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BIBLE NEWS PROPHECY



Is ISLAM the Fourth Horseman *of the Apocalypse* ?

**Should Christians
Celebrate January 1st?**

*When does God begin the year?
What does January 1st honor?*

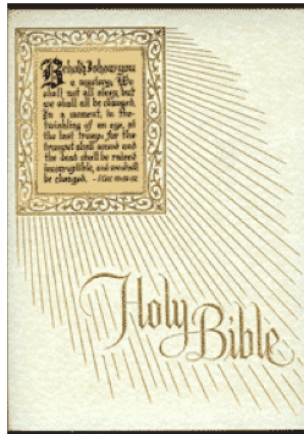
**Why Are Natural
Disasters Increasing?**

*What about World War III and World War IV?
Are there any connections to the
four horsemen of the Book of Revelation?*

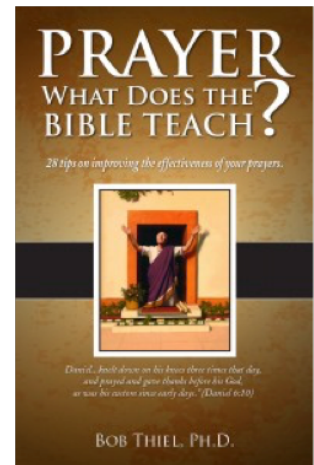
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About the Front Cover: The cover features illustrations from the 1887 painting *Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* by the Russian artist Victor Vasnetsov

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Is ISLAM THE FOURTH HORSE OF THE APOCALYPSE?

It was in 2014 that I believe I first heard a Pentecostal minister referring to Islam as the 'fourth horse' of the Apocalypse. I heard it again from the same source in 2015. Later that year, I found that another Protestant preacher taught that as well.

Is it possible that Islam is the fourth horse of Revelation?

Some Protestant Views

Here is the view of a Pentecostal minister named Irvin Baxter:

Revelation 6:1-8 depicts four riders on white, red, black and pale horses. These spirits have competed with each other and patrolled and dominated the earth for the entire last century. They certainly appear to fulfill Bible prophecies concerning the very Antichrist philosophic and political movements of Catholicism, Communism, Capitalism and Islam as we move towards the end of days.

The Fourth Horse "The Green Horse"

The translators of the King James Version of the Bible used the word "pale" for the fourth horse, which is better translated "green" from the original Greek word, "chloros." Green is the universally identifiable color of Islam.

"And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with death." (Revelation 6:8)

According to a 2013 report in muslimpopulation.com, Islam has 2.04 billion adherents, 23% of the world population, projected to be 2.8 billion by 2014. According to a 2013 report in The Economist magazine, over 70% of Muslims support Sharia law and 90% support execution of apostates.

The Mark of Islam: Death

The green horse is marked by death. Islam is associated around the world with the nearly 3,000 deaths in the

9/11 World Trade Center attacks, and the over 22,594 deadly terror attacks around the world since that time, according to thereligionofpeace.com. It is the culture of death. Yet, Islam claims to be the "religion of peace." (Islam in Bible Prophecy: The Four Horsemen in Bible Prophecy. <http://www.endtime.com/islam/>)

Here is something from a preacher named Ken Raggio:

Who are the Four Horsemen? Catholicism. Communism. Capitalism. Islam.

It's in the Bible! ...

THE FOURTH HORSE - The "Pale" Horse

NOW, I want to address one more very important component of this topic - the subject of the FOURTH HORSE - the Pale Horse. This one is too amazing to believe on first glance, but take my word for it; you WILL see the evidence shortly!

The translators of the original King James Version of the Bible (1611) gave us the word PALE for the fourth horse. Let's look at how they came up with that. In the GREEK text, the word "chloros" is present. "Chloros" means GREEN. It is the same as seen in the world chlorophyll, which is the green color of plants. Obviously, the translators could not imagine a green horse, so provided the word "pale" instead. The Old Testament reference to the fourth horse in the KJV said, "grizzled and bay." However, neither of those words appear in the ancient Hebrew. The best interpretation is "strong-colored" horse.

Therefore, when we look at the fourth horse in both Zechariah and Revelation, we see a "strong-colored" - "green" horse.

The universally identifiable color of Islam is green. Look at virtually ANYTHING that has to do with Islam, and you will see GREEN.

So, Islam is the green horse of death seen in Revelation 6:8. The prophecy there foretells Islam's patrolling fully one-fourth of the earth, now 1.5 billion people.

Due to Islam's growth and subsequent threats in even

Western nations such as England, France, and Spain, anti-Americanism is flourishing in many new places. Islam is a driving force in more and more nations around the world, including Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Syria, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Kashmir, India, Malaysia, Indonesia, Turkey, all the Eastern Block nations of Europe, Russia, and many others. Radical extremism around the globe, including cells in America pose increasing threats to Israel and America's futures.

DEATH is the trademark of the GREEN HORSE. Can anyone question the accuracy of that prophecy when Islam today is associated around the world with the nearly 3000 deaths in the World Trade Center attack of 9-11-01, and over 8,000 subsequent Muslim bombings around the world since that time? Where is this so-called "religion of peace"??

Muslim clerics cynically boast that the West loves life, but that Islam loves death. They teach their followers that the most glorious path to paradise is martyrdom - death by killing others while performing the act of suicide. ...

In the first half of Daniel's 70th week, (in the first 3.5 of the last 7 years before Armageddon) the Holy Roman Empire, also known as the European Union, backed by the Roman Catholic Church, will enjoy a short-termed renaissance, and global supremacy.

In the middle of that seven years, Antichrist will impose the Mark of the Beast with Roman Catholic Church endorsement.

But as Islam quickly takes over London, Madrid and other population centers of Europe, Islam is likely to challenge the Roman Catholic Church's influence on politics. ...

I predict that Islam will, at the end of the seven years, finally rise up to take control of Europe and simultaneously destroy the Roman Catholic Church. (Raggio K. The Four Horsemen of Revelation. Copyright 1988-2010. <http://kenraggio.com/KRPN-CathComCap.htm>)

Both Irvin Baxter and Ken Raggio teach that the first horse represents the Catholic Papacy, the second horse Communism, the third horse Capitalism, and the fourth horse Islam.

Is any or all of that right?

To determine that we need to look at the Bible and world

history while we consider each of the four horsemen individually.

The Bible and the Four Horsemen

The four horsemen are listed in the Book of Revelation chapter 6. They are listed sequentially and each one begins to ride after a seal is open.

The first horsemen represents a successful false ecumenical religion:

1 Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, "Come and see." 2 And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer. (Revelation 6:1-2)

Could this represent some version of 'catholicism' as Irvin Baxter and Ken Raggio have claimed?

Well, if catholicism means 'universalism,' which it does, and those preachers mean a church that will use the term 'Catholic' to refer to itself, then yes, Irvin Baxter and Ken Raggio are correct. Basically, my read of scriptures, such as Daniel 11:36-38, Revelation 13:4-8, and Revelation 17, confirms that in the end time, a church of the city of seven hills that has political connections (Revelation 17) will be changed by the influences of a political leader (Revelation 13:1-10; Daniel 11:36-38) and false prophet (Revelation 13:11-18). They will be successful for a time, until their destruction will come (Revelation 19).

Now let's look at the opening of the second seal. This second horsemen represents war:

3 When He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, "Come and see." 4 Another horse, fiery red, went out. And it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that people should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword. (Revelation 6:3-4)

Irvin Baxter and Ken Raggio have claimed that this second horseman represents communism. That is not the case. While red is the color of the communists, and communists have engaged in war, communism per se did not take peace from the earth. Communism did not actually cause World War I nor World War II. Nor will communism truly cause World War III. Ken Raggio's and Irvin Baxter's interpretation of this are wrong.

Now let's look at the opening of the third seal. This third

horsemen represents food shortages and famine:

5 When He opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come and see." So I looked, and behold, a black horse, and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. 6 And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, "A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine." (Revelation 6:5-6)

Ken Raggio and Irvin Baxter have claimed that this third horseman is capitalism. That is not the case. Capitalism existed before communism, thus this interpretation of the third seal is in sequential error.

Furthermore (GMOs notwithstanding), history suggests that communism tends more to cause food shortages than capitalism. Irvin Baxter's and Ken Raggio's interpretation of communism being the third horse are wrong.

The Bible and the Fourth Horseman

But what does the Bible teach about the rider of the fourth horse?

This fourth horsemen represents pestilence and death:

7 When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, "Come and see." 8 So I looked, and behold, a pale horse. And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades followed with him. And power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth. (Revelation 6:7-8)

Irvin Baxter and Ken Raggio claim that this refers to Islam. They are correct that green is the predominant color of Islam. Mohammed's favorite color was green and the Islamic prophet is said to have worn a green cloak and turban. Yet, Islam has not been killing people with hunger and by the beasts of the earth (pestilence). It has not killed a quarter of the earth's population, nor will it (though this does not mean Islamic terrorists could not unleash any type of biological weapon).

Although certain of those now associated with Islam are prophesied to cause death (e.g. Psalm 83:4-8) and certain lands dominated by it look to be part of the final King of the South (Daniel 11:40-43), this type of killing would mainly be through terrorism and war. Islam most assuredly is NOT the fourth horseman of the apocalypse. Irvin Baxter and Ken Raggio are wrong about the identity of the fourth horseman, even if Islam does contribute to

some of the prophesied deaths.

Also, Ken Raggio improperly claims that Islam will be the power at the end that destroys the compromised false ecumenical church based in the city of seven-hills (Revelation 17:9, 18) that will call itself Catholic. While that church will be destroyed, it will be by the European Beast power according to scripture (Revelation 17:15-18).

Let me state that the Bible does tell of a power in the predominantly Muslim lands of the Middle East and North Africa rising up, but being destroyed by the European King of the North power (Daniel 11:40-43; cf. Ezekiel 30:3-8)—the Bible does not tie Islam to any of the horses of Revelation.

Overall, Irvin Baxter and Ken Raggio are wrong about their identification of three of the four horsemen of Revelation 6. Yet, they both have followings, as do other churches with differing views on this topic. Those who want to live as a Christian should pay attention to biblical prophecy, but need to be careful that they do not follow those that are in significant prophetic and doctrinal error.

What Can Be Expected During The Ride of the Fourth Horsemen?

Notice the following by former Worldwide Church of God writer George Ritter:

Epidemics Of The Future

The world has yet to see the last of widespread disease epidemics. That, in effect, was what Jesus Christ told His disciples in the pivotal Olivet prophecy recorded in Matthew 24 and Luke 21.

Right along with wars and famine came pestilence: "For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places" (Matt. 24:7). These were some of the prophetic signs that Christ listed in answering the question, "What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world [age]?" (Verse 3.)

Granted, pestilence, famine and war have been ongoing problems that have plagued mankind ever since the dawn of history. But the main thrust of Christ's message is futuristic. The overall context of the Olivet prophecy readily attests to this fact. In verses 21 and 22 of Matthew 24, Christ referred to a time when the total annihilation of human life would be a distinct possibility.

Only with the recent development of multiple-megaton nuclear weaponry could such an event have become a reality.

The book of Revelation also underscores the fact that such tumultuous times are yet in store for the future. John's apocalyptic scenario centers around the events surrounding the Day of the Lord (Rev.1:10). In the sixth chapter we see war, famine and pestilence (the last three of the four horsemen of John's vision) riding together at this critical juncture in world history.

The Pale Horseman Rides

With both the black horse of famine and the red horse of war riding roughshod over the earth, it is only natural for the pale horse of pestilence to follow hard on their heels. Ezekiel also described the devastating effect this deadly triad can have: "A third part of thee shall die with the pestilence, and with famine shall they be consumed in the midst of thee: and a third part shall fall by the sword round about thee; and I will scatter a third part in to all the winds, and I will draw out a sword after them" (Ezek. 5:12).

Parallel prophecies found in the Old Testament clearly indicate why man will continue to suffer from the ravages of disease. Notice this cause-and-effect relationship as outlined in the 28th chapter of Deuteronomy: "But if you will not obey the voice of the Lord your God," warns man's Creator, "the Lord will make the pestilence cling to you until He has consumed you from off the land, which you go to possess. The Lord will smite you with consumption [wasting, degenerative disease], with fever and inflammation [possibly infectious contagions].... and the tumors, the scurvy [deficiency disease] and the itch, of which you cannot be healed. The Lord will smite you with madness [mental disorders] and blindness and dismay of heart [emotional trauma]" (verses 15, 21-22, 27-28, The Amplified Bible).

Misgovernment, greed and oppression over the course of nearly 6000 years of history have saddled the human race with the unwanted burden of disease. For instance, man's proclivity to crowd into disease — prone cities is indicative of this problem. And it is interesting to note that Bible prophecy seems to indicate that this crowd-at-all-costs policy will eventually backfire on the human race. Notice Leviticus 26:25: "... And when ye are gathered together within your cities, I will send the pestilence among you... ." Also Ezekiel 7:15: "The sword is without,

and the pestilence and the famine within: he that is in the field shall die with the sword; and he that is in the city, famine and pestilence shall devour him." (4 Horsemen of the Apocalypse - The Pale Horse - Disease Epidemics. Ambassador College Press, 1975)

In modern times, the spread of diseases is so much easier than in more ancient times.

Contagion

Notice some comments from the Director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) about the potential to spread disease related to the 2011 movie *Contagion*:

The movie tells the story of a novel virus that spreads across the globe rapidly, with scientists and the public following its every move. The idea of a contagion such as this is very real...the plot of a new, deadly virus spreading quickly is quite plausible. In fact, CDC and public health partners identify, on average, one new or emerging infectious disease each year. The movie is a reminder that public health at local, state, national, and global levels must be supported to quickly detect, investigate, and respond to outbreaks and keep Americans safe from health, safety, and security threats arising in this country or anywhere in the world.

The film underscores that we are all connected by the air we breathe, the food we eat, and the water we drink...Contagion shows that fear is also contagious. (Frieden T. CDC Director on 'Contagion': Deadly Viruses Could Spread Fast. The Atlantic, September 10, 2011)

Humankind is at risk. And modern travel and other practices are placing humanity at even greater risk. The ride of the pale/green horseman of death will result in deaths from pestilences.

I would also like to comment about fear as the *Contagion* movie involved that. In a recent trip to Europe, I noticed that some Asian-appearing individuals (and only Asians, and then mainly women) were wearing masks to presumably reduce their risk of catching airborne diseases in airports and some other places. Washing hands and wearing masks sometimes do have limited benefit, and it is possible that in times of epidemic that some (though not all) may benefit from these actions.

The fourth horseman of the apocalypse will result in death of a quarter of humankind (Revelation 6:8). Just like bodily

exercise can benefit for a little while, physical hygiene steps may also benefit some for a little while, yet turning to God and living His ways are what we need to do:

8 For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come. 9 This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance. 10 For to this end we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe. (1 Timothy 4:8-11)

Yes, it is possible that those who take certain physical precautions will fare better than those that do not. Yet godliness is profitable in all things.

Hold Fast to that Which is Good

Do not overlook what the scriptures say. And in regards to prophecy, in the Continuing Church of God:

19 We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts (2 Peter 1:19, KJV).

The Bible says:

21 Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. (1 Thessalonians 5:21, KJV)

Although the fourth horseman will one day this century begin his ride, Islam is NOT the fourth horse of the Apocalypse.

JANUARY 1ST: IS THIS A DATE TO CELEBRATE?



Roman God Janus Bifrons in Vatican Museum

By Bob Thiel

Every December 31st a celebration is began by many to 'bring in the new year.' It is a wildly popular holiday in Western countries. People bring in the year with parties and much fanfare.

Why is it celebrated when it is? Is this a proper holiday for Christians to celebrate? What are its fruits? Does God teach that the 'new year' begins on January 1st?

Why January 1st?

It was in 46 B.C. that Julius Caesar declared that January 1st would mark the beginning of the new year. January was named after Janus Bifrons, the two-headed god of beginnings, transitions, gates and doors in Roman mythology (bifrons means two-headed). People prayed to Janus when they wanted something new in their lives (such as resolutions).

Janus is normally represented with two faces, one looking to the past and the other looking to the future (the two faces also signified change that Janus would bring in, see Burchett, p. 15). The first day of the month of January was sacred to him.

The early Catholic Church not only did not celebrate a winter New Year's observance. Tertullian (one of its leading 2nd /3rd century writers) warned that to participate in the winter celebrations made one beholden to pagan gods.

Notice what Tertullian wrote about winter celebrations, such as Saturnalia:

The Minervalia are as much Minerva's, as the Saturnalia Saturn's; Saturn's, which must necessarily be celebrated even by little slaves at the time of the Saturnalia. New-year's gifts likewise must be caught at, and the Septimontium kept; and all the presents of Midwinter and the feast of Dear Kinsmanship must be exacted; the schools must be wreathed with flowers; the flamens' wives and the aediles sacrifice; the school is honoured on the appointed holy-days. The same thing takes place on an idol's birthday; every pomp of the devil is frequented. Who will think that these things are befitting to a Christian master, unless it be he who shall think them suitable likewise to one who is not a master? (Tertullian. On Idolatry, Chapter X. Translated by S. Thelwall. Excerpted from Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 3. Edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. American Edition, 1885).

But, however, the majority (of Christians) have by this time induced the belief in their mind that it is pardonable if at any time they do what the heathen do, for fear "the Name be blasphemed"...To live with heathens is lawful, to die with them is not. Let us live with all; let us be glad with them, out of community of nature, not of superstition. We are peers in soul, not in discipline; fellow-possessors of the world, not of error. But if we have no right of communion in matters of this kind with strangers, how far more wicked to celebrate them among brethren! Who can maintain or defend this?...By us,...the Saturnalia and New-year's and Midwinter's festivals and Matronalia are frequented—presents come and go—New-year's gifts—games join their noise—banquets join their din! Oh better fidelity of the nations to their own sect, which claims no solemnity of the Christians for itself!...Not the Lord's day, not Pentecost, even if they had known them, would they have shared with us; for they would fear lest they should seem to be Christians. We are not apprehensive lest we seem to be heathens! (Tertullian. On Idolatry, Chapter XIV. Translated by S. Thelwall. Excerpted from Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 3. Edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. American Edition, 1885t).

But "let your works shine," saith He; but now all our shops and gates shine! You will now-a-days find more doors of heathens without lamps and laurel-wreaths than of Christians. What does the case seem to be with regard to that species (of ceremony) also? If it is an idol's honour, without doubt an idol's honour is idolatry. If it is for a man's sake, let us again consider

that all idolatry is for man's sake; let us again consider that all idolatry is a worship done to men, since it is generally agreed even among their worshippers that aforesaid the gods themselves of the nations were men; and so it makes no difference whether that superstitious homage be rendered to men of a former age or of this. Idolatry is condemned, not on account of the persons which are set up for worship, but on account of those its observances, which pertain to demons (Tertullian. On Idolatry, Chapter XV. Translated by S. Thelwall. Excerpted from Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 3. Edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. American Edition, 1885).

What Tertullian seems to be saying is that observing New Year's celebrations make Christians appear to be followers of pagan gods, and since the pagans would not intentionally celebrate days considered by many to be Christian, Christians should not celebrate days that are honored by the heathen. Specifically, he felt that those who profess Christ should not celebrate New Year's or other pagan days, as even the observance is a form of idolatry.

The Bible teaches:

9 What am I saying then? That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything? 20 Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. (1 Corinthians 10:19-21)

New Year's clearly has demonic origins and promotes paganism.

New Year's was also observed in honor of the pagan goddess Strenua/Strenia, the goddess of purification and well being. It may partially be because of her that New Year's resolutions and vows are made today.

The Catholic Encyclopedia confirmed this when it reported:

Christian writers and councils condemned the heathen orgies and excesses connected with the festival of the Saturnalia, which were celebrated at the beginning of the year: Tertullian blames Christians who regarded the customary presents — called strenae (Fr. étrennes) from the goddess Strenia, who presided over New Year's Day (cf. Ovid, Fasti, 185-90) — as mere tokens of friendly intercourse (De Idol. xiv), and towards the end of the sixth century the Council of

Auxerre (can. I) forbade Christians *strenas diabolicas observare*. The II Council of Tours held in 567 (can. 17) prescribes prayers and a Mass of expiation for New Year's Day, adding that this is a practice long in use (*patres nostri statuerunt*). Dances were forbidden, and pagan crimes were to be expiated by Christian fasts (St. Augustine, *Serm.*, cxcvii-viii in P.L., XXXVIII, 1024; Isidore of Seville, *De Div. Off. Eccl.*, I, xli; Trullan Council, 692, can. lxii). (Tierney, John. "New Year's Day." *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. Vol. 11. New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1911.)

The expression *strenas diabolicas observare* roughly translates from Latin to English as "observing the new time of the Devil." It is likely that New Year's resolutions are related to the purification and well being attributes of the pagan goddess *Strenia*. So, while a Roman Catholic council forbade the devil's new year, many nowadays observe it.

So Catholic sources plainly admit that the celebration of New Year's was originally opposed by claimed "Christian writers." Hence, observing New Year's definitely should not be considered to be an original apostolic practice nor even early tradition for the Catholics of Rome.

The Feast of Circumcision?

New Year's day did not officially become a holy day for the Roman Catholic Church until 487 A.D. when it was declared to be the Feast of the Circumcision (though it may have been also observed in the fourth century, but other sources suggest eighth century or later dates):

Our "New-Year's Day," the "Feast of the Circumcision," was called the octave of Christmas as early as 487, AD, and was instituted by the Church to commemorate the ceremony of the Jewish law which the Saviour submitted. In the time of Numa the old Roman heathens dedicated the day to Janus, the double-faced deity...(Savage J., editor. *The Manhattan and de la Salle monthly*. New York Catholic Protectory, 1875, p. 2)

The Feast of the Circumcision has been observed in the Roman church since 487 and in the Anglican church since 1549. (Douglas GW, Compton HD. *The American book of days: a compendium of information about holidays, festivals, notable anniversaries and Christian and Jewish holy days, with notes on other American anniversaries worthy of remembrance*. H. W. Wilson Co., 1957, p. 2)

This gave the Catholic, as well as Anglican, Church an eight-day festival with a 'holy day' at the beginning and the end, similar in that respect to the Feast of Tabernacles (Leviticus 23:34-35). It was determined that if Jesus was born on December 25th (even though he could not have been), since He was circumcised eight days later (Luke 2:21), He would have been circumcised on January 1st, hence the rationale for New Year's being 'the Feast of the Circumcision.'

It should be added that there is no indication in the Bible that Jesus' circumcision should be celebrated.

Actually here is the only verse in the Bible that specifically discusses Jesus' circumcision:

21 And when eight days were completed for the circumcision of the Child, His name was called JESUS, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb (Luke 2:21).

Notice that there is no command to celebrate this date, hence it really was not an original apostolic tradition. It seems more like a compromise with non-biblical pagan-related practices. Of course, the fact that Jewish babies were not generally circumcised at midnight should show all that what is not celebrated as New Year's at midnight really is not directly related to Jesus' circumcision.

There is no biblical indication that people should engage in heavy drinking and loud parties the evening before to honor the fact that Jesus would be circumcised the next day. Actually, the Bible specifically warns about celebrating observances for the true God that are used for pagan gods (e.g. Jeremiah 10:2).

Since the 'feast of the circumcision' is tied into the date of Christ's birth, it may be of interest to note that the Church in Rome did not even endorse Christmas until apparently the fourth century.

The World Book Encyclopedia notes:

In 354 A.D., Bishop Liberius of Rome ordered the people to celebrate on December 25. He probably chose this date because the people of Rome already observed it as the Feast of Saturn, celebrating the birthday of the sun (Sechrist E.H. Christmas. *World Book Encyclopedia*, Volume 3. Field Enterprises Educational Corporation, Chicago, 1966, pp. 408-417).

History indicates that December 25th was apparently chosen because of pagan worship practices and that the

circumcision of Jesus was not on January 1st. There is no biblical reason that January 1st should be celebrated by Christians.

Actually, when the Roman Church originally endorsed the celebration of New Year's, it was hoped that it would stop the drinking and wild parties, but it did not.

In recent times, I have not seen much condemnation of these practices by any Roman leaders, which one would expect since perhaps most of their members participate in the types of New Year's celebrations that the Roman Church originally condemned.

That various older Roman Catholic writings show a connection between New Year's celebrations ancient pagan observances:

Even in our own day the secular features of the opening of the New Year interfere with the religious observance of the Circumcision, and tend to make a mere holiday of that which should have the sacred character of a Holy Day. St. Augustine points out the difference between the pagan and the Christian manner of celebrating the day: pagan feasting and excesses were to be expiated by Christian fasting and prayer (P. L., XXXVIII, 1024 sqq.; Serm. cxcvii, cxcviii) (Tierney John J. Transcribed by Wm Stuart French, Jr. Feast of the Circumcision. The Catholic Encyclopedia, Volume III. Copyright © 1908 by Robert Appleton Company. Nihil Obstat, November 1, 1908. Remy Lafort, S.T.D., Censor. Imprimatur. +John Cardinal Farley, Archbishop of New York).

Christians should not adopt pagan practices (1 Corinthians 10:20; Deuteronomy 12:29-32).

Janus: The God of Time?

So, how is New Year's celebrated?

Well customs do vary around the world. Various cultures believe that meeting with people, eating certain foods, or consuming certain drinks will help insure good luck for the year.

In the 1700s, notice a poem that was written to and about Janus from The poetical works of Jonathan Swift, Volumes 2-3, By Jonathan Swift, John Mitford, p. 120:

TO JANUS, ON NEW YEAR'S DAY, 1726.'
Two-faced Janus, god of Time!
Be my Phoebus while I rhyme;
To oblige your crony Swift,

Bring our dame a new year's gift;
She has got but half a face;
Janus, since thou hast a brace,
To my lady once be kind;
Give her half thy face behind.
God of Time, if you be wise,
Look not with your future eyes;
What imports thy forward sight?
Well, if you could lose it quite.
Can you take delight in viewing
This poor Isle's approaching ruin,
When thy retrospection vast
Sees the glorious ages past?
Happy nation were we blind,
Or had only eyes behind!

So, some consider Janus to be the "God of Time"--but no real Christian would.

It seems, though, that Janus could have been mainly a side issue for the year to start then:

The connection between Janus and the ceremonies of January first may be still further illustrated by these lines from the Carmina Tria de Mensibus:

Hie Iani mensis sacer est: en aspice ut aris tura micent, sumant ut pia liba Lares. Annorum saeclicque caput, natalis honorumpurpleos fastis qui numerat procures.

Which may mean, "This is the sacred month of January—sacred because of the ceremonies. January is the beginning of the year, because the purple-clad chiefs date their office from that month." Although Janus is used here only as a personification of his month, yet some sanctity is reflected to the god himself from the ceremonies of the day. From the lines just quoted, it seems evident that Fastorum genitor parensque* means only, "Janus, i.e. January, is the beginning of the year, a fact to be emphasized by patriotic Romans, because the consuls assumed, or renewed, office on January first." (Janus in Roman life and cult: a study in Roman religions ... By Bessie Rebecca Burchett, p. 15)

In the USA and many other Western cultures, vows called New Year's resolutions are often made. From this authors research, while repentance is a good thing, he believes that this custom of resolutions is similar to the prayers made to Janus and other pagan deities regarding desiring something new. Notice the following:

The practice of making New Year's resolutions can be

traced back 4,000 years to the ancient Babylonians who made promises to the gods at the start of each year, although for them, the new year started in March. Ancient Romans also rang in the New Year by making resolutions in March, until the New Year shifted to Jan.1 sometime around 300 B.C..

The ancient tradition continues in America where approximately 4 out of every 10 adults in the United States expect to make New Year's resolutions. (Mekouar DH. Americans Worry About Waistlines & Wallets. Voice of America, December 31, 2014/)

According most available research, most people break their New Year's resolutions. Hopefully they are not making them before the true God whose word says:

4 When you make a vow to God, do not delay to pay it; for He has no pleasure in fools. Pay what you have vowed—5 Better not to vow than to vow and not pay. 6 Do not let your mouth cause your flesh to sin, nor say before the messenger of God that it was an error. Why should God be angry at your excuse and destroy the work of your hands? (Ecclesiastes 5:4-6).

Many who claim to be Christian make New Year's or other vows, but do not fulfil them.

Another activity which occurs in the USA and elsewhere on New Year's is heavy drinking of alcohol. Many who go to New Year's parties get drunk. Although the Bible allows alcohol (cf. 1 Timothy 5:23), Paul warned Christians, "Do not be drunk" (Ephesians 5:18).

Another Origin

While there are many origins for an eight-day festival celebrated at the end of December and running into the first part of January, there is at least one of biblical interest.

After the death of Solomon, 10 tribes of Israel split from Rehoboam's kingdom and followed Jeroboam. Jeroboam feared that if his subjects still kept the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem, that they eventually may kill him and turn back to Rehoboam (1Kings 12:26-27), so "Jeroboam ordained a feast on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, like the feast that was in Judah, (held in the seventh month of God's calendar) and offered sacrifices on the altar (vs. 34). God was opposed to this (1 Kings 13:1-3).

Now the earliest Roman calendar had 10 months. Julius Caesar made it a 12 month calendar by adding 2 additional months. However, he did not add them in at the end of

the year, but at other times. This is why, even though the Latin names of the months would suggest that September, October, November, and December should be the 7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th months respectively, they are now instead the 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th. God's Feast of Tabernacles usually begins near late September each year (the precise Roman calendar date varies based upon the fact that it is calculated based upon a lunar, not strictly solar, calendar). Jeroboam's original festival thus began around the end of October. However, when two additional months were added to the Roman calendar, it is quite possible that this man-made eight-day holiday was moved to the end of December.

What Bible-believing person would want to participate in Jeroboam's perversion of God's Feast of Tabernacles? Yet, many who profess Christ do so.

Crime Reports

Notice some crime reports in the USA related to New Year's:

Experts are warning Americans of a crime that goes hand in hand with the start of a new year. According to a new report from the National Insurance Crime Bureau, New Year's Day is the most popular holiday for car thefts. (<http://kfor.com/2013/12/31/most-common-crime-on-new-years-day-may-not-be-what-you-think/>)

Residents are being urged to secure their homes to deter burglars who target empty properties on New Year's Eve. "Burglars expect people to be more relaxed and less cautious during the holiday season and take advantage of homes being empty as people see in the New Year with friends and family." (<http://www.rochdaleonline.co.uk/news-features/2/news-headlines/84548/deter-burglars-on-new-years-eve>)

While criminals could pick another time, I thought those who still decide to keep New Year's, despite its origins might wish to consider additional precautions against crimes like the above.

God's New Year Begins in the Spring

Is January 1st the beginning of the New Year God declared?

No.

When speaking of the Hebrew month of Abib, which occurs around late March/early April God declared:

2 This month shall be your beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you. (Exodus 12:2)

January 1st is not the beginning of the year for the true God, but only of certain false gods.

Now perhaps it should be mentioned that other cultures also accept that the new year begins in the Spring. And while those cultures have various non-biblical practices, it is certainly possible that because God's year begins in the Spring that perhaps anciently these people were aware of it, and retained the correct season, but added improper practices.

Not all have followed the practices of Julius Caesar (called "Julie" below):

For some thousands of years before Julie and the Roman Senate got involved, the new year was celebrated with the first edible crops of the season or the first new moon.

In much of India, Nava Varsha is celebrated in March or April, just as in the most ancient civilizations.

Sikhs celebrate Hola Mohalla in March; ditto for Persian Nowruz.

As celebrated in China and southeast Asia, Lunar New Year still has a floating date, the first day of the first lunar month. (Shore R. Pagan Party: New Year's traditions that hail from the depths of antiquity The Vancouver Sun, Canada - Dec 26, 2008)

From a biblical perspective, the new year begins in the Spring, and therefore not January 1st. And it also begins with a new moon. The fact that even many non-Christian cultures realized that should make it easier for Christians to realize that they too, do not need to heed the later practices of the Romans.

How Does God Determine Seasons?

How does God determine seasons?

Notice what the Bible shows that God declared in Genesis:

14 Then God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years; 15 and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth"; and it was so. 16 Then God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the

night. He made the stars also. 17 God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth, 18 and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. (Genesis 1:14-18)

Hence, the movement of the moon and the sun were important to mark the religious seasons for those wishing to follow the God of the Bible. Days such as January 1 are not part of the way that God marked time for the seasons.

It should be noted that the Hebrew word transliterated as mowed', but translated as "seasons" in Genesis 1:14 likely refers to religious seasons.

OT:4150 mowed' (mo-ade'); or moed' (mo-ade'); or (feminine) mow'adah (2 Chronicles 8:13) (mo-aw-daw'); from OT:3259; properly, an appointment, i.e. a fixed time or season; specifically, a festival; conventionally a year; by implication, an assembly (as convened for a definite purpose); technically the congregation; by extension, the place of meeting; also a signal (as appointed beforehand) (Biblesoft's New Exhaustive Strong's Numbers and Concordance with Expanded Greek-Hebrew Dictionary. Copyright © 1994, 2003, 2006 Biblesoft, Inc. and International Bible Translators, Inc.)

This can also be verified by noting that the same word mowed' (Strong's 4150) is used four times in the following two passages and the KJV English translation for them will be bolded below:

2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, Concerning the feasts of the Lord, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are my feasts... 4 These are the feasts of the Lord, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons. (Leviticus 23:2,4, KJV)

There are also many other passages in the Old Testament that support this understanding. Yet, most people are unaware of the connections between the creation and God's plan for holy day seasons. And because most do not, they do not keep God's Holy Days, nor understand many aspects of the plan of salvation that they depict.

The new moons were brought in with a trumpet in ancient Israel:

3 Blow the trumpet at the time of the New Moon, At the full moon, on our solemn feast day.
4 For this is a statute for Israel (Psalms 81:3-4, NKJV)

The biblical Feast of Trumpets begins on a new moon (Leviticus 23:24), and the First Day of Unleavened Bread (Leviticus 23:6) and the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles (Leviticus 23:34) begin on a full moon.

January 1st is only a new moon about once every 29 years.

Activities Like Many New Year's Parties Are Condemned in the Bible

Notice that the Bible condemns various activities associated with New Year's parties:

12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. 13 Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts. (Romans 13:12-14)

20 Do not mix with winebibbers, Or with gluttonous eaters of meat; 21 For the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty, And drowsiness will clothe a man with rags. (Proverbs 23:20-21)

1 Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, Whose glorious beauty is a fading flower Which is at the head of the verdant valleys, To those who are overcome with wine! 2 Behold, the Lord has a mighty and strong one, Like a tempest of hail and a destroying storm, Like a flood of mighty waters overflowing, Who will bring them down to the earth with His hand. 3 The crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim, Will be trampled underfoot; (Isaiah 28:1-3)

18 And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation (Ephesians 5:18)

A night of drunken revelry is not a Christian holiday and should not be observed by the faithful.

The partying drunkard is also specifically condemned as part of those that will not inherit the kingdom of God:

9 Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, 10 nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Corinthians

6:9-11)

19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, 21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. (Galatians 5:19-21)

Christians should not participate in pagan holidays, and especially those that involve drunken revelries.

Those who are Christians and used to do those things are expected to repent:

3 For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles—when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries. 4 In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you. (1 Peter 4:3-4)

11 But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person. (1 Corinthians 5:11)

The fact that professors of Christ ignore clear scriptures causes a false version of “the Way” to be discounted by the Gentiles (Romans 2:24).

Concluding Thoughts

Humans cannot bring in the new year. God does.

Christians should not celebrate the holiday of Janus even if it is also called ‘the feast of the circumcision’.

January 1st is not a date for Christians to celebrate. Even Roman Catholic writers acknowledge that historical and modern practices of observing it are wrong.

New Year's resolutions were apparently originally made to pagan deities. Although the practice was condemned by certain Catholic leaders, many condone the practice today.

Much associated with the January 1st New Year's Day is pagan and not appropriate for real Christians.

HOLY DAY CALENDAR

In contrast to non-biblical holidays, the Bible actually lists all of God's Holy Days in the 23rd chapter of the Book of Leviticus.

Notice the following:

The feasts of the Lord, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, these are My feasts. (Leviticus 23:2)

These days are then listed in that chapter with their Hebrew calendar dates.

Since most people do not know these dates, as most people use a type of modern Roman calendar, the dates of the Holy Days are listed below with their Roman dates:

God's Annual Holy Days

Roman Year	First Day of Sacred Year	*Passover	Unleavened Bread	Pentecost
2015	Mar. 21	Apr. 3	Apr. 4-10	May 24
2016	Apr. 9	Apr. 22	Apr. 23-29	Jun. 12
2017	Mar. 28	Apr. 10	Apr. 11-17	Jun. 4
2018	Mar. 17	Mar. 30	Mar. 31-Apr. 6	May 20
2019	Apr. 6	Apr. 19	Apr. 20-26	Jun. 9
2020	Mar. 26	Apr. 8	Apr. 9-15	May 31
2021	Mar. 14	Mar. 27	Mar. 28-Apr. 3	May 16
2022	Apr. 2	Apr. 15	Apr. 16-22	Jun. 5
2023	Mar. 23	Apr. 5	Apr. 6-12	May 28
2024	Apr. 9	Apr. 22	Apr. 23-29	Jun. 16

All Holy Days begin evening before

*Passover observed previous evening

God's Annual Holy Days

Roman Year	Feast of Trumpets	Day of Atonement	Feast of Tabernacles	Last Great Day
2015	Sep. 14	Sep. 23	Sep. 28-Oct. 4	Oct. 5
2016	Oct. 3	Oct. 12	Oct. 17-23	Oct. 24
2017	Sep. 21	Sep. 30	Oct. 5-11	Oct. 12
2018	Sep. 10	Sep. 19	Sep. 24-30	Oct. 1
2019	Sep. 30	Oct. 9	Oct. 14-20	Oct. 21
2020	Sep. 19	Sep. 28	Oct. 3-9	Oct. 10
2021	Sep. 7	Sep. 16	Sep. 21-27	Sep. 28
2022	Sep. 26	Oct. 5	Oct. 10-16	Oct. 17
2023	Sep. 16	Sep. 25	Seo. 30-Oct. 6	Oct. 7
2024	Oct. 3	Oct. 12	Oct. 17-23	Oct. 24

All Holy Days begin evening before

Continuing Church of God

It is difficult to observe them if you do not know when they occur. Now you have the dates until the year 2024.

STUDY THE BIBLE COURSE



Lesson 8: Why Are Natural Disasters Increasing?

Lesson 8:

Bob Thiel, Editor-in-Chief

Published 2016 by the Continuing Church of God

Preface: This course is highly based upon the personal correspondence course developed in 1954 that began under the direction of the late C. Paul Meredith in the old Radio Church of God. Various portions have been updated for the 21st century (though much of the original writing has been retained). It also has more scriptural references, as well as information and questions not in the original course. Unless otherwise noted, scriptural references are to the NKJV, copyright Thomas Nelson Publishing, used by permission. The KJV, sometimes referred to as the Authorized Version is also often used. Additionally, Catholic-approved translations such as the New Jerusalem Bible (NJB) are sometimes used as are other translations.

“THIS IS GOD SPEAKING...”

You and your family are seated around the dining table. Your TV is tuned to the news or maybe your computer is on. Suddenly a great Voice thunders forth from your TV/computer,

“This is GOD SPEAKING. I interrupt your program to bring you one final warning!

"It is TIME YOU WAKE UP to world conditions and recognize the CATAclysmic UPHEAVAL ABOUT TO DESTROY CIVILIZATION!

"I come to announce the imminent overthrow of all man-devised civilizations by worldwide upheaval in all nature — earth — sky, yes even of the waters! A disruption of all nature is at your very door! QUICK AND DETERMINED action must be taken IF YOU ARE to escape!..."

What would YOU do were you to HEAR WITH YOUR OWN EARS these words from the voice of God Almighty Himself? Would you faint from fright?—or would you turn off your radio IN DISBELIEF? Would you attentively listen to the WARNING—or would you tell your family, "Just who does HE think He is, interrupting our program like that?"

Yes, what WOULD you do were you to HEAR WITH YOUR OWN EARS the very VOICE of God—the Creator and Supreme Ruler of the universe? Would you RESPECT what He says?

God Has ALREADY HAD HIS WARNING WRITTEN FOR YOU!

Do you realize that GOD HAS ALREADY SPOKEN to humanity—that He has already spoken to YOU?

God has spoken to humanity for almost 6000 years, but the WORLD HAS NOT HEEDED. Most people don't realize that when God speaks He means business! He is not fooling! He does not speak for nothing. He tells us what we need to know, but could NOT otherwise determine for ourselves.

Here is how God has spoken—"God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;...

Therefore we must GIVE THE MORE EARNEST HEED TO THE THINGS WE HAVE HEARD, lest we drift away" (Hebrews 1:1-2 and 2:1).

THAT is HOW God has spoken! Just as the voices of modern speakers have been recorded, SO HAVE God's warning words been recorded—in a book. That book is the HOLY BIBLE. There is NO other book like it, for NO other book records the words of God verbatim! When you study the Bible—its examples, its prophecies—you are really letting

God SPEAK TO YOU. HOW YOU REGARD THE BIBLE IS EXACTLY HOW YOU WOULD REGARD GOD WERE HE TO PERSONALLY SPEAK TO YOU! Do YOU fear and tremble before and respect the Holy Bible, the ONLY RECORD of God's own words?

The final book of your Bible—the Book of Revelation—is full and running over with dire END events and the warning waymarks which precede them. Listen! God warns, "Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps [in mind, and ACTS on] the words of the prophecy of this book" (Revelation 22:7). By the events and prophecies given in this lesson, be alerted TO STUDY HARDER in the days ahead so you may learn how you can ESCAPE the prophesied evils to fall on this sinful world!

Dangerous Knowledge

We frankly DOUBT whether all of you readers FULLY GRASP the DANGEROUS KNOWLEDGE that you have learned from your own Bibles through this Course. We want to impress on you the SERIOUSNESS of knowing what the future holds. YOU HAVE NO EXCUSE whenever you fail to act upon God's WARNINGS—BECAUSE YOU NOW KNOW what God plans to do!

Beware the lethargy and confusion of which NEWSWEEK magazine warned of long ago:

"The U.S. public (and the whole world in general) is the most communication—glutted group of people in world history. Daily bombarded by 'facts' which CONFLICT, DAILY TOLD OPPOSITE VERSIONS of the same incidents, HOPELESSLY INCAPABLE IN THIS COMPLICATED WORLD OF SORTING OUT THE TRUTH, a great many Americans have undoubtedly built a hard shell of SKEPTICISM around themselves."

What a wretched plight for humanity to be in! Incapable of determining the truth, people have developed SKEPTICISM, a "you-show-me" attitude, which resists taking advice from God's VERBAL WARNINGS. But soon God is going to SHOW the disobedient world the consequences of its evil. He WILL SPEAK IN A LANGUAGE THE WORLD WILL UNDERSTAND—He will unleash TERRIFYING FORCES OF NATURE. Through these forces He will inflict physical punishment for our own good until we learn how WRONG we have been.

God's VERBAL WARNINGS—His SPOKEN WARNINGS—have been made known to man for thousands of years through the Holy Bible. But God seems so far distant to most people. He seems insignificant. Whatever He might

say, it is reasoned, could not change the course of world events. What folly! What ignorance of the power and authority of the ALMIGHTY.

It Happened Once Before

In this lesson of the Study the Bible Course, you are going to learn, perhaps for the first time, that God once before intervened in world affairs by unleashing the powers of nature. The nations of that time were terrified! They recognized the power of the Creator. They recorded the frightful events which THEY SAW TAKE PLACE—just as the Israelites recorded in Scripture these same mighty works, the signs, the wonders, which God performed in what to us seems the dim past.

It may seem strange to you to learn that there is abundant PROOF that what God recorded in His Holy Bible as happening ACTUALLY DID HAPPEN!

The world wants to believe that “all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation” (2 Peter 3:4). Most people are like the philosophers of whom Paul wrote: “they did not like to retain God in their knowledge” (Romans 1:28).

But just as scientific minds have usually twisted the PROOF of creation and supplanted it by the HYPOTHESIS of evolution, so also LEARNED HISTORIANS HAVE PERVERTED AND SECRETED THE PLAIN STATEMENTS OF HISTORY—BECAUSE IT SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE TO THEIR NATURAL, CARNAL MINDS THAT GOD CAN CONTROL THE UNIVERSE AT HIS DISCRETION. BUT HIS INTERVENTION IS PROVED BY HISTORICAL RECORDS.

The terrible tragedy of all this suppression of fact is that God’s BOOK OF REVELATION is MADE TO APPEAR UNREAL and preposterous. People, therefore, won’t take heed to God’s WARNINGS recorded in it, even when they see them PLAINLY WRITTEN!

Have you your Bible in front of you? Also several sheets of paper, and a pencil or pen for writing down your answers?

Remember, as you study this lesson you must open your Bible to EVERY scripture reference.

LESSON 8

Is God Fair?

The atheist and the unbeliever constantly charge God with being “unfair.” But God is NOT unfair (Job 34:11;

Ezekiel 18:25)! God has promised to warn this world before He sends Jesus Christ to crush this human-devised civilization and build A NEW AND BETTER ONE—“the world tomorrow”!

In this lesson we shall find that God is sending a VERITABLE SERIES OF WARNINGS—WARNINGS SO PLAIN THAT NO ONE WILL BE LEFT IN DOUBT AS TO WHO CONTROLS THE UNIVERSE!

THESE END-TIME PUNISHMENTS BY NATURE HAVE ALREADY BEGUN! God is giving us EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO TURN VOLUNTARILY from our evil and destructive ways to His way of love and peace. When words fail to stop mounting human sin, God will use FORCE to punish the nations in order to save mankind from annihilating all human life!

As the nations persistently reject the preaching of God’s warnings and despise his MILD punishments, God will send PROGRESSIVELY MORE SEVERE punishments on them. But NEVER will He inflict a more severe punishment without AMPLE WARNING! God wants REPENTANCE—HE IS NOT INTERESTED IN TORTURING FOR TORTURE’S SAKE!

But, first, let us start from the BEGINNING so that we learn HOW God ALWAYS deals with man. Remember, God does not change. (Malachi 3:6.)

1. Did God ever give Adam a COMMAND? Genesis 2:16. Did God also WARN Adam IN ADVANCE what would happen to him if he broke that command? Verse 17.

COMMENT: God “commanded” the man Adam. God PROVED His authority by carrying out His warning.

2. Was Adam’s wife Eve FOREWARNED also? Genesis 3:2-3. Did either of them heed the warning? Why? Romans 8:7.

3. Did God FOREWARN THE WORLD NEARLY 6000 YEARS AGO—EVEN WHILE ADAM WAS STILL ALIVE—what would befall our PRESENT GENERATION? Jude 14-15. How did Enoch learn of God’s plans? Genesis 5:22-24.

4. According to Enoch, is Jesus Christ coming with POWER to execute justice? Jude 14-15. Will He be able to CONVICT the ungodly of their misdeeds?

5. Were other prophets also sent DOWN THROUGH THE AGES with similar WARNING MESSAGES as that delivered by Enoch? Acts 3:19-24. What will happen to those who rebel against Jesus Christ? Verse 23.

6. For whom were the prophetic WARNINGS fundamentally

given? 1 Peter 1:10-12. Note especially the first part of verse 12.

7. Why would God cause His WARNINGS for today to be written thousands of years ago? Isaiah 41:21-23. Why do WRITTEN prophetic WARNINGS given centuries in advance DEMONSTRATE WHO THE TRUE GOD IS? Isn't it obvious that with so many Bibles available in print and on the internet, God's WRITTEN warnings could NOT be altered without skeptics and the world in general knowing about it?

Man Repeats Same Mistakes

1. Whom did God use as a preacher prior to the flood? 2 Peter 2:5. What did Noah preach? What is the BIBLICAL definition of "righteousness"? Psalm 119:172. Did God warn Noah of what was to come? Hebrews 11:7.

When Noah learned about the future, did Noah do something about it? What? Did the great majority around him heed also?—or was he the exception? Matthew 24:37-39.

2. Were the city of Sodom and its neighboring communities filled with crime? Genesis 13:13 and Ezekiel 16:49-50. What kinds of sins were being committed? Jude 7.

3. Did the King of Sodom ever meet Abraham? Genesis 14:14, 17. At that time who was priest of the Most High God? Genesis 14:18.

4. Do we find that the King of Sodom, and Abraham and Melchizedek ALL MET TOGETHER? Genesis 14:17-22.

5. Did God warn Lot, the nephew of Abraham? Genesis 19:1, 12-14. Did Lot WARN OTHERS? How did Lot's sons-in-law react to Lot's advice? Is this often true of family relationships?

6. What happened to Sodom? Genesis 19:24-25. Is the destruction of Sodom and its neighboring communities an example—a caution—to the nations of today? Jude 7, 2 Peter 2:6. Are cities today filled with the same sins as was ancient Sodom? Should people know better today? What must God do to cities today in order to teach the people a lesson?

COMMENT: One must come out of disobedience to escape the PENALTIES of sin!

7. Since GOD DOES NOT CHANGE in His merciful dealings, do we find that He WARNED ANCIENT ISRAEL of her sins? 2 Kings 17:13-15. What were the sins of ancient Israel?

8. Are the descendants of the ancient House of Israel—the English-speaking peoples and the democracies of north western Europe—committing the SAME SINS TODAY as their ancestors once did? Would God be fair if He punished only our ancestors and not their descendants today?

9. Was God also merciful to warn the Gentiles of impending destruction which He would bring? Jonah 1:1-2 and 3:1-5. Did the city of Nineveh (the capital of Assyria) HEED THE WARNING? Was the annihilation of the city delayed? Was the repentance of Nineveh permanent? Nahum 1:1 and 3:1-3.

Should the Ninevites have REMEMBERED what Jonah WARNED them of? Why didn't they remember? Do all human beings want to retain God in their knowledge? Romans 1:28.

10. Judging by Paul's experience, how will many Gentiles react to God's WARNING? Acts 17:32. What are the sins of the Gentiles and many descendants of Israel? Romans 1:29-31. HOW will God first WARN the world of WHAT HE WILL DO just before the end? Mark 13:10, Matthew 24:14.

It Happened Once Before

Now we come to one of the more INTRIGUING PARTS of your Bible.

Here is the key that will unlock hidden meanings in prophecies throughout the Bible. IT IS THE story of the Exodus AND SUBSEQUENT EVENTS.

Turn to Jeremiah 23:7-8. Here is what we read: "Therefore, behold, the days are coming,"—in the very near future "says the LORD, that they shall no longer say, 'As the LORD lives who brought up the children of Israel FROM THE LAND OF EGYPT,' but, 'As the LORD lives who brought up and LED THE DESCENDANTS OF THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL from the north country and from ALL THE COUNTRIES where I had driven them.' And they shall dwell in their own land." Notice that events to occur at the soon-coming intervention by God are compared in the Bible to events which occurred to Pharaoh when he wouldn't obey God.

IF WE UNDERSTAND WHAT HAPPENED THEN, WE SHALL ALSO UNDERSTAND WHAT WILL HAPPEN ONCE AGAIN—ONLY NOW ON A MUCH GREATER SCALE, FOR THE COMING EXODUS will involve MULTIPLE MILLIONS of present-day people being delivered from many nations!

Warning Was Given First

1. DID GOD DECLARE HIS INTENT TO BRING THE ANCIENT

ISRAELITES OUT OF BONDAGE? Exodus 3:10. How were the Israelite slaves being treated by the Egyptians? Exodus 3:7-9.

2. Did God have Moses warn Pharaoh of what He would do if Pharaoh didn't obey God? Exodus 4:22-23.

3. In their first meeting with Pharaoh, what did Moses and Aaron do? Exodus 5:1-4. Did they SPEAK to Pharaoh? What was the Egyptian king's reaction? Verse 4. Pharaoh WASN'T IMPRESSED.

4. At their next meeting with Pharaoh, did God even perform miracles to impress Pharaoh? Exodus 7:9-10. But these did not cause Pharaoh to let Israel go, did they? Verse 14.

5. When Pharaoh still RESISTED, what was the FIRST PLAGUE that came upon the Egyptians? Exodus 7:19-21. Had the Egyptians wanted to shed the blood of Israelite infants? Exodus 1:22. How were the male Israelite infants slain? Then was God JUST in turning the NILE RIVER into blood, as a punishment upon the Egyptians? How long did the plague last before fresh water cleared up the streams of the decaying blood? Exodus 7:24-25.

This record was written on papyrus. It was translated by A. H. Gardiner (1909) under the title: "Admonitions of an Egyptian Sage from a hieratic papyrus in Leiden." It is commonly referred to as the "Papyrus Ipuwer"—because Ipuwer was apparently an Egyptian eye-witness to the plague. The papyrus records: "The river is blood" and the "Plague is throughout the land. Blood is everywhere." It also states: "Men shrink from tasting; human beings thirst after water."

6. Will God punish OUR world with a similar plague of blood as He once punished the Egyptians? Revelation 16:3-4 and Revelation 8:8-9. Why will God send this kind of plague? Revelation 16:5-7. What will the wicked do to merit such a punishment? Is God just?

7. What SECOND, more troublesome PLAGUE did the Eternal punish the Egyptians with? Exodus 8:1-15. Did they learn their lesson? Exodus 8:15. Did they recognize the authority of God?

COMMENT: Notice that in Exodus 8:15, Pharaoh hardened his own heart—that is, he stiffened up in his resistance to God. PHYSICAL CIRCUMSTANCES caused him to be self-assured. When the Scripture mentions that God hardened Pharaoh's heart, it means that GOD BROUGHT ABOUT CIRCUMSTANCES that made Pharaoh convince himself that he could persist in his self-willed, stubborn way. God

mercifully GAVE PHARAOH EVERY CHANCE to change his attitude. GOD ALWAYS MADE CIRCUMSTANCES EASY FOR PHARAOH TO REPENT BY REMOVING THE PLAGUES AFTER A PERIOD OF TIME. Instead of repenting, Pharaoh rebelled. The unappreciative heart of the king of Egypt became hard THROUGH GOD'S MERCY on the Egyptians.

8. What was the THIRD, still more troublesome PLAGUE? Exodus 8:16-19. Notice that some translations render this plague properly "gnats" rather than "lice." DID THIS WARNING TURN THE EGYPTIANS TO REPENTANCE?

Some feel that the lice may have somehow stung or otherwise bothered people.

COMMENT: The word "lice" is rendered as "sand flies" or "fleas" in some translations. The Hebrew word kinnim comes from a root word meaning "to dig," it is probable that the insect in question would dig under the skin.

The lice plague should remind us that we can be infested with problems (Romans 7:18) that we need God's help for (Romans 7:24-25).

9. What was the next plague God put on Pharaoh and the Egyptians? Exodus 8:21. What did God always want from these plagues? Verse 20. What happened to Pharaoh's attitude when he himself was afflicted? Verses 25 to 28. But when this plague was removed by God's mercy, what happened? Verses 30-32.

COMMENT: While most people think that these bugs were flies as flies come from lice, the actual Hebrew word he'aarob means 'swarms.' The KJV and NKJV has the expression "of flies" in italics after swarms--that use of italics means that the expression "of flies" is not in the original Hebrew. Nor, I should add, is the word 'beetle' literally in the text. So, the type of insect is uncertain.

Notice that this particular plague only hit Egypt and did not affect the children of Israel. Yet, this was not said of the previous four.

Often, we Christians face the same tests and trials as the world does (1 Corinthians 10:13). But the Bible teaches that God will ultimately differentiate between His people and all others on this planet (Revelation 14:9-12; 20:4). Yet, God actually has to warn His people in the end time to come out of Babylon (Revelation 18:4) or face the plagues that it will receive.

How many tests and trials do you have to go through with the world? (1 Corinthians 11:27-32)

If Christians will properly examine themselves, they will not have to be condemned with the world.

Anyway, with the swarms God made a distinction between His people and the Egyptians. You want God to make a distinction with you as soon as possible, so examine yourself.

The swarms got Pharaoh's attention:

25 And Pharaoh calleth unto Moses and to Aaron, and saith, 'Go, sacrifice to your God in the land;' 26 and Moses saith, 'Not right to do so, for the abomination of the Egyptians we do sacrifice to Jehovah our God; lo, we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes—and they do not stone us! 27 A journey of three days we go into the wilderness, and have sacrificed to Jehovah our God, as He saith unto us.' 28 And Pharaoh saith, 'I send you away, and ye have sacrificed to Jehovah your God in the wilderness, only go not very far off; make ye supplication for me;' (Exodus 8:25-28, Young's Literal Translation)

Because Moses warned about the abominations of the Egyptians, it is possible that these particular swarms had to do with some type of beetle.

Notice: It is important to note that Moses did not use the phrase "of flies" in this passage—he simply used the word "swarms"—the phrase "of flies" was added by the translators, and it is very possible the translators did not help with our understanding of this passage.

It is very likely that the "swarms" in this passage were swarms of the scarab beetle. The scarab was actually a dung beetle—an insect that feeds on the dung in the fields. The plague of swarms of scarabs, with mandibles that could saw through wood, was destructive and worse than termites!

Swarms remind us that we can be overwhelmed and think that our problems are too difficult to deal with (1 Corinthians 10:13).

The Egyptians got swarms they could not handle. God will not give you more problems than you can really handle (see also our free online booklet Faith for Those God has Called and Chosen).

But Pharaoh Did Not Obey

1. The Egyptians had by now many distinct warnings, including several plagues. Following this, God began to prove He meant business in trying to get Pharaoh to

release the Israelites so they could follow God. What plague did God send next? Exodus 9:1-7.

COMMENT: The statement in verse 6 that "all the cattle of Egypt died" means ALL of those animals which suffered from the plague. Animals would somewhat weep and moan from this type of pestilence.

Back in the days of Egypt, cattle was the source of wealth for many who were wealthy. Many lost much of their wealth with the plague of hail and some of the plagues to follow. While having assets is fine, remember that Jesus taught:

19 "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Matthew 6:19-21)

Remember, "where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

2. As neither the king nor any of the Egyptians paid special attention to these PLAGUES OF WARNING—plagues which SHOULD have made the Egyptians glad to let their Hebrew slaves go (Exodus 9:17)—what was God's next act? Exodus 9:8-12.

COMMENT: Note that among the seven last plagues are to be BOILS, abscesses and ulcers producing excruciating pain (Revelation 16:11). These plagues are to be JUST RETRIBUTION for physical suffering which the modern oppressors will inflict upon their slaves.

It may be that since ashes become part of the earth that this plague was partially also against Geb, the earth god (his 'wife' Nut was likely involved with the seventh). The fact that the magicians were hit by this indicates that this was also against the Egyptian gods of medicine and healing. One such god would have been a supposedly deified human named Imhotep:

The first real person in known history is not a conqueror or a king but an artist and a scientist. Imhotep, physician, architect and chief adviser of King Zoser (ca. 3150 B.C.). He did so much for Egyptian medicine that later generations worshiped him as a god of knowledge, author of their sciences and their arts; (Durant W. The Story of Civilization, PART ONE: OUR ORIENTAL HERITAGE. Great Neck, N. Y., March, 1935, p. 147)

Notice a view from David Padfield:

This plague was probably skin anthrax, a black abscess that develops into a pustule. This plague was accompanied by painful boils that affected the knees, legs, and soles of the feet (Deut. 28:35). This explains why Pharaoh's "magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils, for the boils were on the magicians and on all the Egyptians" (Exo. 9:11)...

This plague would have also been an affront to Serapis, the deity in charge of healing, and to Thoth, the ibis-headed god of intelligence and medical learning. (Padfield D. Against all the Gods of Egypt, #2. The Church of Christ in Zion. © 2015 David Padfield)

The boils would also be consistent with passages in the Ipuwer papyrus about animals and cattle suffering.

As Christians, we need to realize that God is our healer (Exodus 15:26; James 5:13-17).

Sometimes, however, we have to go through long and difficult illnesses. When that happens, it should remind us to examine ourselves (1 Corinthians 11:30-31), but also realize that if we love God, all things will work together for good (Romans 8:28).

3. When the Egyptians still remained basically unchanged God WARNED them of another plague. God exercised the greatest of patience! Did some of the Egyptians heed the warning? Exodus 9:20-21. What was the nature of this terrifying plague? Exodus 9:18, 23-26. Was this the worst electrical storm ever to strike Egypt up to that time? Verses 18 and 24. What were the results of this destructive plague? Verse 25.

COMMENT: The same papyrus which records the plague of blood also records the catastrophic ruin brought upon Egypt by these plagues! It reads: "trees are destroyed" and "no fruits, no herbs are found" and "grain has perished on every side."

The Bible teaches that God controls the weather (Psalm 148:8, RAV)

The Ipuwer papyrus has reports consistent with the biblical account of the hail and fire:

9:2-3: "Behold, Cattle are left to stray and there is none to gather them together. Each man fetches for himself those that are branded with his name." The plague of hail had caused the few surviving cattle to so scatter in trying to find shelter that they were

difficult to round up...

Another aspect of the hail was the fire (lightning?) mixed with it. Note one peculiar passage of the papyrus — 2:10-11: "Forsooth, gates, columns and walls (?) are consumed by fire; (while) the..... of the kings' palace stands firm and endures." Apparently wooden structures (but not the more substantially built structures) were destroyed by the fire accompanying the hail! (Grabbe, p. 29)

2:10 Forsooth, gates, columns and walls are consumed by fire. (Bechmer M. The Ten Plagues Live from Egypt. <http://ohr.edu/838> accessed 03/11/15)

IV:12: Indeed, trees are felled and branches are stripped off. (The admonitions of Ipuwer. <http://www.reshafim.org.il/ad/egypt/texts/ipuwer.htm> viewed 03/17/15)

Notice a couple of specific crops that were struck by the hail:

31 Now the flax and the barley were struck, for the barley was in the head and the flax was in bud. (Exodus 9:31)

Notice something else that the Ipuwer papyrus mentions:

IV:3: Indeed, everywhere barley has perished and men are stripped of clothes, spice, and oil; everyone says: "There is none." The storehouse is empty and its keeper is stretched on the ground; a happy state of affairs! (The admonitions of Ipuwer. <http://www.reshafim.org.il/ad/egypt/texts/ipuwer.htm> viewed 03/17/15)

Barley was a major food source, and flax was likely a source of oil. Flax was also where linen for clothes comes from.

This plague, especially combined with the following fifth one and the eighth one would have greatly affected food production.

4. WILL PLAGUES OF SIMILAR NATURE STRIKE TERROR INTO REBELLIOUS HUMANITY IN THE NEAR FUTURE? Revelation 16:21 and 8:7.

Great hail is also prophesied to come again in the end:

COMMENT: Instead of repenting, people will blaspheme.

Do not be like the Egyptians or others who will not repent nor heed God's correction.

God Freed Israel — the Ancient EXODUS!

1. What FAULT in Pharaoh's character did God call to his attention before sending the next plague? Exodus 10:3. Contrast the king's character with that of Moses. Numbers 12:3.

Moses flat out told Pharaoh that he needed to humble himself and listen to God. (Consider what Paul wrote to Christians in Romans 12:16.)

This time, did Pharaoh's staff decide to try to persuade Pharaoh to listen? Exodus 10:7-11.

So, Pharaoh considered what God had to say, but decided that he still knew better. Pharaoh was wise in his own opinion. This happens to Christians as well as others.

But what God's expects His followers to do is in the Book of Proverbs 3:5-8.

Many are 'wise in their own eyes.' Very few actually trust God.

2. As a result of Pharaoh's continued rebellion, what do we find the next plague to be? Exodus 10:4, 14-15. What does Psalm 105:34-35 say about this plague?

COMMENT: Observe that IN THE FUTURE—during the terrible "Day of the Lord"—God will again send a plague, not of literal LOCUSTS, but of SYMBOLIC ONES—far more devastating (Revelation 9:3-4).

The time will come when crops in the USA and at least some of its Anglo-Saxon descended allies will be hit by locusts and other pestilences--and this is BEFORE the start of the Great Tribulation (Matthew 24:4-8).

Egypt experienced famine and food shortages, both of which are prophesied to happen again (Matthew 24:7; Revelation 6:5-6).

Versions of a lot of the ten plagues will happen again!

3. A strange phenomenon occurred at the next plague. What was it? Exodus 10:21-23. WILL GOD ONCE AGAIN SEND A SIMILAR PLAGUE to punish the wicked in the "DAY OF THE LORD"? Revelation 16:10. Notice how MUCH WORSE the FUTURE plague will be!

COMMENT: THIS FRIGHTENING WONDER WAS RECORDED BY THE EGYPTIANS THEMSELVES in a shrine of black granite found at el-Arish on the eastern border of Egypt.

It reads: "The land was in great affliction. Evil fell on this earth...there was such a TEMPEST that neither men nor gods could see the faces of those beside them." (From F. L. Griffith's "The Antiquities of Tel-el-Yahudiyeh and Miscellaneous Work in Lower Egypt in 1887-1888")

The event of darkness may have been historically referred to in the Ipuwer as a translation of it states:

9:11 The land is without light (Bechmer M. The Ten Plagues Live from Egypt. <http://ohr.edu/838> accessed 03/11/15)

Thus, there is some non-biblical evidence that the darkness of Exodus occurred in Egypt.

4. As a final punishment—when WARNING after WARNING went unheeded—what FINAL CATASTROPHE TUMBLED PHARAOH AND THE EGYPTIANS from their haughty height? Exodus 12:29-31. The Exodus of Israel immediately followed.

Here is some confirmation of the death and wailing in Egypt from the Ipuwer papyrus:

4:3 (5:6) Forsooth, the children of princes are dashed against the walls.

6:12 Forsooth, the children of princes are cast out in the streets.

6:3 The prison is ruined.

2:13 He who places his brother in the ground is everywhere.

3:14 It is groaning throughout the land, mingled with lamentations (Bechmer M. The Ten Plagues Live from Egypt. <http://ohr.edu/838> accessed 03/11/15).

Papyrus 2:4: "Forsooth, women are lacking and no (children) are conceived. Khnum fashions (mankind) no longer because of the condition of the land." Khnum was the potter god who supposedly shaped babies on a wheel. 2:5-6: "Death is not lacking (?). The mummycloth (?) speaks, before every one comes near it (?)."

Gardiner makes this comment about the preceding statement, "The sense seems to be: corpses are everywhere, and the very bandages cry out, so that they can be heard without drawing near to them."

Papyrus 2:6-7: "Forsooth, many dead men are buried in the river. The stream is a sepulchre, and the place of

embalmmment has become stream.” 4:3-4: “Forsooth, the children of princes are dashed against the walls. The offspring of desire are laid out on the high ground. Khnum groans because of weariness.” (Grabbe, p. 30)

II:3-5: Indeed, [hearts] are violent, pestilence is throughout the land, blood is everywhere, death is not lacking, and the mummy-cloth speaks even before one comes near it. Indeed, many dead are buried in the river; the stream is a sepulcher and the place of embalmment has become a stream. Indeed, noblemen are in distress...(The admonitions of Ipuwer. <http://www.reshafim.org.il/ad/egypt/texts/ipuwer.htm> viewed 03/17/15)

The firstborn of Egypt were killed.

Those that God protected were passed over from this death.

Old Testament Exodus—a Type

1. Does the Bible show there is soon to be another Exodus of the people of modern-day ISRAEL? Jeremiah 23:3. From where will this Exodus be? Verse 8. To where—to their own land? They are to be led back to the land of their ancestors.

COMMENT: The ancient Exodus occurred around 1446 B.C. The prophecy for this coming Exodus was given about 588 B.C. and history shows it has to be yet future. God will cause the blood descendants of ancient Israel to be taken CAPTIVE INTO VARIOUS COUNTRIES because of their disobedience to Him. God often indicates their DIRECTIONS from the point of view of Jerusalem. The first Exodus was only a miniature type of what this later one will be.

2. Does Isaiah 11:11 give added light on this coming Exodus? Read also Isaiah 27:12-13.

COMMENT: Assyria, remember, is the ancestor country of the modern Germans.

3. What MIRACLE did God perform for ancient Israel at the Red Sea? Study the entire 14th chapter of Exodus. Did God use the power of nature to bring it about? See verse 21. Would the crossing of the Sea have occurred as it did if it were merely a NATURAL occurrence? How many SKEPTICAL EYE-WITNESSES were there to this wondrous deliverance? DID HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF DOUBTING SPECTATORS WITNESS THE MIRACLE? Exodus 14:30-31.

Do you ever have doubts? The children of Israel did.

This is despite God having a pillar of clouds and fire to lead them (Exodus 13:18-22).

COMMENT: As Christians, we are to be led by God’s Holy Spirit (Romans 8:14), which was shown as tongues of fire in Acts 2:3-4.

Now, there is something interesting from the Ipuwer papyrus that seems relevant here related to the travels of the Israelites:

Papyrus 7:1: “Behold, the fire has mounted up on high. Its burning goes forth against the enemies of the land.”

There is little doubt from the context that this is a reference to the pillar of fire and smoke which led the Israelites. The deceived Egyptians may at first have conceived it to be something which plagued the escaping Israelites instead of guiding them.

Papyrus 7:1-6: “Behold, things are done, that have never happened for long time past... Behold, Egypt has come to pour out water. He who poured water on the ground, he has captured the strong man in misery (??)...” (Grabbe, p. 30)

The Egyptians somehow deceived themselves that it was safe to go after the Israelites, and later may have hoped their gods had a fire to assist them. But they, and those who trusted in that military were in error. What may have been the most powerful military in the world at that time was destroyed.

4. Will the most powerful army in the 21st century will be destroyed? Daniel 11:39. Will God use Assyria, modern central Europeans/Germans, to provide punishment in the end times? Isaiah 10:5-12.

COMMENT: Certain biblical prophecies related to ‘Samaria’ apply to the USA (e.g. Hosea 7:1-3; Isaiah 9:8-12,21). Samaritans were a mixed people. The hill of Samaria was in the tribal territory of ancient Manasseh.

5. Are weapons of mass destruction expected to be used? Deuteronomy 29:23-24; Isaiah 9:19-21.

COMMENT: What Isaiah 9 mentions relating to Ephraim and Manasseh was not fulfilled anciently—it is a future prophecy. Notice that the result of warfare of the future is “land being burnt up”—likely atomic, hydrogen, electromagnetic, laser, and/or other high-tech weapons!

6. Did the Lord Himself GO BEFORE the ancient Israelites in order TO LEAD THEM BACK TO THE PROMISED LAND? Exodus 13:21. And stand behind them when danger threatened from the rear? Exodus 14:19, 24. Will He do the same for their modern-day descendants as they, too, come out of captivity? Isaiah 52:2, 4, 8-9,12).

7. Will these Israelites come to God then, not far in the future, with WEEPING? Jeremiah 50:4. And great SUPPLICATION? Jeremiah 31:9.

COMMENT: To SUPPLICATE means—"to entreat; beg humbly for; to seek by earnest prayer." Supplicate for TRUE KNOWLEDGE of the way to ETERNAL Life!

Such prophecies as these seem preposterous to the natural mind—that IN THE FUTURE GOD WILL DRY UP RIVERS AND SEAS. These doubts have resulted from centuries of controversy over the supposed historical inaccuracy of the book of Exodus. Why, it is asked, is there supposedly no proof outside of the Bible, that the Exodus really happened?

BUT THERE IS PROOF!

Study reveals a DELIBERATE PERVERSION of Egyptian chronology, with an attempt to make Egypt—OUT OF NATIONAL PRIDE—appear older than it really was! The fault has NEVER been corrected in modern history textbooks!

Kings commonly mentioned as candidates for the Exodus account could not possibly be correct—their mummies have been found. The name of the Pharaoh is preserved in the ancient records of Egypt. He was Amenhotep II. The son who succeeded Amenhotep II was Thutmose IV (ca. 1418 -1408 B.C.). For centuries thereafter Egypt was dominated by foreigners called Amalekites in Scripture (Numbers 24:20) or "Shepherd-kings" in most history books—though the dates commonly applied to them by 'experts' are often incorrect.

8. Through this catastrophe, what all-important lesson did the remaining Egyptians finally learn? Exodus 14:18, 25. He took off their chariot wheels, so that they drove them with difficulty; and the Egyptians said, "Let us flee from the face of Israel, for the LORD fights for them against the Egyptians."

Then that generation of Egyptians finally CHANGED THEIR WAYS, to a degree, didn't they? They learned how terribly evil they had been! But notice HOW MANY warnings God had to send before the people would heed! Notice

that Amenhotep II, the likely Pharaoh of the Exodus, also destroyed many of their pagan images:

Archaeologist, Douglas Petrovich at the University of Toronto has written a fascinating article (Douglas Petrovich, 'Toward Pinpointing the Timing of the Abandonment of Avaris During the Middle of the 18th Dynasty,' in *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections*, Vol. 5:2, 2013, 9-28)...At the end of the article Petrovich makes some startling observations in his conclusions:

More inscriptional evidence may attest directly to the Year-9 crisis is Amenhotep II's commissioning of a decree for his couriers to destroy all the images of the gods, singling out Amun-Re in particular. Given that Thutmose III and Amenhotep II expressly ascribed praise to Amun-Re for military victories on their Asiatic campaigns, and that Amenhotep II originated and/or perpetuated the desecration of Hatshepsut's images throughout Egypt, there is plenty of reason to hypothesize that the religious crisis—and subsequent decree to destroy all the "bodies" of Egyptian deities throughout the land—may be intricately bound to the military and political turmoil of his Year-9. Moreover, a potential interruption in the high priesthood of Amun during this time may also attest to this "perfect storm" of events. Therefore, a religious crisis focused on Amun-Re at this time may have been initiated by Amenhotep II as a result of a devastating loss in battle which coincided with the abandonment of their principle naval base from which military operations into Asia were launched, and led to an unavoidable shift in foreign policy. (Ibid., 22)

Why would Amenhotep II order the destruction of the images of Egyptian gods? Why was there major turmoil & upheaval in Egypt's religious practices? Why was there a complete change of foreign policy with regard Egypt's nearest neighbors in Asia [in the Levant] in the later part of Amenhotep II's reign? This evidence alone does not prove the exodus, but it is certainly consistent with the behavior of an autocratic & military ruler such as Amenhotep II, if such an event such as the biblical exodus took place. The exodus was an event in which Egypt's gods were rendered impotent and pharaoh's military forces were drastically reduced. I submit that the exodus, as it is exactly described in the Bible, is the most reasonable explanation for this turn of event's Amenhotep II's rule. (Wright T. Was There an Exodus & Conquest? July 20, 2013. <http://crossexamined.org/was-there->

Since the pharaohs were supposedly related to these gods, it would take a great reason for a pharaoh to do this. Amenhotep II, whose gods failed to protect him, his son, and Egypt, would have the motivation, as well as support from the Egyptian populace, to do this.

9. After the coming Exodus, will all the nations better know who God really is? Jeremiah 31:34.

COMMENT: The expression that the nations SHALL “know the Lord”—an expression used over a hundred times in prophecies—REFERS TO THE TIME WHEN CHRIST WILL RETURN TO RULE OVER THE NATIONS. Here again we find a type of the second Exodus in the first Exodus under Moses when the Egyptians finally learned who God is. CHECK YOUR CONCORDANCE FOR THIS PHRASE, THEN STUDY THE SCRIPTURES CONTAINING IT.

10. After the Exodus, WHAT NEWS WOULD SPREAD TO THE NATIONS? Compare Exodus 15:10-14 with Joshua 2:10. Will the FEAR OF GOD’S AWE-INSPIRING POWER ONCE AGAIN CAUSE THE NATIONS TO TREMBLE? Compare Isaiah 64:1-2 with Psalm 22:27-28. Why?

It Will Happen Once Again

Now we are ready to study some of the most ASTOUNDING warning prophecies in all the Bible — prophecies which will soon come to pass.

1. What other phenomenal events occurred after the first Exodus? Exodus 19:18. Read also the entire 114th Psalm.

2. Is this world NOW in the condition Christ said it would be just before the final great catastrophic events are to occur? Matthew 24:3-8 and Luke 21:7-11.

Are false ministers—those who preach a FALSE way to salvation, sometimes using the NAME of Christ— as well as wars, famine, pestilence and earthquakes becoming INCREASINGLY more and more common today?

COMMENT: Look at the world about you. Scientists realize that natural disasters are increasing:

The human cost of natural disasters 2015: a global perspective

Between 1994 and 2013, EM-DAT recorded 6,873 natural disasters worldwide, which claimed 1.35 million lives or almost 68,000 lives on average each year. In addition, 218 million people were affected by

natural disasters on average per annum during this 20-year period.

The frequency of geophysical disasters (earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions and mass movements) remained broadly constant throughout this period, but a sustained rise in climate-related events (mainly floods and storms) pushed total occurrences significantly higher. Since 2000, EM-DAT recorded an average of 341 climate-related disasters per annum, up 44% from the 1994-2000 average and well over twice the level in 1980-1989.

Earthquakes (including tsunamis) killed more people than all other types of disaster put together, claiming nearly 750,000 lives between 1994 and 2013. Tsunamis were the most deadly sub-type of earthquake, with an average of 79 deaths for every 1,000 people affected, compared to four deaths per 1,000 for ground movements. This makes tsunamis almost twenty times more deadly than ground movements. (Report from Center for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters, UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, March 2015)

So are other problems. The US State Department reports that terrorist incidents are increasing:

35% increase: Why 2014 was a big year in terror

WASHINGTON

Extremists in Iraq, Afghanistan and Nigeria unleashed a savage rise in violence between 2013 and 2014, according to new statistics released by the State Department. Attacks largely at the hands of the Islamic State and Boko Haram raised the number of terror acts by more than a third, nearly doubled the number of deaths and nearly tripled the number of kidnappings.

The figures contained in the department’s annual global terrorism report say that nearly 33,000 people were killed in almost 13,500 terrorist attacks around the world in 2014. That’s up from just over 18,000 deaths in nearly 10,000 attacks in 2013, it said. Twenty-four Americans were killed by extremists in 2014, the report said. Abductions soared from 3,137 in 2013 to 9,428 in 2014, the report said. (Miami Herald, June 19, 2015)

Extremists in Iraq, Afghanistan, Nigeria, and elsewhere also unleashed savage terror in 2015.

Terrors were prophesied in the Bible (Leviticus 26:14-17; Deuteronomy 32:25; Ezekiel 21:12; Psalm 73:12, 19; Ecclesiastes 12:5). It may well be that it is partially because of terrorism that a temporary 'peace deal' (Daniel 9:27) that will lead to disaster after a few years (Daniel 9:27; 11:31-43) will be made.

3. Are these current days only the BEGINNING of sorrows? Matthew 24:8. Unless these days are shortened, would there be anyone left alive? Matthew 24:22.

COMMENT: Today famine, disease, pestilence, earthquakes and other disruptions of nature are taking an INCREASING toll of human life! And everywhere today there is talk of human self-ANNIHILATION!

The "beginning of sorrows" may have begun on or near September 19, 2009 based upon ecumenical developments related to the Eastern Orthodox and the Church of Rome. The rise of the ecumenical movement is related to the first of the four horseman of Revelation 6 and the start of these sorrows.

Notice that the booklet *Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* by the old Worldwide Church of God taught back in 1973 taught that the final ride of this horseman was still for the future back then:

The long-term condition of false religion described above will culminate in the end-time fulfillment of the white horseman of Revelation 6, in the person of a great False Prophet...He will signal the beginning of sorrows: the first horseman. (Alexander G. Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, 1973, p. 17)

Even though this first seal is opened up prior to the Great Tribulation (the "beginning of sorrows" precedes the Great Tribulation, Matthew 24:8,21), and it could have officially began as early as the Feast of Trumpets in September 2009 (if the first seal, in a sense, was not opened centuries ago—as at least its anti-type has been around since Simon Magus of Acts 8:9-24), it will not be until after the beast powers of Revelation 13 are in full control, when the whole world will worship the beast and the dragon (Revelation 13:3-8; 18:23), that this horseman's conquest will be complete.

Many ecumenical and interfaith events in the past several years suggest that "beginning of sorrows" seems to have begun.

However, the final time Jesus referred to as "the beginning of sorrows" technically may not be considered officially to have begun yet. While it is possible that this has occurred

(as the False Prophet is undoubtedly alive now), it may not actually officially begin until the False Prophet gets more prominence (cf. Alexander G. Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, 1973, p. 17). God knows.

It is possible that this seal may be officially opened when an anti-pope is about to take control and/or starts with lying wonders (presuming a pontiff is the False Prophet of Revelation 13:13-15; 19:20) to get the attention of those even without a Greco-Roman background. It may be possible that this seal is to be (or even was) opened around the time when the one who will become the False Prophet successfully works with groups which will re-connect with Rome. Such a deal has already happened with some of the Anglicans (Messia H, Hanna J. Vatican welcomes Anglicans into Catholic Church. CNN, October 21, 2009), and will likely ultimately be followed by one or more public deals involving the Lutherans, Eastern Orthodox, and others. Signs and wonders are expected (2 Thessalonians 2:9-11) and this may be what helps drive other religions without a Greco-Roman background to be "conquered" by the first horseman (Revelation 18:23).

4. Does Revelation 6 speak of these SAME conditions as the sorrows in Matthew 24:3-8, but in SYMBOLIC TERMS such as the "WHITE horse"—verse 2, the "RED horse"—verse 4, the "BLACK horse"—verse 5, and the "PALE horse"—verse 8? Do they also verify the fact that conditions throughout the world are to deteriorate in the end-time—the days in which we now find ourselves?

COMMENT: These FOUR HORSEMEN represent the four world conditions—ALL increasing in SEVERITY at the end of this age. The WHITE horse represents the increasing number of false ministers preaching a FALSE Christ—FALSE WAYS TO INTERFAITH "SALVATION." The RED horse—the increasing tempo of the RAVAGES OF WARS. The BLACK horse—INCREASING FAMINE. The PALE horse—DISEASES RAMPAGING.

5. What happens when the second seal is opened? Revelation 6:3-4. What happens after the third seal is opened? Revelation 6:5-6. What happens after the four seal is opened? Revelation 6:7-8.

COMMENT: Religious deception can lead to war. The time is coming where there may also be wars in parts of the world that have rarely had them (perhaps, for example, even between some South American nations), as well as wars in areas that have long been especially tense (like Korea, possibly involving other Asian nations). Damascus ultimately will be destroyed and could be a signal for destruction to come for Jacob (Isaiah 17:1-4). There will

likely be civil unrest and perhaps rioting in scales not normally seen, including within some Western nations (such as in Europe and North America). This will lead to military leaders rising up in various parts of the world. And one European will, after making one or more false peace deals/pronouncements (Daniel 9:26-27; 11:27; 1 Thessalonians 5:3), rise as the final Beast leader (Revelation 13:4) and he will take over many nations (Daniel 11:39-43). The taking over of the United States (Daniel 11:39) and its close allies could be considered as World War III. But unlike World War II, this will be a relatively short war for the USA as it will quickly lose.

History, consistent with the words of Jesus (Matthew 24:7-8), tends to show that food shortages come after wars, and the third horseman comes after the horseman representing war.

Notice that this third horseman results in scarcity and famine. Revelation 6:5-6 indicates that there will be food, but that it will be quite expensive (food-price inflation). Some will thus die as they will not be able to afford it, while others will survive but struggle.

We are starting to see more reports of food shortages and the potential for food inflation. I also suspect that agricultural practices, such as the heavy reliance on genetically-modified crops is helping set the stage for some of this in countries like the USA.

History, as well as the words of Jesus (Matthew 24:7-8), tends to show that pestilences and death follow food shortages. In Revelation 6:7-8 the fourth horseman, the pale/green horse of death and pestilence, comes after the horseman representing famine.

According to Jesus, one or more significant pestilences will begin shortly before the start of the Great Tribulation. It appears Biblically to be highly likely that the USA and its Anglo-allies will be hit hard by pestilences (likely worsened by their relatively high dependence upon genetically-modified “foods”) just prior to being taken over (Leviticus 26:21-25) by the Beast power (Daniel 11:39). And while no pestilence will stop the rise of the Babylonian Beast power, the Book of Revelation indicates that the final effect of the fourth horseman will ultimately affect this spiritual city of Babylon, and apparently result in death (Revelation 18:8) and including by the sword (Revelation 19:14-21).

6. Does the Book of Daniel show a two-part persecution coming? Daniel 7:25.

COMMENT: Notice the following with a and b in bold to

make the parts easier to distinguish between:

25 a He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, Shall persecute the saints of the Most High, And shall intend to change times and law. b Then the saints shall be given into his hand For a time and times and half a time. (Daniel 7:25)

First of all (a), he (the King of the North) shall persecute certain of the saints (see also Daniel 11:28-35), which is consistent with what Jesus said was coming:

9 “Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake. 10 And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. 11 Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. 12 And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. 13 But he who endures to the end shall be saved. 14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come. (Matthew 24:9-14)

Much of the above will affect the Philadelphian Christians (Revelation 12:13), but they will later be protected (Revelation 3:8-10) in the wilderness for a time, times, and half a time (Revelation 12:14-16). Part of why they will be persecuted is for proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and probably also for identifying the coming King of the North, who will not wish to be identified that way. This will likely result in internet censorship and other restrictions on getting the truth of God out to the world (Amos 8:11-12).

Daniel 7:25 a, which is consistent with the persecutions in Daniel 11:28-35, are a factor in the opening of the fifth seal in Revelation, which is the start of the Great Tribulation:

9 When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. 10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?” 11 Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed. (Revelation 6:9-11)

Notice that this is consistent with Daniel 7:25 a and b. There were those who were martyred/persecuted (a) then there were to be more who were to be martyred/

persecuted (b).

Second of all (Daniel 7:25 b), the remaining saints will be given into the King of the North's hand for a time, times, and half a time. This is the portion of the Church of God, the non-Philadelphians, who are NOT protected in the wilderness as Revelation 12:17 shows this separation:

17 And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. (Revelation 12:17)

There are persecutions just before the Great Tribulation starts per Daniel 7:25a, 11:28-35; Revelation 12:13, and then during the time of the Great Tribulation per Daniel 7:25b, Revelation 12:17; 14:12-13.

COMMENT: Remember that the ancient Israelites had gone into captivity long before this prophecy was given. It is for THIS CENTURY!

The descendants of the ancient House of Israel—the people of the United States, Britain, and other specific democracies of north-western Europe—are soon to go into captivity to a European union of nations. It will come to pass that TWO-THIRDS of these modern-day Israelites will die of pestilence, famine and war (Ezekiel 5:12). And the remaining ONE-THIRD will be scattered in captivity and decimated—a “sword” will be drawn out after them (verse 12)—until there will finally be only about ONE-TENTH of present-day Israel left alive? Isaiah 6:11-13.

You need to fully realize the MAGNITUDE of these end-time events. NO ONE can escape them without Divine protection! These are GOD'S warning words—not man's. Ponder them WELL, for these frightful days are almost upon us!

God Will Shake Heaven and Earth

1. After the time called the “tribulation” (Matthew 24:29; Revelation 6:11), will there be a great EARTHQUAKE? Revelation 6:12.

2. And after this will there be a TERRIFIC display of God's POWER by the spectacular movements of both heaven AND earth for all mankind to see? Revelation 6:14-17.

3. When did God perform wonders somewhat like this BEFORE? Read 2 Samuel 22:8-18 and Psalm 18. Notice especially Psalm 18:7.

4. Does the FACT that GOD ONCE BEFORE DID these

wonders help prove He CAN DO THEM AGAIN? Or has God become powerless to perform them? Malachi 3:6.

5. Will these divine manifestations in the heavens cause men to realize there IS a Divine heavenly power? Revelation 6:15-17. Will men, in stark fear, throw away their gold and silver idols? Isaiah 2:19-22.

6. And around this time, will the very powers of the heavens be shaken—producing chaos in the heavens? Revelation 6:12-13. Matthew 24:29 seems to describe the same event.

7. What will happen to the sun at that time? Revelation 6:12. And to the moon? Same verse—this is why certain nonsense that some preachers stated about ‘blood moons’ in 2014 and 2015 was not possible—the timing was wrong (this was denounced in the January-March 2014 edition of the Bible News Prophecy magazine). And to the stars? Verse 13. Compare with Isaiah 34:4, 8.

COMMENT: Soon God will SUPERNATURALLY INTERVENE in the very powers of the heavens as a staggering WARNING for mankind to repent! Fantastically spectacular meteor showers will make the starry heavens APPEAR to crash earthward!

Sealing By the Holy Spirit Leads to Safety

1. Will further disruptions of the earth be stopped for a brief period? Revelation 7:1-2. Why? Verse 3. Note the word “sealed.” Note the words “servants of God.”

2. How many people will there be in this group? Verse 4.

3. Who will comprise the 144,000? Revelation 7:4-8. Note the word “Israel.”

COMMENT: They will be some of the modern-day descendants of ancient Israel who will have heeded God's warnings while in the end times. These people apparently have responded to the preaching of the Two Witnesses and/or otherwise refused to worship the Beast (Revelation 11:3, 7; 13:4-8). They are physical and/or spiritual descendants of the twelve tribes of Israel.

4. But after the 144,000 are sealed from harm, will there also be a great multitude? Revelation 7:9. Are these people of ALL nations? Same verse. What did they come “out of”? Verses 13-14. Will they be hungry or thirsty anymore? Verses 15-17.

COMMENT: “These are they which came out of the GREAT

tribulation...”—and have been forgiven their sins through the shed blood of Christ. They are seen clothed in white robes, symbolizing purity and righteousness—obedience to God’s laws—unspotted by the ways and customs of the world.

This great multitude of people—of various nations—will come out of the great tribulation. Before the great tribulation, many may have had heard God’s WARNING message preached as a “witness” unto all nations by His faithful ministers. They had heard of Christ, but they had not obeyed Him—as above, they likely heard the messages from two witnesses and those of the three angels (Revelation 14:6-11).

But now—as they see God intervening through terrible supernatural signs in the heavens and on earth—they begin to fear God. They begin to properly surrender to God’s will, to ask God to cleanse them from all their past sins by the blood of Jesus Christ.

Think of it—thousands upon thousands, even millions, beginning to truly turn to God as a result of His intervention in nature.

Notice, too, that these uncountable multitudes are pictured as though they are in the very presence of God. John does not seem to see them in mortal flesh, but as SPIRIT-BORN sons of God who neither thirst, hunger, nor sorrow anymore!

5. WHEN all those who are immediately willing to repent have surrendered to God, then what further terrifying events will God send on the earth to bring stubborn, unrepentant human beings to their senses so they may turn to Him? Will the four angels—restrained while God’s servants were sealed—then send their punishments upon the earth? Revelation 7:1 coupled with 8:6-12.

COMMENT: Today, God is first speaking His warning to mankind by His true ministers. Soon He will speak by STUPENDOUS WONDERS in the heavens which man can SEE. Still many will not repent. Therefore, God will speak to the world through even GREATER supernatural acts which men will FEEL!

In this vision, God continues to show the apostle John that the next tormenting event to fall on the most stubborn of mankind will be WARFARE! It’s described in the 9th chapter of Revelation.

6. Are men to be TORMENTED by symbolic “locusts”? Revelation 9:3-6.

COMMENT: Note in verse 5 that their torment is NOT of a scorpion, but “like” a scorpion. These are NOT actual scorpions. Actual scorpions would consume vegetation and these ones do not (Revelation 9:4).

7. Are these tormenting “locusts” shaped like horses? Verse 7. And do they have armor of iron? Verse 9.

COMMENT: These symbolic locust-like “horses” with power to hurt MEN (verse 10) could refer to TERRIFYING WAR MACHINES—now in existence or soon to be invented (like some type of enhanced radiation weapon)—and/or some type of controlled pestilence.

8. What warring peoples could possibly use these machines? Examine Nahum 3:18. Could the Assyrians—the ancestors of the GERMANS today, referred to here as “LOCUSTS”? Verse 17.

COMMENT: The term locusts seemingly identifies both the fighting power AND its type of weapon. The prophet John had to speak of these FUTURE weapons in SYMBOLIC terms since they were completely UNFAMILIAR to him—thus calling them “locusts” or this could be something from the spirit world.

It could be considered that the final resurrection of the Roman Empire is the power that emerges from the bottomless pit or abyss. It is a war making power (Nahum 3:14-15; Revelation 13:4) with a super army equipped with sophisticated weaponry.

9. Who is the motivating force, the real leader, of this religious-political war-making power? Revelation 9:11; 16:13-14.

COMMENT: The Hebrew word Abaddon and the Greek word Apollyon both basically mean “destroyer” or “destroying angel.” The evil power guiding the beast’s army will be none other than Satan the devil with other destroying demons.

10. Will there be some residing in the European, Asian, and certain other lands who will NOT be tormented—those who have the “SEAL of God”? Revelation 9:4.

COMMENT: It could be that if humans unleash this, it could have unintentional consequences and affect many not intended to be. Now, the Bible tells of the 144,000 that were sealed in Revelation 7:2-8 will be protected. However, around Revelation 9:4 could also be the time when the Beast turns against the other Israelite descended nations in Europe (Ezekiel 5:4).

When the forces of the beast attack various of its enemies, those who lived through the Great Tribulation, turned to God and were “sealed” by His Spirit will be protected during these terrible plagues. Meanwhile, millions and millions of other people in Asia will also have been preparing for war. The second woe is now ready to begin—the sixth trumpet is ready to sound.

Having God’s Spirit in their minds is symbolically referred to as being SEALED IN their “foreheads”—the control center of the MIND. (The lessons of this Study the Bible Course will lead YOU to the knowledge of how you may also bear this “seal” during these dangerous end-days!)

Terrible “East vs. European” War

1. Is there to be conflict between the end time King of the North/Babylon and a confederation from the north and east? Daniel 11:44; Jeremiah 50:41-43.

2. What happens when the sixth trumpet is blown—who will dare to threaten and even make war with the beast? Revelation 9:14-16; 16:12-16.

COMMENT: The literal translation of Revelation 16:12 is “the kings of the sunrise” and thus this would seem to also include China, Japan, Korea, Indochina (including Vietnam), Indonesia, and other lands (since Indonesia is Islamic, it is likely to wish much closer alignment with the Chinese in the end after the King of the North overwhelms the King of the South per Daniel 11:40-43). India is also likely one of those kings.

The Asians nations lie EAST of the Euphrates River as does much of Russia. This conflict could be considered as possibly World War IV (or World War V if the success of the King of the North against the final King of the South could be considered as World War IV).

This attack will happen after the United States, Britain, and other surviving modern descendants of ancient Israel become captives of the German-dominated European Beast power (Daniel 11:39) and after the defeat of the final King of the South (Daniel 11:40-43), leaving but two world powers—the European power and the Eurasian Confederation—to battle.

Thus, the European empire (the “daughter of Babylon”) is to be destroyed by a northern (apparently Russian led) force. And probably one that cooperates with nations in the East, as well as maybe Iran, and possibly the Ukraine. (While the fulfillment of Ezekiel 38 is later, the fact that it refers to the peoples of the FAR NORTH shows that there

is a power further north than the final European King of the North of Daniel 11). Notice that a people from the north (Russia in this case) will be part of a confederation of many kings raised up from the ends of the earth (Jeremiah 50:41). These “ends of the earth” kings would seemingly have to include Asian nations such as India and China, which while not currently part of the Eurasian Union, are already involved with many military and trade agreements with Russia, hence by extension have some connection to the actual Eurasian Union.

Only Asian forces, such as those in China and India and likely many others, could put together a 200,000,000 man army. India, China, and others in Asia will apparently align themselves with a Russian confederation against the European Empire. Already in the 21st century, they have begun to set the stage to do so with groups like the Shanghai Cooperative Organization and the Eurasian Economic Union.

3. Does Isaiah show that end time Babylon is tied together with birth pains/pangs to a group from a far country? Isaiah 13:1-8.

COMMENT: Thus, both the accounts in Jeremiah and Isaiah seem related to the same invaders. This is referring to an end time confederation that has a distance to travel—apparently a type of union of powers from the east including Russia, who is also the major power of the far north.

And this type of confederation is something that Vladimir Putin has repeatedly called for. This is something Russian and certain Asian nations will continue to advocate and work towards. And it will form.

A northern confederation (that appears to be led by Russia and probably includes the far north and far east/Pacific coast portion of Asia) will destroy the European Babylon (Jeremiah 50:9).

So, although many worry that Russia will be a major military threat to the USA, the reality is that the Bible indicates that it will be the Europeans that will receive a massive attack involving Russia. And perhaps not too many years from now.

4. Will the East (Russia and her allies), long preparing for world war, attack the European Beast power in this great bid for world dominion? Revelation 9:12-19.

COMMENT: The Eurasian armies lying beyond the Euphrates River will cross it and advance, attacking the armies of the European Beast power.

Notice their weapons. Out of the “mouths” of their “horse”-like war machines will come horrible “fire and smoke and brimstone.” And they, too, will maim, slay and ravage like ravenous “LIONS” (verse 17). Again, we see symbolism used for actual weapons of carnal warfare.

5. What tremendous number of the humankind will be killed by the fire, smoke and brimstone? Revelation 9:18. But will this cause humankind to repent and TURN TO GOD? Verse 20. Note the words “did NOT repent.” This was very similar to the Pharaoh when God unleashed the plagues in Exodus.

6. What will these “desperately wicked” (Jeremiah 17:9) people continue to do? Verses 20-21.

Sores — Polluted Waters

1. What does your Bible call the FINAL disruptions, or plagues of God? Revelation 15:1.

COMMENT: They are referred to as “The Seven LAST Plagues” and will occur immediately AFTER Christ returns (Revelation 11:15; 14:10; 16:17).

2. Are each of these plagues referred to as a bowl being “poured out”? Revelation 16:1. Upon what are these bowls to be poured out? Same verse.

COMMENT: These “bowls” are to be poured out on the earth and on humankind.

3. Will the first vial cause EXCRUCIATING SORES to break out on mankind? Revelation 16:2.

COMMENT: Note that the first of these seven last plagues (boils) that is “poured out” on those who worship a false God, is the same type of plague which fell upon the ancient Egyptian priests who were active agents in promoting a false religion (cf. Exodus 9:9-11).

4. What will be the second and third of these seven last plagues—WATER BECOMING BLOOD? Revelation 16:3-4.

COMMENT: Every living thing in the sea will DIE! Imagine the effect of this upon mankind! Yet the rivers and springs of the earth becoming blood is far worse, for man must have water to drink! Recall that this also was one of the plagues God used on Egypt (Exodus 7:20-21) to drive to its knees a nation which had refused to heed His warning

Earth Out of Orbit?

1. Following this, is our solar system to become disrupted?

Revelation 16:8. Might this earth be shaken out of its orbit around the sun? Isaiah 24:18-21. Will there be fearful noises in the heavens as this results? Verse 18. Note the word “noise.”

2. As a result what will be felt?—SCORCHING HEAT? Revelation 16:8. Have wicked men ever burnt one another in religious persecution (cf. Daniel 11:33) and warfare? Then is God unfair in administering to them the SAME KIND of punishment? Will there still be some so stubborn that they will not seek God and His divine protection, even after all these things? Verse 9. Note the words “did not repent.”

3. What is to happen to those at the headquarters area of the “beast”—the headquarters of the great military leader of the European Babylon the Great. Will these extremely stubborn ones suffer terribly from pain? Revelation 16:10-11. But note again the words, “did not repent.”

Armageddon: They Gather for War

1. War is a frightfully serious and awesome thing for man to contemplate! Will the greatest battle in all human history occur in order to bring humankind to its senses, and to God? Revelation 16:13-14. Will ALL nations of the WORLD BE INVOLVED? Verse 14. Will this be THE GREAT GATHERING AT ARMAGEDDON? Verse 16.

2. Will the blood of the slain run in depth up to the bridle of a horse for almost 180 miles? Revelation 14:20. Is this to occur in the gigantic battle after the armies of the WORLD GATHER AT ARMAGEDDON TO FIGHT AGAINST THEIR CREATOR? Revelation 16:14-16. The armies gather at Armageddon and will then head south towards Jerusalem to fight God.

3. How will Christ be able to fight ALL nations—will He carry the battle TO each nation, in addition to fighting their representatives who at first gathered at Armageddon? Revelation 16:17-20.

COMMENT: Satan’s demons will gather the kings of the East to go against the European Beast power—but then they will then try to fight against Christ per Revelation 19:19.

CHRIST—IN THE GREATEST OF MERCY—WILL INTERVENE SEVERELY TO DESTROY THE BEAST, THE FALSE PROPHET AND ARMIES (Revelation 19:20-21) AND ALSO SAVE HUMANKIND FROM SELF-ANNIHILATION (Matthew 24:22)!

Mightiest Quake—Massive Hail!

1. After the gathering at Armageddon, is the mightiest earthquake ever, to VIOLENTLY SHAKE this earth? Revelation 16:18.

2. What will happen to the islands of the sea? Revelation 16:20.

COMMENT: Bible prophecy shows that the earth will be scorched with heat, there will be the greatest earthquake of all time that will level mountains, and that heavenly bodies will fall to the earth as well as apparently into the sea. Earthquakes will be followed by the sea and the waves roaring. The Bible specifically teaches that the islands will be heavily affected. And if most of the frozen waters have melted by then, the height of these roaring waves apparently will be enough to destroy many, but probably not all, who live on islands (Revelation 6:12-14; 16:17-21).

3. Did God also punish the heathen in Joshua's day with huge hailstones, while interfering with the movements of the sun and earth? Joshua 10:11-12.

4. Will God's PUNISHMENT include gigantic hailstones? Revelation 16:21.

COMMENT: The weight of these hailstones will be one talent—about 57-130 pounds or 26-59 kilograms (the weight of the 'talent' has been debated). Just imagine the UTTER DESTRUCTION they will cause!

God will have to resort to this terrible, shocking method of punishment in the near future because most human beings WON'T LISTEN to any Milder form of WARNING!

5. Will some continue unrepentant even to the very last plague? Revelation 16:21. Note the words, "blasphemed God." Will Christ, at the beginning of His millennial rule, have to specially restrain and punish these remaining unrepentant ones to BRING THEM TO THEIR SENSES? Consider Psalm 149:5-9.

Avoid the Sorrows Just Ahead!

The world is into "the BEGINNING OF SORROWS" (Matthew 24:4-8).

But the deception by great numbers of FALSE MINISTERS, prophesied for this end-time, CAN BE AVOIDED. How? By your CONTINUED STUDY OF THIS COURSE, along with your reading of the FREE Bible News Prophecy magazine, the FREE booklets and listening to the worldwide Bible News Prophecy radio broadcast and/or watching the Bible News

Prophecy YouTube Channel).

The ravages of war, famine, and pestilence are soon to have a devastating effect on all nations. Billions of people will DIE! (Revelation 6:8; Revelation 9:13-19). YOU WILL NEED GOD'S PROTECTION THROUGH THESE PERILOUS TIMES!

Modern-day Israel—primarily the United States and Britain—will also suffer TERRIFIC LOSS of human life. Two thirds are to die WITHIN their present borders, and the remainder will go into hazardous captivity to the European Beast power (Ezekiel 5:12).

Next to occur will be GREAT religious persecution. But God promises you can avoid this IF you are found TRULY obeying the Bible. God says to the Christians who are part of the Church of Philadelphia, "Because you have kept My command [of the Bible]...I also will keep you from the hour of trial [UNDER PRESSURE to forsake God's word, the Bible, for man's teachings] which shall come upon THE WHOLE WORLD" (Revelation 3:10). Disobeying God's Word will soon prove to be DISASTROUS!

Terrible world wars and devastation will occur.

YOU DON'T NEED TO LIVE THROUGH THESE TERRIBLE EVENTS JUST AHEAD—YOU CAN HAVE THE DIVINE PROTECTION OF GOD!

We are now beginning to feel the jarring, dangerous impact of these terrible events in the earth, sky, and water—and in human relations! They are certain to intensify rapidly as we near the climax of this end-time. But INDIVIDUALLY, each of us can have God's divine protection from them!

God warns that "it [WORLD DISRUPTION!] will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the WHOLE earth" (Luke 21:35). But God also PROMISES a way of ESCAPE! "WATCH therefore, and pray always that you may be COUNTED WORTHY TO ESCAPE ALL THESE THINGS that will come to pass, and to STAND before the Son of Man" (Luke 21:36).

God commands, "WATCH..."! (verse 36.) Watch—be alert to these end-time EVENTS now being reported daily by various news media. Let these events stimulate you to prepare NOW to avoid the dire things to come.

God also commands, "...PRAY" (verse 36). Earnestly pray to God constantly that He will open your eyes to UNDERSTAND the spiritual truth revealed in your Bible by this course. SPIRITUAL things are SPIRITUALLY discerned. You need God's SPIRIT TO HELP YOU TRULY SURRENDER

YOURSELF to obey Him—BEFORE the disruptions become SEVERE!

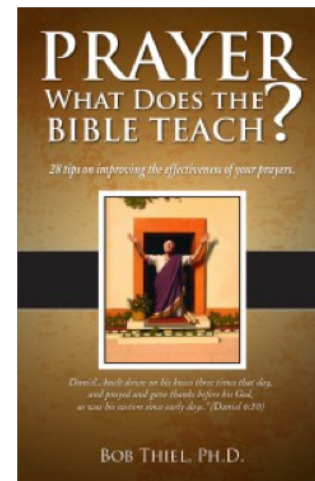
“SEEK the LORD WHILE HE MAY BE FOUND, Call upon Him while He is [STILL] near.” (Isaiah 55:6). For God clearly warns. “Behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord GOD, “that I will send a famine on the land, not a FAMINE of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of HEARING THE WORDS OF THE LORD. They shall [this can be YOU] wander from sea to sea, and from north to east; they [it COULD be you] shall run to and fro, seeking the word of the LORD, but shall NOT find it.” (Amos 8:11-12).

Amos 8:12 will apparently happen after Daniel 11:33 and Matthew 24:14 are fulfilled, but portions may begin as early as Daniel 11:28. With FCC “net neutrality” rules (they were approved to start to use in early 2015), we are getting close to that time when governments will be too offended by the truth of the Gospel of the Kingdom so that some will take steps to stop it from being proclaimed. Perhaps under the guise of “neutrality,” perhaps under the guise of “The Patriot Act,” perhaps under the guise of “public welfare” or national security, something will be done to stop perhaps all of the organized media efforts to proclaim biblical truths.

SOON the knowledge of the TRUE way to salvation will no longer be available. “The night cometh when NO man can work” (John 9:4) in spreading the knowledge of the one and only TRUE way to salvation. God’s saving knowledge will not be available then. TAKE HEED WHILE THERE IS YET TIME!

Make the most of your opportunity NOW. Study your Bible diligently with the aid of this Study the Bible Course. Read the FREE Bible News Prophecy magazine. Read the COGwriter News items. Study the FREE booklets. Watch the Bible News Prophecy channel Youtube videos. They will show you THE way to avoid the catastrophic events now almost upon us. Jolting disruptions ARE JUST AHEAD! And above all things, avoid the vast numbers of false ministers—listed by God on an equal level with wars, famines, and pestilence (Matthew 24:5-7). Disregarding God’s warning can only mean untold SUFFERING and probable DEATH for You!

TWENTY-EIGHT TIPS FOR MORE EFFECTIVE PRAYERS: PART 3



Continuing Church of God booklet on prayer

By Bob Thiel

This is the third part of a multi-part series on prayer.

It has been said that, “The Church of God goes forward on its knees.” This has basically been used as an admonition to tell Christians that they need to pray. But how?

In the previous articles, prayer was defined, and nine tips were discussed. In this article, four additional tips, starting with what we will call tip ten are covered.

Tip Number 10: Remember God’s Will and Have Your Priorities in Order

You need to have the right priorities when you pray. Jesus laid out an outline of prayer as He taught:

9 In this manner, therefore, pray:

Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. 10 Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven. 11 Give us this day our daily bread. 12 And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors. 13 And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. (Matthew 6:9-13)

I personally try to keep that outline in mind when I pray. Not that I simply repeat the above words vainly, but I add details. Details about doing the work of God

(the Kingdom, for example, will not come until Matthew 24:14 is fulfilled), details about the daily needs of others, forgiveness, details of the daily needs for myself and family, details about my own sins/debts and sins/debts of others.

We truly are to want God's will to be done. Furthermore, Jesus specifically taught that His faithful followers should have the right priorities. Notice some of what He taught after teaching His disciples how to pray:

25 "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? 26 Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27 Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?

28 "So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; 29 and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?

31 "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. (Matthew 6:25-34)

38 Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest. (Matthew 9:38)

Your prayers and entire approach to life need to have the correct focus, including God's kingdom and work. The spiritual needs of others and yourself are more important than your physical needs. Yet, few truly have faith.

Notice also what the Apostle John wrote:

14 Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 15 And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him. (1 John 5:14-15)

We need to accept God's will and align our priorities with Him.

Tip Number II: Praying Positions from the Bible

Some have said that "the Church of God goes forward on its knees." This basically means that prayer, whether or not on the knees, is an important factor in doing God's work. And those that wish to support the end time Philadelphian work of God (Revelation 3:7-13) should be praying.

The Bible shows that Solomon and others prayed on their knees and/or with their arms spread towards the heavens:

54 And so it was, when Solomon had finished praying all this prayer and supplication to the Lord, that he arose from before the altar of the Lord, from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread up to heaven. (1 Kings 8:54)

10 Daniel...with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days. (Daniel 6:10)

11 For it is written: "As I live, says the Lord, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God." (Romans 14:11)

8 I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting; (1 Timothy 2:8)

Now, I should add that this does not mean that Christians are to be bouncing/dancing around in public with their arms raised and/or with their palms up as many evangelicals and others do.

Nor do these scriptures mean that all prayers need to be done on the knees or with arms raised (cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:17; Luke 18:13-14). Praying on the knees shows humility and can help one focus when praying. Looking up can also help with focus.

Yet it should be mentioned that Jesus, and apparently Jehoshaphat, also sometimes prayed looking down:

39 He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, (Matthew 26:39)

18 And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of

Jerusalem bowed before the Lord, worshipping the Lord. (2 Chronicles 20:18)

Jesus did not, however, always pray looking down. He also prayed looking up to the heavens (Luke 9:28-29). You do not always need to pray on your knees, facing down, or looking up.

Notice also that sometimes God expects more than just oral/silent requests. Notice what happened with Moses:

11 And so it was, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. 12 But Moses' hands became heavy; so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it. And Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. (Exodus 17:11-12)

While you do not have to have your arms raised every time you pray, some matters take more effort than simply asking.

Related to instructions for the first Passover, the Bible says, "the people bowed their heads and worshiped" (Exodus 12:27), so praying with one's head bowed would seem consistent with that. But God does not want you to bow down before statues or similar icons (Deuteronomy 5:8-9).

The Bible describes prayers given while standing, kneeling, bowing down, or prostrate with the head touching the ground. Sometimes the Bible shows hands are lifted, though not always. Yet nowhere in the Bible is there any mention of holding the hands with palms together with the fingers pointed upward as is shown on so many religious pictures or artifacts, like one for the Babylonian priests praying to the sun god Shamash c. 888 B.C.



Priests praying before sun symbol and Shamash

Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims, and others follow practices

similar to the ancient Babylonians. Since God does not want to be worshiped as the pagan gods were worshiped (Deuteronomy 12:29-31), clasped hands would not seem to be appropriate for Christians.



Hindus praying to goddess Durga (by Hasan Iqbal Wamy)

As far as other positions go, some people, because of physical infirmity, can't kneel or even stand. God's ability to hear and to answer prayers isn't limited by such circumstances.

Tip Number 12: Pray Every Day

Christians should pray regularly, and preferably at least daily:

17 pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

12 continuing steadfastly in prayer (Romans 12:12)

36 Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man. (Luke 21:36)

The prophet Daniel prayed three times per day (Daniel 6:11), so did King David:

17 Evening and morning and at noon I will pray, and cry aloud, And He shall hear my voice. (Psalms 55:17)

Notice also that David knew that God heard him. He believed that God was there and was listening.

Jesus prayed early in the day:

35 Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed. (Mark 1:35)

Normally "I rise before the dawning of the morning" (Psalms 119:147) and pray for about forty-five minutes. Immediately afterwards, about four days a week, I jog, and tend to meditate and sometimes pray while doing so.

I will also pray other times throughout the day.

It is too easy to get busy during the day, so many find it is good to start your day off with prayer.

The Bible does not specify any amount of time for you to pray, but encourages daily prayer. The late evangelist Leroy Neff wrote:

Some people in their zeal and enthusiasm pray more than they should. They become practically prayer-and-Bible-study hermits! Children and spouses are neglected while they spend long hours “getting in their prayer time.” They are not giving as they should in outgoing concern for their family and the rest of the world. On the other hand, take heed to this appropriate saying: Seven days without prayer makes one weak!

The Bible nowhere states how long we should pray each day — just like the financial offerings we give and the frequency or length of our fasting. God leaves it to us to decide, and watches to see what we will do.

Jesus, when He knew He was going to be crucified within 24 hours, prayed for a solid hour, then went back to continue twice more (Matt. 26:38 and following verses).

On another occasion, when Jesus was about to make the important decision of selecting the 12 apostles, He prayed all night (Luke 6:12). So it should seem obvious that five, 10 or 20 minutes a day before our Creator God is insufficient. (Effectiveness in Prayer. Good News, May 1979)

So days five, ten, or twenty minutes might be fine. Yet, as he properly wrote, God leaves the amount to us to decide.

Tip Number 13: Forgiveness

One reason that people do not get their prayers answered is that they have failed to truly forgive others. Many feel that “those that did them wrong” do not deserve to be forgiven.

After giving an outline of prayer, Jesus said:

14 For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. (Matthew 6:14-15)

Yet, many seem to think that their relationship with God is sufficiently close that they do not really need to forgive

others. This is wrong.

Most people have not forgiven someone from what they perceive someone did to them.

Jesus taught that forgiveness needed to be done before worship:

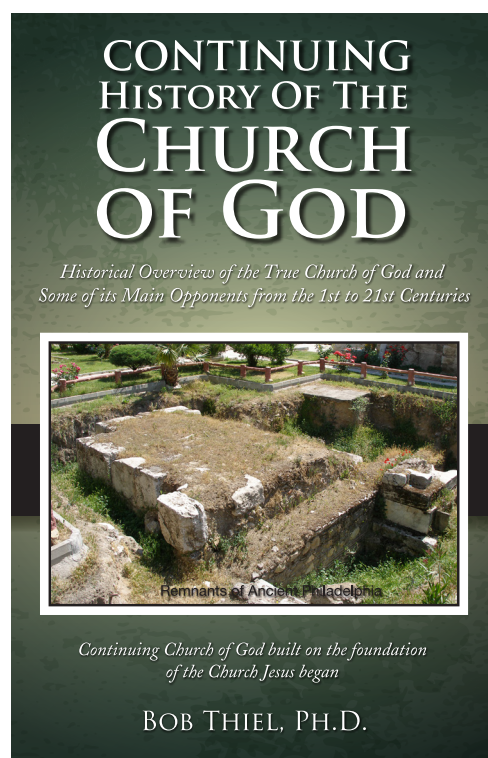
23 Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. (Matthew 5:23-24)

Forgiveness is a two-way street. In the above account, it appears that perhaps the worshiper needed forgiveness and apparently needed to ask for it. Forgiveness is important. More important than simply showing up somewhere to worship.

More information on prayer can be found in our booklet *Prayer: What Does the Bible Teach?*

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CHURCH HISTORY BOOKLET



We have a new edition of the booklet *Continuing History of the Church of God* available. It has been printed and can also be found at www.ccog.org

Fulfilling Matthew 24:14 and Matthew 28:19-20



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