

Vol. 1, No. 5 • September/October 2014

DISCERN

A Magazine of *Life Hope & Truth*

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a very thick, old book. The book's pages are aged and discolored, and a cloud of fine dust or particles is rising from the edges of the pages, creating a dramatic, ethereal effect against a dark background. The lighting highlights the texture of the paper and the skin of the hand.

— *The* —
**GREATEST
STORY
NEVER** —
— **TOLD**

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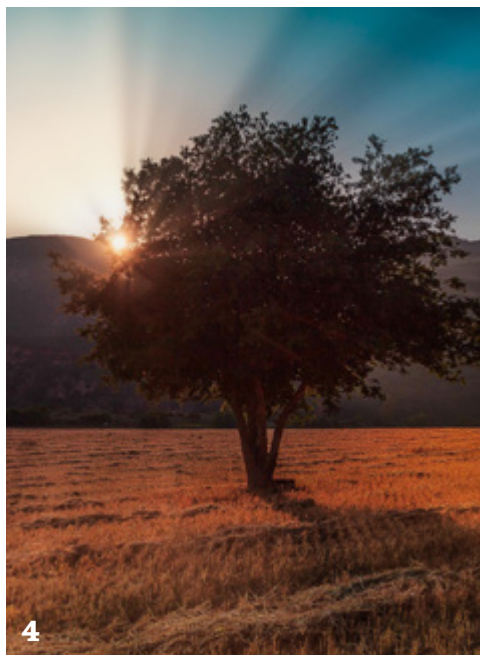
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WILL WE EVER SEE PEACE ON EARTH, GOODWILL TOWARD MEN?

I **It's going to happen,
you know.**

Politicians aren't going to bring it—most are too self-serving.

Religions aren't going to do it—they've wandered so far from God's core values they've become ineffective, sometimes even part of the problem!

Education and humanitarian programs, while noble efforts, don't carry enough clout to make it happen.

Military powers won't do it—they'll actually be the biggest obstacle.

But it will be done. The promised "peace, goodwill toward men" will find its way here on earth!

The untold story

"You may say I'm a dreamer." Yes, I know some would say the lyrics from John Lennon's sappy peace anthem, "Imagine," fit anyone who thinks this quarrelsome world can defy the odds and figure out its way to peace.

The Israeli/Palestinian hotspot has again flamed out of control. As I write, diplomats scurry to broker fragile cease-fires, but resentments are wedged deeper than ever and smoldering revenge will not be contained. And if the carnage there ceases, one of the 61 other countries where conflicts are boiling today (the current count according to the warsintheworld.com scoreboard) will occupy our attention.

Nevertheless, we *will* someday see peace and goodwill toward men! That is, if you believe God.

I'm no dreamer. I have zero hope in humanity's ability. But I'm staking my life on the most astounding, and most overlooked, story in the Bible. "The Greatest Story Never Told" is this issue's lead article, and it unravels the mystery of what God is doing (past, present and future) that will literally change people—change the world!

The best He can offer

A few weeks ago I stood on one of the pivotal locations in this story, the Mount of Olives, envisioning the



events that will unfold when Christ once again sets foot there. I'd already spent some wonderful time with Arab friends in Amman, Jordan; watched the Friday evening spectacle of hundreds of Jews in Jerusalem welcoming the Sabbath at the Western Wall; and chatted with Christian shopkeepers while wandering around the Old City.

These locations, and mingling with all these people, induced mixed emotions. On one side was sadness over the absurdity of three major faiths—Christianity, Judaism and Islam—all venerating Jerusalem, the "City of Peace," as a holy site while its inhabitants have seen more continuous suffering than those of probably any other place on earth!

On the other side was inspiration over catching occasional flashes of potential, of what *could* be. For example, consider the story on pages 16-19 of Princess Sarvath El Hassan and others who are dedicated to serving the needs of the poor and mentally challenged. It's some of the best of what humanity can offer.

But what we really need is the best of what *God* can offer, and in His story we see not what can be, but what *will* be.

His story is already written, but your story and mine are yet to be completed.

From that mount I could also see the original site of the temple. I imagined Jesus two millennia ago lamenting, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!" (Matthew 23:37).

When He comes once again to gather His children under His wings, will we, this time, finally be willing?

Clyde Kilough
Editor
@CKilough

**What we really need is the best of what God can offer, and
in His story we see not what can be, but what *will* be.**



Life

— *The* —
**GREATEST
STORY
NEVER —
— TOLD**

God's plan has all the elements of a great story—and it is absolutely true! Understanding God's festivals is essential for fulfilling your role in God's story.

By Jim Franks



In 1965 a classic film was produced about the life of Jesus Christ titled *The Greatest Story Ever Told*. It starred Charlton Heston as John the Baptist and Max von Sydow as Jesus Christ. Other famous actors in the film included Sidney Poitier and John Wayne.

Even though the life of Jesus Christ has been a big seller, Hollywood just seems to always get it wrong.

Bruce Barton's 1925 classic, *The Man Nobody Knows*, was one of the best-selling nonfiction books of the 20th century, and it confirmed how little people know about the Christ of the Bible. The Jesus portrayed in books and movies is different in virtually every way—from His physical appearance to what He taught—from the Jesus Christ of the Bible.

Distorted and ignored

But this isn't the only biblical story that has been distorted. The answers to the really big questions in life can be found in the pages of the Bible:

- What is the purpose for mankind?
- Why were you born?
- What do you mean salvation?

And these questions are answered through a story that most people have never heard. It is the story of the seven annual festivals God revealed to ancient Israel.

Most Christians assume these days are only for the Jews and are only found in the Old Testament. It may shock you to learn that, out of the 66 books in the Bible, there are more references to the festivals in the New Testament book of Acts than in any other book with the exceptions of Exodus, Leviticus and 2 Chronicles.

God's festivals are referred to in more than 40 verses in the New Testament and never in a negative manner.

It is clear from the historical record that the New Testament Church observed these annual festivals. So, why are these days so important in Scripture and early Church history, yet almost completely ignored by Christians today? It is truly the greatest story never told.

In chronological order God's festivals, as listed in Leviticus 23, are Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks (or Pentecost), the Memorial of Blowing of Trumpets (or Feast of Trumpets), the Day of Atonement, the Feast of Tabernacles and the Eighth Day (or Last Great Day).

Many authors will tell you that a well-written story has seven components: setting, plot, a hero or main characters, some type of conflict, perspective or point of view, an overall theme, and a conclusion or resolution.

You may be surprised to know that all of these can be found in the vitally important true story told through the meaning of God's festivals.



Passover: THE SETTING

Our story begins in Jerusalem with the death of Jesus Christ. He was God in the flesh (1 Timothy 3:16), which means He eternally existed and was the One who interacted with mankind in the Old Testament (John 8:58). He is introduced in the New Testament as the Son of God, which makes His life worth more than all human lives. He is the central character of the story.

After living a sinless life, Jesus was crucified outside the city of Jerusalem on Passover day. This was reminiscent of the Passover sacrifice that led to the escape of the Israelites from Egypt as recorded in Exodus 12.

The death of Jesus Christ is the one sacrifice that makes forgiveness of sin possible (Hebrews 10:10). Today Christians who recognize the importance of the festivals follow His example and gather on the night of the Passover, the evening that begins the 14th of Nisan on the Hebrew calendar. We wash one another's feet and partake of the symbols of the bread and the wine.

Through these symbols, we understand that Jesus Christ gave His life so that we might live. It is a sobering, yet deeply meaningful evening, and it provides the setting for the story to follow.



Days of Unleavened Bread: THE PLOT

Our story doesn't end with the death of Jesus Christ or with His resurrection. The Christian world seems confused on this issue. It commonly teaches that salvation is secured with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, but Scripture and the festivals reveal that there's more to the story.

The second festival is the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which explains the need to remove sin from our lives. Essential to this story is your involve-

ment. From the time God calls you (John 6:44) and you accept the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for your sins, you must be removing sin from your life. This is the plot that is consistent throughout the story of the festivals—sin separates us from God and must be removed.

But the Feast of Unleavened Bread reveals to us that we must do more than just remove sin. We must replace it with righteousness. Replacing leavened bread with unleavened bread during this festival represents replacing sinful conduct with actions pleasing to God.

Unleavened bread on the night of the Passover pictures the beaten body of Jesus Christ. Unleavened bread during the Feast of Unleavened Bread pictures the righteousness that must replace the sin in our lives. As Christians, we follow the example of Jesus Christ. We commit to repenting of sin and keeping God's commandments.



Pentecost: THE MAIN CHARACTERS

Unleavened Bread identifies the difficulty we face in living a sinless life. The next festival is Pentecost, which provides hope and comfort. Through Pentecost, we understand that we can be part of the Church that was built on the foundation of Jesus Christ, the apostles and prophets (Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 2:20).

The main characters of the story are Jesus Christ—our Savior and the Head of the Church—and those called to be firstfruits in God's harvest of humanity (James 1:18). By receiving God's Holy Spirit after repentance, baptism and the laying on of hands, we begin our personal journey as a firstfruit. (Read more about this process in our free booklet *Change Your Life!*)

In ancient Israel there were two harvest seasons—spring and fall. Generally speaking, grain (barley and then

wheat) was harvested in the spring, and fruit and other produce were harvested in the fall. Pentecost pictured the end of the spring harvest, but we should not think that the spiritual harvest ends on that day. After the grain was cut from the field, beginning after the wave-sheaf offering, it had to be stored and dried before it could be used. Even though we are called to become firstfruits, there is a maturing and drying process (trials) that cannot be avoided.

While the central character in this story is Jesus Christ, God the Father is by no means left out. No one can come to Jesus Christ or be part of His Church except the Father draws him (John 6:44).

Our story does not end when we are sealed as firstfruits. In many ways, it is only beginning.



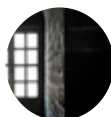
Feast of Trumpets: THE CONFLICT

The next festival foreshadows the events that will bring us to the climax of human history, the return of Jesus Christ. It pictures the ultimate conflict that will engulf the world at the end the age. This is the "memorial of blowing of trumpets" (Leviticus 23:24), and we refer to it as the Feast of Trumpets.

Through this festival, we gain insight into a time of great conflict that will come upon the world. Scripture tells us that leading up to the return of Jesus Christ there will be plagues, woes and heavenly signs. These events will be introduced by a series of trumpet calls (Revelation 8).

There will be great fear throughout the world, as millions will die from disease, war and natural disasters. But among the saints there will be great joy at the fulfillment of the many prophecies about Christ's return. The resurrection of the saints and the change to immortality for those who are alive are central to the fulfillment of this day (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).

Upon His return to this earth, Christ will bring with Him the angels and the saints who will meet Him in the air at the blowing of the seventh trumpet. Human beings won't be raptured to heaven, but will meet Christ in the air and return with Him to the Mount of Olives (Acts 1:11-12).



Day of Atonement: GOD'S POINT OF VIEW

To comprehend God's plan, we must understand God's point of view, a necessary element to a good story. God sees not only the physical events occurring in the world, but the invisible spiritual forces at work behind the scenes.

When Christ returns, He will remove Satan and his demons from their positions of influence. God will ultimately place the blame for the sins of the world on the head of Satan (symbolized by the Azazel goat sent away on the Day of Atonement in Leviticus 16:10). From God's point of view, man has sinned and is responsible for his sins, but Satan was the originator of sin and the deceiver of all mankind (Genesis 3:1-5; Revelation 12:9) and will face the consequences.

The Day of Atonement foreshadows the binding of Satan and his demons. For 1,000 years Satan will be unable to influence human beings. Revelation 20:1-3 describes his imprisonment shortly after the return of Christ. Satan is the impediment standing in the way of mankind's being reconciled to God. This is the ultimate fulfillment of the Day of Atonement.

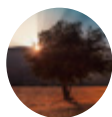


Feast of Tabernacles: THE OVERALL THEME

In addition to a plot, great stories have an overall theme. This theme is found in the meaning of the sixth festival, the Feast of Tabernacles. This seven-day festival foreshadows the

setting up of God's government on the earth. This is the heart of the gospel—the good news of the Kingdom of God. It is the same message that Jesus Christ came preaching (Mark 1:14).

For ancient Israel, the Feast of Tabernacles reminded them of the 40 years they spent wandering in the wilderness (Leviticus 23:39-43). For us, it tells the story of the millennial reign of Jesus Christ on this earth, when all mankind will learn that our limited physical life gives us time to learn to trust God and follow His ways—building holy, righteous character. With Satan out of the way, it will be a wonderful and peaceful life for the saints and those who survive the horrific events surrounding the return of Jesus Christ.



The Eighth Day: THE CONCLUSION

Our story concludes with the Eighth Day of the Feast (Leviticus 23:36). Traditionally we refer to this as the Last Great Day. It is the time of final judgment and represents a period when all mankind will be given an opportunity to know God's truth and be judged accordingly.

Those who never knew God will be resurrected to physical life in a world free of Satan and the pulls of an evil society and will be judged by their works during this judgment period. We refer to this as the Great White Throne

GOD SEES NOT ONLY THE PHYSICAL EVENTS OCCURRING IN THE WORLD, BUT THE

INVISIBLE SPIRITUAL FORCES AT WORK

behind the scenes.

Judgment period (Revelation 20:11). On the other hand, those who were converted but then rejected God will be destroyed in the lake of fire (Malachi 4:1; Revelation 20:15; Romans 6:23).

After this final judgment, we see the arrival of a new heaven and a new earth (Revelation 21), the ultimate fulfillment of the Kingdom of God. At that point we are told that God the Father will come down to this new earth to dwell with us (Revelation 21:3).

Since the plan of salvation is about eternal life, it really has no ending. Eternal life goes on for, well, eternity. What will we be doing for all eternity? It appears there is another story to be written.

Eagerly anticipating the conclusion of the story

Each year when we observe these seven annual festivals, we are retelling this wonderful story. It has all the elements of a great book—setting, plot, hero or main characters, conflict, point of view, overall theme and conclusion.

We should pray fervently for the day when this story will be complete, when Jesus Christ will appear in the clouds as King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Revelation 19:16) followed by the removal of Satan, the 1,000-year reign and the final judgment.

Yes, it is the greatest story *never* told!

Learn more about God's plan and your part in it by downloading our free booklet [From Holidays to Holy Days: God's Plan for You. D](#)

THE GREATEST STORY EVER

GOD'S plan to save humanity is a story of sacrifice and struggle, an epic tale of good vs. evil. And it has the happiest of endings.

Though it has been unnoticed by many, God outlined this plan of salvation through seven harvest festivals. The annual agricultural cycle of the Holy Land foreshadowed the wonderful steps God is using to save us from the destructiveness of sin and help us grow to become His own children.

The first spiritual harvest is pictured by the first three festivals, and the larger spiritual harvest is represented by the four fall festivals.

AS TOLD THROUGH **GOD'S** SEVEN FESTIVALS

1 PASSOVER

Christ died for us.

- The Passover lamb in the Old Testament pointed toward Christ giving His life to pay the death penalty for our sins.
- The New Testament symbols of bread and wine represent Christ's broken body and shed blood.

Key scriptures: 1 Peter 2:24;
1 Corinthians 5:7.

4 FEAST OF TRUMPETS

Christ will return and resurrect the saints.

Trumpets will announce:

- End-time plagues and war.
- Christ's return to earth to establish the Kingdom of God.
- The resurrection of the saints.

Key scriptures: 1 Corinthians 15:51-52;
1 Thessalonians 4:16-17;
Revelation 8:6-13; 11:15.

5 DAY OF ATONEMENT

God will remove Satan and reconcile humanity.

- God will bind Satan so he can't deceive humans.
- Christ's sacrifice makes it possible to reconcile man to God.
- Fasting helps us to learn humility and become at one with God.

Key scriptures: Leviticus 16:3-34;
Revelation 20:1-3.

For the dates of these festivals, see pages 42-43 of the booklet *From Holidays to Holy Days: God's Plan for You*.

If you would like to know more about how these festivals are celebrated today or to find the locations where Christians are celebrating these days all around the world, check our website at cogwa.org/congregations. Our ministers would be happy to answer your questions or arrange for a private appointment if you would like. We look forward to hearing from you!

2 DAYS OF UNLEAVENED BREAD

We must remove sin and pursue righteousness.

- For seven days leaven represents sin.
- Removing leaven reminds us to remove sin.
- Eating unleavened bread reminds us to strive to live a life free from sin, putting Christ and His way of sincerity and truth into our lives.

Key scriptures: 1 Corinthians 5:6-8.

3 FEAST OF PENTECOST

God gives the Holy Spirit and begins His Church.

- God gives His Holy Spirit to those who obey Him.
- We must repent and be baptized to receive the Holy Spirit.
- God launched the New Testament Church—the “firstfruits” of His plan.
- We must continue to allow God’s Spirit to lead us.

Key scriptures: Acts 2:38, 5:32; Romans 8:8-9; James 1:18; Revelation 14:4.

6 FEAST OF TABERNACLES

Christ’s government will produce 1,000 years of peace.

- The saints will serve as kings and priests assisting Christ on earth.
- People will be healed of diseases.
- The earth will become peaceful and abundantly productive.

Key scriptures: Isaiah 35:1-2, 5-6; Zechariah 14:16; Revelation 5:10.

7 LAST GREAT DAY

God will offer eternal life to all!

After the Millennium:

- All humans who have ever lived without full knowledge of God’s way of life will be resurrected to physical life.
- They will be taught God’s way and given a chance to respond.
- In the end, every human will have had a full chance to accept God’s calling to become His children!

Key scriptures: Ezekiel 37:14; Matthew 12:41-42; Revelation 20:11-12.

Relationships



DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE

They're everywhere: on the road, at work, in the grocery line, at church and even in our own family. How can we respond to difficult people in a godly way?

By Debbie Pierce

When we think of *difficult* personality types, we can be quick to attach a label: bossy, rude, know-it-all, phony, whiner, judgmental. These and other words are used to describe and categorize others. Perhaps these labels have even been used on us.

The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM) lists some additional labels that professional health-care providers use: antisocial, obsessive-compulsive, narcissistic and passive-aggressive, to name a few.

Unfortunately, while they may be helpful in terms of treatment, labels can also prevent us from truly understanding individuals.

See the human being

People are *more* than the labels attached to them. Labels can keep us from truly getting to know a person and finding out how unique and complex he or she really is. No two people are alike, nor are they motivated or shaped by the same things.

Imagine that each person you come in contact with is a puzzle for you to put together. Usually when assembling a jigsaw puzzle you have all the pieces as well as a picture of what you are constructing. But what if you had the picture, but not all the pieces? What if you didn't even know what pieces were missing or what to look for?

When therapists see new clients, they ask them lots of questions so they have as many pieces of their puzzle as possible. Therapists don't want to *assume* anything, and

they need to be able to put the *difficult* parts into a meaningful context. This helps them understand and *empathize* with the unique individuals these people have become.

In personal relationships, however, we are hampered by social norms and a person's desire for privacy. What is acceptable in a professional setting becomes nosiness in any other.

So how do we truly get to know and *appreciate* someone—especially when that person is difficult to be around?

Live by the Golden Rule

We start by realizing there is One who already knows everything about each and every one of us. God sees the complete picture; He has all the pieces; and He truly understands us. His love and compassion for us are not defined by how easy we are to get along with. He loves us despite our difficult parts, and He sets us a beautiful example of how to do the same with others (Romans 5:6-8).

In Matthew 7:12 Jesus tells us to treat others the way we want to be treated, otherwise known as the **Golden Rule**. This is not always easy to do, because our natural tendency is to retaliate when we have been hurt by the words or actions of another. "Fair is fair," we might tell ourselves.

But true Christianity is about rising above what our human nature wants to do. It is about living as Jesus lived, for He came to show us a better way. That's why He shared these words:

"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other

GOD LOVES ALL OF US, AND HE EXPECTS US TO TREAT OTHERS AS HE TREATS US

to him also. If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away" (Matthew 5:38-42).

This is not to say God expects us to allow someone to abuse or beat on us, or to allow someone to take our possessions. Rather, He is addressing the human desire to retaliate or take revenge. As much as we might think it is right to "make things even" with someone who hurt us, that is not what we are expected to do. Instead, we are instructed to leave the vengeance to God, who always knows exactly what is best (Romans 12:19).

Give to others what they DON'T deserve

If God were to give us what we *deserve*, what would we receive? Since we are all sinners, we are all deserving of death (Romans 6:23). Yet God, in His infinite love, paid the price of our sins through the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ. He gives each of us an opportunity to have eternal life at the perfect time.

God loves all of us, and He expects us to treat others as He treats us. That's why He says, "*Love* your enemies, *do good* to those who hate you, *bless* those who curse you, and *pray* for those who spitefully use you" (Luke 6:27-28, emphasis added throughout).

With God's help, these four action steps—love, do good, bless and pray—are possible, no matter how challenging someone may be.

Don't antagonize

Each of us has "trigger points" that, when set off, can and will bring out the worst in us. When we understand this about someone else, we should avoid pushing his or her "buttons." Don't get

into pointless debates or arguments or bring up inflammatory subjects (see 2 Timothy 2:23).

We should choose our words carefully.

Everyone knows that you don't throw gasoline on a fire to put it out—you'll have an explosion or a raging inferno on your hands! Yet how many times do we inflame a situation with our words? Proverbs 15:1 says, "A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger." And in Romans 12:18 Paul writes, "If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men."

Change the subject as necessary. If that doesn't work, perhaps you can politely excuse yourself from the conversation. At other times it may be necessary to be frank and say, "Let's talk about something else."

Look in the mirror

Astute observers have noted that we are all somebody else's difficult person at least occasionally.

Sometimes the reason people rub us the wrong way can be found by simply taking a good look at ourselves and our own motivations. Some people may, at least outwardly, remind us of past hurts, which can dredge up painful memories. It's easy to be defensive, until we stop and ask ourselves *why* we are reacting in that way. In doing so, we may gain some insight about ourselves that will help us in the future.

Look for the best in everyone

Remember, you don't have all the pieces to this person's puzzle. There are things about this person you don't know and/or don't understand. But God does. He can help you be kind and patient until you discover things to appreciate about the individual.

In 1 Corinthians 13:4 we read that love is patient and kind. We are not nat-

urally that way, but God is. Go to Him in prayer and ask for Him to reveal to you what you need to know—to help you be around this person, to treat him or her with the patience and kindness with which God treats each of us.

Be realistic

Some people are truly damaged, and that damage often spills over and touches others. It may be that their wounds will not be healed in this lifetime, which means that we have to accept the reality and the limitations of who they are.

But though *they* may never change, we can, by changing our outlook toward them and our way of responding. We should think about the way we usually interact with them. Is there a different, gentler way to respond? Can we replace defensiveness with compassion? Sometimes being polite may be the best we can do, but that's better than retaliation. Politeness goes a long way in getting along with difficult people.

When all else fails, walk away

There comes a time when it's necessary to distance ourselves from some people—those who for whatever reason always want to antagonize or even harm you. Minimal and even no contact may be the best option in certain situations. God doesn't expect us to stay in abusive relationships (Proverbs 22:24; also see our article "[Toxic Friendships?](#)").

He does, however, want us to develop His mind to help us to interact with everyone in a more godly manner in the future.

People can be difficult, no doubt, and how they live may tend to bring out some of the worst in us. We need to remember that our natural reaction is not always the best way to respond. God gave us a better way—a kinder, more patient, loving way—to view and interact with others. It's His way, and it needs to become ours as well.

For additional information about learning to treat others more as God does, see "[How to Be a Good Neighbor](#)" and the articles in our section "[The Fruit of the Spirit](#)." **D**

5 WAYS

TO HELP YOUR CHILD DEAL WITH THE EVOLUTION DEBATE

How can parents who believe in the Creator God help their children navigate the minefield of the evolution vs. creation debate? Consider these five tips.

By Paul Luecke

“Dad! Did you know that horses used to be no bigger than our *dog*? Imagine riding a horse the size of Buddy!”

How do you answer your child when he or she hears evolutionary concepts presented as facts?

There is no escaping the fact that our children will be exposed to evolutionary teachings—whether in public school, nature shows, science books or museums. The theory of evolution has been embraced and promoted as fact in almost every aspect of society—while the Creator God has been rejected and minimized to religious myth.

Does the debate matter?

Some parents who believe in the Bible may assume that evolution vs. creation is just an academic debate for adults to argue about. Nothing could be further from the truth! It is *critically* important that our children learn that all things were literally created by a very real, living *God*. Jesus Christ is described as the Creator who made Adam and Eve with His own hands, not through evolution (1 Timothy 2:13; Colossians 1:16).

It is essential that parents begin teaching their children about the existence of God from a young age. We must not wait to begin teaching this vital truth to our children until they are older! The god of *this* age (2 Corinthians 4:4, referring to Satan the devil) begins indoctrinating our children at a tender young age. We must be proactive in equipping our children to overcome this powerful deception.

Believing in the Creator is a fundamental prerequisite to any person coming to Him. “But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God *must believe that He is*” (Hebrew 11:6, emphasis added throughout).

The angels in heaven are constantly mindful that God created everything—and are moved to praise Him as a result. “You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created” (Revelation 4:11). This is an excellent example for us earthly mortals—of all ages—to follow.

Specifically, how do you equip your child to believe firmly in the Creator God and *refute* the false teachings of evolution? Here are some suggestions:

1.

TALK ABOUT GOD REGULARLY

“And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. *You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them* when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up” (Deuteronomy 6:6-7).

False teachings will come quickly to our children through many avenues. Therefore we must make conversation about the true *God* even more natural and routine. “Train up a child in the way he should go, and [even] when he is old he will not depart from it” (Proverbs 22:6).

For example, you might comment on the creatures in your backyard—the amazing agility God built into the squirrel or the aeronautical abilities of the bird that surpass any man-made aircraft.



2.

EQUIP YOURSELF WITH THE BASIC TEACHINGS OF EVOLUTION

You are your child’s most important teacher! Therefore you need to have a working knowledge of what evolution actually teaches. We highly recommend that you read some of the materials listed in the sidebar “Creation vs. Evolution Resources.” Some of these you can read for free at your local library or on the Internet or find as used books for purchase at low prices.

Having some knowledge of evolutionary theory will prevent you from describing it inaccurately—such as simplifying it to “human beings came from monkeys.”

IT IS
CRITICALLY
IMPORTANT
THAT OUR
CHILDREN
LEARN THAT
ALL THINGS
WERE
LITERALLY
CREATED BY
A VERY REAL,
LIVING GOD.

3.

LEARN ABOUT INTELLIGENT DESIGN WITH YOUR CHILD

In the last two decades, microbiologists have made astonishing new discoveries about the living cell. Each discovery adds to the growing mountain of evidence that this mind-blowing complexity can only have come from a superintelligent mind capable of the most complex engineering.

The intelligent design movement is leaving evolutionists with fewer arguments to stand on. The sidebar lists several recommended resources. As you begin reading some of these, you’ll quickly realize that most “intelligent design” authors choose to approach this subject purely from an analytical position, that is, showing clearly that evolution fails to explain the origin and complexity of life, and that a superintelligence was necessarily involved. Most are not claiming to bring the God of the Bible into the picture.

Those who believe the Bible know who this superintelligence is, and learning facts from these books about His creative genius can be inspiring and helpful.

For example, after reading *Darwin’s Black Box*, you could illustrate the principle of “**irreducible complexity**” to your child by taking apart a mousetrap or putting together a bicycle, explaining how each part must be made in a specific shape and positioned precisely for the whole system to have any useful function.

Video animations of living cells can also be excellent teaching tools. These show the amazing complexity of the billions of parts that work harmoniously together in every living cell. You can find many of these videos on YouTube by searching for “living cell animation.” When you see the astonishing complexity required to give us life, you (and your child) cannot help but have a deeper awe and reverence for the *great* Creator God!

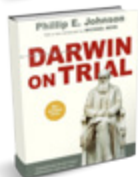


CREATION VS. EVOLUTION RESOURCES



THE CASE FOR A CREATOR

Lee Strobel, 2004.
A journalist investigates scientific evidence that points toward God.



DARWIN ON TRIAL

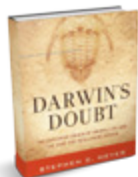
Phillip Johnson, 2010.
A professor of law examines scientific detail that argues convincingly against the theory of evolution.



DARWIN'S BLACK BOX

Michael Behe, 2006.
A professor of biochemistry shows that the building blocks of life are far too complex for

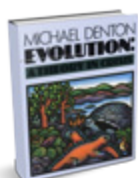
their codependent parts and processes to have evolved.



DARWIN'S DOUBT

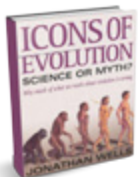
Stephen C. Meyer, 2013.
A geophysicist and Cambridge-trained philosopher of science makes the case that intelligent design is the

best explanation for the sudden explosion of life shown in the Cambrian fossil record. Also by the same author: *Signature in the Cell*.



EVOLUTION: A THEORY IN CRISIS

Michael Denton, 1985.
A biochemist examines features of the natural world that mutation and natural selection cannot explain.



ICONS OF EVOLUTION: SCIENCE OR MYTH?

Jonathan Wells, 2000.
A molecular biologist tackles 10 of the most prominent illustrations

used in teaching evolution and shows how each is misused.

4.

ADDRESS EVOLUTIONARY TEACHINGS PROMPTLY

Since *you* have the primary responsibility for the education of your child, you need to know what others are teaching him or her. Start the habit of discussing what was taught in school each day as a matter of routine, perhaps at dinner.

Whenever your child encounters evolutionary concepts—whether in school or in a TV show or book—discuss it at your earliest opportunity. If you have equipped yourself with some facts disproving evolution, you can help your child process what he or she has just heard on a level you know your child can best understand.

It is good to remember that if evolution had occurred, many missing links would have been found. Instead we see vast gaps in the fossil records where Darwinian evolution predicted there would be transitional creatures. See our LifeHopeandTruth.com article "[The Fossil Record and Creation](#)."

When it comes to evolutionary teachings at school, there are a few more points to consider:

- If your child worries about having to put down answers he or she doesn't believe when taking tests, here is one idea. When the "correct" answers would be evolutionary concepts, your child can simply add a note at the top of the test page such as, "According to the book" or "According to the theory of evolution."
- Advise your child not to start arguments in the classroom. Arguing with teachers who do not believe in the biblical account of creation will only cause unnecessary conflict or resentment toward your child in the long run. No teacher likes to be put on the spot or shown to be wrong in front of a class of students.
- Prepare your child to "*be ready*" to give a defense to everyone who *asks* you" (1 Peter 3:15). This is a principle we all need to practice. This requires being adequately armed with the knowledge of the truth. Remind your child that he or she is not alone; there are many others who believe in the Creator God rather than evolution. We can—and should—have confidence in knowing the facts are solid, true and irrefutable.

5.

COACH YOUR CHILD IN MAKING A LIST OF HIS OR HER OWN PERSONAL PROOFS OF GOD'S EXISTENCE

Your child's list can be added to or modified as he or she grows in understanding. It would, of course, be a good idea to first have your own personal list!

We believe the 15 articles in the

"Is There a God?" section of the Life, Hope & Truth website can help you in your responsibility to equip your child to deal with evolutionary teaching and to develop a growing relationship with our Creator. We invite you to bookmark the site and visit it often.

Parents, God has given *you* the responsibility to equip your children with the knowledge that will help them build a strong relationship with their Creator! **D**

Foundation
Outreach
International
volunteers Erica
Bennett and
Courtney Tobin
give thumbs-up
with children
from the village
in Zambia
where they
were serving



A Heart of Service

There are two basic ways of living—giving and getting.
We see the results of selfishness all around us. How can we
nurture a heart of service?

By Clyde Kilough

I T WAS A TIME NOT UNLIKE WHAT WE SEE so often today with competing leaders and factions manipulating the people to serve their own ambitions.

In the mightiest nation on earth at the time, a perfect political storm was brewing—a bad mix of an out-of-touch king bent on preserving his power, a people overburdened by years of heavy taxation and forced labor, and a savvy opposition leader seizing on their discontent to slickly position himself to usurp the throne.

The nation's fate would turn on a single decision. The king had heard the people's entreaty—"lighten the burdensome service of your father, and his heavy yoke which he put on us, and we will serve you"—and now pondered two conflicting solutions offered by his advisers.

The advice of the old, experienced men was profoundly insightful to the way things work in life: "If you will be a servant to these people today, and serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be your servants forever."

But wisdom often falls on deaf ears. Their counsel irked the king, so he turned to his young friends. They urged him to crush the dissent! "Say to them: 'My little finger shall be thicker than my father's waist!'" In other words, you think my father's yoke was heavy? Wait till you see mine!

And blind to the rule of reciprocity—that serving others in love would inspire his people to love and serve him in return—he chose the philosophies of so many leaders throughout history: I'll govern by command and control. My subjects are there to serve me; I'll sacrifice what's good for others for what's good for me.

The nation was ancient Israel, at its height of supremacy following wise King Solomon's death. But his son Rehoboam's foolish decision quickly rent it in two, a division from which it never fully recovered.

This story, found in the Bible in 1 Kings 12, is nearly 3,000 years old, but its lessons are as relevant today as ever.

The scourge of “me first!”

The self-serving approach continues to be one of society’s greatest scourges, yet humanity seems to never learn. We perpetuate the philosophy that “the way of get” is the way to happiness and success, but the “me first” path of life always leaves a trail of hurt. It never results in greater good for society, and when people who wield power over others choose that path, its effects are devastating.

Few of us lead nations, but most of us lead in our families, our businesses and our communities, and the leadership principles are the same for all. How many marriages and families owe their strength to selfless love? How many have been torn apart by someone’s “me first” self-interest?

One of the end-time signs

It’s a principle worth examining, because the Bible warns of intensifying selfishness in the last days leading to a time when, as Jesus said, “Because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold” (Matthew 24:12).

The apostle Paul in 2 Timothy 3:1-5 specified 19 “perilous times” indicators of the last days. Topping the list is “men will be lovers of themselves,” and many that follow also link directly to self-centeredness. They are “perilous” because they inevitably wreck character, create conflict and hurt others.

The self-serving disposition so pervades human nature that even the 12 disciples of Jesus struggled with it, on

Humanity desperately needs people who don’t just talk about Jesus, **but who actually walk in His steps.**

three separate occasions arguing about who would get the greatest positions in the Kingdom of God! Jesus kept reminding them that such an approach is futile. If they were to follow God, “it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Mark 10:42-45).

The attitudes the disciples and Rehoboam projected are not exceptions to the rule. No, we naturally gravitate toward these deeply rooted ways of thinking. Jesus’ instructions, along with case studies such as Rehoboam, serve as barometers by which we can gauge our own lives.

What about you? Are you primarily a “me first” or an “others first” type of person? A giver, or a getter?

Every one of us is predominantly one or the other, but a

(Continued on page 19)

A Heart of Service — Personified —

AN INTERVIEW WITH
PRINCESS SARVATH EL HASSAN

Princess Sarvath El Hassan of Jordan is an inspiring leader in a troubled part of the world. She has made a difference for her people and for the volunteers who serve them.

By Clyde Kilough

Only 45 miles from Jerusalem, where the corrupt King Rehoboam chose self-interest over serving his people nearly 3,000 years ago, today we can find someone, also a member of royalty, who has chosen to set a different example.

Some 40 years ago Princess Sarvath El Hassan, wife of Prince El Hassan bin Talal of Jordan, determined to fill a crying need for her people. Today, nearly 2,500 poor Jordanian families with mentally challenged children are living witnesses to how her efforts, and those of others who joined with her, forever changed their lives.

Starting from scratch and through hands-on hard work, she has overseen the Young Muslim Women’s Association (YMWA) Centre for Special Education in Bunayat from its meager beginnings. It started with only 18 students and three staff in 1974 and now serves over 170 students in its preschool, school and prevocational sections.

Princess Sarvath El Hassan has gone on to sponsor and support numerous other humanitarian and educational projects in Jordan, and has also welcomed volunteers from around the world. They, too, have had their lives changed forever through the experience of serving. Since 1982, 150 young adult volunteers have worked in these projects under the auspices of first the Ambassador Foundation and, today, Foundation Outreach International (FOI). FOI exists to promote humanitarian projects and the development of leadership and character in the lives of all people, but especially among the youth and young adults around the world.

In May Princess Sarvath El Hassan, in an interview with *Discern*, told her story. It’s an inspiring story of how a simple idea, combined with a desire to serve, can profoundly affect people far beyond what we imagine. It is a modern example of how leadership can be, and the difference it can make!

Following are excerpts from our conversation:



Princess Sarvath El Hassan speaks with Clyde Kilough at her home in Amman, Jordan

Discern: What led to your passion and involvement with [this project]?

Princess Sarvath El Hassan: Well, that was very simple. I came to Jordan 46 years ago, and I wanted to do something, but I didn't want to be what I call a "ribbon-cutting princess." I wanted to do something that made a difference. I looked around and found at that time there was nothing in the country for the educable handicapped. I thought, "What about the young people who actually can make something of their lives and what about their families?"

It started with very small beginnings. There was no money. We'd just had the war in 1967, and we'd lost half the country. It was not a time when there was any money to splash around. I felt I had to then raise the money. So with a few friends who felt the same way, I said, "Let's get on board." They had given me the YMWA as an institution, and at that time it was very, very small. It was in a tiny little flat somewhere in Jabal al-Weibdeh. But it was nothing much.

So we started fund-raising. We started making, literally, jams and jellies; and I sewed so many soft toys and made candles—you know, that really sort of small cottage industry.

We managed finally to raise \$20,000. And when we raised \$20,000, my husband gave us \$20,000. At that time the present king of Bahrain—a very good friend of my husband's—was visiting, staying with us. He saw me busy making candles and things and asked, "What are you doing?" I told him, and he gave me \$20,000.

So we ended up with \$60,000. And with that \$60,000, we sent three child psychologists, educators, one to America, one to Britain, and a lady who went to Norway because she specialized in the vocational aspect of things. Those three came back and started the school with 20 children in an apartment and, as they say, the rest is history.



TO WATCH CLYDE
KILOUGH'S FULL
INTERVIEW WITH
PRINCESS SARVATH EL
HASSAN, VISIT
LIFEHOPEANDTRUTH
.COM/DISCEARN

Q: I think your website said you've had [since opening] something like 2,000 families affected.

A: At least! And it's *families*. I would say 90 percent of our students that come are very, very financially disadvantaged. So actually, when we get a child into this center, we're actually helping the family.

Q: What is your greatest sense of gratification now, looking back on 40 years of the school?

A: Obviously we have affected positively these families and these young people, but I also think we've affected the mind-set. When I started it, I had to put up with quite a lot of flak because [to] a lot of people in the region—and if you think about it, even way back in the States—the handicapped were something to be hidden. And there was even a thought that, perhaps, it was a punishment to the family—they had done something wrong so God had sent them a handicapped child.

Consequently, it was an uphill battle. And also, as I say, the country was reeling after the war of 1967, we had refugees coming in, and people said to me, "Why are you wasting time and ... why are you bothering about these children?"

And I think now—maybe it's the world, maybe it's the country—no one would say that. They have realized that these people contribute to society; it's our responsibility to take care of them. And [there are] many centers now, as you know, in the country—some good, some not so good—but I think the mind-set has changed.

And if we've done a little bit to help that, I'd be pleased.

Q: Over the time that you've seen this program for a number of years, you've seen the volunteers come and go. Can you speak to what they have con-

**"I DIDN'T WANT TO
BE WHAT I CALL A
'RIBBON-CUTTING
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THAT MADE A
DIFFERENCE."**



tributed to it, and, maybe what you've seen how it has affected them and changed their view of life?

A: I think the concept of volunteerism is not very strong in the Arab world, so to see these bright young people coming in, giving of themselves, giving of their time, for very little financial reward—none virtually—but a lot of personal satisfaction, I think that was a very good object lesson to everyone around. Especially the ones who worked in Bunayat and who also worked in the Al-Hussein Center for the handicapped.

So I think from that point of view it was very valuable, apart from what they actually brought—the skills, the music, the art, even some of them were fantastic in administrative skill. At many levels they contributed to the success of the center. But I think what they also showed from the point of view of altruism and, you know, doing something for other people, was very valuable.

Q: When your children were little, did you try to consciously instill in them [the mind-set of serving others]?

A: I don't think consciously; it's just the atmosphere you grow up in. They saw their father working, me working. That's how I saw it, because my parents were involved in this sort of thing. My grandparents started projects, they did things, they supported people, they educated people. I think it's the environment that you grow up in, really. **D**



Foundation Outreach International volunteer Joel Bosserman (right) stands with one of his students at an art sale featuring work by students at the YMWA Centre for Special Education in Amman, Jordan; one of the YMWA Centre's students paints a craft



heart of service can be developed! Here are some steps you can take.

Follow the model, be the model

Jesus Christ didn't just talk, He modeled what "the give way of life" is all about. When He saw others in need, He helped. When He saw suffering, He healed. When He saw ignorance, He taught. When He saw people abused, He defended them. He comforted, He prayed for, He cared for people, even His enemies.

Humanity desperately needs people who don't just talk about Jesus, but who actually walk in His steps, who "visit orphans and widows in their trouble," and keep themselves "unspotted from the world" (which is full of selfishness), as James 1:27 describes "pure religion."

Selflessness is one of the greatest qualities parents can impart to their children. Teach them, yes, but nothing is more powerful than letting them see their parents model a servant's heart. Such parents give their children a much better chance to grow up to be givers, not takers.

Engage others in service

I knew a family in America whose Thanksgiving traditions included serving meals at a women's shelter before going home to their own feast. By involving their children in this service, they instilled in them compassion, wisely raised their awareness of life's harsher realities, and developed in them the habit of helping the less fortunate.

Serving is often more fun and more effective in groups. I also know of a young lady who recently returned from a nine-month volunteer service stint in Jordan (see accompanying article). She said the experience was life-changing, and it also unexpectedly opened doors to her career—serv-

ing others often brings rewards back to the giver! But she took this giant step only because some friends engaged her, encouraging her to join them.

Sometimes people in the workplace, school or neighborhood are willing to help, but depend on others to get a project going. You may be the one who helps others help!

See a need, fill a need

The accompanying article about Jordan's Princess Sarvath El Hassan tells of someone who simply saw a humanitarian need and worked to fill it. Her efforts over 40 years have now touched thousands of people.

People all around are hurting. What can you do, what will you do, to make a difference in their lives? Jesus' stirring parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) showed how people heartlessly ignored an injured man until a Samaritan—people commonly looked down upon—mercifully stopped to help. He ends the story by saying, "Go and do likewise."

It's simple, really—see a need, fill a need. Whether it helps one or 1,000, your service is worth it.

It's good for you!

Those who serve do more than impact others—they help themselves! In a world where love is growing more and more cold (Matthew 24:12), it's outgoing concern, selflessness, giving and caring that will protect your heart, that will keep you warm.

Everyone chooses his or her road in life, and with it the consequences. We can take the wide, well-traveled Highway of Get, which leads to destruction, or we can take the narrow path, the Way of Give, that leads to life. It will make all the difference in the world, not only for all who meet you on your journey, but also for you! **D**

LEFT BEHIND:

THE TRUTH

A new *Left Behind* movie is soon to hit theaters. Sadly, more than the characters in the story, it's actually the truth that is being left behind.

By Cecil Maranville





LEFT BEHIND,

written by Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins, is being brought to the big screen again. This time it will feature Academy Award winner Nicolas Cage and a bigger budget. New and old fans will follow an intense fictional plot framed by the theory that Jesus will snatch believers and innocent children away to heaven just before the world plunges into its darkest hour.

This film's storyline is based on the rapture theory.

Rapture fact-check

But I don't want to write about the movie—I want to give you a rapture fact challenge.

Most of the following statements are based on the book used for the movie (published in 1996) and other books from the LaHaye-Jenkins series. The third statement is about the first prominent teacher of the rapture theory. The last two statements, mentioned in *Left Behind*, are directly about the Bible.

So test your knowledge of the facts on this topic by answering “true” or “false” to each of the following statements.

1. The *Left Behind* books and movies present Bible prophecy accurately.
2. When the rapture is complete, all believers will be in heaven and all unbelievers will be in hell.
3. John Nelson Darby, a preacher in the 1830s, began the widespread teaching of the rapture theory because people no longer believed that they would go to heaven.
4. All believers have a responsibility to convince all other people to “accept the Lord.”
5. Jesus and the early apostles believed in and taught the rapture theory.

6. Christian churches through all ages have believed and taught the rapture theory.

7. Russia will attack Israel and be defeated by supernatural events years before Jesus returns, according to Ezekiel 38.

8. The Tribulation will last seven years.

9. Every child up to approximately 12 years of age will automatically be included in those who rise to meet Christ. (This includes not only newborns, but also unborn children at all stages of development within their mothers.)

10. All that is necessary to be “saved” is to say a brief prayer acknowledging you are a sinner (such as being selfish) and accepting Jesus’ death for your sins.

The answers

The answer for each of the 10 preceding statements is *false*. That might shock those who assumed that the *Left Behind* series represents the Bible accurately.

The answer to No. 2 may also be a shock to countless members of today's Christianity who believe that the fictional series supports the doctrine of going to heaven forever. The *Left Behind* theology has Jesus taking *some* people to heaven, but only for a few years, *after which they all come back to the earth*.

That is what was taught by John Nelson Darby. Even though he is not mentioned in the *Left Behind* books or movies, his ministry is a basis for the modern rapture theory. Some people argue that Darby did not originate the theory, but no one can argue with the fact that he was a prominent teacher of it or that

his work influenced C.I. Scofield to publish the theory in his seminal *Scofield Reference Bible* in 1909 (“John Nelson Darby: Father of Dispensationalism,” ChristianityToday.com).

So widespread and so forceful was the rapture teaching and the Scofield reinforcement that the theory has become deeply embedded in segments of Christianity.

It might seem logical to assume that Darby believed in going to heaven, but Darby was actually motivated to teach the rapture theory out of concern that Christianity no longer believed that the Kingdom of God would be on earth (ibid.)! Darby understood that the Bible teaches Christ *will return to the earth* to set up God’s Kingdom. Probably few *Left Behind* fans realize that the writers of the series teach this too!

Consider No. 4. The responsibility to preach to others is at the heart of today’s Christianity and runs through the fictionalized rapture series by LaHaye, Jenkins and other writers. Yet the Bible shows that in this age of deception (Revelation 12:9) only God can enable a person to understand the truth. No argument, regardless of how passionate or brilliant it might be, is capable of causing someone to believe the truth unless God has called the person. Jesus said this in John 6:44.

Now you can see why statements 5 and 6 are false. The Bible and the New Testament Church of God didn’t teach the rapture theory—or any kind of “split” second coming. Jesus and His disciples spoke of His second coming and clearly taught that the resurrection of the righteous would occur *at* His second coming—not before (Matthew 24:29-31).

Left Behind theology

It’s important to compare what the rapture theory teaches with what the Bible actually says.

The implication of the words “left behind” is that those who do not “believe in Jesus” or “accept Jesus’ sacrifice for sin” will be left behind when Jesus snatches away to heaven those who believed. Their scenario has the righteous dead

being resurrected years before Christ’s second coming.

Left Behind theology actually leaves behind the truth! The rapture theory essentially splits Jesus’ return into two parts:

1. A near return when He comes into the clouds around the earth.

2. The second coming, when He comes back to earth with those raptured saints.

This is *not* taught in the Bible. The theory snatches a few words out of context to manufacture a doctrine that does not fit with the rest of the Bible’s teachings.

See “[Rapture: Will There Be a Secret Rapture?](#)” for the truth of Paul’s words in 1 Thessalonians 4 on the second coming. This article also explains Matthew 24:40-41, which has also been wrongly used in support of the rapture theory.

A war in which Russia and its allies attack Israel, with supernatural intervention saving Israel years before Christ returns, is a theme threaded throughout the *Left Behind* fictional series. Yet if you read “[Russia in the Bible](#),” you will find that Ezekiel 38 plainly interprets itself. Its setting is *after* Jesus has returned and is reigning over the earth.

Many saints will be [protected](#) from the beast, false prophet and Satan, but *not in heaven*. And [the Great Tribulation](#), according to the Bible, lasts 3½ years, not seven!

The concept that children under 12, as well as unborn children or children literally in the process of being born are snatched up to heaven is simply a far-fetched idea! It might make for good movie footage, but nothing in the Bible hints at such a strange concept. [God plans salvation for all](#), but not by skipping the process of [conversion](#).

Salvation is ...

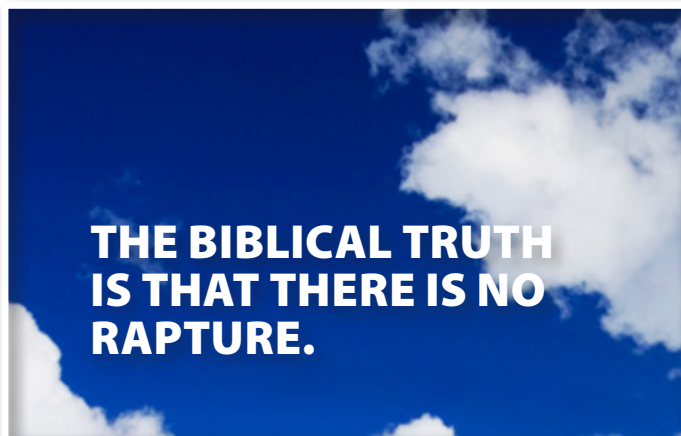
The *Left Behind* theology equates qualifying for the rapture with being “saved.” Recognizing that you are a sinner and that Jesus died for your sins is necessary. But you also have to learn what you need to believe, before you can say you believe it! There is much more to sin than the fictional stories imply. See our article “[What Is Sin?](#)” for more on this.

Learning this is the beginning of *the process* of conversion. There is much more to salvation than the *Left Behind* theology implies! See also “[What Is Salvation?](#)” to discover what you perhaps have never seen in the Bible.

Truth

The biblical truth is that *there is no rapture*. The *Left Behind* fiction brings the Bible into its stories in a piecemeal manner. Those who study the Bible carefully and really believe it—who understand what Jesus preached, why He died and why He is returning—do not accept the rapture. We want you to have the big picture! You can find it outlined in our booklet [The Mystery of the Kingdom](#).

The truth is in your Bible—not in fictional books or movies! Download this booklet and read the biblical passages that reveal the truth—so that you will not leave *it* behind! **D**





Secularization has rapidly eroded Christian beliefs in Great Britain. How did it happen, and what does it mean for the future?

By Neal Hogberg

“We don’t do God”

the communications director for Tony Blair famously interrupted when the British prime minister was asked about faith during an interview.

Those four curt words highlight the bigger issue of the crumbling and rotting nature of biblical faith in Great Britain, the island that includes England, Scotland and Wales. They show how Christianity in the land that produced the King James Bible, which opened God’s revelation to the common man, is now considered an awkward and rather embarrassing part of Great Britain’s history rather than its present or future.

Plunging poll numbers

Secularization—the process of separating from a spiritual connection, orientation or influence and moving to attitudes and actions not bound by religious rules—has affected the entire Western world. And it has had a particularly corrosive effect in Britain. While the massive cathedrals and churches long ago became museums of a bygone era, empty of all but tourists, the results of the 2011 census in England and several recent opinion polls reflect the velocity of change.

Though Prime Minister David Cameron claims that Britain is “a Christian country,” this is countered by the nation’s leading religious figures. George Carey, former archbishop of Canterbury, said that Christianity in Britain is just “a generation away from extinction” (*International Business Times*, Nov. 19, 2013). His successor, Rowan Williams, recently declared that Britain is already a “post-Christian” nation (*The Guardian*, April 27, 2014).

The results of the 2011 census showed that religion has declined far more sharply than expected over the past decade in Britain, with fewer than three in five (59 percent) describing themselves as Christian—a drop from 72 percent in just 10 years.

More than a quarter of the population now identifies with no religion, 10 percentage points higher than in the 2001 census. The overall number of people identifying themselves as Christians plunged by 4.1 million, and only a third of these attend church outside of weddings, baptisms and funerals. Younger people, young men in particular, seem to be rejecting religion altogether, as 32 percent say they do not have a religion.

More recently, a 2013 YouGov poll of 18- to 24-year-olds reported:

- 41 percent showed hostility to religion by stating that religion was “more often the cause of evil in the world,” while only 14 percent said it was a cause for good.
- When asked if they believe in God, only 25 percent stated they do, while 19 percent believe in some “spiritual greater power” and 38 percent do not believe in any sort of God or spiritual power.
- When young adults were asked which figures have influence on their lives, religious leaders came out on the bottom: only 12 percent felt influenced by them, which was significantly below politicians (38 percent), brands (32 percent) or celebrities (21 percent).

How did this happen?

How has Britain’s core, Christianity-infused culture and moral identity, built over centuries, spi-



Campaign creator
Ariane Sherine and
Richard Dawkins
at the Atheist Bus
Campaign launch

raled down and imploded so rapidly? What led to this secularization and the relegation of Christian beliefs to the fringe of social significance? More importantly, where will Britain end up as a result of this demise?

The secular seeds for Britain's—and much of the Western world's—Christian disbelief were planted long ago. The Industrial Revolution of the 18th century had profound effects by dislodging people from agricultural settings to cities and suburbs where belief failed to take deep root. Theories from Sigmund Freud and Charles Darwin worked to banish God from the mind and universe. The horrors of two world wars shook moral and theological beliefs.

These influences were just a preamble, however, to the massive shift. According to religious and cultural historian Callum Brown in his book *The Death of Christian Britain*, that happened with a catastrophic and abrupt cultural revolution in a single generation that flowered between 1960 and 1975. "Secularisation," he argues, "is to be located, in part at least, in the changing conditions which allowed previously regarded Christian and social 'sins' to be regarded as acceptable and moral, at least by many, in British society in 2000" (2001, p. 8).

The hinge decade of the 1960s saw the rise of radical feminism and the casting off of restraint, with cohabitation, divorce, pornography, abortion and homosexuality swirling within a sexual revolution that overwhelmed a spiritually unprepared people. Former Archbishop Carey noted how the church has merely reflected rather than shaped societal norms when he said, "Britain's unthinking secularism is the context for the Church's attitudes, shape-

In essence, the religious leaders went with the prevailing wind and preached a message that required little—and expected even less—of adherents. The dwindling audience grew tired of a vapid and valueless form of religion and decided to stay home.

less form and its lack of any underpinning values" (quoted by Melanie Phillips, *The World Turned Upside Down*, 2010, p. 355).

In essence, the religious leaders went with the prevailing wind and preached a message that required little—and expected even less—of adherents. The dwindling audience grew tired of a vapid and valueless form of religion and decided to stay home.

"The Church of England," as Jeremy Paxman, author of *The English: A Portrait of a People* describes it, "is the maddening institution it is because that is how the English like their religion—pragmatic, comfortable and unobtrusive ... a comforter of the comfortable" (1999, p. 99).

Dereliction of duty

Callum Brown notes the dereliction of duty from Christian leaders: "Christian churches have not only fallen in size but also in moral standing. They were once a safe and unmovable fixture at the heart of national standards, but now confidence in the probity of church leaders is almost weekly challenged by scandal" (*The Death of Christian Britain*, p. 4).

This began with the liberal theological colleges losing faith in the Scriptures and then indoctrinating future bishops to replace ancient ideas of sin and atonement with an inclination toward liberal psychology.

In his book *The Abolition of Britain*, author Peter Hitchens observes that in church teachings "the Old Testament and the Psalms, with their harsher and more uncompromising approach were relegated or eliminated." He also points out that the 10 Commandments

were disappearing from church services, “but lengthy pleas about the most fashionable international crisis would be inserted” (p. 122).

British religious leaders then shifted from a doubting and confused stance to a militantly secular one. Dating back to the 1930s, William Temple, who later became archbishop of Canterbury, said, “There is no such thing as revealed truth.” Later, the Anglican bishop of Durham, David Jenkins, spoke of the resurrection as being a “conjuring trick with bones” and received a standing ovation from a group of bishops when he called the God of the Bible a “cultic idol.”

Richard Harries, the Anglican bishop of Oxford, in 2002 took blasphemy to another level when he said that Christians should pray to “God the Mother” (*The Times* [London], Nov. 3, 2002). In 2005 and 2008 the Church of England issued apologies to the developing world for the spread of Christianity (*The Times*, Nov. 1, 2005) and to Charles Darwin for not accepting his theory of evolution (*The Telegraph*, Sept. 13, 2008).

In 2013 the Church of England eliminated its ban on gay clergy in civil partnerships and unofficially began to bless gay marriages in church. Having previously voted to allow females to serve as priests, the Church of England recently voted overwhelmingly to admit women to the rank of bishop (*Newsweek*, July 15, 2014).

Church without children

As the British people grew accustomed to this meaningless and irrelevant stew of religion, there appeared to be no good reason to believe or practice any type of Christianity, so they simply abandoned the faith. The 2008 humanist advertising campaign, splashed across buses throughout the country, appears to have resonated. It said: “There’s probably no God. Now stop worrying and enjoy your life.”

Children have become a rarity in churches today, as only 35 percent of children in Britain have been brought up in a church (2012 YouGov poll). This contrasts with the 80 percent of people aged 66 or older who had a religious upbringing. Having never attended as children, many British young adults drift to a vague agnosticism with little hostility but much indifference. They “believe but don’t belong” to a formal church and casually follow a soft and fuzzy “spirituality” of beliefs often initiated by popular culture and celebrity hedonists mixing a New Age brew of ecology, paganism, gothic romanticism and Wicca.

When asked what inspired them in a 2003 Ipsos MORI poll, more Britons said “being with friends” (46 percent), “a walk in the country” (41 percent), and music or poetry (27 percent) than said Jesus (24 percent) or a sacred text (6 percent).

Imprisoned by passing pleasures

With the Bible no longer relevant to many, Britain no longer speaks the same cultural or moral language of the nation’s past. Nor are many even familiar with the biblical narrative.

As Peter Hitchens goes on to say: “Our British Protestant

sexual morality, which once required marriage as the price of pleasure, now treats any sexual activity as recreation. This allegedly liberates women from the slavery of the home, and men from the slavery of supporting a family. But in truth it imprisons children in a world where they always come in second to adult pleasures, it imprisons women in endless competition with their sisters for fun—a competition in which the rich and beautiful are the only winners as long as their wealth and beauty last and not for a moment longer—and it imprisons men in an ultimately sterile quest for passing pleasure” (*The Abolition of Britain*, p. 298).

Where does this religious vacuum in Britain lead? The fallout from this plunge into spiritual illiteracy and moral relativism has already had devastating societal effects:

- Britain has the third highest rate of teenage sexual activity in the world (*Daily Mail*, April 24, 2012).
- Nearly half (47.5 percent) of all children born in Britain are to unwed mothers (*The Telegraph*, July 10, 2013), and in the EU only Latvia has a higher percentage of single-parent homes (*The Telegraph*, Jan. 17, 2014).
- The highest rate of divorce in the EU is found in Britain (*Daily Mail*, July 21, 2014).
- The United Kingdom was named Europe’s “addictions capital” with some of the highest rates of alcohol and prescription drug abuse (*BBC News*, Sept. 1, 2013).

Heed God’s warnings!

Sadly, the people of Britain (and many other nations, such as the United States, Canada and Australia) have failed to heed God’s warnings. These include the warnings given to their physical and spiritual forefathers, the children of Israel, who were told there would be a severe penalty for forgetting God during times of affluence (Deuteronomy 8:11-20). (For more on the identity of Britain in Bible prophecy, see the LifeHopeandTruth.com article “[Who Are the United States and Britain in Prophecy?](#)”)

They have foolishly followed the secular theories of men who say there is no God (Psalm 14:1-3), who call the things of God foolishness (1 Corinthians 2:13-14; Romans 1:18-32) and who preach a different, syncretistic gospel (2 Corinthians 11:4) that tries to please men rather than God (Galatians 1:8-10).

God, through the prophet Jeremiah, proclaimed, “My people are foolish, they have not known Me. ... They are wise to do evil. ... The prophets prophesy falsely” (Jeremiah 4:22; 5:31).

Isaiah warned the ancient Israelites that “those who lead you cause you to err” (Isaiah 3:12), while Hosea sounded a similar alarm: “The prophet is a fool, the spiritual man is insane, because of the greatness of your iniquity” (Hosea 9:7).

The modern-day nations of Israel will suffer the same punishments and sudden downfall (Deuteronomy 28:20; Isaiah 9:13-14; 30:10-13) as ancient Israel if they do not acknowledge and repent—both individually and nationally—of their sins. Learn more about the vitally important subject of repentance in our free booklet [Change Your Life! D](#)

WORLDWATCH

Anti-Semitism in Europe



“At what point do the Jews of America and the Jews of Israel tell the Jews of Europe that it might be time to get out?”

—AMERICAN JOURNALIST JEFFREY GOLDBERG, in a tweet after a gunman killed four people at the Jewish Museum in Brussels and after far-right and neo-Nazi parties made large gains in the European Parliament elections (*The Economist*).

See more about the recurrence of anti-Semitism in the Life, Hope & Truth article “[Anti-Semitism](#).”

What Will the Next Terrorist Bomb Threat Be?

Intelligence reports of terrorists trying to hide explosives in hollowed-out phones, tablets and laptops prompted new airport security rules this summer. Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula’s innovative bomb makers have, in the past, been able to get past security with bombs in printer cartridges and underwear; and Western officials are

scrambling to figure out what will be next.

U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson said, “Our job is to try to anticipate the next attack, not simply react to the last one” (*The Week*, July 18, 2014, p. 3).

But with al-Qaeda desperate to become the world’s most feared terrorist group again (now that it has been trumped by the Islamic State), they are sure to attempt more violent and spectacular attacks.



51 Million

Number of refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced people last year—the most since the Second World War. The problem is worldwide, but it is especially acute in the Middle East and Africa. Half of all refugees were from

Afghanistan, Syria and Somalia. And Nigeria has 3.3 million displaced people, including 250,000 who have been displaced this year by Boko Haram’s war on civilians (*Time*; *The Christian Science Monitor Weekly*).




3,000

Number of Europeans, North Americans and Australians who are foreign fighters in Syria and Iraq. Security experts fear they will return to their home countries “battle-hardened and radicalized by

master terrorists—ready to engage in attacks on home soil” (*Time*).

For example, the man accused of the attack at the Jewish Museum in Brussels, Mehdi Nemmouche, had spent more than a year in Syria and had links to the group formerly known as ISIS.

Territorial Control of the Islamic State

-  Areas controlled by the Islamic State
-  Areas claimed by the Islamic State
-  Rest of Iraq and Syria

SOURCE BBC/MAP BY NORDNORDWEST/SPESH531
AS OF AUG. 1, 2014/CC BY-SA 3.0



There is no end in sight to most of the crises that are uprooting millions today, but the Bible promises a time when people will return to their homelands and live in peace and safety. Read more about this in our article “[World Peace: How It Will Come](#).”

Left Syrian refugee Mahmoud stands in the underground shelter where he lives with his parents and eight siblings in El Akbiya, Lebanon

45 Million

Number of landmines in the ground worldwide, according to U.S. Department of Defense estimates. (UN estimates are more than double that, at 110 million.) Mines and IEDs not only kill thousands during wars, but many remain to kill thousands of civilians even after a conflict is over. In 2012 there were 3,620 casualties, about three quarters of them civilians (*The Economist*).



Clearing landmines can be a dangerous and expensive project. New technologies are being developed to detect mines that have little metal in them; and animals such as dogs, bees and rats are being trained to sniff out explosives.

We pray for the day when Jesus Christ will return and all weapons of war and landmines will be removed. See the January/February Discern article “Neither Shall They Learn War Anymore.”

Spy Fiasco Further Damages U.S.-German Relations

Public outrage led to Germany ordering the CIA Berlin station chief to leave the country in July. This followed the discovery of German intelligence and defense officials spying for the U.S. Relations had been strained since Edward Snowden’s revelations that the U.S. National Security Agency had listened to thousands of German phone calls, including those of Chancellor Angela Merkel (Reuters).



Japan’s Pacifist Policy Changing

In the midst of growing tensions with China and North Korea, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe worked out a deal to get around a pacifist article in the Japanese constitution. The reinterpretation of the constitution will allow Japan’s Self-

Defense Forces to come to the aid of allies if Japan itself is under threat. For example, the change “opens the way for Japan to take forceful action in the event of China landing personnel on the Senkaku islands,” reported *The Economist*.

For more background on the tensions between Japan and China, see the World InSight article “Route of Contention” in the July/August issue.

3 Years

How long it took for China to use more cement than the United States used in 100 years. China used 6.6 gigatons between 2011 and 2013. The U.S. used 4.5 gigatons in the entire 20th century (*The Christian Science Monitor Weekly*).



“I don’t think this Ebola outbreak is the next big one. But I think it’s a dress rehearsal for the next big one.”

—**DAVID QUAMMEN**, author of *Spillover*, which examines diseases like Ebola and HIV that move from animals to humans, in an interview with NPR. This year’s Ebola outbreak is by far the worst since the disease was discovered in 1976, having killed 932 by Aug. 7 and continuing to spread rapidly.

“Viruses such as the Middle East respiratory syndrome [MERS] and SARS are much more of a concern to scientists that study these things than Ebola because they are already transmissible through the respiratory route. They are also highly adaptable, and they mutate quickly.”

“Scientists acknowledge that if the American Breadbasket cannot help supply ever-growing food demands, billions could starve.”

—**BRIAN BROWN**, writing for NBC News about the catastrophic depletion of critical global underground water sources like the Ogallala Aquifer, which spreads across eight states, from Texas to South Dakota. “It’s the fountain of life not only for much of the Texas Panhandle, but also for the entire American Breadbasket of the Great Plains, a highly-sophisticated, amazingly-productive agricultural region that literally helps feed the world.”

The Kingdom of God: A Message Christianity Ignores

The Gospel accounts are very clear about the focus of Christ's message. Yet the gospel of the Kingdom of God is nearly absent from Christianity today.

By Erik Jones

The myriad of churches that make up Christianity profess that their religion is based on Jesus Christ. Nearly all claim Him as their founder and say that their teachings are based on what He said and did 2,000 years ago. But, sadly, there are many doctrines where mainstream Christianity ignores or actually rejects the teachings of Jesus Christ.

This month's column makes a bold assertion: Mainstream Christianity does not teach the same message that Jesus Christ brought when He walked the earth 2,000 years ago.

Jesus had a central message that formed the basis for His entire ministry and teachings.

He pinpointed this central message in the heart of His most famous sermon—the Sermon on the Mount. He made a statement about what should be the highest priority for His followers: “But *seek first* the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (Matthew 6:33, emphasis added).

Jesus Christ's words are clear—the Kingdom of God is to be the No. 1 focus and emphasis in the lives of His followers. In fact, it was the core of His gospel message.

Christ's gospel was *not* just about Himself

Gospel is a common word in the Christian world. Some think of it in connection with a genre of religious music, but most understand that it

describes a message. It literally means a message of *good news*. Most churches include the word gospel in their mission statements. Typically, the gospel is described as *the gospel of Jesus Christ*, and it is seen as the message of His life, death and resurrection. (You can see this by doing a Google search of the mission statements of different denominations of Christianity.)

But was this the central message that Jesus actually taught? Was His message only about *Himself*?

A study of the Gospel accounts of Christ's life pinpoints exactly what His message—His gospel—was all about!

Notice Mark 1:14: “Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God.” That statement is pretty plain—Jesus preached the gospel about the Kingdom of God!

There are many scriptures that reinforce this fact. For example, Matthew 9:35 says, “Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom.”

At one point in His ministry, Jesus was about to leave an area where He had been preaching for some time. The people of that area tried to persuade Him not to go (Luke 4:42). Jesus' response was, “I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent” (verse 43).

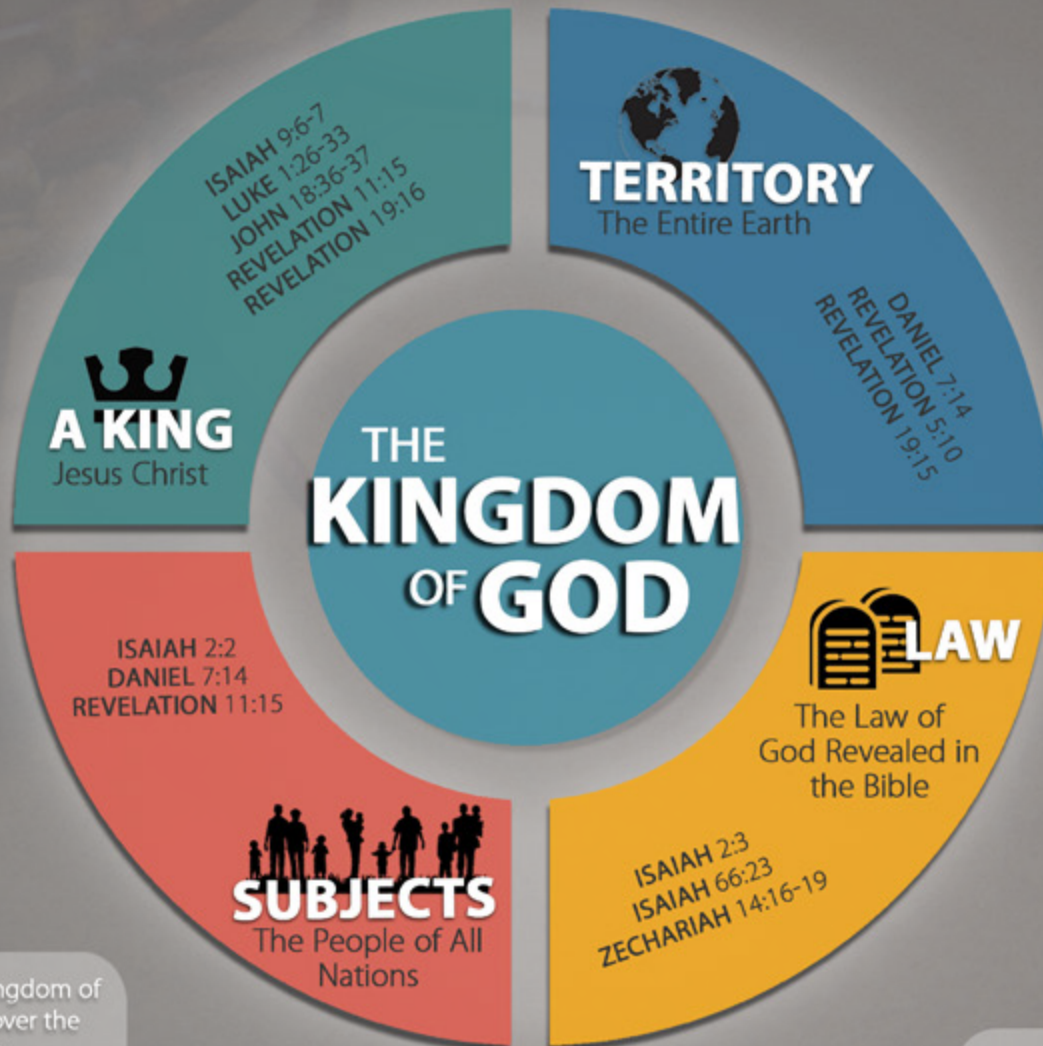
Let that sink in.

Jesus Christ said that one of His primary purposes for coming to earth was to preach about the Kingdom of God! That was His gospel. That was His message. That was His purpose. That is what drove Him.

When we understand that the thrust of Christ's message centered on the Kingdom of God, we

So, What Is the Kingdom of God?

The Bible is clear that the Kingdom of God is a literal government that will be established on earth. The Kingdom of God will contain the four essential components of a real kingdom.



When the Kingdom of God rules over the earth,

THE NATURE OF WILD ANIMALS WILL BE CHANGED

to make them docile (Isaiah 11:6-9).

The Kingdom of God will be **ESTABLISHED ON EARTH**

at the second coming of Jesus Christ (Revelation 11:15; 19:15).

The Kingdom of God is a **FUTURE REALITY.**

It is not here yet (Matthew 6:10; John 18:36).

KING DAVID WILL RULE

over the 12 tribes of Israel (Jeremiah 30:9). Each tribe will be governed by one of the 12 apostles (Matthew 19:28).

understand better why He made the statement in Matthew 6:33: “Seek first the kingdom of God.” He tells us to seek first the Kingdom because the Kingdom of God was His primary message.

This message is about the literal establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth at the second coming of Jesus Christ. See our infographic on page 29 to learn more details about what the Kingdom of God is.

But where is that message in mainstream Christianity today?

Jesus Christ’s words are clear—the Kingdom of God is to be the No. 1 focus and emphasis in the lives of His followers. In fact, it was the core of His gospel message.

Christianity lost Christ’s message

After Christ was resurrected and ascended to heaven, He founded a Church. The purpose of that Church—that called-out group of people—was to carry on the work He did while on earth. Christ commissioned His Church to go into the entire world and preach the same message that He preached while He was on earth (Matthew 24:14; 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Acts 1:3-8).

The Bible shows that the early Church faithfully followed Christ’s directive and preached the gospel of the Kingdom of God (Acts 8:12; 14:22; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23, 31). The members of the early Church also put their focus on the coming Kingdom (Colossians 4:11; 2 Thessalonians 1:5).

But as the first century progressed, the intense focus on the Kingdom began to wane as false beliefs began to creep into Christianity. The apostle Paul wrote that he perceived Christians in his time were “turning away” from the true gospel to “a different gospel” (Galatians 1:6). In what was likely his final letter, Paul gave multiple warnings about his fear that people were abandoning true doctrines and being led astray into false teachings (2 Timothy 2:14-18; 3:13-14; 4:1-3, 14-15). Other apostles wrote similar warnings (2 Peter 2:1; 2 John 1:7; Jude 1:4).

The understanding of the true gospel and the focus on the Kingdom of God were minimized and lost over the centuries after the end of the New Testament era.

A key factor in this was Emperor Constantine’s acceptance of a popular form of Christianity and its subsequent adoption as the official religion of the Roman Empire.

Historian Justo Gonzalez writes: “Since the time of Constantine, and due in part to the work of Eusebius

and of many others of similar theological orientation, there was a tendency to set aside or to postpone the hope of the early church, that its Lord would return in the clouds to establish a Kingdom of peace and justice. . . . Eusebius, although more articulate than most, was simply expressing the common feeling among Christians, for whom the advent of Constantine and of the peace he brought about was the final triumph of Christianity over its enemies” (*The Story of Christianity*, Vol. 1, pp. 134-135).

This idea was also promoted by the theologian Augustine of Hippo in his highly influential book *The City of God*: “Therefore the Church even now is the kingdom of Christ, and the kingdom of heaven” (Book XX, Chapter 9).

This belief became known as *amillennialism* and is a dominant belief (in different forms) in mainstream Christianity today.

After the true biblical teaching of the Kingdom of God was removed, the gospel message was changed from the message about the Kingdom to a message primarily about Jesus Christ. In other words, Christianity kept the name of Jesus Christ, but abandoned His message.

Jesus was very clear that professing His name but ignoring His teachings is false worship (Luke 6:46).

Preaching the true gospel today

The true gospel is not a minor issue. As we have already read, Jesus connected a belief in the true gospel to repentance (Mark 1:15), and the apostle Paul warned that preaching a different gospel brings a curse (Galatians 1:8-9). Believing the *true gospel* is vital to your salvation!

The true gospel is the message of good news about the coming Kingdom of God. It is a message of hope—for this entire world and for you and your family. It is the message that God is building a family that will soon rule the entire earth, bringing peace and happiness.

The established Christian churches have lost that true gospel message. *Discern* magazine and the Life, Hope & Truth website exist to continue the proclamation of the true gospel. Even though we are a minority voice in the world of religion, we are dedicated to teaching the same message that Jesus Christ taught. We are a small voice crying out amid a global landscape of religious confusion.

Keep reading and discerning.

You need to learn more about that true gospel message. We recommend reading our booklet [*The Mystery of the Kingdom*](#). **D**

A Beautiful Monument to Failure

I RECENTLY VISITED A BEAUTIFUL MONUMENT to man's frustrating inability to end war. This unintended monument to failure sits on a hillside overlooking Switzerland's Lake Geneva. It's called the *Palais des Nations*.

This year marks the 100th anniversary of World War I, the first fully industrialized war. Mass production of new and destructive arms, such as chemical weapons, tanks and warplanes, led to 30,000,000 soldiers being killed or wounded. Several empires fell, and even most of the victorious nations were bled dry.

"Never again," said the mangled nations, mourning their lost generations. The proposed solution to war was to come from collective security and disarmament, achieved through a new organization, the League of Nations.

Signatory nations promised to defend each other from aggression. International disagreements would be settled before judges, not on the battlefield. Weapon stockpiles would be reduced. A new era of understanding, cooperation and peace would begin. There would never again be a world war.

In 1920 the headquarters of the League was moved to Geneva, where the imposing palace was built.

Broken promises

Alas, the League of Nations could not keep its promises. Member nations did not live up to their commitments when Japan invaded Manchuria in 1931 or when Bolivia and Paraguay went to war in 1932. It did not intervene in the Spanish Civil War or when Italy invaded Ethiopia (both signatory nations) in 1936.

It was in the Palais des Nations that Emperor Haile Selassie eloquently pleaded with the League to honor its obligations and come to the aid of the barefoot Ethiopians, against whom the Italians had used tanks, bombers and mustard gas.

As we walked through the Assembly Hall, I tried to imagine that speech, which some consider among the most stirring of the 20th century. Yet the League of Nations, shamefully, did nothing. Some members even recognized the Italian conquest. All were too absorbed in their own concerns to keep their pledges to protect the weak.

Three years later, Hitler invaded Poland and World War II began. The League had failed utterly.

Ironically, the League of Nations structures were turned over to a new organization founded in 1945 to pursue the same idealistic purposes: the United Nations. The Geneva complex, enlarged and improved, now supplements the UN headquarters in New York.

But lasting peace still has not been achieved. I'm writing this in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the country with the largest UN peacekeeping presence in the world. But peace still has not come to the Congo, and wars are simmering or burning around the world.

The spiritual path to peace

Mankind seeks peace with alliances, conferences, institutions, promises and good intentions. But the root of peace lies elsewhere. Long ago, the prophet Isaiah explained, "The way of peace they have not known, and there is no justice in their ways; they have made themselves crooked paths; whoever takes that way shall not know peace" (Isaiah 59:8).

War and peace spring from spiritual paths people follow. Because people don't want to change their inner orientation, or don't know how, wars continue and people die. (Read more about this problem, and the solution, in the January/February article "[Neither Shall They Learn War Any-more.](#)")

The key, according to Isaiah, is *justice*—doing what is just, fair, right. And what is just is determined by God. True and lasting peace will only occur when all people turn to the God of the Bible and seek to fulfill His just will. This will happen one day when God "sends forth justice to victory" (Matthew 12:20).

Until that happy day, which the Bible says is sure to come, mankind will go on looking for the solution to war in the wrong places and continue building beautiful and impressive monuments to failure.

—Joel Meeker
@JoelMeeker



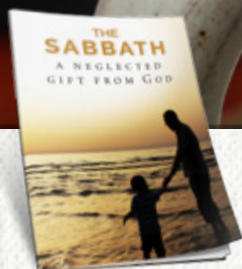
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