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# The Missing Dimension in Homeland Security

*Homeland security instantly became the #1 priority of the Bush administration on Sept. 11, 2001. With the creation of the massive Homeland Security Department, concerns of safekeeping continue to be the primary focus of the American government. Are you aware of national security's most important aspect? The lack of this element immediately compromises the safety of any country.*

by Cecil Maranville

**D**ue to its immense power and the peaceful nature of its immediate neighbors, the United States has long enjoyed security at home. With the end of the Cold War, a sense of total security and invulnerability settled upon the world's only remaining superpower.

Attacks upon U.S. allies or even its embassies on foreign soil did not bring security concerns to the forefront of American thinking until the terrible morning of Sept. 11, 2001. Subsequently, the United States finds itself preoccupied with the security of its own land. "Homeland security" dominates American news. Not that enemies attack the U.S. homeland on a regular basis—yet . . .

The need for a vigorous defense of the homeland dominated political debates during the American congressional elections of 2002. Both major U.S. political parties are making it the principal theme of their strategies to retain or obtain power in the 2004 elections, which includes the White House as a prize.

On Nov. 25, 2002, the president signed legislation that created the new Department of Homeland Security. Its mission statement outlines three principal objectives:



Reuters/William Philpott

*U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge speaks to reporters Jan. 24*

- Prevent terrorist attacks within the United States.
- Reduce America's vulnerability to terrorism.
- Minimize the damage from potential attacks and natural disasters.

The White House projects a budget of \$37 billion for the massive new department, with an additional \$35 billion spent in the private sector on homeland security. The government

(See "HOMELAND," page 3)



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Editor: Don Ward

Managing editor: Darris McNeely

Senior editors: Melvin Rhodes, Robin Webber

Contributing editor: John Ross Schroeder

Copy editors: Becky Bennett, Doug Johnson, Cecil E. Maranville

Layout/design: Mike Bennett, Peter W. Eddington

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**Address changes:** POSTMASTER—Send address changes to *World News and Prophecy*, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027.

**International addresses:**

AFRICA (except as listed below): United Church of God, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027, U.S.A. E-mail: [info@ucg.org](mailto:info@ucg.org)

AUSTRALIA: United Church of God—Australia, GPO Box 535, Brisbane, Qld. 4001, Australia. Phone: 0755 202-111 Fax: 0755 202-122

BAHAMAS: United Church of God, P.O. Box N8873, Nassau, Bahamas. Phone: (242) 324-3169 Fax: (242) 364-5566

BRITISH ISLES: P.O. Box 705, Watford, Herts. WD19 6FZ England. Phone: 020-8386-8467 Fax: 01257-453978

CANADA: United Church of God—Canada, P.O. Box 144, Station D, Etobicoke, ON M9A 4X1, Canada. Phone: (905) 876-9966, (800) 338-7779 Fax: (905) 876-0569 E-mail: [info@ucg.ca](mailto:info@ucg.ca)

FIJI: United Church of God, P.O. Box 10-577, Nadi, Fiji. Phone: 723-678

FRENCH-SPEAKING AREAS: Eglise de Dieu Unie—France, 127 rue Amelot, 75011 Paris, France

GERMANY: Vereinte Kirche Gottes, Postfach 30 15 09, D-53195 Bonn, Germany. Phone: 0228 - 9454636 Fax: 0228 - 9454637 E-mail: [info@gutenachrichten.org](mailto:info@gutenachrichten.org)

ITALY: La Buona Notizia, Chiesa di Dio Unita, Casella Postale 187, 24100 Bergamo, Italy. Phone: (+39) 035-58.21.40 Fax: (+39) 035-452.16.26 E-mail: [redazione@labuonanotizia.org](mailto:redazione@labuonanotizia.org)

MALAWI: United Church of God, P.O. Box 23076, Kitwe, Zambia. E-mail: [malawi@ucg.org](mailto:malawi@ucg.org)

MAURITIUS: P.O. Box 53, Quatre Bornes, Mauritius. E-mail: [mauritiust@ucg.org](mailto:mauritiust@ucg.org)

THE NETHERLANDS: United Church of God Holland, P.O. Box 93, 2800 AB Gouda, The Netherlands

NEW ZEALAND: United Church of God, P.O. Box 22, Auckland, 1015, New Zealand. Phone: 0508-463-763

PHILIPPINES: United Church of God, P.O. Box 81840, DCCPO, 8000 Davao City, Philippines. Phone: (+63) 82 241-0150 Cell/Text: (+63) 0918-904-4444

SCANDINAVIA: Guds Forenade Kyrka, Mailbox 144, 111 73 Stockholm, Sweden

SOUTHERN AFRICA: United Church of God, Southern Africa, P.O. Box 2209, Beacon Bay, East London 5205, South Africa Phone/Fax: 043 748-1694. E-mail: [rsa@ucg.org](mailto:rsa@ucg.org)

SPANISH-SPEAKING AREAS: Iglesia de Dios Unida, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027, U.S.A. Phone: (513) 576-9796

TONGA: United Church of God—Tonga, P.O. Box 127, Nuku'alofa, Tonga

ZAMBIA: United Church of God, P.O. Box 23076, Kitwe, Zambia. E-mail: [zambia@ucg.org](mailto:zambia@ucg.org)

ZIMBABWE: United Church of God, Zimbabwe, P.O. Box 3393, Paulington, Mutare, Zimbabwe. Phone: 09 263 20 68102 E-mail: [zimbabw@ucg.org](mailto:zimbabw@ucg.org)

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## A Week to Remember

**A**s I write this column on the day after the tragedy of the space shuttle *Columbia*, I have to think it has been an extraordinary week for America and its president, George W. Bush. One editorial writer put forth the thought that President Bush is a gift to the nation at this time of national testing.

### The State of the Union

On Tuesday night, Jan. 28, the president gave the annual State of the Union address. What he said went further than reporting the present state of the nation. It was more of a vision. The president laid out a number of initiatives—tax cuts being one, aimed at stimulating the economy. He also addressed health care reform. One surprise was his call for an emergency plan for AIDS relief to help in the fight against AIDS in Africa and the Caribbean—including \$15 billion of U.S. aid over the next five years.

This is a bold and a noble quest. It is hard to imagine the full extent of the horror of AIDS in these particularly hard-hit areas of the world. Whatever suffering is relieved by this effort will be good. While the causes of such problems are generally not addressed or solved by such expenditures of money, President Bush is nonetheless acting in the long tradition of American generosity and compassion.

The end of his speech focused on the impending war with Iraq. His language was clear and unmistakable. He intends to bring about a regime change in that nation and remove Saddam Hussein. Within weeks, possibly as you read these words, coalition troops, led by American soldiers, will likely be on the offensive in the Middle East. This will be an unprecedented action by America in that region. While no one can predict the outcome, this action is sure to have far-reaching consequences in the area.

On the morning of 9/11 President Bush was awakened to the urgent reality that a well-organized movement is bent on removing freedom from America and other Western nations. I believe he is a man for the times. His experiences have produced a man of character with the ability to connect with the mood of the American people.

### Columbia disaster

Four days later, America was stunned by the destruction of the space shuttle *Columbia* as it flew over the southern United States. In his words to the country, the president spoke the words of Isaiah, "Lift your eyes and look to the heavens. Who created all these? He who brings out the starry hosts one by one and calls them each by name. Because of His great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing."

Courageous men and women have devoted their lives to the space program. They remind us of the human drive to push the boundaries of knowledge. Those who have lost their lives in space for the most part understood the risk they took. They lived their lives on their own terms and died doing what they loved best. Though their deaths bring sadness, we must accept them as part of the cost of personal choice and dedication.

In one week, we saw the noble qualities of generosity, compassion and resolve in the leader of the United States, and courage, adventure and curiosity in the six American and one Israeli astronauts. One day, in a far more perfect world than ours, we'll see these qualities magnified many times in peoples of all nations. When Jesus Christ returns, He will restore these qualities and more in the reign of the Kingdom of God.

—Darris McNeely

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**“HOMELAND,”** (Continued from page 1)  
will employ approximately 169,000 people directly in the department. But, theoretically, every loyal American citizen is a volunteer sentry, for the president repeatedly asked all to be on the lookout for potential security threats.

So far, there has not been a subsequent major attack on U.S. soil. (The FBI reports thwarting more than 100 planned attacks.) But will the United States continue to be so successful?

### The missing dimension

Talk of homeland security reminds me of a biblical song or prayer that speaks of protection. Because of its comforting thoughts about home and family, undoubtedly millions of people have read it. But I wonder how many are aware of its prophetic message. Within a few words, it reveals the key to success or failure in securing any nation’s homeland.

It’s the second sentence of Psalm 127: “Unless the LORD protects a city, guarding it with sentries will do no good” (The New Living Translation).

*“Only the LORD Can Bless a Home.* Without the help of the LORD it is useless to build a home or to guard a city,” is the wording of the Contemporary English Version.

How is this prophetic? It foretells the consequences of having or lacking divine security. The missing dimension of homeland security is God’s divine protection. If a home—or *homeland* has God’s protection, its sentries will be effective. However, if a home or homeland does not enjoy God’s protection, even hundreds of millions of sentries (the number of volunteer American citizens on alert), multiple-billion-dollar budgets and the latest in technological devices will not guarantee its safety.

Don’t U.S. politicians call upon God for His blessing and protection in speeches? Is it enough to invoke God’s name publicly? Most of America’s citizens consider themselves to be God-fearing. Is that enough to meet the prescription laid out so plainly and forcefully in Psalm 127? How does a country engage divine security?

### A prophecy of homeland security

A remarkable passage in the book of



*When an enemy threatens,  
countries set up watchmen.*

Ezekiel specifically addresses the issue of “homeland security.” The first several verses of Ezekiel 33 tell what a country does when an enemy threatens it—the people set up a security system. In biblical parlance, they hire “a watchman.”

In the following statements, God lays out a scenario in which He in fact stirs an enemy to threaten a nation: “The LORD said: ‘Ezekiel, son of man, warn your people by saying: “Someday, I, the LORD, may send an enemy to invade a country. And suppose its people choose someone to stand watch and to sound a warning signal when the enemy is seen coming.”’”

It sounds so simple and takes so few words, but this, in essence, describes the detailed work of a homeland security department with its complicated screening methods and warning procedures. The American government chose a numerical and color-coded threat alert notification system.

1. Green, “Low,” for “Low threat of terrorist actions.”

2. Blue, “Guarded,” for “General risk of terrorist attacks.”

3. Yellow, “Elevated,” for “Significant threat of terrorist attacks.”

4. Orange, “High,” for “High risk of terrorist attacks.”

5. Red, “Severe,” for “Severe risk of terrorist attacks.”

The complex web of police, FBI,

Secret Service, counterterrorism Special Forces, border patrol agents and military personnel—along with alert citizens—combine to form a formidable phalanx of “watchmen.”

Sounding the alarm is only the beginning. Then, Americans will have to sacrifice some of their cherished freedom of movement and take appropriate cover, depending on the threat level. If they do not, they risk suffering injury or loss of life; both the watchers and the watched have a responsibility.

God’s conversation with Ezekiel continues: “If any of these people hear the signal and ignore it, they will be killed in battle. But it will be their own fault, because they could have escaped if they had paid attention.”

Then, He addresses the responsibility of the watchers, the guards: “But suppose the person watching fails to sound the warning signal. The enemy will attack and kill some of the sinful people in that country, and I, the LORD, will hold that person responsible for their death.”

Having the charge of securing a nation is a grave responsibility. But, if you follow the drift of the conversation, God moved away from speaking of a nation appointing its own guards to speaking of His appointment of a guard. Why does He use this language?

### God appoints a watchman

He explains: “Ezekiel, I have appointed you to stand watch for the people of Israel. So listen to what I say, then warn them for me. When I tell wicked people they will die because of their sins, you must warn them to turn from their sinful ways. But if you refuse to warn them, you are responsible for their death. If you do warn them, and they keep sinning, they will die because of their sins, and you will be innocent” (quotes taken from Ezekiel 33:1-9, Contemporary English Version).

What does this have to do with securing God’s protection in the way that Psalm 127 speaks of? Unbeknown to most people, God still thinks and works the same. It would be simplistic to speak in terms of a singular watchman to provide God’s warning message to this vast world. Even in ancient Israel, each city or town had a watch-

man—and presumably more than one to handle more than one shift of duty. So, Israel had uncounted watchmen. Similarly, in modern times, “the watchman” is the Body of Christ, whose principal spokesmen are the elders God appoints.

Throughout the ages since Ezekiel, God’s servants repeated Ezekiel’s words. But their most direct application is in these last days to the United States, Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, South Africa—along with other nations of the British Commonwealth and nations of Western Europe. These peoples descended from Israel of old and are still nourished by the generous benefits God promised their forefathers.

*Do you think that Americans or other people of the Western world would take kindly to being told that they do not please God?*

Regardless of how secure these nations seem to be when one measures defense in terms of technology, God’s present message is that the nations have yet to face their greatest security threat.

Today’s religious individual is comfortable with his own sense of what “being good” means, rather than being told what is good—and then being told to live up to it. For example, Americans are generous people, a characteristic often cited by the U.S. president. To be sure, generosity is a godly trait. All nations can point to good within their citizenry, and most individuals can point to worthwhile qualities within their character. But, as the prophet indicates, a singular trait or even several fine qualities aren’t enough. For our well-being, God insists that we accept the entire package, “the laws and teachings [He] gave . . . Moses on Mount Sinai.”

Undoubtedly, this sounds quite strict to many people. The very fact that it does, speaks to the times in which we live. People want God, but they want Him on their own terms—not His. While individuals may temporarily fool themselves into thinking that just being good on their own terms is satisfactory, they will be shocked when they find

they do not have God’s special protection.

### **God’s protection has a price**

Their massive system of homeland security will be for nothing. If we want God’s blessing, we have to live the way He says we should live. Just as with the physical aspect of security, we have to pay the price for divine protection.

God spoke in the same terms, “all or nothing,” in His conversation with Ezekiel. Continuing from where we left off above: “Ezekiel, son of man, the people of Israel are complaining that the punishment for their sins is more than they can stand. They have lost all hope for survival, and they blame me. Tell

them that as surely as I am the living LORD God, I don’t like to see wicked people die. I enjoy seeing them turn from their sins and live. So if the Israelites want to live, they must stop sinning and turn back to me.”

In modern parlance, if people want divine protection, they must stop their ways of living that trample down God’s laws and teachings. Telling people that will likely evoke this response, “What about all the good things I do?”

When speaking of the security of nations, we must not mince our words. Hundreds of millions of lives are at stake. We need to understand plainly that doing “some good” is not the same as living by God’s laws and teachings.

God’s words to Ezekiel are prescient, piercing through the façade of “good people” today who flatly refuse to subject themselves to the kind of structured religion He speaks of in the Bible. Lest we misunderstand and think that this means God is harsh, please take note of His ready promise of mercy along with His high standards for human behavior.

“Tell them that when good people start sinning, all the good they did in the past cannot save them from being pun-

ished. And remind them that when wicked people stop sinning, their past sins will be completely forgiven, and they won’t be punished.

“Suppose I promise good people that they will live, then later they start sinning and believe they will be saved by the good they did in the past. These people will certainly be put to death because of their sins. Their good deeds will be forgotten.

“Suppose I warn wicked people that they will die because of their sins, and they stop sinning and start doing right. For example, they need to return anything they have taken as security for a loan and anything they have stolen. Then if they stop doing evil and start obeying my Law, they will live. Their past sins will be forgiven, and they will live because they have done right.”

### **Hard to accept: “We don’t please God”**

Do you think that Americans or other people of the Western world would take kindly to being told that they do not please God? And that as a result, He will not protect them from terror? They probably would not believe what this article is saying. If they did accept what the Bible says, they would howl about how unfair God is.

Anticipating the predictability of human reasoning, God is again “on point.” “Ezekiel, your people accuse me of being unfair. But they are the ones who are unfair. If good people start doing evil, they will be put to death, because they have sinned. And if wicked people stop sinning and start doing right, they will save themselves from punishment. But the Israelites still think I am unfair. So warn them that they will be punished for what they have done” (quotes taken from Ezekiel 33:10-20, Contemporary English Version).

How do you think the United States—or your homeland—would measure up to God’s expectations? Do you think He will grant His protection? Read our booklets *The Ten Commandments* and *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy* to find out. ❖

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# Visions of Judgment: The Red Horse of War

*Worried eyes are fixed upon the Middle East where yet another war seems imminent. What unknown forces will be unleashed should America, Britain and their allies invade Iraq? The horses are saddled and prepared. Will this be the war symbolized by the ominous red horse of Revelation 6?*

by Darris McNeely

In the mid-1980s, President Ronald Reagan once openly mused about the potential for an age-ending world war. “You know, I turn back to your ancient prophets in the Old Testament and the signs foretelling Armageddon, and I find myself wondering if—if we’re the generation that’s going to see that come about . . . There have been times in the past when we thought the world was coming to an end, but never anything like this.”

Those who lived through World War I felt the same way. They called it the “Great War” and “the war to end all wars.” Oh that it were true. The war to end all wars is coming, but it will follow a time of total war unlike any ever seen (Matthew 24:21). The ride of the second horseman of Revelation 6 unleashes the malignant forces of evil and removes the last vestiges of peace from the earth. However, Jesus Christ stops this horseman’s ride with His appearance and the establishment of His just Kingdom.

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

This vision corresponds with Christ’s Olivet prophecy in Matthew. Notice, “And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom” (Matthew 24:6-7).

The record of history shows a pattern of the red horse of war often following the white horse of false religion. An example is the Thirty Years War in Europe during the mid-17th century. Following the Protestant Reformation, the resultant shift in power among European states led to 30 years of car-

nage from 1618 to 1648. Religion, the newly emerged Protestant versus Roman Catholic theology, was the ideology that fueled the winds of war. It led to strange alliances: Catholic France aligned with Protestant Holland to offset the powerful Catholic Hapsburg dynasty. This resulted in prolonging the conflict. By the time peace (a euphemism for balance of power) was restored in 1648 with the Treaty of Westphalia, 8 million people had lost their lives.

What can we expect to see as this red horse of war rides across the landscape in the last days, unleashing the fury of nations and its unique ideology upon the world? A look at the history of war and its cause will give us a clue. Let’s first look at what the Bible says is the cause of war.

## The cause of war

Volumes have been written describing the root causes of war. It has been studied, no doubt, since the first conflict erupted among humans. The ancient Greeks felt human behavior was guided by fear, self-interest and honor. These characteristics cause war and instability. When instinctual human nature creates a crisis, the normal course of events leads to a breakdown in order, and anarchy or war is the result.

Relations among nations are generally guided by self-interest. When individual interest is jeopardized, the natural instinct for self-preservation takes over. War is often the result.

The apostle James wrote quite pointedly on this subject. “Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask” (James 4:1-2).

James identifies lust, desire and covetousness as the sources of strife among people who cannot focus on the right relationship with God. He goes on to say, “Adulterers and adul-

*What can we expect to see as this red horse of war rides across the landscape in the last days, unleashing the fury of nations and its unique ideology upon the world?*

teresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God” (verse 4). Again we see that self-interest plays a dominant role in human aggression.

Left to itself, without a spiritual relationship with God, the human heart is the seat of conflict. In the context of the sins of Judah, Jeremiah the prophet said, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?” (Jeremiah 17:9.) Jesus Christ confirms, “Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies” (Matthew 15:19).

But the Bible reveals that the real source of this hostile nature is Satan the devil. In a heated discussion with the Pharisees who were challenging Him, Christ labeled Satan as the source of human hostility. “You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it” (John 8:44).

Paul describes Satan as controlling the “power of the air,” literally swaying man to disobedience, without people’s conscious awareness. Until man’s nature undergoes a fundamental change, he follows after the natural “lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind.” He is a child “of wrath” caught up with the rest of humanity in a spirit of conflict (Ephesians 2:2-3).

It will take a change of heart along with the addition of God’s Spirit to turn the human mind from pursuing pure self-interest to following the lead of God. We find this solution alluded to in a quote from Tolstoy’s novel *War and Peace*, “Drain the blood from men’s veins and put in water instead, then there will be no more war!”

When the world comes under the covenant in which God writes His law upon the human heart with His Spirit, we will see the end of war. Until then, we will see wars continue and escalate in ferocity. Those who understand

man’s nature know he is on a course toward absolute destruction.

### **The beginning of war**

In Genesis chapter 4, we read of the first human “war,” the conflict between Cain and Abel, the sons of Adam. When God refused to accept the offering of Cain, reading his sinful heart, Cain’s self-interest was threatened. He did not control his aggression and subsequently “rose up against Abel his brother and killed him” (Genesis 4:8).

Cain was expelled from the family environs and we are told he went to the land of Nod on the east of Eden (verse 16). Some biblical scholars say he built on the ancient site of Jericho. Regardless of the accuracy of those speculations, excavations at this site, one of the oldest inhabited sites on earth, reveal a fortress city with walls 12 feet high and 6 1/2 feet thick. The remains of a large tower, 30 feet across at the base and 30 feet high, tell a story of people living in a fortress city, protecting what they had, probably food, from those who would take it by force. Clearly, this was a site of conflict long before Joshua and the Israelites encircled its walls.

In Genesis 10, God provides a narrative of the sons of Noah and the cities that grew from their dynasties. One descendant, Nimrod, and the city he built, Babel, are inserted into the story. Nimrod was a “mighty hunter before the LORD.” The wording indicates an adversarial relationship with God’s purpose and plan. This is made clearer in the story of the Tower of Babel in chapter 11. The cities associated with Nimrod war back and forth for centuries. Babylon becomes a city, then an empire and eventually a symbol of a system that opposes God, His people and His plan throughout the Bible story.

It is that city, described in Revelation 17:5 as a “mystery . . . the mother of harlots and of the abominations of the earth,” which in the time of the end provides the cultural and religious inspiration to a political-religious empire called “the beast.” The roots of this end-time system reach back to the system started by Nimrod at Babel, thus bridging the intervening centuries. It will form the backdrop for the final conflict

of the age brought on by the red horse of war.

No war has brought peace. Wars waged in the name of religion have not achieved religious harmony. No war waged for national interest has brought lasting security for any city, state or empire. The peace sought by man is all too often a peace that suits his nationalistic interests.

### **Current Iraqi conflict**

As a result of the breakup of the Soviet empire in the early 1990s, its nuclear stockpiles and those of the United States have been dramatically reduced. However, the nuclear genie has not been put back into its bottle. Through various means the nuclear technology has migrated to other nations. Today India and Pakistan possess nuclear weapons, and twice in recent years have rattled their sabers to threaten a holocaust on the Asian sub-continent.

President Bush has identified three nations, Iran, Iraq and North Korea, as an “axis of evil.” North Korea, openly admitting its capability, recently threatened to resume production of nuclear material. Satellite photographs have been taken which show facilities capable of making nuclear bombs under construction in Iran. The same types of facilities have been destroyed in Iraq by both the Israelis and the United States. It is the suspicion of more capability to produce weapons of mass destruction that is driving the Bush administration to lead an impending attack on Iraq.

### **Present world scene ready for war**

The great fear is that nuclear weapons, or other weapons of mass destruction, would fall into the hands of terrorist groups such as al Qaeda and be used against Western nations. Some intelligence sources claim that Iraq already officially supports al Qaeda. This real possibility causes the unthinkable to come too close to reality. The end of the Cold War did not bring us any closer to the end of possible nuclear war. It just shifted the power into the hands of more players.

Those who study war understand the persistent danger. In a comprehensive

look at the subject, author Gwynne Dyer made this chilling, sober and almost hopeless observation:

“To begin quite close to the end: we may inhabit the Indian summer of human history, with nothing to look forward to but the ‘nuclear winter’ that closes the account. The war for which the great powers hold themselves in readiness every day may come, as hundreds of others have in the past. The megatons will fall, the dust will rise, the sun’s light will fail, and the race may perish. Nothing is inevitable until it has actually happened, but the final war is undeniably a possibility, and there is one statistical certainty. Any event that has a definite probability, however small, that does not decrease with time will eventually occur—next year, next decade, next century, but it will come. Including nuclear war” (*War*, 1985, p. xi).

### One world government

This bleak prospect has led many to conclude that a supranational world government is the only hope for universal peace. The medieval writer Dante in his work *De Monarchia* speaks of the inevitable contentions between two governments which require arbitration by a third power with the authority to settle the dispute. “This third power is either the world-government, or it is not. So, we must arrive at a first and supreme judge for whom all contentions are judicable . . . Therefore, world-government is necessary for the world” (*The Great Ideas: War and Peace*, p. 1,018).

War at the end of the age will bring the nations to the point where one system will be created with the desire to bring peace to the earth. Revelation 13 describes a system rising up out of the sea, a large diverse system that is called “the beast.” By a series of miracles, a world in crisis is persuaded to worship this system. Nations surrender their sovereignty and the world worships “the beast,” asking “who is able to make war with [the beast]?” (verse 4). To enforce this type of “peace,” he makes war on the people of God and he has authority over all “tribes and nations”—a world-wide power (verse 7).

Revelation 17 describes this “beast” receiving power from 10 kings. Again, the “peace” that is brought leads to war

against God. The beast and his system will make war with the Lamb [Jesus Christ], but in the end will be overcome by Him.

Throughout the ages man has sought to organize a universal state. What began at Babylon as an attempt to reach to the heavens and defy God will be resurrected in an age-ending attempt to unify the nations into a political and economic system. The intended goal of this system will be to bring order and peace among the warring factions of humanity. But once “peace” is attained, the attractive mask will be removed to reveal a hideous beast of a system that will tear and destroy any opposition to its rule and authority. The desire of the ages—peace—will prove elusive one more time, when left in the hands of man.

The stage will be set for the climactic battle at the end.

### Christ’s intervention

Peace, when left to humans, has little chance of permanence. This system of Babylon that arises will be part of a time of world calamity unlike any experienced in history. The prophet Daniel was shown, “There shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation” (Daniel 12:1). Christ spoke of this time as well. “For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved . . .” He offered the light at the end of the tunnel when He added, “but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened” (Matthew 24:21-22).

This final time of war will be in the hands of God. Remember that Revelation 5 shows us that it is the Lamb who unleashes the seals. Christ is in charge of history, and He will bring this trial to a conclusion, resulting in peace for all peoples. But genuine peace will not come without a terrible cost in human suffering.

The final war to be waged will be of God’s design. It will serve to humble mankind to the point that people will obey God and become willing to live the way that will produce peace.

Look at the description of this time

of world conflict. Revelation 8 begins with the opening of the seventh seal, containing seven trumpet plagues of unimaginable destruction upon the earth. The next chapter reports that the sixth trumpet sounds: “Then the sixth angel sounded: And I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, ‘Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.’ So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released to kill a third of mankind. Now the number of the army of the horsemen was two hundred million” (Revelation 9:13-16).

This 200-million-person army is fearsome to contemplate. But what is important to understand in this verse is God’s control over the armies and the destruction marching across the face of the earth. One unmistakable message of the book of Revelation is God’s control of seemingly uncontrollable events.

Verse 18 shows a third of mankind, more than 2 billion lives, snuffed out by three plagues. The only hope of human survival is the reality of Christ’s intervention to prevent the destruction of the earth and its inhabitants.

As the “crisis at the close” reaches its crescendo, the heavens will open and Christ will appear on a white horse. Here, in God’s message of hope, appears a fifth horseman whose ride will be decisive and final. Revelation 19:11 says He is “called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.”

Christ will wage this battle in righteousness because He alone holds the keys to death and the grave (Revelation 1:18). No other person waging battle or war in history, no matter how “just” the cause may seem, can make this claim. God’s judgment upon the nations has been building over the millennia and will be executed at precisely the right time.

This ultimate battle will result in the advent of the Kingdom of God. Finally there will be lasting peace.

But before this takes place two other horsemen will ride. In our next installment we’ll look at the ride of the third horse, famine. ❖

# The Palace of Versailles—Again at the Center of World Events

*Few news sources are reporting the growing rift between France and Germany on the one side and the United States, Britain and their allies on the other in a potential Middle East war. World News and Prophecy looks beyond the obvious, with the help of Bible prophecy to bring you unique perspective and clear understanding. You need to comprehend the forces shaping our world.*

by Melvin Rhodes

**A**fter three wars between Germany and France in seven decades, both countries were determined to avoid any further conflict between them. This commitment laid the foundation for the European Union, soon to be a 25-member economic union of European countries. It will surpass the United States as the world's biggest single economic power in May of next year, when 10 new countries join the EU.

Shortly after the 1957 signing of the Treaty of Rome that created what was then called the European Economic Community (EEC)—a treaty that bound the two former belligerents with Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg, the original six members—the two leaders of France and Germany met in January 1963 to sign a treaty of friendship. Significantly, the two leaders were giants in the history of their respective nations—Konrad Adenauer, the first chancellor of the postwar Federal Republic of (West) Germany, and France's President Charles de Gaulle, the founder of the Fifth Republic, who ended the instability and infighting that had plagued his country in the postwar years.

Exactly four decades later, on Jan. 22, 2003, the two nations made another giant leap forward as the driving force of the new Europe.

Meeting in the Palace of Versailles, symbolic for both nations, the parliaments of the two nations sat in joint session, an occasion unprecedented in the history of nations. Plans call for future joint cabinet meetings, thereby further cementing the close ties between the two countries.

Prior to the joint parliamentary session, Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder and President Jacques Chirac met together and set the pace for the future destiny of Europe by refusing to endorse a U.S./U.K. led attack on Iraq. Anti-Americanism has been one of the driving forces behind the thrust for European union—a feeling that there is an urgent need for another super-

power to stop American “unilateralism” in military adventures like the one against Saddam Hussein.

Americans find this lack of support from “allies” perplexing. France and Germany are not the only two allies of the United States against the war. Greece, another EU member and current holder of the presidency of the European Council of Ministers, along with some of the other members of the EU are also against military action.

All these “allies” are fellow members of NATO, formed in 1949. NATO was set up at a time when the Soviet Union and its communist satellites in eastern Europe were threatening the freedom and independence of the western half of the continent. NATO guaranteed that if one member nation was attacked by an external force, all the members would take that as an attack on all and react accordingly. The first time this mutual assistance accord was invoked was after Sept. 11, 2001, when member nations came to the aid of the United States. Technically, the NATO treaty does not apply in the Iraqi situation as Iraq has not attacked any member state. It is also outside of the North Atlantic-European theater of operations. Additionally, the perceived purpose of an invasion of Iraq, in the words of U.S. President George Bush, is “regime change,” something not sanctioned by either NATO or the UN.

## Seismic shift in geopolitics

Not even 18 months has gone by since the events of Sept. 11, but that day has led to a seismic shift in geopolitics. The signs were already there prior to the attacks on Washington, D.C., and New York, but it has since become clearer that the world is dividing into three forces, all competing for universal dominance.

The first force is led by the United States and is a capitalist free-for-all that is strongly based on individualism, promising unlimited opportuni-

*Not even 18 months has gone by since the events of Sept. 11, but that day has led to a seismic shift in geopolitics. The world is dividing into three forces, all competing for universal dominance.*

ties for the creation of wealth and the acquisition of more material possessions. This force dreams of globalization, the opening up of all markets to enable it to continue to grow and prosper. Out of the three, this force is the youngest. As U.S. Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan pointed out when in London recently to receive an honorary knighthood from the queen, it all started in England about 300 years ago.

The second force, in embryonic form since the fall of the shah of Iran in 1979, is radical Islamics using force to promote their political views. In fact, the origins of this can be traced back to Muhammad 14 centuries ago, but its most recent incarnation first appeared on the world scene with the overthrow of the pro-Western shah and the holding of American hostages in the U.S. embassy for 444 days, finally released the day of U.S. President Ronald Reagan's inauguration. If anybody had any doubts about where these radical Islamics were headed, the events of Sept. 11 should have made it a lot clearer. As with the American economic system, radical Islamics seek universal domination, believing that the world will not have true peace until everybody on the planet is a Muslim. Although not all Muslims are fundamentalists, extremism is growing and all Muslims share the goal of a world completely converted to Islam.

The third force has also been in embryonic form for a long time, tracing its origins back centuries, further even than Islam, back to the days of the Roman Empire. This force has developed greatly in the aftermath of 9/11, emerging as a serious contender for global leadership. It is the European Union.

These three competing forces do not have clearly defined demarcation lines. There are, for example, Muslims in the United States and the European Union. The United Kingdom remains a member of the EU but is arguably in the American camp. One of America's two biggest political parties would be quite comfortable with the EU model, while there are those in Europe who would prefer to be more American. In the Islamic world, some have embraced many of the materialistic values of the United States while remaining followers of Muhammad. But the three overall forces are extant,

nonetheless, becoming clearer as the ripple effect from Sept. 11 settles.

### Western divisions

There are similarities between the EU and the United States, but there are also many differences. As with America, the EU encourages private enterprise—up to a point. The role of the government in each EU member nation is greater than in the United States, theoretically ensuring a more equitable division of wealth.

One division increasingly apparent is in the area of faith. Americans are much more religious than Europeans, with faith influencing politics in the United States in a way that has not been seen in Europe for two centuries. One commentator interviewed on BBC radio thought that the strong religious beliefs of both President Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair were a factor in their alienation from other Western nations.

Historical experience and perspective is also different on both sides of the Atlantic. Europeans are surrounded by history, with castles and cathedrals that are sometimes over a thousand years old. Awareness of history is much greater than in the United States.

Americans tend not to look back. Europeans are looking back, learning from the lessons of the past before moving forward. With so many wars in their collective history, the nations of Europe are determined to unite their continent in such a way that never again will there be a repeat of World Wars I and II. Conscious of the past, they are also determined that no other nation will bring about a cataclysm to rival those former conflicts. Opposition to war is therefore greater in Europe than in the United States, though opposition in America is also increasing.

Remembering the two world wars of the 20th century, Americans see themselves as the saviors of Europe and cannot understand what they perceive to be the ingratitude of today's Europeans.

The perspective in Europe is somewhat different.

The French perception, for example, is that America betrayed them twice in the 1950s, in consequence bringing about the collapse of the Fourth Republic in 1958. Both betrayals were during the Eisenhower administration. The first, in 1954, was the failure of the United States

to come through with requested military aid at the battle of Dien Bien Phu, which resulted in a French defeat and the loss of Indochina. The United States also paid a penalty for this decision, as the Vietnam War was the consequence of French withdrawal. Two years later, in 1956, American pressure forced Britain and France to withdraw from Suez after a combined military force had retrieved the Suez Canal, seized by Egypt. This, in turn, led to the French losing Algeria, the home of over a million French nationals.

The British learned from this that they amounted to little without American support and have been firm supporters of the United States in subsequent decades. The French learned a different lesson—that they could never trust America, still a complication for U.S. foreign policy at this time. It can, of course, be said that the Americans have learned the same about France.

### Franco-German ties

Closer to home, the French have also learned the necessity of a close relationship with Germany. German troops arrived in Paris during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71 (leading to the fall of the Second French Empire of Napoleon III) and again in 1940. In the interim, World War I saw massive loss of French lives. Three conflicts in 70 years. "Never again," is the French wish.

In the geopolitical context, this means that Paris and Berlin view their relationship with each other to be of far greater importance than the relationship each has with Washington or London.

Making the Paris-Berlin axis of greater importance was the reunification of Germany following the fall of the Berlin Wall and the more recent transference of Germany's capital to Berlin. Both events emboldened Germany to play a much greater role in world affairs. This has even been encouraged by Washington which, forgetting the lessons of Germany's militaristic past, requested that Berlin send troops to the Balkans and Afghanistan.

Always fearful of a resurgent Germany, the French are not about to loosen the ties that bind them to their bigger neighbor. Franco-German ties remain of paramount importance.

They are of importance to Germany as

well. Many liberal Germans, mindful of Germany causing two world wars in 25 years, want Germany to be firmly contained within the EU, as do the other member nations. As France is the second biggest nation in the EU after Germany, the French connection is important to Germany as well. The Germans gain international respectability through this close link.

This is not to say that the countries have the same vision for Europe. The Germans want a federal Europe, modeled on the German system. The French prefer a confederation with power remaining in the hands of national governments. However, both are committed to a full European Union, a superpower to rival the United States.

Economically, it already does. The EU controls more of the world's trade than the United States, giving it greater global economic clout. For example, Europe recently demanded that Iran abolish the death penalty before any trade agreement could be signed. European economic power is set to become far greater when the 10 new members join in May 2004. Largely unnoticed in the United States, the European currency, only one year old in January, has surpassed the American dollar in value, a reflection of growing international confidence in Europe at the expense of America. The disparity between the two currencies may widen in the event of further conflict in the Middle East.

In foreign policy, the United States and the EU disagree most over the Middle East. This is partly the result of divergent economic interests, with the Europeans more dependent on oil from the Persian Gulf. On the issue of Israel and the Palestinians, European support of the latter stands in stark contrast to American support for Israel.

### **Rising Islamic power**

This brings us back to the other force in this geopolitical trinity—radical Islamics. Again, Europeans have a different perspective of Islam than the Americans do. Apart from terrorism, let's consider the political power of Islam in Europe.

Most Americans are aware of how powerful a force American Jews have been in determining the course of American elections. What few realize is that the percentage of Muslims in Western

Europe is far greater than the percentage of Jews in America, making Islam a major factor in European politics. Fearful of domestic upheaval, European governments tread carefully in dealing with Islamic nations of the Middle East.

If European governments support an attack on Iraq, the consequences at home could be disastrous.

The announced formation of a pan-European Islamic political party in January can only add to the fears of European governments. There are more Muslims in Europe than there are French nationals. Almost all of these people have arrived in Europe since World War II or are the children of immigrants.

Sept. 11 has increased European fears of attacks by radical Islamic elements, repeatedly a historic threat to the continent. The Muslim Ottoman Turks twice attacked the city of Vienna in the 16th and 17th centuries, while Moorish Muslims reached the gates of Paris in the eighth century.

### **Biblical importance of the three forces**

For decades, the Church of God's publications have been focusing the attention of readers on these three forces now at the forefront of world affairs. How did we know that these competing powers would come to dominate the world scene?

The answer is found in the pages of your Bible. In the book of Daniel we read, "There is a God in heaven who reveals secrets" (Daniel 2:28). In verse 21 we note that God "removes kings and raises up kings." In the prophetic book of Amos we see, "Surely, the Lord GOD does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7). Almost one third of the Bible is prophecy and most of that prophecy relates to end-time events that usher in the Kingdom of God.

Throughout history, nations have continually risen and fallen. No power that reaches the top remains there for long. Before World War II, the British Empire was the dominant force in the world and had been for two centuries. Before Britain, it was France; before France, Spain. Two thousand years ago, the Roman Empire was the mightiest force on earth. God truly does remove and set up kings.

Before the second coming of Jesus Christ, the Bible shows us there will be

another powerful force in the world that is presently not clearly seen. This is a final resurrection of the European-centered Roman Empire, which dominated Europe until the fifth century. Various attempts have been made throughout history to restore Rome's glory. The last failed attempt was under Mussolini, who proclaimed the resurrection of the Roman Empire in 1922. Later, in alliance with Hitler's Germany, the original "axis of evil" attempted to conquer the world. Together, they succeeded in briefly conquering most of Europe.

Europe is again coming together, this time not by force, but voluntarily. The two dominant nations of the new Europe are Germany and France. Forty years after these two ancient nations signed a treaty of friendship, they are now flexing their muscles by refusing to back the United States and Britain in war against Iraq. At the same time, they are pushing vigorously for a full military and political union of Europe's ancient continent, a revived Roman Empire founded by the 1957 Treaty of Rome.

Prophecy shows this power coming together for a short time prior to Christ's return. It will be more powerful than the United States and will threaten the peace of the world (Revelation 17:12-14).

Pushing at this prophesied European "beast" power in the northern hemisphere will be a powerful nation or group of nations led by "the king of the South," possibly emerging now as radical elements of the Islamic world increasingly turn against the West and nonbelievers.

Meanwhile, more and more, the United States and Britain will see the world turning against them. These modern descendants of the biblical tribe of Joseph, part of the house of Israel, have progressively turned away from God in recent decades and will soon reap the consequences of their national sins. God says that He will "break the pride of [their] power" (Leviticus 26:19).

The relative decline of the English-speaking nations, the gradual rise of Europe and the sudden emergence of Islamic extremists with increased problems in the Middle East were prophesied in your Bibles centuries ago. These powerful forces are destined to clash prior to the second coming of Jesus Christ to establish the Kingdom of God upon the earth. ❖

# Who's Afraid of Turkey?

*The recent European Union summit conference in Copenhagen, Denmark, resulted in an agreement to admit 10 new members by May 2004. Turkey, however, continues to knock on the door to the EU, as it has for some 15 years.*

by Paul Kieffer

The EU summit conference held in mid-December in the Danish capital of Copenhagen produced an agreement between the European Union and 10 countries seeking EU membership. On May 1, 2004, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia will become full members of the EU. For Belgian Foreign Minister Louis Michel, the conference was a historic occasion for the EU. "This is the reunification of Europe," Michel told reporters after the agreement was finalized.

The Copenhagen summit was indeed noteworthy. The 10 new member countries represent the single largest addition to EU membership in EU history and produce an increase in the EU's surface area of approximately 30 percent. As of May 1, 2004, the EU will comprise nearly 500 million people in 25 countries, a population roughly 60 percent larger than that of the United States.

One country, however, was disappointed by the summit: Turkey. It has had "associated" status since 1963 and first applied for full membership in 1987. Membership has been denied since then because of Turkey's occasionally unstable political system and human rights record, which were deemed incompatible with European standards.

There is also concern about the cost of Turkish membership. Admitting 10 new nations next year with a combined population of 75 million will cost an estimated 40 billion euros (over \$40 billion). A poorer Turkey with a population of 70 million could cost other member nations much more.

However, the EU indicated its willingness to decide on starting official membership negotiations with Turkey by the end of 2004, provided Turkey continues its internal reform process. For example, within the last two years Turkey announced that it would no longer carry out the death penalty, one of the prerequisites for membership negotiations with the EU.

Turkey had hoped for a firm commitment on receiving official candidate status and starting membership negotiations. Understandably, the Turkish government was disappointed, and Danish television reported that Turkey's new prime minister, Abdullah Gül, initially termed the EU offer "unacceptable," but later indicated that his government would continue the reform process.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair was reported to have pushed for a more positive statement concerning the possibility of Turkish membership. Italy and Spain also support a higher priority treatment of Turkey's request to become part of the EU.

## Opposition to Turkish membership

Before the summit, concerns were voiced in France and Germany about admitting Turkey as a full member of the EU. A month before the summit former French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing rejected membership for Turkey in an interview with the French daily *Le Monde*. According to Giscard, Turkish membership would mean "the end of the European Union" (Nov. 15, 2002).

In the interview, Giscard characterized Turkey as a country with close ties to Europe, but not a true European country. "The Turkish capital [Ankara] is not in Europe and 95 percent of the Turkish population lives outside of Europe," Giscard stated. He also summarized one of the main concerns that many in Germany have about Turkey's bid for EU membership: Turkey has "another culture, a different approach and a different way of life."

Giscard also emphasized some of the practical considerations that Turkish membership would involve. Turkey's population is approaching that of Germany, which is currently the EU's most populous nation. It has a surface area larger than the EU's largest member state (France). Should it become a full member of the EU, Turkey would immediately have the second largest delegation of representatives at the European Parliament in Strasbourg.

Turkish population growth is a concern for many in the EU. Turkey had less than 40 million inhabitants in 1963, when it was granted associated status with the EU. This year Turkish population is expected to reach 70 million, and if the current birth rate is sustained, by the middle of the century, Turkey could have as many people as France and Germany combined.

In an article published in the prestigious German weekly newspaper *Die Zeit* the same week as the Copenhagen summit, former German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt echoed Giscard's comments. Like Giscard, Schmidt supports close ties with Turkey and its economic development. In his opinion, however,

(See "TURKEY," page 14)

*Will the dividing line between Christianity and Islam also be the delineation between Europe and the Middle East? If so, Turkey's bid for EU membership will ultimately be unsuccessful.*

# What Will Be in 2003?

*What will happen in 2003? No human being knows for sure. But we can observe and analyze the storm clouds that are on the horizon.*

by Don Ward

**P**ollsters in recent surveys asked the American people: What are your greatest concerns for 2003? In most polls, the number one answer is war in the Middle East; and number two is the economy.

The heat of the rhetoric in the Middle East grows hotter and the buildup for war is increasing with each passing day. With the most recent report from the United Nations' weapons inspectors stating that Iraq is not cooperating and has not provided documentation of having destroyed known weapons of mass destruction, the drum beats of war are deafening. Even the most moderate member of the Bush administration, Secretary of State Colin Powell, stated that time was running out for the Iraqis. Fox News is reporting that U.S. special operations forces are already on the ground in Iraq.

How will war with Iraq affect your life? War in the Middle East will impact your wallet immediately. Oil prices are rising rapidly—the spot price now exceeds \$33 a barrel. Energy costs are soaring as the United States struggles through an arctic winter that dumped snow over the northern tier of states with thermometers plummeting as far south as Miami, Florida.

The stock market is down for the third year in a row, consumer spending is slumping, unemployment is growing, manufacturing continues to slow, the trade deficit is spiraling out of sight. The prospects for a brighter economic future grow dimmer.

According to Stratfor Report, Japan, with the world's second largest economy, continues to wallow in a protracted economic bust. Japan's Nikkei index has lost 19 percent of its value over the last 12 months.

Germany, with the world's third largest economy, also continues to experience grave difficulties. Germany's unemployment rate stands at 10 percent. Some of the nation's largest banks are in trouble.

Recently, German business leaders expressed their concerns with the economic policies of Gerhard Schroeder's government. The chairman of Adidas called the government

“conceptionless” and said that “nobody has a clue in this overall chaos,” while the head of IKB Deutsche Industriebank said, “Not since the end of the war have conditions been as bad as today.”

## **Worldwide quest for armaments to accelerate**

Much of the economic vitality of the nations is continually siphoned off in their pursuit of armaments. The nations of the world are trying to beat as many plowshares into swords as possible before the bombs start falling. The prophet Joel prophesies of the time that we are now entering: “Proclaim this among the nations: Prepare for war! Wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near, let them come up. Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears; let the weak say, ‘I am strong’” (Joel 3:9-10).

America's military is the country's biggest business. “In the Department of Defense's most recently published report, the 2001 defense budget was more than \$360 billion, of which \$60 billion was spent on procurement and almost \$40 billion on research and development. The budget for national defense is expected to exceed \$360 billion by 2006” (Mark Williams and Andrew P. Madden, “New Technologies May Revolutionize War,” *Red Herring Magazine*, Aug. 1, 2001).

U.S. President George W. Bush has ordered the military to begin installing a national missile defense system. Ten ground-based interceptors will be installed in Fort Greeley, Alaska, by 2004 and 10 more by 2005 or 2006. The Danish and British governments have received requests from Washington to use radar sites in Greenland and England, but they have not yet sent replies. Many analysts believe that this move will set off another arms race similar to the one that consumed much of the resources of the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War.

North Korea, one of President Bush's “axis of evil” nations, has openly admitted that it has the bomb. The nation has pulled out of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and has

*In view of all that is happening in the world today, we do well to heed Christ's admonition, “Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.”*

expelled the UN observers who were monitoring its nuclear power reactor. The situation in Korea appears to be reaching crisis proportions.

North Korea appears to be coldly calculating the odds, wondering if America is able and willing to fight an active war on two fronts.

China, the world's most populous nation, is sounding a clear clarion call that she intends to displace the United States as the preeminent power on the face of the earth.

Bible prophecy reveals that a powerful alliance will be the great world power just before Christ returns. According to Daniel, a "beast" power will set up its headquarters in Jerusalem. "He shall also enter the Glorious Land . . . But news from the east and the north shall trouble him; therefore he shall go out with great fury to destroy and annihilate many. And he shall plant the tents of his palace between the seas and the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and no one will help him" (Daniel 11:41, 44-45).

Tidings out of the east and the north (directions are from the point of view of Jerusalem in the prophecy) trouble the "beast," indicating that the world is divided between East and West. Neither China nor nations from the Middle East will be in control of the Middle East at the end of this present evil age.

### **Disease epidemics to escalate**

It is estimated that some 20 million people will die of AIDS on the continent of Africa in the next few years. American politicians, businessmen and entertainment figures have visited Africa and pledged financial support in fighting AIDS. Bill Gates, founder of Microsoft, has pledged millions of dollars to fight AIDS there.

On Jan. 28, in his State of the Union address, President Bush proposed an emergency plan for AIDS relief to help in the fight against AIDS in Africa. The intent of this plan is to "prevent 7 million new AIDS infections, treat at least 2 million people with life-extending drugs and provide humane care for millions of people suffering from AIDS and for children orphaned by AIDS." Congress was asked to commit

\$15 billion over the next five years to fight AIDS in Africa and the Caribbean.

In an effort to try to understand the nature of disease epidemics, scientists have been looking at the environmental connection to meningitis, which ravages desert areas of North Africa. They believe that there is a connection to the "desertification" that's been happening in the past 40 years. The disease doesn't occur in the forested areas of central Africa, but is endemic in the dry region stretching from Senegal to Ethiopia.

Many of the more communicable diseases are becoming more and more resistant to the so-called miracle drugs. New and more virulent strains of various diseases are rearing their ugly heads.

### **Upset weather conditions, food disparity**

Scientists have made great strides in being able to predict the weather. Yet they cannot control it. The ultimate goal of science is to predict *and* control. But the weather is like the human tongue, no man can tame it. Scientists talk about global warming and the El Niño effect, but they still don't really know what is causing either one.

In some areas there is drought and in other areas too much rain. The prophet Amos prophesied of such a time. "I also withheld rain from you, when there were still three months to the harvest. I made it rain on one city, I withheld rain from another city. One part was rained upon, and where it did not rain the part withered" (Amos 4:7).

Up to 24,000 people a day—three quarters of them children under the age of 5—die of hunger-related causes. More than 800 million people are chronically undernourished, 180 million children are severely underweight for their age and, says the UN, 2 billion people suffer from nutrient-deficiency diseases.

Yet the problem is not one of a scarcity of food. The United States exports 60 percent of the food it grows, but even in America, 26 million people are in need of food handouts.

Only 20 years ago, Ghana used to

export rice; today its rice industry has collapsed under U.S. and Thai imports. Many Pakistani farmers have burned their harvests in desperation because they are losing money. About 20 percent of Africa's food now comes from rich countries, even though it could in many cases grow its own.

### **Water becomes more and more scarce**

As the world seeks and fights for the oil fields of the globe, another liquid will become more precious than all the world's petroleum reserves. That liquid is water.

A World Bank forecast for South Korea, a relatively well-watered country, calculates that if its economy grows 5 percent a year, industry's demand for water will cut in half the amount available for farming within 23 years.

In China, the water needed to produce one ton of wheat worth \$200 can be used to expand industrial output by \$14,000. Farming, it is thought, will always lose out to industry.

The paradox is that as nations continue to increase industrial production, there is an exponential increase of water usage. The result is less and less water for growing food. As the food supply of a country decreases, the more it depends on other countries.

### **Moral decline continues to accelerate**

Various authors have written volumes concerning America's obsession with materialism and pleasure seeking. Supreme Court nominee Robert Bork gained notoriety with his book *Slouching Towards Gomorrah*, in which he graphically describes the disturbing trends of America's increasing obsession with sensual pleasure.

The United States is now in what I call "the post-immoral state" and has lapsed into a state of amorality. Amorality means no standards of morality are universally accepted. As Victor Davis Hanson writes in *The National Review Online*, "There is a postmodern amorality afloat—the dividend of years of an American educational system in which historical ignorance, cultural relativism, and

(See "2003," page 14)

“2003,” (Continued from page 13)

well-intentioned theory, in place of cold facts, has reigned” (“Postmodern Palestine,” March 29, 2002).

When a nation falls into the cesspool of amorality, the only universally accepted standard is that all lifestyles are to be equally accepted. Thus the greatest evil becomes intolerance of another person’s lifestyle. Then intolerance is suddenly defined as hate, and then laws are passed to prosecute those who would condemn another person’s lifestyle.

So one of the most disturbing trends in American life is the secularization of American society, to the point that all standards of behavior are to be equally tolerated. This has far-reaching implications for the people of America. America, a nation in which 90 percent of the people profess that they believe in God. America, a nation in which the inscription on the currency reads, “In God We Trust.” America, a nation that repeats the pledge of allegiance to the flag with the affirmation, “One nation under God.” America, a nation in which jurors and witnesses are sworn in with the words, “so help me God.”

So the question of the day is, do Americans really believe in the God of the Bible? Based on the popular culture of the day, one would have to conclude that their belief is betrayed by their hedonistic lifestyles. Many Americans are now driven to try to squeeze out every ounce of pleasure they can while at the same time wallowing in the pits of hopelessness and despair, having lost sight of personal and national integrity.

### **A warning to all**

In view of all of this, Christ admonishes everyone who will listen to “take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man” (Luke 21:34-36). ❖

“TURKEY,” (Continued from page 11)

EU membership for Ankara “would mean full freedom of movement for Turkish citizens and make the urgent need for the integration of Turks and Kurds living in Germany a lost cause.”

With more than 3 million Turks already living in both France and Germany, full EU membership for Turkey would only mean more Turkish migration to more prosperous EU countries, especially in view of expected population growth in Turkey in this century.

Like Giscard, Helmut Schmidt sees Turkish EU membership as an “opening of the door for a similarly plausible full membership for other Islamic countries in Africa and the Middle East.” The result, according to Schmidt, would be the eventual demise of the EU as a political union to becoming merely a free trade zone.

Schmidt’s statement on Turkish EU membership came only five weeks after the Christian Socialist Union’s (CSU) party convention. The CSU became the first political party represented in Germany’s Bundestag to declare its opposition to Turkish membership in the EU. Edmund Stoiber, the CSU party chairman and unsuccessful candidate for chancellor in September’s national election, announced the party’s position, which was approved unanimously by the party delegates.

The chairman of the larger Christian Democratic Union (CDU), Angela Merkel, who attended the CSU convention as a guest, voiced her party’s support for the decision. Like Giscard, Schmidt and Stoiber, Merkel is in favor of good relations with Turkey, but not as an EU member.

The CSU’s announcement is a clever populist move, since many Germans are concerned about the possibility of Turkish membership in the EU. Stoiber has put German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder in a difficult position. Schroeder has been pressured by the United States to support accelerated negotiations for Turkish EU membership. Stoiber’s move is a role reversal of the recent election campaign, when Schroeder caught the CDU/CSU opposition off-guard with his “no blood for oil” proclamation concerning possible German participation in a war against Iraq.

### **Will EU remain a “Christian club”?**

The clear position taken by Germany’s main opposition parties seems predestined

to revive a claim made by former Turkish Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz. During a visit to Washington in December 1997 to seek support for his country’s bid for EU membership, Yilmaz accused former German Chancellor Helmut Kohl of wanting to make the EU into a “Christian club.” Kohl had said earlier that the EU was founded on Christian principles, a statement that Yilmaz interpreted as intended for his country with its Muslim population.

In their comments on Turkey’s bid for EU membership, all of the European politicians and senior statesmen cited differing values and ways of life. None, however, stated it so clearly as Helmut Schmidt:

“Thanks to the church and the crusades, most Europeans since the Middle Ages have grown up with a hostile rejection of Islam. And from the Islamic side admonitions for religious tolerance occur with scarcity. Islam lacks the developmental influences of the renaissance, the enlightenment and the separation of spiritual and political authority, which are so decisive for European culture. For that reason Islam was not able to gain a foothold in Europe, despite 500 years of Ottoman expansion . . . For several decades many Muslims have been living in Europe . . . but to date integration or even assimilation have not really been successful anywhere” (*Die Zeit*, No. 50, 2002).

Will the dividing line between Christianity and Islam also be the delineation between Europe and the Middle East? If so, Turkey’s bid for EU membership will ultimately be unsuccessful.

A recent election in Turkey emphasized this Islamic connection. Since the founding of the Turkish republic in 1924 the country has charted an officially secular course. But recent elections brought victory to Islamic fundamentalists. Although the constitution prohibits them from pursuing overtly religious policies in the secular state, nevertheless voter sympathy is increasingly with religious conservatives, as it is in many Muslim nations.

At the turn of the 20th century the Turks ruled over most of the Arab world. Could the recent revival of Islamic fundamentalism in Turkey mean that the Turks and the Arabs will once again be united through their common allegiance to Islam? The outcome of the crisis that centers on its southern neighbor Iraq will probably determine the answer to this question. ❖

**“TWO MINUTES,”** (Continued from page 16)

Now, four months later, how would Abraham Lincoln give voice to that “vast mournful roar” of battle? How could he make sense out of the senseless in responding to an invitation “to make a few appropriate remarks” at this national cemetery dedication?

First came a two-hour oratorical rendering by the former governor of Massachusetts, Edward Everett. Now what would the man from Illinois say? What could he possibly say, that hadn’t been already said? One legend says that he wrote his Gettysburg Address on the back of an envelope as he rode to Gettysburg. That simply didn’t happen! The 266 words were incredibly well-crafted and organized in a theme almost spiritual in nature. Only the phrase “under God” would be added at the podium, as Lincoln knew he needed all the help he could get.

Lincoln’s intended thrust was to move “their moans” from the cry of death to the collective cries of “the birth of freedom.” William Safire, on pages 49 and 50 of his 1992 book *Lend Me Your Ear*, offers great thought to the construction of this national treasure. He suggests that Lincoln’s famous introduction of “four score and seven years ago” offers a “biblical solemnity to the number 87.” He goes on to suggest the speech may best be understood by focusing on “the metaphor of birth, death, and re-birth,” with obvious undertones of Christ’s triumph over death.

Safire illustrates how “four images of birth are embedded in its opening sentence: the nation was ‘conceived in liberty’; ‘brought forth’ or born, ‘by our fathers’; ‘with all men created equal.’” He then focuses on how Lincoln touches on images of death with thoughts of “final resting place,” “who gave their lives,” “brave men living and dead,” “these honored dead”—and by verbs of religious purification, “consecrate and hallow.”

Safire finishes evaluating this metaphor of existence by moving beyond the nation’s symbolic birth and death to focus on rebirth, that is resurrection. As Safire so eloquently defines, “out of the scene of death, ‘this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom’ and thus, ‘shall not perish,’” i.e., be immortal! Lincoln does not leave America with simply a distant past or troubled present, but the hope of a bright and renewable future.

He recognized that the recipe for democracy had been brought forward in 1776 and placed into the fiery oven of reality. He was assured it would survive.

### **Constant rhythm of dedication**

But beyond the powerful metaphor of life’s cycles, it is his use of the one word “dedicate” that gives a constant rhythm to all Lincoln says, and ties the three metaphorical parts into the ongoing existence of rock-solid purpose. As Safire indicates, Lincoln uses the word six times to build to his point.

Lincoln’s reasoning with regard to this word, Safire states, is “rooted in consecration, making the secular sacred by pledging it to God. The first three dedications spring from the theme of the Declaration of Independence’s ideal ‘that all men are created equal.’ The fourth dedication is reserved to enshrine ‘a portion of that field as a final resting place.’ The fifth and sixth dedications move beyond death to the future: ‘to the unfinished work’ and ‘to the great task remaining before us.’” This unmistakable rhythm links the honored fallen dead with the yet standing listener so that from their martyrdom may come the living sacrifice of “increased devotion to that cause.”

After the speech, Lincoln was displeased with his presentation. Many in the media scorned his message. But it was Edward Everett, the other speaker, who said it best when he wrote the president, “I should be glad if I could flatter myself that I came as near to the central idea of the occasion, in two hours, as you did in two minutes.” Yes, sometimes even when we don’t see immediate results, our words and actions can touch others.

### **Reunited in brotherly love**

Geoffrey C. Ward picks up the story in 1913, at a 50th anniversary reunion at Gettysburg. Thousands of old veterans came to be a part of what one man called a “radiant fellowship of the fallen.” The climax was a reenactment of Pickett’s Charge. Thousands of spectators watched the Confederate veterans emerge from the woods of Seminary Ridge and once again advance. One Union veteran said, “We could not see rifles or bayonets but canes and crutches. We soon could distinguish the more agile ones aiding those less able to maintain their places in the ranks.”

As they neared the Northern line, they broke into one final, defiant rebel yell. At the sound, after half a century, a moan, a “gigantic gasp of unbelief,” rose from the Union veterans. “It was then,” said an observer, “that the Yankees, unable to restrain themselves any longer, burst from behind the stone wall, and flung themselves upon their former enemies . . . not in mortal combat, but re-united in brotherly love and affection” (*The Civil War: an Illustrated History*, 1992, p. 412).

### **Not lost in the moment**

While not as eloquent as a Lincoln, the staff of *World News and Prophecy* is equally “dedicated” to a bright tomorrow and the rebirth of humanity in the bonds of brotherly love. All of our articles are “dedicated” to this cause. All we say points to one galvanizing, hopeful conclusion, crystallized in Revelation 21:1-5:

“Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.’ Then He who sat on the throne said, ‘Behold, I make all things new.’ And He said to me, ‘Write, for these words are true and faithful.’” Yes, 150 words in nine sentences that tell it all.

Do our lives have a seamless consistency of dedication, like Lincoln’s words? Could you sit down and write out in 266 words what you are all about? Take a break, soon, and with pencil and paper create two minutes dedicated to eternity. Why? Perhaps the apostle Peter echoes best the millennial refrain of “this is the way, walk you in it” (Isaiah 30:21), when he says, “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have” (1 Peter 3:15, NIV). Such answers just aren’t written on the back of an envelope at a moment’s notice, but are chiseled in our hearts one day at a time. ❖



# This is the Way

ISAIAH 30:21

by Robin Webber

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## Two Minutes Dedicated to Eternity

**H**ow do you explain the unexplainable? How do you make sense out of the senseless? When such times come, and come they will, you had better know what truly comprises the fabric of your being. A look back in history can provide answers for what lies ahead.

Nearly 140 years ago, in the midst of the American Civil War, one man had to reach deep to inspire his exhausted countrymen to move beyond the weary moment of frustration into the bright hope of tomorrow. His message lasted only two minutes. The entirety of his life's work and the stated purpose for his nation's existence was summed up in 266 words, encased in a mere 10 sentences. What many consider to be the greatest speech in American history was offered as a dedication to the dead and to those who remained alive after the western hemisphere's greatest battle. What events led to Abraham Lincoln's speech on that cold November day?

### A three-day, life-and-death struggle

Four months before, great bands of soldiers were surging from Virginia into Maryland. General Robert E. Lee wanted to take the fight directly into the North with the hope that a major victory on Union soil would crush his opponent's desire to maintain the war effort. But both armies had lost sense of one another's movements. It was a tense time.

The need for shoes would set the wheels in motion for the greatest of Civil War battles. There was rumored to be a large supply of shoes stored in the little crossroads town of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. On July 1, an infantry officer under Confederate General Ewell's command went to the village to commandeer gear for his foot-sore troops. Thus began the epic three-day struggle between armies of the North and South.

They had found one another, and there was no turning back.

Immediately, couriers were sent out for reinforcements. By the second day of battle, 85,000 Union troops were squared off with 65,000 Confederate troops anxious for a knockout blow against their one-time fellow countrymen.

### A vast mournful roar

But it was the third day that would seal the fate of one side or the other. On this day, the Southern military leadership misread the North's continuing capabilities to battle. A human wall of 13,000 Confederate infantrymen, spread over a line of one-half mile, surged forward across a farm field towards their foes' elevated position.

Bruce Catton captures the moment: "As the Confederate infantrymen came on steadily and quietly nearing the awful climax of the war's greatest battle, Union artillery fire shook their ranks with deadly accuracy, and then both sides exploded in a tremendous clash of musketry." He goes on to describe an eyewitness account as to how "the battle noise was strange and terrible, a sound that came from thousands of human throats . . . like a vast mournful roar" (*American Heritage's Picture History of the Civil War*, 1982 edition, p. 344).

Of the 13,000 Southern troops who initially marched forward, in just a matter of minutes half would be dead or captured. "Pickett's Charge," as it came to be known, would seal the fate of the day. Three days of battle would end in nearly 51,000 total casualties that were nearly equally distributed over both sides. A staggering one third of all men engaged in this epic clash would be wounded or killed. The North had won, but at such cost! The South would never recover its position.

(See "TWO MINUTES," page 15)