

MAY-JUNE 2003

THE

REAL TRUTH

A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING



ANCIENT and MODERN IRAQ

The Untold Story



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A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING

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ARTICLES



The Seventh and Final Empire—The Rise of Europe, Part II

The European Union has become a significant economic and diplomatic force. World events and an eventual alliance with the Vatican will soon propel it to become the seventh and final restoration of the Holy Roman Empire—a power that will truly “shock and awe” all nations, effectively fulfilling an important role in God’s Plan for humanity. This awesome event will unfold before your very eyes.

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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
DAVID C. PACK

SENIOR EDITOR
GEORGE C. ROGERS

PRODUCTION MANAGER
BRUCE A. RITTER

TECHNICAL
BRADFORD G. SCHLEIFER
JAMES T. BOYLE

WORLD NEWS DESK
MARK P. DENEE

ART/GRAPHICS
BRUCE A. RITTER
PAULA RONDEAU

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
DAVID C. PACK
KEVIN D. DENEE
MARK P. DENEE
CHARLES E. HERZOG
BRUCE A. RITTER
GEORGE C. ROGERS
BRADFORD G. SCHLEIFER
JAMES F. TURCK

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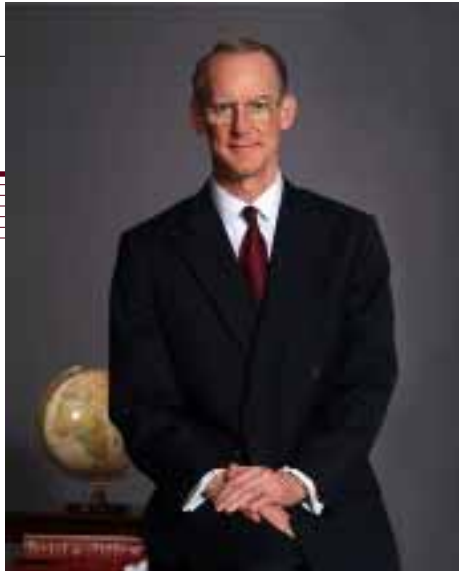
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Contact The REAL TRUTH:
P.O. Box 23295
Wadsworth, OH 44282
www.RealTruthMag.org
info@RealTruthMag.org



PERSONAL FROM

David C. Pack

You Can Live the **ABUNDANT LIFE!**

NEVER HAS the world had so much, yet been so miserable. Depression, unhappiness, confusion, frustration, unfulfilled hopes and dreams, dissatisfaction, emptiness—and HOPELESS MISERY—describe humanity the world over.

The United States Constitution guarantees people the right to “life, liberty and the *pursuit* of happiness.” While the framers of the Constitution understood they could guarantee the American citizenry certain civil liberties and freedom from oppression, they understood they could not guarantee happiness. They could only guarantee one’s right to “pursue” it.

Many are pursuing happiness, but in all the *wrong* places!

Vast new frontiers of expanding scientific knowledge have not brought the happiness that leaders prophesied would accompany it. Neither have laborsaving devices, which were supposed to bring people more leisure time to “enjoy themselves.” Instead, mental illness, drug addiction, despair, suicide, alcoholism, self-pity, and other forms of escapism—and general discontent with life—abound everywhere.

Educators have failed to lead people to the abundant life. Like science and education, religion has also failed terribly in teaching people what God intends them to know about real abundant living.

Many religions have taught people to *feel guilty* if

they enjoy themselves—if they are HAPPY! Many believe that God wants them to suppress joy and happiness—and that Christ expects this from His followers.

Millions view Christianity as little more than a series of “Thou shalt *nots*,” rather than as THE PATH to enjoying a wonderful, abundant life. These same millions often think of sin as the fun that will end if they obey God. They think that “accepting Jesus” also means accepting a life of almost morbid gloom and doom.

Be honest with yourself. Haven’t you seen Christianity primarily in *this* light? Haven’t you thought that Christianity primarily means an *end* to fun, pleasure, excitement, thrills and leading an interesting life? Haven’t you also thought of most church services as solemn, sober, unemotional and devoid of real meaning—and *happiness*? Because of this, many attend certain more emotional churches, seeking an emotional *feeling* (always temporary) that they equate with happiness, so that they can fill their terrible emptiness inside.

All of this wrong understanding exists because almost no one equates Christianity with enjoying a true zest for life!

Your life can be full of enjoyment, happiness and abundant living! God intends that you experience these things. Yet people do not know what brings—what causes—the abundant life.

What Christ Said

On the last night before His crucifixion, Christ taught His disciples many vital principles. At one point, He said, “These things have I spoken unto you, that My JOY might remain in you, and that your JOY *might be full*” (John 15:11).

On the same occasion, Christ, knowing the disciples would sorrow at His death, added, “But your sorrow shall be turned into JOY...and your JOY no man takes from you” (16:20, 22).

This is a powerful promise. Christians experience real joy and happiness *in this life*. If they are truly pleasing and obeying God, there is nothing that anyone can do to take this joy away.

This is an extraordinary statement. But most know nothing of it, or of other verses about this subject. Yet it has been God’s purpose from the beginning that His servants enjoy life to the FULL. And God has also intended that His people enjoy life with *His* joy. Christ said “My [His] joy” was to remain with His disciples.

Consider. The true God of the Bible is the happiest Being in the universe! David understood this: “In Your [God’s] presence is *fullness of joy*” (Psa. 16:11).

Do you see what David is saying? God intends that you live a life of full joy and happiness—*His* happiness—the very same kind of happiness that God Himself experiences. God lives life with “fullness of joy.” All those in His presence experience it as well.

The apostle Jude added that God wants “to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with *exceeding joy*” (vs. 24).

This is your ultimate destiny!

Why then would God expect His people to merely *endure* this life? This life is a time of lesson-learning, including trials and suffering. But it is a forerunner, in a very small way, of what eternal life is intended to be. It would make no sense for God to expect life to consist of only suffer-

ing and pain *now* as a preparation for perfect joy and happiness *later*.

What Christ Brought

Many years ago, I learned of one of the most incredible verses in the entire Bible. No one in the large, respected denomination of my youth ever spoke of it. Apparently, none ever *thought* about it either, because their lives did not reflect radiant happiness. Notice: “I am come that they might have life, and that they might *have it more abundantly*” (John 10:10).

Have you ever seen—or even *heard* of—this verse before? Probably not.

Christ came bringing the *abundant* life—and He said so plainly!

Why then do so many believe that Christianity is supposed to be *endured* instead of *enjoyed*. Why do they not understand that the radiant, abundant life can be theirs—if they will follow *God’s* formula to achieve it?

God never instructs or commands His people to avoid anything unless it is for their *own good*. Many things *seem* like fun, but carry a delayed penalty, and terrible price, for having done them. God instructs us on what to avoid so that we will not get hit later by an unexpected “boomerang”!

I have never met a single person who actually *wanted* to be unhappy. All want to live life to the fullest, and feel happiness and joy. But most have simply not known *how* to do this—or whether God even expected it.

He does expect it—and tells you *how*!

Introducing the Bible Formula

For every person, there is a different definition for what a Christian is. Do you know the definition? Are you sure? Can you turn to a single verse that explains this, removing all doubt?

There is such a verse—and it is the only place to *begin* to fully understand how to live the HAPPY, JOYFUL, ABUNDANT LIFE!

The apostle Paul probably said more about the subject of happiness than any other Bible writer. We will see some of these verses in a moment. But the verse that speaks most about this subject appears not to mention it. Notice: “But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, *he is none of His*” (Rom. 8:9).

This basic scripture leaves no room for misunderstanding. A Christian is *one who has the Spirit of God*. If not, “he is none of His.” This includes you. Countless millions of professing Christians sincerely believe that they are “Christ’s.” Yet they do not have God’s Spirit and are, therefore, not Christians at all.

Let’s keep this simple—and move step-by-step. The beginning point of Christianity is that one must receive the Holy Spirit.

But what does this *mean*—what does having the Spirit of God have to do with happiness, joy and the abundant life?

Let’s see more of why Romans 8:9 has much to do with this subject. Paul wrote the Galatians, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, JOY, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith...” (Gal. 5:22).

This verse is all-important. When a newly converted Christian receives the Spirit of God, he receives a little of each of these qualities of God’s character. We have already seen that God experiences fullness of joy, so it is not strange then that His Holy Spirit—which is His “divine nature” (II Pet. 1:4)—includes JOY.

The Christian starts out by practicing love, which is the only fruit listed before joy. Love is the fulfilling of the Law of God (Rom. 13:10; I John 5:3). “Joy” is listed second because it is the first and most immediate *by-product* of practicing

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THE SEVENTH AND FINAL EMPIRE

THE RISE OF

EUROPE

PART TWO: The Present to the Return of Jesus Christ

THE WORLD has reached a significant and historic juncture. Many feel this, with the advent of a U.S.-led war against Iraq. The diplomatic wrangling between former allies, especially between the U.S. and France, leading up to the military action, was virtually unheard of until recently, and somewhat shocking and disturbing to most. Unfortunately, however, the war itself quickly turned the focus of many away from the significance of what occurred, the climate that it has created, and its future implications.

History has shown that world powers, great civilizations or empires rise and fall. There is no denying the facts that the British Empire is but a distant memory, that Russia is a shadow of its former self, and that the United States is bound for this same end. In fact, Bible prophecy is quite clear on this.

Most of those with a realistic outlook would agree that socially, the U.S. is on the brink of disaster. The American family and work ethic are fading fast—if not gone already. Some would even argue that America's economic, political and diplomatic power and might are already significantly declining. Recent events have proven that the U.S. is no longer able to influence the opinions of other nations as it once did. That leaves, finally, the strength of America's military, which seemingly remains unrivalled and nearly invincible. But again, Bible prophecy indicates otherwise—God *will*, in fact, miraculously break the “pride of [her] power” (Lev. 26:19),

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BY MARK P. DENEÉ

and then the American Empire will, like the others before it, reach its conclusion.

The end of the Cold War and the temporary decline of Russia as a superpower essentially left the U.S. alone on top of the world. This unrivalled power and the absence of a balancing power created a vacuum. Most nations do not like the idea of America being the world's only superpower. In addition, the decline of America's own strength will also create a vacuum. Both of these vacuums will need to be filled.

In an article from *The EUObserver*, former Irish Prime Minister John Bruton pointed out that the U.S., with its heavy borrowing, huge trade deficit and mounting pension bill, cannot sustain its current power. And Europe, Bruton implies, must be proactive in dealing with this situation. We saw in Part 1 of this series the amazing resiliency of the European continent, and the speed at which it was able to

rebuild itself (boosted by the Marshall Plan), since its near-destruction after World War II, into the economic powerhouse that it is today. That economic might has enabled Europe to throw its diplomatic weight around—we have witnessed this in recent months.

Some may scoff and doubt Europe's military might. These people need only study Germany's history to realize the ability of this proud, industrious and war-loving people to quickly (and quietly) alter their military status—they have proven that unquenchable resilience time and again. Also keep in mind the nuclear capabilities of France, the military assets (including nuclear missiles) still deployed in some eastern European nations as remnants of the Cold War, as well as a Europe-Russia military alliance.

Others may argue that socially, Europe is not very different from the U.S. However, history has also shown that many countries in Europe have

had, and still do have, a special relationship with the Roman Catholic Church. Do not doubt history!

Bible prophecy, or history written in advance, indicates that this relationship will once again be renewed—Daniel 7 pictures a beast with 10 horns, the last seven of which are ruled by a little horn. Revelation 13 pictures a beast with a seventh head having 10 horns. Revelation 17 pictures a great harlot riding a beast with seven heads, the seventh of which has 10 horns. All of these portray a soon-coming, unified European/Vatican power. (For a detailed explanation, read our free booklet *Who or What is the BEAST of Revelation?*)

Prophecy stands sure! The Roman Catholic Church will soon provide the moving force and empowerment Europe needs to become the next world superpower—this seventh and final restoration of the Holy Roman Empire.

Current Events

To place current events into context, and to understand their future implications, we have to go back to a watershed moment in recent world history—September 11, 2001.

The attack on America by Islamic extremists did create a short period of pro-American sentiment. Nearly every nation in the world, including France, Germany, Russia and China, expressed their sorrow and condolences to the American people, along with their support for an international “war on terrorism.”

The war in Afghanistan, to rid that country of the Taliban and Al-Qaeda training camps, was a multi-national effort with eventual success. A few months later, however, one would be hard-pressed to see any remnants of that original support. France and Germany had suddenly united themselves in what seemed to be a very anti-American stance. During this same time, the EU has been busy working on its Convention on the Future of Europe, which will eventually produce a European Constitution and President.

Many will recall the “Hitler-Bush” statement made by the German Minister of Justice during the summer of 2002. The media and most of the world attached no meaning to this, eventually dismissing it as political rhetoric only necessary to ensure Chancellor Schröder’s re-election.

However, in a very telling article for *The National Review* titled “Remembrance of Things Past—The German Way,” Victor Davis Hanson described that infamous statement as a sign of a much deeper—but historically familiar—socio-political thought process. He pointed out several other statements from electioneering politicians: Jürgen Möllemann of the Free Democrats spoke of the “intolerant, spiteful style” of some prominent Jews. Former Defense Minister Rudolf Scharping complained that President Bush was trying to please “a powerful, perhaps overly powerful, Jewish lobby.” Schröder himself promised that Germany would not simply “click their heels,” then referred to the “German way,” and said that Germany’s decisions would “be made in Berlin—and only in Berlin.”

Some may insist that all of this is political rhetoric, but Davis concluded his article with these chilling words: “Mr. Schröder has no idea of the repressed historic forces that he has unleashed both at home and abroad—but unleashed them he most certainly has.”

At issue in 2002, regarding defense and security, was the UK’s vision that the new European and Security Defence Policy (ESDP) maintain strong institutional links with NATO, while France viewed it as a more distant, eventually independent structure. Indeed, by mid-January 2003, Gustav Hägglund, chairman of the Military Committee of the European Union, announced that the European part of NATO and the ESDP would merge.

This essentially gives Europe an immediate military structure (largely paid for by the U.S.) and, although basic, it is almost continental. France and Germany, in the meantime, released several joint proposals regard-

ing European defense and security. This includes, as reported in *The Telegraph*, a proposal to the Convention on the Future of Europe for a new “Euro Army” that would eventually cut all ties with whatever remains of NATO and go far beyond the 60,000-troop “rapid reaction force” that was initially in the works. France and Germany even indicated that they might proceed with implementation of this plan regardless of acceptance by the EU.

The timing of this Franco-German alliance and U.S.-led war in Iraq is also of some interest. An article by William Safire in the *International Herald Tribune* indicated that the recent split between U.S./U.K. and mainland Europe (controlled and fronted largely by France and Germany) is all by German design. Case in point: France was poised to deploy troops and its aircraft carrier to the Persian Gulf early this year, when quite suddenly they seemed to do an about-face.

It appears that Schröder made an offer to Chirac that he simply could not refuse: Let us reignite the Franco-German motor and control all of Europe. We will propose a long-term President for the EU that would coincide with but dominate any President of the European Commission that the Parliament chooses. In return, France had to turn their back on promises made to the U.S. in regard to the coming war on Iraq.

France apparently had told Colin Powell last autumn that no second UN resolution would be necessary. Quite suddenly then, France surprisingly threatened to veto any second resolution. The U.S. had insisted all along that no second resolution was necessary. It appears that Germany’s intention may now be to cut away the Atlantic part of the NATO alliance, essentially leaving the U.S. and the UK on their own, and France and Germany to go their own way, controlling the rest of Europe and building their new superpower.

The pre-war wrangling between France, Germany, the U.S. and the

UK, has had significant and lasting effects. An April 2003 visit to the EU by U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell was, for all intents and purposes, an attempt by both parties to “mend fences,” but if the above Franco-German deal is indeed solid, time will tell that there may be no such fence left to mend.

A European Constitution and President

The Convention on the Future of Europe, headed by former French President Valéry Giscard d’Estaing, is due to release its final proposals to the heads of member states during the spring and early summer of 2003. The main points of significance will be a European Constitution and a European President. Some other interesting proposals include:

- A constitutional treaty that may replace and supersede all previous ones (including the two current main ones that created the European Community and the European Union).

- A new name (one proposal is the “United States of Europe”).

- The governments of EU member states would get one chance to ratify this new constitution. If their citizenry (in a referendum) or their government fails to accept the new treaty, they may find themselves out of the new Europe.

- A European Congress made up of European and national parliamentarians.

- A President appointed by Congress. (*The Financial Times* reported in January 2003 that German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer is even pushing for the President to be head of both the European Commission and the European Council—which would essentially make him a very powerful President of Europe, especially if he is appointed by a “Congress” as opposed to voted in by the people.)

- Europe’s ability to sign treaties and sit on international bodies (e.g., the United Nations).

- European citizenship (that may eventually supersede and/or replace national citizenship).

The European Commissioners for France and Germany, as reported in

The EUObserver, even called for a Franco-German federation as the beginning of what some refer to as the “Core Europe.” The proposal indicates that members of this federation would have common governmental institutions, as well as common foreign, security and financial policies. There is some fear among European politicians that the power of the EU will be diminished when it reaches 25 countries in 2004. To counter this watering-down effect, a German named Wolfgang Schäuble introduced the idea of a “Core Europe” during the 1990s. The intention, it is made clear, is not to “build an island without bridges to the European Union.” Other EU countries would be permitted to join this new “Core Europe” if and when they share the goals of the initial Franco-German federation.

As Stephen Castle reported in *The Independent*, some of the stated objectives of the United States of Europe would be “economic and social cohesion, protection of common values, high employment, liberty, security and justice, foreign policy.”

Yet, despite these noble-sounding and lofty objectives, the Daniel 2 image with two feet and ten toes made of a mixture of iron and clay, which represents this final restoration of the Holy Roman Empire, indicates that there will be elements of both strength and weakness. The strength will come from the iron—the weakness from it being mixed with clay—the fact that ten “kings” or nations will have to unite and agree with the one ruler over them and his alliance with the Roman Catholic Church.

An Important Alliance— Church and State

The Vatican has been closely monitoring the proceedings of the Convention on the Future of Europe, and providing input. At each step, it seems that important European politicians are headed to Rome for a visit with the Pope and other Vatican advisors. The Vatican’s position is made obvious, as indicated by parts of the Pope’s address to the Italian parliament in

November of 2002: “If lasting stability is to be given to the new unity of Europe, there must be a commitment to ensuring that it is supported on those ethical foundations which were once its basis” (*The New York Times*).

The Pope went on to say that it was important to ensure that it is built with “the cement of that extraordinary religious, cultural and civic heritage that has made Europe great down through the centuries” (*The Financial Times*). He then pleaded, “Europe, at the beginning of the new millennium, open once again your doors to Christ” (*The New York Times*).

With some rather interesting language, the Vatican, through its semi-official newspaper *L’Osservatore Romano*, commented on Europe’s decision to accept 10 new countries in 2004. The headline read, “New Europe Is Born,” and the article stated that the continent “has not missed the appointment with history.”

The Catholic Church in Poland has been particularly determined in regard to this issue, and hopes to make “Christian values” definite in all of Europe. Prominent religious leader Zoséf Zycinski said, “We do not have the right to use the stones of the Berlin wall to build a new tower of Babel without Christian foundations” (*EUObserver*).

Although the requested mention of Europe’s “Christian heritage” in the new Constitution has received most of the media’s attention, some of the other requests are even more significant. According to a report from the *Zenit News Agency*, Cardinal Sodano, the Vatican’s Secretary of State, stated that the Catholic Church is looking for the following three issues to be covered in Europe’s upcoming Constitution:

- Each church and/or religion must be free to organize itself within its “statutes and objectives.” [Editor’s note: Will this guarantee be above national laws?]

- The identities of each church and/or religion must be “safeguarded,” and dialogue between these institutions and the State must be maintained. [Editor’s note: The Roman Catholic

Church is looking to be treated as a state-equal, and is insisting that the usual political and diplomatic ties are maintained between Europe and The Vatican.]

■ Member states must “respect” the jurisdiction of the church and/or religion, especially in regard to national legislation. [Editor’s note: This essentially answers the question posed above: Yes, the guarantee will indeed be above national laws.]

Cardinal Sodano pointed out that the inclusion of Europe’s “religious heritage” is not the weightiest of matters. He went on to indicate that a recent poll, taken in the 15 member states and the 10 states awaiting admission (in 2004), shows that 81% of the citizens identify themselves with “Christianity.” Sodano said, “To exclude this factor would be like constructing Europe without taking Europeans in due consideration. It would contradict the principles of genuine pluralism and, therefore, of a healthy democracy.”

To really envision how the new Europe—this final Holy Roman Empire—will benefit from an alliance with the Vatican, and what the two will do to those under and around them, we must also look at historical examples, including some from previous occurrences of the Holy Roman Empire.

The Harper Collins *Encyclopaedia of Catholicism* gives us a synopsis of the first two emperors. Justinian I (527 to 565) produced codes of legislation that served the empire well and influenced, during and after his reign, both civil and church law. Charlemagne (800 to 814) subdued, in 774, the Lombards, who had been threatening Rome. As emperor, he was able to exercise great influence over the Vatican.

Due to further military conquests and protection given to the Catholic domain, Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne “Emperor of the Romans” on Christmas Day, 800. Charlemagne’s vision of a united European commonwealth based on the concepts of “renewed learning” and “religious unity” was indeed success-

ful because he, through his influence and alliance with the Pope, was able to control almost every aspect of secular and religious life, including episcopal appointments, reforms, and the summoning and presiding at all church councils.

Once again, in the mid-900s, the Vatican, this time under Pope John XII, appealed to German king Otto I for protection from Berengar, the count of Ivrea. In recognition of his services, Otto was crowned Emperor (the third of seven) by the Pope in February 962. Otto and John XII drew up the *Ottonianum*, an agreement of mutual dependency, which contained clauses stating that any new pope must fulfill all obligations to the emperor. In return, the emperor would provide protection to the church and its interests (*The Oxford Illustrated History of Medieval Europe*, p. 187).

In 1208, Pope Innocent III organized the Albigensian Crusade, backed by many of the authorities in northern, pro-Catholic France, the objective of which was to eliminate a determined group of Sabbath-keepers in southern France, the Waldenses. Refusing orders from the church to subjugate the Waldenses, the civil authorities in that region paid the ultimate price—destruction at the hands of this horrendous, church-sanctified crusade. The Roman Catholic Church expected all civil authorities to submit to her—those who refused would be harshly dealt with.

This crusade literally destroyed the Provençal civilization, one of the most brilliant in Europe at that time. In the wake of the 20-year campaign, this decimated region became completely backward, and subservient to Paris and Rome.

To completely eliminate further religious objections, Rome instituted the infamous Inquisition. Anyone even suspected of sympathizing with “heretics” was sentenced to severe punishment by papal decree. For the next hundred years, confiscations, imprisonments, burnings and every imaginable form of persecution were implemented to stamp out those who

dared to differ with Rome (see our booklet *The History of God’s TRUE CHURCH*, ch. 4).

Blum, Cameron and Barnes had this to say in regard to Europe, Europeans and the Roman Catholic Church, prior to the Reformation:

“In 1500 Europeans generally still spoke of Christendom rather than Europe to denote the greater entity to which they belonged. The distinction is significant. Europe is a secular concept that came into vogue only in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; Christendom was a spiritual concept, ideationally, not geographically, descriptive. It bore witness to the unity of Western men under the apostolic Church of Rome.

“All except pockets of religious minorities—the Jews, Eastern Orthodox Christians in eastern Europe, Moslems—worshipped according to the same basic rites, accepted the Church’s claim that it alone held the keys to salvation, and recognized the pope as the final authority on matter of Church government, faith, and morals” (*The European World—A History*, p. 118).

Pope Paul III approved the Society of Jesus (whose members were later and more commonly known as the Jesuits) in 1540, during Charles V’s reign as emperor of the fourth restoration. It operated under direct papal command, with the objectives during the counter-reformation to “convert the heathen, to reconvert the lapsed, and, above all, to educate” (Norman Davies, *Europe—A History*, p. 496).

Some quotes from its founder, Íñigo López de Recalde (better known as Ignatius Loyola, his official Catholic name) include: “I have never left the Army,” “I have only been seconded to the service of God,” and “Give me a boy at the age of seven, and he will be mine for ever.” Eventually, the Jesuits came to be known as the church’s “secret police” and were eventually assumed to be accountable to no one. Their power was somewhat reduced in 1773, but reinstated in 1814.

The sixth restoration of the Holy

Roman Empire, culminating in the Hitler/Mussolini Axis power during World War II, is perhaps the most familiar to most readers, as it is the most recent. The decades leading up to 1939 were dark ones for many countries. Since the unification of Italy in 1870, the Italian civil government had not enjoyed very good relations with the church.

In 1922, with fascist forces marching on Rome, King Victor Emmanuel III was essentially forced to ask Mussolini to form a new government. In 1929, however, Pope Pius XI and Mussolini signed the conciliatory Lateran Treaty, which, among other things, restored some African countries as Italian territory, guaranteed the role of the church in the life of Italy, especially as the official religion and educator, and gave the pope's approval for Mussolini's dictatorship.

In Germany, Hitler was named Chancellor in January 1933 and, with support of the Catholic Center Party, was able to pass the Enabling Act in April, essentially giving him emergency dictatorial powers. By the summer, Germany and the Vatican had signed a Concordat to protect the church's rights.

In his book *Hitler's Pope, The Secret History of Pius XII*, John Cornwell pointed out that Pope Pius XII failed to denounce Hitler and Nazism in his October 1939 encyclical (pp. 233-234).

In addition, Cornwell made evident Pius' silence in regard to the reports that became known during the early years of the war, of Germany's mass execution of Jews, citing, "Christianity, and Catholicism in particular, had a long history of anti-Judaism on religious grounds that had by no means abated in the twentieth century" (p. 280).

Anti-Americanism, Anti-Anglicism and Anti-Semitism

We mentioned earlier the dramatic swing in world opinion toward America after September 11, 2001 and leading up to the war in Iraq. This is especially the case in some European

countries that were traditionally loyal American allies. Suddenly, however, it had become very popular to hate America, and, by extension due to their loyal support, the UK.

A poll conducted in late 2002, by the non-partisan Pew Research Center (Washington, D.C.), in association with the *International Herald Tribune* (Neuilly Cedex, France), found that large percentages of Germans, French and Russians opposed any war against Iraq. They believe that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is much more important to Middle East stability, and are generally suspicious of American motives.

At the annual meeting (January 2003) of the World Economic Forum, the outlook was bleak, and all fingers pointed in blame to the United States. A year of corporate scandals, rotating executives, and falling stocks, combined with the threat of war, all provided good ammunition for such pessimistic feelings. And all of these issues are almost directly related to the U.S.

There was concern that a war in Iraq would almost certainly drive up oil and gasoline prices, and increase the likelihood of another terrorist attack, both of which would have tremendously detrimental effects on consumer confidence. Almost every nation seemed to be looking to the U.S. economy as the leading indicator of any sort of global recovery.

A report by the European Monitoring Center on Racism and Xenophobia found that, as has been somewhat the norm at certain times throughout history, social and economic factors are again fueling racial prejudice against Jews, and that these prejudices are on the verge of becoming acceptable. Typically, the coverage by European media, and most political statements by governments, in regard to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, have been anti-Israeli.

The Creation of Desperation

The European economy and, more specifically, the German economy, the largest and most important, has

been faltering for some time.

An article by John Schmid in the *International Herald Tribune*, on a report released by the McKinsey Company's Global Institute, indicated that average productivity growth in Germany slowed significantly through the second half of the 1990s. Although some may believe this to be a weakness, more importantly, it indicates a prolonged condition of political unwillingness that will eventually have dramatic socio-political consequences.

In the same article, Juergen Kluge, head of McKinsey's German operations said, "The political thinking in Germany—and this applies to two-thirds of the political class in all the parties—is that productivity gains automatically mean lost jobs."

A December 2002 article in *The Financial Times* cited several large German companies as indicating that their country was facing its biggest crisis since World War II, and they questioned their current government's willingness and/or ability to handle it. Such a political stagnation will eventually force a population, through a seemingly ever-increasing unemployment rate and other pressures, to reach a boiling point.

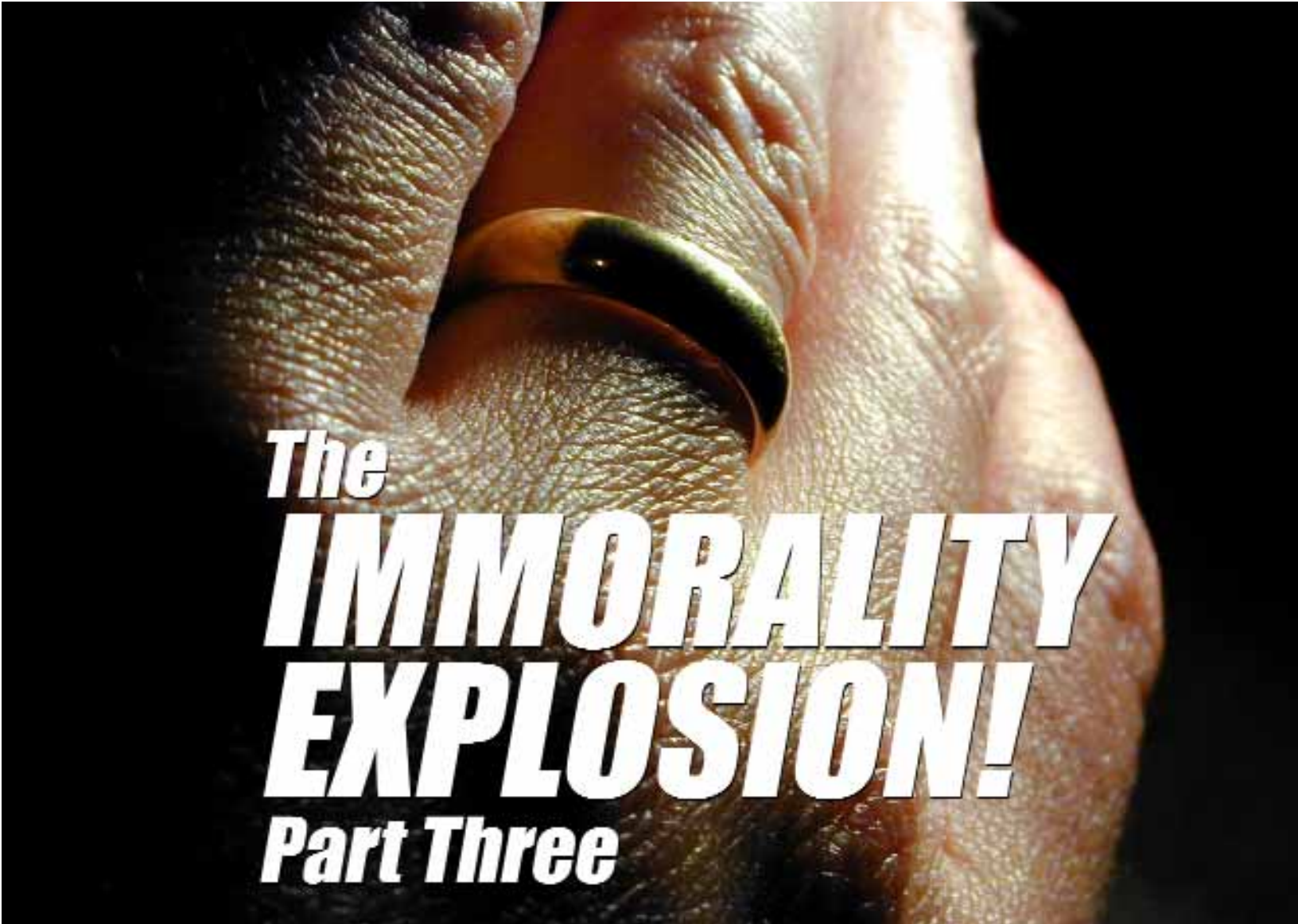
The creation of a desperate people typically creates a desperate environment. Desperate societies have been known to vote for and allow desperate governments!

The Beast Dominated by Rome

We know a vacuum exists. We have seen how recent and current events have created and are creating an environment ripe for the picking. Europe is on the verge of taking its next big step by instituting a powerful Constitution and President. The Roman Catholic Church is insisting on very specific involvement in this new United States of Europe.

History has proven that European "kings" typically ally with the church from Rome for their mutual benefit. Very recent history has exposed a viral

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The **IMMORALITY EXPLOSION!** *Part Three*

BY BRADFORD G. SCHLEIFER

IF YOU have been reading this series from the beginning, you have seen the evidence showing how immorality plagues society. You have seen the rampant lack of morality or even the concept of what it is. Schools have given up in the battle to properly teach children how they should act—and many parents have also dropped the baton. If you have not read the previous parts in this series, we recommend that you do so to put into context what we will cover here.

Throughout this series, we have shown that tolerance is the crux of youth education. This has caused them to grow up accepting and tolerating most *any* form of conduct. But there are more sources for the rampant immorality in our society.

A *business* of immorality has developed, growing into one of the most

Modern media and the Internet have changed society. But is it for the better? What have they added to society—and what have they degraded? Much more is done “behind closed doors”—with these “subcultures” pushing the envelope of decency and morality. What is their cause? What are their effects? And what will be the final solution to these seemingly unsolvable problems?

successful “entertainment” industries ever seen. Always innovating and grasping new forms of technology, this business has reached into modern media. Scanning television channels would uncover many that exist strictly for pornography. The Internet is also no stranger to perverse sexuality. Anyone with email access knows of the constant bombardment of explicit

advertising asking them to visit this or that website. Thousands upon thousands of websites indulge in every perverse action imaginable.

Yet it is not limited to just the Internet and media. Many people are coming together in “understanding” and “tolerance” like never before. Those who share these immoral interests are creating subcultures and

forums that allow them to indulge their fantasies. And, as explained in Part II, the thrill of the forbidden is short-lived, leading great numbers to engage in increasingly more forbidden activities to maintain that thrill.

And so sits civilization today—dark, confused and perverted. As it begins to crumble, it will give way to a solution just over the horizon—one that will change the way the world seeks pleasures and fulfillment. The law of CAUSE and EFFECT will be universally understood. This cause is near—and the effect will be *peace, happiness, fulfillment and joy* to everyone around the world.

A proper understanding of sex will also come with this cause. This article will show you the cause, the solutions

around the world communicating for virtually no cost via email. Researching a subject is made incredibly easy, yet thorough, with this great tool. You can follow news and events from around the world *as they happen!*

It is exciting to see how this medium provides mass information. But all that information has its downside. The instant access to news and communication also allows instant access to negative—even immoral—forms of information. With little investigation, you can indulge *any* perverse desire. There are now websites that focus on even the most extreme of perversions.

Often, such websites allow others of similar interest to discuss their lusts. This creates an atmosphere of acceptance and validation for such

the late 1990s. It allowed users from around the world to share music, bypassing the need to purchase it. Napster has come and gone, but other similar services have appeared in its wake. These services have gone beyond allowing just music to be shared, but also movies, software, images and more.

Studies show that 6% of all the searches on these systems were for some form of child pornography, with a full one-fourth of these directly looking for pornographic images of children. A shocking 73% of *all* movie searches were for pornography!

But, considering the large number of youth utilizing the Internet, is this any surprise? Imagine if you put a teenage boy in a house with many

“Our society has grown into a culture that craves and encourages instant gratification.”

and what you can do *today* to help you experience that cause 1,000 years before many—even most—will even know it has arrived.

But to truly understand how great this soon-coming society will be, we must first examine the world in which we currently find ourselves.

The Internet—Privacy and Perversion

Modern society has every imaginable convenience. Information is at our fingertips—at the click of a button. Media and the Internet drive this information surge. The Internet has changed communication. It has allowed millions from all around the world to keep in contact—and make contacts—unlike any time in history. But these amazing achievements cast a dark shadow.

This technology has spawned the Information Age, but, as this series has shown, not all information is good. Like most forms of technology, the Internet is neither good nor bad. It is simply a tool that can be *used* for good or bad.

Many things can be considered “good,” such as families scattered

people and propels them even further down the slippery slope of immorality.

But you may wonder, “Just how big is pornography on the Internet? Is it as bad as the media portrays?”

Surprisingly, it is *far worse* than the media portrays!

Every day, nearly 1,000 new pornography websites appear! Of course, many go out of business, but many more appear than disappear. And why are so many appearing? Why would organizations and corporations start a thousand such websites a day?

Because there is a *demand* for them—money is to be made for *supplying* this kind of content.

This is not a new phenomenon. Even in the early 1990s, pornography was a budding business on this then largely unknown medium.

Some even assert that pornography was the Internet’s *first* big business venture—that it helped drive the Internet economy in those early years. Even today, studies show that file-sharing systems are used primarily for pornography.

You may remember the Napster service that gained media attention in

rooms and tell him that, in each room, different types of sexual acts are taking place, and that all he need do is open the door to see them. Do you think he wouldn’t look? What if you extended the analogy to be more like the Internet, where one does not even have to open the door? He can view what is happening in these rooms as if he were watching television. Tell him no one will know he is watching and that all he has to do is turn a dial to view what is happening in these rooms.

Does anyone actually believe that this teenage boy would be able to resist? Of course not! Statistics prove this: “According to Net Value, children spent 64.9 percent more time on pornography sites than they did on game sites in September 2000. Over one quarter (27.5%) of children age 17 and under visited an adult web site, which represents 3 million unique underage visitors. Of these minors, 21.2 percent were 14 or younger and 40.2 percent were female” (“The Net Value Report on Minors Online...” *Business Wire*, Dec. 19, 2000).

“Nearly a third (31%) of kids age

10-17 from households with computers (24% of all kids 10-17) say they have seen a pornographic web site” (“Survey Shows Widespread Enthusiasm for High Technology,” *NPR Online*, 1999).

But viewing pornography is only one facet of the Internet. There is a much more dangerous aspect, one that allows people with similar interests to find validation. There are those on the Internet who seek out such teenagers.

There are many “man-boy” love organizations that have an Internet presence and encourage, empower and promote individuals to commit illegal acts. They use this tool to seek victims and have been very successful in their activities: “Based on interviews with a nationally representative sample of 1,501 youth ages 10 to 17 who use the Internet regularly, approximately one in five received a sexual solicitation or approach over the Internet in the last year. One in thirty-three received an aggressive sexual solicitation—a solicitor who asked to meet them somewhere; called them on the telephone; sent them regular mail, money or gifts. One in four had an unwanted exposure to pictures of naked people or people having sex in the last year” (*National Center for Missing and Exploited Children*, June 2000).

It was recently reported that such a perpetrator attacked and raped a young boy because of the encouragement he received from one of these online forums. When people are involved in such perversions, their minds are already twisted. The only thing they lack is support from others wanting to live vicariously through these more aggressive individuals.

The Internet empowers this!

How much new life has the Internet shot into pedophilia pornography? “Child Pornography was pretty much eradicated in the 1980s. With the advent of the Internet, it exploded” (“The Web’s Dark Secret,” *Newsweek*, March 19, 2001). And that was two years ago. Since then, cases have more than doubled yearly.

But like we have said, the Internet is simply a form of technology. It is neither good nor bad. But who can

control this? Who can control such an amazing technology, that it only be used in a good way? Can organizations? Can governments?

A government is coming that can—but its time has not yet arrived, and the world still wanders blindly.

Pornography—The New Entertainment Industry

As we have seen, the Internet is a driving force behind pornography and vice-versa. But pornography existed long before the Internet came on the scene. Interestingly, if you look back over time, you will see that pornographers have often been the first to embrace new technologies. Human nature is always looking for new ways to “express itself”—and corrupt others. People have always sought ways to indulge their lusts, yet maintain privacy—secrecy. This is one reason the Internet grew into such an effective tool for pornographers. It has even been said that the VCR became mainstream because the availability of pornography drove its sales.

One must ask: Why do so many feel that they can continue with all kinds of sexual exploits as long as they keep them secret?

Could it be that people *know* what they are doing is wrong? Do they *know* they are not helping their development or improving themselves? While such thoughts may not be conscious, this is the reason why *any* wrong act is done in secret—“in the dark.” Of course, whether it is theft, deceit or lust—people tend to hide their wrong acts.

Notice: “Men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil” (John 3:19). People hide their actions because they are wrong. But this is not the answer the average person would offer. They would speak of privacy and personal choice. They might even chide the questioner for being “old-fashioned,” “out of step” or “prudish.”

Our society has grown into a culture that craves and encourages instant gratification. Look around! You will see the wonders and comforts that promote this—television, email, tele-

phones, microwaves, etc. So many things are done with the short-term in mind. Few consider the long-term consequences of their actions. It is much the same with pornography. Indulging short-term pleasures can result in long-term problems. How would a wife feel if her husband turned to pornography instead of to her? Would it develop the bond of their relationship? Is lusting after a virtual stranger fulfilling—or is it just a short-term indulgence?

While seemingly harmless, pornography taints your expectations, ultimately desensitizing you to what is normal and balanced. The more you surrender to these desires and lusts, the more they will control your thinking. When you focus on yourself, *you* will be the center of your attention. In marriage—and in life—you should direct that focus on others!

Imagine a society in which everyone else looked out for each other. *Even selfishly*, it would be in one’s best interest to act this way. If those around you are completely self-centered, then each person only has *one* person looking out for him—*himself*! But, if everyone were looking out for everyone else, then thousands, millions, even billions of people would be looking out for your best interests. How sad that the world does not see this! Instead, most people focus on themselves, seeking self-gratification and—in the case of pornography—self-destruction!

Most do not realize that the pornography industry *dwarfs* Hollywood: “Annual rentals and sales of adult videos and DVDs top \$4 billion, and the industry churns out 11,000 titles each year—more than 20 times as many as Hollywood, according to Adult Video News, an adult industry trade magazine” (*Los Angeles Times Magazine*, Jan. 6, 2002).

We have already seen that, once you open the door to perversions, it is very difficult to close. More often than not, what was originally enticing and exciting will become drab and boring—that is, until you find something more extreme! Nowhere is this more obvious than in the modern media.

Media Immorality

Television has been called the window into our society. It truly shows the “state of affairs.” As mentioned in Part II, there was a time when society reflected television. It was the stimulus for change in society. Popular culture once reflected what was seen on television—and so did morality. The early years of television saw programs such as *Leave it To Beaver* and *The Donna Reed Show*. These programs represented wholesome families, and were good examples for the viewing audience.

But, like so many things in our culture, human nature prevailed. Competition frayed the moral direction of producers. What “sells” became more important than what *effect* their programs would have.

We have seen this go even farther today. Society no longer reflects television on important moral issues. Society is now *regressing* at a faster rate than even this popular medium can sustain.

Many have heard the saying, “Sex sells,” and nowhere is this truer than on television. Programs for teens and adolescents feature overtly sexual messages, their characters dressed in the skimpiest of clothing. These characters are lacking more than just morality. These “role models” disrespect their parents, fight with authority figures and have a general disregard for the adult population, which is often portrayed as “lacking understanding” or “uncool.”

And these are just the programs for teens!

The newest phenomenon is “reality television”—basically voyeurism. These programs place “normal” people into various situations. The audience laughs at their mistakes or lives vicariously through their achievements. While this started with a show that put a group of adults on an island to see if they could “survive,” it has degraded into something far worse.

Programs like *Married by America*, *Temptation Island*, *The Real World*, *Are You Hot?* and *Cheaters* are just a small sample of what “reality” television is becoming. Even the name of

this genre speaks volumes for the state of the world. While what happens on these shows is not reality for most, how long before it is?

And this is just television! It is considered tame in the entertainment industry. The movies produced by Hollywood would make your average television producer blush.

A movie with a good storyline that does not contain numerous sexual references or violence is rare. Even children’s movies contain such references to keep adults entertained.

How sad that Hollywood feels that older children are not aware of these undertones and the consequences they can bring.

Another aspect of this popular media is fashion. While not truly a form of media, fashion is usually the one most often imitated by the general population. As we have seen in this series, children are having difficulty finding clothing that actually covers their bodies. It is too tight, too short—and too revealing. The fashion industry, promoted by television and movies, has created this dilemma.

Award shows, the ultimate marriage of television, movies and fashion, are truly “unreality” programming. The “rich and famous” parade in shockingly short, revealing or plain inappropriate dresses. When winning awards, they spout some sort of extreme—yet “tolerant”—viewpoint.

The entertainment industry creates a false reality—a fantasy world—for those who look to its moguls as idols, mimicking the dress, style and blatant immorality that they endorse. Where is the *entertainment* in that?

The Swinging Explosion!

As we have seen, the concept of marriage has degraded substantially from its original purpose. Many today look at marriage as nothing more than a “tax break,” “convenience” or simply “what’s best for the kids.”

Such attitudes have caused many to remove what they would call the “restrictions of monogamy” and practice a shocking, new—and growing—lifestyle.

Across many nations, married couples are visiting swinging clubs. Such clubs allow couples to trade partners with other couples. Often, no concept of whom those partners are—or where they have been—even enters the equation. Group activities are indulged and human desires tantalized. Could you imagine any relationship where such activities take place, and retain any form of trust—or at the very least a lack of jealousy?

You may think that such clubs are rare or are hidden in the back alleys. But across this country, the “swinging” lifestyle is rapidly growing in popularity. In 2000, a study showed that up to 2% of the adult population in the United States was involved in this lifestyle. While it may not seem like a large percentage, this constitutes over 3,000,000 adults!

Notice the following quotes from within this “community”:

“The number of parallels between the modern swing community and the modern BDSM/leather community is truly remarkable.

“A 1985 study of over 400 swingers found its subjects ‘significantly more liberal than a control group of nonswingers on items dealing with areas such as divorce, premarital sex, pornography, homosexuality, and abortion.’

“In 1984, Dr. Joan Dixon published some fascinating research on female bisexuality within the swing community. Summarizing: She noted that the prevalence of sexual activity between females in the swing community is extraordinarily high. She assembled (apparently without difficulty) a sample of 50 women for her study, all of whom had their first experience with female-female sex in the swing community after age 30, and none of whom even fantasized about women before these first experiences” (Society for Human Sexuality, *Community Profiles: Swinging*).

What sort of example do parents involved in this lifestyle create for their children? One that may encourage their children to involve themselves in the *same* perversity. Children

are like moldable clay. By teaching and by *example*, parents lay the foundation on which children will grow into adults.

Notice this wise statement from the book of Proverbs: “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (22:6). This applies to both good *and* bad examples!

The swinging culture is creating an entire generation interested in the extremes of “premarital sex, pornography, homosexuality, and abortion.” Its result will surely not be a positive one.

The Far Extreme

While many of the topics covered in this series are immoral, society generally accepts them. Homosexuality is accepted on a large scale, as are many of the other perversions that we have

although starting out with little more in mind than a “cheap thrill,” always lead to something much darker, just as a drug addict gets into heavier and heavier drugs with time. The God of the universe understands that any sin will lead a person into others (Jms. 2:10).

There are many other extremes far too perverse, twisted and immoral to mention. Almost everything in this society has been turned into a sexual object for fascination. But always remember that when sin is entertained, it will grow progressively worse over time, reaching even to the point that such things as bestiality become an option.

Perversions Foretold

The state the world has gotten itself into should *not* be a surprise. It has been developing for millennia. But

Look around you. Such conditions are epidemic in our society. Most actions involve some form of adultery, fornication, seeking pleasure at any cost, homosexuality or unruly conduct. The Bible speaks often about how those who live in the “now”—never looking ahead to see the consequences their actions—will end up.

Of course, everyone knows the account of Sodom and Gomorrah. God destroyed these cities because *everyone* had become involved in perversions—especially homosexuality. But God compares our time *now* to those lost cities (Luke 17:30). Society is quickly reaching the same level of conduct that required God to utterly destroy the thousands living there!

Understand! God cannot continue to tolerate—or allow—such actions. Sin of any sort leads to unhappiness,

“For men shall be lovers of their own selves...
disobedient to parents...*Without natural affection...*despisers of those that are good...
lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God...”

covered. But there are still many more extremes, subcultures and various perversions running rampant in society.

While many fall under the classification of being too lewd to discuss (Eph. 5:12), some are so widespread that they need to be examined.

One such perversion is bestiality. This is the embrace of the rawest aspect of carnal nature. Gone is any form of decency or self-respect. The only focus on such an action is sick, perverse self-gratification. This has been such a large problem throughout time that God, in His Word, addressed it.

Notice: “Neither shall you lie with any beast to defile yourself therewith: neither shall any woman stand before a beast to lie down thereto: it is *confusion* [Hebrew: unnatural].” (Lev. 18:23).

Not much needs to be said about bestiality or even should be. But it should be noted that such perversions,

would you believe that it was foretold thousands of years ago that immorality would reach its current state?

One-third of the Bible is prophecy—the future written in advance. Most of those prophecies describe our time. This includes many describing the state of the world just before the end of the age.

Today’s filth, lust, perversion, sickness and immorality were foretold long ago in God’s Word.

Notice: “...In the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves...disobedient to parents...*Without natural affection...*despisers of those that are good...*lovers of pleasures* more than lovers of God...For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, *led away with diverse lusts...*” (II Tim. 3:1-4, 6).

How true!

depression and eventually death! But God has a solution! He does have an answer for all those who seek it.

Can We Rewind?

But has society gone too far? Are we able to turn back the clock? Is it still possible to purge from our culture the unbridled immorality around us? Of course, it *is* possible. But ask yourself: Is it *likely*? Will modern society, as a whole, remove sex from advertising? Will the fashion industry stop selling suggestive clothing to children and teens? Will children stop learning how to perform sex acts in grade school? Will today’s sex education ever help children understand what makes them female or male—instead of confusing them? Will they be taught that sex is something that can be fulfilling, if it is within the vows of marriage?

Will the Internet purge the hundreds of thousands of pornography

forums and websites? Will the adult entertainment industry close its doors and choose a better, more productive profession?

Will people stop committing adultery—either without their partners' knowledge, or in swinging-type relationships? Will homosexuals and pedophiles turn from their vile ways, and embrace proper adult heterosexual relationships?

Do you believe that even ONE of these questions will be answered with a "Yes"?

Saying "No" does not mean that all hope is lost for humanity. There is coming a system that will change everything! Literally, everything that is wrong with our society will be corrected. You can be part of that coming society. Just because the world around you will not choose what is right, it does not mean you must follow.

The Longed-for Solution

The Bible teaches that we have reached the end of 6,000 years of man's rule. God gave Adam and Eve a choice—a way that would have led to peace and happiness, or their own way—their own rule.

Obviously, the latter was chosen. Did you know that the first concept of immoral acts immediately followed that choice? After making this choice, the "eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons" (Gen. 3:7). Why did they cover themselves? Because they were ashamed!

Since that fateful choice, the world has been ashamed, yet enticed, by sexuality. But 6,000 years of man's misrule is ending. Very soon, the world is going to be shown its mistakes and wrong choices for what they are, and given a chance to reject the ways that lead to immorality and unhappiness.

That age will dawn when Jesus Christ returns to earth. He will lead the *government*—alluded to throughout this article—that will create this change. The changes it implements will make people truly happy. They will have no choice but to give up their

ways, which create confusion and unhappiness, and will literally be forced to choose happiness! How ironic that the world will need to be pushed into happiness and fulfillment.

This government will teach all nations what marriage means. It will show them that the devil has been the force behind sexual immorality—the root of their lusts. He will be put away, unable to influence humanity any longer. When the easy temptation to commit immoral acts is gone, people will be able to unlearn them. This exciting future lies before humanity. This is the hope that will come when the sickness that exists today will be put away.

Here is how the Bible describes the ultimate destination for humanity—the new heaven and new earth: "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Rev. 21:3-4).

Happiness, prosperity, joy and the right, wholesome understanding of morality will encompass the entire earth!

A Choice

Lust causes much more than just sexual problems. It does more than break up marriages, destroy families and corrupt children.

Even *war* is caused by lust! Notice: "From where come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts...?" (Jms. 4:1).

Lust is a dangerous aspect of human nature. Throughout history, more people have died from wars than any other man-inspired event. The Word of God commands that we flee from lusts—that instead of "entertaining" wrong desires, we must put them out of our minds. Otherwise, they *will* turn into deed. You may not have realized it, but when you begin to entertain

an idea, you are actually planning to act on it.

Ask yourself: "Have I ever done anything without first thinking about it?" Of course not! You always think about an action before it happens. And when it comes to lusts, it is inevitable that your thoughts will be followed by *actions*: "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust has conceived, *it brings forth sin*: and sin, when it is finished, *brings forth death*" (Jms. 1:14-15).

One simply cannot toy with human nature and expect to control it. You cannot find happiness in things that need to be hidden—of which you feel ashamed.

What you consider innocent will eventually cause more trouble than you now understand. The Bible uses the analogy of comparing sin—one of which is lust—to the yeast in bread.

These inappropriate thoughts often start small, like leaven—perhaps even just a pinch. But they will quickly expand and grow, taking over and spreading to encompass your life. Like leaven, sin grows. It starts small and innocent—even just a thought—but it quickly becomes an action. And that action stirs more thoughts—which create more actions. And soon, you are no longer controlling your lusts. They are controlling *you*.

Do not be a slave to such things. (Notice Romans 6:16.) Do not allow the god of this world (II Cor. 4:4) to shape you in the way he sees fit. You have the choice of changing your path.

You can be a part of the coming government of God, which will change this world and create the utopian paradise for which many hope.

The facts of this explosion of immorality now sit in your hands. You are able to make a wise and in-depth choice in your life. The only question left is whether you choose to be led into unhappiness and depression, or whether you break those chains and choose happiness, joy and peace. The choice is yours to make.

Choose wisely! □

MODERN IRAQ

A House Divided

RECENTLY, the President of the United States made a daring challenge to the Middle East: Iraq will be a “dramatic and inspiring example” of peace.

As American troops patrol the streets of Baghdad and other Iraqi cities, many questions surround Iraq’s future: What will become of this nation and its people? Will America *really* bring peace to this region? Can foreign occupation bring *lasting* peace to a land that has known nothing but war, division and strife? How will—or can—the Iraqi people practice democracy? Or is it only a matter of time until another harsh or terrorist regime seizes control of a newly liberated Iraq?

While these are tough questions on the minds of many government and military officials—they *can be* easily answered!

As Harvard Professor George Santayana stated, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” A brief examination of Iraq’s fractured history—in combination with Bible prophecy—answers these and other looming questions, and helps identify the true nature of the Iraqis.

Pre-Islamic Arabia

In the seventh century, the mainly desert region of Arabia was home to many wandering Arab tribes. These tribes represented the largest unit of political organization in the region, and were often governed by rulers selected from ancient lines of Arab kings. Since natural resources and arable land for farming and grazing were limited in Arabia’s deserts, tribes constantly migrated, and competed with other neighboring tribes for control of these valuable areas. With the need to battle



What is the origin of the Iraqi people? How did Iraq become the nation it is today? Can the “coalition of the willing” bring peace and stability to this tumultuous land and people?

just to survive, young men were required to be warriors, and the impetuous, fighting nature of the Arab people became an integral part of their society.

As years passed, Arabia became a center for trading and trade routes. Among these, one of the most famous was the Hijaz city of Mecca. This city became a great source of wealth for many merchants, neighboring tribes and, most importantly, the city itself.

Pre-Islamic Mecca had also become a center of religious practices. Many western Arabian and African cults traveled to the city’s shrine, which soon became the site for yearly pilgrimages.

At these gatherings, all attending tribes would cease from warring, and often settle certain long-standing disputes.

This period was an unusual time for Arab society. Its long-established tribal systems were slowly vanishing, and merchant *capitalism* was growing in its place. This void of a centralized governing system helped the proliferation of Islam in this region.

The Birth of Islam

In A.D. 610, the single biggest force controlling practically every action in the Middle East was born—the religion of Islam. Within a century, Islam would

control an empire far larger than that of Alexander the Great or even Rome.

While most Westerners do not understand much of what occurs in the Islamic world, events in that region directly affect most of the world. The *Council on American-Islamic Relations* reports that there are 1.3 billion Muslims (also called Moslems) worldwide, accounting for approximately 20% of the world's population. Once spread almost solely by the sword, Islam is one of the fastest growing religions today, and is the second most popular, with an estimated 135,000 converts per year. During the 1991 Gulf War alone, approximately 3,000 Americans converted to Islam!

Mohammed ibn Abdullah, born in Mecca around A.D. 570, was of the lineage of Kedar, son of Ishmael, and grandson to the patriarch Abraham (Gen. 25:13). He was born of a poor but respectable branch of the Quraysh tribe, the dominant tribe in Mecca.

Mohammed was a husband, a father of four daughters, and, as a merchant trader, was said to have had regular contact with Jewish and Christian traders, learning much about both religions. One night, while in a secluded mountain, an angel—supposedly “Gabriel”—is said to have appeared to Mohammed, imparting to him the knowledge of the Koran. Mohammed further claimed that the archangel stated that he was to be a prophet, and his teachings were to supplant all previous teaching revealed through God's true servants and prophets.

This event, called “the Night of Power” by most Muslims, represents a shift in the Arab world. This single event would lead to the emergence of organized religion in Arabia—and would help unite a splintered Arab world into a conquering force.

Islam's Development

For the next 22 years, Mohammed would teach his increasing number of followers the many “revelations” conveyed to him. Mohammed memorized these revelations, which eventually comprised the 144 *suras* or chapters of the Koran. Claiming these were the

exact words of God, Mohammed further taught that they replaced previous revelations, primarily the teaching found in the Bible!

While extremely different from the Bible, the Koran has a number of similarities to it, and even acknowledges the authority of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses and even Christ as servants God used to convey His message. However, Muslims deny that Christ was the Son of God, and even attribute certain accounts from Christ's life to the life experiences of Mohammed!

The purpose of this article is not to prove or disprove the authenticity of the Koran. (God's Word—the Holy Bible—plainly states that such messages would, in fact, proliferate.) However, Islam's development helped galvanize the Middle East as we know it today.

Since Mohammed's teachings forbade the pursuit of physical riches and wealth, and his followers continued to increase within Mecca, the rich merchant tribes ruling Mecca soon saw them as a threat to their way of life. Soon, Mohammed persuaded his followers to move to Medina, where he was offered supreme authority over the city. This pilgrimage to Medina took place in 622, the first year of the Islamic calendar. One of Mohammed's first actions in Medina was to expel certain Jewish tribes residing in the city, who had rejected his self-proclaimed authority as a prophet.

For the next few years, Mohammed sought to disable Mecca's financial power, and led repeated strikes against the city's merchant fleets. As Mohammed's fame spread, many tribes converted to Islam. In 630, the Quraysh tribe, leaders of Mecca, accepted defeat. For the next two years, most of the remaining Arabian tribes accepted Mohammed's teachings and converted. In 632, Mohammed died, leaving no male heir to fill his position of leadership. Only one of his daughters, Fatima, survived him.

The cities of Mecca and Medina did not abandon Islam after Mohammed's death. However, they soon began com-

peting for supremacy. Since there were no male heirs to succeed Mohammed and, since the Koran did not specify what should be done in such circumstances, different interpretations of who should replace Mohammed sprang forth.

There were three common beliefs concerning who the new leader of Islam should be. One group believed that the line should be carried through Fatima, Mohammed's daughter. Thus, her husband, Ali, should rule. A second group, comprised of recent Meccan Islamic converts (who had until recently fought against Mohammed), hoped to regain power by claiming one of their own as successor. Finally, the third group, those who had been with Mohammed through his initial troubles in Mecca, claimed that one of Islam's faithful followers, Abu Bakr, should succeed Mohammed.

The other factions eventually gave in to Bakr's claim to leadership. However, this dispute over Arabia's leadership sowed the seeds of division that would affect the Islamic world to this day.

Bakr was called “the successor”—or *khalif* in Arabic. This title, later anglicized to caliph, referred to a political or religious figure in Islamic leadership.


Within 100 years of Mohammed's death, the Islamic empire, led by the conquering nature of the Arabs, reached from the Indian subcontinent, to the Iberian Peninsula (Spain) and across the Pyrenees into France.

Islam's Division

As the Islamic empire grew, so grew its inability to remain functioning and organized. Caliphate followed caliphate, dynasty followed dynasty, with practically every successor facing opposition from other tribes, each also claiming the right to rulership.

Baghdad was the capital of the Abbasid caliphate from about the mid-eighth century to 1258. This was a golden age of Islamic power and culture. But it began to slowly decline in

Please see MODERN IRAQ, page 23



ANCIENT ROOTS OF THE IRAQI WAR

Today, much of the conflict centered in the Middle East relates directly to an ancient family feud: The ongoing bitterness between the descendants of Esau (allied with the descendants of Ishmael) and the descendants of his brother Israel (the Jewish state of Israel allied with the Western Anglo-Saxon nations). These Western nations are the recipients of the birthright of Israel—the United States and United Kingdom, along with her commonwealth countries.

We will examine the identity of the modern descendants of Esau and their relation to Israel. We will then review historical and scriptural accounts of that ancient controversy through the centuries, and what prophecy reveals will be the final outcome.

Mesopotamia— Wealth of Ancient History

Ancient history converges upon the region of Mesopotamia, known as the

On September 11, 2001, America, the sleeping giant, was awakened to address her terrorist adversaries. The resulting war on terrorism is but the latest bout in a controversy dating back to the time of the biblical patriarchs.

BY GEORGE C. ROGERS

cradle of civilization. It was here that the ancient tower of Babel was said to have been located. This was the land of the famous Sumerian culture, which has been extensively studied by archaeologists. The book of Genesis reveals that the patriarch Abraham was born in this region, in the city of “Ur of the Chaldees” on the Euphrates River. Of course, the Assyrian Empire at the headwaters of the Tigris came to envelop this region. The Babylonian Empire was ruled from the famous city of Babylon, on the Euphrates. Mesopotamia, with its major rivers—

Tigris and Euphrates—and its rich, easily irrigated valleys, became an ideal location for major city-states to flourish over the centuries. The very term *Mesopotamia* means “the land between the rivers.”

Archaeologist James Mellaart, in *Civilizations of the Near East* (1965), made some interesting observations pertaining to the earliest migrations from the mountains and hill country to the north. After the Great Flood, the surviving family was reluctant to explore the plain country. (See *Antiquities of the Jews*, Josephus, bk. I,

ch. IV, sec.1.) Their reluctance was not based on fear. Rather, it was due to the fact that the lowland regions were still flooded. After a flood so vast as to cover the entire earth, it would have taken decades for the area to dry to the point that it could be farmed.

Various archaeological reports, including Mellaart's work, place the first human settlement in the hill country. From there, the population eventually spread through the Mesopotamian and Syrian plain, and later to southern Iraq. These studies into the repopulation process covered the period from the Flood until the building of the city of Nineveh.

Genesis 11 records the building and destruction of the tower of Babel. Genesis 10 lists other cities besides Babel that were built by Nimrod. Some of the cities were built as joint projects between Nimrod and Asshur. After Babel, the chief city was Erech (archaeologists prefer Uruk). "An interesting side-light is that the modern country of Iraq takes its name from Erech. Few people are aware that this ancient city built by Nimrod has given its name to the entire country" (Schulz, *Ancient History—The First 2500 Years*).

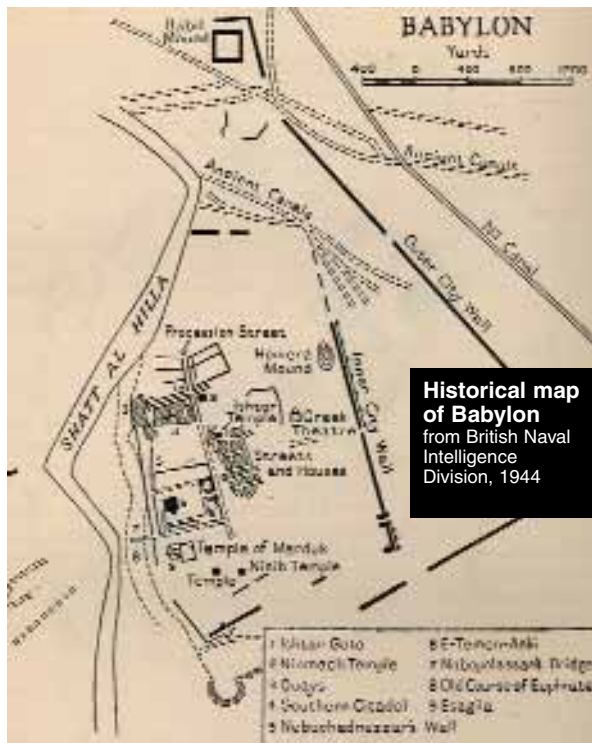
The British defined the territory in 1921, naming it "Iraq" (which means "land of the sun"), derived from the ancient name Uruk.

Now let's look at the peoples who make up the majority of Iraq's population.

Origin of the Arabs

The descendants of Ishmael and Esau—the modern Arabs—share a common ancestor: The biblical patriarch Abraham.

Abraham had two sons: Isaac (by his wife, Sarah) and Ishmael (by Hagar, her handmaid). Though Abraham passed the birthright to Isaac, Ishmael was also blessed, becoming the progenitor of the Arabs.



Twelve princes, sons of Ishmael (Gen. 25:16), went on to form major Arab nations—not the insignificant nomadic tribes some believe. These peoples intermarried primarily with the Egyptians and were located south of Canaan, in the region of Arabia.

Genesis 16:12 records Ishmael's nature: "And he will be a *wild man*; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren." True to this scripture, Ishmael's descendants have traditionally been at odds with outside nations, and even at odds with each other!

The sparse populations already in Arabia before Ishmael's time were descendants of Joktan, the son of Eber. They established colonies along trade routes across Arabia.

The name "Arabia" was given to the vast arid desert land due to its relative direction to the west and south of the people who first observed it upon spreading through Mesopotamia after the Flood. The Hebrew root word *arab* means "evening or dusk." As the people spread to Arabia, they called the land to the south *Yemen*, meaning "right and south." Since these ancient people based their directions from the

east (the rising of the sun), this put Yemen, literally, on their right and to the south. The modern country of Yemen lies near the southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula. Arabian tribes from the southern areas of the peninsula are still called Yaman to this day.

Isaac had two sons: Jacob and Esau. Isaac's God-given birthright was passed on to Jacob. However, Esau, like his uncle Ishmael, was also blessed with wealth and offspring. He moved away from Canaan to a region called Mount Seir, just south of Moab (southeast of the Dead Sea). Esau married Mahalath, the daughter of Ishmael (Gen. 28:9). He also had a number of wives from various other nations. Many rulers, nobles

and kings came from Esau (Gen. 36). His offspring continued to marry into the families of Ishmael, as well as other peoples.

Ishmael and his descendants settled primarily in the southern portions of the Arabian Peninsula. Notice that Ishmael was "to dwell in the presence of all his brethren" (Gen. 16:12). True to this description, his descendants have always tended to associate in their original territory. On the other hand, some of the leading tribes of Esau tended to intersperse with other people and expand their sphere of control. Since they were close blood relatives, Ishmael was receptive to Esau. Both felt they had been denied the birthright, which reinforced their resentment toward Israel. Ishmael's wild nature and Esau's violent ambitions have been passed on to their descendants.

The Lineage of Israel

Meanwhile, Jacob (whose name God changed to Israel) had twelve sons—Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Zebulon, Issachar, Dan, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Joseph and Benjamin—the twelve tribes of Israel. While in Egypt for nearly two and a half centuries, the

tribes of Israel grew vast in number. The birthright was passed from Jacob (or Israel) to Joseph's sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. Great Britain, along with her former commonwealth countries, make up the modern descendants of Ephraim. The United States of America constitutes the modern descendants of Manasseh. (Many more facts about their identity and the birthright appear in our free book *AMERICA AND BRITAIN IN BIBLE PROPHECY*.) After King Solomon's death, the kingdom of Israel split into two nations: Judah in the south, and Israel to the north.

The northern kingdom (Israel) was taken captive by the Assyrians, about 721 B.C., never to return to its homeland. The vast majority of Jews remained dispersed among other nations after their Babylonian captivity (about 525 B.C.). The Jews who returned to their homeland were accosted by hostile enemies, such as the Samaritans. To a lesser extent, they were also opposed by the peoples of Ammon and Moab. The Ammonites and Moabites—sons of Lot, Abraham's nephew—were distant relatives of the Jews. The Jews' most bitter rivals, both before and after the Babylonian captivity, were the Edomites—sons of Esau.

Ancient Background of Esau

The original homeland of the tribe of Esau was in the Mount Seir region, southeast of the Dead Sea. The term *Mount Seir* was used to describe Esau's descendants who lived there. The term *Edom* is also used to describe the descendants of Esau in any geographical location. Edom, meaning "red," is interchangeable with Esau or any of the House of Esau. Another term to describe Esau or Edom is *Idumea*. Sometimes the name of the leading tribe of Esau, "Teman," is used to address all of Esau, just as Ephraim is sometimes used in prophecy to describe the House of Israel.

The following verses tell of Esau's migration from Canaan: "And Esau took his wives, and his sons, and his daughters, and all the persons of his

house, and his cattle, and all his beasts, and all his substance, which he had got in the land of Canaan; and went into the country from the face of his brother Jacob. For their riches were more than that they might dwell together; and the land wherein they were strangers could not bear them because of their cattle. Thus dwelt Esau in mount Seir: Esau is Edom" (Gen. 36:6-8).

Esau took three wives: "Now these are the generations of Esau, who is Edom. Esau took his wives of the daughters of Canaan; *Adah* the daughter of Elon the Hittite, and *Aholibamah* the daughter of Anah the daughter of Zibeon the Hivite; and *Bashemath* [the same person as Mahalath of Gen. 28:9] Ishmael's daughter, sister of Nebajoth. And *Adah* bare to Esau Eliphaz; and *Bashemath* bare Reuel; And *Aholibamah* bare Jeush, and Jaalam, and Korah: these are the sons of Esau, which were born unto him in the land of Canaan" (Gen. 36:1-5).

Esau had five sons. Eliphaz, the firstborn, also had five sons, each constituting a major tribe of the House of Esau. By his concubine, Eliphaz had another son, named Amalek. Together with the sons of Esau's other sons, there were 14 dukes or sovereign princes. Each of these became tribes that grew into nations—some of which mixed with other peoples, others remaining as cohesive nations. The most notable of the lineages was the Esau-Eliphaz-Teman line, from which sprang the Ottoman Turks.

Some Bible students assume that these tribes somehow remained in Mount Seir for over two millennia, until they migrated north to conquer Asia Minor—known today as Turkey. But elements of these tribes had already migrated hundreds of miles to the east by the time Israel came out of Egypt. Some of Teman's descendants were royalty in Persia by that time. Elements of Teman and other tribes had already established themselves in strategic locations (such as southern Mesopotamia). Although some remained in their original homeland,

the majority eventually dispersed.

Even before Israel went into Egypt, we find evidence that the House of Esau dispersed to other lands. The biblical account of Job records an interesting side note of history. One of Job's friends is mentioned in Job 2:1—Eliphaz the Temanite, the father of the Temanites and the son of Esau. Eliphaz was a leading figure among Esau's descendants (*Ancient History—The First 2500 Years*). These family lines had become closely associated with various kingly lines and leaders of their day. Notice that Eliphaz was a close friend to Job, who was a prominent noble and leader in Egypt.

The Persian Connection

While Israel was still in Egypt, the line of Esau became prominent among the ruling class of Persia. The Edomite ruler who refused to allow Israel to pass through his land (at the end of Israel's 40 years in the wilderness) was named Husham (Gen. 36:31, 34), a Temanite king of the line of Esau.

Detailed historical sources, such as *Early Kings of Persia* by Shea and *Universal History, Volume V*, indicate a common dynasty ruling Persia and Edom. Husham's native land was Persia. This shows how early some of Esau's descendants had left Mount Seir and expanded east to Persia and Turkestan. Husham was king of the tribes of Edom, which were scattered far and wide. The history of western Turkestan is closely connected to that of ancient Persia.

All the regions between Mount Seir and Persia were controlled by Husham and his successors. This included southern Mesopotamia. Husham's grandfather Zerah (Gen. 36:33) was from a city named Bozrah, a capital of Edom (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11th ed., vol. 4, p. 356). The significance of this location will be addressed later.

A later Edomite king prominent in Persian history was Hadar (Gen. 36:39). He reigned just before the time of King Saul of Israel. Much of Persia's chronology harmonizes with the biblical chronology of Esau. The

list of the rulers of Edom (Gen. 36) is the same line as the early rulers of Persia. This occurred through intermarriage of these ancient ruling dynasties. Many of the Persian ruling elite throughout the centuries have been blood relatives of the House of Esau. Even the closest advisor to King Ahasuerus, Haman the Agagite, was of Amalekite lineage of the House of Esau (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11th ed., vol. 9, p. 796). How could a non-Persian attain such a position? The answer is that not only was the tribe of Teman well-established in the Persian nobility, but others of the House of Esau as well.

Expansion of the Turks

The name Turk is derived from Turkestan, where the Turks had settled. Many Caucasian Osmanli Turks of modern Turkey had settled in western Turkestan before the eleventh cen-

ment in the 1200s, actually gaining control of the Holy Land from that time until they surrendered it to the British in 1917—about 700 years! Before the Ottomans gained control, the Seljuk Turk advance had been in progress for nearly three centuries. After conquering Asia Minor, the Ottomans moved into southeastern Europe, and, by the early 1400s, conquered a number of countries in that region. Their relentless drive continued for centuries, only to be stopped by Charles V, who was backed by the united factions of Germans at Vienna (Austria), about 1532.

Even though the descendants of Esau were denied the birthright from Isaac, they always maintained a great desire to control the Holy Land—and much more! They continued to vie for control of all Europe until their failed attempt to take Vienna in 1683. After the 1700s, their struggles in Europe

recorded this emphatic prophecy: “And the LORD said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven...For he said, Because the LORD has sworn that the LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation” (Ex. 17:14-16).

God saw that this action was carried out, as I Samuel 15:2-3 records: “Thus says the LORD of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt. Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not...” Verse 8 reveals that (with the exception of the Amalekite king) Israel “utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword.”

Although the bulk of the Amalekites were destroyed, there

“Edom, meaning ‘red,’ is interchangeable with Esau or any of the House of Esau. Another term to describe Esau or Edom is *Idumea*.”

ture. The ruling family of the Osmanli Turks was the Ottomans, a leading tribe descended from Teman (Gen. 36:11, 15).

No known bloodline exists between the Mongoloid Turks of Turkestan and the descendants of Esau who intermixed with the Oriental lineages of Japheth. However, there is a definite tie between the Osmanli Turks and Esau. A connection to the Esau bloodline with the warlike Tartars probably existed in some major branches or tribes, but to a lesser extent with the Mongols. In the Middle Ages, while the Ottoman Turks threatened European civilization in the West, the Tartars and related tribes were an ongoing threat to the civilizations bordering the steppes of Central Asia.

The Seljuk Turks had conquered most of Asia Minor by about 1070 A.D. The Caucasian Osmanli Turks gained control of the Turkish move-

were defensive, as the Europeans gradually reclaimed much of their land.

Due to the standards required of today’s civilized nations, modern Turks have appeared to modify their animosity against the Jews and modern Israel. But the true feelings of Turkey were reflected in the parliamentary decisions not to cooperate with the coalition forces in the recent war against Iraq. The record of history still stands as testimony to the warring expansionism of the House of Esau.

Amalekites Carry the Tradition

One of the most notorious examples of the characteristics of the House of Esau was embodied in the war-like tendencies of the Amalekites (Gen. 36:12). They attacked the tribes of Israel near Sinai shortly after Israel’s exodus from Egypt.

God’s anger against these merciless people was so great that Moses

were remnants dispersed among other nations and peoples who continued to vex Israel. The most notorious was Haman the Agagite, in the book of Esther (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11th ed., vol. 9, p. 796). In the fourth century B.C., Haman plotted to have all the Jews killed, by manipulating the Persian king to do his will. But Queen Esther and her relative Mordecai foiled his plans.

In Moses’ time, shortly after the Exodus, Balaam spoke of Amalek, as Israel was preparing to enter Canaan: “...Amalek was the first of nations: but his latter end shall be that he perish forever” (Num. 24:20). “The first of nations” does not refer to time, but position and rank. As a nation, the Amalekites were late to arrive, having stemmed from Esau. But they suddenly rocketed to greatness by seizing the Nile Delta shortly after the Exodus. Egyptian poetry reflects their suffering

under Amalekite rule (*Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, Pritchard, pp. 441-444).

God intervened on Israel's behalf when the Amalekites attacked them in the Sinai Peninsula. These attackers were not roving bands of nomads, but segments of a larger group mobilized to reap the spoils of Egypt in its defeated state. Only God's intervention gave Joshua and his untrained militia the power to defeat and repel them.

Historians labeled Egypt's new conquerors as "Shepherd Kings." These Amalekites, together with their kindred peoples, gradually conquered Egypt, dominating them for centuries after the Exodus. The first and most infamous of these Shepherd Kings was Salitis. In *Against Apion*, Josephus quotes the Egyptian historian Manetho in describing Egypt's subdued state under these ruthless Amalekites (Bk. I, ch. 14, parts 73-92).

The Herod Family— Notorious Villains

Herod the Great's father, Antipater, was appointed procurator of Judea, Samaria and Galilee by Julius Caesar (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11th ed., vol. 14, p. 290). In the tradition of the House of Esau, Antipater undermined the Jews and their allies at every opportunity. This Herod family ruling in the Holy Land during the time of Christ was of Idumean (Edom or Edomite) descent (Ibid.). Mentioned often in the New Testament, they maintained control for the better part of the first century A.D.

The actions of Herod the Great were indeed merciless. He murdered 45 members of the Jewish Sanhedrin, and even his own sons (Ibid., vol. 13, p. 380). He did not hesitate to order the deaths of all infants in Judea in order to kill Christ—as an infant (Matt. 2:12-18). Herod almost succeeded in fulfilling Satan's agenda: "...and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born" (Rev. 12:4).

The next Herod, Herod Antipas, Tetrarch of Galilee, ordered John the

Baptist to be beheaded, at the behest of his mistress (Matt. 14:1-12). Next in this family line was Herod Agrippa I, king of Judea. Through intrigue, he attained the same position held by his grandfather (Herod the Great). Herod Agrippa killed the apostle James and imprisoned Peter, intending to kill him as well. After exalting himself as a god, he was eaten by worms (Acts 12:20-23). Finally, Herod Agrippa II was the one to whom Paul appealed to see Caesar when this Herod had visited Festus, Roman governor of Judea (*World Book Encyclopedia*, vol. 9, p. 199).

As you can see, the Herod line were neither friends of the Jews nor servants of God. Murder was so natural to these descendants of Esau that, in many cases, as with Herod Agrippa I, they eagerly carried out executions.

Catalysts for Expansion

Much of Esau's expansion coincided with the expansion of Islam. The most vigorous Islamic missionaries to spread their religion through violence were those of the lineage of Esau—chief of whom were the Turks. They appeared to possess an inherent desire to conquer and expand their sphere of control. Prior to Islam, no other force united the many Arab factions. Certain smaller kingdoms had existed within Arabia, but with minimal impact on the region. (The origin, growth and impact of Islam are covered in detail in "MODERN IRAQ: A House Divided," in this issue.)

Not until the rise of Islam did the Turks begin expanding through conquest of any and all nations in their path. Previously, the thirst for expansion by these tribes—the majority of Esau—was mainly in Turkestan. That vast area, between the Caspian Sea and the borders of China, is now occupied by a number of nations, including much of Iran and Afghanistan. Yet a few of the tribes of Esau remained in northern Arabia.

At the height of Turkish control, the Ottoman Empire extended from Baghdad in the east to Morocco in the west, and from the Russian steppes in

the north to the Persian Gulf in the South. They later acquired Spain, thus controlling the Gibraltar Strait. Islam spread well beyond these boundaries.

Even in the Holy Land, Islam's incremental spread was accompanied by population shifts: "The spread of Islam introduced a very considerable Neo-Arabian infusion. Those from southern Arabia were known as the Yaman tribe, those from northern Arabia, the Kais (Qais). These two divisions absorbed the previous peasant population, and still nominally exist [as of 1910]; down to the middle of the 19th century they were a fruitful source of quarrels and of bloodshed" (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11th ed., vol. 20, p. 604).

As in other regions, the infusion of Arabs in the Holy Land coincided with the expansion of Islam. Their presence in the Holy Land began about the seventh century A.D. These waves of migration followed in the wake of Turkish expansion.

Arabic infusion into neighboring countries became extensive. Arabs constitute a significant portion of the population of Jordan (ancient Ammon and Moab—the sons of Lot), Syria and Lebanon. Concerning Egypt, the original Egyptians were prophesied to become the basest among people (Ezek. 29:15). They became dispersed, mostly outside their original country. Those who came to settle in Egypt have been the Arabs—descendants of both Ishmael and Esau.

Remember, twelve major tribes came from Ishmael, settling mostly in the southern Arabian Peninsula and closely neighboring regions. Some of the tribes that emerged from Esau interspersed with other peoples, while other tribes were more cohesive. A latent tendency common to most tribes was to expand in territory and power—only needing a catalyst such as Islam to spring into action.

The House of Esau in Prophecy

The descendants of Esau were traditionally motivated by their perpetual jealousy and contempt of the Jews and anything pertaining to Israel, as if

each generation bore the same resentment as did their patriarch. The Bible documents that these bitter enemies of Israel never passed over a chance to join ranks when Israel was being attacked by formidable opposition. They rarely failed to seize any opportunity to loot, kill and destroy when Israel was weakened or in dire straits for any reason. Therefore, God made some strong prophetic statements about these people.

Most of the Arab populations of the modern nation of Israel (erroneously called Palestinians) are of the bloodline of Esau to a significant degree. This applies to the Arabian population of Iraq, as well as Syria. Even the Persian population of Iran has some of Esau's bloodline among the descendants of their ancient royal-

text of Amos 1:11. By reading the material covered so far, we should be able to identify modern Edom and Esau as not only the Turkish people, but many of the Arabs of central and northern Arabia and surrounding areas also. This would include the vast majority of Iraq, Syria and those in Israel. It also includes a smaller percentage of those living in Jordan, Iran, Egypt and other neighboring countries. There are most likely many who live in the region of Afghanistan, Pakistan and countries to their east. The countries of Ishmael in the southern part of Arabia, such as Saudi Arabia, are also drifting more toward opposition to Israel.

The ancient animosity, stemming from the loss of the birthright, has been passed from generation to gener-

of Iraq is a partial fulfillment of this prophecy. But this conflict is not the final chapter. Much is yet to occur, and there is much more that prophecy reveals.

The following scripture explains God's anger with the descendants of Esau. Carefully note this pivotal scripture: "Shall I not in that day, says the LORD, even destroy the wise men out of Edom, and understanding out of the mount of Esau? And your mighty men, O Teman, shall be dismayed, to the end that every one of the mount of Esau may be cut off by slaughter.

"For your violence against your brother Jacob shame shall cover you, and you shall be cut off forever. In the day that you stood on the other side, in the day that the strangers carried away captive his forces, and foreigners

“Historians labeled Egypt’s new conquerors as ‘Shepherd Kings.’ These Amalekites, together with their kindred peoples, gradually conquered Egypt, dominating them for centuries after the Exodus.”

ty. Of the fourteen tribes of Esau, some have divergent traits, while there exist certain common traits—mostly a hatred of the Jews and Israel.

The following scripture addresses this hatred and shows that God condemned Esau's actions: "Thus says the LORD; For three transgressions of Edom [Esau], and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because he did pursue his brother [Jacob or Israel] with the sword, and did cast off all pity, and his anger did tear perpetually, and he kept his wrath forever" (Amos 1:11-12). Then we read in verse 12, "But I will send a fire upon Teman, which shall devour the palaces of Bozrah." The *Encyclopedia Britannica* informs us that this Bozrah was once an ancient capital of Edom (11th ed., vol. 4, p. 356), as Scripture implies.

Knowing the precise location of ancient Bozrah is not as crucial as understanding the meaning and con-

ation, and further fuels their hatred of the Jews and Anglo-Saxons.

Prophecy Summarizes Trends of Past, Present and Future

Ezekiel 25:12-14 states, "Thus says the Lord GOD; Because that Edom has dealt against the house of Judah by taking vengeance, and has greatly offended, and revenged himself upon them; Therefore thus says the Lord GOD; I will also stretch out Mine hand upon Edom, and will cut off man and beast from it; and I will make it desolate from Teman; and they of Dedan shall fall by the sword. And I will lay My vengeance upon Edom by the hand of My people Israel: and they shall do in Edom according to Mine anger and according to My fury; and they shall know My vengeance, says the Lord GOD."

God will use the modern descendants of Israel to exact His vengeance upon Edom. The recent military defeat

entered into his gates, and cast lots upon Jerusalem, even you were as one of them. But you should not have looked on the day of your brother in the day that he became a stranger; neither should you have rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction; neither should you have spoken proudly in the day of distress. You should not have entered into the gate of My people in the day of their calamity; yes, you should not have looked on their affliction in the day of their calamity, nor have laid hands on their substance in the day of their calamity; neither should you have stood in the crossway, to cut off those of his that did escape; neither should you have delivered up those of his that did remain in the day of distress. For the day of the LORD is near upon all the heathen: as you have done, it shall be done unto you: your reward shall return upon your own head" (Obad. 8-15).

The descendants of Esau have typically attacked Israel or Judah after powerful enemies, such as the Babylonian Empire, defeated or greatly weakened them. Rather than take pity upon his brothers and blood relatives, Esau sought every opportunity to capture and kill those trying to escape, and to destroy and ransack their property. This has always been Esau's attitude toward Israel. In the future, when modern Israel is taken into captivity, Esau will be at the forefront of the pillaging and killing of those left behind.

The Palestinians, also descendants of Esau, certainly demonstrate such bitterness when given the opportunity. Their constant attacks against Israeli civilians are evidence of this resentment. Most of the world feels that their outrageous slaughter of innocent civilians is justified in light of what they term "Israeli oppression."

A Wake-up Call

The September 11th attacks brought home to America the threatening reality of Islamic terrorism. This growing anti-West "gospel" is perpetuated by Islamic clerics in all Arabic countries. Most of the terrorists involved in these attacks were youthful Saudi Arabians. Saudi Arabia has traditionally been considered an ally of the West, yet Islamic clerics have fanned the flames of hatred and reawakened the long-standing animosity of Ishmael and Esau against Israel.

But notice what is prophesied to happen to Edom: "The earth is moved at the noise of their fall, at the cry the noise thereof was heard in the Red sea. Behold, He shall come up and fly as the eagle, and spread His wings over Bozrah: and at that day shall the heart of the mighty men of Edom be as the heart of a woman in her pangs" (Jer. 49:21-22).

The term "at that day" refers to the Day of the Lord, when God will pay vengeance to those who refuse to submit to Him. The recent military action in Iraq is only a type of what is to come. The earth was moved at the continual bombing, including the 2,000-pound "bunker busters" that rumbled

through the land like a constant thunder. The "eagles" did fly over Bozrah (Basra), reigning terror on the enemy forces. The ancient mounds near Basra are attributed, from the best evidence, to be the ancient city of Bozrah, the capital of ancient Edom. Apparently, God counts this as a continuation of the same ancient site, because Bozrah is *yet* to be destroyed in the coming Day of the Lord.

Notice verse 13: "For I have sworn by Myself, says the LORD, that Bozrah *shall become* a desolation, a reproach, a waste, and a curse; and all the cities thereof shall be perpetual wastes."

Modern Basra is relatively close to the Persian (Iranian) border. The Persian population there is second largest, after the Shiite Moslems. Both of these population groups are descended from the House of Esau. The kings from the tribe of Teman who jointly ruled over Persia, Edom and the Edomites of western Turkestan, reigned in ancient Bozrah. As a point of interest, the Turkomans of Iraq are also of Edom, while the Assyrian population is of the same stock as the modern Germans. The Kurds to the north are Caucasian, somewhat related to the Armenians, who descended from Aram, the son of Shem.

Notice again the pivotal scripture of Amos 1:11-12: "Thus says the LORD; For three transgressions of Edom [Esau], and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because he did pursue his brother [Jacob or Israel] with the sword, and did cast off all pity, and his anger did tear perpetually, and he kept his wrath forever: But I will send a *fire* upon Teman, which shall *devour* the palaces of Bozrah." The palaces of Bozrah, as well as those of Baghdad, *were* "devoured" by precision bombs and firepower!

As a result of the perpetual hatred of Edom, God continues, "And say unto it, Thus says the Lord GOD; Behold, O mount Seir, I am against you, and I will stretch out Mine hand against you, and I will make you most desolate. I will lay your cities waste,

and you shall be desolate, and you shall know that I am the LORD. Because you have had a perpetual hatred, and have shed the blood of the children of Israel by the force of the sword in the time of their calamity, in the time that their iniquity had an end" (Ezek. 35:3-5).

Verses 13-15 show that the consequences will extend beyond this present age: "Thus with your mouth you have boasted against Me, and have multiplied your words against Me: I have heard them. Thus says the Lord GOD; When the whole earth rejoices, I will make you desolate. As you did rejoice at the inheritance of the house of Israel, because it was desolate, so will I do unto you: you shall be desolate, O mount Seir, and all Idumea, even all of it: and they shall know that I am the LORD."

When the survivors of this world live on into the glorious time of Jesus Christ's millennial rule, the descendants of Esau will not be there. Yet they *will* have their opportunity for salvation at a later time. God does not hold trivial grudges. His anger is entirely justified.

However, God has not dismissed them completely. He looks forward to redeeming and teaching those of Edom as much as any other family line. Notice the following scriptures: "[God] Who will have *all* men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (I Tim. 2:4). "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that *any* should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (II Pet. 3:9).

God will welcome, encourage and console the descendants of Esau, along with everyone else, at the appropriate time in His plan of salvation. Meanwhile, this current age precedes a great tumult, which the people of the earth must experience as this present era of warfare and suffering ends. Soon, the whole world will embrace a time of world peace and brotherhood, as the kingdom of God is established on the earth and rules all nations! □

MODERN IRAQ

Continued from page 15

the mid-ninth century. The rule of Baghdad was successfully contested by the Qarmatians, a new Muslim sect, and then later by various Bedouin tribes. Completely disunited, numerous petty governments ruled Arabia.

In 945, an Iranian Shia dynasty, the Buwayhids, invaded Baghdad, but allowed the Abbasid dynasty to remain in power. In 1055, a Turkish Sunni clan, the Seljuks, defeated the Buwayhids. Their victory then reestablished Sunni rule in Baghdad.

In 1258, Hulagu, grandson of the great Mongol conqueror Genghis Khan, sacked Baghdad, which, for some time, had no further influence over Arabia. Both Hulagu and the next invader, the Turkish conqueror Tamerlane (raided Baghdad in 1401), killed most of the city's inhabitants upon invasion, and each built a pyramid made of their skulls (*Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia*). In 1269, Muslim Egyptian princes conquered the region of Mecca.

In the wake of the Mongol invasions of the thirteenth century, various Turkish Islamic tribes began to form what would become the Ottoman Empire. This world power would become a dominant force. At its peak, it was the only empire considered to be both a Middle Eastern and European power. The Ottomans conquered Baghdad in 1517. Control of Baghdad was contested between the Persians and the Ottomans, but, for almost the next three centuries, the land of Iraq was part of the expanding Ottoman Empire.

Ottoman Decline—Birth of Iraq

The Ottoman Empire's effectiveness in uniting many factions in Arabia was noteworthy. Osman, the Turkish chieftain, led his warriors on successful raids that helped spread his realm. In time, as his armies grew, they were all called Osmanlis (Ottomans), after his family name. This stirred his soldiers to feel that they were all in *one* dynasty, when they were in fact of different tribes.

By the mid-fourteenth century, the Ottomans had extended their rule from southeastern Europe to the birthplace of Islam, all the while waging "holy war" on non-Muslims, adding converts by the edge of the sword.

While the Sunni Ottomans ruled Baghdad until World War I, the Shiite Safavid dynasty contested its rule, and led the majority of the population to embrace Shia.

The history of modern Iraq begins with the last phase of Ottoman rule, during the twentieth century. In November 1914, the Ottoman Empire, as an ally of Germany and Austria-Hungary, entered World War I.

Previously, Britain and Germany had competed over Arabian oil field interests, and Germany had even planned to construct a railroad from Berlin to Baghdad to satisfy its need for oil. To defend key oil fields and refineries in nearby Iran, the British landed an army division to occupy Al Basrah, thus preventing Germany from taking them.

Meanwhile, an Arab revolt against the Ottomans, led by Faisal al-Husein, was taking place. The British government had promised Faisal and other Arab leaders that they would receive their independence from the Ottomans if their revolt was successful.

Through vicious fighting, under the guidance of British General Edmund Allenby and Colonel T. E. Lawrence (of "Lawrence of Arabia" fame), Faisal (later Faisal I, first king of Iraq) was successful against the Ottoman forces. After their victory in 1918, the British declared their intentions of establishing independent Arab nations in the lands formerly controlled by the Ottoman Empire.

In 1919, Iraq was entrusted to Britain, meaning that the Iraqi Arabs would not gain their independence for some years—until the Allies felt that they could successfully govern themselves. When the Iraqis heard of the mandate, a rebellion quickly rose in the streets of Baghdad, and many battle-hardened Arabs took arms against the British in Iraq.

While these same British soldiers

were involved in the victory over the Ottomans, they were now treated as foreign occupants preventing Iraq's freedom. The British quashed the revolt, but not until 10,000 Iraqi and 450 British soldiers were dead—at a cost of £40 million.

Determining that Iraqi independence should be effective immediately, the British notified its top administrator in Iraq, a British civil commissioner, to draw up a "blueprint" for the new state of Iraq. With pencils in hand, British officials quickly mandated the provinces of Basra, Baghdad and Mosul as Iraqi territories. These provinces were among the most ethnically and religiously diverse in the Arab regions under Ottoman control.

This quickly-assembled British model for an Iraqi nation, which included many *different* tribes, would prove too difficult for *one* government to control. What the British actually created was a hurried patchwork of differing tribes, who had no common bonds or interests, beyond their ancestry. A random *collection of tribes* were to suddenly be amalgamated into *one* state.

Under British supervision, the first Iraqi election was held. Faisal, who had helped lead the Arab revolt, won 96% of the vote. As British representatives played their coronation anthem, "God Save the King," he was crowned Iraq's first king.

Further Division

With Sunni Kurds to the north, Sunni Arabs to the east, and mixed Shiite Arab population throughout, Faisal struggled to satisfy his diverse kingdom. In June 1922, he signed a 20-year treaty of protection with the British, who required that Iraq's king follow their guidance on issues regarding British interests. Faisal recognized that Iraq's oil was of great importance to the British, and granted them first rights to it. Britain would in turn provide Iraq with military assistance and aid.

Meanwhile, many Iraqis embraced the rising pan-Arab movement, seeking to join all Arabs into one powerful Islamic state. This movement was seen as a means of unifying the Iraqi people

through their common Arab ancestry. On the other side of this mentality, a group called the *efendiyya* developed and taught anti-British ideology.

As the Iraqi monarchy continued, the people were soon turned against the dynasty's pro-British agenda. They viewed British support as interest in Iraqi oil. So, in 1958, Brigadier Abd al-Karim Qasim overthrew the monarch, and killed King Faisal II and others of his dynasty.

In his coup, he declared Iraq a "republic," claiming that his revolu-

tion was against "tyranny and corruption." But he himself ruled Iraq with a tyrannical and corrupt regime. In 1963, a factious militant group, led by Colonel Abd al-Salam Arif, toppled Qasim's regime.

Five years later, yet another coup occurred in Iraq—and the Baath party came into power in 1968, placing Ahmad Hasan al-Bakr as Iraq's president and prime minister. The Baath Party consisted of Sunni Muslims, and was to remain in power for over 30 years in Iraq.

A Dictator's Quick Rise To Power

Born fatherless to a peasant family in Tikrit, a town on the Tigris River, Saddam Hussein's swift rise to power and rule exhibits his powerful cunning and brutality. By the early 1970s, most Iraqis recognized the young Hussein as the real power behind the Iraqi throne.

Iraq's leader at the time?—Hussein's relative, President Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr. A few years earlier, Bakr had arranged to make Hussein the deputy security general of the Baath

Many Peoples—One Nation

Modern Iraq—commonly referred to as the cradle of civilization—has been home to many powerful empires: Assyria, Babylon, Sumer and the Ottoman Empire. As we have seen, it has been a land of turmoil, war and besiegement, with waves of powerful tribes and empires carving their way through the sandy terrain, seeking dominance.

Turkey, Iran, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Afghanistan, Egypt and Israel are just some of the countries within Iraq's vicinity, which places Iraq in the middle of an entire region engulfed in turmoil.

Amidst this chaos, problems within Islam have further propelled conflicts. Like most religions today, Islam is divided into many fractured groups. Since Mohammed's sons had all died in infancy, and he left no male heir to succeed him, two major schools of thought were born regarding who should lead the Islamic community. This schism created two main branches of Islam: *Sunni* Muslims and *Shiite* Muslims.

Shiite Muslims believe that, with the exception of Ali (Mohammed's cousin and son-in-law) and his descendents, all of the caliphs were usurpers, and had claimed a role that was not rightfully theirs. They believe that, in addition to political powers, the Islamic leader also has religious powers over the community. Shiites initially began as a political group known as the *Shia* (partisans) of Ali, or Shia Muslims, but soon became a sect, upholding their own doctrinal positions.

Some years after Mohammed's death, a civil war broke out between the supporters of Ali and those who supported Mu'awiyah, the founder of the Umayyad dynasty. As Ali's armies

were about to deliver the final blow to Mu'awiyah's forces, Mu'awiyah's soldiers placed Korans on the tips of their spears, screaming, "Let God decide!" "Allah," they declared, "will decide which man is to be caliph."

Ali agreed to this arbitration. However, it decided nothing, and only alienated a group of Ali's supporters, the Kharijites, who stated that his agreement to this was a "lack of faith." In 661, Ali was murdered by the Kharijite, which solidified Mu'awiyah's claim as caliph. Since the 1970s, Kharijite doctrine has been the foundation of many Islamic militant groups in the Middle East.

Shiites form the largest of the Muslim sects. Its followers believe that Islamic leadership resides in Mohammed's line—through Ali's descendants. The *Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia* further explains, "These were the first 12 *imams*, or leaders of the Shia Muslim community. The Shia Muslims believe that Muhammad designated all 12 successors by name and that they inherited a special knowledge of the true meaning of the scripture that was passed from father to son, beginning with the prophet himself..."

To this day, the Shiites are awaiting the return of the Twelfth Imam, who, they claim, was concealed by God eleven centuries ago. Shiite doctrines teach that this powerful Islamic leader is to return to earth before the "Day of Judgment," bringing peace and justice to the earth.

Sunni Muslims believe that Islamic leadership should be in the hands of the people, and state that the Rashidun, Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties' claims to the caliphate are legitimate. However, in contrast to

Shiites, they believe that the caliphs were mere mortals, having no divine powers. They view the caliph as one who protects the Islamic way of life, and ensures its continuance in the community.

Today, the secular Sunnis make up less than 20% of Iraq's population, while Shiites comprise more than 60%.

Another major faction in Iraq is comprised of the *Kurdish* people. The Kurds are mainly Sunni Muslims, residing in northern Iraq. Arabs conquered most of the Kurdish lands in the seventh century. They brought Islam to the region and most Kurds converted.

Following World War I, the Allies provided for a Kurdish state in the Treaty of Sèvres in 1919. However, this part of the treaty was never ratified, and the lands were assimilated into Turkey, Iran and Iraq. The Kurdish people have received much attention from Iraqi regimes because they consist of 20-25% of Iraq's population, and reside in the oil-rich lands. They have long opposed Pan-Arabism, and warn that if Iraq joins an Arab union, they will secede, forming their own Kurdish state. Their expectation of having an autonomous state has been unfulfilled for many years. □

party. In the next few years, Hussein used his power to ensure his rise to the top—by whatever means necessary. The “justified” executions of members of opposing parties skyrocketed—thus fortifying the Baath party’s rule in Iraq.

In 1972, Hussein became vice president of Iraq, and a few years later, with no military background, proclaimed himself general of Iraq’s army. By 1979, President Bakr resigned due to “health reasons.” Behind the scenes, reports state that he confided to those closest to him, “You know we are doomed. Saddam is in power.”

Therefore, in July 1979, Saddam Hussein assumed Iraq’s leadership—and became its grand dictator. Over the years, Hussein had carefully planned his moves, ensuring that he would not only become the most powerful man in Iraq—but that he would be the *only* powerful man in Iraq!

In 1980, Hussein attacked Iran and, in years to follow, orchestrated countless attacks against his *own* people. On August 2, 1990, 150,000 Iraqi troops invaded Kuwait. Within a few hours, they had taken control of the nation, defeating Kuwait’s mostly inexperienced army. The UN coalition, led by U.S. forces, then swept into Kuwait, liberated the people and defeated the Iraqi troops. But they failed to remove the Iraqi dictator. Shortly after America’s departure, Hussein slaughtered countless Shiites and Kurds attempting to overthrow his regime.

“We must now pay dearly for our abdication of a decade ago.” These words haunt many on Capitol Hill, even more so to those soldiers today returning to the Gulf to finish the job started over ten years ago.

“Inhumanity” does not begin to describe Hussein’s utter disregard for and brutal treatment of his people, which is well known and documented. Throughout his regime, countless thousands have been slaughtered for reasons ranging from treason to mere *suspicious* of disloyalty.

What is the result of such cruel dictatorship?

Today, Iraq is in absolute turmoil. Even with Saddam’s murderous regime

overthrown, the problems now facing the Iraqi peoples are monumental. These problems have reached such depravity and degeneration that most Iraqis view murders, tribal wars, turbulence, poor sanitation, lack of clean drinking water and insufficient food—even torture by the ruling party—as routine aspects of life!

Tragically, Hussein is merely the most recent in a long line of power-hungry, murderous rulers in the Middle East.

A Peace Unknown

God states, “Their feet *run to evil*, and they make haste to shed *innocent blood*: their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; *wasting and destruction* are in their paths. *The way of peace they know not...*” (Isa. 59:7-8).

This scripture, quoted by the apostle Paul (Rom. 3:17), reflects mankind’s existence on earth. It also fitly describes the tumultuous history of the Middle East—a history that, unless radically altered, will be the *COMPOSITE* history *and future* of humanity!

This leads to the question asked at the outset of this article: Can a peaceful Iraq truly be a catalyst for peace in the region?

Even as American troops fill Iraq’s cities, the concept of bringing stability to this region and these peoples appears to be a hopeless pipedream. Many dismiss President Bush’s promises of making Iraq a “dramatic and inspiring example” of peace as mere hopeful rhetoric, and that the only product of foreign occupation will be animosity and hate, just as it brought hatred toward the British in the 1900s.

However, regardless of this recent turmoil, and the countless chattering of “experts,” Iraqi citizens *WILL* be liberated from oppression and their children *WILL* play safely in the streets of Baghdad. Iraq *WILL* see peace, and will experience great prosperity and abundance, both of which have been as elusive to this region as rainfall in the desert!

But peace will *not* come from the efforts of America’s troops.

How *Will* Peace Come?

The Bible—God’s true source of knowledge—reveals that Christ, as King of kings and Lord of lords, will soon establish His kingdom on earth, finally restoring peace to this region—and deserts will bloom like roses at His Return (Isa. 35:1).

These promises are true! God’s word *ASSURES* there *WILL* be peace and stability in Iraq! But it will only come after one of the bloodiest battles ever fought ravages the Middle East.

After decades of strife and “holy wars,” these lands will witness the emergence of a united Arab world—perhaps under the banner of being Mohammed’s successor, the “Twelfth Imam.” The rift between Islam and professing Christianity will become full blown as the Catholic-led “king of the north” sweeps through the Mid-East. Scripture shows that this power shall enter the region that includes the glorious land (the country of Israel) “and many countries shall be overthrown” (Dan. 11:41). Next, we find that Egypt and her neighboring countries fall to this superpower sweeping down from the north (vs. 42-43).

This campaign by the king of the north is interrupted by a turn of events in which he turns to engage the threat from the kings of the east (vs. 44). The ensuing attack by the king of the north and counterattack by the kings of the east are both covered in Revelation 9.

As Christ descends to earth, the survivors of these forces will attempt to resist Him. They will be destroyed and Christ will usher in a new age of peace.

Then, and only then, will the Mid-East finally see peace.

Only those faithfully studying God’s Word and obeying Him can claim the promise of *protection* from these terrifying events, soon to strike the Middle East and the world! Will you hear the warning from the pages of history, and act upon God’s warning?

Much is at stake if you do not!

(To learn more about the subjects discussed here, read our free booklets *Are these the LAST DAYS?* and *The MID-EAST in Bible Prophecy.*) □

WEST NILE VIRUS

A Modern Plague?

WHILE WALKING his dog, an Atlanta, Georgia man found a hawk, which, when examined by authorities, tested positive for West Nile Virus. This viral disease can cause encephalitis (an infection of the brain and the spinal cord). It was Georgia's second confirmed case of the disease. A citizen had previously found a crow infected with West Nile in Lowndes County.

Once found only in Africa, Asia, and southern Europe, West Nile Virus began appearing in the Western Hemisphere in August 1999. That year, at least 62 people became seriously ill, seven of whom died.

Origin of the Disease

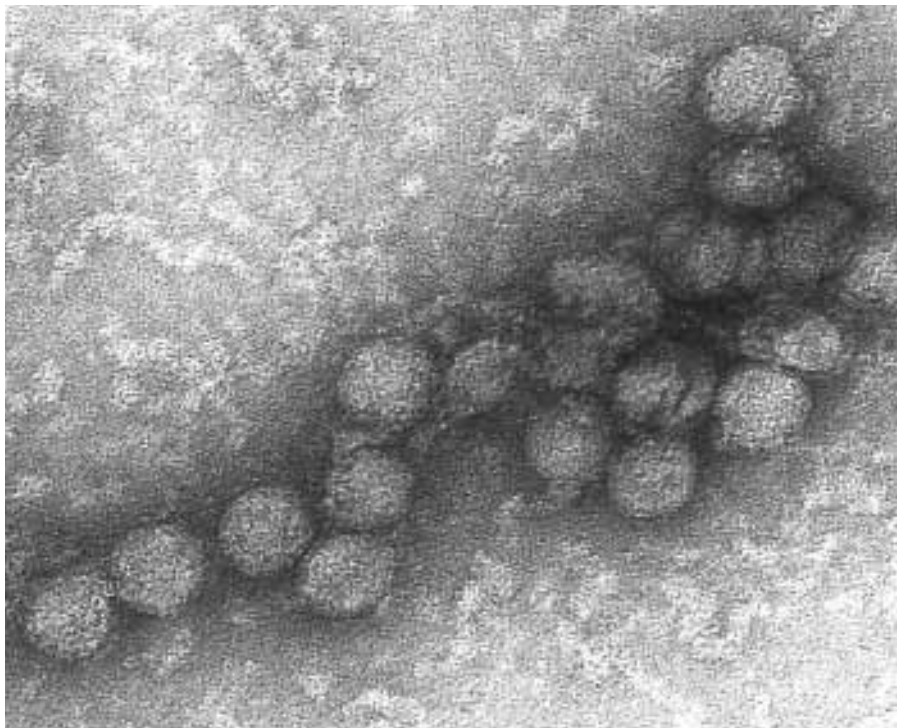
A mosquito-borne disease named for the West Nile River in Uganda, West Nile Virus can be fatal in humans. There is no specific treatment for it or vaccine to prevent it.

Since 1937, when it was first isolated, West Nile Virus has been a known cause of asymptomatic infection and fevers in humans in Africa, West Asia, and the Middle East. Not until 1999 were infections documented in humans and animals in the Western Hemisphere. In 1999 and 2000, 83 human cases of WNV encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) were reported in New York City, New Jersey, and Connecticut, with 9 deaths.

The virus is transmitted to humans by mosquitoes, which become infected and spread the disease by feeding on the blood of infected birds. The disease is even more lethal in certain *types* of birds, crows in particular.

In humans, the incubation period

With warmer weather on the way in the United States, a disease that has already claimed hundreds may soon become an epidemic. The Bible shows there is a reason for this—and that it will only become worse!



AN ELECTRON MICROGRAPH OF THE WEST NILE VIRUS: A flavivirus commonly found in Africa, West Asia, and the Middle East, West Nile Virus is closely related to the St. Louis encephalitis virus found in the United States. It can infect humans, birds, mosquitoes, horses and some other mammals.

PHOTO: Cynthia Goldsmith; U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

(i.e., time from infection to onset of disease symptoms) for West Nile encephalitis is usually 3 days to 2 weeks. West Nile Virus is not transmitted from person to person and

although, in most human cases, no symptoms are detected, a small percentage of those infected develop the following mild symptoms: Swollen lymph glands, skin rash, fever,

headache and body aches. Such symptoms will generally last a few days.

Other symptoms include: Fatigue, dizziness, weakness, confusion, joint problems and encephalitis or swelling of the brain. The U.S. Department of Health says people over the age of 50 are at greatest risk.

Victims of a severe infection (West Nile encephalitis or meningitis) may exhibit headache, high fever, muscle weakness, disorientation, neck stiffness, stupor, tremors, convulsions, paralysis and coma. About “1 in 150 persons infected with the virus will develop a more severe form of disease. Symptoms of severe disease may last several weeks, although neurological effects may be permanent.

“Of the few people that develop encephalitis, a small proportion die but, overall, this is estimated to occur in less than 1 out of 1000 infections” (*cindi.usgs.gov*).

Recent Outbreaks

In 1999, when the virus crossed the Atlantic and appeared in New York City, doctors were stunned. Between 1999 and 2000, it killed nine Americans.

From 1999 to 2000, 82 cases of the disease and nine deaths occurred in the New York City and New Jersey metropolitan areas. In 2001, 10 states reported a total of 66 WNV infections, with 9 deaths. Another more massive outbreak occurred in the summer of 2002, striking nearly 1,300 people, and killing at least 54, according to the *Center for Disease Control*.

The 1996-97 outbreak of West Nile fever in and around Bucharest, Romania, exceeded 500 cases and had a fatality rate approaching 10 percent. This largest outbreak of the illness in Europe since the 1980s reaffirmed that mosquito-borne viral diseases can occur on a massive scale, even in temperate climates. Environmental factors, including human activities that increase mosquito population densities, heavy rains followed by floods, irrigation or higher than usual temperature that enable mass breed-



A PROVEN CARRIER OF THE WEST NILE VIRUS: The *Culex quinquefasciatus* mosquito feeds on a human host.

PHOTO: James Gathany, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

ing of mosquitoes, could increase the incidence of West Nile fever.

The Implications

One may ask: “Since the symptoms of this disease are generally fairly minimal and rare, how do a few mosquitoes and a few dead birds affect me personally?” One tendency of human nature is the inability (or at least the lack of initiative) to see the BIG PICTURE.

To understand the potentially far-reaching implications of this virus, consider: Over 110 species of birds are known to have been infected with West Nile Virus. Birds consume many crop-threatening insects, as well as mosquitoes. If the bird population is sharply impacted by disease-carrying mosquitoes, not only will crops suffer due to increased insect predators, but the mosquitoes will thrive due to the resultant decrease in mosquito-eating birds. It becomes a vicious cycle, one that will only accelerate, resulting in massive crop loss, fewer products on grocers’ shelves and, ultimately, higher prices for such goods.

Ultimately, if left unchecked, the scenario could include not only higher prices, but also rationing of goods. When one thinks about the lines of automobiles at gas stations due to oil shortages in recent history, the picture becomes clear.

Why is This Happening?

God long ago foretold that disease would come on the peoples of the world if they did not obey Him. This is

now happening in a terrible and devastating way and is prophesied to grow far worse. Ezekiel 5:12 states that one-third of the population of the modern nations of Israel will die of *pestilence*—disease epidemics.

The Bible foretells a great time of world trouble lying ahead for all mankind (Matt. 24:21-22). Diseases once primarily found in the “Third World,” or underdeveloped countries, are prophesied to soon enter the West. Many scientists and doctors tell us that these diseases are poised to soon make this jump. When this happens, newspaper headlines and reports will not ignore them or treat them so casually.

The modern-day descendants of the tribes of ancient Israel are the free, democratic and primarily English-speaking peoples of Europe and North America. These people have ignored the true God, and His patience has nearly ended.

Like a father with the children that he loves, God is soon going to punish His people because of 6,000 years of sin and rebellion against His way of life. This is not a punishment that anyone will want to experience.

Consider these scriptures!

In Leviticus 26:15-17, God states, “If you...will not do all My commandments...I also will do this unto you; I will even appoint over you terror, consumption, and the burning ague [fever], that shall consume the eyes...I will set My face against you, and you shall be slain before your enemies: they that hate you shall reign over you;

and you shall flee when none pursues you.” God forewarns that if we do not follow His instructions, terrible trials and plagues will fall upon us—no longer will He protect us from the worst pestilences this world will ever see.

Next notice Deuteronomy 28:58-62. God warns His people that if they do not heed His instruction—if they “...will not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book...Then the LORD will make your plagues wonderful [extraordinary]...even great plagues...and sore sicknesses, and of long continuance...all the diseases of Egypt...and they shall cleave unto you...until you be destroyed...because you would not obey the voice of the LORD your God.”

This warning is serious!

There is Hope!

The media reports staggering numbers of people infected with this and other deadly sicknesses, and it is getting worse. Yet there is hope!

Individuals who yield to God can avoid these terrible life-threatening diseases. The Bible describes promises God makes to anyone who obeys

Him. Consider: “And the LORD will take away from you all sickness, and will put none of the evil diseases...upon you; but will lay them upon all them that hate you” (Deut. 7:15).

We read further that if the nations of this world would only “...diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD your God, and will do that which is right in His sight, and will give ear to His commandments...I will put none of these diseases upon you...for I am the LORD that heals you” (Ex. 15:26).

Mankind spends great time, effort and money to find “miracle” cures for diseases—in an attempt to circumvent punishment for breaking the laws of God. In the end, it is an attempt to treat the effect—not the cause—and only brings a short-term solution.

Modern medical science seeks to discover new ways to block the progress of highly contagious, deadly viruses and bacteria, while failing to realize that the only way to bring an end to all disease is by obeying God!

As diseases mutate and become more deadly, the number of outbreaks and infected people will only skyrocket. Doctors will scramble to find

stronger antibiotics for their patients. But they will not find cures. Only by obeying God’s commandments can one be “immune” to these diseases.

To understand why this plague, as well as other diseases, will grow worse, ultimately resulting in the devastation of one-third of mankind, read our free booklet *And there shall be PESTILENCES*. But if you truly fear God, walk in His laws and are led by His Holy Spirit, then God promises to keep you from the time of trouble coming upon the world.

In Psalm 91:5-10, God promises, “You shall not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flies by day; Nor for the pestilence that walks in darkness; nor for the destruction that wastes at noonday, a thousand shall fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand; but it shall not come near you. Only with your eyes shall you behold and see the reward of the wicked. Because you have made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, your habitation; There shall no evil befall you, neither shall any plague come near your dwelling.”

This is God’s promise. Will you claim it? □

PERSONAL

Continued from page 2

obedience to God’s Law. Next comes “peace,” which flows from being genuinely happy in life—and happy toward those around you.

It is not hard to see how this will yield real peace in your relationships with others. Without the presence of God’s Spirit within one’s mind—which produces the deep, inner peace that Paul wrote must “rule in your hearts” (Col. 3:15)—it is impossible to be happy.

Each of the following fruits of the Spirit will flow as a direct result of having the Spirit of God, and being a real Christian. While millions may think that they are Christians, and may think that they

have the Spirit of God, they have not followed the biblical formula (Acts 2:38).

This means you. If you have God’s Spirit present within you, you can experience both a joy and peace that no one can take from you—even when you are persecuted. Paul wrote, “...all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (II Tim. 3:12). So you will be persecuted for your beliefs, but this need not upset you and cause unhappiness.

God actually tells us to “rejoice, and be exceeding glad” (Matt. 5:11-12) when the very worst and most intense kinds of persecution and false accusation are thrown against us. This is because we will receive a “great(er) reward” at Christ’s Return, as a result!

A Man of Sorrows, But Happy

The same is true of enduring trials, which are a part of every Christian’s life. Christ was not an exception when it came to trials and suffering. We have seen that He experienced joy and left it with His disciples and with His Church, through His Spirit given on Pentecost (Acts 2). Yet Christ was also “a man of sorrows [pain], and acquainted with grief” (Isa. 53:3).

How could it be both? How could Christ be full of joy and experience a life of sorrows and grief?

Overcoming and conquering sin is not easy. Christ conquered sin, so He understood this. He knew that the whole world lives in sin and suffers terribly as a result. This brought Him great sorrow because it was never what He intended for mankind.

Christ also understood that the Christian way involves trials and difficulties throughout life. This is an inescapable fact for those in whom God is working. These are essential to the character-building process, and are GOOD for us. Trials and tests can make us temporarily sorrowful, but bring great joy when we understand their purpose.

Here is how the apostle Peter told us to view trials: “Beloved, think it not *strange* concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But REJOICE, inasmuch as you are partakers of Christ’s *sufferings*; that, when His glory shall be revealed, you may be glad also with EXCEEDING JOY” (I Pet. 4:12-13).

No one likes to suffer. Certainly Christ did not look forward to pain and suffering. But He knew, as He endured these things, that He would soon be sitting at God’s right hand, restored to full glory.

During trials we are to focus on the glorious reward that awaits us, if we “endure unto the end” (Matt. 24:13)—throughout this life!

Of course, most people *do* think that trials are “strange”—that they are bad, painful and undesirable. They certainly are *inconvenient*. Most convince themselves that their trials are worse than everyone else’s, but this is not true. Christians have to train themselves to recognize that trials bring lessons—and lessons learned forge, temper and strengthen one’s character!

This is why the apostle James instructed, “count it all JOY when you fall into various *temptations* [trials]; knowing this, that the trying of your faith works patience” (vs. 1:2-3).

Temptations are tests. And so are trials. God says to count these opportunities for building character as a time for “joy.”

Again, why?

Because of the “exceeding joy” that we shall have when Christ returns. And we will receive a greater reward because of more character that has been built!

Peter also wrote, “Wherein you GREATLY REJOICE, though now for a season, if need be, you are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the *trial* of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perishes, though it [our character] be *tried with fire*, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the APPEARING OF JESUS CHRIST” (I Pet. 1:6-7).

Peter added, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled...unto SALVATION ready to be *revealed in the last time*” (I Pet. 1:3-5).

Is this now clear? Do you see the direct connection to trials *now* and greater reward *later*? No wonder God says we should be joyful during trials, temptations and persecutions.

Now you know what to do the next time you experience trials and difficulties. Do not become unhappy, wondering what is wrong—and moan, groan and complain as though something *bad* has happened. Instead, realize it is something that is very GOOD, IF received and used properly. Why, if you are building something “more precious than gold,” would you complain or feel unhappy about it?

Christianity Means Change

Becoming a Christian means a TOTAL CHANGE to a completely different way of life. It means a whole different way of thinking and believing. You must recognize that people do not automatically understand all God’s ways at the outset of conversion. All wrong ways, values and beliefs must be *unlearned*, and everything that is good, pure and right—all things of God—must be *learned*!

God says, “For MY THOUGHTS are not *your thoughts*, neither are *your ways* MY WAYS, says the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your

ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts” (Isa. 55:8-9).

This scripture is profound and far-reaching in meaning. It involves everything we think, say and do, including how we view the subject of joy, happiness and living the abundant life. It means recognizing that this is what GOD wants. This may mean sweeping from your mind all previous false concepts of what you thought Christianity was supposed to be like.

If you are Christ’s, then your eyes are fixed on the kingdom of God (Matt. 6:33). You understand that this is the biggest objective—the greatest GOAL—in your life! Never forget that *everything* in your life is subordinate to achieving salvation, and building character along the path to *that* end!

Pause and think for a moment. How many things could bring more peace and satisfaction than understanding why you were born and where your life is going? The excitement, joy, thrill and enormous contentment that flow from this confident assurance will dwarf every trial, difficulty, hurdle, obstacle and problem you will ever face in your life. If you truly grasp this statement, you have gone a long way toward comprehending *why* Christ said that His way represents a life more wonderful—more *abundant*—than most could ever imagine!

Serving God does not mean a loss of fun and giving up pleasures but rather understanding what real fun and real pleasures are—and enjoying them.

Putting God First

Let’s take a moment to read Matthew 6:33: “But seek you FIRST the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all *these things* [material blessings] shall be *added* unto you.”

John also wrote, “Beloved, I wish above all things that you may PROSPER and be in *health*, even as your soul [life] PROSPERS” (III John 2).

These verses express God’s will regarding receiving physical things—

enjoying *prosperity*—in your life. In time, if you truly put God and His kingdom *first*, you have His sure promise that He will add physical—material—blessings to your life. It is impossible for God to lie (Heb. 6:18). When He makes a promise, He keeps it—and He has promised YOU that “these things” will flow into your life, if you put Him first!

You can count on this!

Malachi 3:8-10 is an example of how this principle works in the mind of God—how He views faithful obedience. When we obey Him, good things happen—and sometimes *lots* of good things!

But be careful that you do not expect them right away. Also be careful that you do not obey God simply because “there is something (material) in it for you.” Many Bible verses speak of the importance of being patient and waiting for answered prayers and blessings to come according to *God’s* timetable.

ness, richness, pleasures and overflowing with plenty, both physically and spiritually. They have no idea that boundless energy is available to them if they will but TAP it.

Here is what Paul wrote to Timothy in this regard: “For God has not given us the SPIRIT of fear; but of POWER, and of *love*, and of a *sound mind*” (II Tim. 1:7).

This verse is not about how to tap the better “inner you.” It is not about practicing “pull yourself up by your bootstraps” positive thinking derived from human strength. In the long run, these are not worth much. On their own, people fall short, and ultimately fail in the most important aspects of life. They are powerless to overcome weaknesses and faults—and to triumph in the end.

Paul is speaking about drawing upon God’s Spirit within a converted mind, and using it as a source of strength—of real power! He wrote the Ephesians to “be strong in the Lord,

challenges, defeat enemies, conquer fear and reflect cheerfulness. It will bring wisdom, knowledge and understanding, and drive anger, bitterness and anxiety away. It will replace discouragement with energy and hope. It will bring zeal to accomplish and remove confusion and indifference. It will take shattered dreams and shriveled feelings, and expand them to new horizons—and bring an *expectation* of success. It will take stress and turn it into productivity and fulfilling ACCOMPLISHMENT.

In James 1:17, God says that He gives every good and perfect gift. People cannot offer or bring to you the truly good things of life, but GOD CAN—and He says that He will if you come to Him and ask for help when you are in “time of need.” His answers are satisfying, and His strength is real—life-changing.

How sad that the lives of so many are so completely empty—so utterly devoid of joy, happiness and abun-

“Serving God does not mean a loss of fun...”

Also, we must be sure that we are pleasing God as a *regular* practice in our lives.

Let’s read an important verse that ties obedience to confidence and answered prayer. John wrote, “Beloved, if our heart [mind and conscience] condemn us not, then have we CONFIDENCE toward God. And whatsoever we ask, *we receive* of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight” (I John 3:21-22).

Take time to savor this verse. Internalize it and practice it—and then expect that God will give you all the physical things that you need.

Source of Enormous Power

Almost no one understands what Christianity really is. They have no idea that it can bring them supreme happiness, beyond imagination. They have no concept that it represents full-

and in the POWER of *His* might” (Eph. 6:10). This can be you. Enormous inner strength and power will flow into and through you, if you take advantage of the access that God offers you.

Read what Christ told His disciples about how God’s Spirit worked within them: “He that believes on Me, as the scripture has said, out of his belly shall flow RIVERS OF LIVING WATER. (But this spoke He of the SPIRIT, which they that believe on Him should receive...)” (John 7:38-39).

Have you ever stood by a powerful river and watched the current? I have many times. A big river carries enormous power and force—Christ understood this when He chose this analogy. God’s Spirit flows like a river, and it produces mightily in the lives of those who have it. It radiates out of one who has it and brings love, faith, joy and peace from its Source—God.

This Spirit will help you meet

dance. Many try drugs, fall into immoral lifestyles, pursue the wrong kind of entertainment, commit crimes, and otherwise get into trouble, simply because they are *bored*. They have no idea that their lives can be FILLED WITH PURPOSE. This lack of understanding is so unnecessary, so far from what God intended for *every* human being.

Notice what Isaiah wrote: “...*everyone* that thirsts, come you to the waters, and he that has no money; come you, buy, and eat; yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price” (Isaiah 55:1). You too can come to God and “buy” His “waters” (His Holy Spirit) when you have “no money.” Isaiah continues by asking, “Wherefore do you spend money for that which is not bread? And your labor for that which satisfies not?” (vs. 2). Billions do this continually.

This has been a critical principle that I have had to learn.

I lead a very active, busy life. I am generally able to work long hours, day after day, for long periods. But this was not possible (and would never be possible) until I learned to claim God's promise and tap His strength for the physical energy needed on a daily basis. Take a moment to read Isaiah 40:28-31, and then claim God's promise to RENEW the "weary," the "faint" and those with "no might," if they come to Him.

A Wonderful Way of Life

The vitality and abundance—and pure JOYFUL HAPPINESS—that can be yours is closer than you think.

But you must recognize that God offers an entirely new and different way of life. It means living "by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4; Luke 4:4; Deut. 8:3). This means studying God's Word and drinking in its meaning. It means praying daily and seeking God with your whole heart—and resisting Satan the devil.

This also means periodically accepting the Bible's correction, which can sometimes cut very deep (Heb. 4:12). But the converted mind seeks to grow at every opportunity. And receiving correction is also directly connected to happiness. Notice: "Behold, HAPPY is the man whom God corrects: therefore despise not you the chastening of the Almighty" (Job 5:17). Of course, no one naturally enjoys correction, but yielding to it produces a by-product described as the "peaceable fruit of righteousness" (Heb. 12:9-11).

So, if even *correction* can bring happiness, just think of the joy that will come from practicing the many other aspects of the Christian way of life.

Practicing God's Way will lead you to be concerned for those around you. You will move away from self-interest and replace it with an interest in others. You will want to humble yourself and value the lives of others, more than your own opinions—and your own needs. You will feel good

will and cheerfulness in your heart. You will want to smile, lead a life of vigor and reflect calm when standing in the eye of a storm. You will find courage to step out in full and complete faith, knowing that God is with you—that you are not alone! It means understanding that you "can do *all things* through Christ who strengthens [you]" (Phil. 4:13) and that "with God *all things* are possible" (Matt. 19:26).

Those around you cannot help but see these things. You will become an example to them—a light (Matt. 5:14) in a world growing darker every day (John 3:19-21; 9:4). They will see that you have found meaning and purpose in a confused, disagreeing, unhappy world! And knowing that you are doing this will bring its own happiness and satisfaction to you—because it is what God intends for His servants. Confidence will flow from this, but not *self-confidence*.

You will not find yourself constantly carping, griping, moaning and complaining about life's endless "injustices." You will not want to speak evil of others, but will want to lift them up, rather than pull or put them down. You will be able to conquer loneliness. And this conduct will generate a never-before-realized strength, boldness and confidence that will literally DRIVE YOUR LIFE!

This may cause people to ask you for help, encouragement or advice. They may see that your life is "together," while theirs is not! People are drawn to strength—they are drawn to confidence. If you exude these things, radiating a power that is greater than anything they have seen, they may seek your help.

Of course, be sure that they *ask* for your help (and they may even *ask* why you are filled with hope and cheerfulness—I Peter 3:15) and seem to really need it. Be sure that you do not go around pushing your beliefs and values on others. This will turn them off, and drive them away, producing the opposite of what you are trying to achieve.

But if people see that you always

give others the benefit of the doubt, and are always willing to offer a helping hand, they will recognize you as *different* than everyone else. While they may not appreciate your doctrinal beliefs, they will very much appreciate your radiant attitude.

Remembering the Supreme Goal

Finally, you will always remember why God put you on earth—why He gave you life. You will want to seek salvation, with zeal, vigor, enthusiasm and drive—and led by hope and faith—as though final success depends on your conduct *every day*. You will not want to compromise God's Way or His truth—and you will enjoy richness and fullness overflowing as a result of this determined approach. This will give you more strength to address your problems and overcome them.

Paul wrote to the Thessalonians to "rejoice evermore" (I Thes. 5:16). This is one of the only two verses in the Bible that contains two words, making it hard to forget. Yet it is a command from God to all those begotten of His Spirit. It is why a thousand years earlier, David approached each day by saying, "This is the day which the LORD has made; we will REJOICE and be GLAD in it" (Psa. 118:24). In the very next verse, he asked God to "send now *prosperity*."

These are not vague, nebulous scriptures. They are clear, direct and *plain*—and vital instruction for you and me. John added, "truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ...THAT YOUR JOY MAY BE FULL" (I John 1:3-4).

Your joy can be full, beyond your wildest dreams, if you walk and fellowship with God and Christ as a constant way of life that overarches your every word and deed.

Yes, you can live the rich, radiant, full, happy, joyful, ABUNDANT life. All you must do is be willing to leave the old way of life behind—go to the SOURCE—and begin! □

WORLD NEWS DESK



WEATHER

Newfound West Coast Fault Could be the “Big One”

Scientists have recently discovered an active fault underneath Los Angeles that may have been the cause of four previous large-magnitude earthquakes. The fault, named the Puente Hills Blind Thrust System, is 2 to 11 miles deep and extends for almost 31 miles from northern Orange County, through Los Angeles, and up to Beverly Hills. James Dolan, a professor at The University of Southern California's Department of Earth Sciences, had this to say about the

newfound fault: “In terms of location, it couldn't be much worse. Downtown L.A. is sitting on top of this thing.” A blind thrust fault is one that does not reach the earth's surface, and as such has remained, until recently, a point of argument even over its existence among those who study the earth's faults and the ensuing earthquakes.

Scientists believe that the Puente Hills fault once caused an earthquake measuring 7.5 on the Richter scale—

15 times stronger than the 1994 earthquake that hit north of Los Angeles, killing 51 people. Dolan went on to say, “The good news is that major earthquakes along this fault are very infrequent, it may not happen again for thousands of years. The bad news is that it could be very strong when it does happen.”

Source: *The National Geographic*

GEOPOLITICS, STRATEGIES & ECONOMIES

OPEC and a Post-War Iraq

Now that the war in Iraq appears to be in its final stages, many post-war scenarios and their related questions are arising. One of particular interest is that of Iraq's oil industry and how that will affect The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), an international cartel of eleven countries that relies heavily on oil exports as a source of national revenue. Although a founding member of OPEC, Iraq has been on the outside looking in since invading Kuwait in 1990. A concern for many OPEC members is that the U.S. may use its influence in a post-war Iraqi government to effectively destroy the cartel. Since the object of a cartel is to control supply to maintain a certain price range, and since many believe lower oil/fuel prices may boost the U.S. and world economies, the U.S. may wish, at the very least, to diminish the importance of OPEC. The implications for a country such as Saudi Arabia are tremendous—as an exporter of 7.5 mil-

lion barrels per day, a decrease of \$1 per barrel would translate into an annual loss exceeding \$2.7 billion.

U.S. conspiracy theories aside, even members of the Iraqi opposition-in-exile are making statements regarding ending Saudi Arabia's “monopoly” on the world's oil supply. This of course would serve the U.S. well, since its relationship with Saudi Arabia has become increasingly strained due to their connection to 9/11.

There are two additional questions: Will the new Iraqi government honor all of the pre-war oil contracts, mostly with French and Russian companies? And will the new government be as protective as previous Iraqi governments in regard to allowing increased foreign investment in their oil industry?

Despite America's best intentions to make it clear that the war was not about oil, it may end up becoming a major post-war issue. Now that the military operations appear to be over (at

least any major battles), that part of the “regime change” operation may have been the easy one. Maintaining law and order, winning the hearts of the Iraqi people, installing a new government, rebuilding a country in ruin, and all the while dealing with an international stage that simply hates it and its success, as well as a lagging domestic and world economy, may indeed prove to be far more difficult for the U.S. to handle. Who will provide a solution for Mr. Bush? Mr. Rumsfeld? Mr. Powell? The UN? Europe?

Source: *The Middle East Media Research Institute*

Europe Must Replace Unsustainable U.S. Power

In preparation for the release of articles from the Convention on the Future of Europe, which will eventually become law (in the form of their Constitution and otherwise), European politicians are warning each other (and preparing the public) that drastic changes to their foreign and security policy are inevitable. Former Irish Prime Minister John Bruton points out that the U.S., with its heavy borrowing, huge trade deficit and mounting pension bill, cannot sustain its current power. And Europe, Bruton implies, must be proactive in dealing with this situation.

Bruton also pointed out that America's social problems will further intensify their economic ones, saying, "They have an excellent elite but the middle rank is not well educated." He went on to indicate that the aftermath of the Iraqi conflict would be more significant than the war itself. "Occupation will drain them," and if, in the event they get bogged down, he adds, "they can spend as much as they like on defence, [but] it won't work."

Source: *The EU Observer*

HEALTH, SCIENCE & SOCIETY

SARS—The New Epidemic

Not a day passes without shocking new developments concerning the SARS virus. The Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome has greatly affected many countries, most severely being China. Their initial cover-up of this virus has allowed its spread to nearly get out of control. In addition to spreading via droplets from a sneeze, authorities now also believe that it can be spread via fecal matter.

While it appears that Canada, Vietnam, Singapore and Hong Kong have been able to contain the virus, it is still spreading in China. Already, thousands have been infect-

ed, with hundreds of deaths. Experts have suggested that over the long term, SARS may have an effect similar to that of the modern AIDS crisis. Some have even compared it to the 1918 flu epidemic—which killed 50 million.

This may be the newest super-virus, but it certainly will not be the last. The next issue of *The REAL TRUTH* will investigate SARS and the effect this and other viruses will have on humanity.

RELIGION

Pope: World Needs Christian Reconciliation

The Pope continues to offer "Christian unity" (i.e., Catholic domination) as a solution for the world's troubled times. This more recent statement came when he was visited by an ecumenical delegation of Catholics, Greek Orthodox and Anglicans from the San Francisco area. He said, "At a time of conflict and grave unrest in our world, I pray that your witness to the Gospel message of reconciliation, solidarity and love will be a sign of hope and a promise of the unity of a humanity reborn and renewed in the grace of Christ."

Source: *Zenit News Agency*

EUROPE

Continued from page 7

hatred for, and an eagerness to bring down, the U.S., UK and Israel. The continuing economic decline in Europe, and specifically Germany, slowly increases the pressure on its people, and creates a certain sense of desperation, thereby creating a willingness to allow desperate measures.

Revelation 17 portrays a whore riding a seven-headed beast, the seventh head having ten horns. Very plainly, she, as the rider, will control and maneuver the beast to do her bidding—in fact, she will even require her subjects to worship the beast!

The ten horns are ten kings of central Europe who will receive power and give their allegiance to a great leader. This leader, represented by the beast and allied with the Roman church, along with those 10 kings who unite under him, will be the seventh and final

restoration of the Holy Roman Empire, to appear with great speed and force. The world will be shocked by the ferociousness of what is now a rather docile EU!

This final Holy Roman Empire has already allied with Russia. Right now, the EU and Russia are drawing closer and closer, and cooperating more and more in regard to defense and security, trade and travel. This will provide Europe with strategic access to Russian oil supplies, as well as their military technology and production capabilities.

God has historically used Assyria to punish His nation of Israel. The modern-day descendants of Assyria are none other than the Germans! And so they, as the largest and strongest nation of this final Holy Roman Empire, will be used one last time to mete out punishment, in what the Bible calls the Great Tribulation, on the modern-day descendants of Israel—primarily the United States, United Kingdom and the remnants of its empire.

Finally, Europe will break off its alliance with Russia and attack her. Russia, then allied with the "great hordes" of men from the east (China, possibly along with Japan, India, etc.), will counter-attack and cause great destruction (Rev. 9:13-21).

In the end, at Christ's Return, His power and strength—His government—will destroy and permanently replace (Dan. 2:34, 44-45) the two feet and ten toes of the final Holy Roman Empire.

But first, in fact at this very moment, a great dark cloud is forming over the world. A tremendous power is rising right now in Europe to dominate all nations, requiring observance of its way and worship of its image.

However, there *is* a way to escape.

A warning is now being given. Listen carefully. Read carefully. Act now. For there will come a time when this warning will no longer be able to be given—and then it will be too late... □

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The WORLD TO COME "Why The WORLD TO COME Program?" PRESENTED BY DAVID G. PACK

ARTICLES FOR MAY-JUNE 2003

THE SEVENTH AND FINAL EMPIRE —The Rise of Europe, Part II
 The European Union has become a significant economic and diplomatic force. World events and an eventual alliance with the Vatican will soon propel it to become the seventh and final restoration of the Holy Roman Empire—a power that will truly "shock and awe" all nations, effectively fulfilling an important role in God's Plan for humanity. This awesome event will unfold before your very eyes.

The IMMORALITY EXPLOSION Part III
 Modern media and the Internet have changed society. But is it for the better? What have they added to society—and what have they degraded? Much more is done "behind closed doors"—with these "subcultures" pushing the envelope of decency and morality. What is their cause? What are their effects? And what will be the final solution to these seemingly unsolvable problems?

MODERN IRAQ—A House Divided
 What is the origin of the Iraqi people? How did Iraq become the nation it is today? Can the "cohesion of the willing" bring peace and stability to this tumultuous land and people?

ANCIENT ROOTS of the IRAQI WAR
 On September 11, 2001, America, the sleeping giant, was awakened to address her terrorist adversaries. The resulting war on terrorism is but the latest bout in a controversy dating back to the time of the biblical patriarchs.

WEST NILE VIRUS—A Modern Plague?
 With warmer weather on the way in the United States, a disease that has already claimed hundreds may soon become an epidemic. The Bible shows there is a reason for this—and that it will only become worse!

You Can Live the ABUNDANT LIFE!
 PERSONAL FROM DAVID G. PACK
 Your life can be full of enjoyment, happiness and abundant living! God intends that you experience these things. Yet people do not know what brings—what causes—the abundant life. Here are the vital keys that you can know!

WORLD NEWS DESK

- Newfound West-Coast Fault Could be the "Big One"**
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- CPEC and a Post-War Iraq**
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