

TOMORROW'S WORLD

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Is Christianity Dangerous?



MATTHEW 5:19
are the pure in heart,
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Remembering Richard F. Ames

It is with great sadness that we inform you of the death of longtime evangelist Richard Franklin Ames. Many of you were familiar with Mr. Ames from his many *Tomorrow's World* telecasts, magazine articles, and booklets. You may even have had the opportunity to meet him in person at one of our *Tomorrow's World* Presentations.

Mr. Ames was a driven, "type A" personality and a man of achievement. Born in June 1936, he grew up and attended public schools in New London and Meriden, Connecticut. He served as co-captain on his high school football team and as Senior Class President, and he began his broadcast media career working after school as an announcer for a Meriden radio station. Following graduation, he went on to get a B.C.E. degree from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York, and went to Yale University to complete a year-long graduate course in traffic and transportation engineering. He was subsequently hired as a transportation engineer at the Southeastern Virginia Regional Planning Commission in Norfolk, Virginia.

But engineering was not to be his ultimate calling. As many do, he realized he was missing something in life. It was then that he was introduced to the work of Herbert W. Armstrong, and he left his work in Virginia to attend Ambassador College in Pasadena, California, in 1962. There he served as Student Body President and married Kathryn Lind Meredith in 1964. Kathryn was the younger sister of the late evangelist Roderick C. Meredith, my predecessor in this work.

Mr. Ames was ordained a minister of Jesus Christ a year later and served congregations in seven states as part of a rapidly growing work. Over the course of his life, he also taught theology, speech, and broadcasting at the Big Sandy, Texas, Ambassador College campus, and served as Director of Admissions, an instructor of theology, and Registrar at the Pasadena campus.

From 1986 to 1994, he became a familiar face to many on the television program *The World Tomorrow*, which, at its peak, was the most-viewed religious

program in the United States. As one of its four presenters, Mr. Ames traveled to record on-location programs in Israel, Egypt, Great Britain, Germany, and locales across the United States.

Mr. Ames left the Worldwide Church of God after it began substituting heathen doctrines and Greek philosophy for the pure words of Scripture. He humbly joined with many others in supporting the revived Work, led by his brother-in-law, and explained his decision in a letter he wrote at the time: "I used to argue with Dr. Meredith, telling him that the Worldwide Church of God would never accept [a doctrine nowhere found in Scripture], and that the Church would

not do away with the sanctity of the Sabbath. He was right and I was wrong."



Before long, Dr. Meredith asked Mr. Ames to go on television again, where he produced programs from 1996 until a few weeks before his death. When the Living Church of God was organized, he was additionally made Director of Media Operations. Through his work as broadcaster, writer, and speaker, he reached millions of people in many countries around the world. He understood deeply what God has prophesied for His faithful servants who dedicate their lives to His Work: "Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever" (Daniel 12:3).

But dates, places, and achievements do not tell us about the whole man. Even in his last days, confined

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to a hospital bed, he wanted to know, *How is the Work doing? Has the latest book gone to the printer?* His mind was focused on doing the Work of God—as was the mind of Jesus Christ, who proclaimed to His disciples, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work” (John 4:34).

The more you get to know someone, the more you realize that Jesus Christ was the only perfect man to ever walk this earth. Knowing this, someone once asked Mr. Ames how he could work for his brother-in-law. After all, he would have seen Dr. Meredith’s human weaknesses up close. His answer was unambiguous: “I fear God.” Mr. Ames deeply understood that Jesus Christ is the true Head of the Church and that as long as the human leader is following Christ—as clearly revealed in the Bible—it would be a grievous error to rise up against him, imperfect as he may be. I’m sure that is why he was my greatest supporter when I was appointed to be Dr. Meredith’s successor, even though I was nearly a decade younger than he was.

For many years, Mr. Ames was truly our elder statesman, always “the adult in the room.” As one of our Canadian ministers put it, “When Mr. Ames spoke, everyone listened.” Mr. Stuart Wachowicz, evangelist and regional director of Canada for *Tomorrow’s World* and the Living Church of God, wrote this about the man he had come to know:

Mr. Richard Ames will be remembered for his many contributions to the Work of God in this age. His total focus was on “doing the Work,” which was always an inspiration and encouragement for all of us to look past our own desires and project our energies on the calling he valued so much. For my wife and I, Mr. Ames will be most remembered for his admonition to “claim God’s promises,” and therefore put total trust in our Father and Christ. We will always cherish the memory of the visit Mr. and Mrs. Ames made to Alberta quite a number of years ago, during which time he gave *Tomorrow’s World* presentations in Red Deer and Calgary. Their sincere concern for the brethren made a

very deep and lasting impression. The same impression was shared by members across the nation. It will be wonderful to see him again in a glorified body in the soon-coming Kingdom of God.

Mr. Ames made prophecy understandable to millions, and three of his booklets focused on the subject: *Understanding Bible Prophecy, Armageddon and Beyond*, and *The Middle East in Prophecy*. However, his focus was not merely on understanding future events, but on turning many to righteousness. Note this admonition from his article “How to Escape Armageddon” in the July-August 2024 *Tomorrow’s World* magazine—the last issue to be published before his death on July 4:

Perhaps you have not been praying; now is the time to get down on your knees and cry out to God for a change in your life. Scripture tells us how to draw close to God. “Seek the LORD while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon” (Isaiah 55:6–7). God promises to bless you and forgive you if you seek Him with your whole heart.

As a teacher and an encourager, Mr. Ames always looked for the best in others. There were times when he was direct. He could bark, but he did not bite. If he saw some way in which you could improve in your life, he would bring it to your attention—but sincerely motivated by love and a desire to help you improve, while also striving to hold himself to the highest standard.

Richard Ames was a fellow worker in Christ, a true friend, and an inspiration. We look forward to seeing him again at the resurrection in the Kingdom of God.



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United States

PO Box 3810
Charlotte, NC 28227-8010
Phone: +1 (704) 844-1970

Australasia

PO Box 300
Clarendon SA 5157, Australia
Phone: +61 8 8383 6266

Canada

PO Box 465
London, ON N6P 1R1
Phone: +1 (905) 814-1094

New Zealand

PO Box 2767
Shortland Street
Auckland 1140
Phone: +64 9-268 8985

Philippines

PO Box 492
Araneta Center Post Office
1135 Quezon City, Metro Manila
Phone: +63 2 8573-7594

South Africa

Private Bag X30
Menlo Park, 0102
Pretoria, GP, South Africa
Phone: +27-12-331-0058

United Kingdom

Box 111
43 Berkeley Square
London, W1J 5FJ
Phone: +44 844 800 9322

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The Leaders We Deserve

By **Jonathan McNair**

Throughout most of history, kings, queens, pharaohs, and dictators have ruled the earth. Most citizens of the world have had no say over the laws of the land or who made and enforced them. Average citizens were taxed on their work, conscripted into service, and made subject in every way to the rulers of the land—that is, until the rise of modern democracy. Today, people in so many countries around the world get to choose their own leaders.

But how well are we choosing? Are our leaders building a just, equitable, and God-fearing society? Furthermore, what do our choices of leaders tell us about ourselves?

Israel's Choice

The story of King Saul provides an intriguing lesson. We read that Israel suffered under the leadership of Samuel's sons. "Now it came to pass when Samuel was old that he made his sons judges over Israel.... But his sons did not walk in his ways; they turned aside after dishonest gain, took bribes, and perverted justice" (1 Samuel 8:1, 3). These men took advantage of their po-

sition and exploited the people. But instead of going to God for relief, the Israelites demanded a human-centered solution to the problem, saying to Samuel, "Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations" (v. 5).

When Samuel prayed to God for the answer to this dilemma, God responded, "Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them" (1 Samuel 8:7). Samuel had been serving for many years as a representative of God. When people wished to know God's will, they would come to Samuel or another true prophet. But that arrangement did not satisfy the people. They wanted to follow the custom of the nations around them—they wanted a human ruler who could visibly lead them into battle, be their chief judge, and establish laws as he saw fit. That was the kind of leader they thought would "save the day." Inspired by God, Samuel warned them of the consequences of their choice, saying that they would "cry out in that day because of your king whom *you have chosen for yourselves*, and the LORD will not hear you in that day" (v. 18).

And the Israelites got the leader they deserved.

The story of Saul's selection has some interesting twists and turns. Saul was everything that *looked* good

in a king. “There was a man of Benjamin whose name was Kish... a mighty man of power. And he had a choice and handsome son whose name was Saul. There was not a more handsome person than he among the children of Israel. From his shoulders upward he was taller than any of the people” (1 Samuel 9:1–2).

Saul had the right pedigree—his father was a powerful leader. And he was big and good-looking, with the outward traits we tend to desire in those who lead us. Yes, God orchestrated Saul’s ascension to the throne, but He was giving the people what He knew they wanted. Note what God inspired Samuel to say at Saul’s coronation. “Now therefore, here is the king whom you have chosen and whom you have desired. And take note, the LORD has set a king over you” (1 Samuel 12:13).

So, what happened when God gave them what they wanted?

As the story unfolds, the Israelites learn that appearances can be deceiving. Instead of being courageous, Saul shrank in fear before the giant Goliath: “When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid” (1 Samuel 17:11). It wasn’t only the rank-and-file soldiers who were fearful of the giant—Saul, their king, the biggest and most impressive specimen of a man in the land, was terrified. And, instead of acting as champion

INSTEAD OF WISDOM, SAUL SHOWED FOOLISHNESS. INSTEAD OF MERCY AND BENEVOLENCE, HE REVEALED A STREAK OF JEALOUSY AND VENGEFULNESS.

and hero, he was quite willing to allow an inexperienced young man, who wasn’t even in the army, to step into his shoes—or, rather, his uniform. “Saul clothed David with his armor, and he put a bronze helmet on his head; he also clothed him with a coat of mail” (1 Samuel 17:38). Of course, we read that David rejected Saul’s armor and relied upon God to protect and strengthen him, and God gave him victory over Goliath.

As Saul revealed his true colors, the citizens of Israel came to see that their new monarch lacked more

than just courage. They had expected that this man, who had the look of a king, would judge them wisely. They had said to Samuel, “Look, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations” (1 Samuel 8:5). But the king they received showed his foolishness. As they prepared to battle the Philistines, Samuel told Saul to wait for him to make an offering to God, to seek His blessing, but Saul impatiently ignored Samuel’s instruction and led the offering himself. Samuel was outraged at his folly, saying, “What have you done?” This was Saul’s response:

“When I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that you did not come within the days appointed, and that the Philistines gathered together at Michmash, then I said, ‘The Philistines will now come down on me at Gilgal, and I have not made supplication to the LORD.’ Therefore I felt compelled, and offered a burnt offering.” And Samuel said to Saul, “You have done foolishly. You have not kept the commandment of the LORD your God, which He commanded you” (1 Samuel 13:11–13).

Just one chapter later, we see Saul acting foolishly again, instructing the army to fast during a day of

battle in a misguided attempt to show his determination to vanquish Israel’s enemies. We read that “the men of Israel were distressed that day, for Saul had placed the people under oath, saying, ‘Cursed is the man who eats any food until evening, before I have taken vengeance on my enemies.’ So none of the people tasted food” (1 Samuel 14:24). The day became a fiasco, with Saul’s son Jonathan unknowingly

breaking his father’s command and dipping into a honeycomb he found.

Jonathan was incredulous when he later learned of his father’s ridiculous decree that denied the men food as they battled the Philistines. And the day ended in chaos: “the people rushed on the spoil, and took sheep, oxen, and calves, and slaughtered them on the ground; and the people ate them with the blood” (1 Samuel 14:32). Saul’s irrational decisions brought bad results at every turn. The wise king the Israelites had anticipated was becoming a menace to his people.

What They Deserved

Instead of the strength his people expected, Saul showed cowardice. Instead of wisdom, he showed foolishness. Instead of mercy and benevolence, he revealed a streak of jealousy and vengefulness. In essence, the Israelites got the king they deserved. They learned the hard way that humans don't have the ability to truly see the heart of another person, and that we can be swayed by appearances.

After Saul's demise, God established David as king. By appearance, David was not the man for the job. But God told Samuel that "the LORD does not see as man sees; for *man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart*" (1 Samuel 16:7). Though David's own family could not see it, God saw that David was a man after His own heart, despite his flaws. Centuries later, this contrast between Saul and David was discussed in the book of Acts. We read, "And afterward they asked for a king; so God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. And when He had removed him, He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, 'I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will'" (Acts 13:21–22).

A ruler the Israelites deserved, who had only the *appearance* of a good and godly leader, utterly failed—while a truly good and godly man, though lacking many of the superficial traits that *seem* to designate a leader, became the greatest human king of Israel's history. What is the lesson for us?

What We Deserve

With the rise of modern democracy, we have labored under the delusion that we can select the best leaders for ourselves. We look for people who appeal to our image of what leaders should be. Do they have winning personalities? Do they seem like attractive people to follow? Do they speak to the issues that are important to us personally? Will they stand for our values?

Citizens of democratic countries vote for candidates who seem to have the most winning characteristics. But most people know, deep in their hearts, that each choice is a hopeful compromise with their conscience. They have a sneaking suspicion that they can't *really* trust their leaders.

Consider a recent poll of American citizens conducted by the Pew Research Center. Here's what its

surveys found: "Last year, 16% said they trusted the government just about always or most of the time, which was among the lowest measures in nearly seven decades of polling" ("Public Trust in Government: 1958–2024," *Pew Research Center*, June 24, 2024). Time and again, we tell ourselves. *This time will be different. This election will be different.* Yet, just as ancient Israel learned, what we see in our leaders-to-be is usually a mirage, our own wishful thinking.

Where does this leave us?

In many ways, and for many people, life in our modern world—particularly in the Western world—is no doubt an improvement over the life of the average man or woman throughout most of history. But while some ascribe that improvement to man's wisdom and prowess, Bible students know that the real reason for the prosperity of the United States and the British-descended nations is found in the promise God made to Abraham many, many years ago. That promise granted wealth and prosperity unmatched in human history. (To learn more, read our free booklet *The United States and Great Britain in Prophecy*). These nations inherited a framework of largely biblical values, and despite ongoing rebellion against those values, they continue to benefit those who live by them.

Sadly, instead of drawing closer to the God who has blessed us and beseeching Him to guide our nations and leaders as they adhere to His ways, we as a people have turned our backs on Him. Scripture tells us of God's mind toward our nations: "My people would not heed My voice, and Israel would have none of Me. So I gave them over to their own stubborn heart, to walk in their own counsels. Oh, that My people would listen to Me, that Israel would walk in My ways! I would soon subdue their enemies, and turn My hand against their adversaries" (Psalm 81:11–14).

People today spend a tremendous amount of time promoting one political leader or another, arguing over candidates' abilities to bring solutions to our troubled lands. We watch politicians proclaim how much good they will do for our country—how much better they are than their opponent. We watch them criticize and ridicule each other, and in a vain hope for something better we try to turn a blind eye to the ways in which they plainly do not reflect goodness, truth, and wisdom. We hope that the decisions they make in office will somehow turn out to be in harmony with godly values,

even if their character is not. And we see fellow citizens passionately divided over which candidate is best, just as we see deepening divides over values, class, culture, and socioeconomic status. Yet we naively think that we can determine what is best for our nation—which political leader will bring the best results.

But does anyone ask, “What is God’s opinion?”

We can read of God’s mind toward our foolishness: “The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying, ‘Let us break Their bonds in pieces and cast away Their cords from us.’ He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall hold them in derision. Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, and distress them in His deep displeasure” (Psalm 2:2–5).

What We Need

The time will soon come when this world will have a ruler who will not be of its choosing—and He will finally bring the solutions to mankind’s problems. He will be the One who chose ancient Israel’s king after His own heart. We read:

There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD. His delight is in the fear of the LORD, and He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, nor decide by the hearing of His ears; but with righteousness He shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, and faithfulness the belt of His waist. “The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.... They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the


LORD as the waters cover the sea. And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, who shall stand as a banner to the people; for the Gentiles shall seek Him, and His resting place shall be glorious” (Isaiah 11:1–6, 9–10).

Appearances can be deceiving—so, as King of kings, Jesus Christ will judge *not* by outward appearances, but by hearts. He will lead in sincerity and truth, with love, mercy, and kindness. His rule will teach mankind to set aside the carnal mindset that leads to rejecting Him—He will rule in such a way that mankind will instead choose to obey and submit to Him.

A Familiar Refrain

Ever since Adam and Eve, mankind has replayed the same story over and over again. The blessings God provides have been taken for granted, and we have stubbornly turned our backs on Him. In taking from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the first couple declared that they could “go it alone,” without looking for God’s guidance. As a result, mankind has suffered under countless human-conceived systems that seem “better” to us than God’s way.

Some of those humanly conceived systems are even presented to us in the name of someone’s mistaken idea of “Christianity.” In the United States, we are seeing the rise of a philosophy often called “Christian Nationalism” that claims to apply Christian values to politics and government. Sadly, as you will see in this issue’s article “Dangerous ‘Christianity’” on page 16, some of the most dangerous deceptions come to us with a false label of “Christianity.” But when we look back at the example of ancient Israel, we should be wary of those who would offer us a human king—or president, or prime minister—as a satisfactory substitute for God and His perfect rule.

As we have seen, the example of ancient Israel provides a timely illustration for us today. When the Israelites proclaimed that they wanted a human leader instead of God, He gave them a leader they deserved. Looking at the current state of electoral politics, can we deny that we echo their rebellious chorus today? 

MAY WE SUGGEST?

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Are Enoch and Elijah in Heaven?

Question: Genesis 5:24 says that “Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him,” and 2 Kings 2:11 says that “Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.” What exactly happened to these men seems unclear. Did they ever die? Are they in Heaven with God right now?

Answer: Part of the challenge of these passages is that their language is ambiguous. The phrases “he was not” and “God took him” have led many to believe that Enoch was removed from planet Earth and taken into Heaven. Additionally, the passage does not mention his death, and the Apostle Paul wrote that Enoch was “taken away so that he did not see death” (Hebrews 11:5). However, the story of Enoch nowhere tells us where he was taken, and it nowhere asserts that he did not die.

Enoch and Elijah are now dead, awaiting their reward, and are not in Heaven. To claim otherwise would be to disagree with Jesus Christ’s own words.

Regarding Elijah, we should remember that the Bible tells us of *three* heavens: the air above us where birds fly and clouds move; the space above that, which we know as outer space; and, finally, what Paul called “the third heaven,” the spiritual dimension in which God dwells (2 Corinthians 12:2). Whenever the Bible mentions “heaven,” we must keep in mind these *three different places* and let context reveal which one applies to the passage. Thus, when 2 Kings 2:11 says that “Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven,” the location of his chariot ride is not immediately clear.

This brings us back to the main question: Are Enoch and Elijah in Heaven? That is, are Enoch and Elijah now residing in the *third* heaven, in the presence of God and His angels?

The details of what happened to Enoch and Elijah *after* their disappearance is a larger topic than we can cover in this brief space, but the question of their death is actually very simple, and the answer involves a fundamental principle that is vital for anyone trying

to understand the Bible: Use plain scriptures to help explain scriptures that seem ambiguous.

The Way of All Flesh

Certainly, the tales of Enoch and Elijah have ambiguities we must resolve. Yet there are other very *plain* passages that are far *easier* to understand—passages that leave us no doubt as to whether or not Enoch and Elijah are alive in the third heaven.

One such passage was spoken by none other than the Son of God, Himself. Jesus Christ is very plain, saying, “No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven” (John 3:13).

And there we have it, from Jesus’ own mouth: *No one* has ascended into the third heaven except for Jesus Christ, the Son of Man and the Son of God. He is the *only* man to have traversed both Heaven and earth. He didn’t say, “No one but two,” or, “No one but Enoch and Elijah”—He said, *No one*. And that leaves no room for these two Old Testament figures.

In fact, we can go further. We read of Enoch in Hebrews 11—often called the “Heroes of Faith” chapter—and, in verse 13 of that very chapter, we are told *plainly* what has happened to *all* of these heroes of faith: “These all *died in faith*, not having received the promises...”

“These all” would include Enoch, mentioned just eight verses earlier. In fact, *of course* Enoch and Elijah have died; Scripture makes plain that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23) and that “the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23; see also Ezekiel 18:4, 20).

No matter what we might speculate, these *plain* verses set limits as to what *must* be true: that Enoch and Elijah are now dead, awaiting their reward, and are *not* in Heaven. To claim otherwise would be to disagree with Jesus Christ’s own words. As we have seen, the plain verses of the Bible add clarity to those that we might otherwise misinterpret and misunderstand. For deeper insight into God’s plan for humanity beyond death, you can request free copies of *What Happens When You Die?* and *What Is the Meaning of Life?*, or visit TomorrowsWorld.org to read them online. TM

Oh Canada!

The Disappearance of the Family



The 2016 Canadian census brought attention to dramatic changes that had been occurring in Canadian households up to that time. Previous census reports had already shown that the “nuclear” family—one father, one mother, and two or more children—was being replaced by a variety of supposed alternatives. The real surprise in the 2016 census was the family structure that had become the *most common* in Canada:

For the first time in the country’s history, the number of one-person households has surpassed all other types of living situations. They accounted for more than 28.2 per cent of all households last year, more than the percentage of couples with children, couples without children, single parent families, multiple family households and all other combinations of people living together (“Census 2016: More Canadians than ever are living alone, and other takeaways,” *The Globe and Mail*, August 2, 2017).

That was eight years ago. Since then, more adults are choosing alternatives such as living with their parents, living alone, or living unmarried with roommates. “While more than two-thirds (68 percent) of people aged 25 to 29 were in a couple in 1981, this was the case for just under two-fifths (39 percent) of people in this age group in 2021” (“How and Why There are So Many Singles in Canada,” *PsychologyToday.com*, June 10, 2023).

As of 2021, 15 percent of the population grouping of ages 15 years and older live alone, a total of 4.4 mil-

lion, up from 1.7 million in 1982 (“Living Solo,” Statistics Canada, *StatCan.gc.ca*, September 29, 2022). One must ask the question of why so many are choosing to “go it alone” rather than experience life with a spouse. There are many reasons for this increase, but the reality of a public shift in opinion about marriage cannot be ignored.

A survey conducted by pollster Angus Reid showed that 53 percent of Canadians agreed with the statement “Marriage is simply not necessary.” This belief was held by 60 percent of men aged 18–34. It should come as no surprise that this change in attitude toward marriage mirrors a change in attitude toward religion. Among married Canadians aged 18–34, fewer than half were married in a religious ceremony, with 53 percent opting for a civil ceremony instead (“‘I don’t’: Four-in-ten Canadian adults have never married, and aren’t sure they want to,” *AngusReid.org*, May 7, 2018).

Falling Fertility

In most Western nations, changing public attitudes regarding marriage, child-rearing, and family in general are having lasting effects. Canada is not alone in seeing sharp declines in the number of traditional families. And one of the obvious detrimental results of fewer couples and fewer marriages is that Canada is facing a disturbing trend of fewer babies.

The MacDonald-Laurier Institute, a public policy think tank based in Ottawa, adds a worrying number to these findings. Canada’s fertility rate has dropped from 1.6 in 2016 to 1.3 in 2022 (“Canada’s Family Erosion,” MLI, *MacDonaldLaurier.ca*, May 7, 2024). A drop of 0.3 may not sound significant, but it is taking a very small

number and making it even smaller. A fertility rate of 2.1 babies per woman aged 15–49 is known to be the benchmark to maintain a population. Currently, Canada's fertility rate is only two-thirds of what is needed to maintain its population—and the 1.3 fertility rate represents a nearly 20 percent decline in just six years.

In 2021, Statistics Canada described some of the problems associated with this drop in fertility rate: "If the country's fertility continues to decline further in the coming years, Canada could join the countries with the 'lowest-low' fertility rates (1.3 or less children per woman)—a situation associated with rapid population aging and increased stress on the labour market, public health care and pension system" ("Fewer babies born as Canada's fertility rate hits a record low in 2020," *StatCan.gc.ca*, May 16, 2022).

While the decision to marry and have children is deeply personal, and there are many legitimate reasons why one may choose to remain single, the overall trend of fewer Canadians choosing marriage—and fewer Canadians choosing to have children—is having an impact on society. *MacLean's* magazine highlighted the reality:

Marriage may not matter as much as it once did to young couples. But it matters a lot to society at large. Married couples are a foundation of the economy. They earn, save and spend more than their unmarried counterparts. They are happier. And a mountain of evidence shows stable two-parent families are good for kids. Children who grow up in a married family are far more likely to succeed in school, find employment and avoid problems later in life than those raised in other situations, however loving ("You can't mandate marriage, even if it's good for society," *Macleans.ca*, October 11, 2011).

Our Fullest Potential

Beyond what *MacLean's* reports, and beyond statistics provided by Statistics Canada or the Angus Reid Institute, the reality we need to understand is that—right from creation—men and women were built to reach their full potential within a family structure.

The second chapter of Genesis contains the well-known account of God using Adam's rib to create Eve. Its language makes clear that Adam was longing for

companionship. "But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him" (Genesis 2:20).

Adam's reaction when God brought Eve to him seems to have been one of pure elation: "This is now bone of my bones," he exclaimed, "and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man" (Genesis 2:23). He may even have recognized the broader importance of their relationship—the creation of the first human family.

What value has God placed on the family? He saw fit to ensure that two of the Ten Commandments, which are the most basic and fundamental expressions of godly morality, are directed at maintaining the family unit. The Fifth Commandment reads, "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you," and the Seventh Commandment concisely declares, "You shall not commit adultery" (Exodus 20:12, 14).

Men and women were built to reach their full potential within a family structure.

Perhaps you did not have the benefit of growing up with a positive parental example and aren't quite sure what that looks like. If so, your loving Creator has not left you without help. The Bible contains a wealth of information describing principles that can help you be a better father, mother, brother, sister, husband, wife, son, or daughter—and it can help you in preparing for a future family.

In recent decades, the family unit has come under attack. Though many find themselves in less-than-ideal situations beyond their control, family does matter. It is the bedrock of society and the foundation of successful community. A healthy family is—and has always been—the best environment for raising children and shaping future generations.

Understanding the vital role of family is also key to understanding the way of life God reveals in the Bible. The two support each other in profound ways, and the family unit also teaches us much about God's overall plan. To learn more about this vital connection, you can request your own free copies of *What Is the Meaning of Life?* and *Successful Parenting: God's Way* from the Regional Office nearest you (listed on page 4 of this magazine), or you can read them online at *TomorrowsWorld.org*.

—Michael Heykoop

BRIDGES TO NOWHERE

Are your grudges leading you down a path to destruction?

Why would people build a bridge to nowhere? Either they do not realize where they are headed, or they just are not the sharpest tools in the shed. Sadly, however, most of us have done this unknowingly at one time or another—spending a lot of effort on something that will never take us to a useful destination.

How have we done this? Chances are, most of us have at times held onto *grudges*—which are essentially bridges to nowhere.

Human nature can lead us to be quite hypocritical in how we address hurt feelings. We may recognize that when other people hold grudges, they stray away from the healing process. Yet, when we have our own bone to pick, we too often hang on to *our* grudge, deluding ourselves into thinking that, for us, the results will somehow be different.

Grudges are terrible dinner guests; they have endless appetites, but the only thing they consume is the one who invited them to dinner. The list of health risks associated with holding grudges is lengthy and alarming. It can include any or all of the complications that result from depression, such as chronic fatigue, anxiety, and a weakened immune system. Additionally, holding onto grudges can even lead to an increased risk for cardiovascular diseases, as the constant stress and negative emotions take their toll on our hearts and overall well-being. But while *intellectually* we may understand the clear side effects of our grudges, *in practice* we may still find it difficult to let some old hurts go.

Why do we cling so tightly to feelings that we know only hurt us? Perhaps we do so because they are *our* hurts—those feelings belong to us, and to let go of them means to realize that we have been wrong to nurse them. It can be hard to admit that we may have been wrong, or at least that it may be better that we be wronged and have peace by forgiving than that we continue to sulk or to seek revenge.

The Cost of Our Bridges

At times, hurt feelings may be understandable—but even then, holding onto them is contrary to two core Christian principles: “You shall love the LORD your

God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength” (Deuteronomy 6:5) and “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:39).

When we fail to uphold these principles, do we go to God and pray, “I really blew that one—You better really teach me a lesson this time”? Or do we ask Him to be merciful with us? If we love God with all of our heart, then our heart will reflect His, which is filled with

Why do we cling so tightly to feelings that we know only hurt us? Perhaps we do so because they are our own hurts—those feelings belong to us, and to let go of them means to realize that we have been wrong to nurse them.

forgiveness and patience. If we love our neighbors as ourselves, we will extend to them the same level of mercy that we want from God—and, if we do not truly forgive from our hearts, God will not forgive *our* debts, either (Matthew 18:21–35).

In bridge-building, there is a process called surveying, in which a surveyor comes to a potential construction site to see how best to lay the road and to choose which route a bridge should take to arrive at the desired destination. The surveyor’s work eliminates any routes that may traverse treacherous terrain. We can apply this in our own lives to those times when someone’s behavior upsets us. God tells us that those who wish to see Him must first pursue peace with all people—and if we are not making that pursuit, we will lose out on eternity (Hebrews 12:14–17).

Are we counting the cost of holding grudges? We must each ask ourselves, “Which route will lead me to God’s Kingdom?” Changing course—especially over a mole hill we are treating as a mountain—may leave us building a bridge to nowhere.

To learn more, visit TomorrowsWorld.org to watch the telecast “What Is the Greatest Love?” While you’re there, you can also read helpful, related articles like “Overcoming Stress” and “Are You Willing to Change?”

—Ryan Dawson

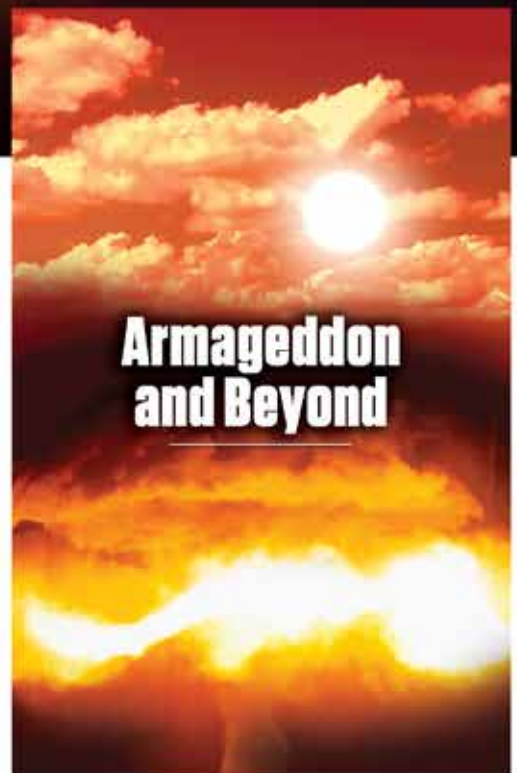
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The Aberfan Disaster: A Tragic Day and a Hopeful Future

On the morning of 21 October 1966, the Welsh mining town of Aberfan awoke to a thick, autumnal mist after weeks of heavy rain. Children made their way to Pantglas Junior School, which was overshadowed by vast piles of coal waste—called tips—from the local Merthyr Vale Colliery. At 9:15 a.m., as classes began, more than 110,000 cubic meters (140,000 cubic yards) of liquefied coal slurry cascaded down the hill. A sound like thunder preceded a massive, black avalanche six meters (20 feet) high, breaking walls and crashing through windows, engulfing the young students.

That day, 116 children and 28 adults lost their lives. Despite the heroic efforts of the local community and rescue services, very few in the rear classrooms survived.

This disaster, the worst involving children in modern British history, nearly wiped out a community's entire generation in seconds. The survivors, bereaved parents, siblings, and other members of the local community have remained deeply affected by this catastrophe for the past 58 years. What comfort and hope can we find in God's word for those who lost their lives—and for those who survived, plagued by memories as vivid as if the avalanche were yesterday?

The Tragedy of That Day

Aberfan (pronounced "a-buh-van"), like many other South Wales valley communities, existed because of the local coal mine, which employed many men both underground and above ground. Miners were familiar with the dangers of their work, including tunnel collapse, poisonous gas, and the buildup of coal dust in

their lungs. The risks to their families at home were considered minimal by comparison.

The coal mining process produces vast quantities of waste material called tailings, which need to be discarded. Merthyr Vale Colliery had seven tips, the latest of which was 34 meters (111 feet) high and positioned atop a natural spring. Heavy rain in the preceding three weeks turned the underlying waste into slurry, and at 7:30 a.m. that day, a small subsidence (a sunken area) greeted the morning shift.

Students at Pantglas Junior School, downhill from the tip, had begun their last day of classes before the half-term holiday. When the coal waste began moving down the hill toward them, it built up to a speed that left no time for warning. Survivors described the slurry rapidly overwhelming classrooms, trapping bodies like thick cement, and crushing them under the pressure of debris. When the noise stopped, everything went black and silent; clinical data later showed that most victims died from suffocation. Those still alive realized that they were trapped next to teachers, friends, and classmates who had perished. Unable to free themselves, they awaited rescue.

The community quickly understood the disaster's scale and began working with their bare hands to free survivors. Emergency services and miners arrived, knowing their own children were still missing. Compounding matters, the landslide had ruptured the local water main, adding more water to the sludge. Few tools were available initially, and debris was transported by hand down lines of people. Occasionally, a whistle would blow, and hundreds of rescuers would fall silent, listening for any survivors' cries; even the strongest

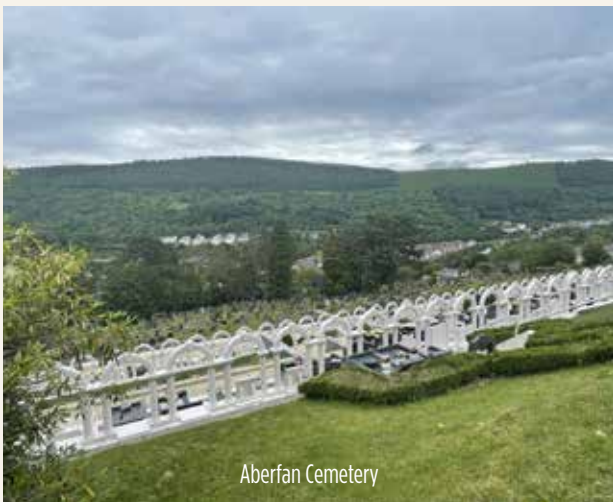
would break down in tears at the horrendous circumstances. No more survivors were found after 11:00 a.m., and it took a week to recover every victim. Bodies were moved for identification to a nearby chapel, used as a mortuary. The spirit of cooperation was extraordinary, and people from outside Aberfan came to help after the news broke on national TV.

An estimated 10,000 people attended the collective funeral of 81 children and a mother—buried with her two sons on either side of her—at Aberfan cemetery on 27 October, where the dead were buried in two long trench graves. Today, a memorial garden stands at the location of Pantglas Junior School.

For many of the surviving students, that was the day their childhood ended. Some have never spoken in detail about their experience, while others have found solace in sharing their memories and grief. Many suffered from night terrors, fear of the dark, PTSD, and survivor's guilt. Parents who had lost children couldn't bear to see surviving children playing in the streets. The grief was so great that they avoided discussing their lost children even with others who had experienced the same loss.

A five-month tribunal into the disaster's cause began on 2 November 1966, determining that the National Coal Board was entirely responsible. Fear of mine closure and significant job losses had perhaps made the community hesitant to address potential dangers.

King Charles III, then the Prince of Wales, spoke in Aberfan on the disaster's 50th anniversary, referring to the community's "darkest sorrow, but also the most shining selflessness," and the survivors' courage and



Aberfan Cemetery

determination. When considering the tragic loss of young life, their unfulfilled potential, and the desperate grief of the affected families, we must ask: Are they without hope?

Hope for the Future

God has a plan and purpose for everyone. Scripture tells us that He wants to give us "a future and a hope" (Jeremiah 29:11). Some may think those children in Aberfan have no future, no hope—that their brief existence, with all their unfulfilled dreams, came to an end that day. However, Scripture is clear that those who have died are merely asleep, awaiting a return to life (1 Thessalonians 4:13-15). Our hope should echo that of the Apostle Paul, "that there will be a resurrection of the dead" (Acts 24:15).

Revelation 20:5 tells us that after the first thousand years of Christ's reign upon the earth, the "rest of the dead" will be resurrected, and Ezekiel 37 explains that this will be a resurrection to physical life—not to immortality like the first resurrection of God's people at the end of this age. This resurrection will include the vast majority of people who have ever lived, as they never had an opportunity to truly know God (Matthew 11:21-24; John 6:44, 65;).

The precious young lives of Aberfan will have their opportunity to understand the Bible. And God says that they will *then* be judged, in His mercy, "according to their works, by the things which were written in the books" (Revelation 20:12). Considering the billions who die senseless deaths, it is comforting and inspiring to realize that their tragic ends are not final.

Almighty God, in His love and care for humanity, has tremendous plans for the children of Aberfan, all made in His image (Genesis 1:26-27). He has not forgotten them; they will live and experience abundant joy in obedience to God, and they will see their friends and classmates again. They will come to see the supreme purpose God has for all humanity and have their opportunity to genuinely accept the truth of God. This is the wonderful future hope for Aberfan's families and children.

For more on this topic, you can request printed copies of *Is This the Only Day of Salvation?* and *What Happens When You Die?*, or visit TomorrowsWorld.org to read them online.

—Simon R. D. Roberts



Dangerous “Christianity”

By **Rod McNair**

Is Christianity dangerous? The very question might seem absurd. After all, Christianity promotes loving your neighbor, turning the other cheek, and showing mercy to your enemies.

How could *that* be dangerous?

But in recent years, there has been a growing narrative that long-standing, Christian traditions are not beneficial for society—and may even be actively harmful. If you have lived a few decades, you’ve likely noticed this shift, and it has been shocking. According to this narrative, Christianity is not inclusive, compassionate, or keeping up with the times, nor is it on the “right side of history.” The list of criticisms goes on.

Yet Bible-based traditions have for centuries formed the backbone of Western civilization. Considering that Jesus Christ taught mercy, love, and consideration for our neighbors, how did Christianity become seen as the enemy? What has caused this extreme change in how the world’s most widespread religion is perceived by so many?

Cultural shifts don’t occur overnight or in a vacuum. There are reasons for the dramatic changes we’ve observed in society—and for the growing trend of hostility against Christianity. What should we make of this trend? Why is it happening? And, more importantly, what should we do about it? The answers are not obvious—but they *are* biblical.

Rising Persecution

Though some consider Christianity to be dangerous, there’s no question that Christianity itself is under attack. Around 2.5 billion people worldwide call themselves Christians, and 365 million of them live in nations where they experience “high levels of persecution or discrimination,” according to *Christianity*

Today (“The 50 Countries Where It’s Hardest to Follow Jesus in 2024,” January 17, 2024).

It’s easy to disregard this if we live comfortably in the Western world, far removed from such persecution, enjoying much more freedom. But there are signs that those freedoms are eroding, even in the West—and greater persecution may well be on the horizon.

In Canada, some lawmakers are pushing legislation that would redefine hate speech more loosely than ever before. In Scotland, such legislation has already been passed. In Finland, a Member of Parliament, Päivi Räsänen, was taken to trial in 2022 for a “hate crime” related to the Bible. Ms. Räsänen was charged with making derogatory comments toward homosexuals by quoting Romans 1:24–27. Yet she was simply expressing what the Bible says. The Bible *itself* is being put on trial.

This should concern all who consider themselves Christians. *ReligiousFreedomInstitute.org* summed it up well: “The Räsänen prosecution did nothing more than draw a logical conclusion from the ideological shift that has occurred in the course of recent decades, not just in Finland but also in the United States, Canada, and the rest of Western Europe. In today’s West... now that this type of instinctive secularist progressivism has become the cultural norm, Romans 1:24-27 *is* hate speech” (“The Bible as Hate Speech?,” April 1, 2022).

So, what should you do if society is labeling your belief system as dangerous, and it’s becoming more dangerous for you to practice it? Let’s explore three actions we can and should take as the world’s hostility to biblical values continues to grow.

Live by the Word of God

This might seem overly simplistic, but don’t overlook the obvious; make sure you are living by the Bible and living like a Christian. That means getting our spir-

itual houses in order, so to speak. The Apostle Peter explained this in his first recorded letter:

If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people’s matters. Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter (1 Peter 4:14–16).

Merely calling oneself “Christian” doesn’t make it so, as we see in so much “Christian” conduct (see Matthew 7:21). Researcher George Barna found that “biblical worldview incidence in the United States has declined for five consecutive generations, and during that time the number of adults holding a biblical worldview has plummeted from 12% to today’s 4% level. And this shift among younger generations is ushering in a ‘new morality’ now embraced by the majority of all American adults” (“CRC Study Shows Younger Generations Reject Biblical Worldview, Ushering in ‘New Morality,’” *Arizona Christian University*, May 28, 2024).

This is not a new problem. A century ago, Professor Rufus M. Jones wrote, “If by any chance Christ Himself had been taken by His later followers as the model and pattern of the new way, and a serious attempt had been made to set up His life and teaching as the standard and norm for the Church, Christianity would have been something vastly different from what it became” (*The Church’s Debt to Heretics*, 1924, pp. 15–16). And nineteenth-century philosopher and theologian Søren Kierkegaard put it more bluntly: “The Christianity of the New Testament simply does not exist” (*Kierkegaard’s Attack Upon “Christendom,”* translated by Walter Lowrie, 1946, pp. 32–33). Put simply, Jesus’ teachings have been watered down with falsehoods and compromises over the centuries.

So, if Christianity is dangerous, toxic, and debilitating, you might think its enemies would be relieved that very few actually practice it. Yet Christians are facing dangerous times that will become more dangerous still. We shouldn’t be surprised by this; Jesus Christ even warned His disciples about

how to handle such times: “Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, ‘Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?’ And Jesus answered and said to them: ‘Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, “I am the Christ,” and will deceive many”’ (Matthew 24:3–5)

It can be easy to read right over that, but Jesus said that many would come *in His name*—professing faith in Him and even claiming Him as their Lord—but would “deceive many.” We must understand that many who use Christ’s name are not His true followers. We must be able to recognize *false* Christianity.

Why is this so important? Because there are a lot of fake Christians in our world today. If we truly want to be Christ’s disciples, we must find out what the Bible says and align our lives with it. Christ told His disciples, “I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18). In other words, Jesus Christ’s Church, the one He Himself built, will *never* die out, even if the majority of self-identified “Christians” are not following Him.

So, has Jesus left us any instructions on what true Christians should do when the world around them derides their faith as dangerous? He does, and one of those instructions is very hard for most to accept: Christians are not to entangle themselves in the politics of this world.

Don’t Put Faith in Politics

When politicians strive to trample on your religious freedoms, it may be tempting to fight back and seek a political solution. Particularly in the U.S., some are turning to what they call “Christian Nationalism.” The movement is diverse and hard to narrow to one definition, though *Christianity Today* offers this: “Christian nationalism is the belief that the American nation is defined by Christianity, and that the government should take active steps to keep it that way” (“What Is Christian Nationalism?,” February 3, 2021).

Should followers of Jesus Christ support Christian Nationalism? If you watch the news, you know the bad press that Christianity is getting from many quarters. Yet some politicians are proclaiming that their Christianity and their political views are not just compatible—they are inseparable. When Josh

Hawley, Republican senator from Missouri, told fellow conservatives of his Christian Nationalist beliefs, he ignited a firestorm. “Some will say now that I am calling America a Christian nation,” he said. “And so I am. And some will say that I am advocating Christian Nationalism. And so I do.... my question is, is there any other kind worth having?” (“Josh Hawley Doubles Down on Christian Nationalism Remarks,” *Newsweek*, July 10, 2024).

Opponents quickly pointed to the famous Treaty of Tripoli, signed in 1797 by President John Adams, which stated, “The government of the United States of America is not, in any sense, founded on the Christian Religion.” Interestingly, that phrase is not found in the Arabic translation of the treaty, making it hard to explain away as an attempt to appease the North African Muslims with whom the treaty was signed. Almost from the very beginning of the U.S., parties have contended back and forth as to whether or not their nation is supposed to be a “Christian” one.

If you are concerned about the rights of sincere Christians being trampled on and you lament the erosion of biblical values in society, you might understandably feel a kinship with those trying to fight back against this avalanche. You might even want to get involved politically. But ask yourself—does God want you to put your faith in political movements? We are grateful for any leaders in our governments who support biblical values—but will political movements truly solve our problems? *Of course not.*

Jesus Christ faced immense pressure to fight back against the political forces of His time. But notice what He said when questioned by the Roman governor Pontius Pilate: “Jesus answered, ‘My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here’” (John 18:36). God doesn’t want us to get involved in the political disputes of this world. He doesn’t want us to fight our adversaries physically or politically.

This brings us to an irony behind the strongest aims of “Christian Nationalism.” While some argue that the machinery of the nation should be politically seized to make the country more “Christian,” Jesus’ *own instruction and approach* tells us *not* to get involved in such worldly struggles. The “Christianity” of those advocates differs markedly from their Savior’s!

A Prophesied “Christian” Political Power?

Yet, Bible prophecy *does* reveal that a similar but deceptive movement will rise in the world at the close of this age. It will be led by a charismatic leader from Europe, portrayed as a savior and defender of Christian values—and he will sway billions to his false cause. Notice how Scripture describes this leader: “Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon” (Revelation 13:11).

This false religious leader will claim to be Christian, having “two horns like a lamb”—a symbol of Jesus. But he will speak like a dragon—Satan the Devil (see Revelation 12:9). His words and teachings will *not* align with the Bible.

What will this leader do? We find that he “performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do.... He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads” (Revelation 13:13–16).

According to Mark’s account of Jesus’ Olivet Prophecy, this worldwide deception will be great enough “to deceive, if possible, even the elect” (Mark 13:22). This will be an extremely dangerous time for genuine Christians—the most dangerous time in all of history.

John also describes this counterfeit religious system as a woman sitting on a beast. Scripture often uses a woman to symbolize a church. Notice:

I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication. And on her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus (Revelation 17:3–6).

Counterfeit Christianity *is* dangerous—it will put true servants of God to death, take away religious freedom, and compel obedience by force. Its false prophet, in league with a political and military leader Scripture calls “the beast,” will bring unprecedented suffering to our world.

Notice what John wrote later: “And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army” (Revelation 19:19). This alliance between church and state will literally wage war against the returning Christ—but it will be no match

Revelation provides a behind-the-scenes preview of a cosmic war yet to come, when Satan the Devil will fight against God Himself. “And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail.... So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him” (Revelation 12:7–9).

Remember that the counterfeit church, which will deceive billions, will be influenced by the dragon. This is why so many Christians in the last days

JESUS SAID THAT MANY WOULD COME IN HIS NAME—PROFESSING FAITH IN HIM AND EVEN CLAIMING HIM AS THEIR LORD—BUT WOULD “DECEIVE MANY.” WE MUST UNDERSTAND THAT MANY WHO USE CHRIST’S NAME ARE NOT HIS TRUE FOLLOWERS. WE MUST BE ABLE TO RECOGNIZE FALSE CHRISTIANITY.

are Christians in name only: They have been deceived into accepting a counterfeit religion. God’s people have long faced temptation to turn away from God’s true ways and accept human-devised solutions to problems that only their

for Him. The One who sits on the horse, Jesus Christ, will return in glory and power to quash this rebellion, as John recorded: “Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone” (Revelation 19:20).

As society becomes ever more hostile to *true* Christianity, Christ’s true followers will find themselves living in increasingly dangerous times. So, what should we do? We must completely align our lives with Christ in every way—and, in doing so, *refuse* to be involved in political movements.

Let Christ Be Our Protector

As mentioned, the Book of Revelation uses a harlot woman to symbolize a counterfeit church at the end of this age. Yet it also uses the image of a chaste and pure woman to depict God’s faithful, true Church. What does it say about that Church?

Lord can truly resolve, as discussed in our article “The Leaders We Deserve” on page 5 of this issue.

But those who truly follow Christ will be protected from destruction and devastation. God will offer them protection on earth in a place of safety. “Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male Child. But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent” (Revelation 12:13–14).

Will Christians “Fly Away”?

Some mistakenly think Scripture describes a “rapture” of the Church—but it plainly describes a flight to a “wilderness.” And Heaven is *not* a wilderness. The Israelites came out of Egypt “on eagles’ wings” (Exodus 19:4), and since they *walked* out of Egypt, we know that this symbolizes God providing their way of escape—and He will do the same as He rescues end-time Christians.

Those who will be protected from the wrath of Satan the Devil will be those who persevere faithfully in fulfilling Jesus Christ’s commission at the end of this age. John recounted Christ’s message for His most faithful followers:

I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name.... Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown (Revelation 3:8–11).

If we are true followers of Christ, if we obey His commandments—all ten of them—and are covered with the blood of His sacrifice and led by His Holy Spirit, He promises to take care of us. But to be under His protection then, we must let Him be our Lord and Master now. We must trust Him and give our lives to Him.

Notice what the prophet Jeremiah wrote: “Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart departs from the LORD.... Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, and whose hope is the LORD. For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, which spreads out its roots by the river, and will not fear when heat comes” (Jeremiah 17:5, 7–8).

Our full trust must be in our Savior, Jesus Christ. He is our Rock, our Protector, and our Savior. King David, a man after God’s own heart, recognized this, writing, “I will love You, O LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised; so shall I be saved from my enemies” (Psalm 18:1–3).

How grateful we should be for having a faithful and loving High Priest! Christ, our Rock, is our


strength—and internalizing this truth will be crucial as times become more difficult in the days and years ahead.

Sincerity of belief is not enough. We must base our belief on Scripture. Satan is real, and he is the great counterfeiter. He is the cause of the confusion we find throughout modern, mainstream “Christianity,” and he will cause the mayhem and destruction that is coming. But true Christians can be assured of protection under the care of Almighty God.

Embrace Genuine Christianity

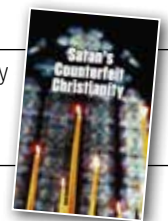
Increasing numbers of people today are calling Christianity dangerous. But we must distinguish between true and false Christianity. False Christianity *is* genuinely dangerous—and will bring the world to the brink of destruction. The *true* Christianity of Jesus Christ and the Bible is the only real hope for our world. It teaches us that Jesus Christ will return, set His feet on this earth, and rule as King of kings, bringing the peace and prosperity we desperately need.

While there are many false Christians in the world around us, our duty is to *genuinely* follow Christ. We may suffer persecution for doing so, but He will guide and protect us if we obey Him and put our faith and trust in Him. And we will not be deceived when a powerful counterfeit religious leader rises in Europe—calling himself a Christian but allying himself with an evil political leader Scripture calls “the beast.” Though this coming false leader will even perform signs and wonders, Jesus’ true followers will not be deceived.

Jesus Christ promises to help His faithful and zealous servants. As David said, He is our Rock, our fortress, our high tower. He is our protection—and we need His protection more than ever, because counterfeit Christianity *is* dangerous and will become even more so as we approach the end of this age. We must be alert and awake to not fall prey to it. We must embrace genuine Christianity with all our hearts, anticipating the true hope for our world—the promise of Christ’s soon-coming millennial reign on earth. May God speed that day. 

MAY WE
SUGGEST?

Satan’s Counterfeit Christianity Many have unknowingly accepted false religious ideas that they now take for granted. Have you? Request this **free** printed booklet from the Regional Office nearest you, or order at TomorrowsWorld.org. PDF, ePub, and Kindle are also available.





THE Works OF HIS HANDS

Larynx, Language, and *Logos*

Have you ever tried to imagine what your life would be like if you had never learned a language? I don't mean a second language. What would your mental world be like if you did not speak *any* language? We see that many animals use forms of non-verbal communication. But while some zoologists will point to rudimentary forms of oral communication in various species, there is something very different about human speech and the way human beings form words into languages.

Much of that difference arises from the unique physical makeup of the human body—and our physical differences from animals lay the groundwork for other vital differences that set us apart from the rest of God's creation.

Thinking Out of the Voice Box

The human larynx, sometimes called the voice box, is a tube containing our vocal cords; it regulates our breathing, swallowing, and talking. Composed of cartilage, ligaments, muscles, and a mucous membrane, it prevents food from entering our trachea when we eat, and it affects the pitch of our voice—a large larynx corresponds to a deeper voice. The malady we call *laryngitis*, typically thought of as a greatly reduced ability to speak, is the inflammation of the larynx.

This remarkable segment of our respiratory tract is a controversial topic among evolutionists, many of whom believe it is evidence of random evolutionary development. Evolutionist Richard Dawkins suggests that the human larynx has become “a mess, unlike the tidily symmetrical, serial repetitiveness” of what he believes was its ancestor in fish (*The Greatest Show on Earth*, p. 360). He

points to the fact that, in humans, the laryngeal nerve is about seven times longer than it would be if it followed the most direct route between brain and throat. However, the nerve in humans serves more purposes on its circuitous route than does the simpler, shorter nerve in fish.

Primates, unsurprisingly, differ from other mammals—and the human larynx further differs from that of other primates in a vital and surprising way. It lacks the vocal membrane found in other primates, and it also lacks the air sacs that help many species of apes bellow out their booming calls. This is a conundrum for evolutionists—could the evolutionary gain of the vocal membrane have *benefitted* evolving primates, only for its *loss* to somehow afford *additional* benefit?

Yet the lack of the vocal membrane is not by itself sufficient to allow human speech. The human tongue is connected in the throat in a different way than we find in primates, and its shape also facilitates the use of the voice box to make a variety of controlled sounds far more precise and distinct than the shouts and shrieks of animals.

Evolutionists offer their explanations for each individual difference between humans and animals, but all of the differences together raise the problem of sheer mathematical and statistical improbability. Much more could be said on this point; to learn more about the illogic behind so much of evolutionary theory, please read our informative booklet *Evolution and Creation: What Both Sides Miss*. You can read it online at TomorrowsWorld.org or order your own free printed copy.

The Way We Use Words

Of course, having the physical capacity for speech does not guarantee our ability to use it. From time to

time, scientists and other researchers have encountered children who spent their early lives deprived of the human contact that would teach them to use language. In the 1970s, the case of Genie Wiley gained international attention after she was rescued at age 13 from an abusive home in which she had been locked alone in a room for nearly twelve years. Though tests

In humans, the laryngeal nerve is about seven times longer than it would be if it followed the most direct route between brain and throat. However, the nerve in humans serves more purposes on its circuitous route than does the simpler, shorter nerve in fish.

found Genie quite skilled at non-verbal communication and spatial recognition, her isolation had prevented her from developing language skills. Teachers and researchers managed to expand her vocabulary, but grammar—the way we connect words to express complex thoughts—eluded her.

And, despite much misleading media coverage, we find the same in scientific studies of apes, young or old, taught to use sign language—they may accumulate a vocabulary of signs, but grammar is beyond them. Human language is much more than using nouns to describe things and verbs to describe actions; it includes adjectives and adverbs to describe those nouns and verbs, and it gives us past and future tense. A porpoise or a bird can use sounds to communicate

“I’m here” or “I’m hungry” to others of its kind, but it cannot say, “I was hungry yesterday but will not be hungry tomorrow.”

Human beings are unique as what philosopher Alfred Korzybski called “time-binding” creatures. Plants are what he called “chemical-binders” in that they process chemicals to survive and thrive. Animals are both chemical-binders and “territory-binders,” as—unlike stationary plants—they move within their territories to survive. Only human beings are what Korzybski called “time-binders.” Not only can we speak to younger people to pass forward our knowledge, we can also speak of the past and the future. Today’s coyote crowded out of its territory by devel-

opers building a new subdivision cannot directly share its experience with coyotes that will live a hundred years from now. Human beings, however, have the capacity to understand our past, apply its lessons to our present, and both speak and write for the benefit of future generations. Without words, and without the grammar we use to connect them, this would be impossible. Human developments of vastly differing cultures and lifestyles over time and around the world testify to the power of human language.

And there is more. We know from God’s word that the difference between apes and humans is more than physical—more than just the roughly 2 percent of DNA that separates us. Scripture tells us that there is a “spirit in man” (Job 32:8). This spirit sets us apart from all other creatures—and enables us to receive God’s Spirit (Romans 8:16).

The Word Made Flesh

Before He was born on the earth as the Son of God, Jesus Christ, that divine Being was known as the *Logos*—Greek for *Word* or *Spokesman*. He was the God with whom the Israelites interacted throughout the Old Testament, and He later came as the Spokesman for His Father to reveal that Father to humankind. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1).

When God gave the Holy Spirit to the first Christians at Pentecost in AD 31, He used it to give them words that were *understood* by their hearers. The gathered crowd of people, some of whom had called for Christ’s crucifixion only weeks earlier, heard the word of God in their own languages (Acts 2:6-11). The miracle of Pentecost was not the ability to interpret babble—it was a miracle of hearing with understanding that led many to repentance and baptism (vv. 41-42).

Sadly, human speech can also draw people away from God. Animals can try to deceive each other by making noises, but only human beings are able to use words to tell lies. Human language can be—and often is—used destructively. Let us each, as faithful Christians, heed not the divisive words of mankind, but instead heed the words of Jesus Christ: “He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day” (John 12:48).

—William Bowmer

Why the New King James Version?

By **Wallace G. Smith**

Careful readers may notice that while *Tomorrow's World* uses many different Bible translations in our materials, we most commonly use the *New King James Version (NKJV)*. Occasionally we receive questions about why this is so and why we do not use other popular versions, such as the *New International Version (NIV)*, beyond occasional references. A look into the history of Bible translations in English—and the inherent challenge of translating the Bible from its original languages—helps to illuminate the answer to these questions.

Jesus Christ explicitly promised that His words would not pass away (Matthew 24:35), and such promises apply to the *entirety* of God's inspired word (Isaiah 40:8). So, we at *Tomorrow's World* believe that, in their original writing (often called the *autograph*), the words recorded by the biblical authors were inerrant—written under God's inspiration through the Holy Spirit and completely true and reliable (2 Peter 1:20–21; Proverbs 30:5; 2 Timothy 3:16–17).

Yet studying that word in our modern day involves multiple challenges. One is the human chain of transmission; as copies multiplied over the centuries, errors and omissions crept in. A great deal of scholarship has been devoted to determining the true words among the different variations that have been passed down through the years. Thankfully, those “variations” change very little of the meaning—so the vast

majority of the Bible's message is utterly untouched by the small differences in the various copies. God's word has, indeed, been faithfully preserved.

But God does not promise anywhere that translations of His inspired original words would be perfect—in fact, because languages are rich, are complex, and change over the centuries, it is essentially impossible to translate perfectly all the words of one language into another. And the different cultures behind the languages have great effect as well. Consider how the modern English phrase “It's raining cats and dogs,” or the modern Spanish idiom “*Hablar sin pelos en la lengua*”—“To speak without hairs on your tongue”—would seem to a first-century reader. Even when clear words can be found, translators must sometimes choose whether to communicate the *literal words* or the *literal meaning* of the original text.

The “Old” King James Version

Understanding a bit about the “old” *King James Version*, sometimes called the “Authorized Version,” will help illustrate why we tend to use the *New King James Version*. Completed in 1611 and revised in the 1700s, the *King James Version* is still one of the most popular Bibles in the English-speaking world today. It is *not* perfect—indeed, as mentioned, no translation is—but it was a remarkable work for its time.

Working more than 400 years ago, the researchers and translators of the *King James Version (KJV)* took an admirable approach. First, they sought “formal equivalence” in their translation. That is, while

some seek to paraphrase the ancient languages to communicate the *meaning* but greatly change the *words* in doing so, the *KJV* translators sought to create as close to a word-for-word translation as they could. While this might make some phrases confusing in English, they considered that the reader is best served by a translation as close as possible to the original inspired words, rather than a translator's interpretation of the words' meaning—though, of course, some level of interpretation is often unavoidable.

Second, the translators went back to the most authoritative and trustworthy copies of the original Greek and Hebrew resources they could find: Erasmus' sixteenth-century Greek New Testament and the Hebrew Masoretic Text of the Old Testament. While they often kept the language of older English versions (the *Bishop's Bible*, the *Geneva Bible*, and others), they diligently compared those works to Greek and Hebrew resources—as well as to their copies of the ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament, called the Septuagint, and to their copies of the fourth-century Latin Vulgate translation. Faithfulness to the original languages was a driving goal.

Finally, the translators also sought to create a *beautiful* work. Many today assume that the *thee's*, *thou's*, and *ye's* of the *KJV* are remnants from the days of its translation. Actually, those words were *already* archaic by 1611; yet the translators saw not only that they added a sense of majesty and “high language” to the text, but also that they helped make a grammatical distinction no longer present in English. “You” in English can be singular or plural, while Greek uses different words for the singular and plural “you.” By using “thee” for the singular and reserving “you” for the plural, the *KJV* translators added elegance and increased grammatical clarity. (Read Luke 22:31–32 in the *KJV* to see the difference.)

Yet the *KJV* is not without problems that have confused many over the years. As just one example, it translates the Greek word for “Passover” as “Easter” in Acts 12:4—an error corrected in many later translations. And other *KJV* mistakes have been revealed by later archaeological discoveries that shed new light on Scripture's ancient languages. For example, 1 Kings 10:22 in the *KJV* mentions “peacocks,” translated from the Hebrew word *tûkkîy*. Since then, more has been learned about ancient Hebrew and other

Semitic languages, and we now know that the word means “monkeys.”

While the remarkable *KJV* translation continues to be helpful today, we now have the benefit of an additional 400 years of research and discovery that was unavailable to the translators in 1611 and later editors. And the English language has changed in many ways in the last 400 years, causing some words to disappear from usage and—even more challenging—causing other words to change meaning.

Consider that you might pick up a *KJV* translation and read John 2:6, where you will see a reference to pots big enough to contain “two or three firkins” of water. But who today knows how large a “firkin” is? Similarly, 2 Chronicles 11:12 speaks of “every several city” and 2 Chronicles 26:21 says King Uzziah lived “in a several house.” How many people today would know that these mean “every individual city” and “an isolated house”? And while the *KJV* may speak of “ouches of gold” (which sounds painful), a modern reader may not realize that it is speaking of “settings of gold.”

A more challenging case of words remaining in English but changing in meaning can be illustrated by 1 Thessalonians 4:15. There, in the *KJV*, we read that those who are alive at Christ's return shall not “prevent” those who are asleep from rising. Is Paul saying that the living won't somehow “stop” the dead from being resurrected? No. The meaning of the word “prevent” has shifted in 400 years. In modern English, we would say that those who are alive will not “precede” or “come before” them.

These are just a few examples, but they should be enough to illustrate that, as remarkable as the “old” *King James Version* is, the passage of centuries meant it could benefit from an update.

Enter the New King James Version

The translators and editors of the *New King James Version*, published in full in 1982 with a handful of revisions in later years, sought to maintain the accuracy, beauty, and clarity of the “old” *King James Version* while updating it based on the latest scholarship and modern language usage.

As a result, readers familiar with the *KJV* will often recognize wording in the *NKJV*, but will also find the *NKJV* easier to read as well as more accurate. In their work to update the *KJV* text and take advantage

of the best of modern scholarship, the translators and editors of the *NKJV* also sought to avoid some of the mistaken philosophies that tend to cause issues in other modern translations, such as the *NIV*.

For example, some modern translations lean very heavily on ancient Greek texts often called the “Alexandrian texts,” such as the *Codex Sinaiticus* and *Codex Vaticanus*. These manuscripts are among the oldest large collections of New Testament text, but are also problematic, showing signs of errors and poor editing. The *Codex Vaticanus* even attests to the frustration scribes felt toward their fellow workers, who were apparently not following older texts; in a margin note next to Hebrews 1:3, a scribe admonishes a coworker, “Fool and knave, leave the old reading and do not change it!”

Another grave problem with the *Codex Vaticanus* is its complete omission of the last twelve verses of Mark’s gospel, thus removing Jesus’ post-resurrection appearances. Some modern scholars have taken this to mean that verses 9–20 of Mark 16 were not originally part of the Bible. Yet, if one looks closely at the pages on which the *Codex Vaticanus* was written, one will see that there is a completely blank column where those verses are supposed to be—the only blank column in the entire codex—at a time when vellum, the material on which these ancient works were written, was expensive and never wasted. Serious scholars have concluded that the scribe intended to write the rest of Mark there, but never did.

Even so, while most of the more modern translations lean too heavily on them, the Alexandrian texts still have some value. Occasionally, they get something right that the Textus Receptus or the Byzantine texts—the primary sources for the *KJV*—got wrong. The *NKJV* addresses these occasions by providing detailed notes on its pages, pointing out when different ancient texts give different readings. This helps to give Bible students *more* information, not less.

And the *NKJV* also avoids many modern translations’ tendency to over-interpret the ancient text. Like the “old” *KJV*, the *NKJV* leans more toward a “word-for-word” approach instead of a “paraphrase” approach, which helps to protect against translator bias.

Still, we must always remember that there is *no* perfect translation—not the *KJV*, and not the *NKJV*. While the *NKJV* fixes some errors of the *KJV*, it retains others such as the *Comma Johanneum*—incorrect words ancient copyists added to 1 John 5:7–8 to support the idea of a Trinity. Both the *KJV* and the *NKJV* retain those uninspired words (though the *NKJV*, to its credit, footnotes them as problematic), while the *NIV* is among those that correctly omit them.

And the *NKJV* introduces a few of its own new mistakes or confusions. For instance, Galatians 2:20 in the *KJV* correctly tells that it is “by the faith of the Son of God” that we live—that is, the very faith Christ had within Him—while the *NKJV* says it is “by faith *in* the Son of God.” A subtle but important difference!

One Inspired Word, Many Translations

Relying on one main version in our publications—whether the *New King James Version* in English, the *Reina Valera* in Spanish, or the *Louis Segond Le Sainte Bible* in French—helps ensure that we communicate the teachings of Scripture in a consistent, orderly manner that is easy for our readers to investigate and verify. And the *New King James Version* is certainly a solid translation in English: readable, highly accurate, based on sound translation principles and scholarship, and offering additional notes and comments to help students get the most out of their study.

Even so, because there is no perfect translation, *Tomorrow’s World* will occasionally cite a different version that either translates a particular verse more accurately than the *NKJV* or more clearly communicates the sense of a passage. In doing so, we follow the pattern of the Apostles and other writers of the New Testament. Those writers, when quoting the Old Testament, would sometimes use Hebrew-language copies of their day, sometimes use the Greek Septuagint, and sometimes even paraphrase the Old Testament in their own way as they were led by the Holy Spirit.

Regardless of the translation we use in our materials—whether the *NKJV* or any other—our goal is always the same: to make the truth of God plainly understood. TW

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The Bible: Fact or Fiction? Is the Bible still relevant to our modern world? Find out why it’s actually more relevant than ever. Request this **free** printed booklet from the Regional Office nearest you, or order at TomorrowsWorld.org. PDF, ePub, and Kindle are also available.



OLYMPIC ABOMINATIONS

What does God think of such “freedom”?

The 2024 Paris Olympics opening ceremony has been widely criticized by many who still hold to high standards of dignity, decency, modesty, and other biblical values. Here is how one review described it:

Paris didn’t just push the envelope. It did away with it entirely as it hammered home a message that freedom must know no bounds. A practically naked singer painted blue made thinly veiled references to his body parts. Blonde-bearded drag queen Piche crawled on all fours to the thumping beat of “Freed from Desire” by singer-songwriter Gala, who has long been a potent voice against homophobia. There were the beginnings of a menage à trois [a sexual encounter between three people]... and the tail end of an intimate embrace between two men who danced away, hugging and holding hands (*AP News*, July 29, 2024).

That brief summary doesn’t cover other details, such as the many other drag queens showcased, the grotesque depiction of Marie Antoinette singing while holding her own severed head, and the performances given by Celine Dion and Lady Gaga, touted as “queer icons.” Note how the reviewer admires the ceremony’s celebration of “freedom”—twisting a treasured Western value into a repudiation of long-standing biblical values of purity, chastity, innocence, self-control, family, marriage, modesty, and decency.

By the way, the main event being celebrated was the Olympics, right? Wasn’t it possible to leave out sexual perversion and just focus on the *athletes* and the *sports*?

A God Who Excludes Sin

The director of the ceremony, a self-described homosexual man, described some of his goals: “The idea was instead to have a grand pagan festival connected to the gods of Olympus,” he said. “Most of all, I wanted to send a message of love, a message of inclusion and not at all to divide.”

Paris’ Olympics ceremony provides a lurid example of how readily Western societies today push values they call love, inclusion, diversity, tolerance, and freedom. Their overarching thoughts can be summarized as, “Everyone can do whatever they want. The only boundary is that boundaries must not be set.” This attitude is nothing new—in fact, it has been quite common throughout history. For instance, ancient Israel was once characterized with this statement: “everyone did what was right in his own eyes” (Judges 21:25)—as opposed to what was right in God’s eyes. God distinguishes right from wrong, specifically by setting boundaries that the Bible describes in great detail, as we have explained often in this magazine (see “The War Against Normal” in our January 2023 issue).

Where sin is concerned, the true God is a God of *exclusion*. The Bible expresses repeatedly that God, in His eternal Kingdom, will categorically exclude every form of sin, many forms of which were celebrated in Paris’ opening ceremony. And, not only will God *exclude* sinful *behavior* from His Kingdom—He will exclude *people* who are not willing to repent of such behavior, “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, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Corinthians 6:9–10).

It is important to note that these verses do not just focus on homosexuality, “drag queens,” or other behavior in “LGBTQIA+.” They also condemn sins that heterosexuals can commit just as easily, like adultery and fornication, as well as non-sexual sins such as idolatry, covetousness, theft, and drunkenness.

The book of Revelation gives much detail about the wrath of Almighty God, which will one day be poured upon mankind (Revelation 6:16; 11:18; 14:10, 19; 15:1). Until then, sincere Christians must “sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done” (Ezekiel 9:4), while striving to deliver one of the Bible’s central messages: Turn from wickedness to righteousness.

—Josh Lyons

New Techniques in Archaeology Support the Bible

According to critics, the Bible is full of far-fetched stories. Yet, over time, evidence continues to emerge that substantiates biblical narratives. One such account is recorded in 2 Kings 19, which recounts that Jerusalem was surrounded by the massive army of Assyrian king Sennacherib. The king's commander sent a letter to Hezekiah, the king of Judah, demanding that he surrender peacefully. Instead of surrendering, Hezekiah prayed and laid the threatening letter before God. According to this biblical account, that night an angel of the Lord went through the camp of the Assyrians and killed 185,000 soldiers. The next day, Sennacherib departed, along with whatever was left of his army.

Those who have considered this a far-fetched story may now find it more believable, thanks to fresh archaeological evidence. *Archaeology News* reports that an independent Near East archaeologist, Stephen Compton by name, using “modern mapping techniques,” believes he has located remnants of “the Assyrian military base described in these biblical stories” (June 19, 2024). This base was located about 40 miles south of Jerusalem. Mr. Compton also located other ancient Assyrian fortifications closer to the city. As the article notes, “While the archaeological evidence discovered by Compton does not confirm

the supernatural aspects of the biblical narrative, it does provide compelling support for the historical presence of Assyrian military forces near Jerusalem during Sennacherib's reign.”

It is interesting how easily critics dismiss historical records in the Bible if there is no *current* evidence to support them. However, as time passes, more and more seemingly implausible Bible stories gain support from new discoveries in history and archaeology.

“Gender-Affirming” Therapies Ineffective and Unnecessary

The transgender movement is heavily backed by aggressive activists, media outlets, and politicians. Promoters claim that so-called “gender-affirming therapy” saves lives and makes people happier. However, a growing body of research suggests just the opposite. While European nations are moving away from such therapies, America pushes ahead, ignoring research that does not agree with the current political and ideological trends.

The *Washington Times* reported, “A landmark Dutch study found that most adolescents ultimately outgrow their gender confusion” (April 8, 2024). The study followed more than 2,700 adolescents for 15 years. The findings revealed that while discomfort with one's gender is not particularly uncommon among teens, most grow out of this condition as they age, and

it “appears to be associated with a poorer self-concept and mental health throughout development.”

Researchers warn doctors to avoid being quick to treat adolescent gender dysphoria medically and to be sure to assess the developmental issues involved. One ethicist has noted, “Indeed, we can infer from the DSM 5 [2013] and other sources that as many as 88 percent of gender-dysphoric girls and as many as 98 percent of gender-dysphoric boys in previous generations desisted if allowed to go through natural puberty” (*Daily Mail*, April 5, 2024). In England, another landmark report was just published by the National Health Service (NHS). *The Cass Review* made 32 recommendations after an in-depth review of the research. Among the review's findings, no strong scientific rationale was found to support the use of puberty blockers, and evidence of their benefits concerning gender dysphoria, mental health, or psychosocial health was weak.

The team noted the utter lack of long-term follow-up data regarding the impact of gender hormones on young patients, as well as the inability of doctors to determine which youth will simply grow out of their gender dysphoria and which will not. “For most young people,” the report concludes, “a medical pathway will not be the best way to manage their gender-related distress.” UK gender clinics

stopped routinely prescribing puberty blockers in March 2024 due to a lack of evidence of their effectiveness (*BBC*, March 12, 2024).

While evidence supporting the success of “gender-affirming” treatments is lacking, evidence of their danger is mounting. Yet criticism of this current medical fad is often viewed as bigoted and misinformed, especially in the U.S. We live in a time when the “whole head is sick” (Isaiah 1:5) and this warning from God is very salient: “Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil” (Isaiah 5:20). May God quickly bring the day when Jesus Christ will restore all things that are good, right, and true (Acts 3:19–21).

DNA for Sale?

As the end of the age draws closer, real life seems to meld with science fiction—today's realities are becoming like scenes out of a dystopian movie or political espionage novel. Over the last two decades, the field of genetics has experienced monumental advances. Scientists are learning how to turn genes on and off and how to program organisms in the language of genetics. In their work, some scientists buy and sell the genetic sequences of various bacteria and viruses.

At first glance, this may seem both interesting and exciting, because it might lead to incredible scientific advances. Many presume that, given the high potential for danger, such

research is strictly and safely regulated. However, health and medicine news source *STAT* reports that a research team from the prestigious Massachusetts Institute of Technology, in cooperation with the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, tested the effectiveness of current controls by attempting to purchase “gene-length DNA fragments that could be used to generate the 1918 influenza virus, which killed more than 50 million people” (May 8, 2024). The team took minimal steps to mask their identity. They even requested to have genetic material sent to non-laboratory locations. Of 38 providers contacted, 36 shipped the genetic material for the 1918 flu virus. *STAT* notes, “Only one company detected a hazard and requested proof of biosafety approval.” This experiment demonstrated just how easy it would be for a rogue nation or terrorist group to obtain the genetic material needed to create a devastating bioweapon.

One of the signs of the end of the age is God’s punishment of the nations of Western civilization for their rejection of Him. God promises to “appoint terror over you,” including terrifying diseases (Leviticus 26:16). As technology increases, the tools for creating terror become more advanced and more accessible. Will genetics be among these new tools?

Is Democracy Dying in Europe?

Democracy has been hailed as the savior of civilization by many. History indicates that democracies have been wealthier and, generally, more politically stable than many other forms of government. Across Europe, democracy is seen as a fundamental value of European culture in the modern era. But the winds of change are blowing, and many do not view democracy with the respect it once held—especially European youth.

Headlines tell part of the story, as autocratic leaders are

on the rise. *Politico* has reported on a poll that highlights just how far the views of Europe’s youth diverge from those of older generations (May 21, 2024). Poll participants were asked how supportive they were of democracy versus other forms of government, such as dictatorships and military rule. The survey findings were sobering in light of the history and future of Europe. In Germany, only 38 percent of those “aged 18 and up are consistent supporters of democracy. In France, the number stands at a paltry 27 percent, while Italy and Poland clock in at less than 45 percent.” Survey results are particularly sobering when comparing young people to their parents and grandparents. “For example,” *Politico* reports, “in Germany, just 21 percent of Generation Z and millennials said they consistently support democracy compared to 66 percent of those aged 70 and up. In Poland, meanwhile, only around one quarter of 18 to 29-year-olds showed consistent support for democracy.”

What does this mean for Europe’s future? As older members of society age and die, they are being replaced by young people with more extreme perspectives. This could drastically affect future elections in Europe. Europe is changing, and so is European democracy.

Germany Prepares for War by 2029

Germany’s Defense Minister Boris Pistorius again forcefully

highlighted Germany’s need to strengthen its defense capabilities (*Deutsche Welle*, June 5, 2024). During a question period in Germany’s lower house of parliament, Pistorius stated, “We must be ready for war by 2029.” He pointed out the need for the government to back such efforts financially with materials and personnel and reiterated the possibility of reinstating compulsory military service for young Germans, saying, “In an emergency, we need strong young women and men who can defend this country.”

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz has promised to support the defense industry and has pushed for more cooperation between European defense manufacturers. Scholz announced the purchase of an additional 20 Eurofighters, and the German Defense Ministry announced the purchase of two additional frigates. Germany has also signed a defense agreement with France and Japan to jointly develop railgun technology (*Aviation Week*, May 31, 2024). This weapon is intended to be a defense against hypersonic missiles.

Currently, nations across Europe are increasing their military capabilities, updating military hardware, and developing advanced military technologies—due in part to Russia’s actions in Ukraine. Russia’s military industrial complex is in high gear, and Europe is beginning to conclude that it must not be left behind. 



LETTERS TO

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK



I've been receiving your magazines for three or four years now and just started the *Bible Study Course*! I absolutely love it! I just want to say thank you so very much! You all are a blessing for sure! Hopefully we will all meet soon in our Father's house! God bless y'all!

—Subscriber in Oklahoma

I met you [Mr. Gerald Weston] at the seminar in Statesville at the Comfort Inn at the beginning of April. I appreciate your correspondence with me by sending me booklets I had requested as well as others. I have found them to be very interesting and inspiring. Having completed the entire Lesson One of the *Bible Study Course*, I am eager to receive Lessons 5–8 along with an answer guide to accompany the first questionnaire from Lesson One. Thank you very much for your ministry and your kindness and willingness to correspond with me.

—Subscriber in North Carolina

I want to express my sincere gratitude for being one of the fortunate recipients of your *Tomorrow's World* magazine and [my] desire to receive copies in the future. Your magazine teaches me a lot about what is happening in different parts of the world. It really makes me feel knowledgeable—thanks a lot. God bless you all out there.

—Subscriber in the Philippines

I received today my Bible Study Course from the Australian office. Thanks! Very soon I will study and fill the exercise and send it back to you.

—Reader in Pakistan

Thank-you for the wonderful magazine! I also enjoy watching your YouTube presentations. The Bible studies and articles are clear and concise and I am able to understand and share what I learn with others!

—Subscriber in Minnesota

Dear *Tomorrow's World*, Thanks for all you do for the Kingdom of the LORD in the name of Jesus. And thanks for all the free magazines. They are wonderful! Keep up the good work.

—Subscriber in Texas

I have received *Tomorrow's World* magazine for some time now, and find it especially relevant and very informative. You make the Bible come to life, and explain issues with the utmost of clarity. Thank you to every one of your members who tithe, so that you can reach as many people who seek the truth about God's plans.

—Subscriber in Indiana

Erratum: On page 5 of the July-August 2024 issue, we incorrectly made reference to "George MacArthur." The name of the famous WWII general is, of course, Douglas MacArthur. We apologize for the error.

Clarification: Page 13 of the July-August 2024 issue cited Revelation 12:6 to illustrate Scripture's use of a "woman" to symbolize the Church of God. In the end-time context of the article, however, Revelation 12:14 should have been used, as it describes the Church's future 1,260-day protection in a place of safety, not its historical 1,260-year time of scattering in the "wilderness" of the world.

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P. 15 Susan Roberts

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While the world's eyes are on war in Ukraine, Scripture points to an old power to the west.

August 29–September 4

Is Jesus God?

Some say Christ was an angel or ordinary man. Who does Scripture say He is?

September 5–11

Russia, Ukraine, and Bible Prophecy

Are we witnessing the start of the final conflict before Jesus' return? You need to know!

September 12–18

Who Will Win the Battle of Armageddon?

"Armageddon" is good news if you understand what the Bible teaches about Christ's return!

September 19–25

The Problem of Evil

How can a good God have created a world filled with so much evil? You need to understand!

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