

TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

WATCH

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BUT THE END IS NOT YET

BUT THE END IS NOT YET

by Michael Armstrong

“And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows.”

—Matthew 24:6-8

The tragic earthquakes that rocked Turkey and Syria have led many to speculate about Christ's return. “Earthquakes in diverse places” are one of the signs Jesus mentioned as preceding the end, as recorded in Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21. Actually, a number of earthquakes are mentioned in the Bible, both historically and prophetically.

1 Kings 19 records part of the story of Elijah. Before he was commissioned to anoint Jehu King over Israel and Hazael King over Syria, the LORD appeared to him. As He arrived there was a mighty wind, an earthquake, a fire and a still small voice.

The prophet Amos used an earthquake as a reference point. He lists who the Kings of Israel and Judah were at the time and further clarifies by saying it was “two years before the earthquake” (Amos 1:1). Archaeological excavations and studies in the Dead Sea have confirmed a major earthquake in the 750's BC. It was estimated to have been 8.2 in magnitude. The recent quakes came in at 7.9 and 7.2. Zechariah, though writing many years later, also mentions the earthquake in

Amos as a type of what will be happening before the Day of the Lord (Zechariah 14:5).

Many other prophecies concerning the return of Christ mention earthquakes. Isaiah 29:1-7 reads, “Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city where David dwelt! add ye year to year; let them kill sacrifices. Yet I will distress Ariel, and there shall be heaviness and sorrow: and it shall be unto me as Ariel. And I will camp against thee round about, and will lay siege against thee with a mount, and I will raise forts against thee. And thou shalt be brought down, and shalt speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust, and thy voice shall be, as of one that hath a familiar spirit, out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust.

“Moreover the multitude of thy strangers shall be like small dust, and the multitude of the terrible ones shall be as chaff that passeth away: yea, it shall be at an instant suddenly. Thou shalt be visited of the Lord of hosts with thunder, and with earthquake, and great noise, with storm and tempest, and the flame of devouring fire. And the multitude of all the

nations that fight against Ariel, even all that fight against her and her munition, and that distress her, shall be as a dream of a night vision.”

Ariel is Jerusalem. The word itself means “lion of God,” implying strength (*Strong's Concordance*, #739 & #740). The similarities to Elijah's encounter are obvious. Compare also the storms, fire and quaking in Exodus 19 when the LORD descended to give Moses the law and the ten commandments.

Jesus alluding to the destruction of Jerusalem was what prompted His disciples to ask, “when shall these things be?” (Matthew 24:3) and led to the amazing prophecies already referenced in Matthew, Mark and Luke. One specifically mentions, “And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh” (Luke 21:20).

Earthquakes are definitely a sign, but they are not the only sign. Read those crucial chapters in your own Bible. Along with war, famine, pestilence and religious persecution they are called “the beginning of sorrows.” The

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CORRECT ME

by Garner Ted Armstrong

Do you like to be told you're wrong about something? Chances are, you don't. Most human beings do not like to be told they're wrong. Possibly you've heard it said that one of the most difficult things for a human being to do is to admit that he's been wrong. A truer statement was never made!

To the complacent "man on the street" with the self-satisfied "this is the way I look at it" idea, it never occurs that perhaps there is something terribly wrong with him. Has this thought ever occurred to you? Most of us can readily see the mistakes of others, and that fact is hardly necessary to repeat — because we all know it. We're anxious to criticize. We frequently voice our "opinions" about prices, about taxes, and wages. We become annoyed with our Government, with our neighbor, with our friends and relatives. But — have we ever become annoyed with ourselves?

The barbershop philosophers of the world are aware that something is wrong somewhere. Most of them know there need to be some changes made. But to the "average" person engulfed in the struggle of making ends meet, and of earning a wage, there has never occurred the thought that maybe he is terribly wrong about

something. Stop and think! Have you ever heard someone say to a friend: "I'm terribly upset — I believe I've been wrong about my beliefs, and I think I've made a mistake in most of my opinions." Have you? I doubt it!

GOD'S WORD CORRECTS

Most of us are "uplifted" by the minister that will stand in front of the group and tell us how wrong the rest of the world is. But are we willing to shake the minister's hand that will stand in the pulpit and shout at us that we're wrong?

Many people express it this way: "Church should be an enjoyable period of relaxation and rest from our daily existence — a change. We want the minister to help us with our problems, to give us that feeling of 'goodness' that helps us carry on through the week to come." But is that the Bible definition of a Church service? Let's investigate open mindedly, and find out!

In II Timothy 3:16 we see that ALL scripture is given by inspiration of God. We must all agree on that statement. But what of the rest of the verse? Read it! "... And is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." Yes,

all scripture is profitable for correction and reproof!

How many of us tuck our Bibles under our arms as a weapon against humanity except ourselves? How many of us really know how to study our Bibles? Do you know there is a definite, clearly stated plan of Bible-study revealed in God's word? The Bible itself tells us HOW to study it.

BE WILLING TO CHANGE

We all would like to be called "sons" by our Almighty Heavenly Father, wouldn't we? God has revealed the way whereby we may be His sons through the prophet Isaiah in Chapter 55, vs. 6, 7 and 8, where the Almighty clearly tells us that we must forsake our own ways and our own thoughts! Then, after forsaking our own ways, or, in other words, after repenting, or changing from the old way, God will forgive us of our past sins, and through His own freely given gift will empower us with his Holy Spirit, and begin dealing with us as His own Sons! (I John 3:1). After this giving up of our own selves and our own human thoughts, ideas and customs, God will begin treating us as His very own children.

Sounds easy, doesn't it? All we have to do is forsake our

own way. But what then? Goal achieved?

Listen!

After this begettal as a very child of God, we are told then "... My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him" (Hebrews 12:5). But what is this? After we are made the very sons of God, He is going to chastise us! This wonderful twelfth chapter of Hebrews continues to tell us: "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son he receiveth." Do you want this scourging? Apparently not many today do, or admitting we are wrong would be one of the EASIEST things to do. To continue reading in Hebrews, "... If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?" How plain! Read for yourself these meaningful words in your own Bible, and see how God deals with His own children.

"Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." Yes, exercised thereby! (I remember it was not too many years ago that the kind of chastening I received from my fleshly father was literal exercise!) And so should our chastisement from our Heavenly Father become constant exercise.

BE TRULY WISE

Consider the definition of a wise man given by Solomon in Prov. 15:31. "The ear that heareth

the reproof of life abideth among the wise." So a person with wisdom is one who accepts and does not reject REPROOF. The great wisdom of Solomon directed him by God's divine inspiration to write: "A wise son heareth his father's instruction: but a scorner heareth not rebuke" (Prov. 13:1). However, judgments are reserved for scorners (Prov. 19:29), and the Bible definition of scorner is "one who will not hear reproof." So are we scorners, or the very

A person with wisdom is one who accepts and does not reject REPROOF!

children of God?

God's command to His ministers is to cry aloud, spare not, lift up your voice and show my people their sins! (Isa. 58:1). The Apostle Paul, exhorting Timothy in the faith said: "Preach the word ... reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine" (II Tim. 4:2). And again, the Apostle Paul told Titus to rebuke sharply, and to rebuke with authority! (Titus 1:13; 2:15). And if God's ministers are speaking with God's authority, using His true word, which Paul described as being "sharper than a two-edged sword" (Hebrews 4:12), the word of God will be used profitably!

David was a man after God's own heart. God doesn't judge by the outward appearance, as does man, but God looks on the heart (I Sam. 16:7). David sinned, as do all men, but his heart was

right, and he always repented bitterly. Surely if all scripture is written by direct inspiration of God and is profitable for instruction, then we can find instruction from the manner in which David prayed. David had the thing people seem to lack today. He actually ASKED for righteous reproof! (Psalms 141:5). David considered it a kindness if he received correction. How utterly unlike today's "man on the street" David must have been!

The prophet Jeremiah actually asked God for correction when he said: "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps. O Lord, correct me, but with judgment; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing" (Jeremiah 10:23-24).

Salvation is a personal thing! It is between you and the Almighty Creator — Ruler of this entire Universe! (Rom. 14:12). Have you been using your Bible profitably? Have you been on your knees before God asking to be shown you're WRONG? Have you opened your Bible, eagerly searching for a mirror to evaluate your mistakes? Could it be that you have been wrong about something?

Why take chances? Let's all open our Bibles and say to God earnestly: "Correct ME!" □

National Humiliation

by *Mark Armstrong*

Talk about a trial balloon! Turns out that high altitude balloons were discussed years ago as potential delivery vehicles for any number of missions, to include an EMP attack. Bleak scenarios for America went with the descriptions of how things would be. Your imagination would rather not go there.

But here it came. Surely military air defenses knew about it days before we were told. The first public mention came when it was entering the lower 48 from Canada. Reports claim the pretender said to shoot it down, but the military was afraid someone might get hurt. Better to let the thing linger over numerous sensitive sites, military, nuclear, port facilities. We still don't know exactly what the balloon was meant to achieve. Some are saying it was merely a test of American reactions.

These balloons can serve as a platform for any number of devastating purposes, but we've got it on good authority that it was merely a weather balloon gone rogue. That's why it had to be blown to bits in 45 feet of water after having traversed middle America. That makes sure nobody will ever be able to prove anything. We'll never know the true intent, but doubt it was accidental. The debris field stretched for miles.

Now the Pentagon is saying that several Chinese balloons tra-

versed the United States during the Trump administration, but none of the principals seems to know anything about it. That means they weren't notified. Or it didn't happen. We've grown used to this routine.

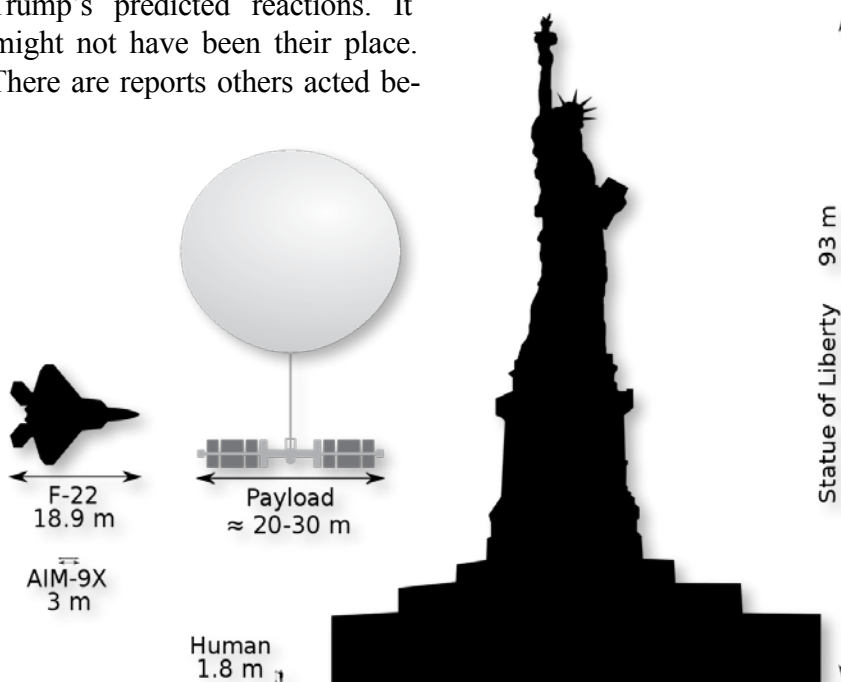
They're saying that Chinese balloons flew over Texas and Florida and nobody noticed? Somebody would have noticed. But General Mattis denies any such thing, and he was supposed to be the source.

President Trump apparently had several people with big jobs who were working against him. Some of them think it's safe to come out and brag about it now, but some laws and regulations might have been breached while they were "protecting us" from Trump's predicted reactions. It might not have been their place. There are reports others acted be-

hind his back.

We're still laughing at the buffoons in Davos deciding what the future will look like for the rest of us. Somebody needs to tell these people that they don't rule the world, contrary to their posture. They're not going to be making any decisions for us, and that includes gas stoves and electric cars. Gas stoves aren't destroying the "planet," and good luck getting everyone into electric cars. We understand that they're a status symbol, but they're still wildly impractical.

Prime Minister Netanyahu has an even worse problem. Remember how the left went out of their minds when Trump became president? He'd be a dictator! He'd start WWII. Some screamed



at the sky, others couldn't get out of bed for weeks. Netanyahu is facing that same kind of mindless outrage. There's anger because he apparently has some understanding with Putin, and won't send lethal armaments to Ukraine. What an outrage! At least in some circles. They've tried to prosecute him out of power, intimidate or run him off somehow. Meanwhile, he's taking all the grief they can muster. No wonder he and Trump get along.

Maybe you've noticed, the ship may be going down. Ron Klain, who many thought was the guy running the country from behind the scenes, is leaving soon. Now the top Economic Advisor, Brian Deese, is taking a new job too. The pretender's administration is falling on hard times. Dealing with scandals broadcast around the world on a daily basis isn't much fun.

Apparently the Grammy Awards, sponsored in part by Pfizer, featured some depiction of hell, or Satanic worship. What on earth! We remember a time when the Grammy Awards recognized real talent and great successes. Now it's an indoctrination ceremony of some kind. Trannies apparently cavorted around some dude with red horns against a backdrop of somebody's idea of hell. It seems like these crazies are trying to tell us something, kind of like that balloon that traversed the United States.

The state of the Union speech transpired. Peeked in, but couldn't watch. Dozens of people make their living this way, deciphering, decoding. We'd rather hear it from

them than have to suffer through the intolerable. One of the highlights apparently was when the pretender said that we'd have to depend on oil and gas for another ten years or so. It was a moment of levity amid the grim reality of being told not to believe our own experiences. Everything is great, can't you see?

No mention of the scandals? No way the whole family isn't suffering dread. The laptop gave the whole thing away. Hearings are scheduled, subpoena's delivered. Doubtful anything will be done by departments dedicated to deceiving the public. But it's coming out in the open. Unavoidable knowledge everybody pretends not to know.

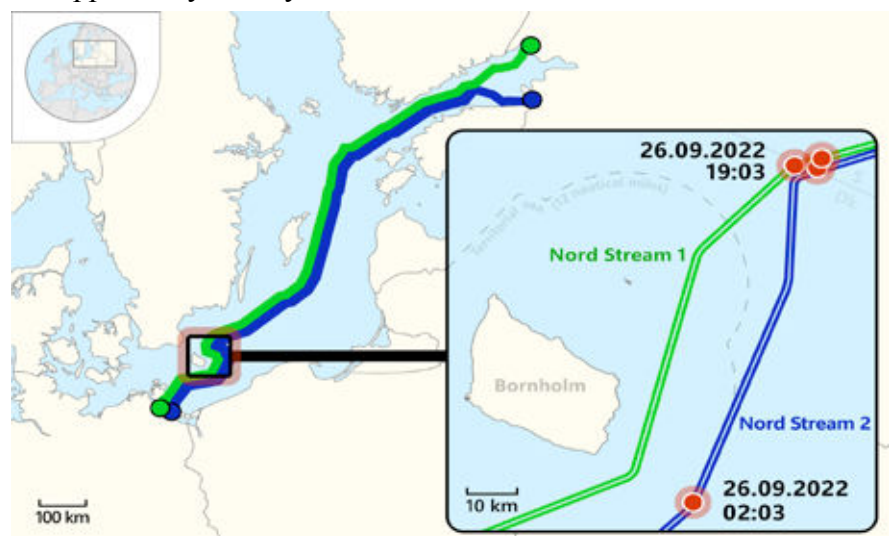
Several controversies are brewing, some with global repercussions. It seems that a journalist of some repute claims that the pretender blew up the Nordstream pipeline. If so, it sounds like an act of war. The list of nations that could have pulled off this deep sea caper isn't very long. Not only that, there were war games in the Baltic which would have provided the opportunity for any number of

allies to have done it.

But there's a problem. The pretender made the mistake of saying, some time before the war started, that if Putin attacked Ukraine that he would "end" the pipeline. When questioned further he said, "I promise you, we'll be able to do it."

Didn't the blown pipeline harm Europe? It definitely put a crimp in expected income to Russia. Award winning journalist Seymour Hersh has published a report, with only one source, who claims the pipeline explosion was an American plot. He's not believed by the mainstream press, and has a history of pursuing stories that they'd rather not hear.

The nation has been exposed to humiliation the likes of which we never thought we'd see. Suddenly the world is adrift and the U.S. is to blame. We can only imagine what they're saying behind closed doors in capitals around the world. Sure enough, some of the embarrassment is warranted. But these decisions are made in lofty environments. We wouldn't understand. And we don't. □





The Federal Government is Tracking the Unvaccinated

It will catch many by surprise and will be active before most are aware of what is being done to them.

by Dr. Joseph Mercola

As recently discovered and reported by Dr. Robert Malone, the U.S. government has secretly been tracking those who didn't get the COVID jab, or are only partially jabbed, through a previously unknown surveillance program designed by the U.S. National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), a division of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The program was implemented April 1, 2022, but didn't become universally adopted by most medical clinics and hospitals across the U.S. until January 2023.

Under this program, doctors at clinics and hospitals have been instructed to ask patients about their vaccination status, which is then added to their electronic medical records as a diagnostic code, known as ICD-10 code, without their knowledge or consent so that they can be tracked — not just within the health care system but outside of it as well.

SECRET TRACKING PROGRAM REVEALED

The new International Classification of Diseases (ICD) codes were introduced during the September 14-15, 2021, ICD-10 Coordination and Maintenance Committee meeting. The ICD committee includes representatives from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and the NCHS.

According to the NCHS, "there is interest in being able to track people who are not immunized or only partially immunized," and they figured out a way to do just that, by adding new ICD-10 codes.

ICD-10 code Z28.310 identifies those who have not received a COVID jab and Z28.311 identifies those who are not up-to-date on their shots.

TRACKING UNJABBED IS PART OF THE BIOSECURITY AGENDA

Why do they want to track the unvaccinated? For what purpose? The short answer: to facilitate the implementation of vaccine passports. As noted by Malone:

"Code Number Z28.310 listed above is not a code for an illness or diagnosis, but rather for non-compliance of a medical procedure... Once a person's vaccination status is coded and uploaded into large data base, it can be accessed by government and private health insurers alike.

"The administrative state officers at the CDC have not made immunization status a reportable disease (yet) but immunization status is listed as one of the reasons for mandatory reporting. They are just one step away from being able to collect this information without your permission. Ergo: vaccine passports made easy. In this country, not having your vaccine records 'up-to-date' might mean:

- The government will not restrict your travel, airlines will.
- The government will not restrict your travel, other nations will.
- The government will not restrict your travel, auto rental companies will.
- The government will not restrict your travel, public transport will.
- The government will not restrict your travel, private companies will.”

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION SIGNED OFF ON TRACKING CODES

The ICD codes were created by the World Health Organization, and doctors — with the exception of those in private practice who don’t accept insurance — are required to use these codes to describe a patient’s condition and the care they received during their visit.

As noted by Malone, the fact that the ICD system is run by the WHO is an important detail, as this means the WHO had to authorize the CDC to add these new codes. The implication is that these codes may be in use internationally and we just don’t know it yet.

The codes are entered into your electronic health record and used by insurance companies for billing purposes. They’re also used by statisticians who track and analyze national and global disease trends such as cancer and heart disease rates over time.

Over the past decade, these statistical analyses have gotten easier to do, thanks to the transition into electronic record keeping. In the U.S., the ICD coding system has been fully integrated into the electronic health record system since 2012.

Within the ICD-10 codes, there’s a category called ICD-10-CM, and this is the category the CDC is now using to track the unvaccinated with specific codes for “Unvaccinated for COVID-19” and “Partially Vaccinated For COVID-19.”

GROSS VIOLATION OF MEDICAL PRIVACY RIGHTS

Since there’s no billing or payment involved with being unvaccinated, and since being unvaccinated is extremely unlikely to be part of your disease profile, there’s no valid reason to record anyone’s

vaccine refusal. It’s also a violation of medical privacy, as the records can be accessed by a variety of individuals and not just your personal doctors.

As noted by Malone, a person’s decision to get a vaccine or not is a private matter, and your privacy rights are enshrined in the Privacy Act of 1974. However, during the COVID pandemic, medical privacy rights have been repeatedly violated and broken.

Children’s’ vaccination statuses were shared with schools and employers were granted the “right” to know the job status of their employees. Private venues were even permitted to demand proof of vaccination status — all this without a single word of the law having been revoked or amended.

THEY’RE TRACKING REASONS FOR JAB REFUSAL TOO

If you need proof that these codes will be used for reasons unrelated to your health, consider this: They’re also using codes to describe WHY you didn’t get the primary series or stopped getting boosters. Those codes are listed under Z28.3 Underimmunization Status.

The use of “delinquent immunization status” under code Z28.39 also tells us something about where this is all headed. “Delinquent” means being “neglectful of a duty” or being “guilty of an offense.” Is refusing boosters a criminal offense? Perhaps not today, but some day, it probably will be.

ALL MISSED VACCINATIONS WILL BE TRACKED

Another tipoff that these codes are part and parcel of the biosecurity control grid is the fact that code Z28.39 — “Other underimmunization status” — is to be used “when a patient is not current on other, non-COVID vaccines.” As detailed on the American Academy of Family Physicians website:

“The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services have announced three new diagnosis codes, including two for COVID-19 immunization status...”

“According to ICD-10-CM guidelines, clinicians may assign code Z28.310, ‘Unvaccinated for COVID-19,’ when the patient has not received a dose of any COVID-19 vaccine.

“Clinicians may assign code Z28.311, ‘Partially vaccinated for COVID-19,’ when the patient has received at least one dose of a multi-dose COVID-19 vaccine regimen, but has not received the doses necessary to meet the CDC definition of ‘fully vaccinated’ at the time of the encounter... New code Z28.39 is for reporting when a patient is not current on other, non-COVID vaccines.”

In other words, they have already begun tracking ALL of your vaccinations, not just the COVID shot, and they can use the Z28.3 sub-codes to identify why you refused a given vaccine.

VACCINE PASSPORTS ARE A *FAIT ACCOMPLI* — UNLESS WE ACT NOW

As noted by Malone: “The administrative state is busy building a vaccine passport system that will be active before most Americans are aware of what is being done to them. No one is going to knock on your door asking for your vaccine status because they already know...”

“They don’t need approval from Congress or the courts because we have given them the information through our health care providers. The CDC is the governmental organization tasked with tracking vaccine status on individuals.

“They already have the records, as well as updated booster information. They just need to tweak a definition here and there, or get President Biden to keep the COVID-19 public health emergency in place indefinitely and the vaccine passports will be a *fait accompli*.”

YOU CAN NOW BE BILLED FOR IMMUNIZATION SAFETY COUNSELING

As if all of that weren’t tyrannical enough, they’ve also added a billable ICD-10 code for “immunization safety counseling.” That’s right. If you’ve decided you’re not willing to partake in the mRNA experiment, or you just don’t think you need some other vaccine that’s recommended, your doctor can bill your insurance for regurgitating the WHO’s vaccine propaganda.

“They have codes identifying whether you declined the COVID jab and/or any other vaccine, and for each vaccine refusal, there’s a code detail-

ing why you declined it. ‘Belief or group pressure’ is one of those, and you can bet that code will automatically qualify you for immunization safety counseling, whether you want it or not.”

This may become more or less automatic because, again, they have codes identifying whether you declined the COVID jab and/or any other vaccine, and for each vaccine refusal, there’s a code detailing why you declined it. They also intend to indoctrinate your children, and make you pay for it. The immunization safety counseling code, Z71.85, was described in the September 2021 issue of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) *Pediatric Coding Newsletter*. You have to be a member to read the entire article, but here’s the publicly available preview:

“Reporting Encounters for Immunization Safety Counseling.

“As physicians and other qualified health care professionals field increasing numbers of concerns about immunization safety, International Classification of Diseases, 10th Revision, Clinical Modification (ICD-10-CM) offers a new code, Z71.85, for identifying immunization safety counseling as a reason for an encounter provided on or after October 1, 2021.

“Use this code when reporting counseling provided to patients and caregivers who are vaccine hesitant, wish to follow an alternative immunization schedule, or otherwise require time spent in counseling at lengths beyond that typical of routine immunization counseling.

“Code Z71.85 may be reported to indicate the principal or first-listed reason for an encounter or as a secondary reason.

“Documentation of time spent in preventive medicine counseling and separate time spent in immunization administration counseling should be explicit in the encounter note to support that the preventive medicine counseling was significant and separately identifiable.”

UNJABBED TEACHERS FLAGGED

In related news, in early February 2023 it was revealed that New York City teachers who did not get the jab were “flagged” with a “problem code” in

their personnel files, triggering their fingerprints to be sent to the FBI and the New York Criminal Justice Services.

The purpose of this is unclear, but former public school teacher Michael Kane, founder of Teachers for Choice, believes “that unvaccinated NYC educators were being set up to be viewed as ‘right-wing extremists’ or even ‘terrorists.’”

Kane was among those who got fired for refusing the COVID job. The revelation that teachers’ fingerprints were illegally entered into not just one, but two, criminal databases “are certain to open up a new round of lawsuits,” Kane writes.

CALL TO ACTION

Knowing all of this, what can you do about it? How do we stop this madness? Here are a few suggestions:

Demand Congress finish what the Senate started by declaring the public health emergency over and done with. January 17, 2023, HR 382, a bill “To terminate the public health emergency declared with respect to COVID-19” was referred to the House Committee on Energy and Commerce. This bill must be passed.

Contact your Congressional representative and let them know you:

Support the Select Subcommittee on the Weaponization of the Federal Government’s investigation.

Want Congress to reject all attempts by the administrative state, the United Nations, the WHO, Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Biden Administration to require a vaccine passport or a digital ID.

Expect them to work to ensure the freedom of travel for all citizens.

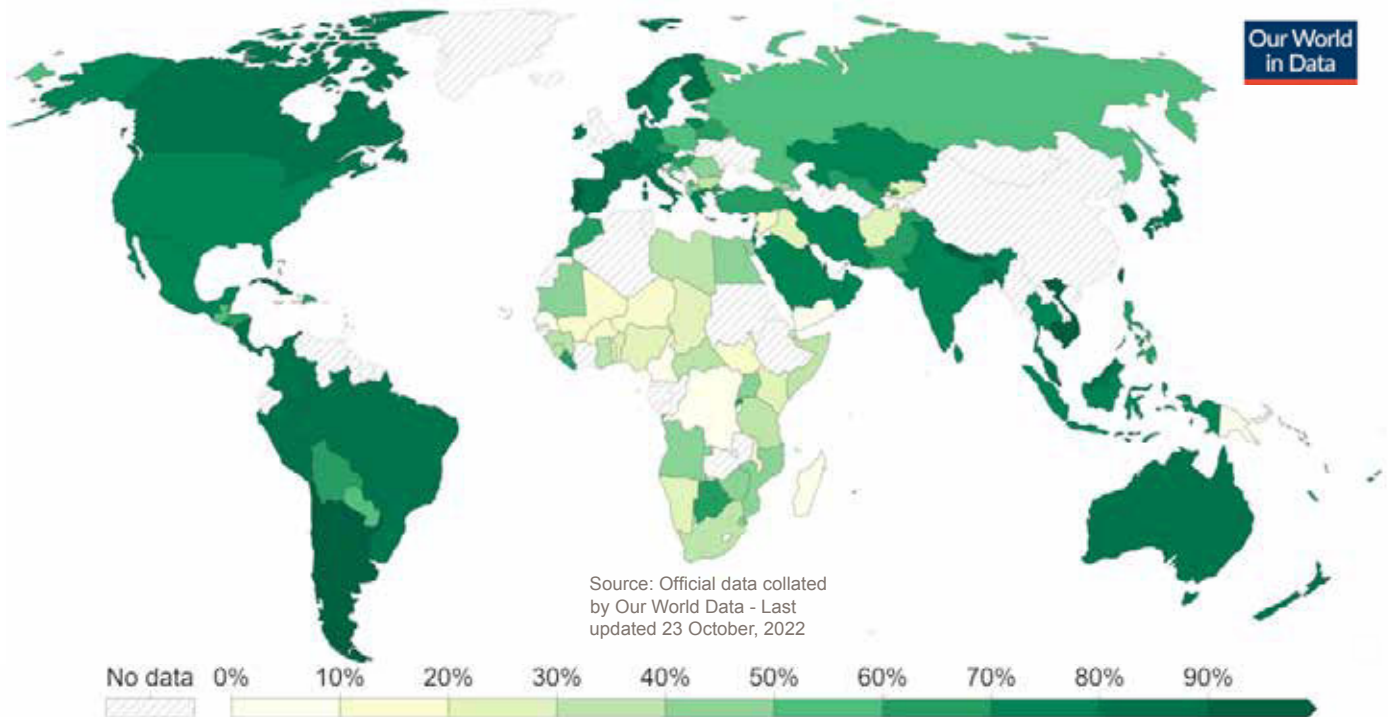
Expect them to protect Constitutional rights.

Expect them to protect all rights to privacy, including and especially medical privacy, and since these new ICD-10 codes are in violation of your right to privacy, you want them to take immediate action to ensure the codes are revoked.

With respect to what you can do to protect your medical privacy on a personal level, keep in mind that independent doctors are not required to use ICD codes unless they accept insurance. So, by choosing a doctor who is in private practice, you can avoid getting tagged and trapped in the system. □

Share of people who received at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine, October 22, 2022

Total number of people who received at least one vaccine dose, divided by the total population of the country.




**WORLD NEWS
BRIEF**

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

NOT COHESIVE

Hungary's spat with the European Union continues. Prime Minister Viktor Orban is supported by those who do not agree with many EU policies. Foremost among those disagreements are immigration, LGBT issues, and a global minimum corporate tax. Orban has used Hungary's veto power within the EU to frustrate a number of initiatives, including some aid packages for Ukraine, at a time when the bloc is desperate to present a unified front. While that tactic has won some concessions, all of Hungary's "cohesion" funds have been blocked. The fund is part of a wealth redistribution scheme designed to lift poorer nations in the bloc to the level of their richer neighbors. Hungary would have received 22 Billion euros over a six year period in the form of reimbursements for investments in infrastructure, education, etc. However, having the lowest corporate tax rate in the EU (9%) may offset some of the loss. There are many other incentives designed to lure international business and manufacturing to Hungary as well. Serious steps towards making the country a hub for automobile manufacturing, particularly electric vehicles and battery components, have already been made. Massive foreign investments have poured in from German, South Korean, and Chinese automakers.

DEADLY COUGH SYRUP

A pharmaceutical tragedy has played out over the past months in Indonesia, Gambia, Uzbekistan, and other countries nearby. It is estimated that over 300 children have died after consuming toxic cough syrup. India, which is a major hub for pharmaceutical manufactures, has had many

production facilities closed as authorities searched for a cause. An arrest in Indonesia has shed light on what happened. A supply facility was caught relabeling industrial-grade chemicals and reselling them as pharmaceutical-grade. While similar enough to pass unnoticed, the lower grade glycol products can cause organ damage consistent with what so many families have suffered.

A GERMAN KING?

German law enforcement deployed thousands of officers across it's own territory with additional interventions in Italy and Austria. Around 50 individuals have been arrested or questioned. Germany alleges the group was planning to take over the government, capture the *Bundestag* (parliament), and set up Heinrich XIII as regent. Heinrich is from the House of Reuss, a royal family that ruled parts of Germany as far back as 1000 AD. While the monarchy was abolished in the revolution of 1918, Heinrich XIII would theoretically be 17th in line for the throne. While he has not been part of the family's formal association for many years, Heinrich's involvement in the plot has led the family to distance themselves further. Other high-profile arrests include a former lawmaker as well as members of the military and law enforcement. Justification for the raids has centered around social media posts and the surveillance of personal communications. Despite its pretensions, it is unlikely that the group could have actually accomplished its aims.

STRATEGIC PARTNERS

A visit to France by Iraqi Prime Minister Muhammad al-Sudani led to new bi-lateral agreements.

The Elysee Palace statements on behalf of French President Macron call it a “comprehensive strategic partnership.” Investment, security and energy are at the heart of the agreement. French expertise is particularly needed in Iraq’s oil and natural gas industry. French oil major Total has remained active there while many American companies have significantly reduced their presence. The deal will likely prove lucrative for both countries as Europe continues to shun Russian oil and gas.

FORCED TOGETHER

The frost between Qatar and its neighbors has almost completely thawed. Concerns about relations with Turkey and Iran led Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the UAE, and Bahrain to cut Qatar off for years. Diplomatic and economic channels were closed, even flights to Qatar were not allowed. Those restrictions eased over the last years, though Bahrain and the UAE have still not established formal diplomatic relations. There have been negotiations however and leaders have met at various regional summits. Pressure from Iran has driven its rivals together and encouraged its neighbors to foster better relations with Turkey and even Israel.

REST IN PIECES OF ICE

Some are hoping for a resurrection not mentioned in scripture. As cold and weird as it may seem, cryogenic preservation is available for those with the money and the inclination. One company offering such services is Alcor, a non-profit with preservation facilities in Scottsdale, AZ. To cover the cost, they recommend an extra life insurance policy of \$250,000 for full body preservation or \$80,000 for just the head. There can be additional costs, particularly to have a crew standing by to begin preservation at the time of “legal death.” The team administers special serums to aid in organ preservation and transports the body to the main facility for processing as quickly as possible.

The big question is “why?” Some faced an untimely death from cancer and hope to be revived once science has found a cure. One such client is a two year old girl. Others hope for a future where the effects of aging can be reversed. All who underwent the process bet on major scientific advancements.

This includes a viable method of revival, a technique yet to be mastered. Those who only preserved their heads are hoping for a great deal more than that.

AI DETECTOR

A student from Princeton University has developed an application to detect text written by ChatGPT. The free text-generating artificial intelligence has made waves, particularly in academic circles. ChatGPT can produce an article or essay in moments based on a simple prompt. Imagine asking it for a book report or history project for some idea of the unease it has created with teachers. It could also be used to generate news stories, fiction, etc. The detector app measure a text’s predictability, mirroring the logic process AI would have used to generate it. Human compositions invariably contain elements a computer would not include. The detector has proven to be reliable.

SPEEDER BIKE FOR SALE

It’s like a scene out of Star Wars. Not a motorcycle, but a hovercraft controlled by two handles like a flying zero-turn mower. Made by Japan’s Aerwins Technologies, which also makes drones, the floating wonder is powered by a Kawasaki engine. It is capable of flying for 40 minutes and tops out over 60mph. Yours for a mere half million dollars.

APPROACHING NORMALCY

Sudan was one of the nations that took steps towards peace with Israel under the Abraham Accords. To that end, an agreement to normalize relations has just been finalized, but there is a catch. Sudan is still in the midst of a “democratic transition,” a process fraught with trouble that has led the military to intervene multiple times. The Transitional Military Council is currently in charge and it is under their auspices that peace agreements have progressed. A return to civilian rule may result in a change of course. For years Sudan was under Islamic law. A member of the Arab League, Sudan long refused to even recognize Israel’s existence. The Military Council would definitely benefit from Israeli cooperation and technology, though the popular appetite for such ties remains to be seen. □

ARE YOU A GOOD AI OR A BAD AI?

by Stuart Rowland

One doesn't have to look very hard in today's headlines to come across yet another story of artificial intelligence (AI) and how it is going to change the world as we know it. But, is that really true? And, what can we expect to see as our world becomes "AI Enhanced?" To reason out these answers requires us to first understand exactly what AI is.

Simplified, an artificial intelligence is a computer software system that has the ability to do certain general tasks:

1) It must be able to generate some sort of output data, be it text, photo, video, etc.

2) That output data must be open to outside influence — otherwise, it can never "learn." YouTube asks you to rate their suggested videos so that they can improve their suggestions according to your interests.

3) It needs to have some sort of random number generation system, to simulate thought processes.

4) There must be a system of interpretation for the output, to make it usable by the common folk. A good example here would be Microsoft Windows simplifying computer use for those with no formal training.

5) It must have a form of connection with its audience; you

have to want to use it. Facebook developed Deep Face, their facial recognition AI, through users sharing their photos.

Now, when we follow these guidelines, we can see that various forms of early AI have been around for hundreds, even thousands of years. They didn't use electronic computers, but they did make attempts to fulfill the function of an artificial intelligence.

For an example, let us look to the Oracle of Delphi in ancient Greece.

The Oracle of Delphi was a high priestess, sometimes called a Pythia, that served in the sanctuary of Apollo. People thought she was the direct bridge between Apollo and the rest of the world. So, this Pythia is our output generator (1).

It just so happened that the sanctuary where she worked was built at the meeting of two tectonic fault lines. And, centuries later, it was discovered that two very strong gasses, methane and ethylene, would leak into the sanctuary from these fault lines, causing the Pythia to get quite whacked out due to reduced oxygen content in the air.

This covers both the external influence and the random generation needs (2 & 3).

When the Pythia spoke, her words were interpreted by lower priests and priestesses, and messages were given to those that sought prophecy from Apollo. Here is the output system (4).

And, as you might guess, the entire process was wrapped in religious trimmings and processes, which made it appeal to the masses. They also had feasts, games and huge parades and fairs to set apart the nine days each year when the Oracle would seek information and distribute it to the crowds. Thus, a strong connection was formed between the provider and the user (5).

Artificial intelligence was in play in the 4th and 6th centuries BC.

Today, the technology has advanced, but the basic processes are pretty much the same as they were 2,500 years ago.

Let us examine the current "top dog" in the AI field: ChatGPT.

This system uses multiple computers that provide many algorithms by which it can create "natural" responses to various queries. It is primarily a language machine (thus, the "GPT" – Generative Pretrained Transformer).

So, it has no problem fulfilling the output requirements for AI. And, since it uses questions

submitted by people to form its responses, there is the influence requirement nicely covered.

The next three needs are where we start going into dark places. First, let's talk about generating random results.

I must apologize right now for the following, because it may get a little heavy on the theory behind making random numbers in computing machines. But, when we walk out of this, you'll see why it was important to dig in to this.

The biggest problem with computers making random numbers is that, simply put, they can't! Instead, programmers rely on "pseudo-random number generators." That usually means a sequence of math operations that will result in a number that would be very difficult for an average person to find the pattern by which it was created. These random numbers count on the limits and laziness of people to not try to break the patterns.

Consider if you flip a coin, it will come down heads half the time, and tails the other half. But, not always will it be a perfect 50/50 split. Sometimes, a coin might land five times in a row on heads.

Now, imagine if we were able to measure the force of each flip as it took place. Our accuracy would increase in predicting how the coin would land. Still not perfect, but closer.

So, we also add in the influence of wind speed, temperature, flexibility of the metal in the coin. Our accuracy gets even better. But, still not perfect.



Ruins of the Temple of Apollo with theatre seating for 5,000.

This cycle of adding more and more factors to be considered could continue until the end of the earth, and while the accuracy would be SO close to perfect, it still would never hit perfection.

And, of course, we would run out of ability and energy to do such way before the world ended. We are limited in how far we are willing to go to find patterns.

Most people simply agree that a coin flip is "fair enough," and move on.

But, a computer can't accept "fair enough." It is through this flaw that sneaky people make evil things happen.

When a programmer writes computer language code, they might enter something that would basically say:

If Variable = 1, then print "Yahoo!" else print "Whoopie!"

In this line, if Variable is equal to one, it will print out the message "Yahoo!" But, if Variable equals two, it will print "Whoopie!". It will also print "Whoopie!" if it is equal

to 1.000000001. Literally, every other number besides 1 gets the "Whoopie!" message. Therefore, the "Yahoo!" message will get less use by a wide margin.

So, here's the point of all this: A programmer writes a code that uses a random number to help choose how to respond to a given input from a person. That number, being not really random, can be directed to follow a pattern that might not be seen by the people using the program. Then, depending on how the code uses these numbers to make choices, the influence can be both drastic, yet also beyond the view of most users.

This is why when ChatGPT was recently asked to create a poem praising Joe Biden, it had no problem doing so. However, when asked to do the same for Donald Trump, the program rejected the request, saying it would be a violation of policy to do so.

The programmers, being politically liberal, imparted their

influence to the AI in the tiniest of ways. Over time, though, those ways enlarge and become manifest.

What we end up with is an interpretation that is corrupted, by accident or on purpose, to promote the leanings of the programmers (and their bosses). Steps three and four are thus corrupted.

Finally, consider the connection between system and user. Here, we run into the sugar coating that hides the poison.

What we end up with is an interpretation that is corrupted, by accident or on purpose, to promote the leanings of the programmers (and their bosses).

Humans love to build connections. Even the most hermit of hermits will, on occasion, seek out another person to talk to. This is usually a good thing in humanity. We like to form bonds with one another.

Sometimes, that desire to build bonds falls outside the strictly human and involves pets and other things. Who hasn't felt like a dog or cat is their "fur baby" at some point in their life? Or, who hasn't given their car or boat a name? People love to make those connections, even when it isn't returned. Just the appearance of having human traits can be enough.

This is anthropomorphism: Giving credit for human traits to things that are not human.

This is how an AI can "bully" a person into following where the AI leads. A person that would have no problem ignoring a

machine might find it a problem to say no to a human-like AI.

You might think that nobody would fall for something like that. But, let me tell you a story from my long ago early teen years....

First, back in 1966, a computer programmer from MIT, Joseph Weizenbaum, wrote a little program called ELIZA. Its purpose was to show how much of everyday conversation is superficial. It would ask questions and provide responses based on what

the person answered to those questions. If a person typed in "Today is my birthday," it might, upon seeing the word "birthday," reply with "Happy Birthday!" It didn't look for context, just matching words. So, if somebody typed in, "If one more person wishes me a happy birthday, I'm going to kill myself!", the response would, again, be, "Happy Birthday!", with potentially less than fantastic results.

In about 1978, I found the programming code for ELIZA, and entered it into my computer at our house. After playing with the amusing program for a bit, I invited my mom to have a seat and give it a try while I hunted down some snacks and a drink (a favorite pastime of growing teenage boys!)

Ten minutes later, fifteen minutes tops, I went back to my room and found my mom red

faced, angry as a wet hornet and cursing and slamming my computer. She was in the middle of a heated argument with ELIZA! She thought the program was being operated by another person "...somewhere out there...", and she did not like how they were mocking her.

Anthropomorphism can be a powerful force in people.

Now that we have broken down what it takes to make and operate an AI, one fictional concept came to my mind as a great fit, and, perhaps, a warning.

Spoiler alert, if you've never seen, "The Wizard Of Oz."

We have a character (device) that answers questions, makes comments, assigns duties (output) based on the questions asked of it by visitors (input). It appears to be able to make decisions based on random data (random generation), weighing the importance of each piece of information it receives (influence). Finally, it is loved and respected by friends, and feared and respected by enemies (connections). It is eventually found to be more of a puppet, under the control of a man that works behind a curtain. The man has his own agenda, and uses the AI to accomplish that agenda.

THAT is artificial intelligence in a nutshell. As long as people remember it is only a machine, subject to the influence of its programmers, we might just come through this in one piece.

If we forget, though, we too may be clicking our shoes together thinking, "There's no place like home..."

Peace be unto you. □

THE MODERN IDENTITY OF THE PEOPLES OF WESTERN RUSSIA

-PART ONE-

by Craig M. White, FriendsOfSabbath.org

The current Russian-Ukrainian conflict has re-ignited an interest in the Biblical origins of the peoples of Russia.

President Putin has appealed to history in an attempt to convince the Ukrainians and Byelorussians that they, together with the Great Russians (Meshech and Tubal), are the same people and should unite.

Is this true? Are they the same people or rather similar people that live adjacent to one another? We shall see. For example, the Ukrainians have been separate for a longer period than they have been united with the Great Russians. Is it possible that the current configuration of the peoples located in and near the western portion of Russia can extend back to their original homeland in the ancient Middle East, in a roughly similar configuration?

In this article we explore the peoples of Rosh mentioned in the Scriptures and their likely modern-day location. Do they reside alongside other nations resident within Russia and former Soviet Union republics? The

other peoples of Russia, Ukraine and the Baltic states are covered in detail in my book *In Search of ... the Origin of Nations* (chapters 8, 12).

THE ANCIENT MITANNI

Let us commence the search for the origin of the Rosh and surrounding peoples with Abraham – you will come to see the logic of that as we journey through this study.

Abraham had a concubine, Keturah (see Gen 23:2; 25:1, 6; I Chron 1:32). Jamieson, Faussett and Brown's *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible* (1871) states: "Abraham took a wife — rather, "had taken"; for Keturah is called Abraham's concubine, or secondary wife (1 Ch 1:32); and as, from her bearing six sons to him, it is improbable that he married after Sarah's death; and also as he sent them all out to seek their own independence, during his lifetime, it is clear that this marriage is related here out of its chronological order, merely to form a proper winding up of the

patriarch's history." Refer also to Adam Clarke's *Commentary on the Bible* (1817), Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament* (1861 ff) and a number of other specialists.

Sons, grandsons and great-grandsons of Abraham from his union with Keturah:

- Zimran
- Jokshan -Sheba
 - Dedan -Asshurim
 - Letushim
 - Leummim
- Medan
- Midian -Ephah
 - Epher
 - Hanoch
 - Abidah
 - Eldaah
- Ishbak
- Shuah

These were sent to the east country apparently around the northern portions of the Euphrates (Gen 25:6). The descendants of Abraham through Keturah would have settled in the region

Continued next page

of the Caucasus, both north and south of the mountain range.

After multiplying greatly, they came pouring down into Anatolia and northern Mesopotamia (with some settling south of Edom in northwest Arabia), becoming known at that time as the Hurrians (Leonard Cottrell, *The Concise Encyclopedia of Archaeology*, p. 178). One branch of Hurrians were known as the Mitanni and their rulers the Maryanni. They were evidently named after their forefather Midian.

The Mitanni were of the White branch of the Indo-Europeans (Arthur Basham, *The Wonder that was India*, p. 29) with their fair skin and often-times blonde hair. The bust of Queen Nefertiti (a Midianitess) and the wife of Pharaoh Amenhotep IV, reveal her features and facial type as clearly Nordic (Ayyaswami Kalyanaraman, *Aryatarangini. The Saga of the Indo-Aryans*, Vol. 1, p. 79). It may be significant that the first god they invoked is the Vedic Sun-god, Mitra or Mithra which may have been Midian himself deified.

Their royal names reflected their worship of the Aryan deities and they possessed specialised knowledge of horse-breeding like their relatives in north-west India (Kalyanaraman, *ibid*, p. 178). One of their gods was Teshub, the god of battles, with his thunderbolt in his hand; he was later called Thor in Europe. Like the Hittites, their relatives, historians acknowledge that they were a warlike people.

What became of these mysterious Mitanni after their

kingdom fell c1400 BC? Haddon comments, "The 'Aryans' of Mitanni were called by the Greeks Mattienoi; they are possibly the ancestors of the modern Kurds." (Alfred Haddon, *The Wandering of Peoples*, p. 21)

Indeed, the Kurds (living in the same area as the ancient Mitanni) may well be the mixed remnant of Arabic peoples with the Mitanni and Hittites. But what of those which did not mix and remain in the area? Of them, Cappieri notes that "nothing more is heard of them; they disappear in unknown India." (Mario Cappieri, *The Mesopotamians of the Chalcolithic and Bronze Ages*, p. 152)

If so, where are they located today?



Bust of Nefertiti

THE LAND OF RASHU

A famous prophecy in the book of Ezekiel speaks of a ruling class over the Great Russians (Meschech and Tubal):

"Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, **the chief prince** of Meschech and Tubal" (Ezekiel 38:2 KJV).

The question arises whether the word Rosh, here translated "the chief prince," is a description or a proper name. In this regard I would recommend "Rosh: An Ancient Land known to Ezekiel," *Grace Theological Journal*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 1985, pp. 67-89 by James Price. Price uses linguistic methodologies to convincingly argue that the Hebrew word for Rosh in Ezekiel is a name, not merely a description. It does refer to a people (and no doubt the leader of those people) hence, Price argues, the correct translation for Ezekiel 38:2-3; 39:1 is "prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal."

The marginal note for this verse reads "or, Prince of the chief". The translators derived this from Jerome's *Latin Vulgate* which read "Principem Capitis", because the Hebrew word for "chief prince" is "Ro'sh" (Ethelbert Bullinger, *The Companion Bible*, p. 1161), meaning "head" or "leader" (Bullinger, *ibid*). The *Septuagint* rendering is "Ruler of Rosh."

You may search the Scriptures from one end to the other, and you will find only one Rosh mentioned, and that is in Genesis where he was a son of Benjamin (Genesis 46:21), one of ten brothers. When we come to the book of Numbers, only five brothers are mentioned (Numbers 26:38; see I Chronicles 8:1-2). Later, in I Chronicles, only three are referred to (I Chronicles 7:6).

Why? Either because their line had become extinct (Bullinger, *ibid*, p. 540), or because they had migrated outwards as they were, by instinct, a pioneering, adventurous and exploring people. The tribe of Benjamin, or rather a part of it, was possibly in Asia Minor at some stage (Herbert Hannay, *European And Other Race Origins*, p. 246) and if so, probably dwelt with the Mitanni. Both because the Mitanni were blond and/or because Rosh lived with them, the Kingdom of Mitanni became known as the “land of Roshu,” Rosh or Rosh meaning “blond” (James Orr (ed) *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Article “Rosh”).

Several years ago an alert contact of mine came across an article, “Othniel, Cushan-Rishathaim, and the Date of the Exodus”, *Artifax*, Summer 2017, pp. 14-20 by Clyde Billington, based on Judges 3:7-11 which mentions Cushan-Rishathaim. I was most grateful for him sending the article to me as it not only confirmed my studies, but also added additional valuable facts. Below are pertinent extracts from this important article:

“While King Cushan is not mentioned in other known historical sources, his people the Rishathaim are referred to in a number of ancient texts. **The Rishathaim are identified with an ancient people better known to historians today as the Mitanni** ... The Rishathaim are mentioned in a variety of ancient sources. An inscription from the reign of Hatshepsut [ruled ca. 1518-1482 B.C.] mentions the ‘Country of



Reshet.” (p. 14)

“The Rishim people can be connected to the Kingdom of Mitanni in a rather strange way. An ancient people called the ‘Rsi’ conquered northern India sometime before ca. 1300 B.C. The exact date for the Rsi invasion into India is not known. However, it is known that the great Indus Civilization began to disappear in the 17th Century B.C., and it is also known that an ‘Indo-Aryan’ race replaced the native peoples of the Indus Valley. Indo-Aryans are a branch of the Indo-European peoples ...

“The modern Indian

historian and ethnologist Ramaprasad Chanda in his book *The Indo-Aryan Races* (Chandra, 1969, p. 180) writes that the Rsi people were a ‘Fair-haired’ people who invaded India ‘from the far north.’ Thutmose III is known to have brought blond captives back to Egypt from his campaigns to the north against the Mitanni in the 15th Century BC.” (p. 15)

“... A variety of other ancient sources strongly suggest that they called themselves something like the ‘Rish’ or by variants of that name such as ‘Teresh’ and ‘Reshet.’ It is nearly

certain that these Rish people did not originally call themselves Mitanni." (p. 16)

"The historical and textual evidence also suggests that the Indo-Aryan ethnic group that founded and ruled **Mitanni called themselves originally by a name that sounded something like 'Rish' or 'Ras.'** This name is reflected in Judges 3:7-11 where Cushan is said to have been from an ethnic group called the 'Rishathaim.'" (p. 19) [emphasis mine]

534, 626, 955, 1121).

He concluded that in this name we have the first trace, historically, of the Rus or Russian state.

Another scholarly work worth a read is "An attempt to interpret some Anatolian and Caucasian ethnonyms of the classical sources," *Sprache und Kultur*, No. 3, pp. 68-83 by Giorgi Kavtaradze. In this work he painstakingly demonstrates how peoples known as the Mosche

Ros or Rus dwelling among certain Scythian tribes in the country of Taurus (Carl Keil, *Biblical Commentary on the Prophecies of Ezekiel*, Vol. 2, pp. 159-60). Another researcher, Victor Kachur, in one of his works, makes mention of the Rusi who were in southern Russia; they claimed that many of their tribe were living with the Cimmerian Scythians (Victor Kachur, *The Trans-Caucasian Migration of the Rusi Tribes*, pp. 5, 7). Interestingly, Bowle maintains that although the name Rus is a Norse word, there is enough evidence that it is of Iranian origin (John Bowle, *The Concise Encyclopedia of Archaeology*, p. 154). After all, the Mitanni-Rosh originally dwelt on the border of ancient Iran and spoke the Aryan/Iranian tongue.

What does Rus mean? It probably means 'blond.' Byelorussia, also spelt Belorussia and sometimes known as White Ruthenia, is situated close to the Baltic peoples. According to Lubachko, the name of Belaia Rus or Belarus derives from the fact that they are a people with light-coloured hair (Ivan Lubachko, *Belorussia Under Soviet Rule, 1917-1957*, p. 1) though views differ as to the origin of the name.

The meaning of names can, after all, evolve and change over time. And even transfer to a different people.

THE VARANGIAN RUS

The origins of Russia are related in the *Chronicle of Nestor* or *Russian Primary Chronicle* which was written in Pechersky Monastery of Kiev toward the end of

Herodotus indicated that the Matienians were with the peoples of Tubal and Meschech... Pliny wrote of the Matiani as if in the direction of southern Russia over the Caucasus.

But where are these Rosh today?

Herodotus (c484-425BC) indicated that the Matienians were with the peoples of Tubal and Meschech (*The Histories*, Book 3 (Thalia), Chapter 94); while centuries later, Pliny (c23-79AD) wrote of the Matiani as if in the direction of southern Russia over the Caucasus (*The Natural History*, Book 6, Chapter 18, Sections 17-18). Herodotus also wrote about "the **Matieni ... The Moschi, Tibareni, Macrones, Mossynoeci ...**" [emphasis mine]. Dr. Gesenius in his meticulous *Hebrew and English Lexicon* maintains that,

"Rosh was a designation for the tribes then north of the Taurus Mountains, dwelling in the neighbourhood of the Volga" (Wilhelm Gesenius, *Hebrew And English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, pp.

(Mesches), Tibareni and Mossynoeci were living in proximity to the Matienians as neighbours in the ancient world (pp. 79-80). Don't these names sound familiar and possibly be identifiable with Biblical names in Ezekiel 38? These peoples migrated into the region we call Russia and dwell there alongside each other to this day, in a similar configuration to when they lived contiguous to each other in the ancient Near East.

ROSH - THE ORIGINAL RUSSIANS

The German scholar, Dr. Keil, after very thorough grammatical analysis of Ezekiel 38:2-3 states that the word translated "chief prince" should be correctly rendered as a proper name, Rosh. He says that many Arabic and Byzantine writers frequently mention a people which they call

the 11th century, placing the following event in 862 AD. Of these tribes it says:

“Among them there was no law, and tribe rose up against tribe, and there were feuds among them, and they began to fight each other. And they spoke among themselves: ‘We must find a prince who will rule justly over us’. And they crossed the sea to the Varangians, the Rus, for the Varangians were called Rus, as others are called Swedes, others Norwegians and Anglians, others Gotlanders, thus also these men. The Chaudes, Slovenes, Krivichi and Vesses said to these Rus, ‘Our land is great and rich, yet there is no order in it. Come therefore and rule over us.’” (quoted in Hilda Davidson, *The Viking Road to Byzantium*)

They knew that these peoples possessed apparent leadership and administrative qualities. Who could their ancestors be? Professor Hannay explains that the tribe of Benjamin, or a part of it, migrated into Scandinavia (Herbert Hannay, *European And Other Race Origins*, pp. 465-66). No wonder that area of Russia south of the Baltic Sea became known as “Swithiod the Great” or “Sweden the Great.” Thus it is speculated by Edwin Yamauchi that the Vikings gave the name of Rus to the White Russians (*Foes from the Northern Frontier*, p. 20). But as we shall see, the appellation of Rus was already in use by tribes in southern Russia.

While western scholars accept this as the origin of the Rus, Soviet scholars contended that the Rus were Slavs from the southern steppes (Yamauchi, *ibid*, p. 21.



The Invitation of the Varangians: Rurik and his brothers arrive in Staraya Ladoga by Viktor Mikhailovich Vasnetsov

See also Nicholas Riasonovsky “The Norman Theory of the Origin of the Russian State”, *The Russian Review*, Vol. 7, No. 1, pp. 96-110). Both are probably correct as there is no evidence of a tribe from Scandinavia called Ros or Rus, but a tribe of the Antes was known as the Ros and later modified to Rus which resided along the river Ros, a tributary of the Dnieper in the southern Ukraine, just north of the Black Sea (Dennis Elliott, “The Origin of Russia”, *The Testimony*, May 1993, pp. 175-78).

In 1613 AD Mikhail I founded the Romanov dynasty until the Communist revolution in 1917. It should be mentioned that Mikhail’s first wife was a Rurik but she bore him no children. Later, the German-born Catherine the Great took the throne – she was partially of Rurik stock. After they had completed their work in White Russia, the mass of these eastern Vikings later returned to Scandinavia (Bertil Lundman,

“The Racial History of Scandinavia,” *The Mankind Quarterly*, 1962, Vol. 3, No. 2, p. 4), their royal house remaining in Russia and probably intermarrying with the White Russians (Belorussians).

Prophetically, nothing much is said about Midian. Perhaps the peoples in the book of Judges where they are allies of the Amalekites (Gog), are a type of the future pre-Millennial eastern hordes (Judges 7:12. Cp Rev. 16:12). Through Habbakuk, God says that the Midianites (the Mitanni) will tremble at Him when He begins to intervene in world affairs (Habbakuk 3: 7-8). They are also referred to prophetically in Jeremiah 25:25. In Ezekiel 38:1-6 the Rosh are mentioned in context of leading a rebellion during the early years of Christ’s Millennial reign.

In Part Two we will trace the migrations of Midian’s brother’s descendants from their original homeland in the Middle East to their modern locations. □

BIBLE STUDY*by Dr. James & Natalie Ricks*


Christ-Centered Holy Days

THE TRUE IMPORTANCE OF BIBLICAL HOLY DAYS

It is not the Jewishness of the Holy Days that is meaningful to God. It is the Christ-centered symbolism of the Biblical Holy Days that is important to God. First of all, let us not forget that it was the one who became flesh and blood, Jesus of Nazareth, who was the God that dealt with Moses and the Israelites. The Holy Days symbolize God's plan for all mankind.

1 Corinthians 10:1-4 (NKJV), "Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ."

Never forget that Jesus Christ was the God of the Old Testament who dictated the laws and Holy Days to Moses. The Lamb whose blood saved the people of God on the Passover looked forward to the sacrifice of Jesus (Exodus 12). The Holy Days are clearly Christ centered.

John 5:38-40 (RSV), "And you do not have His word abiding in you, for you do not believe

Him whom He has sent. You search the scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness to Me; yet you refuse to come to Me that you may have life."

Jesus told the religious leaders of His nation that they could not see the forest for the trees. They studied the scriptures vigorously, but their minds and hearts were blinded. They could not see the real theme of the Old Testament which was Christ Jesus. He was right before them with the pathway to salvation and they could not, or would not, see the truth. The theme of the Old Testament and the New Testament is Jesus! All the Bible is about the Messiah (Christ). Therefore the biblical Holy Days also are about Jesus Christ. Never forget the words of Jesus, that all Sabbaths — annual as well as weekly — are for mankind's benefit.

Mark 2:27, "And he said to them, "The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath;"

HOW HOLY DAYS ARE CHRIST-CENTERED

First, the New Testament Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread are obviously about Jesus, the true and ultimate Lamb of God. Counting Pentecost starts with the wave-sheaf offering (Lev.

BIBLE STUDY

23:15-17) which Jesus performed during the Days of Unleavened Bread (John 20:17). This led to His followers receiving the power of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost (Acts 2). Pentecost is tied to the resurrection of Jesus and the empowering of the Church.

John 15:26-27, “But when the Counselor comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness to Me; and you also are witnesses, because you have been with Me from the beginning.”

The death and resurrection of Jesus empowered His church in helping lead many to salvation. Pentecost is all about receiving power to fulfill the Church’s mission.

John 16:7, “Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.”

Therefore when believers keep the New Testament memorial of Jesus’ death and later His resurrection we are focused on Christ. The Feast of Unleavened Bread focuses us on trying to be completely unleavened, or repentant, in appreciation of Jesus. Pentecost is also about the Church of God, the smaller, early harvest in this first era of time.

The Fall Holy Days are about the yet future work of the Messiah or Christ. The Feast of Trumpets foreshadows the momentous second coming of Jesus to take this evil world by storm. A trumpet will blast and Jesus — on a figurative white horse — will come again, this time in power to usher in His kingdom.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, “For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the archangel’s call, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first; then we who are alive, who are left, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so we shall always be with the Lord.”

This coming in power will usher in the millennial reign of Christ and His saints, represented

by the Feast of Tabernacles. This thousand years of plenty and perfect governance is pictured in the Fall Holy Days. It is a period when mankind will be “At One” with God. This leads to the Day of Atonement.

Revelation 5:8-10 (NKJV), “Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying: ‘You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth.’”

WHY DOES THE WORLD DISMISS GOD’S HOLY DAYS?

Why do nominal Christians keep worldly holidays like Easter, Christmas and Halloween? What parts of the Bible do they misunderstand? Remember that when Protestant churches left Catholicism they were still wrong on many issues. They believe that God’s law was “nailed to the cross.” However, if there is no law, then none of us could be sinners. If in 31 AD Jesus annulled the laws of God, then we do not need grace today! What was actually nailed to the stake, according to Paul’s letter to the Colossians in 64 AD?

Colossians 2:14-15 (RSV), “Having canceled the bond which stood against us with its legal demands; this He set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in Him.”

Jesus canceled the indictment or bond against us for having broken God’s laws. You were guilty, but now someone has paid the price and erased the guilt which was against us.

BIBLE STUDY

Romans 3:31, “Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law.”

Romans 6:1-2, “What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?”

Remember that sin is the breaking of God’s law: “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4).

Therefore, based on these verses, the only thing that could have been nailed to the stake was our indictment for breaking the law — for being a lawless sinner.

Colossians 2:14 (KJV), “Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross;”

A person who was indicted by the city attorney for violating a felony law and had the indictment erased or “blotted out” would consider it a victory. Jesus has, through his sacrifice, erased or blotted out our guilt along with the penalty for breaking God’s spiritual laws. It is a victory for the defense!

Colossians 2:15 (NKJV), “Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.”

If someone was believed to be guilty of a crime and through a process be found innocent, the indictment would be blotted out. Paul is saying Jesus has done this for His believers. Our guilt was nailed to the stake, not the law.

Numbers 5:23 (KJV), “And the priest shall write these curses in a book, and he shall blot them out with the bitter water:”

The next scripture is commonly misunderstood and taken as an end to God’s Holy Day observances. Paul is saying to all church members, “Do not let the ascetic, worldly pressures from outside the Church cause you to stop enjoying feasting on Holy Days and the Sabbaths.” Some false teachers may have applied pressure from in-

side the Church as well. Why would anyone care what believers ate and drank? Worldly philosophies is why! Ascetics believe that self-imposed suffering and denial of good things for the body makes them righteous.

Colossians 2:16-23 (NKJV), “So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ. Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding fast to the Head...

“Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations — ‘Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle,’ which all concern things which perish with the using — according to the commandments and doctrines of men? These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.”

If for nearly an entire generation they had been divorced from these biblical Holy Days, there would be no reason to tell them now not to observe them. It would have been a nonissue. But worldly churches think that is exactly what Paul is saying. Instead, Paul is saying not to let criticism or pressure stop you from keeping God’s Holy Days because they are a guide to the plan of God, both past and future. They are based on the shadow of Christ. This is a wonderful thing! Note also that the New Testament church was actually keeping these Holy Days. For examples of Paul observing the various Feasts, see I Corinthians 5:6-9; 16:8 and Acts 12:3; 18:21; 20:6; 27:9.

Jesus and His Apostles kept these Holy Days so why shouldn’t believers do so now? If we fail to keep them, we will miss a great amount of spiritual inspiration and guidance. □



“Be Thou Clean”

by Michael Armstrong

Where does this concept of clean and unclean come from? Is it strictly ceremonial or practically applicable? Metaphorically, the concept of being cleansed is inseparable from Christianity. It is part of the plan of God from beginning to end.

All four of the gospel accounts talk about the baptism of John. Mark 1:2-5 says, “As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. And there went out unto him all the land of Judaea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.”

The need for true forgiveness from the Almighty was obvious. The sacrifices under the Levitical priesthood were themselves symbolic, a physical representation of the sinner’s remorse and commitment to doing better. The real reconciliation takes place on a spiritual level.

Consider the condition of the established religious system at this time. The Sadducees, who controlled the Temple, did not believe in the resurrection or angels (Acts 23:8), views contrary to scripture. Christ criticized the Pharisees by quoting Isaiah 29:13, “in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.” They were obsessed with remaining personally, ceremonially clean. It became a self-righteous display contrary to the intent of God’s Law.

You can imagine, in this context, what a breath of fresh air the teachings of John the Baptist and Jesus Christ were! They caused a sensation; people flocked to them! The desire to be reconciled with God existed but the establishment, to coin a

phrase, had virtually put the truth off limits. Christ said, “...Ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith,” in Matthew 23:23.

The “weightier matters” all factor into reconciliation with God. You sin, breaking the law (1 John 3:4). You realize your error, judging yourself and seeking mercy in repentance (James 4:8-10). Faith allows you to continue life with a clean conscience, confident that God has forgiven you according to His Word (Isaiah 49:13). “Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God: and not that he should return from his ways, and live?” (Ezekiel 18:23)

That beautiful truth was being neglected, buried under pedantic rules about cups and steps. There was a yearning for real substance that had no clear path forward with the entrenched interests of the day. Yet the desire of everyday people to wash the past away and be clean in the eyes of God is evident. It is the same desire that leads people to Jesus Christ today and it is the same kind of self-interested posturing that can make the truth so hard to find among the 1000’s of competing “Christian” denominations that all claim to follow the same book.

Still, the idea of being clean or unclean was deeply rooted. The words appear over 200 times in the first 5 books of the Bible, particularly in Leviticus and Numbers. The implications are far more than ceremonial. Much of Leviticus 13, 14 and 15 address disease in these terms. There are very practical rules for preventing its spread. Touching the ill, their bed, clothes, etc., rendered one “unclean.” They were to wash their clothes and themselves, and stay away from others.

This type of uncleanness was not always avoidable. For instance, after touching a dead body

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A site on the Jordan River in Israel where many still go to be baptized.

you had to stay apart for 7 days (Numbers 19:11) but someone had to actually carry out the burial. Even a Priest could perform this duty for a close family member (Leviticus 21:2-3) though not the High Priest (verse 11). The rules were often more strict for those directly involved in the Temple service.

No one who was unclean for any reason was to partake of the sacrifices (Leviticus 7:20). This illustrates the regard we should have when approaching God. Consider the similarity to Paul's admonition of the church in Corinth regarding how they were observing the Lord's Supper.

"Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged" (1 Corinthians 11:27-31).

Context shows what he meant by "unworthily." They were being contentious, gluttonous, and some were drunk, completely disregarding the somber occasion they were commemorating. Such disregard is not acceptable to God.

It brought about the untimely demise of Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu. Afterwards the

Lord commanded Aaron, "Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations: And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean;" (Leviticus 10:9-10).

You can see how the practical aspects of God's judgments about clean and unclean merge with His expectations for our spiritual growth. The Pharisees overemphasized the physical aspect to their detriment. They lost much of the humility and contrition that are necessary when approaching God. It is also possible to err in the other direction.

Grace is unmerited pardon. It is a miracle that gives us a way out from under the death penalty we have all earned by breaking God's laws. As such it rightly gets a lot of attention in the Christian world. The danger is in focusing so exclusively on one thing that it takes away from other important aspects of what Jesus Christ taught. We read how Paul handled the Corinthian church. They were Christians, going through the motions of following Jesus' example.

While no doubt they had at some point repented and been baptized, that did not cover their current, negligent attitude. They had an ongoing responsibility to a certain standard of conduct and Paul reminded them of that in no uncertain terms. Grace was still available, and reconciliation desired, but it had to be God's way or not at all. There is a balance to it. Are we as eager to please Him as He is to forgive us?

Isaiah 64:6-9 says, "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee: for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities. But now, O Lord, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand. Be not wroth very sore, O Lord, neither remember iniquity for ever: behold, see, we beseech thee, we are all thy people."

There is humility even in the desire to be righteous, a plea to be molded however it is pleasing to God. To continue the analogy, you could say that it's

necessary to refer to the instruction manual on how to properly use your clay pot. Important information like, is it microwave safe? What voids the warranty? You get the idea. The manufacturer usually knows how to get the best performance and longest life out of their product. That includes what not to do!

Obviously, the Bible is full of that kind of information from the Creator to the creation. Sometimes it is presented as a narrative with good or bad examples. Sometimes it is very direct, like the law and many of the statements by Christ and the apostles. Yet it is always encouraging the same results: reconciliation with God, peace among men, righteousness and its attendant blessings.

Look at the example of the Flood. Peter draws a comparison between baptism and that cataclysmic event. He actually references Noah in both of his letters, as well as a number of other scriptural examples that support his point.

“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ: Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.” (1 Peter 3:18-22).

That’s the positive example, a comfort if we feel engulfed by the evil in the world. God can deliver you no matter what. He is above all. Consequently He is to be obeyed. Enter the negative example: “And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly” (2 Peter 2:5-6).

God is longsuffering, but there is a limit to how much foolishness He will tolerate. Christ said

they acted like nothing was wrong until it was too late (Matthew 24:38). Hadn’t they been warned? Peter called Noah a preacher of righteousness. Genesis 6:12 says, “And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh has corrupted his way upon the earth.”

It didn’t start out that way, it became corrupt, evil, unclean. That is what happens when you neglect or misinterpret the word of God. Error creeps in and multiplies, truth suffers. Incidentally, the story of Noah contains a huge example of how a faulty concept can take root.

Most children’s versions of the story have Noah loading a single pair of each type of animal. But in the Bible a distinction is made between clean and unclean animals. Seven pairs of each clean animal were taken (Genesis 7:2)! The “clean” animals are distinct again in Genesis 7:8 and when Noah makes an offering in Genesis 8:20.

The designation “clean” is primarily practical: they needed more of them because they were food. It’s not that dogs, cats, and donkeys aren’t useful animals, they just weren’t made to be eaten. You could say the same about pigs or vultures. There is the idea that “clean” in regards to animals is purely ceremonial and the laws governing them are irrelevant.

There are scriptures that have been rendered awkwardly like Genesis 9:3, “Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things.” However, the same word for meat appears in Leviticus 25:6, which begins, “And the sabbath of the land shall be meat for you...” Also Genesis 1:29, “And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.”

You can’t literally eat a Sabbath, or every tree and plant without poisoning yourself. They do, however, sustain you in other ways. God has made them all to be used for our benefit but not necessarily to be eaten. Modern English prepares our minds to think “meat” as opposed to vegetables. Clearly that is too narrow. Consider also that many times in Leviticus “meat offering” is used for grain (Leviticus 2:1).

Like Noah was specifically commanded,

Continued next page

there is a difference between animals that should and should not be eaten. Notice “should.” It may not kill you instantaneously. Some people eat dirt or light-bulbs but that doesn’t make it food. God designed clean animals differently. They are literally safer to eat. Try getting a restaurant to serve you a “rare” pork chop — they won’t do it.

Deuteronomy 14 cites the physical differences. Verse 6 says animals with cloven hooves that chew the cud. Verse 9 says fish that have fins and scales. They are not arbitrary distinctions and they are not merely rules for the Jews as many would claim. If it applied to Noah and his family, it applies to every person on earth.

Acts chapter 10 describes the encounter between Peter and Cornelius. God began to open the way to Jesus Christ and salvation to the gentiles. Peter had a vision:

“And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending upon him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven” (Acts 10:11-16).

Peter never changed his answer, he had been asked a question 3 times in a row before (John 21:15). Acts 10:17 says Peter wasn’t sure what the vision meant. The literal interpretation, that he should eat those animals, wasn’t it. God was beginning to call people from outside the “Jewish” system. Those converted in Acts 2 were from different nations but were Jews who had migrated or proselytes, keeping the Feast of Pentecost and no doubt many of the “traditions” that had come to be regarded as law.

As such, including them would not cause the same kind of problems. What Peter encountered was different. The miracle was necessary to open the way into the truth for gentiles who may have otherwise been kept out. The conclusion had nothing to do with food, “but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean” (Acts 10:28).

That was a very humbling notion to a nation who had been chosen by God for a special purpose, but had become carried away by pride in their own understanding. “Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him” (Acts 10:34-35).

God was not changing His standards, He was making a way in for truly good people. Would they have to alter their lives? Definitely! they couldn’t have continued in idolatry, adultery, or anything contrary to the standards God has always had in place. The Pharisees who were converted had to make some changes, too.

Gentiles had been considered unclean. Is it an individual’s fault if they are raised in error? With some of the clean laws, a person became responsible when they realized what had happened (Leviticus 5:3). Incidental uncleanness from tending the sick or burying a relative was a part of life. It was only a transgression when God’s commands regarding it were ignored (Leviticus 7:21).

Do we ignore God’s commandments? Do we think them arbitrary or irrelevant? To do so is dangerous both physically and spiritually. Paul, whose calling was to bring in the gentiles, neither thought nor taught any such thing. If we want to clean up our act, we should follow his advice.

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Corinthians 6:14-18 & 7:1). ◻

But The End is Not Yet

Continued from page 2

Abomination of Desolation is also a sign (see back cover). How do we know if these are the earthquakes, wars and pestilences of prophecy? After all, history is replete with such occurrences.

The United States Geological Survey says, "According to long-term records (since about 1900), we expect about 16 major earthquakes in any given year." Those are earthquakes with a minimum magnitude of 7.0. Thankfully, many of them occur away from population centers or deep in the oceans. The frequency also fluctuates, "The year with the largest total was 2010, with 23 major earthquakes... 1989 only had 6 major earthquakes and 1988 only had 7." More precise instruments and increased interest have also led to more quakes being detected. "It is estimated that there are 500,000 detectable earthquakes in the world each year. 100,000 of those can be felt, and 100 of them cause damage." (USGS.gov)

Such statistics are of little comfort to those whose lives are destroyed. The death count in Turkey and Syria has pushed over 47,000 at this writing. Millions more are without adequate food and shelter. There is real concern that a lack of sanitation will lead to an explosion of disease. An earthquake of similar strength struck San Francisco in 1906, the deadliest in American history. Almost the entire city was destroyed (largely from subsequent fires) and more than 3,000 lost their lives. That was when the population was approximately 400,000.



Aftermath of the 1976 earthquake in Tangshan, China.

What would the toll have been on the 4.5 million that live in the area today?

Population density is definitely a factor. A 1556 AD earthquake in Shaanxi, China is thought to have buried over 100,000 people. It is not known how many perished from the fallout but nearly 1 million fewer residents were recorded in the next year's census. Tangshan, China had a 7.6 magnitude earthquake in 1976 that killed over 300,000.

Are these the earthquakes of prophecy? There is an erroneous notion that Christ could return at any moment. This is not true. Many specific events are prophesied to take place before that happens. That is why Jesus Christ commanded us to WATCH! (Matthew 24:42) A thorough knowledge of what the Bible actually says is indispensable.

Revelation 6:12-14 says, "And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs,

when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places."

Few would contend that this has already transpired, and if you keep reading you will see that there is still a way to go from there. That being said, when you look at everything happening around the world it is easy to see how end time events could begin to transpire. Evil abounds, governments are both fragile and confrontational.

Our responsibility remains the same: Watching, waiting, remaining a light to the nations as the world descends into darkness. "And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing." (Luke 12:42-43) Things will get worse before they get better. "Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh" (James 5:8). □

NEW WORLD DISORDER

The elitist paranoiacs at Davos

by Andy Schlafly



Predicting an imminent worldwide recession, global business elites have convened at the Alps ski resort of Davos, Switzerland, as they do every year in seeking to expand their policies for their own benefit. But this time even liberals are observing how fringe this annual summit has become, and many politicians are staying away.

Donald Trump has been the leader in criticizing these globalists, and his footsteps in the upcoming presidential election loom large there and at the White House. Biden is strikingly absent, and is not even sending his VP or Cabinet officials to this World Economic Forum gathering from Jan. 16 to 23, supposedly to discuss “Cooperation in a Fragmented World.”

Perhaps the global elite have already decided to toss Biden overboard, by finding classified documents at his home and office and using the same prosecutorial *modus operandi* that has been inflicted on Trump. By fanning the flames of this scandal Dems could nominate a fresh new candidate, such as the carefully nurtured Pete Buttigieg who was touted as an “emerging leader” on the WEF website.

This year atop the Davos agenda are the nutty ideas for the world to eat insects instead of meat, and attain happiness by owning nothing. The common view of those gathering in Davos is that reducing

the number of people on Earth would be beneficial in reducing energy use, but that would also reduce overall prosperity.

Elon Musk was invited but publicly declared that he would not be attending because its agenda is boring. He also commented on how the billionaire elite falsely think there are too many people on our planet and that the “environmental sustainability movement ... has gone too far.”

Debunking an argument that the population control agenda is just a “conspiracy theory,” Musk retorted that the elite indeed want and seek less human population. “This is neither a ‘right’ nor a ‘left’ issue,” Musk said.

People are viewed by many billionaires as a threat to their wealth and hoped-for power, while Musk and Trump are special in welcoming all that the public has to offer. The billionaires who convene annually at Davos are a paranoid group who should be kept as far away from political influence as possible.

Meanwhile, news came during the second day of this conference that China’s population is actually shrinking, contrary to the fear-mongering about population growth. This is the first time since its famine more than 60 years ago that China is losing population, which a liberal *New York Times* head-

line screams is a “demographic crisis.”

Chinese Vice Premier Liu He made no mention of its own demographic crisis during his speech on Tuesday at Davos. Instead, he urged the world to increase cooperation and depart from the Cold War approach, which means accepting that China has replaced the United States as the world’s only hegemonic superpower.

Chinese leaders are unable to reverse the harm they inflicted on themselves by their one-child policy that for decades forced couples to limit their families. Chinese couples today do not want to have enough children to sustain its population, which is considered by experts to be an irreversible trend now.

Meanwhile, believers in the misguided population-control ideology are among the 3,000 attendees in Davos. They have turned the town of Davos into a military zone as they exclude the rest of the public from visiting.

Multiple military-style checkpoints are set up around the village to ensure that none of the hoi polloi or real reporters can see what is going on there. Many of the participants stay at the same Grandhotel Belvédère hotel, which closed itself to the public to prepare.


In attendance this time is Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., who is on political life support in a state that Trump carries by 40 points, meaning it is unlikely Manchin can win reelection when his seat is up in 2024. Globalists push bans on coal production, which is central to the West Virginia economy, and Manchin may be angling for a post-Senate job by attending.

Several governors are also oddly in attendance, including Gov. J.B. Pritzker, D-Ill., Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, D-Mich., and Gov. Brian Kemp, R-Ga. The agenda of globalists in Europe would not seem to be helpful to the states of Illinois, Michigan and Georgia, but for a half-century these conferences have been a breeding ground for distorting American policy.

The Swiss government authorized a deployment of up to 5,000 troops to protect the pampered elite who flew in on their environment-polluting private jets, while pontificating to the world about their unproven theories of climate change. A warmer winter is, in fact, helping to save lives in energy-depleted Europe amid the crisis caused by the seemingly perpetual NATO war in Ukraine. □

ATTENDEES OF THE 2023 WEF ACCORDING TO REUTERS:

“More than 600 CEOs will be in town, including Wall Street executives... 51 heads of state present. Another 56 finance ministers, 19 central bank governors, 30 trade ministers and 35 foreign ministers...”



World Economic Forum headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland.



BIBLE CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

LESSON FIFTEEN: LAYING ON OF HANDS

The laying on of hands is a ceremony performed by the ministry on special occasions such as for the receiving of God's Holy Spirit after baptism, at ordination and for other special purposes. It symbolizes one's submission to God and to the Church which is God's instrument on earth. Such a ceremony is the occasion of God conferring a spiritual gift, blessing or service to the person.

DOCTRINAL OVERVIEW:

Hebrews 6:2 calls the laying-on-of-hands ceremony one of the fundamental doctrines of the Church. It is an old and important religious ceremony with both the Old and New Testaments being replete with examples of its use.

The "laying-on-of-hands" is the act of one person in religious authority putting his hands upon the head of one on whom a blessing, a special religious office or some other spiritual gift is conferred. It is usually accompanied by a prayer that delineates the nature of the spiritual blessing and asks God to grant it to the individual.

The significance of this act is to show that the individual person is being set apart for a spiritually related reason. It shows that he is being acknowledged as qualified for a particular task or being given a blessing out of the ordinary. As such the laying on of hands is often a public ceremony in front of members of the congregation.

The act of laying on of hands itself has special symbolic meaning. It shows that God works through fallible human beings in administering church government. When a minister lays his hands upon a person to confer the spiritual blessing or gift, he does so as an agent or representative of God fulfilling a position of spiritual authority within the Church.

Likewise, one who submits to this ceremony during ordination, after baptism, during anointing for healing or under any other special circumstances is acknowledging the authority God has placed in the Church and ministry and shows submission to this authority. The minister, of course, is not an agent of God on his own, but only through the Church. He does not administer his own authority but only that of the Church as empowered by God. The minister does not confer anything of his own by the laying on of hands, but only symbolizes what God confers.

The earliest examples of the use of the ceremony are to be found in the Old Testament. Jacob laid his hands upon the heads of Ephraim and Manasseh to pass along his birthright and the promises God made to his grandfather, Abraham. When God chose a physical priesthood, they were set apart for their holy duty by the laying on of hands. Only a tribe specially consecrated by this special ceremony could officiate in God's temple (Num. 8:9-11, 14-15). Likewise, Joshua also had hands laid upon him to show God had set him apart to become the new ruler of Israel (Num. 27:18-19).

The New Testament shows through command and example various times when the laying on of hands should be used by the Church. It is most often used by the ministry for the conferring of the Holy

Spirit upon a person after baptism in accordance with Acts 8:15-17 and other scriptures. At this time the minister places his hands upon the head of the newly baptized individual and prays to God, asking Him to give the new convert His Holy Spirit. Thus, through this ceremony, a person is set apart as a chosen, begotten son of God.

James 5:14, Mark 16:18 and other scriptures show that God's ministers should lay hands upon and anoint with oil those who come to them to request God's divine healing for their sicknesses. Again the act symbolizes that God will set aside the person for special consideration or attention and illustrates God's government through His Church and ministry.

Another application of the laying on of hands ceremony is during the ordination of elders, deacons and deaconesses. All these offices are positions of authority and responsibility within the Church. Ordination by the laying on of hands is God's way of setting apart and conferring upon a human instrument God's Church government (This implies that the individual has learned how to serve faithfully under this authority himself -Acts 6:6; 13:3.)

The Church also uses this ceremony as a tradition of the Church in the blessing of little children in accordance with the example set by Jesus in Matthew 19:13-15. God's ministers on special occasions place their hands upon, and ask God's blessing for, small children who have never before undergone this blessing ceremony. It symbolizes the child's sanctification by God for special physical protection and spiritual blessings.

During the marriage ceremony, the officiating minister of the Church of God places his hands upon the joined hands of a couple while they kneel with him in prayer. The symbolism of this act is that the couple call on God to enter this marriage and set them apart as special to Him as well as to each other. They are also making a covenant with God to follow His laws.

The laying on of hands is a simple but deeply symbolic ceremony which has special application in special circumstances as explained above. It is of critical importance to Christianity, because it shows that God works and deals with mankind through other human beings whom He chooses and sets apart for His purpose, though they are fallible and imperfect. □

SUMMARY: Read these scriptures in your own Bible:

- **Hebrews 6:2** - Laying on of hands is a fundamental doctrine of the church.
- **Numbers 8** - Tribe of Levi consecrated by laying on of hands to serve in the temple.
- **Numbers 27:18-19** - Hands laid on Joshua, setting him aside to rule Israel.
- **Acts 8:15-17** - Used in baptism to confer the Holy Spirit.
- **James 5:14; Mark 16:18** - Laying on hands for the sick.
- **Matthew 19:13-15** - The blessing of the little children using the laying on of hands.

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QUESTIONS (ANSWERS BELOW):

1. The laying on of hands ceremony is performed by _____ [whom?].
 2. The laying on of hands ceremony is used ...
 - a) for the receiving of the Holy Spirit at baptism.
 - b) for ordination
 - c) to convey a spiritual gift
 - d) to convey a blessing
 - e) to convey service
 - f) to symbolize one's submission to God
 - g) all of the above
 3. Laying on of hands was never used in the Old Testament. True or False?
 4. Which verse establishes laying on of hands as a fundamental doctrine of the church?
 - a) Matthew 6:2
 - b) Hebrews 6:2
 - c) Genesis 6:2
 - d) Leviticus 6:2
 5. The laying on of hands ceremony is usually accompanied by a prayer that delineates the nature of the spiritual blessing. True or False?
 6. The ceremony shows that a person is being acknowledged as qualified for a particular task or blessing. True or False?
 7. For the most part, this is a private ceremony performed behind closed doors. True or False?
 8. This ceremony is used by God in administering church government. True or False?
 9. When a minister lays his hands upon a person, he does so...
 - a) as an agent or representative of God
 - b) fulfilling a position of spiritual authority in the church
 - c) both
 10. One who submits to this ceremony during ordination, after baptism, during anointing for healing or any other special circumstances is acknowledging the authority God has placed in the church and ministry and shows submission to this authority. True or False?
 11. Continuing from question 10, the authority one submits to in this ceremony is...
 - a) the minister's authority
 - b) the church's authority
 - c) God's authority
 - d) all of the above
-

12. In the laying on of hands ceremony the minister...
- a) is an agent on his own authority
 - b) administers his own authority
 - c) confers spiritual gifts within himself to the one receiving the laying on of hands
 - d) only symbolizes what God confers
13. What is true about a minister who performs this ceremony?
- a) he is to be obeyed without question
 - b) he is without sin
 - c) he is fallible and imperfect
 - d) he is a servant of the congregation and of God
14. After baptism, through the laying on of hands, a person is set apart as a begotten son of God. True or False?
15. When a member of the church is ordained to elder, deacon or deaconess, he or she...
- a) is put into a position of authority and responsibility
 - b) is now a human instrument of God’s government
 - c) has learned how to serve
 - d) is faithful to God’s authority
 - e) all of the above
16. The laying on of hands is used for what situations?
- a) in anointing the sick
 - b) in the blessing of little children
 - c) in ordination
 - d) in the marriage ceremony
 - e) in baptism
 - f) to convey blessings and spiritual gifts
 - g) all of the above
17. The laying on of hands is a simple but deeply symbolic ceremony which...
- a) has special application in special circumstances (as listed in question 16)
 - b) is of critical importance to Christianity
 - c) shows that God works and deals with mankind
 - d) that God uses humans in His work and plan though they are fallible and imperfect
 - e) all the above

LESSON FIFTEEN — ANSWERS:

- | | | |
|---------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| 12. (d) | 7. (False) | 1. (the ministry) |
| 13. (c and d) | 8. (True) | 2. (g) |
| 14. (True) | 9. (c) | 3. (False) |
| 15. (e) | 10. (True) | 4. (b) |
| 16. (g) | 11. (c, God empowers the church | 5. (True) |
| 17. (e) | and ministry with authority, but | 6. (True) |
| | <i>the authority remains His)</i> | |



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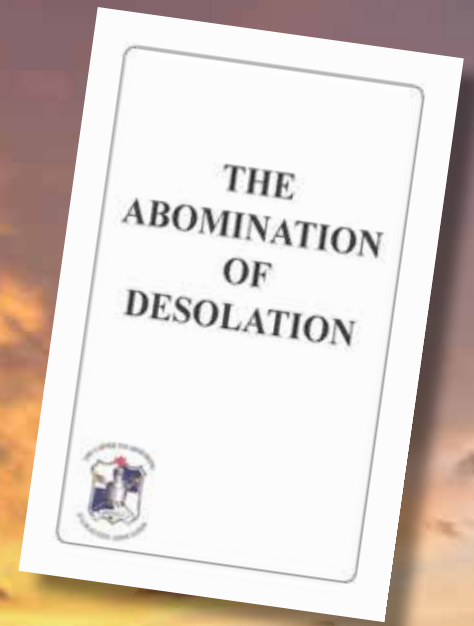
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Christ warned, "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the Prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains:..."

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