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# *Intelligent Design v. Evolution: The Latest Battle in the Culture Wars*

*How will the ruling against teaching intelligent design in science classrooms in Dover, Pennsylvania, affect education throughout the United States?*

by Frank Dunkle

**O**n Dec. 20, 2005, the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania ruled that schools may not inform students of the theory of intelligent design (ID) in science classes, giving the enemies of religion another victory in the “Culture Wars.”

In his ruling, Federal Judge John E. Jones III said that such teaching violates the constitutional separation of church and state and concluded that ID is religious teaching and not a scientific theory.

The case arose in late 2004 when the Dover Area School Board passed a resolution saying that students would be made aware of gaps in Darwin’s theory of evolution and would be taught other theories, including intelligent design. The resolution specifically stated that the origin of life would not be taught in school.

The board adopted a statement to be read to ninth grade biology students. A number of parents reacted by filing suit to block the board’s plan, which would have been implemented in January 2005.

### **The controversial statement**

What could have aroused so much controversy and led some parents to believe they must take legal action to protect their children? Ninth grade students were to hear the following:

“The Pennsylvania Academic



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*Federal Judge John E. Jones III ruled that informing students of the theory of intelligent design in science classes violates the constitutional separation of church and state.*

Standards require students to learn about Darwin’s Theory of Evolution and eventually to take a standardized test of which evolution is a part.

“Because Darwin’s Theory is a theory, it continues to be tested as new evidence is discovered. The Theory is not a fact. Gaps in the Theory exist for which there is no evidence. A theory is defined as a well-tested explanation that unifies a broad range of observations.

“Intelligent Design is an explanation.” (See “INTELLIGENT DESIGN,” page 3)



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

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

**World News and Prophecy online:** Read *World News and Prophecy* as soon as it is completed. The next issue is scheduled to be available by Feb. 3, 2006, on the Internet at:

<http://www.wnponline.org>



"Whom heaven must receive until the times of

# Restoration

of all things ... ACTS 3:21

## The Limitations of Technology

Use Google, the biggest search engine on the Internet, just about every day, as I am sure you do. I don't even look up phone numbers in a book anymore. It is faster to "Google it." No wonder the founders of Google, Sergey Brin and Larry Page, are the toast of Silicon Valley. They have also been named "Men of the Year" by the *Financial Times*.

Technology is a wonderful thing. I am glad to be alive in this age and have access to the Internet, computers and all the wonders the microchip has brought to our world. The promise this technology holds for us is in many ways immeasurable. This massive computing power applied to the challenges facing our world holds out hope that solutions can be found that will improve the everyday lives of the world's poor.

Technology is being harnessed to prepare for a possible avian flu outbreak. A supercomputer at Los Alamos, New Mexico, is running simulations showing how fast and in what patterns an outbreak would spread. The hope is to quickly get a handle on a coming outbreak and lessen the overall impact. Can it be done? Possibly. One certainly hopes so.

Back to the inventors of Google. Brin and Page are in their early 30s and filled with energy and ambition. They have gone against the grain of computing to get this far. Their goal with their search engine seems to be to rival the human brain in speed and capacity.

A *Financial Times* article quotes Brin saying that the human brain is "proof of how [search] can be better." This slice of biological computing power is "very easy to use, in a sense, and it's very quick, and it's much faster than the way human/computer interactions work today... So it's clear there's no inherent ceiling we're hitting upon" (Dec. 23, 2005, p. 13). Can a computer search engine match the power of the human brain? What kind of world would that create?

I have a deep concern whenever I read such boasts from science. Because humanity achieves what was once impossible, it is increasingly impressed by what its hands have made and less impressed by what God's hands have made.

Frankly, I don't think man will ever create anything to match what God, the Creator of life, built into the human mind and body. Yes, I believe that God is the intelligent Designer and Creator of all life on this planet. As I see the continuing efforts to remove, bar and forbid the teaching or mention of God or Jesus Christ in the public forum, I have a greater concern about how mankind responds to the rise of science and technology. If, in looking to technology, we stop looking to God, we are headed into a box canyon with no escape.

Technology is growing exponentially and impacting our daily lives in more ways than we realize. The cost of data storage has become so inexpensive that it is feasible to preserve every form of communication, both verbal and written, we produce. That can be a blessing or a curse, depending on the values of those who have access and control of those records. That is the double-edged sword technology produces.

A world of science and technology without a core reliance on God creates a bleak existence. As people become dependent on scientific and technical achievements to the exclusion of the true spiritual values, we are in danger of creating a world without God.

When that happens, we will find ourselves without hope. We will be very close to what we see described in Genesis 11 at the Tower of Babel. In an attempt at self-deification, humans attempted to build a tower to the heavens, in defiance of God's will. God would not permit this to continue, and He confused the languages and scattered the people.

The Bible prophesies about a wealthy, probably highly technological system called "Babylon the great" (Revelation 18). It will be a system without a soul and will meet its doom at the return of Christ. God will not let this system bring an end to human life.

Technology has an important role in our world. But we should understand its limitations in discovering the deep spiritual truths that provide the missing dimension to life. For that we must rely on God and His revelation. Our free booklet *What Is Your Destiny?* is a good place to start your study to find the purpose of your life.

—Darris McNeely

**“INTELLIGENT DESIGN,”** (Continued from page 1)  
tion of the origin of life that differs from Darwin’s view. The reference book, *Of Pandas and People*, is available for students who might be interested in gaining an understanding of what Intelligent Design actually involves.

“With respect to any theory, students are encouraged to keep an open mind. The school leaves the discussion of the Origins of Life to individual students and their families. As a standards-driven district, class instruction focuses upon preparing students to achieve proficiency on Standards-based assessments” (*Tammy Kitzmiller, et al. v. Dover Area School District, et al.*, Case No. 04cv2688, pp. 1-2, [www.pamd.uscourts.gov/kitzmiller/kitzmiller\\_342.pdf](http://www.pamd.uscourts.gov/kitzmiller/kitzmiller_342.pdf)).

### **“Congress shall make no law...”**

The court said this statement is unconstitutional because it would be perceived by parents and students as a state endorsement of religion.

Judge Jones’s 139-page opinion includes references to legal precedents and labyrinthine reasoning to be expected in a court document, but despite its formal language, it conveys some simple messages very clearly. Challenges to teaching evolution as established fact will not be tolerated by the U.S. court system; the subject of religion has no place in American schools; and those who believe in a Creator God are deluded fanatics.

The role reversal of the past few decades in the United States is amazing. In the early 20th century, religious people used terms of dogmatic condemnation and contemptuous dismissal in discussing the theory of evolution, but now those favoring evolution use similar language for those who espouse a view of intelligent design. Has blind faith in evolution become a religion itself?

The whole tone of Judge Jones’s ruling indicates that belief in evolution has become fundamental to our society. Some educators are pleased by the ruling’s thorough summary of ideas. However, others are bothered by the fact that while the judge has barred teaching ID in science classrooms, he stopped short of forbid-



Reuters/Shannon Stapleton

*Darwin dolls for sale outside the exhibit marking the work of evolutionist Charles Darwin at the American Museum of Natural History in New York Nov. 15, 2005. Curators seek to show Darwin’s relevance in a time when his theories are challenged by supporters of intelligent design.*

ding it in social science classes.

Many will not rest until mention of God and religion has been entirely banished from schools. This is reminiscent of the Orwellian idea that if the words describing certain ideas are eliminated from the language, the ideas themselves will soon cease to exist.

Matching the change in belief among American leaders of higher education, there has been a dramatic reinterpretation of the U.S. Constitution in recent decades.

The first amendment states “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof...” This was to prevent the mandating of a state religion, as well as the use of federal taxes for the support of any particular church. In 1789 several states did financially support their dominant church, so political leaders wanted to make sure that the national government did not use its greater resources to give any one denomination preference throughout the new country.

Mountains of evidence exist to show that the founding fathers did not at all believe that the first amendment prohibited the government from allowing religion in general or Christianity in particular.

### **“Not establishing religion” becomes “not mentioning religion”**

It was not until a century and a half later that people would reinterpret the clear meaning of this amendment into saying that the federal government could have no association with religion at all, rather than that it could not financially support a specific church. The same type of reasoning wrung from the 14th amendment an interpretation saying that the same restrictions applied to state and local governments. This would prohibit, among other things, prayer in public schools and the teaching of creation as an explanation of the origin of life.

The actual purpose of the 14th amendment was to give U.S. citizenship to former slaves who were emancipated after the Civil War. Judges and lawyers have no excuse not to know the genuine interpretation of these laws, which any high school history teacher could explain. Courts have made an inexplicable leap from prohibiting Congress from “establishing” a church to forbidding any action in a public school that might possibly be considered as “endorsing religion.”

As frustrating as incorrectly inter-

preting the Constitution to ban religion from schools is to Christians, Judge Jones's ruling breaks new ground by declaring intelligent design to be religion and not science. His opinion devotes considerable space to his reasons for this conclusion, and it includes some readily evident flaws.

Judge Jones says that while intelligent design *may* be true, it cannot be *science* because it leads people to believe in a Creator, and it has been established that believing in a Creator is nonscientific.

By an ironic circle of reasoning, creationism is condemned because there is no scientific evidence for it, but then intelligent design is condemned because its analysis of scientific evidence may lead people to a belief in God.

The ruling condemns intelligent design as science because it cannot be tested and proven through experimentation, but the ruling makes no mention of the fact that evolution as an explanation for the origin of species (much less of life

itself) also cannot ultimately be tested and proven through experimentation.

Further, the court cites as evidence that ID is not science the fact that peer-reviewed scientific journals have not printed articles in support of ID. This criterion makes the acceptance of ID as a scientific theory dependent upon the very people whose reputations and careers would be destroyed if it were accepted!

Another inherent contradiction in the judge's opinion says that those promoting the teaching of intelligent design impose a "contrived dualism" that insists that creation and evolution are the only two explanations for the origin of life. But the decision requires teachers to teach only one idea about the origin of life by default—that it must have evolved.

### Brilliant but uninformed on the most important knowledge

A student of the Bible reading Judge Jones' opinion would almost surely be

reminded of the apostle Paul's letter to the church in Rome and believe that he had prophetic knowledge when he wrote:

"The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse" (Romans 1:18-20).

This court decision applies only to the Dover, Pennsylvania, school district, but it will have wider ramifications. It will surely be used as a precedent by interest groups going to court in other areas to prevent schools from teaching an alternative to evolution. Activist judges are certain to cite this case as a precedent.

In Kansas, new statewide standards deliberately cast doubt on evolution and will almost certainly spark a legal challenge. The Dover case or a similar one will probably be appealed and will most likely reach the U.S. Supreme Court. This adds importance to the battle between conservatives and liberals in the Senate over President George Bush's nominations to the nation's highest court.

The potential for overturning the protection of abortion afforded by *Roe v. Wade* dominates discussion of the Supreme Court's future, but its impact on education should not be overlooked. If the court upholds the continued expunging of any reference to religion or a Creator in schools, our society will continue further on a course wherein our future leaders, "professing to be wise, they become fools" (Romans 1:22), that is, unknowing about the most important type of knowledge—the spiritual.

On the other hand, a more conservative court that could overturn previous rulings banning religion from schools, might also remove safeguards that protect those with nontraditional religious beliefs from persecution. Such a change in the legal environment would have serious implications for many readers of this publication. Whichever direction the courts go in the future, Christians will do well to pay close attention. ❖

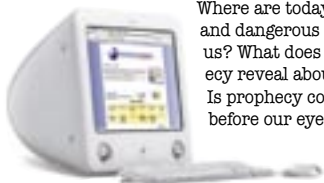
## How Can You Make Sense of the News?



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**S**o much is happening in the world, and so quickly, that it's almost impossible to sort it all out.

Where are today's dramatic and dangerous trends taking us? What does Bible prophecy reveal about our future? Is prophecy coming to pass before our eyes? How can you know the answers?



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- Audio discussion (podcasts) of what's happening in the world around us.
- Links to significant news items from hundreds of news sources around the world.
- Free booklets to help you better understand Bible prophecy.

To understand the meaning behind the news and where the world is headed, visit us at [www.wnponline.org](http://www.wnponline.org) today!



# “Generation @” Needs Godly Values in Space

*You're likely scratching your head at that title or you may assume that it has something to do with NASA! Actually, it has to do with the Internet and something called MySpace, not outer space. This article examines an Internet phenomenon that's growing like wildfire, along with its pros and cons.*

by Cecil E. Maranville

**W**hen he tried to gain understanding of end-time prophecy, Daniel was told by a divine messenger that the secrets of his prophecy were sealed until the time of the end. The messenger concluded, “...many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase” (Daniel 12:4).

We live in a time when knowledge itself rushes back and forth at a frenetic pace! I'm referring to the Internet, a communication enhancer like nothing ever known in human history. People anywhere in the world are able to communicate with each other in real time for free via chat rooms, instant message programs and “blogs.”

Anytime I mention that last word in a group, there are always some who screw up their faces in puzzlement. Blog is short for “Web log.” Web logs or blogs take on many forms, including providing commentary on current events, such as we do at [www.wnponline.org](http://www.wnponline.org). Many news organizations and/or columnists do the same.

Or a blog might be sort of a personal journal, posted on the Internet. You might think that it could not be personal if it is on the Internet, and I agree. Nonetheless, millions of young people in particular write details no less intimate than what you would expect one to put in a diary kept under lock and key away from prying eyes. And they post these blogs on Web sites that millions of people visit.

## More than 40 million members

One of the most popular is MySpace.com, which has over 40 million members! Of course, no one person could read everyone's entries. But you can find MySpace members by name, e-mail address, by posted name (which may be different from one's actual name) or by the school the member attends.

Further, you can search the MySpace database of participants by current students, alumni,

year of graduation or years of attendance. You can search by male or female or both. You can search by age, as low as 16. You can search by “single, married, divorced, swingers” or “in a relationship.” You can filter your search further by looking for people who are on MySpace for “dating, relationships, networking” or “friends.”

When I pull up the first name that pops up in a random search, the person claims to be 26 years old, although still enrolled in high school. That illustrates one of the realities of these Web sites: People lie about themselves.

On his blog are pictures of those signed on to be his “friends.” As I page down the list of his friends, I quickly leave the page, because the pictures his female “friends” posted of themselves show them scantily clad. And that's another reality of MySpace: Many people post immodest pictures of themselves, including total nudity.

There is little monitoring or censoring of the site. Participants are supposed to be honest (yeah, sure!) about their age and not join if they are under 14. They aren't supposed to post lewd pictures, but nothing stops them from doing so. The membership agreement stipulates that members can't post “offensive material,” but a browse of entries shows many laced with coarse language.

Not everyone on MySpace or all of the content on MySpace is crude or coarse. But anyone visiting the site will indeed encounter this seedy element.

MySpace asks you to rate yourself in various ways, to give visitors to your space an idea of what kind of person you are. Selecting a member at random, I pulled up a girl who gives her name as Chelsea and her age as 18. But, as I page down her profile, I see that she is actually 14.

Here is how she rates herself on the following activities: Sex—60 percent; Romance—66 percent; Self-control—44 percent; Kissing—67

*San Antonio Assistant DA Miguel Najera's job is prosecuting Internet predators. He says that MySpace (and other sites like it) provide “very powerful information for predators.”*

percent; Cuddling—36 percent; and Kinkiness—49 percent. The profile also asks participants to state their sexual orientation.

You get the picture. There are many aspects to MySpace that a family with Christian values would find offensive. However, if a parent complains to MySpace about his or her child being a member without permission, the Web site will take the child's Web page down. The question is whether parents are aware that their children are on MySpace.

Ask your teen. Ask him or her to show you his or her site. You may be surprised at its content, for children from families with high values seem to let their hair down on the Internet. They say things and show things that you wouldn't think they would. Teens seem to feel that what they post is private, seen only by those they want to see it, instead of the fact that what they post can be seen by millions.

### Predators' paradise

You are not supposed to post your street address, your last name or your telephone number. But the "Chelsea" whose profile I pulled up gave her last name in answering one of the many questions on the membership form. Another I pulled up at random is a 20-year-old female from Fort Worth, Texas. I know her first name, the high school she attended, the college she currently attends, her height and build, that she is bisexual and sexually active—and the fact that her grandfather died recently.

There are many other personal details, but I list these only to make a point: Young people post enough details that sexual predators could identify them with relative ease.

San Antonio Assistant District Attorney Miguel Najera's job is prosecuting Internet predators. He says that MySpace (and other sites like it) provide "very powerful information for predators." Najera tells teens and parents that someone with a little computer know-how can actually track the computer from which a MySpace member makes his or her posts, right down to the home in which the computer is located (Deborah Knapp, "I-Team: Web Site Draws Attention of Parents,

Districts," KENS 5 Eyewitness News, www.mysanantonio.com).

WETM-18 in Elmira, New York, caused quite a stir in the community when it ran a piece on MySpace, showing how easily a predator could track anyone using the Web site. Viewers were angry at the station for revealing exactly how to find the identity of someone. But Lt. John Sullivan, who tracks sex offend-



*Who is lurking online,  
looking for personal  
information about teens and  
children?*

ers for the Chemung County Sheriff's Office, says that sexual predators already know this information. Further, he says that predators actually share with each other—a chilling thought.

Because of this fact, many high schools block access to MySpace on the school's computers. Some private schools have also forbidden their students from using the Web site on their home computers, a move that angers most students.

Psalm 12:3-4 reflects the attitude of some: "...the tongue that speaks proud things, who have said, 'With our tongue we will prevail; our lips are our own; who is lord over us?'" We will say what we want to say!

Teens see MySpace and sites like Xanga.com as simply places to "hang out," like youths from a previous generation might have hung out at the local burger joint. A lot of the content on these Web sites is just harmless chatter. But some of it is as raw as it gets.

Eric Wilkinson of Seattle's King 5 News says of teen blogs, "It's a 24-7 virtual party, *allowing a world of uninvited guests into your child's life*" ("Teen Web Sites Not So Innocent," www.king5.com, Nov. 15, 2005).

There have been sexual assaults of teens due to their Web postings, and at least one murder. NBC's *Today Show* on Dec. 15, 2005, featured a segment on teen Web sites; the report noted that 25 percent of teens have had sexual conversations online and that 3 percent of their parents knew about it.

### Wisdom warns

One of the biblical proverbs personifies wisdom as a woman crying out "...in the chief concourses, at the openings of the gates in the city..." (Proverbs 1:21), meaning at the places where crowds throng. At one time, that would be in the center of town or the shopping malls. In the cyber age, it's the Internet.

What does wisdom have to say to youthful Internet bloggers? "In the multitude of words sin is not lacking; but he who restrains his lips is wise" (Proverbs 10:19).

Wisdom says, watch your words. Keep good values wherever you are, especially in public. And make no mistake about it, Internet blogs are as public as anything could possibly be. Recognize the power, as well as the potential danger of words.

Parents, monitor your teens' use of the Internet. We don't recommend that you shut them off from it, if they use it with good judgment. But they need your guiding hand, keeping them safe from predators.

Wiredforsaftey.com is a wonderful resource for young children, teens and parents about Internet safety. One of its recommendations is that a teen have his computer in a highly trafficked part of the home, not in his bedroom out of sight. But above all, parents need to be aware of and a part of their children's Internet experience.

"Generation @" symbolizes the generation that is wired to the Internet, and all of the good and the bad that it offers. We urge our readers and their families to enjoy the treasures, but to beware of the trash. ❖

# Modern Israel Has Sown the Wind and Will Reap the Whirlwind

*There seems to be no bottom to the moral toboggan slide the modern house of Israel has been on for the past 40 years!*

by Melvin Rhodes

**A**t the present time, my cable company offers CBC, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. We are able to watch the same programs as the residents of Windsor, Ontario.

Occasionally I watch their main news program as it tends to have more international news than any of our 24/7 cable stations. Additionally, it carries news of Canada, which can be very interesting. Canada has often been ahead of America in embracing modern liberal reforms.

The noon news program on Dec. 21 was particularly interesting. After a lead item on the upcoming Canadian election, there was news of the pop singer Elton John's tying the civic union knot in Windsor, England, the same place where Prince Charles and Camilla, the duchess of Cornwall, were wed. Only Elton John was uniting with another man.

Elton John and his longtime partner, David Furnish, took the earliest possible opportunity to enter into a formal commitment, which is the legal equivalent of marriage, without actually using the "M-word," lest traditionalists get upset. I'm sure it won't be long before the word *marriage* is used in the name of equality.

What was surprising were the crowds outside the hall where the wedding took place. Everybody was cheering on the famous couple as they appeared after the ceremony. There was no sign of any opposition, just plain acceptance on the part of bystanders and supporters.

In Canada, on the same day, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that swingers clubs are perfectly legal and somehow guaranteed under Canada's constitution, which dates back to 1867 at the height of the Victorian era. The news anchor was very helpful in enlightening viewers on exactly what a swingers club offers—group sex and wife swapping were top of the list!

Windsor, Ontario, has long been famous on the Michigan side of the border for its strip clubs,

which offer total nudity and alcohol, a combination disallowed by the Michigan Legislature.

## Where is all this leading?

It's been 40 years since the Sexual Revolution swept through the Western nations. The enthusiastic supporters of reform at the time probably had no idea what they were setting in motion.

I was reminded of this some time ago when watching a documentary on the History International channel, an offshoot of the History Channel that offers documentaries on non-American history.

One documentary highlighted the 1967 decision in Denmark to legalize pornography. Many supporters of the move in the nation's parliament simply wanted to end rapes. Their feeling was that access to pornography would stop men from committing acts of sexual violence against women. Nearly 40 years later, as the documentary pointed out, there is mounting evidence that pornography has only made things worse.

Many of those who supported the reform measure almost 40 years ago now wish they had not done so. They were incredulous at what their seemingly minor reform has led to. They did not expect other nations to follow Denmark. Nor did anybody expect back then that their decision would lead to the development of an adult-movie industry that soon produced more movies than Hollywood—and the Internet had not even been invented!

Not long after that the whole Western world allowed porn. It has been that way with other so-called sexual reforms—what begins in one nation soon spreads to the others!

Now, one nation after another is allowing same-sex, civil "marriages," and soon a swingers club will probably be opening in a city near you, if it hasn't already!

The Old Testament prophet Hosea wrote: "They sow the wind, and reap the whirlwind"

*It's been 40 years since the Sexual Revolution swept through the Western nations. The enthusiastic supporters of reform at the time probably had no idea what they were setting in motion.*



*Press photographers shoot pop star Elton John and David Furnish after their civil ceremony in Windsor, southern England, Dec. 21, 2005.*

(Hosea 8:7). What we do has unavoidable and terrible consequences later on!

What a nation does inevitably has consequences. Proverbs 14:34 states, “Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.” Sin is defined in the Bible as “the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4, King James Version), the breaking of the Ten Commandments.

People have always had difficulty keeping God’s commandments. The difference between today and the time before the 1960s Sexual Revolution is that today governments not only condone the breaking of the commandments, they actively encourage people to do so, often without their even realizing it. Widespread biblical ignorance also means that many people have no concept of sin—but that does not mean they are immune from the consequences of sin.

### Historical background

How times have changed! You have to have a sense of history to see the irony in all of this. The Canadian city of Windsor is named after Windsor, England, which is the home of the British royal family.

It was Queen Victoria who chose to move the British royal family’s

residence to Windsor, slightly west of London, England. During World War I, when anti-German sentiment was running high, her grandson King George V chose to change the family name from Saxe-Coburg to Windsor, after the city in which they lived.

Victoria symbolized moral rectitude. She gave her name to an era—the Victorian age—and even today people still talk of “Victorian prudery,” a reference to the supposed narrow-mindedness of the British monarch.

However, she deeply loved her husband, Prince Albert, and was the mother of nine children, so it is likely inaccurate to dismiss the lady as a “prude.” She was, however, scandalized by the moral laxity of the next generation, notably that of her son, the prince of Wales, later King Edward VII. She would be appalled at the morals of her subjects today!

It was Queen Victoria who chose the location of the Canadian federal capital (Ottawa) when Canada was given independence from Great Britain halfway through her reign. She also signed into law the new constitution of federal Canada. Her descendant, Queen Elizabeth II, remains Canada’s head of state—a fact perhaps lost on many Americans unfamiliar with Canadian

government. Canada at one time was a bastion of conservative values within a British Empire that was founded on upholding traditions passed down through the centuries.

The ancestors of those of us in Canada, Great Britain and the United States would not recognize the moral state of our nations today. Unfortunately, an enormous cultural shift in traditional values has taken place. And current events are continuing to rapidly undermine our Judeo-Christian ethic.

No matter how many courts reinterpret the definitions of marriage and family, it doesn’t alter the fact that those who wrote our laws in times past did not intend the changes that are taking place today. Throughout history, the biblical definition of marriage and family has been a constant of our civilization—rejecting those values takes us down an increasingly uncertain and rocky road.

Canadians, Britons and Americans are among the modern descendants of ancient Israel. (For more on this, please request our booklet *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy*.) God wanted Israel to receive His blessings and promised that, if they obeyed His laws, they would be blessed. He reveals this clearly: “Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the LORD your God will set you high above all nations of the earth” (Deuteronomy 28:1).

Further in the chapter, He shows the consequences of disobedience, of breaking His laws. Beginning in verse 15, we read: “But it shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you.”

The penalty for sin is rarely exacted immediately (see Ecclesiastes 8:11). Biblical precedent shows that the peoples of the ancient world, and Israel in particular, were repeatedly warned over a period of decades before the punishment finally came. But God’s Word says it will come. There is a penalty for sin.

Nations who sow the wind will reap the whirlwind. ❖

# The European Constitution Sneaks in by the Back Door

*“So you thought the EU constitution was dead? Dream on. In fact, the past few months have seen a dramatic diminishing of British sovereignty as Brussels...grabs more power,” said veteran Daily Mail columnist Christopher Booker recently. So is the European Union really acting in Britain’s and the world’s best interests?*

by John Ross Schroeder

Longtime British feature writer Simon Jenkins expressed the United Kingdom’s growing frustration with the EU. He wrote:

“The European Union is ghastly. It poisons all it touches. Europe sabotaged Margaret Thatcher’s last government. Europe mugged [former Prime Minister] John Major to death. Now Europe has driven Tony Blair [to act unwisely] in Europe. The protectionist cartel is internally corrupt and externally a menace to global trade and peace. *Britain’s leaders are humiliated whenever they try to reform it*” (*The Sunday Times*, emphasis added throughout). That’s calling a spade a spade.

The latest British humiliation consists, over a period of seven years, of losing £7 billion (approximately \$12 billion) of the rebate that former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher had so skillfully negotiated with the EU.

Newspapers (right and left) agreed that the United Kingdom got almost nothing in return for this controversial, “last-minute” concession. At the end of the day, France gave no real ground on the enormous agricultural subsidy payments French farmers regularly receive from the EU.

## An unexpected development

No EU budget deal was expected at the end of Britain’s six-month’s presidency of the European Union. It appeared effectively blocked. But due to the last-minute U.K. rebate “surrender” (apparently without the knowledge of British Chancellor Gordon Brown, who was in Washington, D.C., at the time), a surprise agreement was produced.

However, the biggest surprise of the recent summit among all the leaders of EU member nations was Angela Merkel, the new German chancellor. Some EU politicians hailed her as “Europe’s new power broker” as she got the lion’s share of the credit for breaking the budget deadlock.

Angela Merkel’s first month at the seat of German power has generally been judged a very good one in both foreign and domestic affairs. The

German upper house of parliament just approved a number of tax reforms that will help reduce the budget deficit.

Interestingly enough, “She talks passionately about how a coherent and integrated EU is an essential part of making Europe more competitive with the rising economies of Asia” (*Financial Times*). However, this is not the way in which many Britons view the activities of the EU.

## Progress by stealth

Christopher Booker continued his article on the steady loss of British sovereignty to the European Union. “In recent months...the EU has continued stealthily to take over so many of the powers of our government and Parliament from behind the scenes—with full permission and even encouragement from our ministers...

“Far from being some kind of setback, the rejection of the new constitution has turned out to be a trigger for one of *the EU’s biggest power grabs for decades*, across a whole range of policy areas, from defence, immigration and taxation, to the way we run our police, our courts and our judicial system” (*Daily Mail*).

For instance, the EU is rapidly forming its own police force. The newly constructed “Europe Police College” is now in position to train senior officers all over Europe—with an outpost already pretty much in place in Hampshire County, England. As well, according to *The Daily Express*, the European Union is apparently planning a direct tax of 3.5 pence on the pound proposed by current European Commission President, Jose Manuel Barroso. That eventuality will set “the cat among the pigeons.”

Also, according to a report in *The Sunday Telegraph*, the European Commission “effectively insists that the provisions of the Charter [of Fundamental Rights] be enshrined in all new EU legislation.”

Reacting swiftly to this turn of events, Chris

*The latest British humiliation consists, over a period of seven years, of losing £7 billion (approximately \$12 billion) of the rebate that former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher had so skillfully negotiated with the EU.*

Heaton-Harris (Conservative member of the European Parliament from Britain) stated: “This shows that the Commission has no intention of taking any notice of the voters in France and the Netherlands, who decisively rejected their blueprint for a federal superstate.” Brussels bureaucrats were further accused of cherry-picking certain parts of the proposed constitution and *sending them through the back door*.

Liam Fox, Conservative British shadow foreign secretary, firmly stated: “I have repeatedly made clear my fear that the EU is determined to ignore the results of the two referenda and instead press ahead with the implementation of many elements of the constitution treaty.”

This is not how true democracies (or a genuine democratic union) are supposed to function. But it is exactly how some bureaucracies tend to further their agendas.

### The Bible and the European Union

*World News and Prophecy* has focused a great deal on the political affairs of Western and Central Europe. The reason is that there exists a prophetic connection between the politics of today’s Europe and catastrophic future occurrences surrounding the existence of what the Bible defines as a “beast” power at the end of this age (Revelation 13). We are apparently in a transition period that will ultimately end with the glorious presence of the Kingdom of God on this earth.

So an integral part of biblical prophecy



Reuters/Thierry Roge

*British Prime Minister Tony Blair greets German Chancellor Angela Merkel at the European Union summit in Brussels Dec. 15, 2005.*

deals with a latter-day revival of the Holy Roman Empire, predicted extensively in the Old Testament book of Daniel and the New Testament book of Revelation. The Hebrew prophet Daniel spoke of a series of “kingdoms” to arise on the world scene (Daniel 2).

Comparing the Bible with secular history, the first of these was the Babylonian Empire (Daniel 2:38). It was followed by three others clearly identified as the Medo-Persian, Greco-Macedonian and Roman empires (verses 39-40).

### The Roman Empire at the time of the end

The fourth and final kingdom, the Roman Empire, was to be stronger than all the others (verse 40). Its reign would

last for centuries. Then in connection with this final world empire, the Bible predicts that a group of 10 kings or leaders of nations, through alliances or other political arrangements, will ultimately give rise to a final union that will astound and astonish the whole world (see Revelation 17:12-14).

It is on record that the idea of beginning a new Roman Empire was on the minds of the founders of the organization (the European Economic Community or EEC) that eventually gave rise to the present European Union. In spite of some setbacks over the decades, Europe has continued to prosper as barriers to integration (such as national sovereignty) continue to tumble and considerable progress is made in economic and, to some degree, political unity.

It is interesting to note that one secular writer recently referred to the general geographical region as “a Holy Roman Empire of Franco-German bureaucracy.”

What eventually became the expanded European Union began as the EEC (or Common Market) of six nations on March 25, 1957. The 50-year anniversary is only a little over a year from now. Where will we be by then in the fulfillment of Bible prophecy in Europe? Will some astonishing push forward occur at this anniversary time?

To understand the essential biblical and historical background of events in Central and Western Europe, please request our two free booklets *The Book of Revelation Unveiled* and *You Can Understand Bible Prophecy*. ❖

## World News and Prophecy Seminars

People are often heard to say, “What in the world is going on?” The editorial staff of this publication is dedicated to making sense of today’s news within the framework of biblical understanding and prophecies that God’s Word indicates are yet to occur. If you appreciate what you are reading in this publication, then you may desire to attend a weekend *World News and Prophecy* seminar.

The writers of this publication attempt to meet their reading audience as often as possible to engage the readers regarding the great geopolitical and cultural concerns of our time.

News, the Bible, God, the future and you—put it all together and ask yourself, What is in store?

If you would like to experience the pages of this publication live and in person, please contact Darris McNeely at [Darris\\_McNeely@ucg.org](mailto:Darris_McNeely@ucg.org).

### Upcoming Seminars

- Akron, Ohio, March 18, 2006
- Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, March 19, 2006

# Hatred Rising

*Why do seemingly civilized people seethe with unreasonable hatred? America wastes its time and energy to try to understand why it is hated. What does the truth mean to you?*

by Joel Meeker

World events have taken some bewildering turns in recent years. Stories of violence, ranging from school shootings to full-blown genocide, fill the news. And the two American-led wars to root out terrorists and establish democracy in the Middle East, values that one might assume would be universal among other democracies, have been met instead with widespread disapproval.

Pundits still debate the causes of all these events, but one recent novel explanation offered by a Frenchman deserves consideration. In his book *Le Discours de la haine* (“The Discourse of Hatred,” not yet available in English), French intellectual iconoclast André Glucksmann posits that there is a rising spirit of hatred in the world, always lurking in the human spirit, but currently allowed to rage more openly. His observations are particularly interesting in the light of events prophesied in the Bible for the times just before us.

His opening line in the preface states his thesis: “Sometimes burning and brutal, sometimes insidious and icy, a tireless hatred haunts the world.” He considers the mindless violence of terrorism that seems to define our time.

What motivated the terrorists who destroyed the World Trade Center, killing 3,000 innocent people they didn’t know? What motivated terrorists to bomb trains in the Atocha train station in Madrid, Spain, (which, if executed as planned, could have killed up to 10,000 people)? What motivated the terrorists in Beslan to string explosives over the heads of children and make them drink their own urine if they were thirsty?

It was a horrendous hatred let loose. The hatred that most people try to master is given full reign and embraced by the terrorist who knows no taboo.

He explains that because we don’t like to believe that hatred really exists, we excuse and whitewash perpetrators of brutality and violence. “The majority, conformist thesis:

hatred with a capital *H* doesn’t exist. Anyone claiming that it does, is overlooking the true problems. Anyone claiming to ‘have it’...is deluded. The hatred he feels and manifests must be reduced to exterior causes that precede it: unhappiness, unfortunate circumstances, miseries, frustrations, humiliations and offenses... Hatred is the rotten fruit of a lack of education. Education that strives to abolish that which doesn’t exist. General acquittal, unanimous hugs” (p. 11, all translations ours).

But Glucksmann maintains that hatred truly does exist, and we’ve all seen it.

## Hatred for women, Jews and America

He believes there are three principle objects of a rising spirit of hatred: women, Jews and America.

He calls the hatred of women the “longest hatred in history” (p. 163). The fact that woman is different from man and the fear of what sexual desire can cause in society have influenced the way men have treated women through the ages. He points out how this is especially true today in the Islamic world of veiled women, effectively making them disappear. This hatred is mixed with hatred for the West.

Glucksmann sees anti-Semitic hatred rising as well. Himself Jewish, he lives in what is generally conceded to be one of the most anti-Semitic countries in Europe—France. He believes French anti-Semitism comes from three sources:

- A small portion of France’s Islamic population.
- The universities and intellectuals, who side with the Palestinians, seen as downtrodden victims, and who ridiculously make a moral equation between Ariel Sharon and Adolf Hitler.
- The classic Vichyesque anti-Semitism that dates from centuries past and that motivated the government of Premier Philippe Pétain, during the German occupation of 1940-45, to

*Why are anti-Semitism and anti-Americanism growing? Where will it lead?*



*France's far-right leader Jean-Marie Le Pen and his daughter Marine take part in a National Front party demonstration criticizing the French government's handling of the urban unrest in poor suburbs of the Paris region and major provincial cities in Paris, Nov. 14, 2005. Mr. Le Pen has publicly stated his belief that George Bush is worse than Adolf Hitler.*

collaborate willingly in the deportation to concentration camps of many thousands of French Jews.

Perhaps France's anti-Semitism has already tainted all of Europe, but anti-Semitism goes much further. "Ask yourself," Glucksmann writes, "why, alone among all the terrorism in the world, does Palestinian terrorism find grace in the judgment of world public opinion, which explains, excuses and justifies it, when public opinion doesn't applaud it?" (p. 95).

The last target of world hatred is the United States. Glucksmann believes that Americans asking themselves, "What have we done that makes people hate us?" are missing the point. He states, "The key to anti-

Americanism resides in the obsessions and the preconceived ideas of the anti-Americans" (p. 122).

He illustrates his point with some of the incredible distortions that are commonly proffered by European leaders and thinkers. Extreme rightist French politician Jean-Marie Le Pen has publicly stated that George Bush is worse than Adolf Hitler. A front-page article from a French newspaper claimed that the U.S. counterterrorism policy of requiring some visitors to give an electronic fingerprint upon entering the country is a "bio-political tattoo" similar to the tattoos received by concentration camp prisoners under the Nazis (pp. 123-124).

Any action by President Bush

that coincides with the desires of his accusers is studiously ignored; every false step is magnified and trumpeted.

Some Europeans are even revising the history of World War II, explaining that D-Day happened not to free anyone, but for selfish American reasons. They emphasize crimes committed by U.S. soldiers, and the Europeans killed by Allied bombardments.

The cause of this hatred is not found in any logical cause, believes Glucksmann. People have just decided that America is responsible for everything that goes wrong in the world. The hatred reinforces itself and grows over time.

### **Bible confirms observation and reveals more insight**

Students of the Bible will not be surprised by Glucksmann's ideas. The Scriptures show that there is an anger- and hate-filled spirit being loose in the world, acting feverishly to fashion humankind into his own twisted image.

Before the creation of humankind, the brilliant archangel Lucifer conceived a hatred for his Creator and rebelled against Him. Isaiah 14:12-15 recounts details of his rebellion. Lucifer wanted to "ascend into heaven" and exalt his throne "above the stars of God." In fact, Lucifer tried to dethrone God and take His place. This insane attempt was doomed to failure, and Lucifer was hurled back "to the ground" (Ezekiel 28:12-17).

Jesus said Lucifer, whom God renamed "Satan the devil," was "a murderer from the beginning" (John 8:44). The Bible further identifies Satan as a destroyer and an adversary, attempting to thwart God's plan in every way.

Satan's vicious attacks are particularly aimed at two groups of people: the physical descendants of Jacob, the Israelites, and secondly, the Church of God.

Jesus Himself was the object of senseless hatred ("without a cause," John 15:25), stirred up by Satan. Jesus foretold that believers would encounter the same hatred (Matthew

24:9; John 15:19). One reason Satan's hatred is so effective is that he works invisibly, emanating hateful *attitudes*. Satan is "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience" (Ephesians 2:2).

Peter warned Christians to beware, because their "adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8).

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

Verse 12 indicates that this hatred increases in the end time (for more information, see our free booklets *Is There Really a Devil?* and *Are We Living in the Time of the End?*).

God is now working on dual tracks. He is working spiritually with His Church, called from among all the nations of the earth without regard for race or national origin.

He also is working through the descendants of the physical nation of Israel—who are not only the Jews. God's promises of wealth and power to Abraham's descendants (Genesis 12:2-3; 13:15-17; 22:16-18) passed primarily to Joseph via his father, Jacob or Israel. Genesis 48:16 shows that those blessings were predominately conferred on Joseph's two sons Ephraim and Manasseh. They are the ancestors of the British and American peoples of today (see our free booklet *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy*).

The English-speaking nations of the world undeservedly enjoy God's blessings, and they also face impending punishments for their flagrant dismissal of God's laws. This truth is not a racist belief (though some have misused it to that end), nor does it show the moral superiority of any nation. In fact, Israel's history shows that human beings, no matter how physically blessed, are incapable of fulfilling God's will without His Holy Spirit.



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*Some Europeans are even revising the history of World War II, explaining that D-Day happened not to free anyone, but for selfish American reasons.*

### **God allows this for a purpose**

When we understand the biblical identity of the English-speaking peoples, it should come as no surprise that Satan would stir up hatred against them, in particular against the most visible of them at this time, the United States. Satan is the malevolent spirit behind the rising hatred in the world identified by Mr. Glucksmann. The Jewish people, the only descendants of Israel to keep their identity, are also the object of an almost blind hatred by many nations in the world.

God inspired Israel on his deathbed to give his sons a prophecy of "the last days" (Genesis 49:1). Great physical blessings were promised to the descendants of Joseph (Genesis 49:22). Joseph's blessings would spill over into surrounding nations, as has been the case with America and Britain these past two centuries. But this would be accompanied by jealousy and hatred. "The archers have bitterly grieved him, shot at him and *hated* him. But his bow remained in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the Mighty God of Jacob" (verses 23-24).

Keen observers like André

Glucksmann perceive the hatred. But it is only through the revelation of the Word of God that we can understand the cause. The Creator's blessing and protection has been on the descendants of Joseph, but as these nations abandon His Word as their moral guide, He withdraws protection and favor.

From their beginning, the Eternal plainly told the Israelites that obedience would bring amazing blessings, but that disobedience would bring astounding punishments, including economic catastrophe, military defeat and subjugation (Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28).

Why should God deal any differently today with the descendants of those Israelites? The Bible predicts that the hatred now rising in the world will at some point overwhelm and overcome the descendants of Joseph (though God has promised always to save a remnant of these peoples), unless they turn again to the true source of their strength: "the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel"—Almighty God.

How will these coming events affect you and your family? Order our free booklet *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy* to find the answers in your own Bible. ❖

“ALPHA,” (Continued from page 16)

21:23, which says “the city [New Jerusalem] had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light.”

Just imagine, no more sun! What a startling contrast! The greatest object in man’s world is snuffed out!

Consider for a moment the fact that in our world the sun is everything. It equates to 98 percent of the mass of our solar system. One hundred nine earths would be required to stretch across the frame of its disc. This ball of fire could engulf 1.3 million earths within its mass. The temperature at its core is 27 million degrees Fahrenheit. The gravity at its core is 340 billion times earth’s air pressure at sea level. With all this mass and energy, nuclear reactions are generating 5 million tons of pure energy per second (www.solarviews.com).

Is it any wonder the sun has been a major source of man’s adoration? But God has other plans. The Creator is going to displace the creation and establish Himself as the sole center of life and light.

You and I can have a head start today to imbibe of the true energy source of the universe. When you think about it, even the mighty sun fits into the category of the rabbi’s furniture or lack of it. It leaves us with the continuing question that demands an answer from us. Are we focused on “the stuff” or the destination? Yes, even the sun is “stuff” according to God’s Word!

### Imagine—no more Satan

Again in Genesis, we find the serpent (Satan) victorious for the moment as he gets Adam and Eve to succumb to his temptations (Genesis 3:1-6.) And yes, God prophesied in Genesis 3:15 that the serpent would be momentarily victorious as he would “bruise His heel,” speaking of the woman’s Seed (Christ). Revelation prophesies that Satan will no longer deceive the world. He is defeated! The prophecies of Revelation 20:1-4, which portray Satan’s defeat, culminate in the triumph of verse 10 that declares, “The devil who deceives them, was cast



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*When you think about it, everything we see, the earth and even the mighty sun fit into the category of the rabbi’s furniture or lack of it. They will all disappear. This leaves us with the continuing question that demands an answer from us. Are we focused on “the stuff” or the destination?*

into the lake of fire and brimstone...”

Imagine no more Satan. What a contrast from Genesis where we find him “on a roll.” Understanding the contrast between Genesis and Revelation should elevate us to a walk of faith toward a future of hope in which prophecy plainly states God wins and Satan loses. And if God wins, we win!

In Genesis, we sadly note that sin entered the world through the decisive actions of the first man and woman. Yet the prophetic book of Revelation guarantees that God is preparing for us a world where sin is banished.

Imagine no more sin. God invites us into the future through the comforting words of Revelation 21:27: “But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.”

Imagine no more sin. Can we picture a world in which there are no more painful headlines due to the results of murder, lies, theft, deceit or any result

of self-seeking? No more heartache! No more bad news. Yes, the contrast is heart-sweeping. The revelation of God proclaims no more sin. What a riveting contrast from such a mournful start.

### “Come!”

In Genesis we find humanity hiding, on the run and ultimately cut off from God. We all know the story, in which God goes searching for the sin-filled couple hiding in the bushes as they cringe, naked as jaybirds (Genesis 3:8-10).

Before they know it, they are banished from the Garden of Eden. “He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life” (verse 24). No doubt about it—man is on “the outs” in this “book of beginnings.”

But what a contrast awaits his progeny in the prophetic utterances of Revelation 22:17—one of the sweetest four letter words in the Bible—“And the Spirit and the bride

say, 'Come!' And let him who hears say, 'Come!' And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely."

What a reversal of movement. What a contrast of direction. God's creation, no longer on the outside looking in, but on the inside looking at the Tree of Life.

One of the most inviting words that our mouths ever form is "come." It's what we tell an infant, as he is about to take his first, wobbly step on his own into the embrace of our extended arms of assurance.

Just imagine as the Creator bids humanity as a whole to come for the very first time without the hindrance of Satan's wavelength to trip them up. Contrast? I think so!

### Paradise restored

In Genesis 3:17, we find God proclaiming, "Cursed is the ground for your sake..." The original Hebrew word for curse literally means, "to make bitter." So, for 6,000 years of recorded human history, humanity has toiled on a foundation inherently soured by its own actions. But Revelation 22:3 reveals a time in which "there shall be no more curse."

The prophecies of your Bible indicate a remarkable reversal of environment for those who in the future will seek God. Genesis leaves us with a picture of paradise being rejected and man forcefully removed from its environs.

Revelation provides, once again, the powerful contrast. Paradise is restored with the connective elements of water and trees as first mentioned in Genesis, but now magnified in Revelation 22:1-3: "And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."

In Genesis, paradise is lost. In Revelation it is restored, once and forever. Contrast? Yes, contrast!

### Only a beginning, the rest is eternity

Yet the contrasts between "the Alpha and the Omega" of God's revelation to humanity only begin to touch on something we call "eternity." Yes, it will be an entirely new experience for mortal man to taste immortality with the eternal godhead.

How does one even begin to measure eternity? You can't. I can't. It's a brain-stretcher. Or should I say "brain-snapper"? Even so, I've heard "the indescribable or immeasurable" defined in different ways. This is one of my favorites to share. Eternity is the length of time it would take a sparrow to take one speck of dirt at a time, fly it to the sun, until it had moved the entire mass of the earth. After he had done this back and forth a dozen times, eternity would have just begun.

But you might be saying, "I don't even like the single minute that I'm occupying right now!" Yes, this is a world of fading light, Satan's presence, sin's influence, curses that are often multigenerational in nature, people running away from responsibility, tears, sorrow and, yes, death.

But again, the contrasting assurance of a Heavenly Father who loves is to simply say "Hold on—it's worth it!"

Imagine, no, *believe* in a world of no more sun, no more Satan, no more sin, no more hiding, no more curse, no more tears, no more sorrow, no more death, because we "know" God and He loves us! This is all about worthwhile eternity. So keep that sparrow coming!

Sometimes it's humanly easy to get lost along the way and to forget what is only temporary, and what is eternal in scope. That's when we need to remember God's promise in Isaiah 30:21 that there will be a voice, a voice that guides our "heart steps" by saying, "This is the way, walk in it."

It comes in many venues and through many people, if only we will hear. Now it comes to you through the humble rabbi's response of "So am I," when he affirmed before his traveling guest that, he, too, was only a visitor here and simply passing through.

May we also echo the knowing refrain of "So am I." ❖

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by Robin Webber

## The Alpha and the Omega and Eternity

**T**he Bible is a book framed in dynamic contrasts between what mankind has sown and reaped upon itself since the beginning of time and what a loving Creator desires to offer His creation forever.

In the hustle and bustle of our everyday lives, we can mistakenly confuse the identities of these two very different worlds if we fail to maintain a clear focus as to what is temporary versus that which is truly permanent.

Getting sidetracked through mistaken identity is nothing new. In fact, it's been around a long time. In the last century, an American tourist paid a visit to a renowned Polish rabbi, Hofetz Chaim. He was astonished to see that the rabbi's lodging was only a simple room filled with books, plus a cot and table.

The tourist asked, "Rabbi, where is your furniture?" Rabbi Chaim responded, "Where is yours?" The puzzled American asked, "Mine? But I'm only a visitor here. I'm only passing through." The rabbi responded, "So am I."

The humble rabbi in his unique manner clearly had an eye towards the future beyond this world of man's cluttered past and mired present. There is no mistake about it—there is such a wonderful future ahead, so awesome in revealed content, that it should become so real to us that everything else, when said and done, is baggage—just stuff—not the destination.

### The bookends of God's revelation

God designed startling contrasts in the Scriptures to anchor our spiritual moorings that are just as blunt

as the rabbi's reply to the tourist. This contrast is fully developed in the history of man as recorded from its origins in Genesis through the prophecies of God in the book of Revelation.

Genesis literally means "beginnings" and Revelation or "the Apocalypse," as it is in the Greek, signifies an unfolding or revealing. These two pivotal books might be called the bookends of God's revelation to man as to what He is creating at both physical and spiritual levels, in the present as well as the future. We might call them the alpha and the omega of what the Creator wants His human creation to grasp.

At times, it is hard enough to wrap our minds (much less our hearts) around a topic as large as the future that God has said can be ours. The apostle Paul stated, "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him" (1 Corinthians 2:9, New Living Translation).

And yet I believe that God gives us enough hints along the way to encourage us to maintain our identity as a "tourist, simply passing through" in the here and now.

Let's contrast the record of Genesis with the prophecies of Revelation that allow us to peek into those preparations mentioned by Paul.

### Just think—no more sun!

In Genesis 1:14-16, it's recorded that the sun was created. But what a contrast is prophesied in Revelation

(See "ALPHA," page 14)