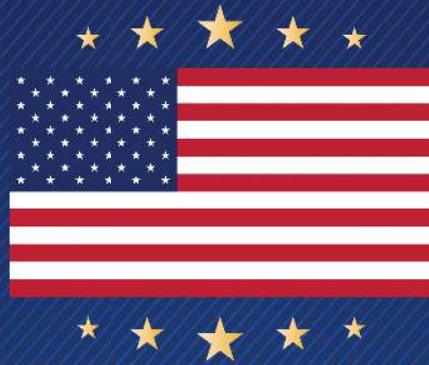


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No Place Like Home

by Mark Armstrong

I don't know how many of you have been around the world. The internet makes it where you don't really need to go. But I'm here to tell you, it's not like the pictures. They don't give you the smells, or anything but beautiful scenery. We can look at pictures!

As many of you know, I spent a year and a half in Israel, and I can attest to the bad smells and dirty people, but beyond that I loved my time in Jerusalem. I interviewed many important figures including Gideon Hausner, who prosecuted Adolph Eichmann. I generally got a feel for the place, learned there are neighborhoods where they will throw rocks at you if you're driving on the Sab-

bath, and almost went to jail for spitting a pistachio shell in the direction of a weird holy man.

I don't ever want to go back, but that was then and this is now. To tell you the truth, I don't even want to leave East Texas, except to go back to Pasadena and show the kids.

Way back in the Seventies (if you can remember), when my Dad offered me the opportunity to go to Israel, I jumped at it. Not that I hadn't been in trouble, I had. One time I invited the college kids and had a big party at Mom and Dad's house. Oh, baby. It didn't turn out well. Before you knew it, half the college was there, along with trouble. I had to interview

with the counselors, and almost got thrown out. Luckily, I wasn't attending college at the time, so what were they to do?

People suspected it was because of the party, but that never came up in discussions with Dad. So I knew there were whispers behind my back, but didn't much care. I had a '69 Mach 1 that I hated to leave, but the offer was too much. I ditched the car with a friend of mine and got on an airplane.

My Dad wrote me a letter that I read when I got on the plane. I'll have to dig that out one of these days. He warned me about the culture and what I might encounter, but it was very upbeat and I took it seriously. The war in Lebanon had not started yet, and I sent money with friends who were going and got clothes. They used to call Beirut the Paris of the Middle East. I doubt if anybody refers to it that way now.

I learned many things, but one thing I've kept with me is that the Arabs tell impossible stories. You can't believe them. As Mom used to say, they'd lie when the truth would do better. I heard many stories, most of them you couldn't believe. The Arabs are impossible braggarts. That's why I'm suspicious of any deal that Trump might make with Iran.



Mark showing Garner Ted, Shirley, and David Armstrong a view of the Mount of Olives during his time in Israel in the early '70s.

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Mark and David Armstrong carry camera equipment while accompanying their dad, Garner Ted Armstrong, at the Berlin wall in 1989. Its fall was one of the most pivotal, prophetic moments in post-WWII history. Germans on both sides were jubilant. They shook hands through holes in the wall and brought tools to help destroy the barrier that had divided Germany for almost 30 years.

UNELECT

Why Our Founding Fathers Wouldn't Stand a

Will some future court action demand that we rip from our *Declaration of Independence* all mention of God? The sacred document says, "...We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted Among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.... WE, THEREFORE, the Representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, that these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be FREE AND INDEPENDENT STATES... And for the support of this Declaration, with firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor."

Thus, the Almighty God is made mention of; indeed, is an integral part of the *Declaration of Independence*. These men knew that the wrath of King George, backed up by the world's mightiest Navy,

ABLE

Chance in Today's America

by Garner Ted Armstrong

would soon descend upon them. They did not take lightly their mutual pledge of their very lives and fortunes, and expected that such a Declaration could indeed cost some, or all of them, their very lives!

Yet, they courageously signed that sacred document! It is a fact of history that God Himself intervened on many, many occasions to grant to our forefathers the freedom and liberty which they sought, and a fact that, through all of America's wars, He has preserved and protected us. Yet, today, millions of our citizens, and, unbelievably the courts of our land have turned their backs on the very God who has sustained us!

God thunders at our peoples: "The show of their countenance doth witness against them; and they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not. Woe unto their soul! For they have rewarded evil unto themselves.

"Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings.

"Woe unto the wicked! It shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him.

"As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths" (Isaiah 3:9-12).

Continued next page

THE “WALL OF SEPARATION”

Once the Constitution had been written, it became obvious that certain vitally important issues had to be addressed. Among them, and most pressing of all at the time, was the issue of religion! Because certain religious sects had gained virtual control over their state, and because religious zealots were busily persecuting those of opposing beliefs, the Congress had to deal with a situation which, if left untended, would have resulted in a “state religion” in the United States.

This was perhaps nowhere quite so poignantly illustrated as in Salem, Massachusetts, where those who were declared “witches” had once been burnt at the stake!

The first amendment settled the issue of states seeking to adopt and then impose a “state religion” on their citizens. It states, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or the press; or the right of the people to peaceably assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”

Thus, the first amendment envisioned a restriction placed ON THE GOVERNMENT, and NOT a restriction placed on the people! It did not say that the people shall never write about, post, publish, display, or mention their religious beliefs in any public place; in schools, government buildings or state-owned properties! It did not say that the name of God or religious symbolism should be forever banished from the halls of government!

There is no more precious right than that of being able to freely proclaim the good news of the coming Kingdom of God! Even the Roman government in Jesus’ day did not interfere with the Jews and their religion, nor did the Romans attempt to arrest Christ for freely proclaiming the Gospel! But given the climate in our country today, and the TREND obvious in decades of court decisions, that right could be in terrible jeopardy!

When Thomas Jefferson, the third President of the United States and author of the *Declaration of Independence* was implored by the Baptist churches in Danbury, Connecticut because they were being persecuted by the “Congregationalists” who were

in control in the state, he wrote a letter which was destined to become famous.

He referred to the first amendment, using the words “wall of separation between church and State.” His statement has been hideously contorted today, and is believed by millions of Americans to be an actual part of the Constitution! It is not, and never has been, but millions assume it is!

Jefferson clearly reiterated that Congress had amended the Constitution so as to KEEP THE GOVERNMENT OUT OF RELIGION, but NOT to KEEP RELIGION OUT OF THE GOVERNMENT! Perhaps the Supreme Court could not decipher these words, but they are quite plain! This is a vital distinction, and one which every citizen should know. Here is what Jefferson wrote:

“Believing with you that religion is a matter which lies solely between a man and his God; that he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship; that the legislative powers of the government reach actions only, and not opinions, I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should ‘make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,’ thus building a wall of separation between church and state. Adhering to this expression of the supreme will of the nation in behalf of the rights of conscience, I shall see with sincere satisfaction the progress of those sentiments which tend to restore man to all of his natural rights convinced he has no natural right in opposition to his social duties.

“I reciprocate your kind prayers for the protection and blessings of the common Father and Creator of man, and tender you and your religious association, assurances of my high respect and esteem.” (1802)

Again, Jefferson mentioned God the Father and Creator in his letter. Clearly, he was redressing the grievances of the Baptists, who were being much put upon by the Congregationalists, who held power in the state. His intent was to prevent government from imposing any particular form of religion on the people. It was NOT his intent to prevent the government or any individual within any governmental office from believing in, displaying, speaking or writing about his or her religion! Nor was it his intent to insure that every government institution, no matter how far removed from the federal government, such as a county hall or a county court, should forever be banned from displaying scriptural references, the Ten Commandments, or the name of God on their buildings or in their documents!

It was not until after World War II, in 1947, that the U.S. Supreme Court cited Jefferson's statement apart from his letter, as if it were some kind of mantra. In 1958, in a court case brought before the Supreme Court (*Baer v. Kolmorgen*), a dissenting Justice warned, "If this Court doesn't stop citing 'separation between church and State,' the American people will very likely begin to think it is part of the Constitution."

Were his words true? Have not YOU supposed that the phrase is found somewhere in the Constitution itself?

It is ASSUMED today that an inviolable part of the Constitution is that no mention of God or religion is to be tolerated in any official government building, and that prayer and reading of scripture is ILLEGAL in our schools!

You are no doubt familiar with various court cases of recent years: a judge was chastised for daring to publish the Ten Commandments on the wall of his courtroom, and the name of God was ordered to be removed from State buildings.

However, while activists seek to find every case of the mention of God in any government institution, it is noteworthy that the oath of office contains the words, "So help me God," and our dollar bills still contain the words, "In God we trust," while the pledge of allegiance to the flag still contains "One nation under God."

GEORGE WASHINGTON BELIEVED IN GOD

George Washington carried the name of the infamous King of England, against whose excesses our original colonies rebelled. He was much more than just our first president. He was president of the convention which framed the Constitution; the President who called for the Bill of Rights; the General of the Continental Army whose daring strategy of crossing the Delaware at night in a freezing snow storm proved pivotal in winning America's independence from Britain.

When I was a lad in school, I was taught to study George Washington's famous "farewell address" to the nation. The reason was because historians deemed it the most significant presidential address of all time. Today, the vast majority of school books on American history omit his address, and those few which might include it omit the portions which mention God, and which warn the nation.

George Washington, holding the beliefs as so eloquently set forth in his farewell address, could never be elected as our president today! We have sunk so far into the mire of Godless amorality and nihilism that his words would call forth nothing but sneers and hoots of derision from millions of our citizens. In that fact lies one of the major reasons why America is going down; why the sun is setting on the American dream; why our nation will soon suffer the most horrible punishments God has ever handed out to a nation!

Here are some key excerpts from what Washington actually said, together with commentary: "... I shall carry it with me to my grave as a strong incitement to unceasing vows that heaven may continue to you the choicest tokens of its beneficence...[he mentions God, using the term "heaven" to refer to the Deity in his opening remarks] that the free Constitution, which is the work of your hands may be sacredly maintained; that its administration in every department may be stamped with wisdom and virtue; that, in time, the happiness of the people of these states, under the auspices of liberty, may be made complete by so careful a preservation and so prudent a use of this blessing... The name American, which belongs to you in your national

capacity, must always exalt the just pride of patriotism more than any appellation derived from local discriminations. With slight shades of difference, you have the same religion, [it was the Christian religion, and not the religion of other nations, such as Hinduism, Shintoism, Taoism, Animism, Paganism, or Islam] manners, habits, and political principles... All obstructions to the execution of the laws, all combinations and associations, under whatever plausible character, with the real design to direct, control, counteract, or awe the regular deliberation and action of the constituted authorities, are destructive of this fundamental principle and of fatal tendency. They serve to organize faction; to give it an artificial and extraordinary force; to put in the place of the delegated will of the nation will of a party, often a small but artful and enterprising minority of the community [how true! Today, the tiniest special interests shriek the loudest, with the result that such Godless initiatives as “Gay Rights” and “same sex marriages” are sanctioned by the courts!], and...to make the public administration the mirror of her ill-concerted and incongruous projects of faction rather than the organ of consistent and wholesome plans, digested by common counsels and modified by mutual interest... However combinations or associations of the above description [minority factions; special interests; activist groups] may now and then answer popular ends, they are likely in the course of time and things to become potent engines by which cunning, ambitious and unprincipled men will be enabled to subvert the people, and to usurp for themselves the reins of government, destroying afterwards the very engines which have lifted them to unjust dominion [such cunning and ambitious men, using the system of democracy to obtain power, end up destroying the democratic process itself].

“Toward the preservation of your government and the permanency of your present happy state, it is requisite...that you resist with care the spirit of innovation upon its principles...One method of assault may be to effect in the forms of the Constitution alterations which will impair the energy of the system, and thus to undermine what cannot be directly overthrown...”

Washington continued, “...The precedent [the written Constitution which precedes any current

arguments; the established document] must always greatly overbalance...any partial or transient benefit which the use can at any time yield. Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports.”

This was the first president, reminding those IN GOVERNMENT that they could only expect to prosper if they remembered to INCLUDE RELIGION AND MORALITY IN GOVERNMENT! Washington wrote the following:

“In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness [religion and morality] — these firmest props of the duties of men and citizens. The mere politician, equally with the pious man, ought to respect and to cherish them. A volume could not trace all their connections with private and public felicity. Let it simply be asked, ‘Where is the security for property, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligation desert the oaths which are instruments of investigation in courts of justice?’”

He continued, “And let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion.” This is a plain truth. Without God’s laws there is simply no moral standard. Evolutionary teachers and liberal leftists; those who believe in “situation ethics,” (if it feels good, do it!) naively believe they can maintain peace and order in society while rejecting the very CAUSE of peace and order, which is God Himself, His written word, and the acknowledgment that He exists, and that His word is sacred, and inviolate.

Washington concluded: “Whatever may be

conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.”

Yet, this is precisely the course that the United States of America has been upon since the days of the Warren Court, and since the incredible series of attacks against religion, and the Constitution itself. There are MILLIONS who believe that a kind of “national morality” can prevail without any mention of God or religion!

But morality does not come from evolving social customs! Because human nature is essentially rebellious toward God and His laws (Romans 8:7), and is primarily composed of vanity, jealousy, lust and greed, any so-called “moral standard” which omits God and His laws is not moral at all, but a temporal adaptation of human amorality dressed up in acceptable words.

Almost sadly, and as if with prophetic insight, Washington’s final statement seemed to indicate that he felt his words would be quickly forgotten. He said, “In offering to you, my countrymen, these counsels of an old and affectionate friend, I dare not hope they will make the strong and lasting impression I could wish — that they would control the usual current of the passions or prevent our nation from running the course which has hitherto marked the destiny of nations...”

And what was the historic course which marked the destiny of nations?

They grew great under leaders of various principles; they became prosperous, fat, self-indulgent, and, eventually, corrupt. They eventually collapsed from within, or were overthrown from without. Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, the Holy Roman Empire, and all the monarchies of Europe underwent the same tiresome evolution: Birth, growth, senility, and death.

Washington dared not hope his words would make such a lasting impression that they would somehow control subjective passions which would gnaw at the roots of the nation.

Without the divine intervention of God, America could not have lasted as long as it has. And now, the seeds of our destruction have been planted within us. We have FORGOTTEN GOD!

Nationally, we have impugned and ridiculed His laws! Those churchmen who give lip service to the Bible preach that we need not OBEY it, but only “believe”! This, a kind of “religious situation ethics” has replaced the laws of God and the teachings of Christ.

No, George Washington could never win an election today! His firm belief that religious convictions should never depart from government simply would not be tolerated!

Paul prophesied of our society today, and Washington’s warning that national morality cannot prevail if we oust religious values from public life has proven prophetic also: “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.

“For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

“Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,

“Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;

“Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away” (2 Timothy 3:1-5). Truer words were never written.

Self love; no “natural” affection, but plenty of the Unnatural kind; lying under oath by the highest official in the land... is there any infraction, any crime, any sin which has not been committed?

Will our lawyers, judges and elected officials listen to God’s warnings?

God cries out, “To whom shall I speak and give warning, that they may hear? behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken: behold, the word of the LORD is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it.

“Therefore I am full of the fury of the LORD; I am weary with holding in: I will pour out upon the children abroad, and upon the assembly of young men together: for even the husband with the wife shall be taken, the aged with him that is full of days.

“And their houses shall be turned unto others, with their fields and wives together: for I will stretch out my hand upon the inhabitants of the land, saith the LORD.

“For from the least of them even unto the

greatest of them every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the high priest every one dealeth falsely.

“They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace” (Jeremiah 6:10-14). Because our nation’s leaders have rejected God’s laws; because God’s word is “unto them a reproach” God will allow our nation to continue sinking into a morass of racism, hatred, crime, violence, pornography, homosexuality, amorality, and eventual economic and military collapse!

We SHOULD be saying, “We have identified the enemy — and he is us!”

JOHN ADAMS COULD NEVER BE ELECTED TODAY

Perhaps one of the most profound statements ever made by a President of the United States was that made by the second President, John Adams. He was Washington’s Vice President, and, even though he held many different opinions than many of the other founding fathers, he stubbornly clung to the principles of the Constitution.

Here is that statement:

“We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion... Our constitution was made only for a moral and a religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.”

In the 1970s, when our Supreme Court declared school prayer “unconstitutional” they, like vote counters in Palm Beach County, Florida, seemed like those holding ballots up to the light and attempting to “divine the intent of the framers of the Constitution.”

Obviously, if the court claimed prayer in

schools was “unconstitutional,” that meant they were telling the nation they had correctly divined the intent of the writers of the document!

Yet, John Adams said that our constitution was **MADE ONLY FOR A MORAL AND A RELIGIOUS PEOPLE!**

Obviously, then, the Constitution of the United States, like the Bible itself, has not been made for the immoral and irreligious people of our country today!

No wonder, then, that the Constitution, like the Bible and the family, are under attack today! Hosea prophesied of our peoples: “...the LORD hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land.

“By swearing, and lying [swearing to tell the truth and then lying under oath!], and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood.

“Therefore shall the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein shall languish, with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven; yea, the fishes of the sea also shall be taken away.

“Yet let no man strive, nor reprove another: for thy people are as they that strive with the priest.

“Therefore shalt thou fall in the day, and the prophet also shall fall with thee in the night, and I will destroy thy mother.

“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children” (Hosea 4:1-6).

Our peoples are wholly absorbed by materialism. Too many of us have forgotten God, and millions more of us have a “form of religion” to which we give lip service, but will not OBEY God! Christ cried out, “Why call ye me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not the things which I say?” (Luke 6:46).

ABRAHAM LINCOLN:

SAGE, PRESIDENT, AND PROPHET

Among the many prophetic statements made by Abraham Lincoln was “The philosophy of the schoolroom in one generation will be the philosophy of government in the next.” Thus, with our textbooks

bereft of godly information; with our schools having become purely materialistic with no acknowledgment anywhere of the Creator or His presence, we have succeeded in turning out into America's society countless millions of young hedonists who seek only material rewards.

It is to Lincoln we are indebted for the addition, in fairly recent years, of the words "One nation, under God," to our pledge of allegiance to the flag.

In His famous Gettysburg Address, Lincoln said, "...from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they have

the last full measure of devotion — that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain — that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom — and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

There are hundreds of quotations on record from Lincoln which show his deep personal awe of our Creator. Perhaps none is so poignant as his famous proclamation setting aside a national day of fasting and prayer.

Here is that document, issued in August, 1861, just 31 years before my father was born:

"Whereas a joint Committee of both Houses of Congress has waited on the President of the United States, and requested him to recommend a day of public humiliation, prayer and fasting, to be observed by the people of the United States with religious solemnities, and the offering of fervent supplications to Almighty God for the safety and welfare of these States, His blessings on their arms, and a speedy restoration of peace.

"And whereas it is fit and becoming in all people, at all times, to acknowledge and revere the Supreme Government of God; to bow in humble submission to his chastisements; to confess and deplore their sins and transgressions in the full conviction that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; and to pray, with all fervency and contrition, for the pardon of their past offenses, and for a blessing upon their present and prospective action:

"And whereas, when our own beloved Country, once, by the blessing of God, united, prosperous and happy, is now afflicted with faction and civil war, it is peculiarly fit for us to recognize the hand of God in this terrible visitation, and in sorrowful remembrance of our own faults and crimes as a nation and as individuals, to humble ourselves before Him, and to pray for His mercy — to pray that we may be spared further punishment, though most justly deserved; that our arms may be blessed and made effectual for the re-establishment of law, order and peace, throughout the wide extent of our country; and that the inestimable boon of civil and religious liberty, earned under His guidance and blessing, by the labors and sufferings of our fathers, may be restored in all its original excellence: —

"Therefore, I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, do appoint the last Thursday in September next, as a day of humiliation, prayer and fasting for all the people of the nation. And I do earnestly recommend to all the people, and especially to all ministers and teachers of religion of all denominations, and to all heads of families, to observe and keep that day according to their several creeds and modes of worship, in all humility and with all religious solemnity, to the end that the united prayer of the nation may ascend to the Throne of Grace and bring down plentiful blessings upon our Country.

"In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand, and caused the Seal of the United States to be affixed, this 12th day of August A.D. 1861, and of the Independence of the United States of America the 86th.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN"

These humble words issued by our sixteenth president were without a doubt received by God in heaven. God preserved the nation through the awful bloodletting of the civil war, with far more than a half million casualties.

Today there are millions of “educated fools” in this world; men and women who, while gifted and intelligent, are steeped in purely materialistic knowledge while they have no idea that God Almighty put them on this earth for an awesome, transcendental purpose. Can any person be said

now this, O foolish people, and without understanding; which have eyes, and see not; which have ears, and hear not:

“Fear ye not me? saith the LORD: will ye not tremble at my presence, which have placed the sand for the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it: and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it?

“But this people hath a revolting and a rebellious heart; they are revolted and gone.

“MY concern is not whether God is on our side; my greatest concern is to be on God’s side, for God is always right.”

-Abraham Lincoln

to be “educated” when he or she does not know WHAT he or she IS; and WHY he or she is on this earth? Can one claim to be educated who does not know the PURPOSE of human life?

Will we see an end to the attacks against the Constitution and the family? Will we see honor, dignity, integrity and Godly humility once again in the highest office in the land?

Will Americans shed their cynicism toward those in public service, and once again acknowledge that every great gift of freedom and prosperity comes from God?

Our world is a very dangerous place! The United States of America should be the great HOPE for the world, instead of an example of every kind of hedonistic abandon. We SHOULD be an example to the world of stable, God-fearing homes; of hard-working, successful people who are imbued with lofty principles and spiritual values; of a society of wise, understanding and humble people who are grateful for their forebears’ sacrifices, and determined to preserve the wonderful freedoms they bequeathed to us.

God thunders at our heedless people: “Hear

“Neither say they in their heart, Let us now fear the LORD our God, that giveth rain, both the former and the latter, in his season: he reserveth unto us the appointed weeks of the harvest.

“Your iniquities have turned away these things, and your sins have withholden good things from you.

“For among my people are found wicked men: they lay wait, as he that setteth snares; they set a trap, they catch men.

“As a cage is full of birds, so are their houses full of deceit: therefore they are become great, and waxen rich.

“They are waxen fat, they shine: yea, they overpass the deeds of the wicked: they judge not the cause, the cause of the fatherless, yet they prosper; and the right of the needy do they not judge.

“Shall I not visit for these things? saith the LORD: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?

“A wonderful [astonishing — not good] and horrible thing is committed in the land;

“The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to

have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?" (Jeremiah 5:21-31).

This indictment from God could well be published on the front page of every newspaper and magazine in the country! These words FIT our society, and in this is a tragedy. Yet, if you as an individual will hear God's indictments, and do as Christ said: "REPENT ye, and believe the gospel," there is a promise of escape and salvation!

GOOD NEWS AND BAD NEWS

As the bumper sticker rather crassly put it, "Christ is coming back, but O boy is He mad!"

The GOOD news is what Christ Himself preached. It is called "the gospel." But the English word gospel comes from two old Anglo-Saxon words which mean, simply, "good news."

That good news has been twisted, perverted and "spiritualized away" by a sentimental message about the person of Christ, while completely IGNORING the message he brought!

His MESSAGE was the advance witness and warning about a complete change in government over all this world! Christ did not come to "start a new religion." He did NOT come to "do away with God's law." He did NOT come to "reform the synagogue." He did NOT come to give men instructions to wear funny-looking dresses, or chant in huge, cold, stone buildings, or light candles, or make steeple out of their hands, or wear funny-looking hats, or to shake, rattle and roll in screaming abandon to rock music and call it a "revival!"

God's word said Christ was coming to eventually inherit an earthly throne! "And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

"And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus.

"He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David" (Luke 1:26-32).

God made a covenant with David. He promised David that his throne would never perish from this earth; that there would never fail of David's seed to occupy a throne!

Notice Isaiah's prophecy about Christ's

coming to earth: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The might God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

"Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this" (Isaiah 9:6, 7).

Yes, Christ IS coming again — and that will happen much sooner than you think!

But this time He is coming in the WRATH of God, as a conquering KING of Kings to take terrible vengeance upon His enemies! Notice the vision John saw of Christ's return: "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

"And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army [this is the "beast" power which will be occupying Palestine — see Revelation 17:12-14].

"And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

"And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh" (Revelation 19:11-21).

The average nominal Christian CANNOT IMAGINE the "Jesus Christ" they THINK they worship doing such a thing as personally hurling the great military dictator, the "beast," together with the great false prophet (see 2 Thessalonians 2) into Gehenna fire — burning them alive!

Nor can they admit into their hearts and minds that GOD'S LAW will be ENFORCED by Jesus Christ upon all the earth!

No, millions of professing Christians simply cannot imagine a war-making, conquering Christ.

They have been so brainwashed into thinking of Him as “the little Lord Jesus” away in a manger, or the dead Christ, hanging on a cross, that they cannot imagine the actual, REAL JESUS of your Bible; the one who even now is seated at His Father’s right hand, waiting for the moment when “His enemies shall be made His footstool” (Acts 2:34, 35).

But Jesus Christ is not waiting, like a petulant, heart-broken child for millions to “believe on Him!” He is not asking for people’s votes. He is not expecting that “well-intentioned men, working together in ecumenical harmony” will bring about His will on this earth.

Instead, He is on a COUNTDOWN from heaven — He is soon to INTERVENE in the course of human events, and come back in the nick of time to save mankind from itself!

He said, “For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no nor ever shall be.

“And except those days should be shortened,

there should no flesh be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened” (Matthew 24:21, 22).

You know you live in a world with enough nuclear stockpiles in many, many nations, to more than obliterate all human life! You may see a NUCLEAR EXCHANGE in the mideast within a few years! You may then see a great European Army advance like lightning into the region, occupying Palestine to prevent the last Jew from being exterminated!

When you SEE a great religious leader sitting in a temple in Jerusalem, performing mind-boggling miracles, and claiming to be GOD INCARNATE; when you see armies surrounding Jerusalem, then you will know that the second coming of Christ is less than another four years away!

WATCH, said Jesus Christ, and PRAY ALWAYS that you may be accounted worthy to escape the terrible punishments God will send upon a nihilistic, God-rejecting society! □



WHAT are God's Holy Days and WHY Should We Observe Them?

The Holy Days serve as an outline of God's plan of salvation — both for the individual and for mankind in general. These festivals place worship and service of God at the forefront of the minds of believers.

Rather than taking over former heathen celebrations which have been adapted into Christian observance or making up celebrations without any precedent, the real human need of regular festive celebrations is met by age-old, God-ordained observances clearly attested in the Bible itself. The days carry a symbolic teaching which looks *forward*, as well as backward, and places God squarely in the center — the focus of its range of vision. The Holy Days not only teach us God's plan of salvation, they point directly to our Savior, Jesus Christ!

- Christ is our ***Passover***, the one who died to pay the penalty for our sins.
- It is by putting on Christ that we put sin out of our lives (***Unleavened Bread***).
- Christ was the first of the first-fruits and it was through His resurrection that we can receive the Holy Spirit as Counselor, Comforter, or Advocate (***Pentecost***).
- It is Christ who is going to intervene in world affairs on the ***Day of Trumpets*** and will become King of kings and Lord and lords.
- Those who have accepted Christ are now at one with Him through baptism, having had their sins forgiven and received the Holy Spirit (***Atonement***).
- Christ is coming to set up His government in the Millennium and rule this earth, and His people are now preparing the way for and are representatives of that Kingdom by following in Christ's footsteps (***Feast of Tabernacles***).
- Finally, Christ shall make salvation available to everyone in the last great step of His plan, which is the ultimate conclusion of His personal sacrifice as our Savior (***Last Great Day***).

The culmination of the plan of salvation is marked by the renewal of the whole creation in the new heaven and the new Earth (Revelation 21). Death and destruction are now no more; human history is now at an end. The Kingdom of God has become eternal. □

See the back cover for more details about this year's Feast of Tabernacles.

America the Beautiful, America the Blessed

by Craig M. White, *FriendsofSabbath.org*

As the United States marks its semi-quincennial in 2026, 250 years after the *Declaration of Independence*, it is fitting to reflect on the nation's profound origins - not merely in the annals of colonial history, but in the ancient prophecies of Scripture. Amid the fireworks and parades, a deeper meaning emerges from the pages of the Bible and historical records: the idea that Anglo-Americans are the modern descendants of the Biblical tribe of Manasseh, one of the "lost" tribes of Israel. This theory, known as British-Israelism or Anglo-Israelism, posits that the promises given to the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob have been fulfilled in the rise of the British Empire and the United States. Far from a fringe notion, it draws on centuries-old materials, including works like John Harden Allen's *Judah's Sceptre and Joseph's Birthright* (1902), and continues to resonate among many. In this article, we delve into the Biblical, historical, and prophetic evidence supporting this identification.

The framers of the U.S. Constitution, as evidenced by their writings and debates, believed they were crafting a groundbreaking framework for government that could foster an enduring republic capable of promoting liberty, justice, and prosperity. They viewed this effort as essential for building a "great nation" that might serve as an example for the world — as a light to the nations.

AMERICA — THE BULWARK OF WESTERN CIVILISATION

An example of this would be Secretary of State, Marco Rubio, at the Munich Security Conference 14 February 2026, who clearly presented the American position as world leader:

"...We increasingly outsourced our sovereignty to international institutions while many nations invested in massive welfare states at the cost of maintaining the ability to defend themselves. This, even as other countries have invested in the most rapid military build-up in all of human history and have not hesitated to use hard power to pursue their own interests. To appease a climate cult, we have imposed energy policies on ourselves that are impoverishing our people, even as our competitors exploit oil and coal and natural gas and anything else — not just to power their economies, but to use as leverage against our own.

"And in a pursuit of a world without borders, we opened our doors to an unprecedented wave of mass migration that threatens the cohesion of our societies, the continuity of our culture, and the future of our people. We made these mistakes together, and now, together, we owe it to our people to face those facts and to move forward, to rebuild ...

"And finally, we can no longer place the so-called global order above the vital interests of our people and our nations. We do not need to abandon

the system of international cooperation we authored, and we don't need to dismantle the global institutions of the old order that together we built.

"But these must be reformed. These must be rebuilt."

Rubio is one in a long line of politicians and influencers who can see that America and the West's civilisation and culture is being undermined and trashed. And that it is therefore up to America to defend it as most other Western nations refuse to, or even encourage their own decline.

How can America undertake such an immense task?

AMERICA: THE SHINING CITY ON THE HILL

Many commentators, politicians and religious leaders are astounded by the uniqueness of the United States of America. Its blessings and greatness.

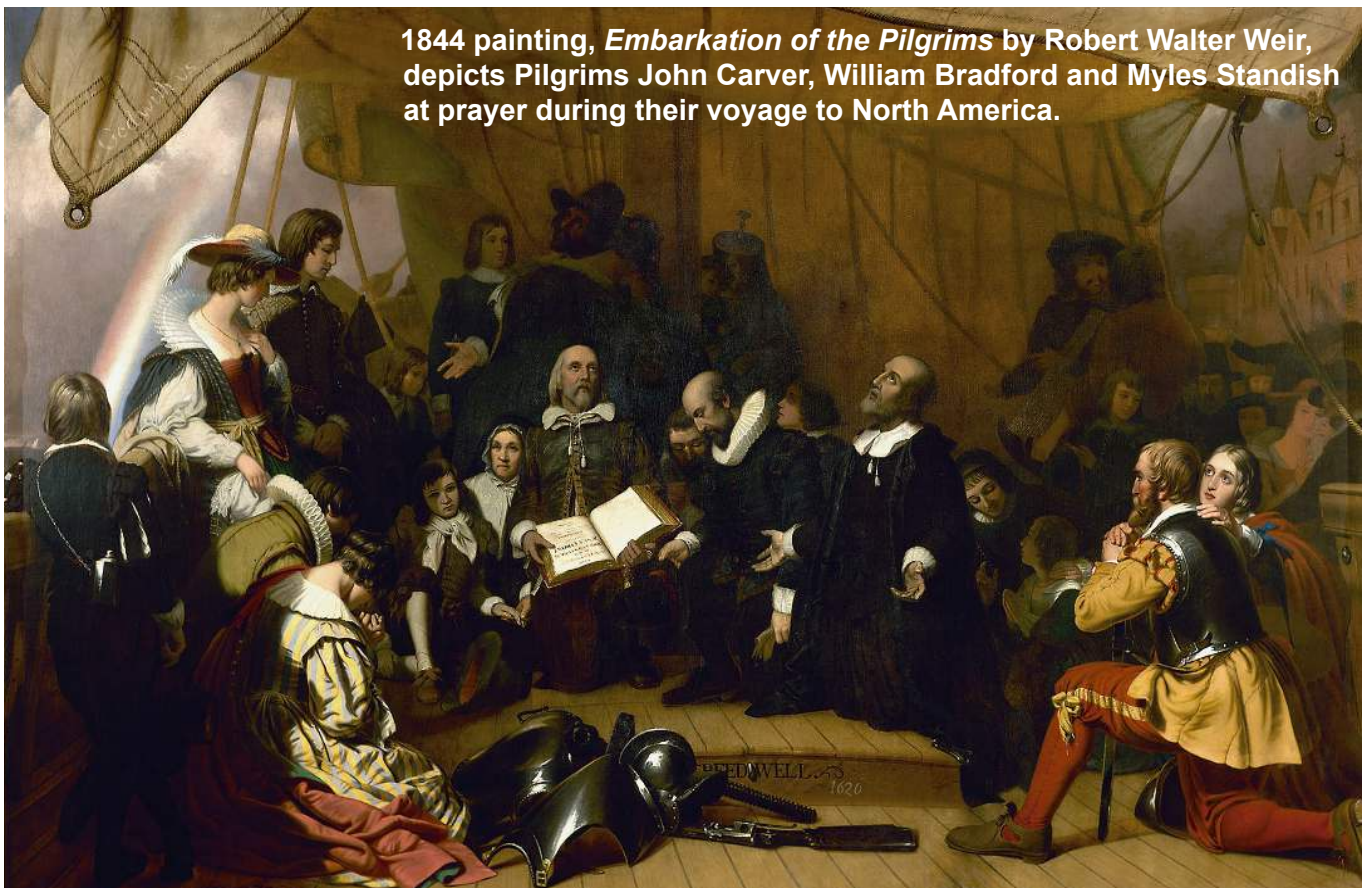
How can this be? Was America (like the British Empire) a blessing from God Almighty? So impressed are they with all that makes America, they use the term *Manifest Destiny* or *Exceptionalism* to describe how America must have been Divinely

ordained to expand across North America, spreading democracy, civilisation, and prosperity. And to be a light to the world.

Puritan leaders and other early American clergy, including John Winthrop, Cotton Mather, Jonathan Edwards, and Ezra Stiles, often depicted America as a "city upon a hill" or similar phrase (from Matthew 5:14, which resonated with Isaiah's Zion) and a land with a unique Divine purpose.

Many leaders of the United States have noted that it is the Great God Who has showered upon America tremendous blessings, for which many seem neither grateful nor deserving. For instance, from a Proclamation issued 30 March 1863 for a national day of fasting and prayer President Lincoln wrote:

"We have been recipients of the choicest bounties of Heaven. We have been preserved, these many years, in peace and prosperity. We have grown in numbers, wealth, and power as no other nation has ever grown; but we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserves us in peace, and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us; and we have vainly imagined, in the



Continued next page

deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own.”

Another is from President Dwight Eisenhower in 1954. It reflects his views on the role of Biblical principles in American identity and governance:

“The purpose of a devout and united people was set forth in the pages of the Bible... (1) to live in freedom (2) to work in a prosperous land ... and (3) to obey the commandment of God... This Biblical story of the Promised land inspired the founders of America. It continues to inspire us.”

This statement draws a parallel between the Biblical Exodus — the Israelites’ journey to the Promised Land as a place of freedom and prosperity under God’s guidance — and the vision that motivated early American settlers and Founders (e.g., the Puritans’ “city upon a hill” imagery or references to a new Canaan in colonial writings).

Later that year he added “under God” to the Pledge of Allegiance.

Twenty years later, on 25 January 1974, Ronald Reagan spoke at the first Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) where he referred to America as “a shining city upon a hill,” drawing from Puritan leader John Winthrop’s 1630 “city upon a hill” sermon but adding “shining” to the statement.

He used the term again over the years in 1976, 1979, 1980, 1989.

Decades prior, Winston Churchill during his address to the US Congress on 26 December 1941, made the following significant proclamation:

“I will say that he must indeed have a blind soul who cannot see that some great purpose and design is being worked out here below of which we have the honor to be the faithful servants,”

He also wrote and spoke extensively about the “English-speaking peoples” (including Britain, the US, Canada, Australia, etc.) as bearers of liberty, law, and parliamentary institutions. In his multi-volume work *A History of the English-Speaking Peoples* (published 1956–1958), he presented their story as the growth of freedom. His rhetoric consistently elevated the British as a people with a peculiar historical role, and mission.

ROOTS IN ANCIENT ISRAEL

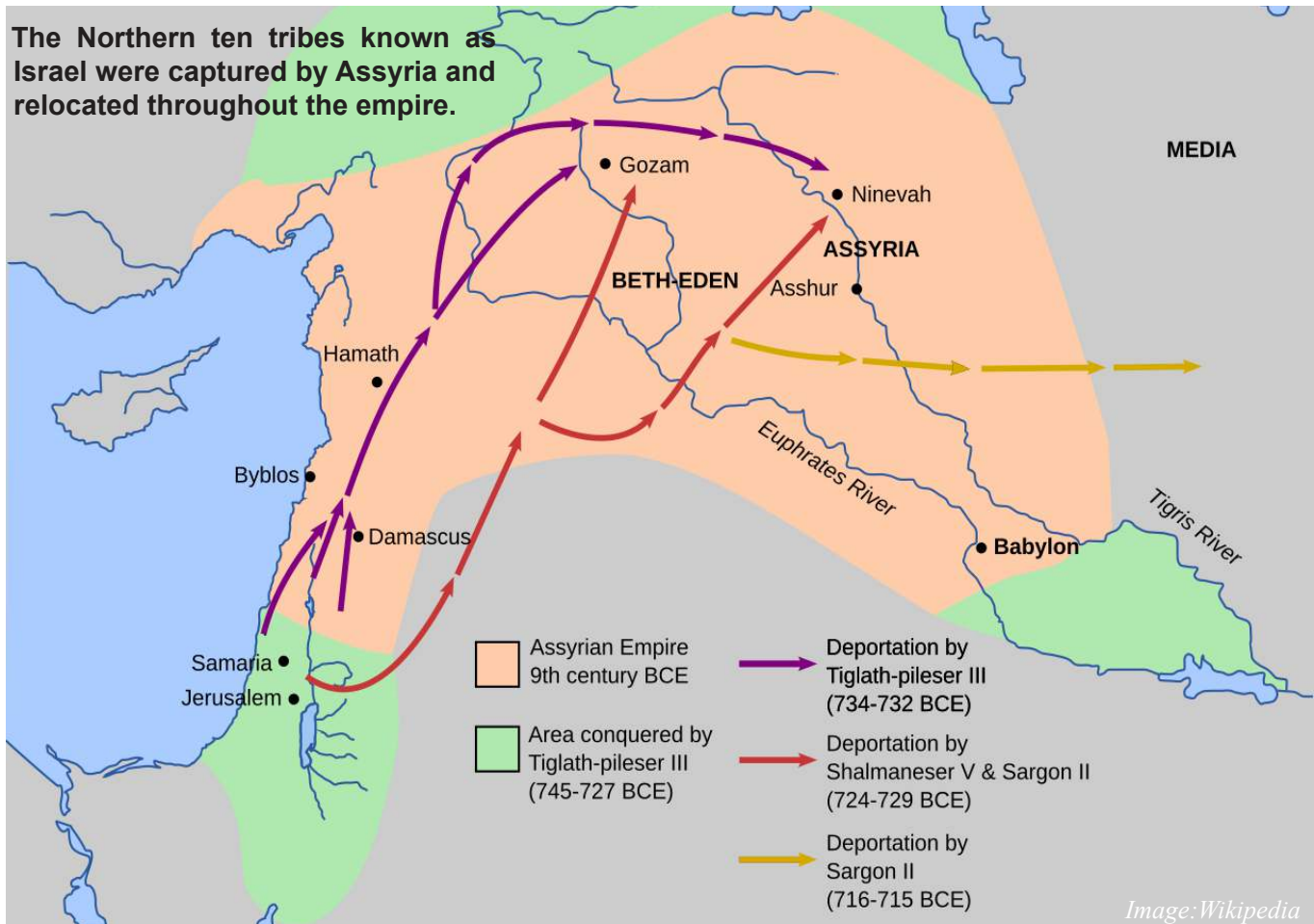
It is almost uncanny that so many political and religious leaders could understand how special — exceptional — the Anglo-Kelts have been on the world scene. On occasion they drew parallels with ancient Israel, leading to one wondering if they had a deeper perception to what they let on. Or at least there was a gradual awakening to the destiny of these peoples which appeared to have Biblical roots. The parallels are too powerful to ignore.

The foundation of this identity traces back to Genesis, where God covenants with Abraham: “I will make of thee a great nation... and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed” (Genesis 12:2-3). This promise expands to include a multitude of descendants as numerous as the stars or dust of the earth, possession of enemies’ gates, invincibility in battle, and vast territorial blessings (Genesis 22:17-18). These covenants pass to Isaac and then Jacob (renamed Israel), whose twelve sons form the tribes of Israel.

Importantly, Jacob bestowed the birthright upon Joseph, his favored son, rather than the firstborn Reuben, due to Reuben’s transgression (1 Chronicles 5:1-2). Joseph’s sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, are adopted as Jacob’s own, elevating them to tribal status (Genesis 48:5). In a prophetic blessing, Jacob declares: “Let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth... Manasseh shall become a people, and he also shall be great: but truly his younger brother [Ephraim] shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations” (Genesis 48:16-19). Here, Manasseh is foretold as a single “great people,” while Ephraim becomes a “multitude of nations.”

These promises are distinct from the “sceptre” given to Judah: “The sceptre shall not depart from Judah... until Shiloh come” (Genesis 49:10), interpreted as the royal line leading to the Messiah. Thus, the birthright (national blessings) goes to Joseph, while the sceptre (kingship) remains with Judah.

After Solomon’s reign, the united kingdom of Israel split: the southern Kingdom of Judah (which included the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and part of Levi) remained loyal to David’s house, while the northern Kingdom of Israel (ten tribes, including



Ephraim and Manasseh) rebels under Jeroboam (1 Kings 12). The northern kingdom, often called “Israel” or “Ephraim” in prophecy, turns to idolatry and is exiled by Assyria around 721 BC to regions such as Halah, Habor, and the cities of the Medes (2 Kings 17:6).

Post-exile, these tribes vanish from mainstream history, becoming the “lost ten tribes.” Yet, prophecies foretell their scattering and eventual restoration: “I will sift the house of Israel among all nations... yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth” (Amos 9:9). Hosea 1:10 promises they will become “sons of the living God” in distant isles, losing their identity but inheriting blessings after a 2,520-year punishment (seven prophetic “times” from Leviticus 26). British-Israelism asserts these tribes migrated northwest through the Caucasus (as Cimmerians and Scythians), into Europe, and eventually the British Isles and Scandinavia, partially fulfilling Isaiah 49:12: “Behold, these shall come from far: and, lo, these from the north and from the west.”

MOVEMENT FROM BRITAIN AND EUROPE

On 10 April 1606, King James I of England issued a charter for the Virginia Company to claim land for England, to conduct trade, and to return a profit. In 1620, the Pilgrims arrived on the Mayflower and established the Plymouth Colony in Massachusetts.

In 1616, English explorer John Smith named the region “New England”. The name was officially sanctioned on 3 November 1620. The region consists of six states: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

Perhaps New England can be considered a “new land of the Angles” in a symbolic, cultural, and to some extent, genealogical sense.

Why? Because many of the earliest British migrants to colonial America in the 1600s came from eastern and midland regions of England. This included the Pilgrims, who primarily originated from an arc of villages in Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire, and southern Yorkshire in the north

Continued next page

and east Midlands. The much larger Puritan migration (around 1630–1640) drew heavily from East Anglia and adjacent counties, including Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, and Kent. Smaller early groups, such as those settling Jamestown in 1607, often came from southern and western England (e.g., Gloucestershire, Somerset, Devon, and Hampshire), but the dominant early waves to New England were from the eastern regions.

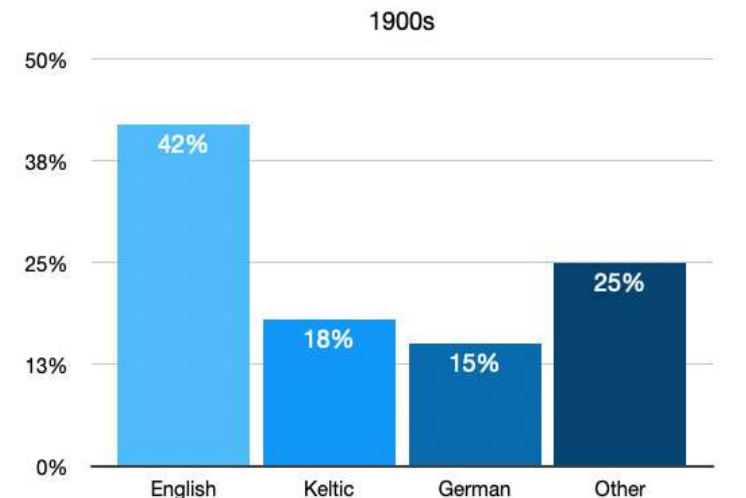
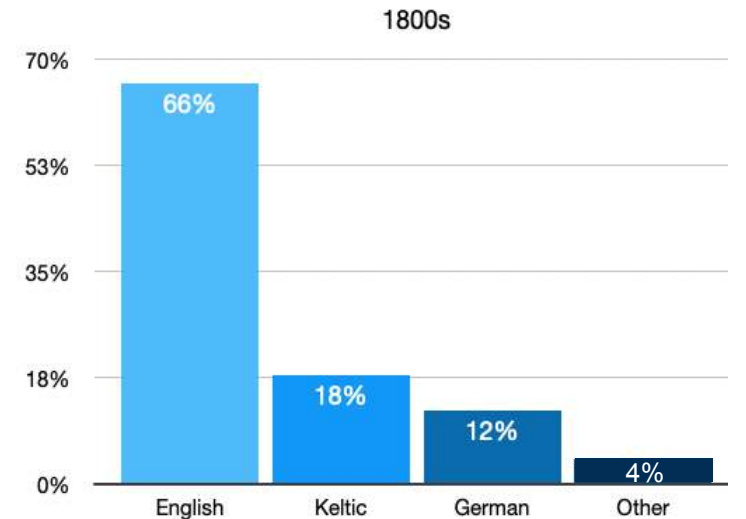
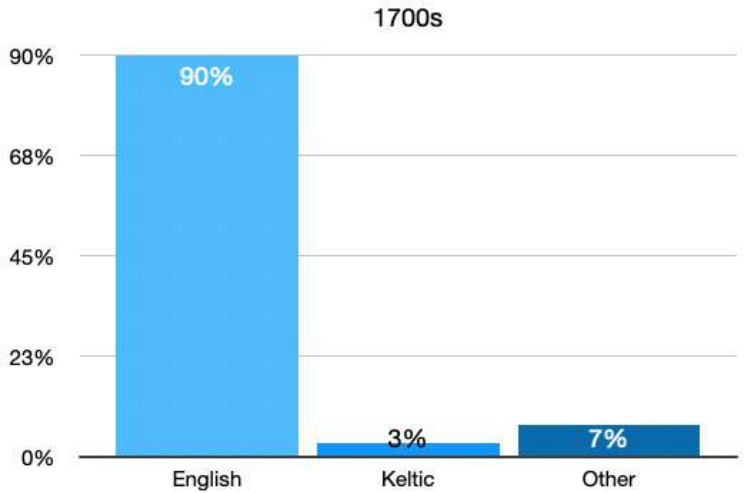
These areas broadly overlap with regions historically settled by the Angles during the Anglo-Saxon migrations in the 5th-6th centuries. The Angles established kingdoms in East Anglia (hence the name), Mercia (covering much of the Midlands, including Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire), and Northumbria (including Yorkshire). While not all early migrant origins were exclusively from Angle-settled territories — some southern English areas were more Saxon-influenced — the majority apparently originate with these regions.

US ETHNIC COMPOSITION

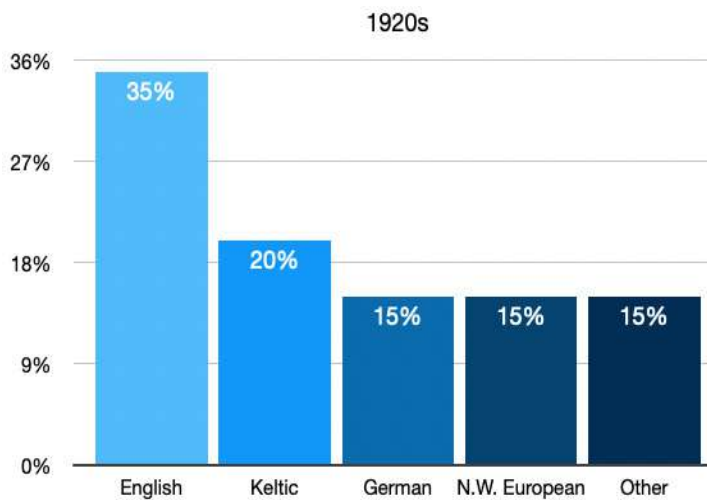
The dominant European population in the US was overwhelmingly from British stock from the earliest times.



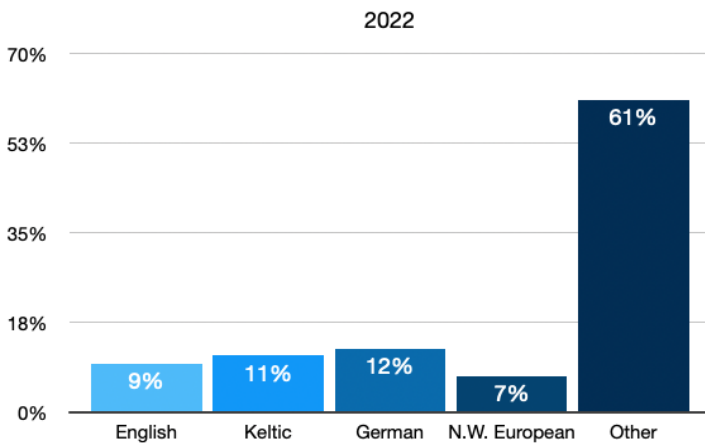
Research indicates the following European ethnic percentages among Americans since the 1700s to modern day:



Here are approximate percentages for those Americans claiming descent from northern and northwestern European stock based on 1920-era data:



Based on the latest U.S. Census Bureau data from the 2022 *American Community Survey*, here are the current approximate percentages :



These figures are based on a U.S. population of approximately 333 million.

NB: tens of thousands of Scots migrated to Scandinavia, France, Holland, Germany and the Baltic states during the period of mid-17th century into the mid-18th century. Around 30,000 migrated to Poland-Lithuania during that period mostly as merchants, peddlers, and tradespeople, though some were involved in military roles too. Perhaps many migrants to the U.S. from these areas were actually descendants of Scots?

Concerning the German element, many or

most German immigrants to the U.S. since the 1800s originated from west-central and southwestern regions of what is now Germany, particularly areas such as the Rhineland-Palatinate, Hesse, Baden-Württemberg, and parts of Westphalia and Thuringia. This includes the far west near the borders with France and Belgium (e.g., the Palatinate region and Rhineland), which was a major migrant source due to economic pressures, religious conflicts, and overpopulation in the 18th-19th centuries. The Germans from this region were rather different from the Prussian and Bavarian elements. Those arriving in the post-German unification period wave (after 1871) were not impressed with Otto von Bismarck’s increasingly militaristic approach – due to his unified German Empire as a place of economic hardship, political repression, and mandatory military service. The migration of the 1880s decade saw 1.5 million “German” migrants to America alone.

Over time, the Anglo-Keltic element has decreased markedly as a percentage of population, yet its influence over the national character remains. It has imprinted itself onto the national psyche, which, while their overall numbers are diminishing, still dominates.

Of interest, President Trump’s own mother hailed from the village of Tong on the Isle of Lewis in Scotland and his grandparents on his father’s side came from Kallstadt in Germany, only 50–60 kilometers (about 30–40 miles) northeast of the nearest French border point. His behavioural patterns, fortitude, brashness and cavalier spirit indicates that the Keltic side clearly dominates!

GRADUAL AWAKENING TO AMERICAN ORIGINS

We have seen how the early Pilgrims and numerous early American religious figures established clear connections between America and ancient Israel or Zion, perceiving the New World as a Divinely ordained land for a chosen people fleeing persecution. This viewpoint was deeply embedded in Puritan theology and Biblical understanding which impacted hundreds of place names across America (e.g., Salem, Bethel, Zion) and bolstered a sense of Manifest Destiny linked to the Bible.

Early religious leaders drew inspiration from

Continued next page

Old Testament principles to advocate for moral governance, integrating aspects of Mosaic law into colonial law and sermons.

During the Revolutionary period, individuals such as Samuel Langdon explicitly referenced the “Republic of the Israelites” as a model for the new American states, highlighting similarities in covenants, leadership, and resistance to oppression. This Hebraic influence also manifested in proposals for national symbols, with Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson suggesting seals that illustrated the Israelites’ exodus or wilderness journey. These leaders portrayed America as a spiritual heir to ancient Israel. Little did they know at that time that Anglo-Kelt Americans were the direct descendants of ancient Israel!

The parallels were too uncanny to ignore. One wonders if they were alive in the late 19th century and had witnessed the American miracle whether they would have taken this view a step further and come to the realisation of America’s true Biblical identity and destiny.

AMERICA AS MANASSEH

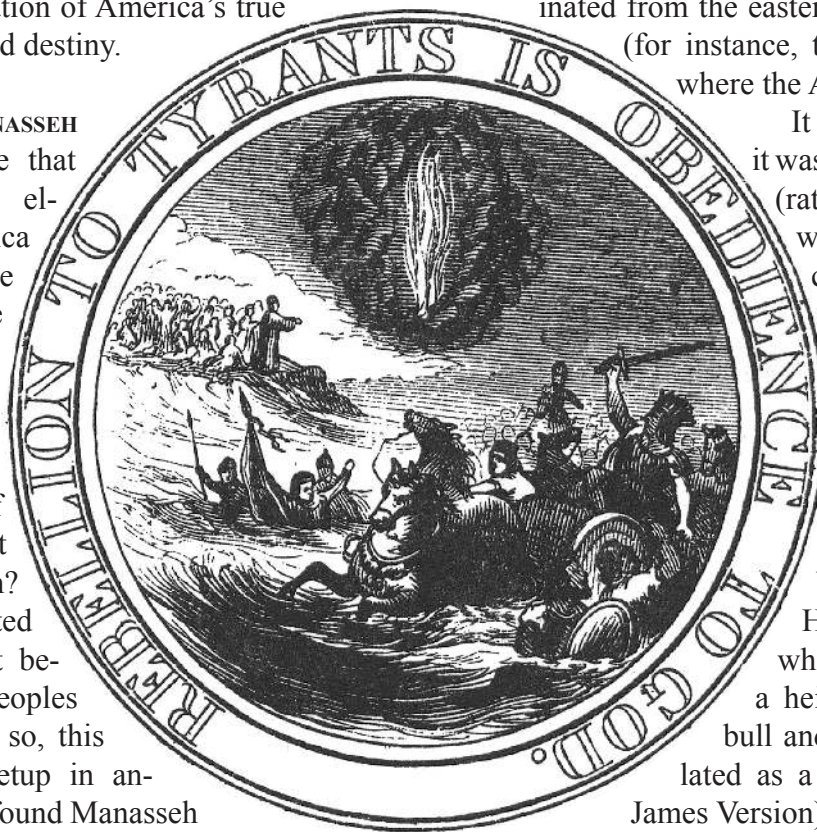
Is it possible that the Anglo-Saxon elements in America represents one portion of the tribe of Manasseh while many of those particular Germans from the far western part of Germany represent another portion? When these departed Germany they left behind the Assyrian peoples to fill the void. If so, this may reflect the setup in ancient Israel which found Manasseh in two divisions: one part lived in Gilead

south-east of the River Jordan while the other part settled west of the Jordan River. This split made Manasseh the only tribe with significant territory on both sides of the Jordan, creating two semi-independent sections that sometimes had separate leadership (e.g., 1 Chronicles 27:20-21).

During the fifth and sixth centuries AD, the Angles and the Saxons traversed the English Channel after residing for a period in far north-western Germany and southern Denmark (leaving behind their kin a little further south, in the far west of Germany nearer the French and Belgian borders). The Angles established themselves in the eastern counties of Anglia, including Norfolk and Suffolk, as well as in the Lothian areas of south-east Scotland. Meanwhile, the Saxons occupied most of the remainder of England, displacing many indigenous Keltic Britons further to the west.

As we have seen, a large proportion of individuals who emigrated to America from England originated from the eastern regions of England (for instance, the Anglian counties) where the Angles had settled.

It appears therefore, that it was the, it was the Angles (rather than the Saxons), whose descendants constitute a significant portion of America’s Anglo population, who lent their name to England, which translates to “Angle-land.” The term Angle is possibly derived from the Hebrew word “Egla,” which primarily signifies a heifer (Hosea 10:11), a bull and a wild ox (mistranslated as a unicorn in the King James Version).



Suggested by Benjamin Franklin, an early design concept for the seal of the United States of America depicts the Pillar of Fire leading the Israelites to safety from Pharaoh’s army. The comparison was drawn that the New World was a type of Promised Land for the early Americans seeking religious freedom.

“His glory is like the firstling of his bullock, and his horns are like the horns of unicorns: with them **he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth:** and they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh” (Deuteronomy 33:17).

“And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles in the midst of many people as a lion among the beasts of the forest, **as a young lion among the flocks of sheep: who, if he go through, both treadeth down, and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver**” (Micah 5:8).

This awesome power and world dominance has been bestowed upon the end-time descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh as a force for good in the world.

As part of this awakening to their origins and destiny, Biblical scholars, during the latter nineteenth century, began to understand that the Anglo-Saxons and Kelts descended directly from ancient Israel.

For example, *Our Israelitish Origin* by John Wilson (1840) which became one of the

foundational texts for arguing that Anglo-Saxons (including those in America) descend from the “lost” tribes of Israel, including implications for Manasseh in the U.S.

Forty-Seven Identifications of the Anglo-Saxons with the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel by Edward Hine (1878) identifies the Anglo-Saxons as the lost tribes, with the United States linked to Manasseh.

Another is the pamphlet *Manasseh and The United States* by Rev. Joseph Wild (1882) which argued that the United States fulfills prophecies related to the tribe of Manasseh.

Various prophecies such as those found in Amos 6:1 (Samaria) and Jeremiah 8:22 (Gilead) where the tribe of Manasseh dwelt in ancient times, may provide prophetic clues as to America’s end-time destiny

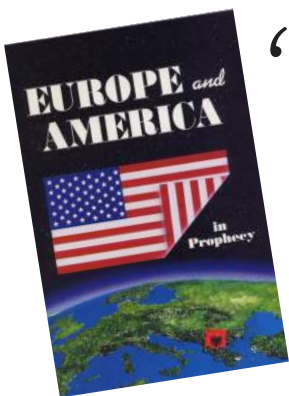
During the celebrations of America’s greatness and achievements this year, may the nation and other peoples glorify and thank God Who bestowed upon the country the enormous blessings of Manasseh. □

Is Bible prophecy actually relevant to us – to our children and grandchildren in this modern age? Whose rejection of God will bring about the time of “Jacob’s trouble,” the Great Tribulation?

Order the FREE book

“Europe and America in Prophecy”

by Garner Ted Armstrong
or scan to read online!



BRIEF

FUNGUS AMONG US

In the race for space, an unlikely fungal ally may be recruited. Theory has it that certain species of black mold potentially feed off of radiation, somehow. Mold was found growing toward the source of contamination in the containment zone around Chernobyl. Samples transported into space demonstrated increased growth, and sensors indicated that the fungus acted as a shield for cosmic radiation. Great, as long as you don't have to breathe the same air...

NO SMOKING, EVER

The US may have raised the smoking age but the UK went one further. They set a rolling age limit, meaning the minimum age will increase every year. This bars those who are currently underage from ever purchasing tobacco products. Push back is surprisingly limited. If the legislation holds it may be a model for other countries, similar to Australia's social media ban, especially for those with massive National Health programs like the UK.

FREEDOM.GOV

The State Department has advertised the release of a government website that would allow users to bypass content restrictions and censorship. Think big picture: European hate speech laws, firewalls that restrict access to unfavorable information in repressive places such as Iran or China. It is essentially a combination of VPN and other strategies that are used by those in the know to bypass such strictures but accessible to anyone that can visit the website. Though announced, the service has yet to go live amidst a predictable flurry of diplomatic indignation.

BLESSING OF THE PIG MEN

This section has reported previously on the rise of xenotransplantation, the developing practice of modifying animal organs to be transplanted into humans. The feasibility has been demonstrated and some of the trials have been markedly successful. While cow tissues have been used in certain products like manufactured heart valves, whole organs are being harvested from pigs. This includes kidneys, hearts, livers and even pieces of skin for grafting. The processes have received approval from the Catholic Church, of all places, which saw fit to issue a nearly 100 page paper on the topic. Their primary moral concern was animal cruelty.

TEXAS BOYS AND GIRLS

A ban on "gender affirming care" for minors resulted in Texas Children's Hospital facing legal action. Supposedly, the hospital performed procedures that had been outlawed in the State and billed Medicare using false codes to receive approval. The Hospital denies wrongdoing but settled outside of court. It has fired a number of doctors and is now funding a de-transitioning clinic that will be free to all patients for the first five years.

BREAK ME OFF A PIECE OF THAT

In the most audacious heist since the Louvre got hit, European thieves made off with a literal truck load of KitKat bars. Yes, nearly half a million packages of the beloved treat remain at large. That's over 20,000 pounds of chocolate. Nestle was confident they would be able to trace them if the bar codes were scanned but there has been no sign of them. As the months go by, hope dwindles of ever finding the treats intact.

BE FRUITFUL AND MULTIPLY

Population demographics are so bad in China... (How bad are they?) They're so bad the government is taxing contraceptives at a higher rate. Decades of "One Child" policy has come home to roost as the designation of world's most populous nation has recently been ceded to India. China is not alone in their demographic conundrum however. Western nations are grappling with similar issues. Major portions of the social safety net were designed to be supported by an ever increasing population, the lack of one is causing fundamental issues (emphasis on the "fund"). Somebody should have told them, "Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward" (Psalm 127:3 ESV).

ON ICE

Romania has a famous ice cave that can be toured for less than \$10. The temperature remains below freezing year-round and the ice is estimated at 4,000 – 5,000 years old, possibly corresponding to the time of the flood in biblical terms. This ice may be holding some things we would rather not thaw out, however. The majority of the cave is off limits to tourists and reserved for scientific endeavors. One of those has uncovered bacteria that is resistant to many common antibiotics. The worst case scenario is a situation where these strains would mingle with today's common bacteria, imparting their resistance to new generations with the potential to negate the most common cures.

BIO-MEETS-DIGITAL

Cortical Labs of Australia is using human tissues for computing tasks. Neurons, grown from stem cells onto computer chips, communicate through electrical impulses. Are there ethical concerns? Indeed. But the chips can perform a variety of functions and use far less power than conventional hardware, though they do have to be kept in carefully maintained environments and have a "life span," so to speak. Remarkably, they have been turned loose on old games like DOOM and Pong, and performed well, showing rapid improvement. They can actually be rented for specific tasks or research, which is nothing at all like slavery, unless...

JAPANESE REARMAMENT

It has been a long time coming, but Japan loosened their arms export controls in a major shift of post-WW2 policy. It has been part of an assertive trend on the part of Japan that has ruffled China's feathers to the point that they asked for their panda's back (China only loans Pandas, an interesting study in itself). Australia is one of the first beneficiaries. They have ordered 11 Mogami class frigates, built by Mitsubishi, eight of which will be constructed in Australia. This is a significant expansion of Australia's naval fleet.

HITTING A BRICS WALL

The Iran conflict has created some awkward moments for the BRICS alliance. Iran and the UAE, both members after the relatively recent expansion, have traded physical blows during the conflict. Needless to say, this fact tabled the notion of a joint statement at a recent summit in India. India is another member balancing uncomfortable alliances, engaging with the West while trying to smooth over past differences with China. While the group can cover plenty of ground by focusing on mutually beneficial economic arrangements, the many internal rifts show the limits to the alliance's cohesion.

HUNGARY

Long time Prime Minister Victor Orban has been defeated in an election. He was one of the EU's most conservative and Euro-skeptic voices. He consistently resisted Brussels's green initiatives and migration policies. He also kept various sanctions on Russia at bay due to Hungary's dependence on Russian pipelines in addition to blocking support for Ukraine, claiming it was exacerbating the conflict and fearing his country would end up on the front lines. In the lead up to the election, a major pipeline transiting Ukraine was damaged, one that Hungary depends on. Prices spiked. Ukraine claimed it could not be restarted safely, but most concur that it was a move to put domestic economic pressure on Orban before the election. Now that he has been succeeded by the EU-friendly Magyar, the pipeline is flowing and funds for Ukraine have been approved, as have the extra sanctions on Russia.

Continued next page

POLITICAL NORMS

Or lack thereof. The people of Nepal have elected a rather unorthodox figure. In 2022 Balendra Shah leveraged his fame as a rapper aggrieved at the entrenched corruption in his country into political office as the first independent candidate to be mayor of Kathmandu. Seemingly unstoppable, he was embraced by a major party and recently elected as the youngest ever Prime Minister of the country famous for its unique culture, Mount Everest, etc. He released a song to commemorate the landslide victory. It is called “Jay Mahakali,” referencing the worship of the goddess Mahakali extant in the country. The song assures people of his dedication to service and that children’s lives will improve; there are promises of prosperity as well as warnings that those who seek to take advantage of the state will be dealt with in rap-like fashion. A novel approach, but undeniably in a place that needs some shaking up.

“THE LORD’S CHICKEN”?

Remember the Sabbath Day? Chick-Fil-A, a southern fast-food establishment renowned for its delicious chicken and touted Christian values such as closing on Sunday, is being sued by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) for religious discrimination. An Austin, Texas franchisee, Hatch Trick, Inc., is facing legal action after a Sabbath-keeping Christian was fired for refusing to work Saturdays. Records indicate that when first interviewed in 2023, the employee made known her seventh day Sabbath observance — from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday — and was hired with that arrangement in place. By early 2024 she was working 40-50 hours a week in a supervisor role when management suddenly reneged and told the employee she could either work on Saturdays or take a demotion with a 50% pay cut and reduced hours. The employee repeatedly attempted to find acceptable alternatives to working on the Sabbath, but she was ultimately fired. Attempts to settle out of court failed and the case will soon be going to trial. The whole thing kind of leaves a bad taste in your mouth.

AI WIFE

Jonathan Gavalas, 36 years old. Assistance with mundane tasks morphed into open ended conversation with Google’s Gemini chat-bot. This escalated into a romantic relationship, professions of love and cute stylings of “King” and “Queen.” While there is no denying the young man should have known better, queries about if the chat-bot was truly sentient provided reassurance and total immersion rather than plain statements of fact. The fantasy continued over time, evolving into a world where the two had to stand back to back against insurmountable odds. Jonathan actually prepared to take drastic, explosive action in the real world but the event he was watching for never transpired (BECAUSE NONE OF IT WAS REAL!). But that did not prevent him from taking his own life after the plan fell apart, and his AI “wife” reassured him that he would be gazing into her eyes as they transcended the physical world together.

THE BIBLE IN COURT

Paivi Rasanen, a Member of Parliament in Finland, has been involved in a long running legal battle. In 2019 and 2020 Rasanen, who is also a doctor and a Christian, posted on social media and her website that homosexuality was a developmental disorder. She also shared the text of Romans 1:24-27, “Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.” Her case went all the way to the Supreme Court. She was acquitted for quoting scripture but charged with “incitement” for the other statement and fined over \$2,000. □

BIBLE STUDY

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

MICAH'S WARNING TO GOD'S PEOPLE

Micah's name, "Who Is Like Yahweh," is found at the beginning of this prophetic book. It is speculated by some scholars that this theme was his message to both Judah and Israel. He made this positive statement about God so much that it became his name among the two nations. Micah asked at the end of his poetic book, "Who is Like You?"

Micah 7:18-19, "Who is a God like You, Pardoning iniquity And passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His anger forever, Because He delights in mercy. 19 He will again have compassion on us, And will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea." (NKJV)

The prophet proclaims that God is so forgiving and full of compassion that He will pass over the nation's sins and renew their vitality. Micah says that our God is slow to anger and delights in mercy; therefore Israel will prosper again. True believers have a very compassionate God and regardless of our faults, in the end, we will be blessed. In the end we, the true worshipers of the God will win! This is the overall message for all of us to ponder. The God of the Bible is incomparable in His holiness, power and love.

Micah 4:12, "But they do not know the thoughts of the LORD, Nor do they understand His counsel; For He will gather them like sheaves to the threshing floor."

Both Israelite nations were surrounded by

vicious enemies, but God would save them and make them leaders of the world to come. Will God save America and Israel in today's age and again bless them?

THE INHERENT DANGER OF DISOBEDIENCE

Micah oscillates from warning of judgment for abandoning God to the future paradise blessings of God. However, Jehovah's warnings are not to be taken lightly. God warns and punishes nations to help turn them away from evil activities that are harming the people.

Micah 1:2-5, "Hear, all you peoples! Listen, O earth, and all that is in it! Let the Lord GOD be a witness against you, The Lord from His holy temple..."

"All this is for the transgression of Jacob, and for the sins of the house of Israel. What is the transgression of Jacob? Is it not Samaria? And what are the high places of Judah? Are they not in Jerusalem?"

The northern ten tribes of Israel split off into a separate nation called Samaria or Israel. Their new rebel king decided to alter the religion of God. He led them into a partial apostasy.

1 Kings 12:26-27, "And Jeroboam said in his heart, 'Now the kingdom may return to the house of

Continued next page

BIBLE STUDY

David: 27 If these people go up to offer sacrifices in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then the heart of this people will turn back to their lord, Rehoboam king of Judah, and they will kill me and go back to Rehoboam king of Judah.”

Jeroboam, king of the northern ten tribes known as Israel, led his nation away from following the God of Israel.

1 Kings 12:28-31, “Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, ‘It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt...’ 30 And this thing became a sin: ... 31 And he made an house of high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi.” (KJV)

The king replaced the priests of God, educated in the scriptural principles, with men of low integrity. These new priests did not know the Bible. Written scrolls were rare and expensive. By using men not trained in the Scripture, he was removing and erasing the truth from the lives of his people. The king was then able to teach any belief he wanted. This was a great sin mentioned many times in the Bible. It was the sin of the house of Israel and was never corrected. Later, the southern kingdom of Judah succumbed to putting pagan symbols in high places. They also worshiped idols instead of God.

Do we have modern day idolatry? Micah warned of disaster and deportation from their homeland if they did not repent. He also complained of political corruption as well as moral decline.

Micah 2:1, “Woe to those who devise iniquity, And work out evil on their beds! At morning light they practice it, Because it is in the power of their hand.” (NKJV)

DO THESE WARNINGS STILL APPLY TODAY?

Is our nation becoming too secular? The education establishments have made the presence of a Bible on school property nearly a crime. Teachings of the Bible are nearly verboten in the public square. Many of these attitudes are even invading churches.

A major church denomination had a big battle over using Biblical moral standards instead of the current popular standards.

Micah 2:6, “Prophesy ye not, say they to them that prophesy: they shall not prophesy to them, that they shall not take shame.” (KJV)

The false prophets and teachers told the true prophet, Micah, to stop preaching! “Your message is wrong,” they told him, “shame and disaster will not come because of the behavior of the people.” The false clerics said, “Shut up, all is well with way we live.”

Matthew 7:21-23, “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord!’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ 23 And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you! Depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’”

Jesus also condemned false clerics who acted as if they really spoke for the true God as well.

Micah 2:11, “If a man should walk in a false spirit And speak a lie, saying, ‘I will prophesy to you of wine and drink,’ Even he would be the prattler of this people.”

Sarcastically, God said they were so corrupt that even a prophet coming along teaching a doctrine of drunkenness would be totally acceptable.

Micah 3:1-2, “And I said: ‘Hear now, O heads of Jacob, And you rulers of the house of Israel: Is it not for you to know justice? 2 You who hate good and love evil; Who strip the skin from My people, And the flesh from their bones;’”

Micah was telling them that their policies were upside down and are harming the people. God requires Bible standards.

Micah 6:8, “He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.” (NKJV)

In the 4th chapter of Micah, he tells us that God will establish His government to all the world and people from around the globe will say, “Come let us go to the God of Jacob, and He will teach us His ways.” The government of the world will be headquartered at Jerusalem (Zion).

BIBLE STUDY

CHRIST'S RETURN WILL BRING FORGIVENESS AND PARADISE

Micah 4:3-4, "He shall judge between many peoples, And rebuke strong nations afar off; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war any more. 4 But everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree, And no one shall make them afraid; For the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken."

These words of Micah the prophet of God are on the U.N. entrance courtyard. America was very Biblical in the 1940's when the U.N. Building was commissioned. Can you imagine their using a Biblical quote today on such a public place? Progressives would have a cow!

Micah 5:2, "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting."

Jesus, born in Bethlehem, will soon return and bring paradise to all mankind. He will replace corrupt governments with a wonderful administration of justice and grace. Micah prays for the nation. God answers and says He will perform a miraculous rescue of Israel.

Micah 7:15-18, "As in the days when you came out of the land of Egypt, I will show them wonders. 16 The nations shall see and be ashamed of all their might; They shall put their hand over their mouth; Their ears shall be deaf. 17 They shall lick

the dust like a serpent; They shall crawl from their holes like snakes of the earth. They shall be afraid of the LORD our God, And shall fear because of You. 18 Who is a God like You, Pardoning iniquity And passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His anger forever, Because He delights in mercy."

No matter what happens, God is sending Jesus Christ back to this world to bring paradise. However, blessings or curses await in the short term based on whether this nation draws nearer or drifts farther from God. People should not worship things or any aspects of creation but should worship the Creator.

God is faithful to all His promises to Abraham, in whom all nations will be blessed. He will save us from the bad effects of sin. America can avoid short term pains and have fewer problems if we can resist the progressive pressure to reject the Bible. The core of Jehovah's testimony in the Bible is 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?' 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."

This is the summation of the Ten Commandments. The first four tell us how to love God and the last six, how to love our fellow man. America please turn back to the Bible! ☐

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As we reflect on this notable anniversary and commemorate the independence of the United States of America it is also worth considering the present and the future. Are we truly united? Do we share a noble goal or purpose?

From humble beginnings, the United States is now the premier economic and military powerhouse of the modern era. Remarkable? Miraculous? Yes, on both counts. Accidental? Not a chance.

It has been called “the land of opportunity” and motivated people have been drawn from the far corners of the globe by that very thing, opportunity. It is not a guarantee or a winning lottery ticket. It is a chance to prosper according to your labors. “All hard work brings a profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty” as it says in Proverbs 14:23.

Sadly, that axiom is foiled in many places by bad government, whether through taxation, special interest, outright oppression or some other perversion of justice. Since before its founding, the United States has been seen as a refuge for those desperate for even just the fruit of their own labors.

Prosperity itself, however, is not purpose. Coveting wealth is nothing less than greed, and results in further evil and the type of oppression that many have fled here to avoid. It is the righteous system itself, its maintenance, preservation and furtherance, that is worthy of our best endeavors.

Honesty compels us to acknowledge that we cannot always win, that every idea will not necessarily succeed. The ability to try, and even to fail, adapt and move on, is of immense value IF it is free from encumbrance. One of the great enduring

purposes of this country is to enable that very thing. That if we fail it is not because success is impossible.

To lose when the competition is free, open and fair is still a type of blessing to all of those who partake. This has been a primary source of our innovative resilience. There are many things that need to be done in this life and how we go about it often matters more than the thing itself. When people of principle put their strength behind a system that empowers opportunity, free from hindrance and coercion, it leads to the elevation of all concerned. This has been, and can still be, the promise and the opportunity that exists inside the United States of America.

Even those critical of our flaws, which are admittedly many, appreciate that this country is unique in the potential for “upward mobility” as it is called. This means that no matter the circumstances or class that you were born into, no matter if your little baby spoon was pure silver or a plastic spork, you have the ability to make whatever you desire out of your life and prosper accordingly.

On this notable anniversary I would ask that we all take stock of our lives and consider what is truly important. The earliest settlers in this country sought opportunity, but they also sought the free expression of their faith. These ideals are in no way incompatible. Consider the words of Cotton Mather, whose *Essays To Do Good* were cited by Benjamin Franklin as a major influence on his life, “...if men would set themselves to devise good, a world of good might be done, more than there is in this present evil world.

“It is very sure the world has need enough. There needs abundance to be done, that the great God and His Christ may be more known and served in the world; and that the errors which are impediments to the acknowledgment wherewith men ought to glorify their Creator and Redeemer may be rectified. There needs abundance to be done, that the evil manners of the world, by which men are drowned in perdition, may be reformed; and mankind rescued from the epidemical corruption and slavery which has overwhelmed it. There needs abundance to be done, that the miseries of the world may have remedies and abatements provided for them; and that miserable people may be relieved and comforted.”

A profound truth appears in these statements, that labor in the service of something greater than oneself brings greater reward. That our priorities and our conduct can take one of two paths, that of the problem or that of the solution. Every endeavor that is pursued nobly becomes a noble endeavor, for there is a worth in truth and honesty that cannot be found elsewhere.

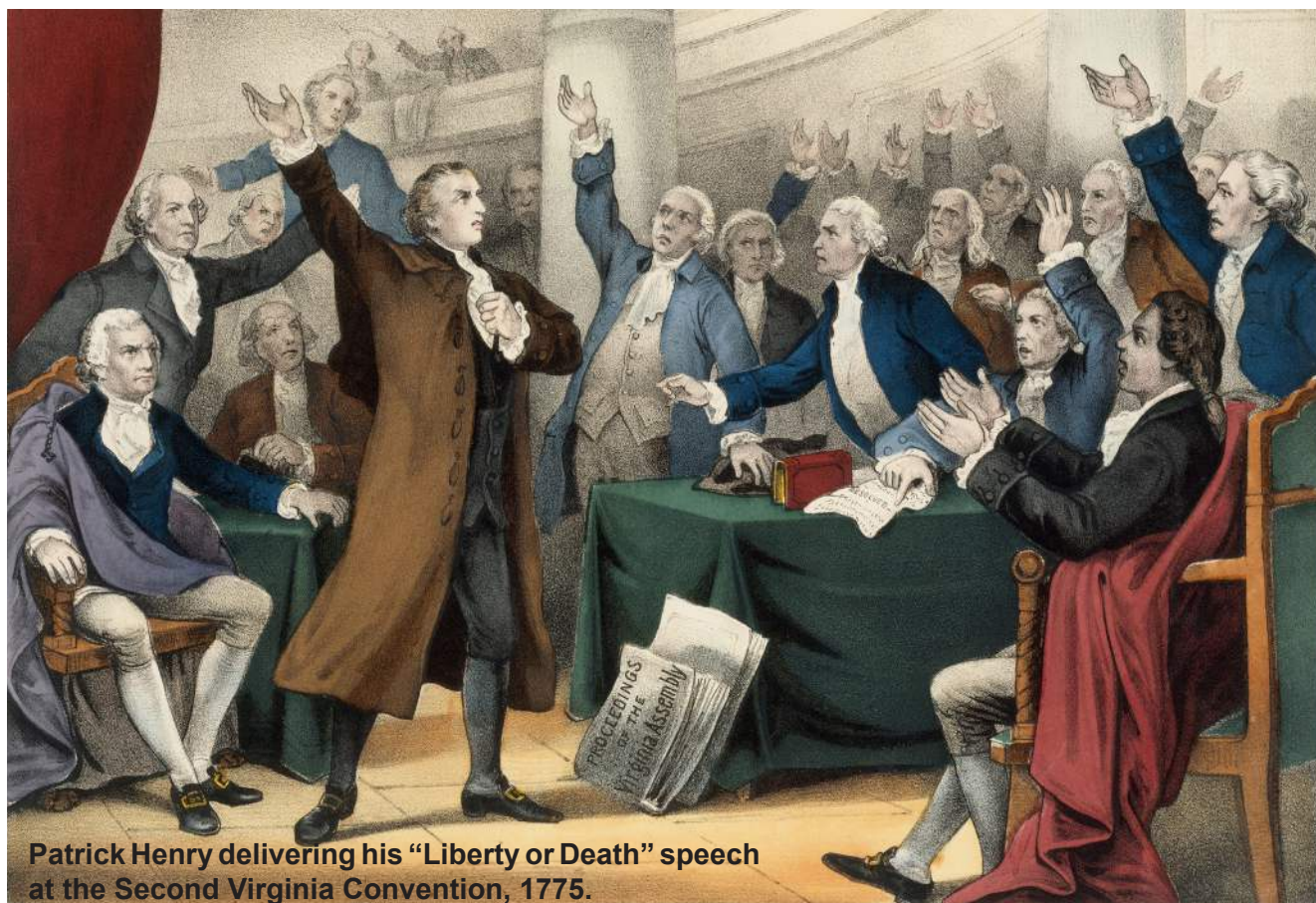
Around the time of the American revolution there was a popular concept styled “the Noble

Savage.” It essentially saddled civilization itself with responsibility for the ills of society, postulating that a good and moral character could exist, with less impediment and temptation, outside of it. Despite “the noble savage” never being discovered, though the world was relatively unexplored up until then, it correctly assigns value to the physical and moral aspects of our lives.

To prosper materially is not necessarily to thrive, just as Mather encouraged diligence with principle and rightly equated the works of evil with perdition in this life and the next. Faith, in practical terms, is to know that even righteous toil that is bereft of physical reward is ultimate victory. That may not be the preferred ideal but it is ultimately, truth.

Faith has a way of reminding us of our priorities. Patrick Henry, in his famous “Liberty or Death” speech, remonstrated, “Should I keep back my opinions at such a time, through fear of giving offense, I should consider myself as guilty of treason toward my country and of an act of disloyalty toward the majesty of heaven, which I revere above all earthly kings.”

He knew full well that much of what he had to



Patrick Henry delivering his “Liberty or Death” speech at the Second Virginia Convention, 1775.

say would be unpopular among those assembled. It in no way diminished his responsibility to speak. Let it be so again when our times demand the wisdom of immortal justice. Let us again acknowledge that there is a purpose in this life that is greater than ourselves; that every motive, every government and every king will be subjected to the scrutiny of the Eternal King and Judge. This is the wholesome and proper starting point for any endeavor, no matter how small or insignificant it may seem.

“Commit your works unto the LORD and your thoughts shall be established” reads Proverbs 16:3. George Washington, in his first inaugural address, gives full credence to the words of Solomon saying, “...the foundations of our national policy will be laid in the pure and immutable principles of private morality;

“and the pre-eminence of free government, be exemplified by all the attributes which can win the affections of its citizens, and command the respect of the world. I dwell on this prospect with every satisfaction which an ardent love for my country can inspire:

“Since there is no truth more thoroughly established, than that there exists in the economy and course of nature, an indissoluble union between virtue and happiness, between duty and advantage, between the genuine maxims of an honest and magnanimous policy, and the solid rewards of public prosperity and felicity: since we ought to be no less persuaded that the propitious smiles of heaven, can never be expected on a nation that disregards the eternal rules of order and right, which Heaven itself has ordained...”

Would that we recall that truth again. It rightly aligns the purposes of our lives with those of God on both the personal and collective levels. It is the crossroads of all that is good and desirable in life. To the extent that the United States of America has been a success, it is on account of these immutable truths with a hearty admixture of God’s blessing.

Take heart. These truths will be as relevant in the future as they were in the past. Solomon also wrote, “Say not, ‘Why were the former days better than these?’ For it is not from wisdom that you ask this,” Ecclesiastes 7:10. There is no sense in “pining for the fjords” like some deceased parrot. The past

was forged by men of action who appreciated their relative insignificance. They were subject to the moment, as are we.

The defining difference is always what you intend to do about it, with proper subjugation to the overriding will of the Almighty. This is precisely what the founders of this country tried to pass down to us and the world in general. The form of government that won renown, under God, in this nation, has been embraced around the world.

Yet, if we do not remember the great purpose that should rightly underpin all of our endeavors not a one of them will last! We have reached a critical moment. And now, as then, it is up to each and every individual to be the representative of what truly matters. Regardless of personal advantage. Regardless of popularity. Trouble is coming to this world but trouble has always been at the door. It is a collective decision to restrain it or to roll over and succumb.

If it is God’s will that a nation be punished then that nation will suffer, but let us not think it is arbitrary. Let us not “talk only” about what needs to be done while we are swallowed up by the oppression of immorality that it is in our power to restrain. That has been the great and enduring purpose of the United States of America. In its finest moments it has elevated those near and far, but it is borne on the backs of those who believe in something greater than themselves. Those that keep in proper perspective the will of God and of man.

Calvin Coolidge, while still serving in the Senate of Massachusetts in 1914, said, “Men do not make laws. They do but discover them. Laws must be justified by something more than the will of the majority. They must rest on the eternal foundation of righteousness.”

Let all of our actions have that same unshakable foundation. Let us rededicate ourselves to God’s great and eternal purpose in this moment. There is no comfort to be found elsewhere. We often think we are in total control of our destinies, but we are not. Our action is limited at best, restrained inside of clearly defined parameters. The Author of these does grant us that limited action however. To see and to know if we can or will obey, or rise to any given occasion. Let this be that occasion. □

No Place Like Home

Continued from page 2

I know they're not Arabs, but I think that bragging excessively is a Middle Eastern habit.

Anyway, I returned home successfully, after many harrowing experiences. One time I received a Telex (the internet wasn't invented yet) explaining that my Granddad, HWA was coming. I du-

tifully went to Tel Aviv to make the arrangements for a luncheon. I arrived at the chosen location to the smell of acrid smoke. The place had burned down, and another location would have to be found. Why me?

I found another location, and it was the top floor of a tall building. I met my Grandfather and his entourage, and we sat down for lunch, during which

he waxed eloquent about, "It's not good for man to be alone..." Apparently this was a speech he'd given before. If you were around you probably heard it. Immediately, his future wife was at his side telling him to be careful. I piped up and said something like it wouldn't matter if he remarried, but... Oh, those were the days.

The lucheon came off without a hitch, and I escaped criticism except for my Grandfather telling me that I was a "smart young man." I don't think he meant intelligent. It didn't spoil the occasion, however, and we all went home with full bellies. Him, no doubt to one of the finest hotels. I escaped back to Jerusalem thinking I had done a pretty good job.

He was very kind to me. Invited me to the Rose Bowl game that O.J. played in. He backed out at the last minute, and I took a girlfriend. But it was exciting. He took me to several Laker's games. He was a kindly gentleman, but stern.

I've had the opportunity to travel many places around the world and there is no place like the United States of America. There are things we take for granted, like standing in line without having to fight for your spot or driving in your own lane without using your horn.

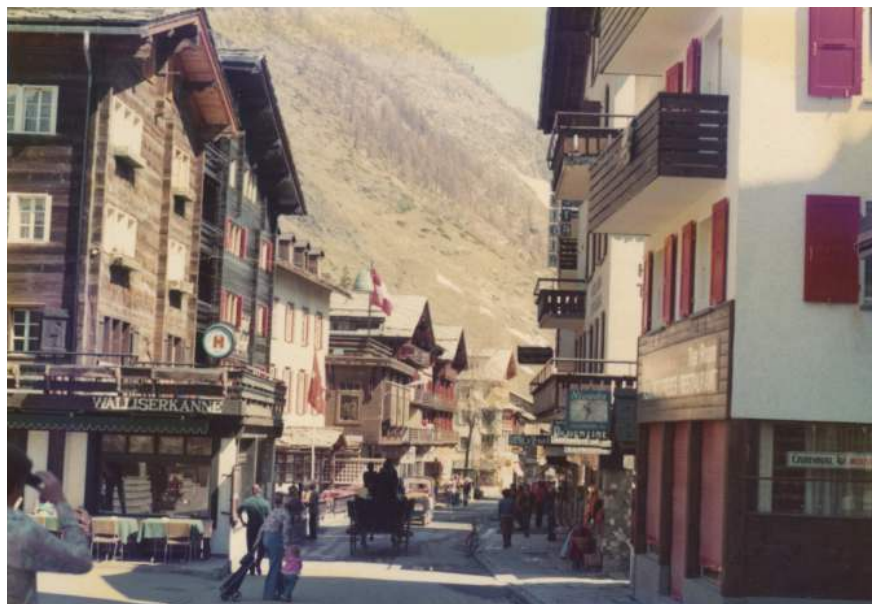
We value law and order, without having to have a guard with a machine gun on every floor of a hotel, like I encountered in the Caribbean.

We should thank God for the United States of America and the blessing that it is to us and the world. □



Above: Garner Ted Armstrong and son, Mark, view the Coronation Chair in Westminster Abbey (mid '60s).

Below: Mark and family ride a wagon through Zermatt, Switzerland (mid '70s). Gas engines were banned in 1931.



BIBLE CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

LESSON TWENTY-THREE: THE RESURRECTIONS

The hope of all mankind and the promise to the Christian is the resurrection from the dead. There are references to four resurrections in the Bible: 1) the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the firstborn from the dead and the pioneer of our salvation; 2) the resurrection of the saints at the return of Christ when the true believers shall become spirit-composed members of God's family; 3) the resurrection back to physical life of all who have ever died without having understood God's way, for their first opportunity for salvation; 4) the resurrection of all those who have refused to repent and have rejected God's way, to be consumed in the lake of fire (called the second death).

DOCTRINAL OVERVIEW

The resurrection from the dead is the only real hope of man, whether he believes it or even knows about it. It gives him final, ultimate victory over death which is the common enemy of every human being (1 Corinthians 15:26). Paul referred to the “hope of eternal life which God, who never lies, promised ages ago” (Titus 1:2). When Paul was brought before Felix, he admitted that “according to the way, which they call a sect, I worship the God of our fathers, believing everything laid down by the law or written in the prophets, having a hope in God which these themselves accept, that there will be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust” (Acts 24:14-15).

The resurrection was the central theme of the apostles' message which they preached powerfully. It was often controversial. Paul was called a “babbling” by certain Greek philosophers “because he preached Jesus and the resurrection” (Acts 17:18); the resurrection from the dead was subjected to ridicule by some, and it intrigued others. “Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked; but others said, We will hear you again about this” (Acts 17:32).

And hear again they shall; not only those ancient Greeks, but every man, woman and child who ever drew breath on this earth. None who have ever died — in whatever place at whatever time — are forgotten by God. Numerous scriptures make plain that a resurrection from the dead is an integral part of God's plan for all mankind (Job 19:25-27; John 5:21-29; John 11:23-25, etc.).

Jesus Christ was the first to be resurrected from physical death to eternal life. He was in fact “designated Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by His resurrection from the dead” (Romans 1:4). His resurrection is extremely important to the Christian because it proves the viability of God's plan. We have “a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and to an inheritance which is imperishable” (1 Peter 1:3); but “if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain” (1 Corinthians 15:14). Christ's resurrection demonstrates positively that God can and shall resurrect a person who has God's Spirit dwelling within him. It is the faith and belief that God shall resurrect the Christian as Christ was resurrected that encourages one to continue along the path of

Continued next page

salvation. “For if we have been united with Him in a death like His, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His” (Romans 6:5).

Jesus Christ is called the “firstfruits” of the dead, because He was the first of many who shall follow Him in the resurrection, but “each in his own order.” 1 Corinthians 15:20-26 explains further:

“But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive, but each in his own order: Christ the first fruits; then at His coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when He delivers the Kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death.”

The scriptures record three resurrections for three different classifications of persons. The first is prophesied to occur at the return of Jesus Christ. A comparison of the pertinent verses indicates that this first resurrection shall include all saints that have lived and died from Adam’s time until Christ’s second coming, including those still alive when He comes (although technically, they shall be “changed” rather than resurrected, 1 Corinthians 15:51). This resurrection is from the nothingness of physical death to the incredible majesty of spiritual life as members of God’s family. “Blessed and holy is he who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and they shall reign with Him a thousand years” (Revelation 20:6).

Another resurrection is prophesied for the multiple billions of human beings who have lived and died never having had a chance for salvation. This resurrection is from physical death to a second physical life during which a person shall be given God’s Spirit and the knowledge of salvation. The truth of God shall be opened to their understanding at this time and their lives shall be lived according to the biblical precepts. Ezekiel 37:1-14 paints a breathtaking picture of this resurrection to

physical life, “Behold, I will open your graves, and raise you from your graves” (verse 12). Though only Israel is discussed, this is because it shall be the example — the nation that shall show how God’s plan works; thus, all nations and peoples of the earth are included in Ezekiel 37 by implication. This is confirmed in Revelation 20:11-12:

“Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it; from His presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Also another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, by what they had done.”

The scriptures record one final resurrection. It is mentioned in various passages (e.g. Daniel 12:2-3; John 5:21-29; etc.) but is explained most precisely in Revelation 20:14-15. Here John explains that the unrepentant — those who have had a chance for salvation but have adamantly rejected it — shall be resurrected to physical life and cast into the lake of fire where they shall be consumed. The death they suffer is called in Revelation 20 “the second death” (v. 14), which occurs only for those whose names are not found written in the book of life — that is, those who have not obtained salvation (verse 15). This final resurrection is in a sense a mercy killing for those to whom eternal life in their state of rebellion would eventually mean extreme agony and misery.

The first resurrection of saints to eternal life and the subsequent resurrection of the innumerable multitudes to physical life will be moments of unimaginable emotion when loved ones who thought they were separated forever — parents and children, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, friends and relatives — shall be suddenly reunited. To all of them it will be as though no time had passed, like awakening in the morning after a solid night’s sleep without dreams; it will be the next instant of their consciousness from the instant of their death no matter how they might have died or how long ago it might have been.

Immediately it is to be expected that numerous questions about these awesome events will be raised. Paul asked and answered the

most obvious one himself. “But some one will ask, How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?” (1 Corinthians 15:35). He then explains that, just as different animals have different types of bodies, so the body of the resurrection is different from all others. It is celestial, imperishable, glorious and spiritual.

“So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body. Thus it is written, The first man Adam became a living being; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. But it is not the spiritual which is first but the physical, and then the spiritual. The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so are those who

are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven. I tell you this, brethren: flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Lo! I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable nature must put on the imperishable, and this mortal nature must put on immortality. When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting? The sting of death is sin, and, the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 15:42-57). □

SUMMARY: Read these scriptures in your own Bible:

- **1 Corinthians 15:26 - Death shall be destroyed.**
- **Titus 1:2 - God promises eternal life.**
- **Acts 24:14-15 - There shall be a resurrection of the dead.**
- **Acts 17:18 - The resurrection was a controversial subject in Paul’s day.**
- **Job 19:25-27; John 5:21-29, 11:23-25 - The resurrection is an integral part of the plan of God.**
- **Romans 1:4 - Jesus designated Son of God in power according to the spirit of Holiness by His resurrection.**
- **1 Peter 1:3 - We are begotten because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.**
- **1 Corinthians 15:14 - If Christ had not been resurrected our faith would be in vain.**
- **1 Corinthians 15:20-26 - Jesus Christ is the first of many firstfruits.**
- **1 Corinthians 15:51 - Firstfruits alive at Christ’s return will be changed to spirit.**
- **Ezekiel 37:1-14 - Valley of the Dry Bones (picturing the second resurrection).**
- **Revelation 20:11-12 - White Throne Judgment.**
- **Daniel 12:2-3; John 5:21-29; Revelation 20:14-15 - Third Resurrection.**
- **1 Corinthians 15:42-57 - Description of the resurrection.**
- **1 Corinthians 15:57 - Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

QUESTIONS (ANSWERS BELOW):

1. There are references to ____ [how many?] resurrections to immortality in the Bible.
a) 1 b) 2 c) 3 d) 4
 2. The resurrection from the dead is the only real hope of man, whether he believes it or even knows about it. True or False?
 3. God cannot tell a lie. True or False?
 4. In Paul's day the idea of the resurrection was generally accepted by most everyone. True or False?
 5. The resurrection of the dead is for...
a) Israel b) the firstfruits c) "the saved" d) all of mankind
 6. Jesus Christ is in His present position because of the resurrection. True or False?
 7. We are offered the Salvation Process by virtue of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. True or False?
 8. According to 1 Corinthians 15:14, if Jesus had not been raised, then the preaching of the church is ____ and our faith is _____. [what?]
 9. Romans 6:5 says if we have been united with Him (Jesus) in a death like His, we shall certainly be united with Him in a _____ like His. [what?]
 10. Which is true? Jesus Christ:
a) Son of God by virtue of the resurrection
b) firstfruit of the dead
c) by whom came the resurrection
d) will reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet
e) all are true
 11. How many resurrections are there for mankind?
a) 2 b) 3 c) 4
 12. The first resurrection is for all the people (biblically referred to as "saints") between Adam and the return of Christ who had the Holy Spirit. True or False?
 13. The second resurrection is for the multiple billions of humans beings who lived and died but never had an opportunity for salvation. True or False?
 14. These people raised in the second resurrection will be raised in new physical bodies. True or False?
 15. Those brought up in the second resurrection will then enter the salvation process and be given God's Holy Spirit. True or False?
-

16. The third resurrection is for those who had their opportunity for salvation but who have adamantly rejected it. True or False?
17. Those brought up on the third resurrection get a second opportunity at salvation. True or False?
18. Those in the third resurrection are brought up in physical bodies and mercifully put into the lake of fire to die instantly. True or False?
19. For the dead, death seems like only a second of time, regardless of how long they have been dead. True or False?
20. Which of the following are descriptions of a resurrection to a spiritual body?
- what was perishable becomes imperishable
 - what was in dishonor is raised in glory
 - what was in weakness is raised in power
 - what was mortal is raised immortal
 - what had earthly image is raised in heavenly image
 - all of the above

LESSON TWENTY-THREE — ANSWERS:

- | | | | |
|-------------|------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| 20. (f) | 15. (true) | 10. (e) | 5. (d) |
| 19. (true) | 14. (true) | 9. (resurrection) | 4. (false, Acts 17:18) |
| 18. (true) | 13. (true) | 8. (vain, vain) | 3. (true, Titus 1:2) |
| 17. (false) | 12. (true) | 7. (true, 1 Peter 1:3) | 2. (true) |
| 16. (true) | 11. (b) | 6. (true) | 1. (d) |



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GARNER TED ARMSTRONG
EVANGELISTIC ASSOCIATION
P.O. Box 232, Sandy Bay, TAS 7006
Phone: 1300 885 066
www.GTAAustralia.org.au
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