

The *SWORD* of God is Raised!

The Scriptures tell us that in the last days there shall come scoffers spreading doubt and confusion with respect to the return of the Messiah and the end of this present age. This condition was prevalent in the first-century Church, and it is just as rampant today. This article, therefore, is an answer to those who would perpetrate such atrocities upon the people of God.

The age in which we live today is perhaps the most dangerous and deceptive of any since the time of Noah, when God was forced to destroy mankind with a great worldwide flood. The fact that the danger is concealed in the deception makes this present set of circumstances particularly critical for this generation. Most people the world over have the attitude expressed by the apostle Peter when he said:

“Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation” (II Pet. 3:3-4).

This attitude is so all-pervasive that it has actually become the norm. Such was emphatically not the case in the

early Church. They lived in high expectancy of Christ’s soon return, and, interestingly enough, it is their history, and their history alone, that God saw fit to include as a part of inspired Scripture. This is very significant fact that we simply cannot afford to overlook.

The early Church is and should be the model for the latter-day Church, yet the leaders of organized religion seldom, if ever, consult or apply the message of the

Scriptures in this matter. God clearly intended that every generation live in great anticipation of the Messiah's Second Coming. We observe the same kind of fervency in the earliest 2nd century Church writings, as we do in the initial apostolic age.

Conditions in the world today portend grave troubles coming upon an unsuspecting global population. God is patient and suffers long with disobedient humanity, but this will not always be the case. As the time nears for the return of the Messiah, God will set Himself to cleanse the earth once and for all. This cleansing on such a massive worldwide scale accounts for much of the dire, apocalyptic language of Bible prophecy.

God will not permit any person, group, or nation to escape His notice or His judgment. Man will be forced to learn that he simply cannot think, speak, and act as he chooses without running the risk of disobeying and dishonoring God.

GOD'S GREAT COVENANT

The true God is remarkable in that He is willing to make agreements and covenants with mere human beings. He made a covenant with Noah in the pre-flood world, and one with David many years later. He has made a new covenant with His spiritual people. There is, however, another particular covenant that is specific and pertinent to this discussion.

When God began to deal with a man named Abram, He embarked on a grand plan that He had in mind for all mankind. A great part of His affiliation with this man Abram or Abraham involved the making of a special covenant between the two of them. We read about that unique agreement in Genesis 12:

“Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get you out of your country, and from you kindred, and from you father's house, unto a land that I will show you: and I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing; and I will bless them that bless you and curse them that curse you, and in you shall all families of the earth be blessed” (Gen. 12:1-3).

A few chapters later, God expands on the promise:

“And Abram said, Behold to me You have given no seed; and, lo, one born in my house is my heir. And, behold, the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, This shall not be your heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be your heir. And brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if you be able to number them; and He said unto him, So shall your seed be. And he believed in the Lord, and He counted it to him for righteousness” (Gen. 15:1-6).

Continuing this unfolding story, we read further in Genesis 17 the following:

“And when Abram was ninety

years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God, walk before Me and be you perfect. And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly. And Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying, As for Me, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations...and I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come out of you. And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your seed after you in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto you, and to your seed after you” (Gen. 17:1-7).

Once Isaac, the son of promise, was born, God one day commanded Abraham and his son to take a three-day journey to the area of what later came to be called Jerusalem. There he was instructed to literally sacrifice his son to God on one of the mountains of Moriah. Although this was a great challenge to the faith of Abraham, he passed the test with flying colors. The story is a familiar one to us all. We know that at the last moment God intervened, stayed the hand of Abraham, and provided a ram for the sacrificial offering. After this heartrending episode had occurred, God once again confirmed His covenant with Abraham by saying:

“By Myself have I sworn, says the Lord, for because you have done this things, and have not withheld you son, your only son; that in blessing I will bless you, and in multiplying I will multiply your seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the

sea shore; and your seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because you have obeyed My voice” (Gen. 22:16-18).

Once Isaac attained manhood and his father had died, God re-confirmed the Abrahamic covenant with him as recorded in Genesis 26. Then to complete the plan, God established this special covenant with Isaac’s son Jacob (Genesis 28).

Jacob had twelve sons, the favorite of whom was Joseph. When Joseph brought his two sons Ephraim and Manasseh before Jacob to receive a blessing, the old patriarch crossed his hands, and instead of placing his right on the head of Manasseh the oldest, he instead gave Ephraim the blessing of the first-born. This was done intentionally, signifying that the younger brother would eventually outstrip the older (Genesis 48). Shortly thereafter, as Jacob approached the end of his life, he gathered his children around him and pronounced prophecies with regard as to what would befall them in the latter days. His inspired words are very significant, because they identify certain traits and even events that would eventually reveal themselves in the history of the 12 tribes.

Although it is outside the scope of this paper to go into great detail concerning this matter, suffice it to say that the tribes of Judah and Joseph were specially singled out by God for specific reasons above and beyond anything said with

respect to the other 10 tribes.

Judah was promised that the scepter of rulership would not depart from them until *Shiloh* came. Many feel that this was a direct reference to the promised Messiah who would descend from Judah. We know that this was at least partially fulfilled in the first coming of Jesus Christ (Yahshua the Messiah). His prophesied Second Coming also figures into the ultimate completion of Jacob’s prophetic words concerning Judah.

Joseph, on the other hand, was given by far the greatest of the blessings. That tribe is called a **“fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall...the blessings of your father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren” (Gen. 49:22-26).**

When Joseph and the other tribal heads had died, the grandchildren of Jacob remained in Egypt, where they had gone to avert a severe famine in Canaan. Eventually a ruler who had not known Joseph arose in Egypt and took the Israelites captive as slaves. The remainder of this story is quite familiar to us all.

WHO IS ISRAEL?

The Scriptures deal almost exclusively with the people of Israel. Certainly the other nations or Gentiles are mentioned, but primarily it is in connection with

their relationship with Israel.

Israel is very special to God. In describing this unlikely bunch of slaves, He says:

“Your birth and your nativity is of the land of Canaan; your father was an Amorite, and your mother an Hittite...no eye pitied you...to have compassion upon you; but you were cast out in the open field, to the loathing of your person, in the day that you were born. And when I passed by you, and saw you polluted in your own blood, I said unto you...Live...Now when I passed by you and looked upon you, behold, your time was the time of love; and I spread My skirt over you and covered your nakedness; yea, I swore unto you, and entered into a covenant with you, says the Lord God, and you became Mine. Then I washed you with water, yea I thoroughly washed away your blood from you, and I anointed you with oil. I clothed you also with brodered work, and shod you with badgers’ skins, and I girded you about with fine linen, and I covered you with silk. I decked you also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon your hands, and a chain on your neck, and I put a jewel on your forehead, and earrings in your ears, and a beautiful crown upon your head...And your renown went forth among the heathen for your beauty, for it was perfect through My comeliness, which I had put upon You, says the Lord God” (Ezek. 16:3-14).

The Israelites spent many years in Egyptian slavery until God’s time was right, and He then set His hand to deliver them. The story is one of the most familiar in

all the Bible. Movies have been made about Israel's famous exodus from bondage. It was an event of monumental proportions.

After their preparation, the second generation of Israelites entered into the Promised Land of Canaan, the place where Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had sojourned.

Once in the land, they had to subdue it city by city. The Israelites, not ever ones to faithfully do what God said, failed in this endeavor. God, however, had mercy upon them, because of ironclad promises He had made to Abraham centuries earlier.

During the reigns of David and Solomon, Israel became powerful and rich, but after the death of Solomon, the nation was divided. A northern and a southern kingdom formed, with different capital cities, separate armies, and quite different doctrinal beliefs and practices.

The northern kingdom generally retained the family name of Israel. At times in Scripture it is also referred to as Samaria, and occasionally as Ephraim. The southern nation was known as Jude, and the inhabitants as Jews.

The northern kingdom of Israel began to experience trouble with the rising power of that day--Assyria. Under the leadership of Sargon II, an attack was launched against Israel, a military campaign that finally proved to be their downfall. During the period 721-718 BC,

Israel fell, and the remaining inhabitants of the land fled.

Where did they go, and what ever became of them? Almost everyone seems to assume that when the Bible speaks of Israel, it is automatically referring to the Jews, but that is emphatically incorrect. The Jews were, strictly speaking, descended from Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. As the old saying goes, *All Jews were Israelites, but not all Israelites were Jews*. This classic mistake on the part of scholars and lay people alike has led to many erroneous conclusions with respect to just who, what, and where Israel really is.

The question is what happened to the northern kingdom after the successful Assyrian invasion? Did these Israelites just disappear from the face of the earth? Were they all exterminated? Were they simply assimilated into the Assyrian culture? Are there any indications that these peoples did indeed survive and can be located even to this very day? These questions open the door to an amazing study of ancient Israel's hidden history, after the fall of Samaria at the hands of the Assyrians.

EARLY COLONIES ESTABLISHED

Prior to the Assyrian invasion, during the reign of King Ahab, a monarch of egregiously evil temperament, a large portion of the northern kingdom migrated out of the area, due to a famine that lasted over three years.

Steven Thomas, in his excellent book, *The Lost Ten Tribes Found!*, states:

“During the same century as the great drought of Elijah, a large exodus of Israelites (accompanied by people from the smaller city-states of Tyre and Sidon) sailed along the North African coast and founded the new Hebrew colony of Kirjath-Hadeschath (the Romans later called it Carthage). Carthage’s origin as a colony of Israelite refugees from the catastrophic drought in Israel has not been appreciated” (pp. 114-115).

We know both from Biblical, as well as ancient secular history, that some of the Israelite population was carried into captivity prior to the final downfall of the northern kingdom. For instance, II Kings 15:29 states that King Tiglath-pileser of Assyria invaded Israel during the reign of King Pekah and took captive the tribe of Naphtali and the population of Galilee and Giliad.

By the time of the final Assyrian intrusion, a great percentage of the Israelites either had escaped or been taken into captivity in earlier raids on the country. Some of the people fled to the southern kingdom of Judah, but the majority of the refugees went elsewhere.

The tribe of Dan, for instance, was known to be a seafaring people. In the annals of Irish history, the arrival of a group of Israelites known as the *Tuatha de Danaans* is recorded as having occurred around 720 B.C.

Steven Thomas once again

sheds valuable light on this whole issue by saying:

“Also at that same time, a large portion of the Israelite tribe of Simeon chose a maritime escape from the Assyrians. Coinciding with the arrival of the Tuatha de Danaan in Ireland, the *Simonii* landed in Wales and southern England in 720 B.C...Since Briton had long been a Phoenician colony and port-of-call, and had been settled by and named for the *Covenant* (B-R-T) people centuries before the fall of Israel, it is logical that some Israelites would seek refuge there in a time of crisis” (*Ibid.*, p. 123).

AN OVERLAND ESCAPE ROUTE

While many Israelites did indeed escape captivity by sailing westward to Ireland and England, the majority of the refugees chose an overland route of escape. The book of II Esdras contains the following evidence in this regard:

“These are the ten tribes that in the days of King Hoshea were carried away from their own land into captivity, and whom Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, made captives and carried beyond the river...But they formed this plan among themselves, to leave the heathen population, and go to a more distant region...so that there perhaps they might keep their statutes, which they had not kept in their own country. And they in by the narrow passages

of the Euphrates River. For the Most High then did wonders for them, for He held back the sources of the river until they had passed over. But it was a long journey of a year and a half to that country...called Arzareth” (II Esdras 13:40-45).

This group of Israelite refugees would become known as the *Scythians* by the Greeks. This large body of escaping Israelites (perhaps as many as a million strong) settled in areas near the Black Sea, north of Armenia. From this general area came not only the Hebrew Scythians, but also Israelite peoples such as the *Gauthei* and the *Sacre*.

The first century Jewish historian, Flavius Josephus, records the following testimony with respect to the northern ten tribes of Israel:

“Wherefore there are but two tribes in Asia and Europe subject to the Romans, while the ten tribes are BEYOND EUPHRATES till now, and are an immense multitude, and not to be estimated by numbers” (*Antiquities of the Jews*, XI, V, 2).

Josephus puts the western boundary of the ten-tribed northern kingdom at the Euphrates River. This obviously indicates that the people themselves were located to the north and east of the river.

We read again from Steven Thomas the following:

“Those Israelites who migrated to the Black Sea area became known as *Scythians*. The *Encyclopedia Britannica* records the Scythians as being present in Eurasian locations from the seventh century

B.C., as this is the earliest date to which their tombs can be assigned” (*Thomas*, p. 173).

In *The Scythians*, authored by Tamara Talbot Rice, we have further confirmation concerning the date of Scythian arrival in the Black Sea area.

“The Scythians did not become a recognizable national entity much before the 8th century B.C....By the seventh century B.C. they had established themselves firmly in southern Russia...and analogous tribes, possibly even related clans, though politically entirely distinct and independent, were also centered on the Altai and Assyrian documents place their appearance there in the time of KING SARGON (722-705 B.C.), a date which closely corresponds with that of the establishment of the first group of Scythians in southern Russia” (pp. 19-20).

Of course, this all makes perfect sense when we recall that it was during the early reign of Sargon II of Assyria that Samaria fell, thus precipitating the hasty escape of many Israelite refugees, the majority of whom fled to areas around the Black Sea.

One of the divisions of the Scythians was the *Sacae*. In Hebrew, this word would be represented simply by the consonants S-C. Interestingly, this also constitutes the spelling of the patriarch Isaac. It seems likely that a branch of the Israelite Scythians took as their name, *the sons of Isaac*.

Another closely related group to the Scythians were the Parthians, who eventually

established an Asian empire that rivaled that of Rome. Professor George Rawlinson states in his book *The Sixth Great Oriental Monarchy* the following:

“There was a strong conviction on the part of those who came in contact with the Parthians that they were Scyths...that the Scythic character of the Parthians is asserted in the strongest terms by the ancient writers...The manner of the Parthians had, they tell us, much that was Scythic in them. Their language was half-Scythic, half Midian. They armed themselves in the Scythic fashion. They were, in fact, Scyths in descent, in habits, and in character” (p. 19).

Not a great deal is ever included in history books with respect to Parthia and its empire. At its height, it encompassed a region bordered on the west by the Euphrates, on the north by the Caucasus Mountains of southern Russia, and extended east to parts of India. Rome often sent armies into Parthia attempting to defeat this eastern foe, but always to no avail.

Eventually the Parthian Empire crumbled, and, as was the Israelite practice, many of the people escaped, moving north and west into central and northern Europe. Such peoples as the *Germanii*, the *Cimmerians*, the *Gauthei*, the *Celts*, and the *Saxons*, were Israelite in origin, and their migrations into Europe are well established.

The evidence is clearly strong enough to indicate that many of the European nations are

Israelite in descent. This holds true for such countries as Britain (B-R-T or Covenant People), Ireland and Denmark (Dan), the Scandinavian peoples of Norway, Sweden, and Finland, Switzerland, Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Germany, and Austria.

Migrants from England, Holland, Ireland, and Scotland sailed across the Atlantic and established colonies in what is now America. These were by no means the first such Israelite colonies in this part of the world. In fact, as far back as the time of King Solomon, there is evidence that there were Israelite settlements in the Americas. Dr. Barry Fell, in his landmark book entitled, *America B.C.*, documents much of the information with respect to the development of such ancient colonies. It is a remarkable study that ought to intrigue every student of true history. The same is true of Steven Collins' book, from which I have previously quoted, entitled, *The Lost Ten Tribes of Israel--Found*. Both of these books come highly recommended.

To conclude that the United States of American and many of the modern-day democracies of western Europe are actually descended from the ancient Israelites will seem absurd to many people. This is primarily due to the general ignorance both of the Bible as an accurate historical, as well as, spiritual, book; and also the fact that the trail of Israelite migration through the centuries has simply not been correctly perceived by current historians. Their ignorance, however, does nothing to abrogate the truth on this matter.

GOD KEEPS HIS PROMISES

The great promises God made anciently to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob began to be fulfilled when the Israelites were freed from Egyptian bondage. Once they were in their own land, there were extended periods of time when they were powerful peoples, extending their control and influence far beyond their actual borders. Many historical records have now been discovered that shed much new light on the extent to which the Bible narrative is historically accurate, not the least of which has to do with the blessings of God toward Israel.

Not even the glory of Solomon, however, nor the wealth and power of kings such as Omri, Ahab, Hezekiah, or Josiah, could ever be said to have totally fulfilled the prophecies of untold blessings promised to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Those ancient prophecies have, in reality, only been fulfilled in more modern times, as the nations of western Europe and their possessions, along with the United States of America came into existence, wielding power, influence, and wealth on a truly unprecedented global scale.

Indeed, Almighty God has accomplished what He promised, and, in like manner, He is going to finish what He started. God's desire has always been for His people to be free, but with that freedom comes responsibility. Therefore God issued strong warnings to Israel regarding what was to be required of them as His specially blessed people.

Reading in Leviticus 26,

we find a long list of such warnings directed at Israel:

“You shall make you no idols nor graven images...You shall keep My Sabbaths, and reverence My sanctuary: I am the Lord. If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments, and do them, then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. And your threshing shall reach unto the vintage, and the vintage shall reach unto the sowing time; and you shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely. And I will give peace in the lands, and you shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid...You shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword. And five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight; and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword. For I will have respect unto you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, and establish My covenant with you...and I will set My tabernacle among you...and I will walk among you, and will be your God, and you shall be My people” (Lev. 26:1-12).

God then goes on to sternly tell the people what the results of disobedience would be:

“But if you will not hearken unto Me, and will not do all these commandments; and if you shall despise My statutes, or if your soul abhor My judgments, so that you will not

do all My commandments, but that you break My covenant; I will also do this unto you. I will even appoint over you terror, consumption, and the burning ague, that shall consume your eyes, and cause sorrow of heart; and you shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. And I will set My face against you, and you shall be slain before your enemies; they that hate you shall reign over you, and you shall fall when none pursues. And if you will not for all of this hearken unto Me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins. And I will break the pride of your power; and I will make your heaven as iron and your earth as brass; and your strength shall be spent in vain...and if you will walk contrary unto Me, and will not hearken unto Me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins...And you shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters shall you eat. And I will destroy your high places, and cut down your images, and cast your carcasses upon the carcasses of your idols, and My soul shall abhor you. And I will make your cities waste, and bring your sanctuaries unto desolation...And I will bring the land into desolation; and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it. And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you; and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste” (Lev. 26:14-33).

These ominous words were actually fulfilled in ancient Israel’s days, for, as we have seen, the northern kingdom was overtaken by the Assyrian empire in about 721 B.C. The same occurred in the case

of the southern kingdom of Judah, when in 586 B.C., the Babylonians under king Nebuchadnezzar sacked Jerusalem, destroyed the temple, and took the remaining Jews captive.

The important thing to note in all of this discussion, however, is that God never changes. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. What He promised anciently, He will still perform today, and the curses He pronounced are just as real in the modern world as they ever were in the past.

Unfortunately, most people do not understand that the descendants of Israel are still alive and well today. They make the erroneous assumption that Israel is simply the Jewish nation of the same name. Nothing, however, could possibly be further from the truth.

Israel still exists, and the Jewish people form only one of twelve branches. The other eleven are to be found in the nations of western Europe and the United States, along with their territorial possessions. The ancient prophecies still carry the same weight as before, and they will emphatically be fulfilled in God’s time.

In the parallel Scriptural account of Deuteronomy, we read even more details with regard to the punishments forthcoming upon Israel should they not repent and turn from their wicked ways:

“But it shall come to pass, if you will not hearken unto the voice of the Lord your God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes which I command you

this day; that all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you. Cursed shall you be in the city, and cursed shall you be in the field. Cursed shall be your basket and your store. Cursed shall be the fruit of your body, and the fruit of your land, the increase of your kine, and flocks of your sheep. Cursed shall you be when you come in, and cursed shall you be when you go out. The Lord shall send upon you cursing, vexation, and rebuke, in all that you set your hand unto for to do, until you be destroyed, and until you perish quickly; because of the wickedness of your doings, whereby you have forsaken Me...The Lord shall cause you to be smitten before your enemies: you shall go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them: and shall be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth...The Lord will smite you with the botch of Egypt, and with the emerods, and with the scab, and with the itch, whereof you cannot be healed. The Lord shall smite you with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart; and you shall grope at noonday, as the blind gropes in darkness, and you shall not prosper in your ways: and you shall be only oppressed and spoiled evermore, and no man shall save you...And you shall become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword among all nations whither the Lord shall lead you...Because you serve not the Lord your God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things...The Lord shall bring a nation

against you from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flies; a nation whose tongue you do not understand; a nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor show favor to the young...And you shall be left few in number, whereas you were as the stars of heaven for multitude; because you would not obey the voice of the Lord your God...And the Lord shall scatter you among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other...And among these nations shall you find no ease, neither shall the sole of your feet have rest; but the Lord shall give you there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind; and your life shall hang in doubt before you, and you shall fear day and night, and shall have no assurance of your life. In the morning you shall say, Would God it were evening, and at night you shall say, Would God it were morning! For the fear of your heart wherewith you shall fear, and for the sight of your eyes which you shall see" (Deut. 28).

ISRAEL TODAY

The modern-day nations of northwestern Europe and the United States have enjoyed the greatest physical blessings ever bestowed upon any people in the history of the earth; and, to a great extent, they still do. Why is that? Why are these nations, which seem to have so much in common, so unique in the world compared to the other countries and civilizations? There is something distinctly different about them.

That difference is

explainable only through understanding and accepting that they are indeed descendants from ancient Israel, and that they fulfil, to a great extent, the blessings of the covenant God made with the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It is we who have inherited the best places of the earth. It is we who have been the bread basket of the entire world. It is we who have had the freedoms and material prosperity unprecedented in all of human history. It is we who have been victorious over our enemies time after time. It is we who have controlled commerce, science, finance, diplomacy, and politics throughout the world.

Just as surely as we are the descendants of Israel and have participated in the attendant blessings thereof, so also must we face the dire words of warning and the ultimate consequences of our ways. While God has always desired to bless His people, He will not continue to do it forever unless they truly recognize their sin, repent, and turn back to Him in full surrender.

God is patient. The apostle Peter tells us that the longsuffering of God works salvation for man. Remember that He allowed Israel to remain in captivity for a long time before delivering them from Egyptian bondage. Remember that He permitted both Israel and Judah to continue their wicked ways until a breaking point was finally reached, and He was forced to act dramatically and decisively, bringing swift punishment and destruction upon both kingdoms. Remember that He promised to send His Son back soon, but it has been early 2000 years. God, unlike humans, waits and waits and waits.

This is part of His patience and mercy, for He desires that all know the truth, repent, obey, and be saved.

We should deeply appreciate God's patience with us. Without it, where would we be? But we must also realize clearly that His patience will run out, and, for the good of those involved and the successful completion of His plan, He will intervene and bring grave punishments down upon those who continue to disobey and dishonor Him.

The modern-day peoples of Israel, including the Jewish race, as well as the untold millions of others throughout the world, stand today guilty as charged in the words of the Scriptures. As a whole, we have neglected our God, taken Him for granted, created religions and religious organizations that spiritually entrap believers, disobeyed and totally trampled His precious Laws, including especially the flagrant breaking of the Sabbath Day, one of ancient Israel's most egregious sins.

We, who have been so greatly and unspeakably blessed, have paid only lip service at best toward God and His beneficence. We are a materialistic, carnal, evil society, corrupt to the core, weak and insipid, lacking knowledge, dull of understanding, and devoid of wisdom. Most people in modern-day Israel are either striving to get more by whatever methods they can devise, or merely struggling to survive, at the mercy of their own taskmasters.

In either case, we are neglecting Almighty God and His Laws and ways, and, unless something drastic changes soon, we are decidedly going to reap the curses and punishments God pronounced upon those of His people who continue to walk in their own ways and disobey His commandments.

It is high time that we who are of Israel, and indeed those who are a part of us who are not Israelites, wake up to the stark reality of who we really are, and precisely where we are headed. The age in which we live today is the most dangerous and deceptive since the time of the great flood of Noah, when God had to destroy the entire world's population for their inherent evil. In fact, Jesus Christ Himself referred to the latter days as being comparable to the time of Noah. We are now living in those very times!

The curses contained in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 are not idle words from a distant God to an ancient people. They are as alive and powerful today as they ever were in times past. And they are going to come to pass in our lifetime unless there is a massive return to God on the part of His people.

Today, Americans, western Europeans, and even many Jews do not walk according to the commandments of God. Most people are even willing to admit that this is true, but so few are willing to go through the changes in character that God requires.

We flagrantly break the most significant of God's Laws, and give it little or no thought, but life is short, and the end is even now

rushing relentlessly toward this present generation. Without regard, we think nothing of trampling on the good things of God. We are a pampered, soft, spiritually dead people, who live only for ourselves and only for today--and God is not amused!!

You have a personal stake in God's scheme of things. You can hear His voice and make a rational decision to turn toward Him and choose life instead of death. You can do it right now. Let the Word of God convict your heart and penetrate you to the core of your soul. Recognize and confess your personal sins and your individual human nature--in other words, repent not only for what you have done, but for who you truly are.

God sent His begotten Son into this world that you might have eternal life. Even though salvation is a free gift, however, we each must be prepared by God to receive it, and that requires a careful process which only God can successfully accomplish in your life. It demands that you yield your life totally into the hand of Almighty God. It requires that you become aware of the true God, not the false one that is so often the center of most churches and religious organizations. It is mandatory that you come to know, understand, and obey the Laws of God, including having absolutely no other gods in your life, and keeping the Sabbath Day holy (not Sunday!!), two of the most overlooked of the commandments.

God tells each of us to choose **NOW** which direction we will take. He sets before us blessing and cursing, life and death. It is His divine will that we choose life and

blessing, but that is clearly a choice that we each must consciously make before Him.

God says through the apostle Paul, **“Today if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts...take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the Living God” (Heb. 2:7-8, 12).** This is speaking to you right now.

I fully realize that there are many who preach doom and gloom, and I frankly do not wish to be counted among them. I do desire, however, to not hid my head in the sand, to be aware of what is transpiring in this world, and to share what I feel is a message of hope, as well as warning, to all who will hear.

As we approach the end of this century and the beginning of a new millennium, there are very ominous signs on the horizon. Fully 65-70% of your Bible has to do with prophecy--the divine predicting of events that will unfold in the affairs of mankind. A great deal of those prophetic utterances are yet to be fulfilled. It is incumbent upon any thinking, sane person to seriously reflect upon and consider the times in which we all live today.

Within a relatively short time, conditions in this world are going to dramatically and alarmingly change for the worse.

The world's political, economic, educational, diplomatic, and religious systems are the product of pagan, anti-God men, whose primary interest is power,

influence, recognition, and money. Almighty God is greatly displeased with the turn of events in this world today, and His revenge will not tarry much longer.

Although God loves mankind, He will not permit things upon this earth to deteriorate much further, before He literally intervenes to save the human race from complete annihilation. The Scriptures contain the hidden keys to making sense of today's world news, to understanding the future, and to discovering the meaning and purpose of your life, and perhaps even an escape from what is looming large on the horizon at this very moment in time.

In Matthew 24, Jesus Christ gave what has come to be known as the Olivet prophecy. His disciples came to Him and asked what would be the sign of His coming and of the end of the age. Here is His alarming reply:

“Take heed (beware) that no man deceive you, for many shall come in My name, saying that I am Christ, and shall deceive many...For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes in different places...Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved...For there shall arise

false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the

very elect. Behold, I have told you before...For as the lightning comes out of the east and shines even unto the west, so also shall the coming of the Son of Man be...Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and they shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory...Take heed unto yourselves...For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch you therefore, and pray always, that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man” (Matt. 24, Luke 21).

If your interest has been piqued, if you should have questions, if you desire to know more about God, His ways, and His will, you are cordially invited to request material from us as you desire. The address is on the back of this article, and there is never any charge or obligation with regard to our services.

It is our sincere hope and prayer that God will move upon your heart today to make a decision that will literally change your life.