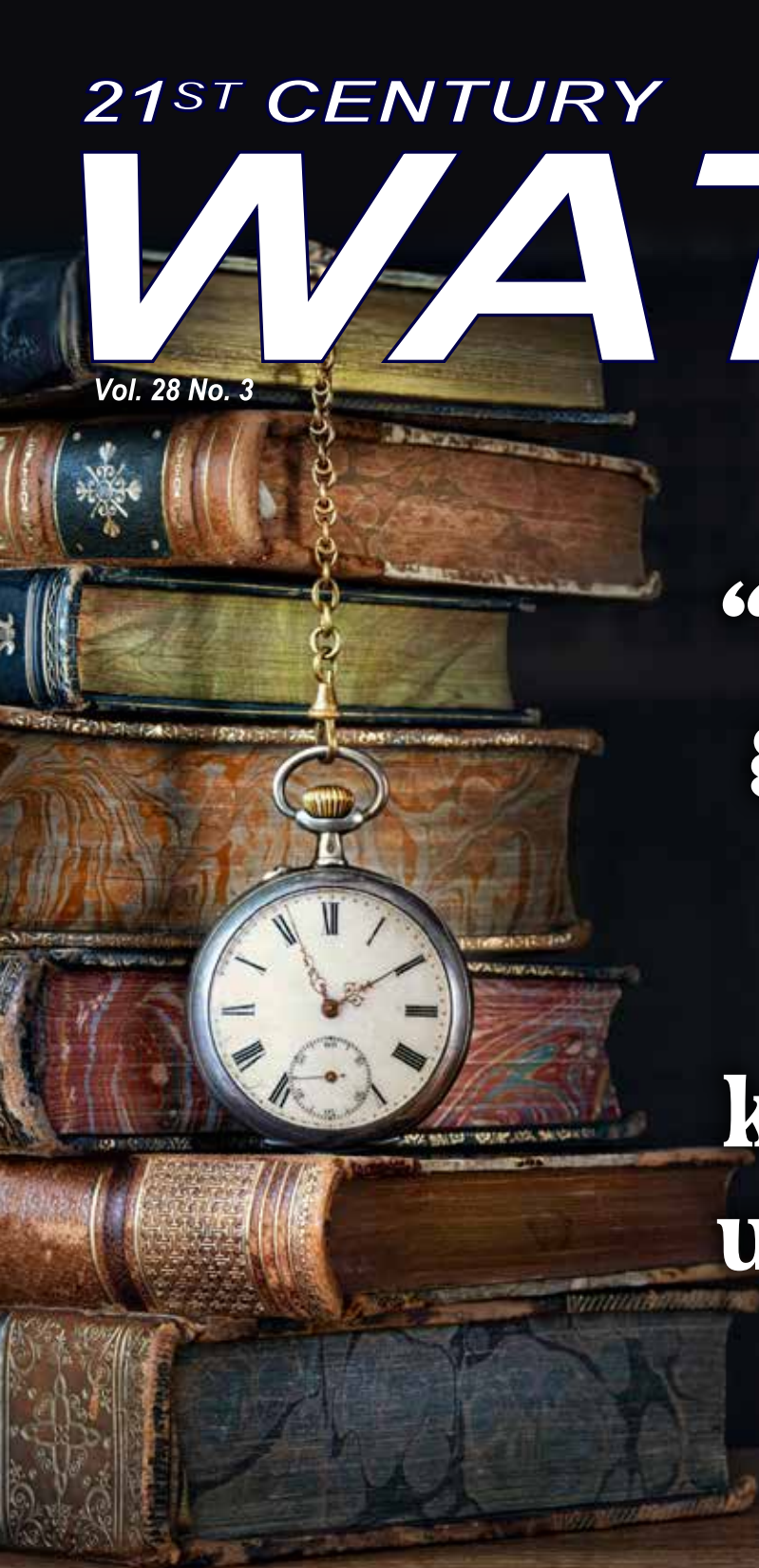


21ST CENTURY

WATCH

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**“For the LORD
gives wisdom;
from His
mouth come
knowledge and
understanding”**

Proverbs 2:6





LET'S MAKE A DEAL

by Mark Armstrong

So far, the Trump administration has played along, trusting the Supreme Court to back him up. But his opponents continue judge-shopping, in the hopes that somebody can make something stick and we can get all the criminals back here including those who have already been deported.

Trump doesn't exactly have a free ride, what with all the opposing networks and several of the Republicans against him. Maybe one of these judges is going to have criminal intent enforced and then we're going to be in for a real showdown. Maybe these judges should realize that he has the power to disbar them all. In the meantime, enjoy the show.

It looks like the war in Ukraine is going to continue despite our best efforts. Putin thinks if he keeps pushing he can have it as a buffer against NATO. I know they've been talking about making Ukraine a member of NATO, but that's not going to happen, short of WWII.

The Houthis had been attacking our ships in the Red Sea, but not anymore. They've decided the better part of valor is to back off. Who wants to be our sworn enemy? In a recent speech it came out that we have weapons that are inconceivable. Maybe we can vaporize them from space, but

your guess is as good as mine.

India and Pakistan are threatening each other. Wouldn't it be something if they started exploding nukes over there? Apparently that's not going to happen. But the headlines were screaming a couple of days ago. The news desperately wants something to get Trump off the front pages. Good luck with that.

Gaza is in ruins. Our President is talking like it can be secured and something great can happen there. I wouldn't hold my breath. We thought we were going to get things straightened out here at home. I doubt we need any international headaches, but then I don't play 4-d chess.

I haven't mentioned the new pope yet. He speaks English fluently, having been born in Chicago. Given some of what he's put on the record, I wonder if the conclave didn't think America needed a higher authority. But the pope's brother may present a problem. He's as MAGA as they come. There will be a great many things to ponder in the months ahead.

Did you see the 747 that Qatar gave to us? Trump jumped all over some reporter who brought it up, off topic, during a press conference and no doubt regretted it immediately. Now

that's a gift. Who knows if it will even be outfitted for service, but it's the thought that counts.

If you look at the mainstream press, they're out to get him, one way or the other. Everything is a scandal. Nothing too small, nothing too big. They hate him and everything he stands for, which is why we like him.

For forty years and longer we've put up with nags, people who preached to us about the flavor of the day, but left our survival out of it. Not since Ronald Reagan have we had a champion who was actually PROUD of this country. There are some wonderful places on earth, but the United States is unique in more ways than one.

Can you imagine the fear that must be disturbing the bad guys and gals? They couldn't leave well enough alone, they just had to bring him down. But all their back-up plans failed, and now he's in charge. I have mixed emotions about seeing the payback that will be coming. It's going to be rough for some who haven't respected our laws, and what can we do about it?

I have a feeling that law-abiding people are going to do better than ever during this second term. It seems the enemies are going down in flames. □

2 **COMMENTARY:** Let's Make a Deal

4 **GARNER TED ARMSTRONG:** Feasts of the Lord

8 Too Good To Be True? *John Mitchell*

12 **WORLD NEWS BRIEF:** In Case You Missed It

14 Biblical Perspective *Michael Armstrong*

18 World News in Advance: The Coming European-Russian Axis *Craig White, FriendsOfSabbath.org*

25 **BIBLE STUDY:** What is God's Objective for Mankind?

28 **BIBLE CORRESPONDENCE COURSE:** Lesson 20 - Tithing and Giving Part Two



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FEASTS OF THE LORD

If Jesus Christ were here in person, He would still be observing the same customs He observed when He was on earth as the “Son of man.” Believe it or not, He would keep the Passover just as He kept it with His disciples, observe the Feast of Pentecost and the Feast of Tabernacles!

by Garner Ted Armstrong

For decades the Church of God has been keeping the annual holy days ordained by God in the time of Moses. It is another unique practice, clearly setting God’s Church apart from all others. But why are these festivals still observed in this modern age of space travel and advanced technology? Here is the answer, made plain, from your Bible.

When I was only a small boy in the 1930s, and the Western world was struggling out of the worst depression in economic history, I remember so well my father, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, and my mother observing God’s annual holy days alone. Though my memories are vague concerning the beginning years of Church attendance — I remember very vividly the annual trips to a nearby Oregon resort for the observance of the “Feast of Tabernacles” every fall! To me, it was a marvelous opportunity for fishing along one of the most beautiful of Oregon’s mountain streams, walking along thickly forested paths in Oregon’s mountains, and experiencing joy and excitement as only a nine, ten, or eleven-year-old boy can know. When I was discharged from the Navy in 1952, a small group of

approximately 400 of God’s people were observing the Feast of Tabernacles at a mountain resort in Northern California. By the next year (1953), I had been converted and baptized, and I attended my very first Feast of Tabernacles as a member of God’s Church.

WHY HOLY DAYS?

One of the most unsettling and shocking biblical revelations to my father, in his very early research, was the discovery that God’s Sabbath day is still holy, and must be observed by God’s people today! Obedience to God is the perfect example Jesus set. Jesus Christ of Nazareth is the SAME yesterday, today and forever! (Heb. 13:8.) He set us an EXAMPLE that we should walk in His steps (I Peter 2:21). Jesus KEPT the weekly Sabbath, and called Himself the Lord of the Sabbath day (Mark 2:28). He plainly said He had kept His Father’s commandments (John 15:10), and commanded His true disciples to teach all nations to observe all things whatsoever He had commanded them (Matt. 28:19-20).

Jesus kept the Passover throughout His entire life. One

very beautiful and meaningful passage of Scripture (Luke 2:41-47) relates the account of Jesus astounding the doctors of Levitical law in the Temple following the observance of the Passover with His parents in Jerusalem. A great deal of space is used by the Gospel writers recounting almost moment by moment the events surrounding Jesus’ final Passover, where the changing of the Old Testament Levitical symbols into bread and wine as the symbols of His broken body and His shed blood took place. The Apostle Paul clearly commanded Gentile Christians to DO exactly as Jesus had said: “...This DO in remembrance of me” (Luke 22:19). Compare with I Corinthians 2:24 where the exact same scripture is repeated.

It is plain from MANY scriptures that Jesus Christ of Nazareth observed the annual holy days as well as the weekly Sabbath! It is very clear that the Apostle Paul observed such annual holy days, and urged Gentile Christians to do so.

My father was stunned to find that his pet argument — “But all these churches can’t be wrong” — made no sense whatever! When he discovered there was no biblical

authority whatsoever for Sunday observance, it was only a matter of a few years before his thorough Bible studies naturally led him in direct confrontation with Jesus' plain example of the observance of God's ANNUAL Sabbaths, as well as the weekly one. God's annual holy days reveal the full scope and depth of God's great purpose for all of mankind.

"FEASTS OF THE LORD"

The "festival chapter" of the Bible is Leviticus 23. Here the ANNUAL Sabbath days are listed right after the weekly Sabbath. This chapter is absolutely vital in understanding just which days God intended man to keep holy — in fact, it's the only chapter where all of God's festivals are listed! Notice carefully the wording in this important chapter: "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, Concerning the feasts of the Lord, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are my feasts" (Lev. 23: 1-2). These are not the "feasts of the Jews" as some have mislabeled them. They are God's feasts! Like the weekly Sabbath, they were made for man (Mark 2:27), not just a single nation. The annual holy days of God are seven in number.

There is no evidence that the festivals were ever rescinded. On the other hand, there is abundant evidence that the first-century Church kept these very same annual holy days. God and Christ are just as alive today; the Church is alive and the Bible is a living witness.

JESUS OBSERVED THE PASSOVER

Jesus Christ of Nazareth — who was and is our perfect example — observed these annual festivals throughout His earthly life. For instance, He was in the habit of observing the Jewish Passover from infancy. Luke preserved the vital details: "Now his [Jesus'] parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the the days [plural] ..." (Luke 2:41-43). Here is the important proof that Joseph, Mary, and Jesus also observed the Days of Unleavened Bread following the Passover. So Jesus had been keeping the Passover all His life.

But the Passover was far from the only annual festival that Jesus continually observed. Notice Jesus' example during the Feast of Tabernacles — the last one of His earthly ministry. "Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand. His brethren [physical brothers] therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judaea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest. ... Then Jesus said unto them, My time is not yet come... Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come. When he had said these words unto them, he abode still in Galilee. But when his brethren were gone up, then went he [Jesus] also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret" (John 7:2-3, 6, 8-10).

Because of continually mounting persecution, Christ wisely chose not to travel openly

in Judaea (verse 1). But verse 10 does definitely show that He did risk His life to keep God's Festival of Tabernacles. Verse 37 tells of yet another festival that your Saviour observed: "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying..." This Last Great Day is a one-day festival (Lev. 23:39).

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

The Apostle Paul wrote: "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (I Cor. 11: 1). One way in which Paul continuously and consistently imitated Christ's example is by observing (and teaching others to observe) the very same set of festivals Jesus did. He wrote in verse 23: "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you [this is exactly how Paul followed Christ], That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread..." And then follows a repetition, a reiteration, of just exactly how Jesus taught His disciples to keep the Passover with the New Testament symbols (verses 24-28). So the Apostle Paul taught Gentile Christians to observe the Passover in a New Testament manner. The Apostle Paul not only FOLLOWED every example of Jesus Christ he humanly was able to, but powerfully and insistently taught all of those who would listen to his preaching (or who read his moving letters) to do the same!

Paul plainly commanded Gentiles to observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread immediately following the Passover! Notice 1 Corinthians 5:7: "Purge out

therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened." How could they be "unleavened" and yet still be commanded to "purge out the old leaven"? This would be a complete contradiction of terms, unless the obvious meaning is understood: the Apostle Paul is urging them spiritually, to get rid of sin still dwelling in their lives, **EVEN AS** they already had swept out the bread and the crumbs containing leaven from their homes! "For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast [of Unleavened Bread], not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (verses 7, 8). These Gentile Christians were clearly keeping the Days of Unleavened Bread according to the literal instruction given in Leviticus 23:6 and Exodus 12:18-20.

PENTECOST AND THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

Only fifty days after Jesus' ascension, God sent His Holy Spirit to a select few repentant men during a New Testament annual holy day (Acts 2:1). Later, the Apostle Paul "...hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost" (Acts 20:16). Now notice yet another New Testament festival connected with the historical account of Paul's activities in taking the gospel to the Gentiles. Concerning Paul's perilous sea voyage to Rome, we read: "...When sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was now already

past..." (Acts 27:9).

Directly adjacent to verse 9 in some editions of the King James Version, there is a marginal reference which reads: "The fast was on the tenth day of the seventh month (Lev. 23:27; Numbers 29:7)." Almost all biblical scholars (conservative and liberal, ancient and modern) agree that "the fast" spoken of in Acts 27:9 is the Day of Atonement. But perhaps even more important than just the proof of the first-century observance of God's holy days is the poignant meaning that is packed into each and every one of them.

THE MEANING OF GOD'S HOLY DAYS

The New Testament states that "Christ, our Passover, is sacrificed for us." Jesus was the Lamb of God (John 1:29). The Passover, originally commanded in Exodus 12 before the Ten Commandments were given at Mt. Sinai, pictures in advance the great sacrifice of Christ. After A.D. 31, it became a memorial of Christ's death. It depicts the shed blood of Christ on behalf of all human beings.

It is also obvious, from a study of I Corinthians, that the Days of Unleavened Bread picture the putting away of sin. Leaven is a type of sin (I Cor. 5:7, 8). Other scriptures come clear as the pattern unfolds. The Festival of Pentecost or Firstfruits pictures the first small "spring" harvest of lives for God's Kingdom. James likens Christians of this age to firstfruits for the Kingdom (James 1: 18). It was on the Day of Pentecost, A.D. 31, that God first gave His Spirit to the original

apostles and disciples (Acts 2). Thousands were then added to the true Church as God called them. This was the very first typical harvest of God's children.

The Feast of Trumpets depicts the triumphant return of the powerful, living Christ to set up the Kingdom of God on earth. Following Jesus' return, the world will be united with God. He will put His Spirit into people's hearts and minds and the world will be at one with God - reconciled to the Father through the blood of Christ. Satan will be bound and his evil influence removed from the face of the earth. He will be cast into the lake of fire, as a symbol of his unrepentant condition. Then he will be banished to outer darkness for a thousand years, after which he will be released for a short time. Atonement, the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day picture this period, from the setting up of God's kingdom to the Great White Throne Judgment.

THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES

My father and mother had kept these annual holy days by simply observing them as they would the weekly Sabbath. They did no servile work, but would study God's Word, especially those sections which applied to the days which they were observing. Several years later, during the fall festival - Tabernacles - they would often go off to a desert place such as Siegler Springs in California for the full eight days of the feast. Only the first and last days were Sabbaths, but the whole festival period was eight full days.

The word "tabernacle"

means a “temporary dwelling place.” Since the festival pictured the world of tomorrow, it seemed logical that that feast should be kept at some temporary site away from the home environment. In ancient Israel the people had made temporary “booths” of leaves and other materials as a means of shelter for the eight days of the fall festival. But how did they finance the trek to Jerusalem from all the distant borders of Israel? God had provided a way! (*See Bible Correspondence Course Twenty.*)

As we think of the approaching Feast of Tabernacles, and the wonderful opportunity of visiting and fellowshiping with others in whom is the very Spirit of God; attending inspiring, uplifting, dynamic services and hearing meaningful sermons; attending the many special activities scheduled; participating in Bible studies, family occasions, recreational activities such as boating, water skiing, picnicking, hiking, bicycling, horseback riding, fishing, or just relaxing

with one’s family around the pool with a group of friends — it fills us with a combination of nostalgia for the many past festivals that many of us have known, and sharpens and hones our anticipation of looking forward to this coming Feast of Tabernacles and season. By the way, even if you are not yet a baptized member of the Church of God — you are most welcome to attend the Feast of Tabernacles with God’s people, and see and observe with your own eyes all that happens there! □

Feast of Tabernacles 2025 *October 7-14*

The Intercontinental Church of God hosts several Feast locations which are open to all who wish to observe God’s commanded Holy Days! Feastgoers can expect daily church services, family outings and activities, Bible studies and plenty of fellowship opportunities for every age.

United States:

Branson, Missouri
Grand Rivers, Kentucky
Lake Tahoe, California
Myrtle Beach, South Carolina
Panama City Beach, Florida

United Kingdom:

Kendal, Cumbria

Australia:

Nelson Bay, New South Wales



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TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE?

by John Mitchell

Historians say that a Democracy lasts about 225 to 250 years before it collapses under its own weight of corruption, graft, greed, and political lies and chicanery. We are in the year 249 since the Declaration of Independence was signed on July 4, 1776 and a new experiment in a Republic was founded. According to the calculations of historical records, we are on the cusp of the demise of this America we know and love. Hard to face with the newly lit flame of freedom, law and order and opportunity for us all portrayed by our newly elected President and his cabinet.

I think this new hope was very well put in a January 22, 2025, monthly letter from Mark Armstrong: "I know it's been talked about as the church's legacy, as always preaching the end of the world. But I genuinely think we're in for some pretty good years. I can't tell you how happy I am for our children and grandchildren, though they don't understand yet. Something could happen to screw this up, but we pray it doesn't. Finally, someone the whole world respects! Thank you, Father, in heaven."

We all echo a big AMEN to those words and anxiously wait to see what happens, to prove the historians wrong. But we cannot ignore the deeply entrenched "wicked spirits in high places" so firmly embedded in the current affairs of men that this new administration is fighting against. What do I mean? There is an old saying, wisely repeated about events in life that seem to have all the right answers. It would be good to remember it in the future: "If something is too good to be true, it usually is!"

Today's events are silently led behind the scenes by the money brokers who want us to be blind to the real problems in our society. They have done

this by pitting us against each other; by using race as the focus of inequality rather than economic inequality itself. That's because racial inequality pits one group against another, whereas economic inequality pits citizens against the rulers of an empire. Such was the French Revolution of yesteryear.

Look just about anywhere in the globe and you will find the rumblings of war. Eventually we will see a worldwide economic reset in which ordinary people will be totally enslaved by the destruction of what wealth they had; handed over to someone who will come along and convince the world they are the answer to world peace. All the destructive events we are witnessing today are for one purpose — to keep you from seeing the truth of where we really are and what is going to happen to you.

However, there is someone else in charge who will totally change the future; someone who has the power and authority to truly bring peace to this world. Millions claim Him, but only very few know Him. Today let's look at just one prophecy that Jesus will bring to pass before He returns; one of great significance: "And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet." (Matt. 24:6)

Never could the prophecies of Christ about the possible annihilation of all mankind be understood until the invention of weapons of mass destruction, such as chemical and biological weapons, and atomic and hydrogen bombs!

True to Jesus Christ's prophecy, these events demonstrate how "rumors of wars" can become major events, costing billions of dollars and creating massive movements of ships, planes, and men.

Scoffers notwithstanding, this world is poised on the brink of gigantic wars, mass destruction, incalculable loss of human life, just as Jesus said it would be!

This is describing the greatest war in all history! The setting of this prophecy is at the time of the resurrection and the return of Christ to this earth. This shows the reward of those who are busily engaged in God's work of witness and warning; those "who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ!"

Notice how closely it is tied to the events of the Great Tribulation, to the major headlines and news outlets of the next few years. The Great Tribulation is the wrath of Satan cast down to this earth, who is filled with wrath and hatred for God's people

ferent fathers who they will never know. And the expression "you're my brother by another mother" is laughingly quoted in every stratum of society. Today, major sports figures, multimillionaires, all openly flaunt the fact that they have fathered any number of illegitimate children by different women!

Will our new Administration really be able to halt society's slide of licentiousness, lawlessness, and immorality?

Violence and crime rule in thousands of neighborhoods, just as vile corruption festers in city, county, state and the federal government, as greedy politicians betray the public trust by dipping their hands into the public till. Unless our new administration can regain control, our societies will continue to

“THIS world is poised on the brink of gigantic wars, mass destruction, incalculable loss of human life, just as Jesus said it would be!”

and all that God stands for. Here are some of the major events for which we should be watching for today and in the months and years ahead:

The disintegration of society, moral and spiritual decay, though hopefully reversed by our new leadership, will eventually continue in the United States, Britain, the commonwealth countries, and the democracies of Northwestern Europe.

The breakup of the family and mounting divorce rates will continue to erode any remaining concept of right from wrong or the fundamental truths of God by which we should live. You know that we live in a society where children, acting out the sickening violence they are fed daily on television and ungodly video games, become mass murderers! Millions of American homes are "matriarchies"; which describes millions of children, especially among minorities, who grow up without a father in the home.

A few decades ago, illegitimacy was a shameful, sinful thing. Today, millions of illegitimate children are growing up in homes with unwed mothers, farmed out to grandmothers or put out on the streets; several children with the same mother but with dif-

implode, and we will finally be destroyed as much by the "enemy from within" as the "enemy from without."

The inflated bubble that is the global economy will eventually burst. America is \$37 trillion in debt, mostly to nations that are not our friends. Billions will be lost overnight when the stock markets of the major nations crash! Nations will be reduced to the kind of poverty and joblessness that was extant during the Great Depression of the 1930's, only worse.

Massive unemployment and the strident voices of ultra-nationalists will be heard in the streets of many nations, especially in Europe and Germany. Already, Germany is witnessing a steep rise in ultra right-wing violence as various neo-Nazi groups commit thuggery, cause riots, demonstrate against the government, and spray graffiti against foreigners. A special, flying riot squad has been organized in Berlin to deal with the rapid rise of skinhead and Muslim violence.

If Germany slips into deep economic depression, look out world! What caused, and who started,

the two world wars of recent years resulting in the deaths of 100 million people (military and civilian)? If you guessed economic collapse and Germany, you get a participation trophy and a gold star!

The trend will be the emergence of military dictatorships in countries all over the world; in Europe, in Germany and Japan, to combat total chaos, and rapidly spreading poverty and crime. Martial law will be declared. Civil rights will be abolished. Freedom of assembly, freedom of the press, the right to bear arms will be denied. Can't happen here? Wake up and smell the rot of our society and see where we are headed. Huge armies will form.

As a response to alarming militarism in Russia and China, Europe will unite. The remaining difficulties with a single currency and tariffs will be overcome. Ultimately, ten nations will pool their economic and military power into one great superpower.

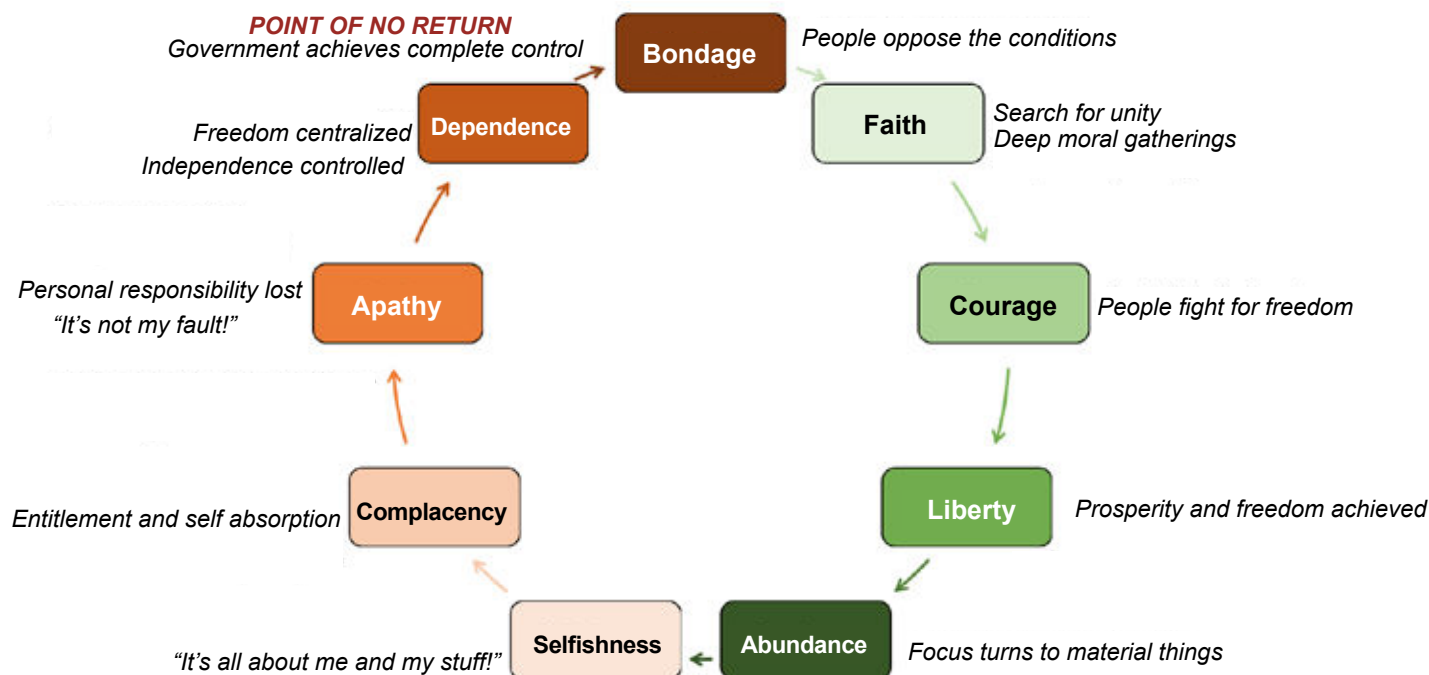
The United States and Britain will be attacked from within and from without. Consumed with unbridled crime and violence our people will not be prepared to withstand the combined blows of economic collapse and the threat, or the actual use, of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons against us. The prophesied "Great Tribulation" of Matthew 24 will have begun!

A great false prophet, calling himself "The Prince of Peace" and taking divine titles will say he is moving the headquarters of the "true church" back to its birthplace, Jerusalem! At some point in time, a temple may be built in Jerusalem. If orthodox Jews destroy the Dome of the Rock and the Al Aksa Mosque in order to replace them with a Jewish temple, all the Arab nations would unite, and a major war would break out. This time, the Arab nations may well use biological and chemical weapons against the Jews.

The ostensible reason for European intervention in the Mideast would be to "save" the surviving Jews from being exterminated. This movement by the False Prophet and by combined European armies would fulfill Jesus' prophecies about the "Abomination of Desolation" and "Jerusalem surrounded by armies"

What is ahead for the Jewish state of Israel, and indeed the world, is a time of terrible tribulation! Events which will be triggered in Jerusalem will drag the major powers into war with one another! Don't count out Japan as a participant in the coming time of tribulation for the United States of America!

The roots of conflict in the Middle East are buried very deep in the soil of the past. They extend



Representation of the "Tytler Cycle", based on the observation by Alexander Fraser Tytler that Democracies are destined to collapse under their own freedoms and privilege. J4lambert/Wikipedia

Jerusalem, home to the holiest sites of the three largest religions, is important historically and prophetically.



all the way back to Isaac and Ishmael; to Moses and the Amorites; to David and the Philistines; to the days of Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome. The conflict extends back to the days of the early Mohammedans who swept into Palestine and Egypt; to the British Mandate following World War I; to the declaration of the State of Israel in 1948, and to the 1967 six-day war between Israel and its Arab neighbors. The roots of conflict are so deep that no mere humanly devised peace process will ever succeed.

That is why there will be no peace in Jerusalem until the final intervention by the Only One who can truly impose peace on this war torn, hating, virulent world; Jesus Christ Himself!

The billionaire power brokers today who are using the “marching mob” that Karl Marx, the founding father of Communism called “Useful

Idiots,” are in the throes of their last-ditch effort to control the masses by violence and the overthrow of governments that stand in their way. Those who attempt to delude themselves by hiding their eyes from the headlines of our time and playing the game of pretending that all these things are not real, that they are not imminent, that God does not exist, are due for a very rude awakening! Armageddon is shaping up! It is coming, and it will affect the whole world!

So where does that leave us? Hopefully, with a few years of the “calm before the storm.” I hope and pray these next few years will bring about “A New Golden Age for America” and peace for the world. But understanding God’s word and the prophecies of the end times we know the final outcome of men’s efforts — it is just too good to be true. □

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IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

MOUSE BRAIN

Scientists have plotted the “wiring” of a mouse’s brain from a sample of roughly one cubic millimeter. The sample came from the area of the brain that processes visual input, a portion similar in construction to the human brain. They mapped nearly 100,000 neurons and over 500 million synapses. Stretched out, the connections would span over three miles, from an area the size of a grain of sand! As scientists probe deeper into natural processes, they consistently reveal the staggering complexity of God’s creation. The eye has long been a point of resistance to the theory of evolution. Irreducibly complex systems, defying the very idea of gradual development by needing every component in place to function at all, are the bane of evolutionists, as is the eye itself. There is no environmental factor that should induce an otherwise content single cell organism to adapt or produce a cell that happens to be sensitive to light at all.

BORDER CRISIS

Problem solved? Cry as many might over rapid deportation, detention in a third country, or the use of the Alien Enemies Act, the results on the ground are dramatic. The first months of 2025 have seen a drop of over 90% in illegal border crossings when compared to the same period just one year ago. No one can deny the strain that trying to accommodate nearly 100,000 new arrivals each month was causing. While there has been much rhetoric about addressing the “root causes of irregular migration,” an overlooked item near the top of that list may have been the belief that you could get away with it! For years, those apprehended were released into the US with a court date for the distant future. The prospect of being sent to Honduras instead can’t be anything but a deterrent.

POWERING IRAN

With some of the largest natural gas reserves in the world, why would Iran need to purchase it from Russia? Sanctions led by the United States have been severe enough to prevent Iran from producing what it consumes. It also provides a needed outlet for Russia, whose supply has been heavily sanctioned by its western neighbors. Russia has also agreed to construct a new nuclear power facility in Iran. Both countries are under pressure to negotiate with the US or face an escalation as the new administration pushes for an end to the war in Ukraine and an agreement to limit Iran’s nuclear ambitions.

UNSPEAKABLE EVIL

Both members of a male homosexual couple have been sentenced to over a century in prison. They had adopted two boys; two years later they were arrested. A different individual was apprehended with child pornography, which led police to identify the children and intervene. It was discovered that the children had consistently endured unimaginable abuse including rape and forced prostitution. This was the twisted reality behind a rosy and flamboyant social media presence. To abuse and degrade a human being in that manner, especially one so vulnerable as a child in need of adoption, is unspeakably evil. The adoption of children by homosexuals was once a controversy in America. Since then, the “gay” movement has largely prevailed in its quest for recognition, despite being prohibited in scripture in no uncertain terms. The practice is still illegal in many of the more conservative countries such as Indonesia, which publicly canes those found guilty. Others try to limit its promotion or exposure, such as new propaganda laws in Russia or the banning of “pride month” in Hungary.

TUGGING HIS LEASH

New German Chancellor Friedrich Merz was reminded of the fragility of his position on the day he took office. Coalition governments are a bit of a novelty to Americans unused to such wranglings. When no party wins an outright majority, a deal is struck between two or more of them to get over the 50% threshold needed to fill important roles such as Defense Minister. This is similar to the process in our own country where those nominated by the President are subject to Senate approval. However, in these coalitions the Prime Minister also has to be confirmed. The first round of voting is anonymous. Some members of Merz's coalition chose to send him a message, with 18 actually voting against him. It was a humiliation — the first instance a head of government had failed to be confirmed in the first round since WW2. While he was confirmed in the second round, the message was heard loud and clear. The maneuvering to form this coalition and the removal of defense spending from debt limits has angered many who voted for this government as well as MPs in Merz's CDU. They feel many promises from the campaign have already been broken, with both coalition partners polling worse than before the election. It was an embarrassing moment for Merz, almost forcing him to cancel his first trips abroad as Chancellor. While many are openly looking to Germany for leadership in Europe, it was a reminder of how fragile many of its most important states are.

MINE

Critical minerals have been an urgent topic of discussion. They do not exist everywhere and much of the world has found itself in an alarming state of dependency on China, the chief producer and refiner of many rare materials which underpin modern energy and defense technologies. Having a secure supply is essential. This is at the heart of the rhetoric over Greenland's autonomy, the mineral deal with Ukraine, and even the push for peace between the Congo and M23 (backed by Rwanda) who struggle for control of land that is rich in natural resources. In addition to diversifying our supply chain abroad, the US has tried to speed up the approval of domestic permits to mine for these sought after materials.


EXTREME MEASURES

Despite their growing popularity, the German political party Alternative for Deutschland (AfD) has been officially branded an extremist organization by the country's intelligence agency. There are definite political overtones and many have speculated about the designation being used to deny AfD members chairmanships of government committees and other positions the number of seats held usually entitle a party to. The temptation may be limited by public opinion as the AfD is polling even stronger now than at the last election.

LOCKED DOWN BY CHOICE

A German couple living in Spain has purportedly been existing in virtual isolation since the height of COVID "stay home" mandates. Despite the passing of years, fear compelled them to maintain this severe and restrictive lifestyle. Reports allege their children were not even allowed to leave the home. The story came to light after the neighbors contacted authorities, charges have since been filed against the parents. "The fear of man brings a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD shall be safe" (Proverbs 29:25).

GENDER BENDERS

The Supreme Court of the United Kingdom has identified "gender" as biological sex at birth. The case prompting this decision regards constitutional protections for women in the workplace. While the UK still offers many official recognitions for those who pursue a transition to its illogical conclusion, they may not claim discrimination under those laws. This continues a trend of tethering the issue to reality rather than emotion, at least in regards to legal definitions, and ensuring fair competition. The Trump administration has not relented, continuing to pull federal funding from educational institutions who refuse to adopt this definition for athletic competition. The Department of Health and Human Services has also completed a massive review of all available studies, reports and medical statistics regarding the effectiveness of commonly prescribed treatments for gender dysphoria. It found that radical interventions like surgery, hormone therapy and puberty blockers did not equate to improved patient health or happiness over time. 



BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

by Michael Armstrong

Many choose to approach life from a biblical perspective. For most, this would mean “Christian living,” as it is sometimes characterized. A life guided by values and integrity, generosity over greed, always observing the Golden Rule “do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” All of these principles are found in the Bible and they are provably true and immensely beneficial, as countless millions who have put them to the test by applying them in their own lives will testify. When you embrace these truths there is no room for doubt. The hard decisions have been made and victory becomes a matter of commitment and perseverance.

How many Christians are living proof that applying God’s word is the biggest positive change you can make in life? There is a remarkable consensus. While these ideas are easily appreciable because they are personal improvements, they are far from being the only scriptures with a practical application in the modern world.

The Bible has a great deal to say about the past. Appreciating

the personalities and peoples involved, as well as God’s promises about the future, enlightens one’s perspective. Our knowledge of history shapes our understanding of the present. The effect of applying God’s word is just as profound as when we allow it to guide our actions. Peace of mind is possible, even amidst the chaos of current events. God has a plan, and He has revealed enough of it to protect us from the lethal combination of fear and ignorance. “For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind” (2 Tim. 1:7).

Let us cover a few key scriptures — things God has revealed about the past, present and future — that can inform our understanding of the world and where it is headed. Since Abraham (Abram) is one of the most pivotal figures in regards to God’s plan for mankind, we shall begin with him. The first recorded words to him from God include, “And I will make of thee a great nation...” (Gen. 12:2). This was later expanded when God changed his name, “Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but

thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee” (Gen. 17:5).

His wife Sarah was included in this iteration, “...she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her” (Gen. 17:16). Even Ishmael, though he was conceived in an attempt to fulfill God’s promises through human reasoning, was not left out. “And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation” (Gen. 17:20).

Are these scriptures relevant in the world today? Absolutely! In Islam, belief in the promise to Ishmael is foundational. The lineage of Mohammad is traced back through Kedar, the second son of Ishmael listed in Genesis 25:13. All “12 princes” are thought to have continued dwelling in the area and have contributed heavily to the population of the Arab peninsula — a belief shared and embraced by its inhabitants.

This certainly fits Genesis

16:12 which states, “He shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren” and “his hand will be against every man, and every man’s hand against him.” In addition to influential monarchies and massive wealth the region has a virtually unequaled history of conflict. This is true of both internal factions and disputes with nations bordering the Arab and Islamic world.

It further illuminates the rivalry with Israel, one of the most volatile flash-points in geopolitics today. It pits the descendants of the firstborn, Ishmael, against those of the son of promise, Isaac. Both embrace their shared lineage but there is a long history of re-creations and mutual accusations of apostasy, to say the least.

Intellectual vanity and moral decay may have caused the Bible to be dismissed by some, but the information it contains is crucial in more ways than one. Its broad overview has proved accurate, despite being written thousands of years ago. Further, its narrative is accepted as a root of conflict by those who are actually involved, whose words and actions are watched so closely on the news today. It is impossible to understand the mindset of some of the most influential and wealthy nations in the world without the foundational knowledge it contains.

The promises made to Ishmael pale in comparison with those reserved for Isaac. God told him, “...I am with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed for my servant Abraham’s sake” (Gen. 26:24). His only progeny

was a pair of fraternal twins, called “two nations” or “peoples” in Genesis 25:23. Jacob obtained the birthright over his brother Esau.

Space does not allow us to digress into the richness of these stories nor the totality of the nations and people affected by these promises. There is no substitute for reading them directly from the pages of your own Bible or studying deeply into millennia of intervening history for those who have an interest. Esau (also called Edom, Gen. 25:30) figures heavily into the history of Israel and is included in many prophecies, as do the children of Lot (Abraham’s nephew, progenitor of Ammon and Moab, Gen. 19:37-38).

All of these are important, but the primary fulfillment of God’s promises have come through Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel (Genesis 32:28). The blessing he received from his father included, “Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother’s sons bow down to thee: cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee” (Gen. 27:29).

God promised, “And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed” (Genesis 28:14). This is especially true of Christ, who was born through Jacob’s son Judah and more specifically the famed King David. Peter quoted this prophecy in Acts 3:25 as did Paul

in Galatians 3:8.

The magnitude of the spiritual aspect of this cannot be overstated but there is a physical component as well. That is apparent when, “God said unto him [Jacob/Israel], I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins;” (Gen. 35:11).

Jacob’s twelve sons were given special information about that, “...which shall befall you in the last days” (Gen. 49:1). The time frame is clearly indicated for the fulfillment of these prophecies, giving them a relevance for today as well as the future. The entire chapter is well worth a read, to say the least. Joseph is singled out as the recipient of the blessing promised to his fathers (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) in verse 26.

Note that this is reserved for Joseph rather than Judah, from whom Christ descended. Jacob blessed Joseph’s two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, in place of his own firstborn in Genesis 48:5. He declared that his name should be theirs, granting them the birthright that had passed to Isaac over Ishmael and Jacob over Esau. Verse 19 promises that Manasseh would be a “great” people and that Ephraim would become “a multitude of nations.” Does this sound like a spiritual statement?

While many have coveted this blessed line of descent, many of the claims are wildly specious and do not at all fit the descriptions of prevalence, status, wealth, or any other condition consistent with the unique importance of this special blessing. Genesis 49:26



reads, “The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren.”

This is far above what was granted to Ishmael or Esau or the other 11 sons of Jacob. There are

not many peoples that can match this criteria when we consider that this description applies to “the last days” rather than some portion of history. The descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh did enjoy great influence in ancient Israel. This is especially true after the kingdom split and they retained the name of “Israel,” (Gen. 48:5, 1 Kings 12:16-21) as opposed to

the southern portion which was called “Judah” and received the promises of their eponymous ancestor as well as those given to David. However, this fulfills neither the magnitude of the promise or the stricture that it be at “the last days.”

It appears that these people will occupy a special role until God’s plan for mankind is completed. Lest this condition be viewed as “unfair” or “privileged,” let us keep in mind that God is no “respector of persons,” as revealed in Deuteronomy 1:17, Proverbs 24:23, Acts 10:34, and Romans 2:11. Many religious actors in Christ’s day appealed to their lineage in lieu of righteousness to no avail (John 8:39).

Those who have received God’s blessing or understand the truth are all the more responsible to act according to God’s revealed will — a tall order for anyone no matter how pious or connected. This is why the end times are called “the time of Jacob’s trouble” in Jeremiah 30:47. God honors His promises, but He will not tolerate transgressions forever. Especially from those who ought to know better. The end however, is reconciliation. Christ’s disciples were promised to, “Sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Matt. 19:28). All of this is yet future, again proving that these peoples are relevant to this day and beyond.

At the same time these nations are receiving their just, and literal, punishments, a great evil will be taking hold of the world. The Bible predicts that in the last days, just prior to Christ’s return,



“And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven.” (Matthew 23:9) The Vatican is both a city and a nation that has traditionally crowned kings and emperors in Europe. The newly appointed Pope Leo XIV has already offered to mediate major international conflicts.

a power will seize control that is utterly blasphemous and contrary to God despite being outwardly religious. 2 Thessalonians 2:3 says the leader will, “...exalt himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.”

When the Bible indicates, “all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him” (Rev. 13:8), we have some idea of the scope of this scenario. It will affect the entire world. It will be empowered by a false religious system allegorically referred to as a “whore” in Revelation 17. There are few extant today with the reach and influence to take on such a role, and fewer still that could be held responsible for martyrdom (verse 6) or identified with “...that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth” (verse 18). Her end is not to be envied (Rev. 18:8).

These scriptures describe our past, present, and future. For those who seek more understanding about what is and what is to come, there are many resources

available free of charge from this publication and others like it. The end time, the great tribulation, has been a cause of fear and concern since it was first illuminated by God. Daniel was told it was, “a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation” (Dan. 12:1). The seriousness of what was revealed to him literally knocked him down at one point (Dan. 10).

Thankfully, we know that God’s word can be relied upon. It shows the way to life, contentment and meaning while informing us about the present and events yet future. We are not called to fear but to faith. God is bringing it all to fruition. His promises endure, His plan is revealed, bit by bit. We see the evidence in the world around us and the conflicts shaping our future.

There will be trouble, yes, but at the end is glory beyond compare. All of the peoples mentioned figure into it, as does every single person who has ever lived. Christ said, “the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice” (John 5:28).

That will be a glorious day, when all are given an opportunity to embrace the wonderful truths of God. It will be a day of reconciliation.

Until then, trouble is still on the horizon, however blessed and pleasant the present may be. “They have taken crafty counsel against thy people, and consulted against thy hidden ones. They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance. For they have consulted together with one consent: they are confederate against thee: The tabernacles of Edom, and the Ishmaelites; of Moab, and the Hagarenes; Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek; the Philistines with the inhabitants of Tyre; Assur also is joined with them: they have holpen the children of Lot. Selah” (Psalm 83:1-8).

“Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man” (Luke 21:36). □



WORLD NEWS IN ADVANCE: *The Coming European-Russian Axis*

by Craig White, FriendsOfSabbath.org

Will a terrible alliance between Europe and Russia eventuate, threatening the very existence of the Anglo-Keltic realm and associated nations? Could a shock rapprochement and close cooperation between a German-led Europe and Russia ever transpire? A look at history may reveal important clues to the future.

It is important to have a bird's eye view of world developments as well as an historical perspective. Otherwise, one can get carried away by current events which seem to be taking the world quickly in a certain direction.

This article has been written based on the historical big picture — that is, looking at history and cycles — which reveals that a future German/European/Russian axis will likely develop despite the current tensions over the conflict in the Ukraine. Most cannot see this now, of course, but history tells another story as shall be revealed below.

People have made all sorts of predictions surrounding the COVID outbreak, the rise of Islam, a new world order, and so on. None of them have come to pass, nor will they in accordance with their perspective.

Similarly, there are great tensions between European nations and Russia which commenced long before the Russian invasion of the Ukraine. These tensions have dragged on for many years, and are escalating, leading some to get excited that a war is about to break out ushering in the Great Tribulation.

It is not that these prophesied events will not happen, but because observers often do not have a “helicopter view” of world events combined with

history and prophecy. They do not have a “big picture” overview, but are stuck in the moment, merely watching *current* events and trying to slot them into prophetic pigeon-holes. This has not and will not work because of the lack of understanding of timing, sequences of events, and the lack of historical perspective.

For those who know this writer and have read his writings, he has always maintained that we need to look at history as a template for future developments as there are cycles and rhymes that can be observed. Based on the aforementioned principles followed by an attempt to project these into the future, we can be reasonably sure of what to expect.

In this context, we need to have a discussion about the current European/German tensions with Russia and whether they will last long.

The relationship between Germany and Russia is arguably one of the most dramatic among nations, characterised by significant fluctuations throughout modern history. This relationship has followed a cyclical model, oscillating between alliances and warfare, periods of rapprochement and tension, as well as cooperation and conflict. Over the past 150 years, German-Russian relations have played a crucial role in shaping the course of European history.

The two economies have been interdependent. Germany produces the industrial chemicals and machinery essential for Russia's economic modernisation. Until recently, Russia supplied enormous quantities of natural resources to European economies. It is likely that this will be revived. The two economies are a lot more dependent upon each other than they currently are willing to admit, in addition to all they have in common culturally.

cal parties are far left/woke/globalist and this has to change.

But there has been a groundswell for over 20 years to reverse this trend — an increasing tide that is beginning to move in one direction while the elites are trying to keep it down. One day it will surge in Europe and Germany with the right leadership. A new form of globalism and cooperating nations, rather than a world melting pot, will emerge;

“OVER the past 150 years, German-Russian relations have played a crucial role in shaping the course of European history.”

EUROPE'S CURRENT DILEMMA

Europe and its leading nation, Germany, have been emasculated; men are not tough, the people are weaklings, society is woke, globalisation and mass immigration are designed to destroy Europe and Western Civilisation.

Writing for the conservative *Quadrant* website, Oliver Hartwich lamented:

“The combination of Merkel's sixteen years and Scholz's three has left problems too deep for quick fixes. That is the price Germany must pay for too many years of politics without leadership.

“I cannot help but see Germany's trajectory as a cautionary tale for other Western democracies. It is what happens when nations prioritise short-term political management over long-term vision, grow complacent about their achievements, and allow their core infrastructure, security and economic structures to decay.

“I wonder if I will ever again recognise the country of my birth as the Germany I knew.” (“German Götterdämmerung”, *Quadrant* online, 3 April, 2025).

Another article in this context worth a read is “Germany and the Future of National Populism” on *The Liberal Patriot* blog, 24 March, 2025 by Henry Olsen.

This has been going on for decades and something has to give. The entire system including the judiciary, big business, bureaucracy and politi-

cal family values and conservative religion will be restored.

Hitler did just that after the decadence of the Roaring Twenties which lasted 10 years. But we have had 60 years of decadence that society needs to purge and for leaders to align with a conservative sentiment.

Today's groups in Europe such as the AfD, Freedom Party, National Rally, Reform Party, etc. are old-fashioned conservatives and in no way “far right.” But could they eventually move far right? Perhaps, under circumstances such as a worldwide economic depression or gaining power and deciding to hold on to it to ensure the reversal of wokeism due to their longing for old Western values, together with restoration and expansion. Will it be a gradual slide toward extremism or other forces that save Europe?

When we look back at Napoleon, Mussolini and Hitler, they pushed back at the “left” of their day while simultaneously adopting economic and social models that were meant to uplift their peoples. To a degree, Bismark and Wilhelm II did similarly.

The eventual European leader will be unlike Hitler initially: someone of noble or royal European lineage and who is classy, diplomatic and captivating. A leader of a European Confederation with a single treasury and military. Not a United Europe of forced integration and the end of national diversity.

Continued next page

Europe has been put to sleep — in a planned and well organised way, by the intelligentsia. It needs to wake up from its slumber and there are clear indications of this stirring. A clamp has been gradually strangling Europe from reviving and thus resisting the left, but the yoke will be removed. Europe will be emancipated!

An influence may come from the more conservative nations of eastern Europe and even conservative Russia. Europe and Russia need each other now more than ever and they will awaken to this political rapprochement in due course.



Statue of Ivan III (Ivan the Great), Grand Prince of Moscow, with the symbol of the double-headed eagle on his shield.

HISTORICAL AFFINITY AND RIVALRY

Much of what is being discussed herein has ancient roots. As Rome split into eastern and western regions, the eastern one was usurped by the Macedonian, Serbian and Bulgarian kingdoms. With the fall of Constantinople in 1402, two small states continued the Eastern tradition, Trebizond and Nicaea. Later, the Byzantine Empire was restored but fell to the Turks in 1453.

However, some aspects of the Eastern Empire transferred to Imperial Russia under the auspices of Ivan III (reigned 1462-1505, often called “Ivan the Great”) who was regarded as the first national sovereign of Russia. Even Peter the Great (reigned 1682-1725) claimed to continue the Eastern Roman Empire and became known as the Czar (Caesar) of “all the Russias.” But it was truly the nations of central Europe (*Mitteleuropa*), more-or-less within the lands of the Habsburgs, that inherited the eastern leg. These became known as the Austrian Empire (*Österreich*) after the abolition of the Holy Roman Empire, and later still the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the 19th century.

“By his marriage in 1472 to Zoë (Sophia), niece of the last Byzantine emperor, Constantine XI Palaeologus, Ivan also made creditable his claim to be the protector of the Orthodox church. Soon after his marriage Ivan added the two-headed eagle of the Byzantine escutcheon to his own coat of arms and modelled his regime on that of the autocratic Byzantine rulers, and drastically curtailed the powers and privileges of the other Russian princes and the Russian aristocracy. Ivan also issued the first Muscovite legal code in 1497.” (“Ivan III Vasilyevich,” *Microsoft Encarta*).

His marriage to Zoë was arranged by the Pope in the hope of bringing the Russians into the Roman church. Instead, “The marriage was of importance in establishing the claim of Russian rulers to be the successors of the Greek emperors and the protectors of Orthodox Christianity (theory of the Three Romes, of which Moscow was to be the third and last ... Ivan took the title of Tsar, i.e. Caesar and the practice of court ceremonial).” (William Langer, *Encyclopedia of World History*, p. 342)

So, some aspects of the Eastern Empire were transferred, politically, to Russia and it may

be that this was a cause of friction between the old Holy Roman Empire (as well as the Austro-Hungarian and German Empires) and Imperial Russia. It may be again if and when the history and heritages of Europe and Russia are revived in opposition to modern wokeism and the ideology of globalisation.

This rivalry and “love-hate relationship” is ongoing. History informs us that it may be a “love” relationship in the not-too-distant future because the two sides really do need each other.

There is a very strong possibility of a German-led United Europe and Russia closely cooperating for some time prior to their falling out yet again in accordance with historical rhythms. Watch for a United Europe developing an antagonistic approach toward the Anglo-Keltic led nations.

In an article on this German-Russian relationship, Birgit Görtz outlined the “Millennium of love-hate” between Germans and Russians (*Deutsche Welle*, 5 October, 2012). Written thirteen years ago, he explained that the relationship between Germany and Russia at that time was far from friendly. However, an exhibition in Berlin highlighted that throughout the last millennium, the two nations have not consistently been adversaries; there were periods when they enjoyed a strong friendship.

Let us explore some of this, because Germany is destined to lead Europe back to dominance. As a proportion of the population of the world, Germany has declined significantly since World War 2. Especially Prussia in the east, now with only around 16.4 million inhabitants. The economy is a mess and debts are shocking. Society is breaking down.

Germany needs the other nations of Europe to be powerful again as it cannot be a world power on its own. It also needs Russian assistance. This may sound a little odd to the reader due to the war in Ukraine and the current antagonisms between Russia and the majority of nations that consist of the European Union. But who says this will last?

History may provide a model that we can observe which can lead us to understand the future. Current events are the moment we are living in — they are not the overall picture.

HISTORICAL PRECEDENTS

The relationship between the Germans and various European nations on one hand, and Russia on the other, has been rather convoluted. Dating back to the 1300-1500s, the Teutonic Knights (close entities with the Holy Roman Empire) invaded the Baltic area and part of what became known as Russia.

Overall, though, engagement between Europe and Russia was limited because the Holy Roman Empire was primarily concentrated on Central and Western Europe. In those days, geographic separation between the Holy Roman Empire and Russia (historically referred to as *Moscovia*), resulted in rare instances of direct political or military engagement.

Additionally, the Holy Roman Empire was predominantly a Western European entity characterised by a strong Catholic cultural identity, in contrast to the distinct cultural identity of the Russian territories.

Note, though: “Germany, of course, has exerted an enormous influence on Russia down through the centuries, although neither Russians nor Germans like to admit it. Germans have ruled Russia (they even institutionalized favoritism: “*Bironovshchina*” during the rule of Tzarina Anna [1730–40]); they constituted the most successful part of its military and commercial corps; they raised the Tsar’s children and colonized Russia’s barren lands.

In the 19th century up to half of all governors and high-ranking army officers in Russia were of German descent. When Tsar Nicolas I asked the conqueror of the Caucasus, General Yermolov, how he wanted to be rewarded, the general reportedly replied, ‘Your Majesty, make me German!’ At different points of Russian history, the ‘German factor’ had a substantial effect on Russia’s trajectory. Had it not been for this factor, Russia might have moved in a whole different direction.” (“Russia’s Love Affair with Germany” *The American Interest*, 27 August 2015, by Lilia Shevtsova) [emphasis mine]

The influence of German born Catherine the Great who reigned as Empress of Russia (1762-96), cannot be under-estimated. The expansion of the Empire, modernisation together with military and economic reforms, greatly assisted with the

development of the country. She imported around 30,000 Germans with the number eventually swelling to 2.4 million by the 1980s. Today only 500,000 still live in the countries of the former Soviet Union.



German princess Sophia Augusta Frederica would marry Russia's Peter III and become Catherine the Great, Empress of Russia in 1762.

For over 200 years, Napoleon (whose empire was joined by the western portion of the Holy Roman Empire) followed by Germany, entered into various treaties. Let us take a closer look at this, and based on history, predict if this is possible again.

- ***The Treaties of Tilsit*** (1807): was formalised between Napoleon and Tsar Alexander I of Russia which concluded the War of the Fourth Coalition and initiated a Franco-Russian alliance, although this alliance deteriorated over time.

- ***League of the Three Emperors*** (1873): founded by Otto von Bismarck, which included Russia, Germany, and Austria-Hungary. However, following Bismarck's removal from office in 1890 by Emperor Wilhelm II, his successors opted to align with Austria in its rivalry with Russia for dominance in the Balkans. This decision ultimately led Germany

to engage in conflict with Russia during World War I from 1914 to 1918. (NB: there was no formal treaty for the League, but a series of agreements and diplomatic initiatives).

- ***Reinsurance Treaty*** (1887): this confidential agreement orchestrated by Bismarck between Germany and Russia and backed by Wilhelm II, sought to preserve peace in Europe by guaranteeing mutual assistance in the event of an attack by France on Germany or Austria on Russia.

- ***Treaty of Björkö*** (1905): a brainchild of Wilhelm II. This secret military treaty was destined to be an unsuccessful endeavour and did not last long.

- ***Treaty of Brest-Litovsk*** (1918): the treaty, concluded between Russia and Germany, signified Russia's exit from World War I and resulted in substantial territorial losses for Russia to Germany.

- ***Treaty of Rapallo*** (1922): this accord, signed by Weimar Germany and Soviet Russia, re-established diplomatic relations, renounced any territorial and financial claims, and initiated trade partnerships.

- ***Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact*** (1939): often referred to as the Nazi-Soviet Pact, the agreement encompassed a ten-year non-aggression treaty between Germany and the Soviet Union, along with clauses for economic collaboration and territorial expansion. There were even attempts to bring the Soviets into the Germany-Italian-Japanese Axis, but this failed. Prior to this, the Russians permitted Nazi pilots to train in their country; while the Nazi pilots in turn, trained the Russians.

HISTORY REPEATS, DOES IT NOT?

In this regard, I wrote to the esteemed and famous Professor Anthony Sutton (1925-2002) over 40 years ago about the possibility of cooperation between a future United Europe and Russia. In response he wrote the following in a letter to me dated 17 December, 1984:

"From the facts you present it seems we agree that Europe will become a united socialist federation cooperating with a Soviet Russia. This ultimately must isolate the United States.

"My guess is that the real challenge will come after the year 2000. It will pose a weakened United States versus the rest of the world. A sad but seemingly inevitable fate."

European leaders discuss sanctions against Russia while on a call with US President Trump. While Europe tries to wean itself from reliance on the US, there is still much American input into world affairs. Left to right: Polish Prime Minister Tusk, Ukrainian President Zelensky, French President Macron, UK Prime Minister Starmer, German Chancellor Merz.



Ukraine Presidency/Ukrainian Pre/Planet Pix via ZUMA Press Wire/Shutterstock

At that time I thought that Russia might evolve into some sort of Imperial power and that someone from royal stock might become the focus of the nation as part of a constitutional monarchy to unite all the tribes and nations of Russia. It was not going to last as a Communist or Soviet system.

Also, that Europe was going to eventually turn extreme-right while America and the Israelite nations would turn extreme-left. Instead Europe went in the opposite direction (as did America, Britain, et al.) until the rise of Trump to (temporarily) arrest this trend. However, in Europe there are strong undercurrents to push back the Continent to the to the centre. From there, under all sorts of pressures and duress, Europe will move to the real extreme-right and find its natural ally in a right-wing Russia. My view is that this is still going to occur some day.

EUROPEAN DEFENCE FORCE

This naturally leads to a brief discussion of an approaching European Defence Force. But let's not get too excited or ahead of ourselves. In an article titled "Europe's half-baked rearmament boom is already turning into a fiasco" published in *The Telegraph*, 26 March, 2025, renowned editor and journalist, Ambrose Evans-Pritchard reveals how tenuous all of this is. Yet it is a start.

This writer does not agree with Evans-

Pritchard's assessment of Trump himself but agrees that the rearmament of Europe looks less impressive than originally presented. It will take some time to implement and to become a threat to the immense power of the United States with its technological advantage and huge bases around the world, etc.

Because Germany spent \$1.8 trillion to modernise East Germany, much of infrastructure spending for West Germany was abandoned for decades. Now that the debt ceiling has been lifted by \$1 trillion, the SPD have pressured the CDU to spend tens of billions on infrastructure in the West. The Greens have been promised \$100 billion for "green spend." What is left over of this \$1 trillion will be spent on the German military over 10 years, in addition to the combined European Union military expenditure of 27 nations. This is very ineffective, and it will take many years to resolve this inherent weakness and to forge a single command structure and synchronised forces. None of this is or will be an "overnight sensation."

The US spends over \$900 billion *per annum* on its military, compared to around \$370 billion by the EU nations. America's GDP is approximately 26% of the world's versus the EU's 15%. Germany alone is 4.3% of the world's GDP and possesses the 3rd largest economy in the world.

SOMETHING HAS TO GIVE

The growing tensions in Europe between the globalist/woke left and Traditionalist/Patriotic right continue unabated. Anger toward the left and hatred between the two camps deepens as each day unfolds.

Eventually the people of Europe will rise up and take back their continent to protect their civilisation and the elites will pay dearly.

Europe may trend back to true democracy for a while after their bitter experiences with the woke, semi-authoritarian elites, but would then slide toward the siren call of the real far-right — a sort of supra-European fascism or something similar. This is when a militaristic German-led Europe will rise, allied with Russia and others (temporarily) against the Anglo-Keltic powers. We just don't know when, because we cannot fast forward prophecy based on all that arises in the world and think prophecy is

European affairs. **A strong Germany means consolidation followed by a catastrophic war; a weak Germany creates a multilateral concert of powers and multistate competition (often involving war, but not on nearly as large a scale). For Europe this cycle of German rise and fall has run its course three times — the Holy Roman Empire, Imperial Germany, Nazi Germany —** and is only now entering its fourth iteration with the reunified Germany". (Zeihan, 2007 "The Coming Era of Russia's Dark Rider.") [emphasis mine. Read also *In Europe's Name* by Timothy Ash.]

In this context, a future European empire (called Babylon and Tyre in the prophecies) is shown to be trading with Russia and others: "Javan, Tubal, and Meshech traded with you; they exchanged human beings and vessels of bronze for your merchandise." (Ezekiel 27:13. Compare Revelation 18:13).

“A MILITARISTIC German-led Europe will rise, allied with Russia against the Anglo-Keltic powers.”

going to be fulfilled any day now. What is interesting though, is that things are stirring in Europe. If it eventually goes fascistic and America in years to come goes liberal again, the game will be on. But that is years away and will not happen overnight.

The Germans are a fascinating and highly talented people who have been central to world history. Notice a chilling comment in an article on Russia by Peter Zeihan:

“At the risk of sounding like a high school social studies teacher (or even George Friedman), **history really does run in cycles.** Take Europe for example. European history is a chronicle of the rise and fall of its geographic center. **As Germany rises, the powers on its periphery buckle under its strength and are forced to pool resources in order to beat back Berlin. As Germany falters, the power vacuum at the middle of the Continent allows the countries on Germany's borders to rise in strength and become major powers themselves.**

“Since the formation of the first ‘Germany’ in 800, this cycle has set the tempo and tenor of

Finally, consider the astute observation by George Santayana (philosopher and poet): “Those who cannot learn from history are doomed to repeat it.” Given the above, we can predict that the Germans and European allies are positioned to repeat their history.

Historian John Wheeler-Bennett wrote that since the 1740s, “Relations between Russia and Germany have been **a series of alienations, distinguished for their bitterness, and of rapprochements, remarkable for their warmth.** A cardinal factor in the relationship has been the existence of an independent Poland. When separated by a buffer state, the two great Powers of eastern Europe have been friendly, whereas a contiguity of frontiers has bred hostility.” (John W. Wheeler-Bennett, “Twenty Years of Russo-German Relations: 1919-1939”, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 25, No. 1, 1946, pp. 23-43.) [emphasis mine]

Will history repeat itself yet again? Ecclesiastes 1:9-10 indicates this strong possibility! □

BIBLE STUDY

by Dr. James Ricks & Natalie Ricks, M.A.

WHAT IS GOD'S OBJECTIVE FOR MANKIND?

DEVELOPING TRUE AND LOVING RELATIONSHIPS WITH US

God is developing new members of His family. Therefore, we need to be more like God, full of unselfish love. We must repent of our selfish, sinful ways and learn to resist them, thereby building truly loving character. This has always been the number one goal. Note what is said in the Old Testament:

Deuteronomy 6:4-6, "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! 5 You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. 6 And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart." (NKJV)

Jeremiah 31:33-34, "But this is the covenant that I will make... I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 34 No more shall every man teach his neighbor... for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them..."

Somewhere in the near future, everyone will know God and will have learned to love Him. All

mankind, except the defiantly wicked, will have a loving relationship with God. Wow! This is the goal of the core of God's law, the Ten Commandments.

Mark 12:28-31, "Then one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, perceiving that He had answered them well, asked Him, 'Which is the first commandment of all?'"

Verse 29, "Jesus answered him, 'The first of all the commandments is: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. 30 And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.'" This is the first commandment. 31 And the second, like it, is this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." There is no other commandment greater than these.'"

Jesus summarized the objectives of the Ten Commandments. The first four are to teach us how to love God and the rest are to guide us as to how to love each other. Jesus stumped his rivals and critics with this analysis.

Matthew 22:34-40, "But when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. 35 Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, 36 'Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?' 37 Jesus said to him, 'You shall love the

Continued next page

BIBLE STUDY

LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ 40 On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”

Verse 46, “And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore.”

Christ left His smart but worldly critics speechless.

BELIEVERS MUST PRACTICE SELFLESS, GODLY LOVE

Paul told the immature Corinthians that they needed to understand why they were given spiritual gifts — so they could learn to start acting in a mature, loving manner and understand agape [Greek: love, charity] love. Sadly, they used their gifts to show off more than to help others.

1 Corinthians 12:31, “But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way.”

Paul said it is fine to desire gifts but the better truly Christian way is...

1 Corinthians 13:1-2, “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. 2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.”

The Apostle Paul is using hyperbole to make his point. Even if someone had the gifts of speaking in different “tongues” (languages), mighty teachings, deep knowledge and faith, if they used them without sincere, selfless love it would all be meaningless. Love is BOTH a gift and a fruit of the Holy Spirit. Note Galatians 5:22-24. Without this fruit, talents and gifts are NOTHING.

1 Corinthians 13:3, “And if I give all my goods

to the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it is of no profit to me.” (BBE)

Charitable giving made not out of love, but instead for virtue signaling or for one’s public image, is spiritually empty. During the Vietnam war, some young monks were persuaded to burn themselves alive in an attempt to push for another administration in Saigon. All that was wasted effort.

1 Corinthians 13:4, “Love suffers long and is kind; love envies not; love makes no parade, is not puffed up...” (MNT)

Without agape love, spiritual gifts are like orchestra instruments played badly — they are just strident, selfish music. Gifts used with Godly love are absolutely beautiful.

Continuing in verse 5, love, “...is not rude, nor selfish, nor easily provoked. Love bears no malice, never rejoices over wrong-doing, 6 but rejoices when the truth rejoices. 7 It knows how to be silent, it is trustful, hopeful, patient, enduring. 8 Love never fails; but though there are prophecies, they will fail; though there are tongues, they will cease; though there is knowledge, it will be superseded.”

Spiritual gifts like knowledge and diverse languages — even prophecy — may fail, but love? Never. Once all is made known, our special gifts will be unnecessary, but love will continue.

WHAT ARE THE BEST SPIRITUAL GIFTS?

Paul is in the process of answering this question. He is first explaining to the immature Corinthian church that first we must have agape love. All their virtue signaling and competition as to who is most spiritual is futile. After this lesson he continues to answer the question.

1 Corinthians 13:11-13, “When I was a child I spoke like a child, felt like a child, thought like a child; now that I am become a man, I have done with childish things. 12 For now we see as in a mirror, and are baffled, but then face to face; now I

BIBLE STUDY

know in fragments, but then shall I understand even as I also have been understood.

“13 Faith, Hope, Love endure — these three; but the greatest of these is Love.”

The big three gifts are FAITH, HOPE, AND LOVE! And the greatest is clearly love. Even with growth, as long as we are human we understand only partially. Someday when Christ returns and we are fully born into God’s family, we will see and understand real love.

1 John 3:1-2, “Behold what manner of love the Father has given us in allowing us to be called ‘Children of God!’ And that is what we are. For this reason the world does not recognize us, because it did not know Him.

“2 We are God’s children now, beloved; what we shall be has never yet been made manifest. But we know that when He is manifested we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him even as He is.”

Remember, no one can look at God directly face to face because He is awesome, bright, and powerful. But one day we will be like Him, or at least made of the same spiritual material and will see Him directly. How wonderful!

Paul has one more piece of advice to give us all and it is to desire a gift that will allow us to share the gospel with others.

1 Corinthians 14:1-3, “Hotly pursue this love, yet seek earnestly spiritual gifts, and chiefly that you may prophesy. 2 For he who speaks in a ‘tongue’ speaks not to man but to God, for no one understands him, but in the Spirit he utters secret truths. 3 But he who prophesies, addresses words to men that build up, encourage, and console.”

The gift of prophecies means the ability to teach, and not just about prophecy.

Whether we teach in a public speaking forum or privately, individual to individual, it is so potentially valuable. It is valuable to the specific congregation and also to outsiders. We can encourage those who are depressed and explain that God will one day resurrect all who have passed away. God will judge righteously — He will take care of them. God is love.

“For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Romans 8:18). □



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BIBLE CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

LESSON TWENTY: TITHING & GIVING PART TWO

Tithing and generous giving are biblical injunctions applicable to all people who choose to follow the way of God. The dedication of ten percent of one's income to God is a private act of worship and thanksgiving which recognizes Him as Creator. It is by means of the tithes and offerings of its faithful membership and interested co-workers that the scriptural commissions of the Church of God are being fulfilled.

DOCTRINAL OVERVIEW

The entire universe belongs to God. He designed it and created it; He sustains and maintains it. God, in fact, owns everything.

God created the material universe, including the earth and its resources, as a fit environment for an even greater creation. It was here that God placed man and began the creation of His own character in children eventually destined to be born into His own family. Thus, this earth and its vast store of animal, vegetable, and mineral resources is only a preliminary step in a much larger drama unfolding progressively before mankind. It is God's purpose that human beings should eventually attain an infinitely greater role in rulership over God's creation by inheriting not merely this world and its resources but even the entire universe (Hebrews 2:6-8).

Every human being owes his entire existence to God — his very life and living. In designing man, God knew it would be in man's best interest to worship his Creator in the fullest, most logical manner. Prayer is an important vehicle for that worship. So is obedience to God's Law, which is His system for governing man's proper behavior and activities. Tithing is an integral part of that Law.

Tithing was ordained by God as one of His

ways of teaching man how to honor and worship Him. Tithing is one of the most important ways by which a godly person of deep conviction and dedication can express his acknowledgement of, and appreciation for, God's blessings in his physical life today. Man, through tithing, continuously acknowledges that God is the Creator and Owner of the Universe, and as such has a prior claim on the whole content and produce of our lives.

Tithing accomplishes two other important goals in the Christian's life. Through it we build godly character by developing a giving spirit. Simultaneously, we are using our resources to share with others both the message and the blessings of the Christian life. Tithing serves as a means of expressing one's love towards both God and his fellow man. The biblical injunction of cheerfully giving ten percent of one's own income is a physical procedure designed to teach profound spiritual principles and lessons. It is, indeed, in mankind's best interests.

Since tithing is biblically enjoined upon all who are called to obey God, the Church of God strongly teaches the overall laws, principles and basic administrative guidelines for tithing as revealed in the Old Testament instructions of God. But tithing,

like prayer, is a very private and personal expression of an individual's relationship with his God. It reflects one's faith in God and one's appreciation for the blessings that He has bestowed. Therefore, actual implementation of how one should calculate his tithes is left strictly up to the faith and understanding of that particular person. Tithing is a matter between a person and God.

God's Church has always been, and shall always be, a work of faith — a work totally relying on God for support and sustenance, as well as for guidance and leadership. Nonetheless, the Work of the Church in the electronic age of the 21st century requires considerable resources. Gone are the days when itinerant evangelists would walk from town to town preaching the gospel wherever they could find an audience. The media utilized today are the printing press, radio, television, the Internet and mass-audience campaigns.

Moreover, the Church recognizes its responsibility to help the poor, indigent and needy in (and outside) the Church who are not always able to receive government help or assistance from some other source.

Thus, based on biblical precedents, the Church sees three basic financial needs for which the membership has a responsibility:

1) Support of the Work of the Church, both in its efforts to present the gospel to the world and in providing for the spiritual care and growth of its membership.

2) Attendance at the annual festivals.

3) Assistance to fellow Church members in temporary or permanent financial straits.

These needs are met by a three-part system of tithing on the part of Church members:

1) With some exceptions, all Church members contribute a tithe of their income for the support of the Work of the Church. This contribution is generally supplemented by various voluntary offerings. This goes to carry out the first need indicated above.

2) Members set aside a tithe to meet the expenses of the annual festivals. This money is saved by the individual and does not come to the Church except in voluntary offerings given at the Feast being observed. While those members who can are encouraged to save the biblically stated ten percent

of their income in this "festival fund," it is recognized that this is not possible for all.

3) Members who are able have the responsibility — based upon biblical precedent — to assist others, members and non-members alike. By these means, each Christian expresses his worship of God and outgoing concern for his fellow man as he practices true Christianity and develops character

DOCTRINAL EXPOSITION

CALCULATING TITHES AND OFFERINGS: Tithing is an act of worship; it is a private matter between the individual and God. The Church does not "enforce" or "police" tithing, but simply teaches the responsibility to tithe. Each individual has the responsibility to "honor the Lord with his substance and with the firstfruits of all his produce" (Proverbs 3:9). God has determined that the minimum standard whereby one honors Him is a tithe of one's income. However, what is to be considered income is not necessarily the gross amount taken in. In ancient Israel one tithed his "increase" or produce because there were no tangible expenses. This is not true in modern society. A continual tithing of one's investment would erode the money-producing base. Therefore, it is recognized that what is to be tithed is what comes in over and above the monetary investment.

It is considered the responsibility of each individual to determine what his "increase" is. A businessman would naturally deduct the cost of doing business before computing his tithe. If one invested an amount of money which had already been tithed, he would not tithe the entire investment each year, only the actual profits. These examples illustrate that only one's true "increase" is to be tithed. To reiterate, each person should conscientiously determine for himself what his increase is as an act of worship and of obedience to God.

Some individuals wonder whether one should tithe before or after government taxes. Here are some general principles to consider.

First of all, it is not the tithe that has become a burden, but skyrocketing tax rates. The "tithe" is always a tenth, and never a burden. But taxation rates vary widely and are subject to constant adjustments. A fundamental fact generally overlooked is that in ancient Israel, each individual head of household

was responsible for making his own decisions, before his God, as to what constituted “increase.” Nowhere in all the Bible are specific details or regulations given. God’s law provided each head of household with an area of land on which he did not have to pay property tax, much less rent or purchase price (Numbers 27:11; 32:1-5, 33-42; Joshua 13:8ff., n.b. v. 14). This was the acme of financial security.

Furthermore, when God gave instructions about tithing cattle, He did not require the first animal that came down the chute — even though

charitable or religious organizations. In effect, this suggests that governments can exercise the right to a prior claim — prior even, to that of God’s — to one’s earned income. This becomes obvious when certain countries have legislated eighty to ninety percent tax rates for individuals in the upper income bracket. For individuals in this category to pay tithes on their gross income requires over one hundred percent of their income, a self-evident logical absurdity.

Obviously, whenever any government allows its tax rate to become prohibitive, it is proper for

“TITHING is an act of worship; it is a private matter between the individual and God.”

He could have: He asked for the tenth. If no tenth animal came through or passed under the rod, God did not take anything. He simply did not claim the first tenth, only a tenth (Leviticus 27:32-33). The conclusion is that the Israelites did tithe on the bulk of their income. God allowed offerings to take care of that. We follow the same practice today. The Church does not generate a whole legal code governing the interpretation of “increase.”

In Israel, under Saul, ten percent was exacted from the people for human government in addition to the tithing system God had instituted when He had established the nation as His own. Many other burdens were imposed by Saul besides the ten percent tax (1 Samuel 8:10-18). The imposition of taxes in Saul’s reign has an important bearing on the question of tithing before or after taxes today. Did Samuel make a ruling that Saul’s tax was now deductible from one’s increase prior to determining God’s tithe? No such ruling is anywhere recorded in Scripture.

The Church today has no biblical precedent for deciding that all taxes withheld from salaries are deductible prior to figuring the tithe. On the other hand, the governments of this world seldom limit themselves to a ten percent tax structure. Many are collecting twenty-five percent, thirty percent, forty percent or more in income taxes — oftentimes without allowing any deductions for donations to

the individual whose tax burdens are significant to seek relief from that tax burden by modifying his increase or tithable base. The laws of certain countries — the United States is the best example — permit the taxpayer to adjust his tax base downward by the amount of his charitable contributions. This mitigates the effect of the tax, especially for those in higher tax brackets, and allows a person to more easily continue to tithe on his gross income. In any case, the individual, not the Church, must make whatever decision is appropriate. Whether in a general situation or on any specific question, the individual himself is responsible before God and he alone must answer to God for his stewardship. This is crucial.

Attitude is the key factor. The Church’s doctrine on tithing must not be used by members as if it were a legalistically worded personal income tax form, hopefully providing various “loopholes” to lessen tax burdens. No one shall ever enter God’s Kingdom with a miserly, selfish, grasping attitude of “get” instead of the loving, sharing, helping attitude of “give.” The individual must know, in his deepest conscience before God, that he is living in faith before God and is staying on the generous side of his personally calculated tithing obligations.

It is the Church’s and the ministry’s responsibility to teach the general principle and to provide biblical examples as guidelines. With every nation

having its own tax laws, and constantly changing its law at that, there is no possible way for the Church to make a definitive and equitable decision applicable to everyone in the matter of tithing before or after taxes. The same principle holds true for any other potential deduction used to determine one's real "increase" or tithable base.

Before coming to a decision regarding whether to tithe before or after taxes, an individual needs to consider several things: his own financial capacity, the tax rate, the deductibility or nondeductibility of charitable donations, and the benefits received from taxes. These factors vary from country to country. For example, many countries have free education, free medical care, child allowances, and many other systems of financial returns on the tax dollar. How one figures his tithable base and what deductions he makes, are both very personal, private matters between the individual and his God. Any questions of conscience should be more than resolved with the giving of generous offerings when one is able so to give. God is calling us to be co-workers in His work today and preparing us to be sons in His Family tomorrow. Our financial responsibilities toward Him are a significant aspect of our stewardship — they are not part of a game. God knows our minds and our hearts, and whatever we do or think is obvious to Him.

Other factors may influence one's decisions in determining the precise nature of his tithing responsibilities. For example, in a situation where a converted husband has an adamantly antagonistic mate opposed to tithing, the man may consider his wife entitled to half the income. This means that the man pays tithes and offerings only on one-half of his actual income. Further, a wife whose antagonistic mate prevents her from tithing at all should consider herself free of any obligation.

God's Church uses the tithes of its members and interested co-workers to pay for the spreading of the gospel to the world, which is the Church's commission (Matthew 24:14; 28:19-20). These tithes also serve to support the ministry whose primary concern is care of the local congregations. These two broad concerns cover a multitude of specific activities on the part of the Church.

Yet the basic tithe on income does not fulfill

one's obligation to God. It simply represents the minimum of a Christian's responsibility. Most Christians freely give offerings well above what is required.

In ancient Israel other dues were also required (firstlings, firstfruits, redemption of the firstborn, etc.). In addition, the Israelites were commanded not to appear empty-handed at the annual festivals; they were rather to bring offerings, each according to God's blessings (Deuteronomy 16:16-17). These were offerings of animals on the altar. The material offering today is monetary, and is contributed to help the Church do its Work rather than being burnt on the altar. The amount is voluntary, to be determined by each person on the basis of what he can afford and how he has been blessed by God. It is not the policy of the Church to take up offerings at regular Church services. Normally, each individual sends in his tithe and offerings privately. The only offerings taken up in services are on the seven annual holy days in accordance with the biblical command.

FESTIVAL FUND: Attendance at the annual festivals is considered mandatory for Church members except under unusual circumstances. Most holy day services are conducted in the local church areas and do not require extensive travel or time away from home. However, the Feast of Tabernacles is conducted at a few central locations and generally requires some travel as well as necessitating a person's being away from home for the entire eight days. Consequently, one's participation requires planning ahead.

Based on the precedent of the Old Testament festival tithe, the Church teaches its membership to set aside an additional tithe for festival expenses. Since the calculation of the festival tithe in the Old Testament was slightly different than for the Levitical tithe (omitting cattle but including firstlings, which were usually fewer than ten percent of a flock or herd), the exact percentage of one's income saved for the festivals may be somewhat variable. Nevertheless, the biblical standard is a tithe, even though it may be a test of one's faith to set it aside. If one is unable to save a full tithe, he should save what he can and still attend the festivals.

Continued next page

The precise administration of the festival tithe, in both its saving and its spending, is the sole responsibility of each individual. Those who have more than enough should make their excess available to those less fortunate who are unable to afford to attend the Feast.

The money each member saves in his own festival fund is, of course, his to use — within biblical parameters — for his own enjoyment of the festivals. He may wish to take part or all of his holy day offerings from it, but any given to the Church is done so on a voluntary basis. It is not money for the Church, but money for the individual: to enable him better to worship God, to learn to be a responsible and mature member of the body of Christ, to enjoy the physical pleasures God has made available, and to help others rejoice as well.

ASSISTANCE TO THE NEEDY: While the exact implementation of the Old Testament tithe for “the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow” (Deuteronomy 14:29; 26:12) is not entirely clear, the Church applies it in principle as a method of providing funds for the assistance of the needy. A significant number of members either follow precisely the biblical system of setting aside a tenth of their income in the third and sixth years in a cycle of seven, or they apply the intent of the law by averaging the amount of tithe over every year. The primary goal is, of course, to develop the godly attitude of giving cheerfully to help one’s fellow man. Many people follow this today and have personally experienced the additional blessings that come from so giving.

One should be willing to help others in whatever way possible, whether it be in time donated, in gifts of goods or money to charity, or in one-on-one aid where needed. Of course, this should be for the poor, not from the poor. It is neither wisdom nor godliness to make one’s own self and family destitute in order to help others. A person can give to the point that he destroys his base for producing the income which allows him to give. This does not reflect the mind of God. One has to be willing to sacrifice everything, even one’s own life, if necessary, in the service of God. Yet the time for such sacrifice occurs only on rare occasions. To sacrifice

one’s health or to ruin one’s finances when the occasion does not demand it is foolish.

On the other hand, to withhold aid when one has the ability to give, to help, or to alleviate suffering is often condemned in the Bible. Just as one’s financial resources may be a means of showing love to another person, so is excessive concern about material possessions a way of showing unconcern, selfishness and even hate. Being generous is seldom (never?) criticized in the Bible; lack of generosity is often censured (Matthew 25:31-36).

In the light of varying laws regarding welfare, Social Security, national health programs, etc., which can be considered a part of our assistance to the poor since they are supported by our tax dollars, there is considerable latitude in the interpretation and implementation of this special “poor tithe.” Consequently a person can decide on his own what percentage of his income he shall give to help the poor according as he is able and as God has blessed him. Of course, it is meaningless for those receiving assistance from the Church or government to try to aid others until they are financially sound themselves.

Christians are to care for those in need who are ineligible for government welfare, or who cannot subsist on welfare alone. We must all, as much as possible, go above and beyond the taxes we pay for welfare in taking care of the needy and the handicapped. In fact, biblical law teaches that we must do more than fulfill the poor tithe (Deuteronomy 15:7-11). Even the strict payment of a ten percent poor tithe did not relieve Christians of their continuing responsibility to be concerned for the poor.

THE LAW OF GIVING: Service to God consists of many things. A multitude of people will voice the desire to serve God, whether or not they really intend to seek out the means of doing so. Perhaps no other area is more sensitive in this regard than the financial one. But, as the book of James states, Christian love consists of more than kindly words or sweet platitudes. One can, of course, serve through encouragement, counsel and prayer. But the work of the Church cannot go on in this modern world without the necessary finances. Diligence in this area is often the test of one’s real desire to serve

God, to discover whether one is willing to put one's full faith in His Laws and His Ways.

God is the greatest giver. He is the one who gives life and makes everything possible and enjoyable by His wonderful creation. God has set the example of giving by supplying what could never be repaid, and giving it to those who could never return the favor. Giving is at the heart of Christian love. We all receive; we show our appreciation by offering and contributing what we can to God and to our fellow man. God, in His infinite love, gave us

determines his increase is a personal matter between that person and God.

The most important point to remember is simply that tithing, like prayer, demonstrates the very essence of one's own personal dedication to God, to the Savior, Jesus Christ, and to the very Work of which Christ is the living Head. We cannot enter into God's Kingdom by deception, either in our private prayer lives or in our private tithing lives. We must beware of the "leaven" of the doctrines of either extreme: of the Pharisees, who tithed with

“WE all receive; we show our appreciation by offering and contributing what we can to God and to our fellow man.”

His Son, setting the ultimate example of generosity. The biblical precept of giving tithes and offerings provides man with the opportunity to emulate this facet of God's character in a material as well as a spiritual way.

By establishing a minimum standard of ten percent, God teaches us that we can give more to Him than is "required" — and makes us inwardly richer in the process. Many people have liberally given above and beyond what would be "required" in order to do God's Work more effectively, and to assist the needy in God's Church more fully. As a direct result, these generous Christians have experienced the great rewards, both physically and spiritually, of God's blessing.

Tithing must be — and must so be represented as being — a very personal matter between the individual and his God. It must never become a case of some being more "righteous" than others in determining their tithable base. The offerings of everyone should be sufficiently above and beyond what is "required" (depending on individual circumstances, of course) that any doubts about having tithed fully and properly before God are obviated.

Everyone should be careful in giving specific advice in matters of tithing to others. How one

rigorous, minute, painstaking and self-righteous effort; or, conversely, of those who are careless with their income, think selfishly and do not have a true spirit of giving. Christ commands us to "Give, and it shall be given unto you" (Luke 6:38). Giving is commanded. Nevertheless, God allows us to decide whether we will obey.

Never should any person attempt to "check up" on somebody else concerning faithfulness in tithing. We all should recognize that if a person is being unfaithful in tithing, he will, in all probability and as a natural consequence, be slackening in other equally personal aspects of private Christian life. The attitude and the intent of the heart are the whole thing — they are what counts.

Those who hold, or seek to hold, offices of spiritual responsibility in the Church should be judged by a higher standard. The position of trust that they hold before the brethren presupposes that they have been found fully faithful in the area of tithing and generous giving. Those who teach others what to do are required to first set the proper example in their own lives.


Far more important than an individual member's wisdom regarding the manner in which he determines his increase is his attitude toward it. A truly

converted Christian is full of the spirit of giving-and is not filled with greed, covetousness, selfishness or resentment for having to give to God's work. God looks on the heart, not in the pocketbook. It is where Christ's ministry must also look — on the heart. And indeed, this is what the Church stresses. The Pharisees tithed with punctilious exactness, but it took a widow with two mites to illustrate generosity of heart — she gave her all.

The Bible is replete with financial admonitions, for example, in 2 Corinthians 9:5 Paul states: "Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren..." 2 Corinthians 9:6-9 goes on to fully exemplify God's attitude.

"Remember: sparse sowing, sparse reaping; sow bountifully, and you will reap bountifully. Each person should give as he decided for himself; there should be no reluctance, no sense of compulsion; God loves a cheerful giver. And it is in God's power to provide you richly with every good gift; thus you will have ample means in yourselves to meet each and every situation, with enough to spare for every

good cause. Scripture says of such a man: He has lavished his gifts on the needy, his benevolence stands fast for ever." (NEB)

Tithing is a God-ordained means of giving. It supports the Church, enabling it to become God's instrument in performing His Work of giving that most precious thing, knowledge of the way to salvation and eternal life. Tithing also makes possible material help to hundreds and thousands of unfortunate people who do not have enough. Tithing is a natural and living law of God which is awarded in many ways, even though reward is not the object of that giving. Many faithful tithe-paying Christians have learned that one cannot out give God. The opportunity to tithe is considered a privilege. Those who have dedicated their lives to God can testify that there is no greater blessing than that which comes from the outgoing actions of helping others. Tithing is an expression of honor, love and obedience to God and His laws, and of outgoing concern toward both the brethren in the Church and the people in the world. 

SUMMARY: Read these scriptures in your own Bible:

- **Proverbs 3:9 — Honor the Lord with thy substance.**
 - **Matthew 24:14, 28:19-20 — Church's commission to spread the gospel.**
 - **Deuteronomy 16:16-17 — Holy Day offerings.**
 - **Matthew 25:31-36 — Jesus' admonition to help the poor and needy.**
 - **Deuteronomy 14:29, 26:12 — Assistance to the needy.**
 - **Deuteronomy 15:7-11 — Attitude we must have in helping the poor and needy.**
-

QUESTIONS (ANSWERS BELOW):

1. The church is there to enforce and police the member's tithing and giving. True or False?
 2. Fill in the blanks of this scripture from Proverbs 3:9: "Honour the Lord with thy _____, and with the _____ of all thine increase."
 3. The increase of one's income is to be determined by...
a) scripture b) God c) the church d) the individual
 4. Whenever the government tax becomes prohibitive, it is proper for the individual to modify his or her increase or tithable base. True or False?
 5. A key factor in tithing and giving is...
a) the Law b) the church c) attitude d) a set formula for figuring increase
-

6. The basic tithe on income fulfills our obligation to God. True or False?
7. God commands us to bring offerings before Him on the seven annual Holy Days. True or False?
8. Regarding assistance to the needy, which of the following statements are false?
- The primary goal is to develop the godly attitude of giving cheerfully to help one's fellow man.
 - No blessings are promised nor implied for helping the poor and needy.
 - Helping the needy could be in the form of time, material goods or money.
 - Even the poor should contribute to the fund for the poor.
 - To withhold aid when one has the ability to give is often condemned in the Bible.
9. Regarding the "Law of Giving", which of the following statements are true?
- God is the greatest giver.
 - God supplies what could never be repaid.
 - Giving is at the heart of Christian love.
 - God gave us His Son, the ultimate example of generosity.
 - the biblical precept of giving tithes and offerings provides man with an opportunity to emulate this facet of God.
10. Tithing and giving are a private matter between the individual and God, never to be used as a tool to appear more righteous than others because of the amount or how we figure the amount. True or False?
11. Everyone should be careful in giving specific advice in matters of tithing to others. True or False?
12. Giving is commanded by God. True or False?
13. A truly converted Christian is full of the spirit of giving. True or False?
14. God looks on the heart, not the pocketbook. True or False?
15. Which of the following statements are false?
- tithing is a God-ordained means of giving.
 - tithing enables the church to spread the knowledge of the Gospel.
 - tithing makes possible material help to hundreds and thousands.
 - tithing is a natural and living law of God.
 - one cannot out give God.
 - the opportunity to tithe is considered a privilege.
 - tithing is an expression of honor, love and obedience to God and His laws and of outgoing concern toward both the brethren in the church and people in the world.

LESSON TWENTY — ANSWERS:

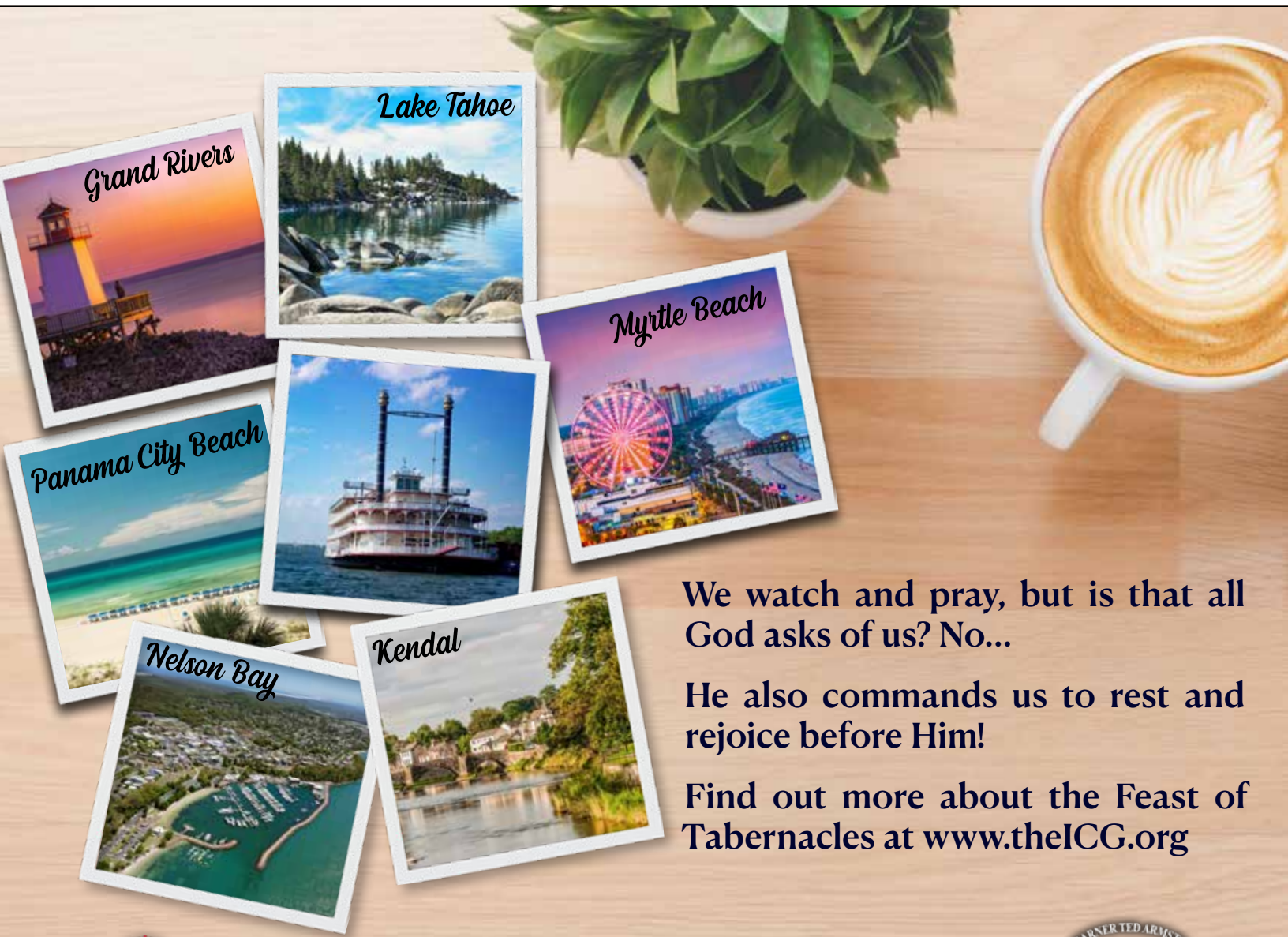
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|----------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|
| 15. (all true, none false) | 10. (true) | 5. (c) |
| 14. (true) | 9. (all true) | 4. (true) |
| 13. (true) | 8. (b and d) | 3. (d) |
| 12. (true) | 7. (true) | 2. (substance, firstfruits) |
| 11. (true) | 6. (false) | 1. (False) |



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