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# The Coming Intervention in the Middle East

*Blood again stains the soil of the Middle East. Neither the principals in the struggle, nor outside political or religious powers, have been able to broker a peace. Are the circumstances ripe for another power to assert itself?*

by Darris McNeely

Jesus Christ gave one unmistakable sign of the end of this age. It was that Jerusalem would be surrounded by armed forces. "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near" (Luke 21:20). He went on to say that those in Judea were to flee to the mountains. Those days will be filled with vengeance as prophecies rapidly come to pass. It will be a time of great distress as the city is occupied by foreign armies until certain times are fulfilled (verses 21-24).

Are we closer today to seeing this event fulfilled? Violence continues to erupt between the Israelis and Palestinians. At this time there are no formal talks going on, and no prominent political figure is making any serious effort to negotiate a settlement between the two sides.

Last month, the European Union was instrumental in negotiating an Israeli army pullout from Beit Jala, a predominantly Christian Palestinian suburb of Jerusalem. The deal to withdraw was brokered by the foreign ministers of Germany, France and Italy. Criticism has been leveled at the Bush administration for taking a hands-off attitude toward the current crisis. French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine accused the United States of "acting like Pontius Pilate" in seeking to remain

aloof from the crisis (*International Herald Tribune*, August 31, 2001).

### A year of tragedy

It has been a year since the latest round of heightened killings, bombings and suicide attacks were launched in what is called the *intifada*. Hundreds of Israelis and Palestinians have lost their lives during this period. All hopes of negotiated peace treaties have been dashed. It was just over a year ago, in July of 2000, that President Bill Clinton brought Israeli Prime Minister



Reuters/Gil Cohen Magen

*Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon meets with Italian Foreign Minister Renato Ruggiero, trying to restart stalled peace talks*

Ehud Barak and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat to the seclusion of Camp  
(See "MIDDLE EAST," page 3)



# World News & Prophecy

BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES ON CURRENT EVENTS

September/October 2001

Vol. 4, No. 8



# Restoration

ACTS 3:21

World News and Prophecy is published monthly by the United Church of God, an International Association, publisher of *The Good News* magazine, 5405 Dupont Circle, Suite A, Milford, OH 45150. © 2001 United Church of God, an International Association. Printed in the U.S.A. All rights reserved. Reproduction in any form without written permission is prohibited.

The mission of *World News and Prophecy* (WNP) is to provide our membership and interested persons with commentary and analysis of selected world news topics in the light of Bible prophecy. Its purpose is to help readers discern the times and increase their awareness and understanding of the answers Christ gave to His disciples' questions: "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" (Matthew 24:3).

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Scriptural references are from the New King James Version (© 1988 Thomas Nelson, Inc., Publishers) unless otherwise noted.

**Subscriptions:** *World News and Prophecy* is sent free to the members of the United Church of God, and all who request it. There is no subscription price. To request a subscription, write to *World News and Prophecy*, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027, telephone (513) 576-9796 or download it from our Web site at <http://www.ucg.org>

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**R**acism is an abhorrent evil that plagues the earth, but it will not be erased by conferences that continue to foster suspicion and mistrust. Nor will the legacy of slavery be salvaged by payments of money to any group historically exploited by another.

Earlier this month, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights held a week-long conference in Durban, South Africa. Officially, the conference was called, "The World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance." Its purpose was to discuss the deep divide in today's world caused by this scourge. Unfortunately, the conference was marred from the opening day by efforts to label Zionism in general, and Israel in particular, as racist because of Israeli treatment of Palestinians. The United States had refused to send a high level delegation because of attempts to set an agenda incompatible with American policy interests.

One of the issues addressed was that of reparations to countries and peoples who suffered in the past under slavery. This is an ongoing issue that flows from German payments to Jews for atrocities committed during the Holocaust. Many African nations and human rights leaders say that those countries which promoted and benefited from slavery and colonialism should make monetary payment to atone for their abuses.

While no one hesitates to condemn the practice of slavery, the issue of financial reparations is controversial. American Secretary of State Colin Powell, himself an African American, illustrated the complexities of the problem by asking, "Would I get compensation for slavery, or would I pay for it?" The former secretary-general of Amnesty International, Pierre Sané, says that a check cannot compensate for spilled blood. How true! It is a sign of our material-driven world to suggest that money could make restitution for all the human injustice caused by slavery.

During his second inaugural address 136 years ago, Abraham Lincoln identified the true cost of one human subjugating another. The American Civil War was winding down after four years of slaughter caused in part by the issue of slavery. Lincoln saw the judgment of God brought to the nation because of slavery.

"If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offenses which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, and that He gives to both North and South this terrible war as the woe due to those by whom the offense came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to Him? Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God will that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said 'the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.'"

Where racism exists today, it should be exposed for the evil that it is. Yet, not until the heart of mankind is transformed by the Holy Spirit of God will the evil tide of racism and intolerance be turned back from human society.

The time spoken of by Jeremiah the prophet must first come to pass. "But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people" (Jeremiah 31:33). Only then will we see a true restoration of justice, tolerance and equity among all peoples.

—Darris McNeely

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<http://www.ucg.org/articles/wnp/>

“MIDDLE EAST,” (Continued from page 1)

David in an all-out attempt to negotiate a peace between the two groups. The high hopes of that time are over for now, shattered by the deaths of so many innocent people on both sides of the conflict.

Many will remember the terrible scene of a Palestinian father caught in the crossfire between troops, trying to shield his son while crouched in a doorway. The young boy died. Then, there was the Israeli doctor, Mario Goldin, who specialized in helping relieve the pain of both Jews and Arabs. He was killed last April while visiting patients in a Palestinian-controlled area. The list of tragedies and missed opportunities goes on.

The Israeli government, under Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, has taken a tough approach toward the Palestinian Authority. Key officials in the PLO and other splinter groups have been targeted for assassination. Last month a top Palestinian leader, Mustafa Zibri, a founding member of the PLO, was killed by Israeli gunships. It had been more than a decade since any Palestinian figure of such stature had been killed.

It is clear that under Sharon, Israel has adopted a stance that the current Palestinian leadership cannot be trusted to negotiate in good faith. It was Sharon who in the early 1980s masterminded the attacks on PLO strongholds in Lebanon and drove them, for a time, from the land. Arafat was forced to board a boat to escape with his life. Clearly, the Israelis feel that a settlement can't be negotiated until there are new leaders at the head of the Palestinian movement.

### Modern imperialism

Interestingly today, nearly 20 years after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, the same two leaders, Arafat and Sharon, are again locked in an inconclusive conflict. The outcome could be different than either imagines.

On August 20, the Stratfor Global Intelligence Company issued a report on its Web site which analyzed the line of conflict stretching from the Balkans to the Caucasus to Jerusalem. The report made the connection that these areas are part of the old Ottoman Empire that collapsed after World War I

(see the accompanying article, “The Shot Still Reverberating Around the World,” page 5). Where this old empire imposed a peace upon the various peoples of these areas, there is a new effort by modern powers such as the United States and several countries of Western Europe to impose a solution to age-old ethnic conflicts.

The report speculates on three courses these conflicts might take. One is continued war without resolution. The second is the rise of a regional power, such as Serbia in the Balkans or Israel in the Middle East, which would impose a peace. The third possibility,



Reuters/Reinhard Krause

*Jesus Christ gave one unmistakable sign of the end of this age. It was that Jerusalem would be surrounded by armed forces.*

and the one which raises a connection to Bible prophecy, is that an outside power would “impose empire on the region.” The article goes on to say, “...the only option is the third option: direct intervention by an outside force intended to impose order throughout the former Ottoman Empire” (emphasis added). This is an enormous task. It is doable, but it would stretch the current military capabilities of NATO. The quantity of troops needed to impose a “pax NATO” on the former Ottoman Empire would be enormous. More importantly, the needed force would require levels of effort that would outstrip “not the capabilities, but the interests of the powers involved” (“From Skopje to Jerusalem: The American

Empire,” George Friedman, 2001, Strategic Forecasting, LLC).

History has shown that any country that places troops in the Middle East runs a grave risk of reprisal from local forces. The 1983 bombing of an American Marine barracks in Beirut is a case in point. The current political climate in America would not be inclined to commit a large number of troops as a peacekeeping force to the area. Moreover, recent experience with Iraq and Saddam Hussein casts doubt as to whether the United States could gather support for and lead another Gulf War-type coalition like that of 1990-91.

Where would a force large enough to “impose order” in today’s Middle East come from? What power would muster the political and moral will to stop the fighting between Israelis and Arabs and bring “peace” to the world’s most critical hot spot? Today the United States is the only world power large enough to even contemplate such a move. But the political risks are too great for any serious effort. Such action, if it occurs, would likely come from some other source. And this is where we need to turn to the Bible for understanding.

### Armed conflict in Jerusalem

The longest prophecy in the Bible is found in Daniel 11. Two forces iden-

tified as the king of the South and the king of the North are pictured as warring back and forth. In verse 40, we come to the “time of the end,” when

Antiochus IV (Antiochus Epiphanes) desecrated the temple in Jerusalem by offering swine’s flesh upon an altar dedicated to the pagan deity Jupiter

called the “man of sin” and the “son of perdition” is described in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4. He “opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.” This parallels the second beast of Revelation 13, a religious figure who causes those who will not worship the first beast to be put to death. Antiochus, who brought the first abomination, is a type, or forerunner, of this final grand fulfillment of the abomination of desolation.

The Scriptures show there will be an intervention by an outside power that will impose a “peace” upon the volatile and seemingly unending strife surrounding Jerusalem and the ancient Holy Land. From the roots of the ancient Roman Empire will spring a revived system, which will play a significant role on the stage of prophesied world events. The growing influence of the European Union could develop into a power unlike any seen in past history. In time, with the roles reversed, we could see this alignment of nations develop into a force with which all countries will have to deal.

Along with this political power will come a religious presence that will add a spiritual dimension to its authority and influence. It will be a force unlike any the world will ever have seen. For more information on these prophecies, send for our booklets, *The Book of Revelation Unveiled* and *You Can Understand Bible Prophecy*.

The past year has seen a sustained escalation of conflict in the Middle East between the Jews and Palestinians. For now and perhaps for the foreseeable future, past treaties and understandings are off the table as Israel asserts its intent to remain in control of the heartland of end-time biblical events. Two ancient peoples continue a war over an ancient patriarchal land grant. Neither side can live together or apart in peace. Jerusalem continues to be a “cup of drunkenness” and “a very heavy stone for all peoples” (Zechariah 12:2, 3). ❖



*The past year has seen a sustained escalation of conflict in the Middle East between the Jews and Palestinians.*

the king of the South attacks the king of the North provoking a counterattack of such fury, “like a whirlwind,” that the king of the North overwhelms countries and enters the Glorious Land (verses 40-41). Here is an army that enters the Holy Land, ancient Palestine and Jerusalem, setting up control, “between the seas and the glorious holy mountain” (verses 43-45).

This setting also fulfills Christ’s specific statement regarding an “abomination of desolation.” In Matthew 24:15 Christ pointed directly to the specific event. Notice: “Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (whoever reads, let him understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains” (Matthew 24:15-16). Christ’s warning to flee to the mountains connects this to the same event mentioned in Luke 21:20 where armies are said to surround Jerusalem.

The event referred to in Daniel, called the abomination of desolation (Daniel 11:31), is a historical event that is a partial fulfillment of a greater event to come, according to Christ’s prophecy. In 167 B.C. the Seleucid ruler

Olympus. These events are foretold in Daniel chapter 8, where the prophet sees the development of two empires, the northern Seleucid and the southern Ptolemaic, out of the Greek empire of Alexander the Great. This was the initial fulfillment of the prophecy.

The second was during the Roman siege of Jerusalem in A.D. 66-70. The armies of Titus surrounded Jerusalem and ultimately sacked the city and destroyed the temple. All the rituals of the temple ceased and remain inactive to this day. More than a million Jews were killed in the siege. While this was a partial fulfillment of Luke 21:20, it was not total. Christ gave His Olivet prophecy in response to the question, “...what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?” (Matthew 24:3).

When we see armies once again surrounding Jerusalem, the stage will be set for the final fulfillment of the abomination of desolation. An individual

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# A 20th Century Retrospective: The Shot Still Reverberating Around the World

*With this issue we begin a new series covering important events and trends of the last century which have shaped our new century. First, what was the most significant event of the past 100 years?*

by Melvin Rhodes

**W**hat was the most significant date of the 20th century? Surely June 28, 1914, must be it—the day on which the Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated, together with his wife, in the city of Sarajevo.

Five weeks later the world was at war.

Almost a century later, the negative consequences of that awful event are still being felt, not just in the Balkans, but around the world.

The world war that started with a single shot on a hot summer's day led within a few short years to the collapse of the continental European empires—the Russian, German and Austro-Hungarian. Soon after their fall, the Ottoman (Turkish) Empire fell. The victorious British and French empires lasted longer, but fell as a direct consequence of the Second World War, which in itself was a direct consequence of the First World War.

And almost all the wars since, those that have been fought and those that are being fought, as well as those still to come, can trace their origins back to Sarajevo.

Prior to that fateful day in 1914, there was little sign that this would be the fate of the 20th century. In 1913 the Romanovs celebrated the tercentenary (300th-year anniversary) of their dynasty, traveling throughout the Russian empire, basking in the adulation of millions of their subjects. The Bolshevik leader, Vladimir Lenin, gave up all hopes of revolution. Four years later, most of their subjects were glad to see the Romanovs go.

Europe's longest reigning monarch,



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*An artist's conception of the arrest of the man who assassinated Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the event that touched off World War I*

Franz Joseph II of Austria-Hungary, had been emperor since 1848, previously the most tumultuous year in Europe's modern history. He was well loved by his subjects. His generally benevolent liberalism enabled 11 different nations to live peacefully within one empire.

Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany was also popular at the outbreak of war. His German empire, the Second Reich, was only a little over 40 years old and had been the great economic miracle of the early part of the new century. Germany's economy had grown substantially and now rivaled that of the German Kaiser's cousin, King George V of England. Germany had even acquired colonies, just like Britain, and had a great navy set to rival the British Royal Navy.

*Almost a century later, the negative consequences of the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand are still being felt, not just in the Balkans, but around the world.*

Only the Ottoman Empire seemed weak. It had been that way for well over a hundred years. “The sick man of Europe” was how the empire had been described. The slowly disintegrating empire had been causing problems in the Balkans for decades as different ethnic groups successfully rebelled and demanded independence. But recently, the empire had appeared to stabilize and the British, in particular, saw a need for it as a buffer against Russia and an essential presence in the Middle East, an area of concern to the British, in need of preserving a peaceful lifeline to India and the Far East.

On the eve of World War I, the five greatest international powers were Great Britain, France, Russia, Germany and Austria (the United States could have been one, but was not that actively involved in international affairs at that time).

Germany’s 19th century “Iron Chancellor,” Otto von Bismarck, had remarked that security came with being “one of three in a world governed by five.” His foreign policy goal had been to secure Germany’s future in alliance with Austria and Russia. Wilhelm II didn’t like so prominent a political figure taking some of the limelight away from him, so he removed Bismarck. Germany then entered on a more unpredictable course, often clashing with neighbors and potential allies. By 1914, Germany was one of two in a world governed by five. They gambled and lost.

But not before the Ottoman Empire had entered into an alliance with Germany and Austria. This alliance had not been a foregone conclusion. The Turks could easily have gone the other way, siding with the Allies. British Intelligence in the area at the time left much to be desired. Mistakes were made and the Turks sided with Berlin. This was a major turning point in world history as the negative consequences of that decision still dominate our news almost every night.

The domination of these empires prior to the Great War of 1914-18 did not create a perfect world, hence the frustrations that led to the war in the

first place. However, it would be difficult to claim that anything better has replaced them.

religious, linguistic and cultural reasons, wanted to be rid of their Turkish rulers. Greece rebelled successfully



Photo © 1999-2001 www.arttoday.com

*The Ottoman Empire had declined significantly from its period of greatness, when it extended far into Europe. By the beginning of the 20th century the empire had been described as “the sick man of Europe.” The slowly disintegrating empire had been causing problems in the Balkans for decades as different ethnic groups successfully rebelled and demanded independence.*

Let us now examine the consequences of the end of these empires in Europe, the Middle East and the rest of the world.

### European consequences

All of the great empires had one thing in common—they were all multi-ethnic. Indeed, one of the dictionary definitions of “empire” is “a state uniting many territories and peoples under one ruler” (Collins, 1982). The same dictionary also defines “empire” as “an extensive social or economic organization under the control of a single person, family or corporation.”

One of the contributory factors to the slow decline of the Ottoman Empire was its multiplicity of ethnic groups. Many of these, for ethnic,

in the early part of the 19th century and formed its own nation, although many Greeks still remained outside the territory of Greece.

Austria had a similar problem with different ethnic groups. Hungarians had been granted their own parliament and a “dual monarchy” was set up, in which the Austrian emperor was also king of Hungary, thereby uniting the two countries, but theoretically giving Hungarians their own independence and equal status. Other ethnic groups seemed content within the empire, at least as long as the empire gave them security and the prospect of economic advancement.

For thousands of years, it had been common in Europe for peoples of different ethnic backgrounds to be ruled

over by peoples of other ethnic backgrounds, often without prejudice or discrimination. But increasingly throughout the 19th century, with increased education and a growing awareness of their own culture and history, people wanted to rule themselves.

The collapse of the empires enabled this to happen. Ethnic feelings rose to the surface, with seemingly every single ethnic group wanting self-rule. This was difficult to accomplish, however, as the various ethnic groups had all been mingling freely while they were part of their former empires. How could territory be divided into new countries when neighbors on the same street wanted to be part of different nations? High population density and attachment to ancestral lands makes it very difficult to simply transplant people. This problem was to dominate the 20th century and is still not resolved.

Does the Bible have anything to say about world affairs and what will take place in the future? In describing the events that would take place before His second coming and the establishment of the Kingdom of God, Jesus Christ prophesied that “nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom” (Matthew 24:7). The Greek word here for “nation” is *ethnos*, the same root word from which we get the term *ethnic*. This 20th century scourge, the rise of ethnic consciousness, was prophesied almost two thousand years ago. It has been the primary cause of the proliferation of “wars and rumors of wars” (verse 6).

Just take one country in central Europe, carved out of the ruins of the Austrian Empire, and note the continuing tragedy of the last century. After the fall of the Habsburgs, the Czechs and Slovaks were united as Czechoslovakia. However, two million Germans resided in the country, providing Hitler with an excuse to annex part of the country in 1938, to be followed by further annexation a few months later. The Czechs were generally opposed to Hitler, but the Slovaks were supportive.

Later the Russians moved in and

dominated the country for 40 years. A return to democracy in 1989 could not keep the country together, and the two peoples separated in 1994.

There are ethnic minorities in most European countries, many of which want “independence” or to be united with another nation. Macedonia right now is on the verge of war, as its Albanian minority wants to break away and unite with a greater Albania. NATO troops, mostly from Britain, have been sent there in the hope of preserving the peace. This is another consequence of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire.

All of the countries that came out of the former empires have ethnic

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minorities that are dissatisfied and would like a significant change of borders or a political rearrangement. This trend has only been exacerbated by the rise of the European Union, as the EU enables small states to have their own national government, but to also be a part of something bigger. The trend is set to continue.

Another negative consequence of the collapse of the empires in Europe was the rise of dictators. Hitler, Stalin and Mussolini would not have been possible without the fall of the monarchies. American historian Virginia

Cowles, in her 1963 biography, *The Kaiser*, relates that in 1930 “the new Chancellor, the Catholic leader Doctor Heinrich Brüning, was strongly in favor of restoring the monarchy as a means of preventing Hitler from capturing the support of the right wing” (p. 423).

In Russia, the fall of the czar in February 1917 led to hopes of a liberal democracy. This lasted only a few months. The Bolsheviks took power in October, giving birth to the world’s first communist nation. After World War II Russia was able to dominate all of Eastern Europe for over 40 years. The Cold War divided the world into two opposing nuclear blocs for decades and held back the economic development of much of the planet.

### **Political backwater now threat to world peace**

“The Middle East...was of only marginal concern” to the European powers at the beginning of the 20th century. “Few Europeans of Churchill’s generation knew or cared what went on in the languid empires of the Ottoman Sultan or the Persian Shah.” So writes David Fromkin in his book *A Peace to End All Peace* (1989, pp. 24-25).

It is difficult to comprehend how unimportant the Middle East was prior to World War I. “Most of the Middle East still rested, as it had for centuries, under the drowsy and negligent sway of the Ottoman Empire, a relatively tranquil domain in which history, like everything else, moved slowly” (ibid., p. 25). This was all to change with the British-sponsored Arab Revolt, British entry into Jerusalem in December 1917 and the subsequent fall of the Ottoman Empire.

Following World War I, world leaders met in Paris to determine the destiny of the post-war world. The Treaty of Versailles created new nations in Europe and the Middle East. The Turkish Empire gave way to new Arab states under European domination (British and French), and the British were given a mandate to govern Palestine. The borders of the

modern Middle East were drawn up at the peace conference.

The consequences were accurately predicted by British Field Marshal Earl Wavell who described the peace treaty as “a peace to end all peace,” the inspiration for Fromkin’s title. This followed the popular description of the war as “the war to end all war.”

It is interesting to note here that much of Bible prophecy relates to the end-time events immediately leading up to Christ’s return. At this time, prophecy shows us that the Jewish people would have their own homeland again, in the same area as it had been two thousand years ago. The creation of the modern nation of Israel was a direct consequence of Sarajevo. Far from being a “political backwater” (ibid., p. 24), the region is now at the center of world geopolitics and poses the single greatest threat to world peace. As the Bible said it would be, it is again at the center of the international stage.

Zechariah 14:1-4 shows that Jerusalem will be fought over immediately prior to Christ’s second coming. The book of Hosea shows Judah (the Jews) and Israel falling in the same month: “Now shall a month devour them with their portions” (Hosea 5:5-7, KJV). Ancient Israel fell more than a century before Judah. This prophecy is for our time. Luke 21:20-24 shows Jerusalem falling to gentile armies in these end-time events. This suggests Israelite domination prior to gentile invasion. Jerusalem came under Israelite control at the end of December 1917. The Jewish state of Israel took control of the whole city in June 1967 after a 19-year period, during which the Old City was under the control of Jordan.

Even the Gulf War of 1991 was a direct consequence of Sarajevo. Iraq claimed Kuwait because the latter was a part of the same Turkish province as Iraq during Ottoman rule. Iraq itself was set up under British protection at Versailles. The British-appointed king and his descendants were imposed on the people. The monarchy was overthrown in 1958. Subsequent developments led to Saddam Hussein seizing control of

the country. French involvement in Lebanon and Syria following World War I directly led to Syria’s present domination of the area.

### International consequences

Internationally, the direct consequence of Sarajevo was decolonization. The collapse of the continental European empires led eventually to Europe’s demise and the end of the British, French and other colonial empires. Many of the wars that are now being fought in Third World countries are ethnic conflicts between different tribes that had peaceful coexistence forced upon them by their former colonial masters. One third of all the nations in Africa are involved in such wars as different factions struggle for power.

There are similar wars being fought in other areas of the world.

*One result of all this conflict is the massive and unprecedented movement of people that is taking place. Hundreds of millions of refugees have been forced to leave their own countries to live in others. Ironically, this often leads to further ethnic tension in host countries.*

One result of all this conflict is the massive and unprecedented movement of people that is taking place. Hundreds of millions of refugees have been forced to leave their own countries to live in others. Ironically, this often leads to further ethnic tension in host countries. Western democracies are not immune to this problem. Confronted with an alarming increase in the numbers of asylum seekers and illegal economic migrants, citizens are increasingly fearful of being swamped by peoples of different cultures. This is resulting in a rise of extremist movements in Western nations.

Economically, the collapse of these empires has taken its toll. At one time,

most peoples around the world were linked to an empire and received the benefits of trade and investment that often came with that. Now, many are alone and struggling to survive. Today we think of “globalization” as a new development, yet the old empires wove an intricate network of trade and investment that brought material advantages to all their citizens. “There is plenty of evidence that, in several ways, international economic links were closer in the 19th century than in much of the 20th,” pointed out the British news magazine *The Economist* (August 25, 2001, p. 61).



Archduke Franz Ferdinand with his wife, Sophie, and family

### Where will it all end?

Gavrilo Princip is hardly a household name today, but he certainly should be remembered as one of the most significant people of the 20th century and perhaps the one who had the single greatest impact upon world events. It was he who fired the shots that killed the Austrian Archduke and his wife, Sophie, on that fateful day in 1914, the trigger that started World War I, which in turn led to World War II. Princip died of tuberculosis in an Austrian prison four years later.

A century of instability has followed that will culminate in the end-time events that precede the establishment of the Kingdom of God. “And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one” (Zechariah 14:9, KJV). ❖

# Partitioning Morality

*“Does having an extramarital affair mean that a government official is unfit to hold office?”*

*This and related questions have been the focus of the U.S. news media throughout the summer of 2001. Is the subject newsworthy, or is it just gossip? The debate swirling around the subject illustrates a growing phenomenon—partitioning morality. What does it portend for the future?*

by Cecil E. Maranville

**P**ummeled with ceaseless coverage of alleged multiple adulteries of yet another Washington official, Americans are again hotly debating whether “what someone does in private” has anything to do with his public service. One would think that this was the most important event in the world this summer, that the Japanese economy wasn’t teetering on the brink of failure, that the Israelis and the Palestinians were not gearing up for another war, that Argentina wasn’t headed toward defaulting on its international loans or that disease was no longer ravaging the African continent.

The gossip masquerading as news has served a purpose, albeit a different one than what the news media envisioned. This article is *not* another rehash of the sordid details that you likely know all too well by now. Neither is it a political commentary. I invite you to step aside from the passion of the debate, and look at the process.

It demonstrates a growing reality: People believe that morality can be partitioned. Ever more prevalent is the philosophy that there is no clear-cut standard for right and wrong. Polls are conducted and reported endlessly, as if the way the wind blows through the canyons of human opinion is the weather-maker of morality. If more than 50 percent of a community were to agree that “an affair” (why don’t news reporters call it “adultery”?) has nothing to do with whether a person is “good,” does public opinion take it out of the sin side of the ledger?

## Try it with the judge

How are people deciding right and wrong? It’s human nature to attempt to cover and justify immoral behavior, at the same time as wanting to be well thought of. The excuse that’s offered is: “Look at the good deeds that have been done, not at the few mistakes.”

“Yes, I told a lie—but I do not steal!” “Yes, I committed adultery—but at least, I am honest about it!” Human nature might be comical to observe, if the subject weren’t so serious. We

would immediately recognize the foolishness of offering such a defense in a criminal court. “Yes, your honor, I embezzled the money. And, since I am honest about my crime, I expect the court to let me go free.”

Why do people think that moral crimes, a.k.a. sin, should be so readily brushed aside?

To listen to the reporting of the American media, you would think that morality is by major-

*Increasingly, the previously clear definition of morality has dimmed, whether the question is how to judge a politician’s peccadilloes or deciding moral behavior in one’s own life.*

ity rule. That’s not to imply that everyone “shoots from the lip” on the subject of right and wrong, although many do. Many reasonable people weigh their thoughts with care before they speak—and some of them speak eloquently. But whether our arguments are brash or brilliant, can we decide for ourselves what is moral and what is not?

The United States and its mother country, Great Britain, were once inhabited by people who believed in God and practiced their faith. They lifted their eyes to the heavens to ask God for bountiful crops and for rescue from their enemies. They bowed their heads and gave sincere thanks for the blessings that they received. Because of their reverence for God, many sought to let His standard govern their behavior.

Of course, there are people who still believe in God and practice their faith. Additionally, legislative sessions still begin with a chaplain’s intoned prayer for God’s guidance and many politicians still sprinkle their speeches with a deferential nod to the divine.

But, increasingly, the previously clear definition of morality has dimmed, whether the question is how to judge a politician’s peccadilloes or

deciding moral behavior in one's own life.

### Prophecy of parsing morality

Jesus Christ made an incisive observation about how human nature will cause people to parse morality. To the people of His day, He said, you mention God's name in ceremonies and imprint it on your currency; you invoke His name when you're desperate for emergency relief. But, just as easily as His name rolls off your tongue for His blessing on your deeds and His help with your needs, His judgments on what is right and wrong are nudged aside by your opinions. You partition off what you are not willing to do, replacing God's instruction with your own opinions. Whether you mean well is not the issue, but rather whether you do well. For, in partitioning yourself off from God's words, you partition yourself off from His favor.

No, those aren't Jesus' exact words, but they are an accurate paraphrase.

Here's what He actually said (quoting from Isaiah 29:13): "These people draw near to Me with their mouth and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:8-9).

Sure, this pertains to religious teachings, but any diligent student of the Bible knows that God's teachings should not be thought of as confined to discourses in a house of worship or to presentations by religious media. The public perception of religion demonstrates how complete the partitioning of morality is, for the term *religion* stirs thoughts of a specific denomination or charismatic personality, rather than a way of life for a family, a neighborhood, a workplace and a government.

The separation of the lip from the heart or of one's words from his actions is not immediate, but Christ's plain message shows the inevitable conclusion of partitioning morality—"doctrine" or morality comes to be based upon the opinions of people, instead of on the opinions of God.

### Editing the Ten Commandments

When reporting the same prophecy

as Matthew, Mark recorded, "For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men..." (Mark 7:8). How does this relate today? Do you know anyone who would so blatantly turn his back on God? Sure, there are people who coarsely declare their hostility toward religion, but most Americans and many other citizens of the world still profess a belief in God.

Think of Mark's words in the modern context. Is there any evidence that people have substituted their own opinions for God's standard of morality? The evidence is all around us. The "thou shalt nots" have been replaced with "according to the latest opinion poll on that subject..." or with "personally, I don't agree, because..."

Where are we headed with this trend? Will a sincere heart guide people through the moral questions they

*Learning "the latest" opinion, especially in the entertainment and political arena (and they are sometimes inseparable) has become an obsession. Learning "the best" opinion, that is, the Creator's, has become obsolete.*

debate? Looking at what's happened in the United States and Britain in the summer of 2001, the answer is, "No."

Learning "the latest" opinion, especially in the entertainment and political arena (and they are sometimes inseparable) has become an obsession. Learning "the best" opinion, that is, the Creator's, has become obsolete.

This phenomenon is not unique to our time. Acts 17:21 reports the Greek Areopagus of the first century was occupied with people from all over the world who spent their time in the sole pursuit of gathering and giving their opinions about "new things." Instead of tuning in to the TV news or logging on to the Internet for their information,

they traveled to the Acropolis to hear opinions and to give theirs.

Addressing them, Paul noted they were quite religious. In seeming incongruity, he also described them as groping for God. How can one be religious and not be able to clearly see or hear God? We witness the same phenomenon today. Unwilling to have their behavior challenged or changed by God, people have built a partition between their lips and their hearts.

God's name is on the former, but His words are not in the latter.

### Time to tear down that wall

"Truly," Paul said to the audience on Mars' Hill, "these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent" (verse 30). God historically has not forced all peoples to live His way of life. Instead, He has allowed nations, communities and individuals to deliberate and debate their opinions, deciding their own course of action. He's allowed all who wanted to experiment with implementing their ideas on right and wrong to do so.

Why would He take such an approach? Simply, like any wise parent, He knows that some lessons are only going to be learned by experience, and He steps back for the good of His children. But, for the good of His children, He will step in to revoke His tolerance of their immaturity at the needed time. His call to "repent," for the human family to turn around, comes when it should.

So, when is "now"? When is it time for Him to say, "I'm no longer going to allow you to partition between using My name and actually doing what I say"? When will He declare, "I am no longer going to allow you to pretend that you are moral, simply by partitioning off wrong behavior and calling yourself good"?

"Now" is now. Oh, the skies have not yet been split to open the gateway for Christ to return to judge every man for his actions, but the announcement of His approach goes out in advance of His issuing the summons to appear before His court of justice. People who are truly wise will tear down the wall they have built between the lips that drop God's name and the hearts that do their own thing. ❖

# In Brief...

## World News Review

### Prepare to Reduce Your Standard of Living

Do you remember the advertising line that said, “when [a certain financial planner] speaks, people listen”? People have become accustomed to “listening” to the vagaries of the stock market. Actually, they need to tune their ears to other voices—three in particular. Regardless of what happens in the near future in the major stock markets of the world, the following factors indicate rough times ahead.

Argentina has come perilously close to defaulting on its international debt. In late August, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) agreed to lend still more money to Argentina in an emergency effort to stave off what could be a catastrophic economic event for Latin America, the United States and Europe. The \$8 billion loan brings the total amount of IMF loans to Argentina to \$22 billion. In spite of the huge loans, Argentina is far from solid in its financial standing.

The second voice to which people should listen is that of Brazil. The IMF has also extended \$15 billion in standby credit to Brazil, fearing that Brazil’s economy would be pulled into the financial sinkhole created by an Argentine debt default. A double default by these large countries would most certainly plunge Latin America into a prolonged recession. “Globally, this would prolong the current economic slowdown in the United States and European Union, since a Latin American recession would hurt the earnings in stock prices of U.S. and European corporations heavily invested in the region, such as BellSouth, Ryder and Volkswagen AG” (Strategic Forecasting LLC, August 8, 2001).

The third voice that should be heard is Japan’s. Opting for a cosmetic and short-term solution to the country’s continuing economic woes, Japan’s central bank announced in mid-August that it would print more money—1 trillion yen (\$8.1 billion). This action only papers over structural cracks in the Japanese economy. What would a collapse of the Japanese economy portend for the rest of the world? “Japan’s economy is the world’s second-largest and is bigger than all other Asian economies combined. When it finally topples, reverberations will be felt throughout the world. It is increasingly likely that a collapsing Japan will throw healthier economies—even that of the United States—into recession” (ibid. August 15, 2001).

Look for developments, whether normal market shifts or manipulated ones, that separate the European economies from the United States. Europe, which has

been preparing for the release of its new euro printed currency, is anxious to keep the breath of life in its economic body and resents taking a beating because of ties to the United States.

Angered by alleged unfair trade practices by the United States, the European Union recently announced that it is seeking \$4 billion in trade penalties. On August 20, the World Trade Organization announced its judgment that the United States had discriminated against foreign competition by giving special tax breaks to Microsoft Corp., Boeing Corp. and others.

“U.S. Special Trade Representative Robert B. Zoellick has likened any EU sanctions of that magnitude to ‘dropping a nuclear bomb’ on the global trading system” (William Drozdiak, *Washington Post* Foreign Service).

Negotiations are continuing, and the EU promises to step back from its demand, if the U.S. Congress agrees to enact tax legislation.

Additional source: BBC News.

### The Apocalyptic Specter of AIDS Marches On

After repeated denials, China has officially admitted a serious problem with AIDS. Officially, the government reported 23,905 HIV/AIDS cases at the end of March 2001. However, its Health Ministry admits that this number could be more than 600,000. United Nations projections show that China will have 10 million or more HIV/AIDS cases by 2010 unless it takes decisive action.

Henan province in central China is one of the hardest hit areas, with perhaps hundreds of thousands of infected people. How could the infection become so widespread? People sold their blood to make money. “Villagers have told how blood was taken from several people at the same time and pooled in one container, where the blood plasma was removed. The remaining blood was then pumped back into the donors’ bloodstreams. Such unsanitary methods, plus the re-use of needles and unsterilised [British spelling] equipment, gave the disease an easy pathway to spread rapidly through the local population,” said a BBC report.

### Miracles or Monsters?

Liberal scientists Panos Zavos and Severino Antinori rocked the world with their bold announcement in August

that they would begin to clone humans before the end of this year. Is it possible? The rest of the scientific community does not seem to doubt that it is. The question is: What will their efforts produce?

The probability of miscarriages, premature deliveries, genetic abnormalities and stillbirths is extremely high. Much publicity has been given to Dolly, the cloned sheep that was born in 1997. However, little coverage has been given to the fact that hundreds of animals are born dead or with terrible defects in cloning attempts gone wrong.

Among those defects are serious lung problems, as well as disorders of the heart, blood vessels, the immune system, bones, brain and kidneys. Scientists have warned that we should expect similar outcomes in human clones.

Potentially, there will be additional problems that aren't easily detected in animals, such as behavioral abnormalities, learning difficulties, problems with sociability, aggressiveness and emotional instability.

Even Dr. Ian Wilmut, who was the leader of the team that cloned Dolly, issued a gloomy warning about the high probability of serious problems in human cloning efforts.

An additional unresolved problem is the fact that some fetuses grow to an enormous size, so huge that their size could threaten the health of a woman pregnant with a clone. Scientists do not know what goes haywire in the genetic coding that causes this phenomenon.

Many governments have passed legislation that bans human cloning, including a recent bill voted on by the U.S. House of Representatives. However, that's unlikely to stop the mad pursuit of cloning. It holds a certain intrigue for the scientist. "Let's see what we can do" is so loud that it shouts down the quieter whispers of conscience.



A potential candidate for the U.S. Congress has already spent hundreds of thousands of dollars in an attempt to clone his infant son who died in surgery. Mark Hunt, a wealthy attorney, told the manager of a cloning laboratory, "I will spend every dime I have to get my son back." When the manager explained that cloning would not recreate his son, Hunt replied: "At least I will have one who looks like him."

As long as there are scientists without ethics and people willing to finance their work, the possibility of human cloning is extremely high. However, the possibility of successful human cloning is not.

Sources: Lois Rogers and Joe Lauria, Times Newspapers Ltd.; Michael Woods, *The Toledo Blade*; Janelle Carter, AP; Agence France Presse.

## A New Rival for HIV

It wasn't spotted until 1989, but hepatitis C is already killing 10,000 people annually, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) predicts that by 2010, it will claim more victims than AIDS.

Between 1993 and 1998, AIDS deaths had dropped to just below 18,000 a year from a high of more than 45,000. Rising indifference to morality in society has caused the CDC to warn of another upswing in HIV infections.

During the same period, hepatitis C infections skyrocketed by a dizzying 260 percent—a rate of increase that by 2010 will cause it to leapfrog past AIDS as a killer in the United States. Infections are caused through dirty needles, blood transfusions or tattoos.

Four million people in the United States and 200 million people worldwide are infected with hepatitis C; 200,000 people get treatment in the United States, and that could double in four years.

David Bernstein, chief of hepatology at North Shore University Hospital in Manhasset, New York, on Long Island, has hosted a rising flow of patients in recent years, among them Wall Street professionals who have just failed a physical and learned some staggering news: They are infected with hepatitis C.

This master of stealth can remain dormant in the liver for up to 20 years before symptoms such as jaundice, fatigue and abdominal pain appear. By the time hepatitis C has been diagnosed, it is already in its chronic stage, when serious liver scarring and the threat of cancer and death exist.

Like other plagues, hepatitis C has stymied scientists. No vaccine is available, and scientists have been unable to grow it in the lab. In the race pitting science against microbes, however, the spread of hepatitis C looks likely to outrun a cure. "The disease isn't becoming an epidemic," says Dr. Bernstein. "It is an epidemic."

Sources: Newsmax.com, Forbes.

## Crime Stalks Britain

Britain was once known as the most civilized country in the world. But *The Economist* recently reported that "Britain may have slipped down many world tables over the past few decades, but [except for Australia] it beats all other rich countries in one activity: crime."

The article continued: "According to a new victimisation [British spelling] survey of industrialized nations, people in England and Wales are at greater risk than anywhere else of having their car stolen. And apart from Australia, people who live in England and Wales are at greater risk of being assaulted, robbed, sexually attacked and having their homes burgled than are people in any [other] rich country."

Crime costs the citizens of Britain an estimated £60 billion (\$86 billion) annually. Of even more concern is that fewer than one in four crimes is solved. Drug gangs—not wanting to pay high prices to professionals—are recruiting teenagers as hitmen.

Why are these things happening? The true historical explanation is found in our full-color booklet *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy*. Please request your free copy.

Sources: *The Sunday Times, The Daily Mail, Evening Standard, The Economist* [all London].

## More Grandparents Bringing Up Babies

“More American children are calling Grandma’s house home. In Florida alone, the 2000 Census says, more than 250,000 children live in homes headed by grandparents, up 33 percent from 1990.... The share of children in grandparent-headed homes increased from 6.8 to 7.1 percent” according to the census as reported by the Associated Press. Other states released similar data.

More than half the children living with grandparents also have their mother living with them. This is just one of the demographic trends that shows the decline of the traditional American family.

The Bible reveals that God established marriage at the beginning of human existence when He created Eve out of Adam. “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh” (Genesis 2:24).

Mankind was God’s creation. “So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply...’” (Genesis 1:27-28).

It was God’s intent from the beginning that children should grow up with two parents, male and female, committed to each other in marriage. “So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate,” said Jesus Christ (Matthew 19:6).

Although the Scriptures provide for divorce in certain limited circumstances, the ideal family situation, which God intended for the benefit of all, is the traditional family He created and established thousands of years ago through our first parents, Adam and Eve.

Source: Associated Press.

## Locusts of Almost Biblical Proportions

According to a British newspaper, there has never been a better time to be a locust. Economic, environmental and weather conditions have resulted in a massive proliferation of the winged insects, often with devastating consequences. China, Russia and the state of Utah in America have suffered severe crop losses from these migratory insects.

Locusts were the eighth of the 10 biblical plagues on ancient Egypt. Note that long before Israel’s exodus from

Egypt, locusts arrived by an east wind in a swarm so dense that “the land was darkened; and they ate every herb of the land and all the fruit of the trees.... So there remained nothing green on the trees or in the plants of the field throughout all the land of Egypt” (Exodus 10:15).



Locusts can be every bit as devastating today. In northeast China more than 19 million acres (8 million hectares) of land has been under attack. The Central Eurasian area of Russia is threatened. And, according to *The Daily Mail*, “Moscow’s Emergency Situations Ministry says the locusts...are eating everything in their path.”

While proportionally this present plague cannot be compared to the devastation wreaked on ancient Egypt, today’s dire happenings should represent a wake-up call to our modern nations that shows how quickly devastation can strike. We need to get our spiritual houses in order (Psalm 50:23).

Sources: *The Times, The Daily Mail* [all London].

## Internet Pornography Affects Christians

By now we are used to hearing statistics such as a fifth of our youth are solicited while surfing the Internet and that a virtual flood of pornography is increasingly available to on-line users.

But one fact many may not be aware of is the debilitating effect of pornography on Christians. *The Southern California Christian Times* reported that “those who have dealt with the issue of sexual addictions say the Christian community is far from exempt when it comes to the lure of pornography on the Internet. Unlike other addictive behaviors, sex carries an enormous stigma that is not easily bridged in Christian circles.”

But how extensive is this particular problem? This article continued: “Although securing data is difficult because of the nature of the lifestyle, other studies suggest that 10 percent of the Christian community is sexually addicted.”

And yet Christians hesitate to ask for needed help partially because, as Steve Watters, Internet expert for Focus on the Family, stated: “There is an increased pressure in the church for people to look their best and not demonstrate anything that represents weakness, especially if it’s sexual addiction.”

But this is no time to put our heads in the sand. The salvation of sufferers may be at stake. Addicts should be able to consult *confidentially* with their pastors and other competent professional counselors without fear.

Sources: *Southern California Christian Times, The Washington Times*.

Contributors: Cecil Maranville, Melvin Rhodes, John Ross Schroeder and Jim Tuck

“WINDOW,” (Continued from page 16)

down! Who knows what’s going to happen?” Nothing happened, but it seemed as if time had come to a grinding halt. Slowly, the officers got out with drawn guns and waited. Finally the darkened car’s door opened, and a tall young man got out.

Immediately, the officer’s voice began to gently but authoritatively command the man to come to the side “with your hands up, step to the right, now back up, now kneel down, now lay down, now hands behind your back.” As suddenly as we had been stirred out of a deep sleep, the scary part of this episode was over. The police gathered around the young man, handcuffed him, led him to the car, and gave him the traditional “duck the head down and into the car routine.” Then they methodically searched every part of his car. I was quite impressed with the conduct and quiet demeanor of the police under the pressure of another graveyard-shift incident.

No “Rodney King incident” here. You can turn off your video cameras.

Nonetheless, a very real and different kind of picture, just outside my window, had been crystallized in my mind forever. A new and different snapshot of life other than the kids playing and the maple leaves falling and the morning light dancing across the window was now lodged in the scrapbook of my mind. Like Dorothy said to her dog in the film classic *The Wizard of Oz*, “Toto, I don’t think we are in Kansas anymore.” Our little protected part of “village life” in L.A. had been changed that night by someone making a wrong turn in life and ending up on our block just outside our window. We all tend to think that “things like this” happen elsewhere, but the fact of the matter is they can happen anywhere at anytime. In a sense, “elsewhere” had been brought to my home right where our morning newspaper would land in a couple of hours.

### Everybody’s son

The next morning, my wife and I reviewed the event of the night before. We deliberated over what the young man had possibly done. Was he a car thief? Was he doing drugs?

Was he perhaps despondent and possibly seeking to gain some kind of attention? Was he a good kid that had simply done something dumb? If that were the case, once those guns were aimed right on him, he must have been “scared spit-less.” My wife and I mused on how quickly one’s life decisions can alter the scorecard. Susan men-

tioned to me that he was in a sense “everybody’s son.” I replied, “That’s an interesting thought. Somebody’s son? That makes it personal.” Susan corrected my notion of her comment. “No,” she said, “He is *everybody’s* son. That could have been one of our children out there.” A woman’s sensitivity claimed the moment and the young man for her own even though we have never met him and most likely never will.

There he sits, alone in the darkened car, perhaps musing in his mind, “What have I done now? If only I had listened to Mom and Dad! The guys didn’t say this was going to happen. What’s that policeman doing now, and what’s that in his hand?”

The Bible is full of stories of “everybody’s sons and daughters.” It’s full of people that had every opportunity



*A loud speaker blaring outside our home awakened my wife and me. “There’s a police car right in front of our place!”*

laid before them, only to self-destruct by some wrong turn in life that led them down that proverbial darkened road. Cain, Canaan, Joseph’s brethren, Lot’s wife, Absalom, Ananias and Sapphira—each has a story. Each made choices and decisions which not only altered his or her life, but also impacted many family members and friends around them.

People are not alone in their “wrong-headedness.” There’s no private reserve for doing something dumb. *World News and Prophecy* often speaks of nations and peoples, past and present, that have taken wrong turns. These wrong turns have at times destroyed other nations around them and stymied what “might have been” in human history. Tragic decisions made by kings, presidents, premiers and generals

have taken much of humanity along for the ride, often against their will.

In a figurative and greater sense, God is looking through His window at this neighborhood called earth. He sees everything that is going on. It troubles Him. It always has. Unlike my wife and I, God doesn't sleep. He sees everything going on. He doesn't miss a thing. In fact, He knows what the outcome of all this will be.

Long ago, when the Tower of Babel was being thrust skyward, God took note of everything going on before Him. Genesis 11:5-6 tells us, "But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. And the LORD said, 'Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them.'" God saw everything as it played out right before Him.

Later on, God clearly stated how He had seen the crime the ancient Egyptians perpetrated against His people of promise. Exodus 3:7 bears out this thought when stating, "And the LORD said, I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows." God has seen and heard it all. I cannot imagine what it must be like for Him. Here my wife and I capture but one upsetting glimpse of a life possibly gone wrong for the moment through the window of our home, whereas God witnesses every plight of His children made in His image for 6,000 years of human history. God is a realist, not an idealist. He knows His government must be restored to this earth, and soon.

### Another long night

Long ago, there was another long night for another lost young man who eventually had the spotlight turned on him as he was caught right in the act. He also was "everybody's son." He also never envisioned where and how he would end up that night. It was always supposed to happen to somebody else. Christ tried to warn him, but it was to no avail.

In Luke 22:31, Christ told Peter, "Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat." Further down in verse 33, Peter let Christ know, 'Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death.'" Christ let him know what would transpire that very night in verse 34, "I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you deny three times that you know Me." Christ was already "at the window" watching the whole scene unfold.

In the verses that follow in Luke 22:55-60, we find Peter denying Christ, denying he knew his fellow disciples and denying his heritage and background as a Galilean. All three denials were Peter's attempt to flee from the reality of his association with the good things Christ had brought into His life from that initial encounter by the Sea of Galilee. No,

there were no sirens or search lights at the scene of this crime, but there were two powerful reminders of what he had just done to himself.

Luke tells us in verse 60 that the rooster crowed then and there as Peter's life came to a grinding halt. And then verse 61 brings the story home by telling us that Peter's attention was arrested by the gaze of Christ, Himself, as He turned and looked at Peter in the courtyard. No spotlight could have been brighter or more revealing of its intended subject. Peter's life had come to a standstill. It says he went out and wept bitterly.

What a night!

### Never say, "Never"

We have all heard the famous maxim, "Never say, 'Never.'" It floats around in our common jargon of collective human wisdom. But we all do. Occasionally it comes home to roost. When it does, grab it and learn from it. I've come to learn more than ever that just outside my window, terrible things can happen. Beyond that, I've had instilled in me that "everybody's son" is but a bad moment away from possible disaster due to reckless or despondent actions on his part. In fact, let's take it a step further. But for God's grace in our lives, "everybody's son" is actually everybody, meaning you and me. We have all been curbside outside God's window. Perhaps we just forget that sometimes.

The difference between God and us is that He sees beyond the window and the moment and reveals the future to us. The pages of *World News and Prophecy* are dedicated not only to showing you what's going on in your global neighborhood, but also what God has in store for humanity. What makes God, God, is that He is not trapped by the moment at the window like you and I, but also has the ability and the desire to open incredibly wide doors of opportunity. That's the biggest headline and future news event we can share with you.

Perhaps the words of the prophet in Jeremiah 29:11-14 best capture the spirit of "This is the Way" by reminding us and revealing to those who yet need to know: "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, with all your heart. I will be found by you, says the LORD, and I will bring you back from your captivity."

Oh, to have a fresh start! To be "given a future" when you've messed up, big time! Peter did. The young man by my driveway can. The nations of the world can, and so can you. Take another look just outside your window. A new day is coming. ❖

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# This is the Way

ISAIAH 30:21

by Robin Webber

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## Just Outside My Window

**W**hen people around the world hear the term “L.A.,” many scenarios immediately come to mind. What comes to the forefront of your thoughts? How about Hollywood, riots, “O.J.,” mudslides, hillside fires, smog, earthquakes, televised car chases, Beverly Hills and massive traffic jams? It may come as a shock to you, but most of us who live in the environs of Los Angeles are not sliding into the ocean via a mudslide or wearing gas masks to protect us from the smog.

Life here can actually be pretty good and very ordinary. My family lives in the town of Monrovia in a tiny enclave called “Mayflower Village.” It’s the kind of place where not everyone looks alike, but everyone truly gets along. The residents don’t necessarily have a lot of money, but everyone knows each other’s kids, waters one another’s lawns when the neighbors are away, takes great pride in “keeping up” his or her property’s appearance, and all come out of their homes when the flag passes by and literally march together down the street on the Fourth of July. Our town’s main street is often used in Hollywood films to capture the essence of “small town U.S.A.” Our neighborhood is probably a lot like yours.

Over the years, my wife and I have seen a lot of life pass by through the frame of our front window. Yes, those Fourth of July neighborhood parades I mentioned, our three girls growing up under the shade of our maple trees, friends and family coming and going, summer swimming pool splashes, first bike rides, the occasional stray pet that ultimately became ours, the falling of autumn leaves, the postman coming up the driveway with the surprise package. You know all those kinds of “neat” lifetime adven-

tures that come to us a little bit each day just outside our windows. Yes, life can be pretty good, even here in “L.A.” But one more snapshot of life occurred just outside my window, which expanded my horizons. No, I didn’t ask for it, but as the old saying goes, “life is what’s happening that you haven’t planned for.” It was big news to us that night, even though it didn’t make any headlines and never will. It’s a snapshot I would like to share with you. Look out my window with me for a moment.

### “What’s that?”

I’m sure that at one time or another, all of us have been startled by an unexpected sound in the middle of the night. Normally, you hope it’s just the cat knocking over an item on a table or the natural give and take of the house “squeaking” in the night. But no cats this night!

A loud speaker blaring outside our home awakened my wife and me from a deep sleep at 3:15 a.m. Susan, my wife, peeked out the blinds of our bedroom to get a sense of what was happening. She excitedly stated, “There’s a police car right in front of our place!” We both got up out of bed and moved slowly but surely through the darkness towards our living room window. Susan whispered, “There’s someone in the car right by our driveway.”

Suddenly a police officer’s authoritative voice, magnified by his vehicle’s microphone, punctuated the still summer’s night air with, “Person in the car, get out now.” Even before his voice faded away, three more squad cars pulled up. Their lights bathed the darkened car in front of them. The voice boomed again, and my wife said, “Get

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