



## In This Issue:

June 2010 | Vol. 13, No. 4

### Integration or Disintegration: The Stark Choice Facing the EU

by Melvin Rhodes . . . . . 1

### Restoration: Graduating With Hope

by Darris McNeely . . . . . 2

### Always on Sunday: Europe's Official Day of Rest?

by Paul Kieffer. . . . . 5

### Risk of Nuclear Attack Still Growing



Reuters/Chip East

by Rod Hall . . . . . 9

### A Page on the World: The Essential Abraham Lincoln

by John Ross Schroeder . . . . . 13

### This Is the Way... World Without End

by Robin Webber. . . . . 16

# Integration or Disintegration: The Stark Choice Facing the EU

*The growing debt crisis in Europe is straining the monetary union and even the European Union itself. Europe has arrived at a crossroads. Which way will it turn?*

by Melvin Rhodes

**"A** European state is being created before our eyes." So wrote international business editor Ambrose Evans-Pritchard in London's *Sunday Telegraph*. "The walls of fiscal and economic sovereignty are being breached" ("Europe Prepares Nuclear Response to Save Monetary Union," May 9, 2010).

For weeks the choice was becoming clear for the countries of the eurozone: Either integrate or disintegrate. Greater integration has been chosen as the more financially disciplined nations of the European Union bail out the PIIGS—five nations (Portugal, Ireland, Italy, Greece and Spain) whose excessive spending and serious indebtedness have threatened the future stability of the world's number two reserve currency, the euro.

At a time when many commentators have observed that the Obama administration certainly appears to be disinterested in Europe, convinced that Asia is more important to U.S. interests, developments in Europe threaten the stability and prosperity of the western world. This doesn't seem like a good time for Washington to turn its back on Europe.



Reuters/Stefan Wermuth

*Britain's Prime Minister David Cameron speaks during the launch of the Coalition Agreement May 20, 2010. Cameron plans to introduce a number of cuts to the national budget.*

"Amid cries of outrage and expressions of disbelief, a new age of austerity has arrived in Europe," wrote Victor Mallet in the *Financial Times*. "As governments across the euro-  
(See "INTEGRATION," page 3)



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"Whom heaven must receive until the times of

# Restoration

of all things ... ACTS 3:21

## Graduating With Hope

This is the season for graduation commencement addresses. Last week I heard an address that featured an unconventional book often quoted at graduation—the famous Dr. Seuss book *Oh, the Places You'll Go!*

Commencement speeches tend to point students toward a life ahead. They encourage further learning beyond the classroom. After all, formal education only prepares one for a lifetime of learning; life's experiences are the real training ground. And anyone beginning a new phase in life can expect a fair share of them.

Trouble always seems to be on the horizon for some. Today's news is particularly bleak with bad economic news, political upheaval and natural disasters. I read that today's job market for graduates is the toughest in decades. I don't doubt it. The recession and financial upheaval of the last two years has wreaked havoc on the economy. The European debt crisis of several countries threatens to cause further damage. The financial future looks daunting.

I'll share something with you. I have stopped watching the evening news for several reasons, one of which is the continual dripping of negativity and criticism. Instead, I stay informed by following the news mainly on the Internet and in a couple of daily newspapers. There is a lot of bad news, and it is aggravated by the demands of a 24-hour news cycle that feeds an information-crazed world. People's need to know is reaping a harvest of cynicism and doubt.

This inundation of negative news casts doubt on the future for new graduates and for everyone. Where is a beacon of hope for the future? Where do we turn to find the way forward through the daily grind?

Ironically the book of Jeremiah is such a place. Jeremiah 32 records a bold action the "prophet of doom" does during Jerusalem's, and his, darkest hour that offers an example of hope. The Babylonian army besieged the city, and Jeremiah had been thrown in prison for predicting the fall of the city and captivity of the nation. Not much hope for anything positive going forward!

God tells Jeremiah to purchase his cousin's field in Anathoth. Now, even though prices would have been low in such a market, it would be a stretch to see how it would pay off if the nation was about to be taken over by hostile forces and the population deported. Conventional wisdom would have said to liquidate capital investments into currency more easily secured and moved. But no, God said to buy real estate. Why? "For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: 'Houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land'" (verse 15).

Jeremiah's action points to hope. When all we see is the world's knowledge apart from God, we can become discouraged. But with the knowledge of God there is always hope. With the promises of God there is reason to get up each morning and strike out on the day. There is reason to move forward and believe. Jeremiah offers us a reason to believe we all have places to go and a future to grasp.

You may be burdened with trouble. It may be hard for you to see how to get through the day and expect anything better tomorrow. The news of our world gives us little hope at times. Focus your eyes beyond today and on a future defined by God's promises. That is the best message we can hear for a future of hope.



—Darris McNeely

Darris McNeely

“INTEGRATION” (Continued from page 1)

zone impose cuts on a scale unseen in decades, Greece—widely seen as the epicentre of the crisis—has already seen violent demonstrations and general strikes. Now there is growing concern that such displays of public anger will become more widespread” (“Europe Enters Era of Belt-Tightening,” May 14, 2010).

Right across Europe, governments are imposing strict austerity measures. David Cameron’s first act as Britain’s new prime minister was to cut ministerial pay by 5 percent, a decision widely expected to precede a similar cut across the board for all government workers.

### A global effect

The fact is that governments everywhere have been over-spending. This has been going on increasingly for decades. Now the final day of reckoning seems to have arrived and not just in Europe. The United States, according to the latest IMF figures, is one of the biggest offenders, with both the federal government and individual states responsible.

Globally, Greece, Italy, the United States, Belgium and the United Kingdom are listed as the countries headed for the highest debt-to-GDP ratios. The United States is widely expected to follow in European countries’ financial footsteps as the international debt crisis worsens and spreads. In the United Kingdom, predictions are that the new government will have to impose the severest austerity measures in living memory, paying a heavy price for the profligacy of its predecessor.

“The shock is palpable in countries which have moved from poverty to prosperity during the decades of almost uninterrupted growth since the second world war and have always enjoyed the material benefits of EU membership,” continues the *Financial Times*.

“For the first time since EU aid started flowing freely in the 1980s, Greeks face a significant drop in living standards, with the economy set to shrink by 4 per cent this year and another 2.6 per cent in 2011.” This is in spite of a bailout from the EU



Reuters/Thomas Peter

*German Chancellor Angela Merkel (second right) casts her vote on a euro rescue package May 21, 2010.*

*Germany approved a law allowing Europe’s biggest economy to contribute to a 750 billion euro emergency debt package to help protect the euro.*

and IMF that totaled a staggering \$955 billion.

“The new reality imposed by the Greek Socialist government—a 12 per cent wage cut for civil servants, reductions in pensions and looming job losses in public sector corporations—has stunned workers in the bloated state sector” (ibid.).

On May 14, Ambrose Evans-Pritchard wrote another article for the London *Daily Telegraph*. Its title, “Europe’s Fiscal Fascism Brings British Withdrawal Ever Closer,” evoked memories of events over 70 years ago, fresh on peoples’ minds as Great Britain commemorates the 70th anniversary of the Battle of Britain, in May 1940. The article began with these words: “Just when you thought the EU could not go any further down the road towards authoritarian excess, it gets worse.”

Evans-Pritchard warns of the consequences of the latest developments on the sovereignty of the 27 nations that comprise the European Union. It’s not only the 16 countries of the eurozone that are going to be affected by the changes.

### An economic government

“The European Commission is calling for EU powers to vet budgets of the 27 member states before the draft laws have been presented to the House of Commons, the Tweede Kamer, the Folketing, the Bundestag, the Assemblée Nationale, or other national parliaments. It applies to Britain even though we are not in EMU [European Monetary Union—the eurozone].

“Fonctionnaires and EU finance ministers will pass judgement on the British (or Dutch, or Danish, or French) budgets before the elected bodies of these ancient and sovereign nations have seen the proposals. Did we not fight the English Civil War and kill a king over such a prerogative?

“Yet again we are discovering the trick played on our democracies by Europe’s insiders when they charged ahead with EMU, brushing aside warnings by their own staff economists that monetary union was unworkable without fiscal union.

Jacques Delors knew perfectly well that this would lead inevitably to a crisis, but it would be the ‘beneficial crisis’ that would force sovereign parliaments to submit to demands that they would never otherwise accept.

“This is now playing out before our eyes. Club Med governments have built up 7 trillion euro sovereign debt under the cover of monetary union, which shut down the warning signals for borrowers and creditors alike. We are now near—or beyond—the point of no return. Eurozone states must go along with this cynical entrapment, or risk economic catastrophe. The conspirators have succeeded. The 750 billion euro shock and awe package agreed over the weekend clearly alters the character of the European Project, crossing the line towards an EU debt union and an EU Treasury. How long will it be now before the EU acquires direct tax-raising powers?

“As French president Nicolas Sarkozy said: ‘We have a veritable economic government.’”

Led by the French president, who has a reputation for being a man of action, the European Union has just taken a major step toward the “ever closer union” the six original member countries pledged themselves to in 1957 when they signed the Treaty of Rome.

However, as Evans-Pritchard shows in his article, “withdrawal” is also a possibility, as some countries may not want to lose their fiscal independence. Although the Treaty of Rome does not allow for withdrawal by member states, it does not mean that it could not happen. It is also possible that countries could be expelled if they don’t submit to the fiscal restraints imposed on them by the European Commission.

With this in mind, the new government in the United Kingdom is particularly interesting. For the first time since World War II, Britain has a coalition government, since no one party got the necessary votes to form a government by itself. The coalition is dominated by the Conservative Party of Prime Minister David Cameron, in

coalition with the third biggest party in the country, the Liberal Democrats. Ironically, while the latter is the country’s biggest supporter of the European Union, the Conservatives are the opposite, resisting any further attempts to more closely integrate the European nations.

Hence, Evans-Pritchard writes that recent events bring “British withdrawal ever closer.” As if to emphasize the growing rift with the continent, the UK’s new Foreign Secretary, William Hague, flew to Washington D.C. for consultations with what the BBC described as “Britain’s foremost ally” (BBC America news, May 13, 2010).

### Prophesied events

The recent developments described above have prompted Bible students to ask how the 27-member European Union will become the 10-nation revival of the Roman Empire prophesied in Revelation 17 and the final superpower predicted to lead directly into the second coming of Jesus Christ.

“The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour [symbolically, a short time] as kings with the beast... These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings.” (Revelation 17:12,14).

While this may not be the time for the fulfillment of the end time

(See “**INTEGRATION,**” page 12)

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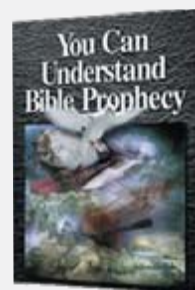
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# Always on Sunday: Europe's Official Day of Rest?

*Labor organizations and mainstream churches have united in an effort to promote EU legislation enforcing Sunday as Europe's official day of rest.*

by Paul Kieffer

**S**ome 30 years ago my wife and I had neighbors with a son about the age of ours. The husband worked as an engineer for the German defense ministry and spent a year with his wife and son in the United States on an assignment at a U.S. military installation. One time in a conversation the couple made an observation about life in the United States that made me think. They said, "Life never slows down in America, because you do not have a real weekly day of rest."

Their comment was based on retail sales on Sunday, since shopping centers and stores are open for business on Sunday in the United States. That confused and irritated them, since they were not used to commercial activity on Sunday in their own country, Germany.

There are many Europeans who have similar sentiments as our former neighbors from Bonn. The European Union's Lisbon Treaty, which took effect on Dec. 1, 2009, gives its citizens an unprecedented opportunity to petition the European Commission directly with a request for action on a particular agenda item.

Article 11.4 of the new treaty says: "Not less than one million citizens who are nationals of a significant number of Member States may take the initiative of inviting the European Commission, within the framework of its powers, to submit any appropriate proposal on matters where citizens consider that a legal act of the Union is required for the purpose of implementing the Treaties."

In what might be the first petition to be submitted under the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty, concerned EU citizens are collecting signatures for an initiative to have Sunday declared the European Union's official day of rest. What began as a small group meeting at the end of December 2009 has

mushroomed into a network of 72 different organizations, including 35 labor unions representing all EU member states and "all relevant churches" in the EU, according to a spokesman for the initiative.

## **Family and social concerns first**

Supporters of the initiative have emphasized the social and labor benefits of a work-free Sunday on Web sites like [www.free-sunday.eu](http://www.free-sunday.eu), "The work-free Sunday is an essential pillar of the European Social Model and a part of the European cultural heritage."

A set day of the week provides time for families to be together, for social interaction with others in clubs and associations, and even for volunteer work with social agencies. Supporters of a work-free Sunday also point out that despite various religious, cultural and ethnic backgrounds within the EU, schools and public institutions like government offices are not open on Sunday and do not plan to be open on Sunday in the future.

Emphasizing social and labor benefits of a work-free Sunday is in large part a reaction to a ruling made by the European Court of Justice (ECJ) in November 1996 on an earlier EU Council Directive (93/104/EC from Nov. 23, 1993) regarding "certain aspects of the organization of working time."

The Council Directive from 1993 declares in Article 5 concerning a weekly work-free day: "Member States shall take the measures necessary to ensure that, per each seven-day period, every worker is entitled to a minimum uninterrupted rest period of 24 hours plus the 11 hours' daily rest referred to in Article 3. The minimum rest period referred to in the first subparagraph shall in principle include Sunday" (emphasis added).

*The main emphasis of the current initiative is on the social and labor benefits of a work-free Sunday. However, circumstances change over time, and what may not be an important issue now—such as religious freedom—may become predominant in future years.*



*On March 24, 2010, a special plenary conference was held at the seat of the European Parliament in Brussels, Belgium, to promote forging an EU-wide alliance for a work-free Sunday. A total of 67 different labor organizations and churches were listed as supporters of the conference.*

In its 1996 ruling, the European Court of Justice overturned the *Sunday* provision of the directive. The court found that “the Council has failed to explain why Sunday, as a weekly rest day, is more closely connected with the health and safety of workers than any other day of the week.”

Supporters of the current work-free Sunday proposal maintain that the 1996 ruling does not rule out protection of Sunday as a work-free day. Since then, several studies have been done supporting a work-free Sunday as providing the greatest health benefit for workers. The European Commission will look at those studies as part of a new review of the working time directive.

### **Forging an alliance for a work-free Sunday**

On March 24, 2010, a special plenary conference was held at the seat of the European Parliament in Brussels, Belgium, to promote forging an EU-wide alliance for a work-free

Sunday. The organizers of the conference were European Parliament member Thomas Mann from Germany along with the German “Konrad Adenauer Foundation.” (The Konrad Adenauer Foundation is a German research foundation linked with Germany’s conservative Christian Democratic Union party. The CDU traditionally supports Catholic social and family policies.) A total of 67 different labor organizations and churches were listed as supporters of the conference.

Thomas Mann served as the moderator for the conference and introduced the guest speakers, among them László Andor, the new EU commissioner for Employment and Social Affairs, and Roman Catholic Bishop Dr. Ludwig Schwarz, who was a professor of classical and Christian literature at the Salesian Pontifical University in Rome from 1985 to 1999. Following the short presentations by each speaker, questions and comments from the 400 conference attendees were presented.

In his address EU Commissioner Andor emphasized the European Commission’s intent to reexamine the working time directive and modify it as needed. He said this issue is currently the most important item on his agenda as the EU’s new commissioner for Employment and Social Affairs. Mr. Andor was careful not to make any commitment concerning Sunday becoming an EU-wide day of rest from work, but he welcomed input from the conference, including the submission of research data on the benefits of having a common day of rest for all of Europe.

One consequence of the European Court of Justice’s 1996 decision is that each EU member state decides whether it will legally mandate a work-free day of the week. Sixteen of the EU’s 27 members have already provided legal protection for Sunday as a work-free day.

However, a conference participant from the German city of Aachen highlighted the difficulties the current situation causes with its national determination of a work-free day. Aachen is located in one of Europe’s “three country corners” where the national borders of several countries meet and is just a short drive from both Belgium and the Netherlands.

Late last year Germany’s Constitutional Court upheld a legal challenge made by the Catholic and Lutheran churches. The two churches sued the city of Berlin for its liberal practice of permitting an increasing number of “shopping Sundays.” Based on a clause in the German constitution, the court ruled that Sunday should be a day of rest and “spiritual elevation.” Germany’s major labor unions also supported the successful legal challenge.

Aachen, located in a predominantly Catholic region, then banned “shopping Sundays” for the year 2010. However, just a half hour drive from Aachen, the Dutch city of Maastricht will have 16 “shopping Sundays” this year. The conference representative from Aachen emphasized the need for EU uniformity on the issue.

A couple of speakers included brief references to minorities who

might want to have a different day of rest instead of Sunday. When the Muslim community in the EU was mentioned, conference moderator Thomas Mann responded by saying that the emerging work-free Sunday alliance had friends from Turkey—a predominantly Muslim country—who fully support implementing Sunday as a work-free day. Two questions from the floor were also asked about the protection of religious freedom for those who preferred to have a different day of the week as their work-free day. Those questions were not answered by any of the panel speakers.

The March 24 meeting on the initiative was the first in a series of conferences to be held at the European Parliament in Brussels. At the end of March—just three months after a small group had met to discuss the feasibility of promoting an EU-wide work-free Sunday—100,000 signatures had already been gathered in support of the petition.

### **The “order of creation” and Sunday as a weekly day of rest**

In his written statement for the conference, Austrian Bishop Schwarz emphasized the religious importance of Sunday. “The churches are not just supporting making church attendance possible on Sunday. They see the Bible’s third commandment—‘Thou shalt keep the day of the Lord holy’—as being what it has always been: the determination of a period of rest in harmony with the order of creation. That makes this ancient commandment the first social legislation of society formed by Jewish-Christian influence.”

(Note: In predominantly Catholic areas the Sabbath commandment is counted as the Third Commandment of the Ten Commandments, though in many Protestant areas it is counted as the Fourth Commandment.)

The majority of speakers at the “Protection of a Work-Free Sunday” conference were representatives of labor unions and organizations. However, even some of them referred to Europe’s religious heritage of Sunday as a day of rest, dating back

17 centuries to Roman Emperor Constantine and his decree supporting Sunday worship in A.D. 321. In his opening remarks, conference organizer Thomas Mann included the “spiritual aspect” of life as an important part of a weekly day of rest, including attendance at worship services.

Comments made from the floor referred to Sunday as the “seventh day of the week” and even as the “biblical seventh day.”

But is that what the Bible says? Let’s look closely.

At the end of creation week God did not rest on the day called Sunday by today’s world. Sunday is also not the “biblical seventh day.” A glance at almost any dictionary, encyclopedia or calendar will show you that Saturday is the seventh day of the week, while Sunday is the first day of the week. According to God’s calendar, the seventh day is—and always has been—the Sabbath day. Although humanity has modified calendars through the centuries, the seven-day weekly cycle has remained intact throughout history. The days of the week have always remained in their proper order, with Sunday as the first day of the week and Saturday as the seventh.

Jesus Christ also kept the Sabbath on the same day of the week as His fellow Jews. Although Jesus had disputes with the Jews about how to keep the Sabbath, He was never accused of keeping the wrong day. Two thousand years ago Jesus kept the Sabbath on the same day that God had instituted as a day of rest in Genesis 2.

No serious calendar authority will argue that the sequence of the days of the week has been altered in the last 2,000 years. That means that the Jews today keep the same day of the week that Jesus did 2,000 years ago: Saturday. That day—actually from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset—is the only correct “biblical seventh day.” It is the only day that reflects Jewish tradition regarding the Sabbath commandment, Bishop Schwarz’s comments notwithstanding.

So why do European church leaders and labor union representatives

say that Sunday is the Christian day of rest and worship? The change from Sabbath to Sunday is not found anywhere in the Bible. It was made long after the writing of the New Testament. How and when was the change made?

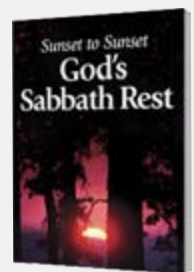
Initially, Christianity was viewed as simply a sect of Judaism. However, after Jewish revolts in Judea in A.D. 67-70 and A.D. 132-135, Jewish religious practices—many of which continued in the early Church—came to be viewed with hostility throughout the Roman Empire. Many among the Church began to abandon these practices, including observance of the biblical Sabbath and Festivals.

No clear references to Sunday as a day of Christian worship are found until the writings of Barnabas and Justin, around A.D. 135 and A.D. 150, respectively. Observance of Sunday as the primary day of worship appears to have begun to solidify during the reign of Emperor Hadrian (117-135), who harshly persecuted Jews throughout the Roman Empire. Hadrian specifically prohibited practices of Judaism, including observance of the seventh-day Sabbath.

These oppressive measures apparently influenced many early Christians in Rome to abandon the seventh day and turn to Sunday, the day for honoring the sun god among the Romans and other peoples of the ancient world. When Christianity was declared the official religion

### **Recommended Reading**

When is the Sabbath to be observed, and does it matter? Request a free copy of *Sunset to Sunset: God’s Sabbath Rest*. Despite the misconceptions many have, the Bible is quite clear on these important questions. You need to understand the answers!



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of the Roman Empire in the fourth century, the process accelerated.

### **Constantine's anti-Jewish prejudice**

Roman Emperor Constantine, although a sun worshipper, was the first emperor to profess belief in Christianity, but the "Christianity" Constantine endorsed was already considerably different from that practiced by Jesus and the apostles. The emperor accelerated the change by his own hatred of Jews and religious practices he considered Jewish.

For example, at the Council of Nicea (A.D. 325), church authorities essentially banned the biblical Passover observance. Endorsing this change, Constantine announced: "It appeared an unworthy thing that...we should follow the practice of the Jews, who have impiously defiled their hands with enormous sin, and are, therefore, deservedly afflicted with blindness of soul... Let us then have nothing in common with the detestable Jewish crowd" (Eusebius, *Life of Constantine* 3, 1979, Vol. 1, pp. 524-525).

In a bid to unify his empire, Constantine established the first laws making Sunday the official day of rest. His A.D. 321 law, for example, stated: "On the venerable Day of the Sun [Sunday] let the magistrates and people residing in cities rest, and let all workshops be closed."

Several decades later, the Council of Laodicea decreed: "Christians must not judaize by resting on the Sabbath, but must work on that day, rather honoring the Lord's Day [Sunday]... But if any shall be found to be judaizers, let them be anathema from Christ."

Considering the emerging changes within the early Christian church and the proclamations of Constantine, we see that anti-Semitism is not confined merely to this past century or to simply one nation. Within a few centuries, observance of the biblical Sabbath was driven underground within the confines of the empire, and most who professed Christianity embraced Sunday.

Although the Protestant Reformation brought some changes,

observance of Sunday continued from the Roman Catholic Church into subsequent Protestant denominations. But whereas the Catholic Church claimed authority to establish its own times of worship, Protestant churches generally justified Sunday observance on the grounds that the seventh-day Sabbath was replaced in the New Testament by worship on Sunday in honor of Christ's resurrection. However, there is no biblical authority for changing the day of rest and worship from the seventh day to Sunday.

### **The end may be different from the beginning**

All speakers at the March 24 "Protection of a Work-Free Sunday" conference in Brussels lauded the effort to provide workers in Europe a legally protected weekly day of rest. Even those conference attendees who voiced concerns about minority rights voiced appreciation for the concept of a work-free day of the week.

As already noted, the main emphasis of the current initiative is on the social and labor benefits of a work-free Sunday. However, circumstances change over time, and what may not be as important now may become predominant in future years.

Revelation 13 contains an interesting prophecy where two "beasts" are depicted. One of them is able "to make war with the saints and to overcome them" (verse 7), and the other masquerades "like a lamb" but in reality speaks "like a dragon" (verse 11). This second beast performs miracles (verses 13 and 14), and he "exercises all the authority of the first beast" (verse 12).

The second beast of Revelation 13 is a religious power, since it appears like a lamb (symbol of Jesus Christ) and works miracles, although in reality it speaks like its actual source, the dragon (symbol of Satan). It uses the power of the first beast to force people "to worship the first beast" (Revelation 13:12). Additionally, the second beast enforces a sign on the people who refuse to worship the first beast: "He [the second beast] causes all, both small and great, rich and

poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name" (Revelation 13:16-17).

The language used—"right hand," representing our actions; and "forehead," our thoughts—is virtually identical to the description God gave His people Israel in the Old Testament to describe what His law should be to them (Exodus 13:9; Deuteronomy 6:8).

This mark of the Beast is evidently a mark of disobedience to God. Of all the points of God's spiritual law, the Ten Commandments, the one that is questioned or ignored most frequently is the commandment involving the Sabbath, which God intended to be a special sign for His people (Exodus 31:13). In fact, the Sabbath can be viewed as a test of a person's willingness to be totally subject to God's will. Revelation 14:12 speaks of "those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus."

Many Bible students understand the mark of the Beast as countermanding God's Sabbath. They believe that forced observance of Sunday—a day originally dedicated to the worship of the sun as a god—instead of observance of the seventh-day Sabbath may be involved. This view is strengthened by the fact that other prophecies in the book of Revelation show a great counterfeit religious figure and system at the time of the end. This system will be centered in Europe and will play a major role in leading people away from the true God.

Without accompanying legal protection for religious minorities in Europe, a successful initiative to declare Sunday as the European Union's official work-free day would have serious implications for those EU citizens who want to keep the true biblical seventh day of the week, God's holy Sabbath day.

For more understanding about the biblical Sabbath and the end-time prophecies of Revelation, download or request our publications *Sunset to Sunset: God's Sabbath Rest and The Book of Revelation Unveiled*. ❖



# Risk of Nuclear Attack Still Growing

*The United States and Russia have agreed to reduce their deployed strategic nuclear warheads by nearly a third. Efforts are underway to rein in the spread of nuclear materials, but the threat of nuclear weapons is still growing.*

by Rod Hall

**W**ith the recent signing of the new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) the two nuclear giants continue to reduce the world's stockpile of nuclear warheads deployed on hair-trigger alert. The new 10-year agreement calls for each nation to reduce deployed warheads from the current ceiling of 2,200 to 1,550 within seven years after ratification by Russia's legislature (Duma) and the U.S. Senate. It replaces the 1991 START I agreement. Delivery vehicles such as missiles, bombers and submarines are to be cut from 1,600 to 800. The treaty does not appear to cut the stored stockpiles not deployed that are more than three times larger.

## **Reducing stockpiles**

According to the Federation of American Scientists over the past 25 years the world's stockpiles of nuclear warheads have been reduced from a cold war high of over 65,000 in 1986 to 22,300 ("Status of World Nuclear Forces," www.fas.org, April 6, 2010). Nuclear expert Michael Krepon, former adviser to the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, writes in *The Washington Post* of both decreasing and increasing threats. "While the threat of short- and medium-range missile attacks on our allies and forward-deployed troops is growing, the danger of transoceanic missile attacks on U.S. soil has decreased markedly... Overall, the long-range missile threat to the United States has decreased by two-thirds over the past two decades... Still, there are far too many missiles in U.S. and Russian arsenals on hair-trigger alert." ("5 Myths About All Those Nukes Out There," March 1, 2009).

## **Analyzing current threats**

The threat of nuclear annihilation is still very much with us. In their book

*Global Catastrophic Risk*, Nick Bostrom and Milan Cirkovic analyze the risks and picture the devastation nuclear weapons can bring. "In an all-out war involving most of the weapons in the current US and Russian arsenals, 35–77 percent of the US population (105–230 million people) and 20–40 percent of the Russian population (28–56 million people) would be killed. Delayed and indirect effects—such as economic collapse and a possible nuclear winter—could make the final death toll far greater" (2008, p. 21).

What are the chances your life will be cut short due to nuclear war? "At least 10 percent..." says Stanford University Professor Martin Hellman. The odds are "thousands of times greater than the risk you would bear if a nuclear power plant were built right next to your home" ("Chance of Nuclear War Is Greater Than You Think: Stanford Engineer Makes Risk Analysis," www.physorg.com, July 20, 2009).

## **Efforts to rein in nuclear materials**

Recognizing the growing danger, U.S. President Barak Obama called for a world free of nuclear weapons in a speech in Prague last year. He also stated "the threat of global nuclear war has gone down, but the risk of nuclear attack has gone up" (*The Washington Post*, April 11, 2010).

The United States hosted a 47-nation Nuclear Security Summit, the largest such gathering in the United States since 1945. It was convened to stop terrorists from getting nuclear material. It called for the safeguarding of all "vulnerable nuclear material" within four years and steps to stamp out nuclear smuggling.

The United Nations also sponsored the five-year review of the 42-year-old

*Is it too late to rein in nuclear proliferation? The more nations that get the bomb, the harder it will be to prevent further proliferation. As technology and know-how become more widespread, technical barriers are lowered. And once neighboring nations start down the nuclear path, surrounding nations may feel obligated to join them.*



*U.S. President Barack Obama shakes hands with South Korea's President Lee Myung-bak at the start of the first plenary session of the Nuclear Security Summit 2010 in Washington, April 13, 2010. The summit called for safeguarding all vulnerable nuclear material within four years.*

Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the world's bedrock agreement designed to limit the spread of nuclear weapons.

Most of the world community (187 countries) has signed the NPT agreement. It recognizes the first five nuclear powers (the United States, Russia, China, France and Britain) and commits them to work toward nuclear disarmament. It allows all other countries, in compliance with treaty obligations, to pursue civilian nuclear power but not nuclear weapons.

The UN's month-long May NPT conference pushed a highly ambitious plan that "reaffirms the unequivocal undertaking of the nuclear-weapon states to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals" (Associated Press, "At UN, Deadline Aired for Abolishing Nuke Weapons," May 14, 2010).

But none of the five nuclear powers recognized under the treaty have ever endorsed a specific timetable for this to be accomplished. And Israel, India, Pakistan and North Korea are not signatories of the NPT and would be unaffected by any final plan.

Is it too late to rein in nuclear proliferation? The more nations that get the bomb, the harder it will be to prevent further proliferation. As technology and know-how become more widespread, technical barriers are lowered. And once neighboring nations start down the nuclear path, surrounding nations may feel obligated to join them.

The recently issued U.S. "Nuclear Posture Review" includes significant changes hoped to encourage NPT compliance. It pledges that if attacked with biological or chemical weapons by a state in compliance

with NPT, the United States will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons.

The United States also pledges to not develop new nuclear warheads or replace any aging nuclear components, emphasizing refurbishing instead. Exceptions must be authorized by the president.

But critics worry that the changes may encourage use of other weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and weaken deterrents offered by the nuclear umbrella that has kept America and its allies secure for the past half-century.

### **Nuclear terrorism**

President Obama identifies nuclear terrorism as "the most immediate and extreme threat to global security." His deputy national security adviser, Ben Rhodes, explained: "We know that terrorist groups, including al-Qaida, are pursuing the materials to build a nuclear weapon and we know that they have the intent to use one" ("US: al-Qaida Exemplifies New-Age Nuclear Threat," Associated Press, April 9, 2010).

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton described in stark terms the impact that even a small bomb would have. "A 10-kiloton nuclear bomb detonated in Times Square in New York City would kill a million people.

"Many more would suffer from the hemorrhaging and weakness that comes from radiation sickness," she added. "Beyond the human cost, a nuclear terrorist attack would also touch off a tsunami of social and economic consequences across our country" (ibid.).

Her illustration uses a bomb about half the size of the one dropped by the United States on Nagasaki at the end of World War II. Terrorists are likely to use a similar bomb. They could also use less-developed radioactive materials in a variety of ways.

Terrorists could attack a nuclear reactor, steal nuclear fuel or waste; acquire fissile material and build a crude nuclear bomb (improvised nuclear device), disperse radioactive material with conventional

explosives (dirty bomb), fabricate a nuclear bomb, trick a nuclear state into launching a nuclear weapon or acquire a ready-made nuclear weapon, small enough to fit inside a suitcase.

In spite of these growing concerns, a commission created by the U.S. Congress recently issued a “report card” on America’s preparedness and gave it an “F” in some areas.

The report concludes the “U.S. government is not taking the necessary steps to protect the country from the threats posed by WMD and terrorism... There is direct evidence that terrorists are trying to acquire weapons of mass destruction...and the opportunity to acquire and use such weapons is growing exponentially because of the global proliferation of nuclear material and biological technologies” (*World at Risk*, www.preventwmd.gov, 2008).

The report warns unless nations act “decisively and urgently,” it is more likely than not a WMD will be used in a terrorist attack by the end of 2013.

### Growing nuclear stockpiles

In addition to nuclear materials used in bombs, there is a growing nuclear stockpile scattered about the globe in nuclear reactors, research facilities and military installations that may be vulnerable to attack or theft. This makes securing nuclear material more urgent and more difficult.

For example, according to the European Nuclear Society, 30 countries have 437 nuclear power plants, and 15 countries have 55 plants under construction (“Nuclear Power Plants, World-wide,” April 2010). Another 40 countries, some in unstable regions, have also recently expressed interest in acquiring nuclear power.

And the amount of nuclear material needed for a devastating bomb is relatively small. *The Washington Post* reports, “Just 55 pounds of highly enriched uranium—about the size of a grapefruit—is needed to make a small nuclear device. There are an estimated 3.5 million pounds of the



Reuters/Chip East

*Demonstrators wave flags and shout during an anti-nuclear weapons protest rally and march in New York May 2, 2010, the eve of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference at the United Nations.*

material in 40 countries and 1.1 million pounds of plutonium.”

There is enough “‘weapons-usable nuclear material’ in the world to build more than 120,000 nuclear bombs” (“Obama Leads Summit Effort to Secure Nuclear Materials,” April 11, 2010). The nuclear threat is also growing in specific regions like India, Pakistan, North Korea, Iran and Israel.

### India and Pakistan

The escalation of tensions between India and Pakistan for more than a decade has spawned a nuclear rivalry. Pakistan is building two additional plutonium production reactors. At least one Pakistani scientist has confessed to smuggling nuclear weapons technology to other nations.

India has a superior conventional force, and there is growing concern that if pressed by an overwhelming conventional attack, Pakistan might

use its nuclear weapons. According to the Federation of American Scientists both countries are estimated to have 60 to 90 nuclear weapons, and they continue to develop more (ibid.). Neither country has signed the NPT agreement.

### North Korea

North Korea withdrew from the NPT in 2003 and has since successfully tested two nuclear weapons.

*Times Online* reports that North Korea is a “fully fledged nuclear power,” an opinion shared by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). North Korea is capable of striking cities in neighboring countries and has threatened the United States and its allies (“North Korea Is Fully Fledged Nuclear Power, Experts Agree,” April 24, 2009).

And North Korea is believed to have sold nuclear and missile technology to Iran, Pakistan and other nations.

## Iran and Israel

The IAEA recently concluded that Iran is actively pursuing a nuclear weapons capability in defiance of IAEA and Western powers. The United States is leading a diplomatic push for a fourth round of UN sanctions against Iran. But past sanctions have not deterred Iranian efforts.

Iran was known to have five primary nuclear facilities until last September when a sixth facility was uncovered. It was being constructed secretly in defiance of the UN and IAEA inside a mountain near Qum. Iran has since announced plans to build 10 more.

Iran continues its efforts to enrich uranium to higher levels. The Iranians recently achieved the 20 percent level needed to produce nuclear fuel rods for research reactors.

According to the *Long War Journal*, Iran's stockpile of low enriched uranium (LEU) is "just over two tons, enough for two nuclear bombs if the uranium is enriched to 90%" ("Iran Actively Pursuing Nuclear Weapons Capability: IAEA," Feb. 19, 2010). Other experts indicate the additional enriching necessary to reach 90 percent is relatively small.

Many Arab countries worry about the unprecedented leverage a nuclear-armed Iran would have. With the dramatic altering of the balance of power in the Middle East, some may feel forced to respond with a program of their own.

Concern is nowhere more pointed than in Israel, which sees Iran's program as a direct threat to its existence. Israel has repeatedly threatened use of force if necessary to stop the Iranian efforts. Disrupting Iran's nuclear program will require more of a sustained campaign than the overnight air strike Israel launched on the Syrian nuclear site in September 2007. But even a successful campaign would likely only set the Iranian program back a few years.

If a strike occurs, the Iranians may retaliate either by striking Israel

directly or through their proxies, Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon. And they may even order terror attacks on Western targets.

The Federation of American Scientists believes Israel is currently the only Middle Eastern country with a nuclear arsenal and calculates it has 80 weapons (ibid.).

"A nuclear exchange between Iran and Israel would be devastating," says Anthony Cordesman, former director of intelligence assessment for the U.S. secretary of defense. Israel "could conceivably survive a nuclear exchange while losing 200,000 to 800,000 citizens within 21 days, but Iran would face 16 to 28 million dead in the same time frame and no longer survive as an organized society" (United Press International, Nov. 22, 2007).

### Prophecy and WMDs

Despite the global reduction of nuclear warheads, a growing dangerous nuclear threat explodes around the globe. We cannot know for sure when nuclear devices may be used. But they have been used in the past, and the figurative language of Bible prophecy in Revelation 9:13-19 appears to indicate a future global conflagration with staggering casualties (one third of the world's population) made possible only by today's arsenals of WMDs.

Jesus Christ personally warned that a time of trouble like no other is destined to push our world to the edge of human extinction (Matthew 24:22). Have you thought about what Christ said in Luke 21:36 and considered exploring its implications?

In a world seemingly out of control, it is time to understand why you are alive in the first place and what God has planned for you and the whole world. Learn about end-time events and God's plan to intervene to save us from self-destruction in *Are We Living in the Time of the End?* Explore what the Bible says about your personal future in the booklets *What Is Your Destiny?* and *Transforming Your Life: The Process of Conversion*. Download or request your free copies at [www.WNPonline.org](http://www.WNPonline.org). ❖

"INTEGRATION" (Continued from page 4)

prophecies relating to Europe, it certainly could be. The modern day Greek tragedy has plunged Europe into economic turmoil. By trying to save the 10-year-old Euro currency, the continent is going to go through severe austerity.

Some of the economically weaker nations of the European Union may decide they can do better on their own, opting for their own national currency that they can then devalue to boost exports and jobs. This would also enable them to control their own interest rates. The disadvantage is that they could lose access to the world's biggest single market, the European Union.

Interestingly, in the midst of the crisis, Estonia announced it has now qualified to join the Euro and will become a full member next year. Clearly, many are very committed to a monetary union.

But a prolonged period of austerity could be very risky, as European history has shown. This article began with a quote from Ambrose Evans-Pritchard. At the end of the same article, he concludes with the following words: "Stephen Lewis from Monument Securities says Europe's leaders have forgotten the lesson of the 'Gold Bloc' in the second phase of the Great Depression, when a reactionary and over-proud Continent ground itself into slump by clinging to deflationary totemism long after the circumstances had rendered this policy suicidal. We all know how it ended."

It ended with the collapse of democracy, the rise of national socialism (fascism) and World War II.

Europe and the euro have come to a crossroads. For the euro to continue to work in so many different countries, the diverse group of member states must all have coordinated fiscal policies. One solution might be for the various nations to agree that there should be absolutely no over-spending, that they must all live within their means. If this does not happen, any solution now is likely to be temporary, with a further and greater euro crisis in the future. ❖



## *The Essential Abraham Lincoln*

The *Essential Abraham Lincoln* contains a rich storehouse of Lincoln's most important letters, speeches and presidential messages (1999 edition, ISBN 0-517-09345-6).

Reviewed by John Ross Schroeder

The wisdom of Abraham Lincoln remains at the pinnacle of American presidential understanding. Like Winston Churchill, he had the rare gift of composition and left many hard lessons for our generation to study and ponder. We begin with his early assessment of the dangers that would confront a young country, relatively new to the world scene.

### **Dangers to America**

In an early speech in Springfield, Illinois, in January 1837, Lincoln stated: "At what point is the danger to be expected? I answer, if it ever reach[es] us it must spring up amongst us; it cannot come from abroad. *If destruction be our lot we must ourselves be its author and finisher*" (p. 9, emphasis added throughout).

Although enemy nations may be the final instrument in executing a nation's demise, the greatest danger is usually from the moral decay that has already occurred within its own borders.

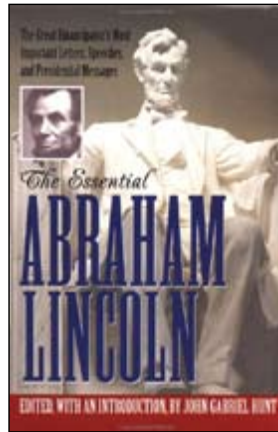
Nearly 20 years later Lincoln spoke again of internal jeopardies during his speech at the first Republican State Convention of Illinois (May 1856).

He warned: "We live in the midst of alarms; anxiety beclouds the future; we expect some new disaster with each newspaper we read. Are we in a healthful political state? Are not the tendencies plain? Do not the signs of the time point plainly the way in which we are going?" (p. 101).

Are not those words even more true today, 150 years after Abraham Lincoln spoke them?

### **Lincoln's awareness of God's purposes and guidance**

In a personal letter to Eliza P. Gurney from the Executive Mansion in Washington D.C. (September 1864), Lincoln wrote: "The purposes of the Almighty are perfect, and must prevail, though we erring mortals



may fail to accurately perceive them in advance. We hoped for a happy termination of this terrible war [1861 to 1865] long before this; but God knows best, and has ruled otherwise. We shall yet acknowledge His wisdom, and our own error therein... Surely He intends some great good to follow this mighty convulsion, which no mortal could make, and no mortal could stay" (p. 313).

Lincoln well understood his own dependence on God. In February 1861, just before he traveled from Springfield to Washington D.C. to be sworn in as president, he said in a farewell speech: "Today I leave you. I go to assume a task more difficult than that which devolved upon General Washington. *Unless the great God who assisted him shall be with and aid me I cannot prevail*; but if the same Almighty Arm that directed and protected him shall guide and support me I shall not fail" (p. 203).

Instead of splintering into two separate nations, the United States remained one nation under God— notwithstanding all of its moral and spiritual inadequacies, then and now. Lincoln always understood what his basic mission really was: the preservation of the American union.

### **Thankfulness to God**

During his last public address in Washington D.C. in April of 1865, Lincoln stated: "We meet this evening not in sorrow, but in gladness of heart... In the midst of this, however, He from whom all blessings flow must not be forgotten. A call for a national thanksgiving is being prepared, and will be duly promulgated" (p. 336).

Shortly afterwards an assassin's bullet ended the life of this great man. He was prevented from carrying out the kind of reconstruction he had envisaged for the nation. But he had done the job! ❖

“WORLD” (Continued from page 16)

the book of Daniel. It is here that we discover the basic ingredients of this ageless kingdom for which Paul praises and glorifies God.

An all-powerful king that had conquered other ancient societies such as Egypt, Phoenicia and Judah defined Daniel’s world. His name was Nebuchadnezzar.

His capital city of Babylon was rumored to be 100 feet high and had walls so wide that six chariots could ride together on top. Within those walls were magnificent edifices such as the Hanging Gardens, the Great Ziggurat and the triumphal Lion’s Gate with its magnificent decorations. King Nebuchadnezzar was a king over kings. It is this same king that seemingly dismisses the historical maxim of “what goes up must come down” as he touts, “Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?” (Daniel 4:30).

This same king who conquered the world had trouble conquering his dreams and asked Daniel to interpret a dream dealing with a great towering image of many magnificent metals that ultimately breaks into pieces (Daniel 2:25-46). Many Bible students have come to understand the various metals of gold, silver, bronze and iron as representing the rise and fall of the gentile kingdoms of Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome.

### Three specific declarations in one verse

In verse 44 Paul’s declaration of “world without end” is given a definition: “And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.”

Here we notice an abrupt departure from history as we know it. Three specific declarations are embedded here. A kingdom emerges that “shall never be destroyed.” This declaration promises to break the cycle we have so far seen in human history. What God introduces through Daniel is not simply the



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*This kingdom will not end and will not be subject to people, time or the historical maxim of “what goes up must come down.” Simply put, this kingdom simply is!*

rise of one government after another, but the complete altering of how the future—your future—will exist.

Secondly, it is a society that will “not be left to other people.” This new world is not physical as we know it, but extraordinary in the sense of a spiritual habitation.

Lastly, this spiritual realm supplants and consumes all before it and former kingdoms are swept away. It alone exists!

What this verse plainly declares is that this kingdom will not end and will not be subject to people, time or the historical maxim of “what goes up must come down.” Simply put, this kingdom that emerges from elsewhere simply *is!*

### “A stone made without hands”

What or who makes possible such a departure from how we commonly comprehend the ongoing turnover of human governments? Here in this verse that cycle screeches to a halt! The answer is found in verse 45. It mentions a stone “cut out of the mountain without hands” that breaks the image. It is described in verse 35 as a stone that “became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.”

Who or what can this be talking about? Let’s allow the Bible to interpret

itself. “The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone” (Psalm 118:22). The apostle Peter builds upon the theme surrounding this stone in 1 Peter 2:4: “Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious.”

Indeed, this stone is none other than Jesus Christ. Yes, the same Jesus not born in a palace but a cow stall in a small out-of-the-way town. Yes, the same Christ that never marched in front of a human army but walked into masses of people who were sick, poor and forgotten by much of society.

Yes, the same Messiah that never built earthly monuments to Himself but placed His monumental truths and teachings in the hearts and minds of men and women to this day. Yes, the same Captain of our salvation who did not offer up others for His cause but gave only Himself when He was rejected by the same people He came to save. It is this same humble carpenter—who has ascended on high, who is coming back as that same heaven-sent “stone shaped without hands”—to frame a “world without end.”

The Book of Revelation gives life, color and action to the ultimate future collision between the stone and image of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream. “Now

I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war” (Revelation 19:11).

Verses 19 and 20 of the same chapter describes how humanity’s last attempt at a ruling government is to actually try to preserve its power over God’s direct intervention. It reads, “And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image.”

Amazingly, humanity is going to think it can fight against God and win, but the divine stone of God “made without hands” is going to dash to pieces “the image,” which is first introduced in the book of Daniel.

### What does this mean to you?

What does this mean to you and me? Simply put, human history will not be simply on hold. It will stop. The kingdom of man will cease to exist. The Kingdom of God will arrive. There will be no more kingdoms or civilizations to learn about. No more place names to memorize. No more lists of kings—just one, Jesus Christ! No more capitals to memorize—just one, Jerusalem. No more emerging religions to discover in the next chapter of a history book. “There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12), and He will return for all to see! Yes, it will begin a “world without end.”

But you might be saying, “That’s it? Just one long, continuous future that never ends? Won’t that be boring?”

How about concentrating on the personal qualities that Christ will bring to this prophesied “world without end”? Let’s focus on the unchanging nature and attributes of the world to which you are invited. Isaiah 11:1-4 states, “There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, the

Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD. His delight is in the fear of the LORD, And He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, nor decide by the hearing of His ears; but with righteousness He shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth.” Who could ever tire of this?

But, let’s take it a step further. A “world without end” means an end to tears, death, sorrow and crying. It is a society in which there is an end to pain (Revelation 21:3-4). A “world without end” means an end to war under the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6).

### Let Paul’s prayer be yours

The prophetic revelation of Paul’s statement a “world without end” is designed to motivate every action of our lives. The admonition of “this is the way, walk in it” (Isaiah 30:21) is expressed in the words of Paul’s prayer where that statement is found.

“When I think of the wisdom and scope of God’s plan, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father, the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth. I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will give you mighty inner strength through his Holy Spirit. And I pray that Christ will be more and more at home in your hearts as you trust in him. May your roots go down deep into the soil of God’s marvelous love. And may you have the power to understand, as all God’s people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love really is. May you experience the love of Christ, though it is so great you will never fully understand it. Then you will be filled with the fullness of life and power that comes from God.

“Now glory be to God! By his mighty power at work within us, he is able to accomplish infinitely more than we would ever dare to ask or hope. May he be given glory in the church and in Christ Jesus forever and ever through endless ages. Amen” (Ephesians 3:14-21, New Living Translation). ❖



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by Robin Webber

## World Without End

**A**t one time or another, all of us have gone through the academic exercise of plowing through the foundational ancient empires that spawned our current 21st century Western world. If it's been awhile since you've thought of Western Civ class, allow me to restart your mental engines down the pathway to long-ago civilizations.

The study normally begins with Egypt and its sand-worn monuments and moves to Babylon under Hammurabi and then returns to Egypt under Ramses. It leaps over to the Mesopotamian empires of the warlike Assyrians and the golden age of the Chaldeans under Nebuchadnezzar. Our standardized studies then deal with the Persians and their nemesis, Greece.

We then proceed with a study of the golden age of Athens under Pericles and the spread of Hellenism by Alexander the Great. Such a systematic study always winds up with the formidable force that was Rome with its seemingly invincible armies and code of law.

The basic lesson that comes from studying Western civilization, as well as all history, is a simple maxim: What goes up must come down. All civilizations, even the best and brightest, run a certain course, even Rome. Stages of societal development always move in an inevitable cycle of infancy, ascendancy, maturity and ultimately decline. None of them are immune. Some of them last longer than others, but they all ultimately “go the way of the dinosaur.”

### Who is next?

Understanding and expecting this pattern always motivates us to await the next chapter to see who will

supplant the people who, for the moment, place their footprints in the shifting sands of history. In doing so, we expectantly turn to a new chapter full of unknown place names, dynasties of rulers, famous battles and contributions to civilization.

The apostle Paul was not immune to this basic historical truism with his educational and travel background. His hometown of Tarsus had experienced multiple occupiers. But God inspired him to look beyond the present circumstances of his time to pen something very special regarding a society yet to come. It comes in the form of a doxology in which Paul is concluding a parenthetical prayer in the midst of the New Testament Epistle of Ephesians. He simply writes, “Unto him [God the Father] be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen” (Ephesians 3:21, King James Version). A profound revelation if ever there was one: “world without end!”

### Consider the implications!

The original Greek word translated by early biblical scholars is *aeon* from which we derive the English word *eon* that means “an immeasurably long period of time.” Thus other translations of the Bible speak of “forever and ever” or as “forever and ever through endless ages.”

Consider the incredible implications of believing in a “world without end.” So often we pray “thy kingdom come,” but how often do we fully grasp that it is not ever going away?

We find that Paul is anchoring his belief structure and thus his life on a prophecy discovered in chapter two of

(See “**WORLD,**” page 14)