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Egypt's Revolution: Will It Unsettle the Middle East?

What's behind the revolutionary fever sweeping the Arab world? It's already having a major impact in the region and may spawn key changes needed to fulfill end-time events.

by Rod Hall

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak became the second Arab leader in a month to succumb to his people's powerful thirst for freedom. He surrendered to the will of a leaderless revolution and stepped down after 30 years of autocratic rule over the Arab world's most populous nation.

The revolutionary wave is washing rapidly over the entire Middle East, leading to some political reform and perhaps more dramatic restructuring. Where's it all leading?

Revolution and interim government

Historian David Bell in *Foreign Policy* magazine points to two types of revolutions possible for Egypt's near future.

"The fundamental question being discussed by commentators at present is what shape a new Egyptian revolution might take. Will it come to a quick end with the establishment of a new government—hopefully a democratic one—or will a much more radical, long-lasting revolutionary process develop? . . .

"Anxieties focus . . . on the Muslim Brotherhood and the possibility that Egypt may experience its own Islamic revolution [as happened in Iran more than 30 years ago], with unpredictable consequences, not only for the



Reuters/Amr Abdallah Dalsh

After 30 years of autocratic rule over Egypt, President Hosni Mubarak stepped down on Feb. 11, 2011, in the midst of one of the country's largest protests for governmental change.

country itself but for the region and the world" ("Why We Can't Rule Out an Egyptian Reign of Terror," Feb. 7, 2011).

Regardless of which type of revolution is underway, the rigid institutions and laws of a police state left
(See "EGYPT," page 3)



World News and Prophecy (ISSN 1942-1001) is published bimonthly, in January, March, May, July, September and November, by the United Church of God, an International Association, 555 Technecenter Drive, Milford, OH 45150. © 2011 United Church of God, an International Association. Printed in the U.S.A. All rights reserved. Reproduction in any form without written permission is prohibited. Periodicals Postage paid at Milford, Ohio 45150, and at additional mailing offices.

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

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

World News and Prophecy online: Read *World News and Prophecy* as soon as it is completed. The next issue is scheduled to be available by April 27, 2011, on the Internet at:

<http://www.WNPonline.org>



"Whom heaven must receive until the times of

Restoration

of all things ... ACTS 3:21

The Power of Social Media

I have a love-hate relationship with social media. Some days I want to divorce myself from all of it, press the delete button and never look at another Facebook page. Other days I spend far too much time looking through the pages and pictures and eavesdropping on others' lives.

I have a Facebook page, and I do Twitter. I am "LinkedIn" and tied to several other features of today's social media landscape. Like you, I am astounded at the power and influence this has throughout the world. The best example is what is happening in the Middle East, where turmoil continues to bring changes and threatens to reshape the region. Facebook and the Internet are at the heart of these events, with protestors rallied to "e-streets" and then literal streets when summoned through these social forces.

We are all watching the power of the Web impact our lives. We are connected to people and events in ways we never imagined a few years ago—well, at least the way many of us never imagined. Those 30 and under have no problem adapting to this new reality. My generation can remember when news and ideas didn't spread quite as rapidly as the flick of a tweet.

Today nothing remains secret for longer than a nanosecond. Where we are and what we are doing can be transmitted instantly at will—and even against our will if our cell phone is on, because it will continually plot our location to marketers. This power continues to influence events beyond the control of leaders in every walk of life. To ignore this reality is lethal to any organization.

Reading of the recent upheaval in Egypt and the role the Internet played reminded me of a scripture from the book of Daniel. Daniel sought to understand the meaning of all the prophecies of future events he was given to record, but God said the meaning would remain locked until the end time: "But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase" (Daniel 12:4).

We are certainly in the time of vastly increasing knowledge. Whether all that knowledge is true, noble or pure is not always relevant. Whether it's used to build a world based on righteous principles is not always considered. Whether it builds or destroys is not always watched. Knowledge can be considered "neutral" and left to find its own level in the marketplace of ideas and information. But in this process more harm can be done than good.

Daniel had no idea what was being described. We who are living through the fulfillment of the prophecy have our moments when we can't understand what we see. But we are in the midst of an information and technology revolution that is reshaping our world. We can't escape it even if we feel overwhelmed by what we see. It's our reality, and we need to make the right choices in using the power in our hands.

So I doubt that I will ever pull the plug on my connection to the Internet and all its wonders. But I am resolved to use it for good and to ignore it when it pulls me toward anger or thoughts I really should not harbor. I am determined to stay current with all its uses so I can teach my grandchildren how to harness it in the right way to build quality lives.

Above all, I am determined to use social media to build healthy relationships and restore any that are damaged. With knowledge comes responsibility, and with the increased knowledge available to us comes the duty to use these tools to *restore all things* that, transcending this world, will be part of the coming Kingdom of God.

—Darris McNeely



Darris McNeely

“EGYPT” (Continued from page 1)

behind by Mubarak are presumably about to change.

In order to push forward the transition to democratic civilian rule, the Egyptian military leaders dissolved parliament and suspended the constitution. They’ve said they will run the country for six months or until presidential and parliamentary elections can be held.

Furthermore, they are forming a committee to amend the constitution and setting rules for referendums needed for public endorsements. And they confirmed they will abide by all of Egypt’s international treaties, including the important peace treaty with Israel.

Future government

Egypt’s historic position in the heart of the Arab world means that what happens in Egypt does not stay in Egypt. Regardless of the form the new government eventually takes, it will have a powerful resonance across the region.

With expectations of elections still set for later this year, many experts are concerned about the nature of the government that may emerge. Overly hasty democratization could eventually lead to a take-over by repressive Islamists.

Bell further explains that “the crucial point to keep in mind, as events in Egypt unfold, is that even in the best-case scenario— . . . a seemingly stable, democratic, secular government—the Egyptian Revolution of 2011 may still just be getting started. Its crucial moments may lie months, or even years, in the future.”

Bell concludes, “Egypt probably does not face the prospect of an Islamic Revolution in the next few months. But if Mubarak . . . is replaced by a weak, unstable series of governments that cannot restore order or deliver serious social and economic reforms—and thus quickly lose credibility and legitimacy among the population—then a different, far more radical revolutionary movement may yet develop. And despite the current lack of a charismatic leader for such a move-



Reuters/Mohamed Abd ElGhany

A boy watches as pro-democracy supporters gather in Tahrir Square in Cairo, Egypt, Feb. 18, 2011. The protests in Egypt contributed to a revolutionary wave across the Middle East.

ment, one could quickly emerge out of the torrent of events.”

Still, some maintain that Egypt’s well-educated middle class and sophisticated elite have enough of a sense of national pride to turn the chaos of street demonstrations into the beginnings of democracy.

And others argue that the well-respected, deeply entrenched Egyptian army will not allow the rise of an Islamist regime. For nearly six decades, the Egyptian armed forces have propped up every one of the nation’s autocratic leaders—Mubarak, Anwar Sadat and Gamal Abdel Nasser. They were all former military officers.

Strong military influence

The military has gradually lowered its political profile since the 1970s, when top generals were house-

hold names. It has been among the country’s most respected and least-corrupt institutions and was lauded for restraint during the unrest.

Virtually all Egyptian families have had members in the military, which now numbers nearly half a million. About the same number are in reserves. This is the largest military in the Arab world.

The military budget is estimated to be about \$5 billion annually, but some estimates go as high as four times that. Part of this comes from annual military assistance from the United States of \$1.3 billion. And many senior officers have completed training programs at the U.S. National Defense University in Washington.

The Egyptian military may well be the ultimate power broker in this time of major political upheaval, as

Turkey's military proved to be in 1980, when it overthrew the government to ensure that communists did not exploit the country's political turmoil to seize power.

The military is also not likely to become a de facto government of Egypt. It has not dominated the economy or civil government in the past.

Weak national parties

But the military will likely want to continue its influence. To do so, it must have a political vehicle in place to counter opposition forces, particularly the Muslim Brotherhood, whose influence was purged from the military years ago.

How the military will adapt to a coalition government composed of wildly divergent political ideologies remains to be seen. Its influence in the long run is more likely to remain strong if the elections bring in a large number of former ruling party members from the National Democratic Party (NDP). The NDP has enjoyed uncontested power in state politics since its creation in 1978.

The other traditional parties and movements that have existed for most of the Mubarak era are the liberal Wafd Party, the socialist National

Progressive Union, and the Muslim Brotherhood, Egypt's most prominent Islamic party. The Brotherhood is the best organized and funded of the three, and its status as an illegal but tolerated organization gives it more autonomy in its finances and internal structure.

There are also a half dozen smaller independent parties that could have representation in the newly elected government.

The Muslim Brotherhood

The Muslim Brotherhood, based in Egypt but international in its scope, says it favors democracy and civil rights, yet it wants to establish a government based on religious law (sharia).

Recent polls indicate about 15 percent of Egyptians strongly approve or somewhat approve of the group. About a third stated they'd formed no opinion. In 2005 the group gained 88 seats out of 444 in parliamentary elections.

The Muslim Brotherhood is a fundamentalist Sunni movement that seeks to spread Islamic law throughout the world. Its members have indicated a desire to revoke Egypt's peace treaty with Israel and increase support for Hamas, which it spawned, and other terrorist groups.

Article 2 of the Brotherhood's bylaws says the group "seeks to establish Allah's law in the land by achieving the spiritual goals of Islam and the true religion." That includes "the need to work on establishing the Islamic State, which seeks to effectively implement the provisions of Islam and its teachings" (quoted in "Mubarak Out, Brotherhood Remains Primed," *Right Side News*, Feb. 11, 2011).

Who falls next?

Repercussions from the Egyptian revolution are already rippling through the Arab world, threatening autocratic leaders who have long relied on a mixture of brutality and economic subsidies to subdue opposition.

The Washington Post reports that the Obama administration is now concerned about Saudi Arabia and Jordan: "Senior U.S. officials say the economic stagnation, youthful populations and simmering political frustration in those kingdoms—echoes of Tunis and Cairo—may provide the spark for widespread political change that could usher out allies in favor of angry, anti-Western opposition movements" ("Mubarak Resignation Creates Political Vacuum for U.S. in Middle East," Feb. 12, 2011).

South Africa's *Mail & Guardian* newspaper also sees the swirling impact of revolutionary fever sweeping through other Arab countries where unemployment is high, human development opportunity low, police brutality common and government corruption widespread:

"The conditions in each country are sufficiently different that one cannot predict whether there will be a 'next' . . . Jordan's King Abdullah dissolved the cabinet and appointed a new prime minister; Algeria announced the lifting of the two-decades-old state of emergency; Yemen's President Ali Abdullah Saleh announced he would not contest the next election in 2013; Syria announced it would ease restrictions on certain rights such as free expression . . .

"Furthermore, though potentates
(See "EGYPT," page 13)



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Erdogan's Grand Vision for Turkey and the Arab World

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Erdogan's actions and words confirm his country's independence in determining its foreign affairs. What course is he charting for Turkey's future?

by Paul Kieffer

It began with a dramatic scene at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, in January 2009. During a panel discussion on the Israeli intervention in Gaza, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Erdogan walked off the stage when he was refused extra time to speak. Immediately prior to his departure, he angrily told Israeli President Shimon Peres that “when it comes to killing, you [Israelis] know well how to kill.”

At first, some observers thought Erdogan's harsh criticism of Israel's intervention in Gaza was merely a momentary lapse of diplomatic restraint. The following 12 months, however, showed that Erdogan's outburst reflects what appears to be a radical change in Turkey's foreign policy toward Israel. The inflammatory language continued when the Turkish leader promised a retaliatory air strike “like an earthquake” if Israel were to violate Turkey's air space in attacking Iran. He also predicted that “Allah's revenge” would come on Israel.

One year after the angry remark in Davos, the Turkish government threatened to recall its ambassador from Tel Aviv. According to Erdogan, such retaliation was appropriate after Israel's deputy foreign minister Danny Ayalon delivered a protest to Turkey's ambassador Ahmet Oguz Celikkol in a humiliating manner—refusing to shake his hand and having him sit in a lower position. Israel's complaint was about the popular Turkish television series *Valley of the Wolves*, which, among other offenses, depicted Israeli intelligence operatives kidnapping children to convert them to Judaism.

Even in averting the diplomatic crisis, the war of words continued. Ayalon did not retract his criticism of Turkey, though he did declare his intention to be

more careful in the future. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu then said he was satisfied with Ayalon's statement but emphasized that the criticism of Turkey was justified. The Turkish foreign ministry in the capital of Ankara responded by emphasizing its historic responsibility to warn and criticize Israel.

Prior to the Davos incident, Turkey and Israel had long enjoyed close diplomatic relations and had even conducted small-scale joint military maneuvers. Turkey also had an important function as a potential mediator in any future peace negotiations between Israel and Syria. Why would Turkey change its approach toward Israel? And what does this mean for the future of the Middle East?

Turkey's uncertain future in Europe

Since World War II, Turkey has been a loyal supporter of the West. Turkish troops fought alongside U.S. forces in the Korean War; and as a member of NATO, Turkey was home to military installations monitoring Soviet activities. America supports Turkey's bid to join the European Union. Turkey has had “associated status” since 1963 (then with EU predecessor the European Economic Community), and it first applied for full membership in 1987. When negotiations began in 2005, Erdogan emphasized that his country would settle for nothing less than full membership.

Progress on negotiations has been slow, with the EU expecting Turkey to amend its constitution to prevent intervention in state affairs by the military, to improve human rights and to give greater rights to its ethnic minorities. Since 2005, only 11 out of 35 “negotiating chapters” on admission to the EU have been opened for discussion,

With future EU membership uncertain, Turkey has begun courting its historic realm of influence: the Islamic Arab world.



Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, right, and Turkish Cypriot leader Irsen Kucuk meet in Ankara Feb. 17, 2011. The main point of contention between Turkey and the European Union is Turkey's support of Turkish Northern Cyprus in their refusal to accept the rule of the Republic of Cyprus to the south—an EU member.

and only one has been “provisionally completed” so far.

The main point of contention between Turkey and the European Union is Turkey's intransigence on the issue of Cyprus. The Turks control the northern part of this island country and reject the sovereignty of the Republic of Cyprus (or Greek Cyprus), which rules over the southern part of the island—and the Republic of Cyprus is an EU member.

In a diplomatic note signed in Ankara in July 2005, Turkey had recognized the EU customs union as including Cyprus. That agreement was the last obstacle removed in paving the way for the start of official negotiations on Turkish EU membership. Yet after official negotiations began in October 2005, Turkey continued its blockade of all ships and

planes originating from southern Cyprus. This stance violates the basic EU principle that all member states recognize each other and impose no trade barriers.

If Turkey's position on Cyprus remains unchanged, then acceptance of Turkey into full EU membership would require sacrificing basic principles. And that does not appear likely in this case.

Even if negotiations are completed successfully, all it would take for Turkey's bid for EU membership to fail is for one EU member to block approval for admission. With national referendums a possibility in more than one country—notably France and the Netherlands—final approval is by no means a certainty.

This prospect is what observers see as the catalyst behind Turkey's shift in foreign policy. Last summer

even U.S. President Barack Obama warned that Turkey might align itself outside the West if negotiations on its bid for EU membership remain inconclusive.

Obama told Italian newspaper *Corriere della Serra* that he did “not think the slow pace or European reluctance is the only or predominant factor at the root of some changes in the orientation recently observed in the Turkish attitude. But it is inevitably destined to play a role in how the Turkish people see Europe . . . if they do not feel themselves part of the European family, it is natural that they should end up looking elsewhere for alliances and affiliations” (quoted by Reuters, July 8, 2010).

Turkey's courtship of the Islamic Arab world

With future EU membership uncertain, Turkey has begun courting its historic realm of influence: the Islamic Arab world, much of which was once under Ottoman Turkish rule for hundreds of years. Erdogan's visit to the Persian Gulf region in January 2011 makes President Obama's comments seem prophetic. Speaking on Jan. 11 at the Turkish-Arab Relations Conference in Kuwait, Erdogan reminded his listeners that Muslim Turks and Arabs had resisted Christian crusaders together. And he urged Arabs and Turks of today to forge their own union and determine the fate of the Middle East:

“The Arabs are our brothers and sisters. We are their brothers and sisters . . . Regardless of what some say, we will continue to develop brotherhood and cooperation with our Arab brothers and sisters . . . We will not turn our back to regions with which we have been sharing friendship and brotherhood for centuries. Our union is political, economic, commercial and cultural. We are members of the same civilization. We share a common history. We wrote our joint history together . . .

“Through solidarity, we can overcome the Palestine problem and end the pain in Iraq and Afghanistan. We do not have to apply at others to help

us. Yet, at foremost, we need to establish our own union. We can strengthen stability in Lebanon and prevent terror acts in Egypt. Through solidarity, we can overcome poverty in the region” (“We Will Determine Our Own Foreign Policy, Turkish Premier Says,” *The Journal of Turkish Weekly*, Jan. 11, 2011, emphasis added).

With Turkey’s open criticism of Israel’s treatment of the Palestinians, Erdogan and his government are increasingly popular among the Arab populations of the Middle East. “When children in Gaza were massacred,” he said, “we felt their pain as if our own children went through a massacre. Jerusalem’s problem is our problem. Gaza’s problem is our problem” (ibid.).

In fact, analysts see Turkey’s shift in foreign policy toward Israel as a move calculated to legitimize any future leadership role for Turkey in the region. The shift appears to be paying off, with Erdogan in 2010 being awarded the Arab world’s equivalent of the Nobel Prize, the King Faisal International Prize for Service to Islam.

Turkey and a future Islamic confederation

Turkey’s independent foreign policy appears to be shifting in a direction that was warned of in Bible prophecy millennia ago. Psalm 83 contains an intriguing prophecy of many Middle Eastern nations that, while it may have applied in part to events of ancient times, appears to be as yet unfulfilled and to possibly tie in with end-time events. If so, it foretells a confederation of Arab nations and Turkey determined to eliminate Israel.

“They have taken crafty counsel against Your people, and consulted together against Your sheltered ones. They have said, ‘Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation, that the name of Israel may be remembered no more.’ For they have consulted together with one consent; they form a confederacy against You: The tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites; Moab and the Hagrites; Gebal, Ammon, and Amalek; Philistia with the inhabit-

ants of Tyre; Assyria also has joined with them; they have helped the children of Lot” (verses 3-8).

These biblical names are significant when we understand the areas and peoples to which this prophecy refers. Edom includes the Palestinians and some of the Turks. The Ishmaelites, descendants of Ishmael, are many of the Arab peoples throughout the Middle East and North Africa. Moab is the area of central Jordan. The Hagrites appears to be other descendants of Hagar, mother of Ishmael.

Gebal, meaning “mountain” or “boundary,” is commonly equated with the Phoenician city of Byblos, modern Jubayl in Lebanon. Ammon refers to northern Jordan around Amman, the capital (which gets its name from Ammon). Amalek appears to refer to a branch of Edomite Palestinians. Philistia is the area around what is today known as the Gaza Strip. Anciently, Tyre was a major city-state in southern Lebanon along the Mediterranean coast. The children of Lot refers to Moab and Ammon—again, regions of modern-day Jordan.

Arab unity has long been elusive, but slowly a common purpose is bringing the different peoples of the Arab world together. This common purpose is the desire to destroy the nation of Israel and its chief backer, the United States of America, along with the West’s liberal culture, long perceived as a threat to the Muslim way of life. Edom, which includes modern-day Turkey, is mentioned first in the prophecy of Psalm 83 and therefore seems to play a prominent role in this development.

Turkey and the European Union

Another nation listed in Psalm 83 is Assyria. While in a historic/geographic sense that could refer to what is now northern Iraq, the reference could be an ethnic one to inhabitants of Central Europe, whose ancestors “migrated into Europe from the Caucasus and the countries around the Black and Caspian Seas” (*Smith’s Smaller Classical Dictionary*, 1910, reprinted 1940, p. 226).

Hundreds of years before Christ, the Hebrew prophet Daniel foretold future occurrences in the Middle East and the world at large, including Europe. His prophecies were later complemented and fleshed out in the book of Revelation, revealed to the apostle John near the end of the first century.

The prophecies these men delivered show that a European-centered superpower will rise to dominate the world in the end time, just before Jesus Christ returns to establish the Kingdom of God on earth. As revealed to John, this superpower will be a union of 10 rulers of nations or groups of nations (Revelation 17:12-14). By all appearances, this final superpower may not be that long in coming. The foundation is being built before our eyes, and prophecy seems to show cooperation with Middle Eastern peoples in opposing Israel.

But what if Turkey’s bid to join the European Union is unsuccessful? Would that negate prophetic indications of cooperation? Not necessarily. There is always the possibility of a strategic alliance based on a “privileged partnership.”

Gündüz Aktan, who had held several diplomatic posts for Ankara and helped write Turkey’s application for membership to the European Union, wondered before negotiations had even started whether full membership would be the best course for his country: “Negotiations could last 20 years, but a ‘privileged partnership’ could be decided upon immediately, and Turkey would not be required to give up full membership at a later date. Turkey would be given a vote in the committee of European defense ministers. As a ‘privileged partner’ Turkey would receive nearly as much financial assistance as a full member without being forced to accept many EU standards which would result in higher [domestic] prices” (translated from *Die Welt*, June 8, 2005).

Aktan did not mention the most important aspect of all: Since Turkey has announced that it will not accept anything other than full membership

(See “ERDOGAN,” page 13)

Multiculturalism Under Attack

A recent controversial speech by British Prime Minister David Cameron follows similar speeches from other Western leaders calling for a rethink on the concept of multiculturalism.

by Melvin Rhodes

It was naively expected that somehow the immigrants would all become Englishmen, Frenchmen or Germans, integrating successfully in these respective nations. But the reality is that many have desired to preserve their cultural identity, which has led to considerable friction and a great deal of fear.

The famous actress was sitting on the couch reviewing the morning newspapers along with the host of the morning news program and another person. The review soon came around to a discussion of Prime Minister David Cameron's attack on multiculturalism. The actress commented that this attacked the very core of British culture! Really? Growing up in England in the 1950s and '60s, I never even heard the word "multiculturalism." Its usage began in Canada during the premiership of Pierre Trudeau in the '70s and '80s and has since spread to other Western nations. It is hardly the historic core of British values!

A number of world leaders have in recent months come out against multiculturalism. Not only Britain's prime minister Cameron, but also Germany's chancellor Angela Merkel, Australia's former prime minister John Howard, Spain's former premier Jose Maria Aznar and France's president Nicolas Sarkozy have expressed concerns about integrating immigrants through multiculturalist policies (Agence France-Presse, Feb. 10, 2011).

Multiculturalism is the advocacy in Western nations of embracing all the new cultures that have moved into Western countries in recent decades. It is not the policy in most countries around the world, where preserving national identity is valued more highly.

What was the context of the British prime minister's remarks, and why did they get so much attention?

Attempting to overcome nationalism

It should first be noted that he gave his Feb. 5, 2011, speech in Munich, Germany, in the presence of the German chancellor. No speech given there has received so much media attention since Neville Chamberlain's visit to Hitler to

try to achieve "peace in our time." That was more than 70 years ago, and Europe is now a very different place. Just as Chamberlain's speech was of great historic significance, so Cameron's may also turn out to be a turning point in British and European history.

In 1938, Europe was made up of many nations, each one with its own separate cultural and ethnic identity. A major problem for Europe involved overlaps—minority ethnic groups living within a different majority ethnic nation. This included Germans in both Czechoslovakia and Poland, providing Hitler with an excuse to invade these countries and plunge Europe into war. And the Holocaust perpetrated against the Jews, a long-established minority in many countries, was the most disturbing example of ethnic cleansing in history.

After two world wars devastated Europe, there was a widespread desire to minimize ethnic conflict—and this has, at length, led to the European Union. The desire to form "an ever closer union" of European nations is a direct consequence of Europe's nationalistic conflicts. The EU is intended to surmount all of this—to unite the various European countries in a supranational federal system.

Yet the European ethnic landscape has become even more diverse. As a result of the massive loss of life in World War II, European countries—their populations sorely diminished—needed labor, and immigrants were welcomed. Most of these came from colonies the European nations had ruled. And as the colonies gained independence, they in many cases experienced national economic decline while their populations nevertheless rose dramatically due to improved medical care. The result has been a surplus of people, many of whom have moved to Europe.

It was naively expected that some-

how the immigrants would all become Englishmen, Frenchmen or Germans, integrating successfully in these respective nations. But the reality is that many have desired to preserve their cultural identity, which has led to considerable friction and a great deal of fear.

Americans like to think that assimilation has been more successful in the United States—a supposed “melting pot.” But interestingly, on the same breakfast television program in the United Kingdom, a British man of African descent who had lived in the United States said exactly the opposite—that assimilation has worked better in Britain than in America.

As recent news reports of home-grown terror cells in the United States show, no country can boast of success when it comes to assimilation. It may have worked a century ago when most immigrants came from Europe, but it has not been so successful in Western countries since doors opened to immigration from developing nations.

The failure of assimilation led to the promotion of multiculturalism. The objective was that ethnicities would dwell among one another while remaining culturally distinct through maintaining their various traditions, customs and ways of thinking. This concept has been promoted in mass media right across the cultural spectrum—from *Sesame Street* to MTV! Yet it’s led not to societal union but to fragmentation.

“Multiculturalism has failed”

Douglas Murray, director of the Center for Social Cohesion in London, wrote this of Cameron’s speech in an article published in *The Wall Street Journal*: “‘Multiculturalism has failed,’ said British Prime Minister David Cameron last weekend in Munich. If anybody thought they had read these words before, it is because they have. Many times. Last October German Chancellor Angela Merkel (sitting onstage with Mr. Cameron when he gave his speech on Saturday) said the same. Finally Europe’s mainstream party leaders



Reuters/POOL New

German Chancellor Merkel reacts as David Cameron speaks at the 47th International Conference on Security Policy in Munich on Feb. 5, 2011. In his speech, the British prime minister declared state multiculturalism a failure.

seem to be realizing what others have long noticed: Multiculturalism has been the most pernicious and divisive policy pursued by Western governments since World War II” (“Cameron’s Multicultural Wake-Up Call,” Feb. 9, 2011).

The same *Wall Street Journal* issue also editorialized in support of what Cameron said: “David Cameron gave a bracing speech about multiculturalism on Saturday, notable as much for the venue as his argument. The annual Munich Security Conference typically devotes itself to foreign policy and defense. By denouncing multiculturalism at the conference, Mr. Cameron put the subject at the center of the West’s security agenda. Past time, too. The U.S., Canada and the EU are waking up to the realization that terrorism isn’t simply a phenomenon that arrives from abroad . . . While undemocratic regimes may explain

extremism in Egypt, they don’t explain why there are ‘so many extremists in free and open societies’ like the U.K.” (“David Cameron’s Warning,” Feb. 9, 2011).

An opinion piece about the speech by American syndicated columnist Cal Thomas was published in the *Lansing State Journal* under the headline and drophead: “Assimilation a must for immigrants: U.S. should learn lesson from flawed British plan” (Feb. 11, 2011). The article, titled “Told You So” at Townhall.com, begins with this observation: “One of liberalism’s many problems is that once an idea or program is proved wrong and unworkable, liberals rarely acknowledge their mistake and examine the root cause of their error so they don’t repeat it. Take multiculturalism . . . please!”

Besides reporting on Cameron declaring state multiculturalism a failure, Thomas further wrote:



Demonstrators picket in the Walthamstow district of northeastern London. A growing number of Europeans and Brits are concerned with the failure of immigrants to assimilate to Western culture.

“For good measure, Cameron said Britain must also get tougher on Islamic extremists. A genuinely liberal country, he said, ‘believes in certain values and actively promotes them . . . Freedom of speech. Freedom of worship. Democracy. The rule of law, equal rights, regardless of race, sex or sexuality.’”

Thomas’ most astute observation was in contradiction to the speech. He wrote: “Cameron said in Britain different cultures have been encouraged to live separate lives: ‘We have failed to provide a vision of society to which they feel they want to belong.’ Here I would take issue with an otherwise excellent speech. It isn’t that Britain has failed to provide such a society. Rather, many of those coming to Britain (and increasingly France, Germany and the U.S.) don’t want to become a part of those cultures, which they regard as corrupt and anti-God.”

The jumbling together of ethnic and religious groups has been a largely

post-World War II phenomenon in Western countries. This is in spite of the evidence that such mixing without cultural assimilation is problematic in many parts of the world.

Take the historic conflict between Muslims and Hindus in India that led to partition in 1947; or the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict that has been the cause of frequent wars in the Middle East; or the frequent tribal conflicts in Africa; or the unceasing ethnic conflicts in the Balkans, which triggered the First World War, contributed to the Second and exploded again in the 1990s. Given these, one might ask why the West thought that somehow the end result of mingling different ethnic and religious groups would turn out to be different!

Some biblical perspective

There’s an interesting verse in the New Testament of your Bible that stands in direct contradiction to the multicultural idea. While “God

shows no partiality” (Acts 10:34), we read in the same book that “He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their pre-appointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings” (Acts 17:26).

It is also interesting to note that Jesus Christ, when asked, “What will be the sign of Your coming and of the end of the age?” (Matthew 24:3), warned that “nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom” (verse 7). A kingdom is a political entity. But the word “nation” here is translated from the Greek word *ethnos*, from which we get the words *ethnic* and *ethnicity*. In other words, Jesus was saying that immediately prior to His coming to establish God’s Kingdom on this earth, there would be a time of great ethnic conflict—the inevitable result of mingling diverse people groups together.

David Cameron’s warning, along with the earlier warning from Angela Merkel, shows a growing concern about the inevitability of conflict in Western countries—conflict that will endanger the very unity and stability of Western nations.

Thankfully, true harmony between peoples is possible through the One who gave His life for us all. Rather than maintaining our old ways, we need to develop Jesus Christ’s ways of thinking and living.

Ephesians 2:14-17 said this of Christ in relation to the division between Jews and gentiles: “For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity . . . so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near.”

When all people finally understand God’s truth and humble themselves through Christ, they can at last come together as one in genuine and lasting peace and harmony. ❖

Can Man Attain Immortality?

The cover of a recent issue of Time magazine astonishingly declares, "2045: The Year Man Becomes Immortal." But the Bible tells a different story about living forever.

by John Ross Schroeder

If announcing human immortality weren't surprising enough, the cover story of the Feb. 21, 2011, issue of *Time* also astonishes in how that's envisioned. The article quotes a science-fiction novelist and mathematics professor who told a NASA symposium in 1993 that "within 30 years, we will have the technological means to create super-human intelligence. *Shortly after, the human era will be ended*" (quoted by Lev Grossman, "2045: The Year Man Becomes Immortal," emphasis added throughout). While that was stated 18 years ago, many still believe in such a future.

The article speaks further of advances in artificial intelligence leading eventually to "smarter-than-human intelligences with which (with whom?) we might one day share the planet" and considers various possibilities:

"Maybe we'll merge with them to become super-intelligent cyborgs, using computers to extend our intellectual abilities the same way that cars and planes extend our physical abilities. Maybe the artificial intelligences will help us treat the effects of old age and prolong our life spans indefinitely. Maybe we'll scan our consciousnesses into computers and live inside them as software, forever, virtually. Maybe the computers will turn on humanity and annihilate us. The one thing all these theories have in common is the transformation of our species into something that is no longer recognizable as such to humanity circa 2011. This transformation has a name: the Singularity."

The teaser for the article defines the Singularity, a term borrowed from astrophysics, as "the moment when technological change becomes so rapid and profound, it represents a rupture in the fabric of human history."

The Bible has long foreseen today's

increased knowledge as part of the end of what could be called "the human era"—the present age of human misrule. As the prophet Daniel was told, "Shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; *many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase*" (Daniel 12:4). The book of Daniel itself would not be fully understood until the close of man's age was apparent. Then transportation would be revolutionized along with an unprecedented growth in knowledge.

After this, as was also foretold, will commence *God's* wonderful age. And it is in this context that the Bible also speaks of immortality, but not remotely as science fiction imagines—or even as most religion does.

The roots and limits of our runaway technology

The exponential technological growth in the computer field is extraordinary. Back in 1997 Garry Kasparov, then reigning world chess champion, lost his match with IBM computer Deep Blue. And now in February 2011, IBM's supercomputer Watson won against human contestants on the American game show *Jeopardy*.

How has humanity reached this level of technology?

On a fundamental level, the Bible reveals that God made human beings in His own image and likeness (Genesis 1:26-27). Mankind was endowed with a mind patterned, though on a far lesser scale, after that of the Creator of the universe, with all of its manifold ramifications.

Much later at the construction of the Tower of Babel, when civilization recommenced after Noah's Flood, God acknowledged the vast potential of human ability: "And the LORD said, 'Indeed the people are one [unified

The Bible has long foreseen today's increased knowledge as part of the end of what could be called "the human era." After this, as was also foretold, will commence God's wonderful age. And it is in this context that the Bible also speaks of immortality, but not remotely as science fiction imagines—or even as most religion does.

here in a wrong pursuit] and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; *now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them*" (Genesis 11:6). Instead of *propose*, the earlier King James Version uses the term *imagined*.

Yet there are limits. For what people imagine must be within the realm of what is physically possible. And man seeking to create a living artificial image of himself, particularly his mind—and to perpetuate himself through it—is beyond human capacity. Man will never be able to duplicate himself in this way or somehow “live on” through such artificial means because the human mind is not strictly physical. It includes the human spirit, which imparts intellect to the human brain—and this comes from God (Job 32:8; Ecclesiastes 12:7; Zechariah 12:1; 1 Corinthians 2:11). People cannot engineer or transfer that which is spirit.

Nevertheless, people might be able to create something that mimics the human mind in some respects.

Contrasting unpredictable man with God's eternal reliability

The *Time* article says that “it’s impossible to predict the behavior of these smarter-than-human intelligences” that people think are coming. As was noted, some have even thought about these turning on people—the stuff of science fiction movies. Sadly, if man really was able to create an even more intelligent version of himself, the passing on of his own flawed character traits in the process would be a real concern.

Thankfully, *God* in creating human beings purposed to duplicate *His flawless character* within us. God is perfect and completely reliable. Consider just one verse: “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, *with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning*” (James 1:17). And God means for us to become like Him and His Son Jesus Christ (1 John 3:2). Again the Bible shows in many passages that

those who become part of God’s divine family will in their conduct adhere to their Creator’s spiritual law of love.

Of course, man rebelled, seeming to thwart God’s plan. But God’s plan to ultimately lead humanity to be like Him goes on just as intended. This plan includes giving the gift of eternal life or immortality (Romans 6:23) to all who receive forgiveness of sin through Christ and who remain committed to developing godly character. And ultimately, as Scripture shows, today’s increasingly disturbing, aberrant conduct will disappear forever.

Speaking of those who deem the artificial intelligence advancements to be inevitable, the *Time* article says, “They’re taking the long view and looking at the big picture.” Of course, for the truly big picture, we need to rely on God’s Word, the Bible. This Book of Books reaches back before time began and looks forward into eternity.

So let’s turn to God’s Word and see that men and women may indeed become immortal, but this comes only as an act of our divine Creator, and it requires our adherence to His view and way of life.

The biblical truth about immortality

In all human history, the only man who has become immortal is Jesus Christ—when He returned to spiritual glory, omnipotent dominion and immortality with God the Father at His resurrection from the dead. The apostle Paul thus described Him as “the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, *who alone has immortality*” (1 Timothy 6:15-16).

But Jesus Himself said that the Father sent Him so that others “should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

Paul explained, in what is called the resurrection chapter of the Bible, that this would require a complete transformation: “Now this I say, brethren, that *flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorrup-*

tion” (1 Corinthians 15:50). Mortal human beings, subject to death (Hebrews 9:27), cannot make themselves immortal by technological means. Only our Creator can impart immortality to humanity.

When it comes to religious beliefs, many erroneously believe we already are immortal through a spiritual soul that continues to live after the death of the body. In this view, we go consciously to heaven or elsewhere immediately upon death. Yet Scripture makes clear that human beings have no such immortal soul. There is no consciousness in death. The “dead know nothing” (Ecclesiastes 9:5; compare verse 10). That’s why the Bible repeatedly describes death as “sleep” (Daniel 12:2; Psalm 13:3; 1 Thessalonians 4:14). Thus, life after death is only possible through a resurrection, which is exactly what the Bible promises.

As Paul explained further in the resurrection chapter, referring to Christ’s return at the end of this age: “Behold, I tell you a mystery: we shall not all sleep [in a period of unconscious death], *but we shall all be changed*—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. *For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality . . .* Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory’” (1 Corinthians 15:51-54).

Man’s ability to imagine and create is truly marvelous and seemingly unbounded. But thankfully God will allow humanity to have a glorious, immortal future only through our developing His character and being made perfect in the divine family of God, the Kingdom of God!

We can only briefly touch on these remarkable biblical truths in a relatively brief magazine article. To understand much more, request or download our free booklets *Are We Living in the Time of the End?* and *What Happens After Death?* ❖

“EGYPT” (Continued from page 4)

in the region might not immediately fall as a result of the two uprisings, they have had profound long-term effects on their peoples . . . If masses of Egyptians can force their government into making concessions, the sentiment goes, then all people can do the same to their governments” (“Egyptian Aftershock Felt Most by Israel,” Feb. 11, 2011).

Israeli concerns

Israel is also being dramatically impacted by these events. Aaron David Miller, a veteran U.S. negotiator with the Israelis, shares these concerns in *The Washington Post*, stating, “It is impossible to overstate the angst, even hysteria, that Israelis are feeling about their neighborhood” (“Why Israel Fears a Free Egypt,” Feb. 4, 2011).

He points out their most dire fears include a radical Islamist government taking over Egypt in time, the breaking of their peace treaty and another war like the ones fought before the treaty was signed in 1979.

“But there’s no doubt that a new Egyptian government and president, more responsive to public opinion—indeed, legitimized by the public in free elections—will be, by necessity or inclination, far more critical of Israeli actions and policies and far less likely to give Israel the benefit of any doubts . . .

“Take a tour of the neighborhood through Israeli eyes, and you’ll understand why such worries have taken on new urgency. To the north in Lebanon, Hezbollah is now the dominant political force, reequipped with thousands of rockets and backed by Syria and Iran. To the east there’s Jordan, with which Israel also has a peace treaty and whose government was just changed after protests sparked by the revolts in Tunisia and Egypt.

“In the West Bank and Gaza, there’s the Palestinian national movement, which thanks to the Hamas-Fatah split is a veritable Noah’s Ark with two of everything—prime ministers, security services, constitutions and governments. And then

there’s Iran, whose determination to acquire nuclear weapons may force Israel one day to live under the shadow of an Islamic bomb” (ibid.).

Prophetic Arab unity

The statelessness of the Palestinians remains the great unifying cause of the Arab world and continues to breed hostility toward Israel. But Arab unity in general has long been elusive.

Bible prophecy, however, indicates that a stronger Arab confederation will emerge, for however brief a time. Whether united by the spark of revolutionary fever or a slower evolutionary process, many Middle Eastern nations will evidently unite in a confederation determined to eliminate the nation of Israel, as indicated in Psalm 83 (see “Erdogan’s Grand Vision for Turkey and the Arab World,” beginning on page 5).

Out of this confederation will likely arise what the prophecy of Daniel 11 refers to as the end-time “king of the South” (a role that earlier in the prophecy referred to the Greek rulers of Egypt following Alexander the Great). The king of the South at the time of the end is prophesied to strike at the king of the North (the ruler of Europe in this end-time setting) in some kind of attack, prompting a retaliation in which the forces of the North will occupy lands of the South—including Egypt, Ethiopia and Libya (Daniel 11:40-43).

Soon after this the world will be plunged further into devastating world war. Only God’s intervention through Jesus Christ’s return will save humanity from self-destruction (see Matthew 24:22; Revelation 11:15). The good news is that God promises to bless Egypt and will turn its people and the entire world to Him, healing the hurts between Egypt and Israel and other nations (see Isaiah 19:22-25).

To learn more about these prophecies and what they reveal about end-time events, be sure to request or download your copy of our free booklet *The Middle East in Bible Prophecy*. ❖

“ERDOGAN” (Continued from page 7)

in the EU, a “privileged partnership” offered by the EU as an alternative to full membership would be rejected. The result would be strained relations between the EU and Turkey, lasting years. If, on the other hand, Turkey were to withdraw its bid for membership unilaterally—possibly to save face because of the likelihood that its bid for membership will be



Reuters/STR New

Turkey’s Prime Minister Recep Erdogan, right, receives the “King Faisal International Prize,” the Arab world’s equivalent of the Nobel Prize, from Saudi King Abdullah in Riyadh March 9, 2010.

rejected—it could accept the “privileged partnership” and retain cordial relations with Europe.

Despite tensions that might exist now over the question of Turkish EU membership, it appears Turkey will remain affiliated with Europe. This is a country that straddles both Europe and Muslim Asia—forming a bridge both geographically and culturally between East and West. And, as a possible key player in a future confederation with the Arabs, it seems that Turkey will also provide a link between the Arab Islamic Middle East and Europe. ❖

“HEART” (Continued from page 16)

Through the prophet Isaiah, God declares, “For I am God, and there is no other: I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure’” (Isaiah 46:9-10).

That is, God will do as He pleases—as He wants. And a significant part of what He pleases to do is to call you to be a part of His incredible spiritual family. The apostle Paul speaks to this profound reality in Ephesians 1:4: “He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.”

And yet the macro-world of global events, prophetic trends and unsavory tidings coupled with our own micro-world of personal emotional and spiritual challenges can come into an explosive collision and dim our vision of the glorious future God has in store for us. Daniel 7:25 pinpoints an ongoing principle that motivates Satan and his minions—to “defy the Most High and wear down the holy people of the Most High” (New Living Translation).

Worn down? Does this fit you? Remember Frankl’s words? Vision! We want to maintain a forward vigilance and a firm understanding that we are not alone in this world colored by frustration and disappointment. We want to make sure we remain living sacred vessels for God’s purposes and not allow ourselves to be paralyzed by external forces. Sadly at times, we put ourselves in a cage of our own making, fringed with emotional barbed wire and guard dogs of inhibition that stifle our spiritual movement toward the promises of God’s Kingdom. Thus, like victims of Auschwitz, we travel down a sure road from the “living dead” to simply deceased. In our case, the parameters are spiritual in dimension.

Looking beyond self-reflecting mirrors

Perhaps that’s why God inspired the apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 to give us a “kick in the seat”—or

should I say, “nudge of heart”—and remind us to look beyond the self-reflecting mirrors of our current struggles and even beyond the devastating future events our prophetic telescopes may be trained on and establish a truly godly focus that will allow us to keep all life’s matters in



Wikimedia Commons

Ebensee concentration camp survivors in 1945. Fellow Holocaust survivor Viktor Frankl concluded that the single most significant factor for survival was a sense of a future vision.

perspective. Yes, vision! He says here, “Therefore we do not lose heart.” Why does he say this? Spiritual heart failure can even affect saints. Even you!

He continues, “Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.” We are not alone! God is there to help us, so we are able to continue on—knowing where we are going. Paul is systematically leading us to the greatest spiritual outcome in a Christian’s life: to, as God tells us, “be still, and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10).

Paul then moves through a series of contrasting elements to bring us to sharp focus by stating, “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” Have you ever asked anyone about his or her individual troubles or the challenges of this world and had the person tell you these were either light or momentary? He or she probably responded, “Oh no, this is off the charts!” And yet, Paul says the weight by which to measure everything is not what happens in the moment, but the weighty realm of eternity.

He then provides one final lens of contrast to maintain stillness of heart by assuring: “While we do not look at the things which are seen, but the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.” Oh yes, the vision thing again! Our hearts need eyes. So, a question: What side of the ledger are we on? Light or heavy? Momentary or endless? Visible or unseen? Trapped in time and space or focusing on eternity? We can’t always choose what comes our way, but we can choose how to respond to it by what pair of eyes we select.

Eyes fixed on eternity

Allow me to be clear. Eyes that are fixed on eternity don’t come from below, but above from God. They are given as a gift when He begins to call and work with us. Sometimes we forget that He gave us something very special in the process of becoming a new creation for His purposes and pleasure (see 2 Corinthians 5:17). Jesus said in John 3:3 that being brought forth anew of God’s Spirit would allow us to “see the kingdom of God.”

In one sense we may view that as the time when we are actually able to enter into God’s Kingdom in glory—when we may fully behold all, being spirit ourselves. But God has given us eyes to see even today. Consider that He provided an actual supernatural vision of that glorious future to some of His disciples in the incident known as the Transfiguration. Here

they were able to “see the kingdom of God present with power” (Mark 9:1-10; compare Luke 9:27-36). Yet even in daily life, through the teachings of Christ and the whole of the Bible, we are enabled to imagine and focus on that wonderful Kingdom—to see it with our hearts and minds more and more.

Seeing God’s Kingdom is not just a future destination, it is also *a way of traveling*—here and now, with the eyes of our new hearts always spiritually synchronized to a transcendent reality purposed by God Almighty. He has invited us to participate as “kings and priests” (Revelation 5:10), serving under Jesus Christ in His eternal Kingdom. You and I are invited into an ageless and unending realm, when God will wipe away all tears, and “there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away” (Revelation 21:4). Can you see it?

Eyes that we might see

H.G. Wells once wrote a short story called “The Country of the Blind.” It told of a man who fell over a cliff into a valley isolated from the rest of the world. He discovered that all the people there were blind. They had no eyes in their faces. No one had seen the sky, and they didn’t know what sunlight was like. They were incredibly inventive and clever with their hands, but they only believed in what they could taste, touch and feel (sound familiar?).

When the visitor told the inhabitants about the world of sun, sky and stars that he saw and that was so real to him, they mocked him at first. Eventually, they insisted that he undergo an operation. These two bulging and soft items in his face must be the cause of his delusion. Once removed, he would be like them and be satisfied with a world of things to be touched, smelled or tasted.

But rather than lose his vision of what he knew to be, the man escaped and climbed up the precipice from which he had fallen. Bruised, bleeding and tired from the strenuous jour-

ney up the escarpment, he rested on a ledge and gazed on the brilliance of the setting sun and stared at the colors of rock all around. Rather than become like those around him in the country of the blind, the man had made a choice to save his vision.

Such a choice is before us daily. It is said that God created “the hearing ear and the seeing eye” (Proverbs 20:12). As His spiritual children, God has bequeathed us spiritual ears to reap faith (Romans 10:17) and eyes that we might see His Kingdom no matter what blocks our view for a moment, hour or lifetime—be it spiritual adversity, future prophetic antagonists or our own homemade spiritual glaucoma.

“But having seen them afar off”

Perhaps it’s Scripture’s account of the spiritual visionaries who have gone before us that allows us to stop at the biblical signpost marked “This is this the way, walk in it” (Isaiah 30:21) and be able to properly place into motion the advice of a World War II survivor that “a sense of future vision” made all the difference. It’s called a “way of traveling.”

Hebrews 11, a record of men and women of faith who kept going despite their difficulties, tells us: “These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them” (verses 13-16).

Like the man in “The Country of the Blind,” and more directly so like the patriarchs of old, hold on to those eyes of the heart. These gifts from God will keep us on the way to where we’re going. ❖



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by Robin Webber

“Therefore We Do Not Lose Heart”

Viktor Frankl, a concentration camp survivor, wrote a landmark work in 1946 titled *Man’s Search for Meaning*. It shared his deeply embedded observations on life and death as molded by personal experience at the Auschwitz death camp during World War II.

Frankl’s work is summed up with his firsthand observation as to why some captives survived while others died. He pondered why some with good health, intelligence and survival skills did not survive, while others who lacked these attributes endured and lived. He concluded that the single most significant factor for survival was a sense of a future vision—that is, those who survived had a conviction that they had a mission to perform, some important work to do.

Such a crystal-clear analysis of such a grim situation may sound obvious when read in the comfort of our easy chairs. We can easily respond with: “Vision! Uh-huh. Okay, got it!” Yet such excruciating circumstances truly did exist—horrifying circumstances that broke men’s souls and transformed them into living zombies devoid of strength to go forward in the face of overwhelming adversities.

So just how vital is this sense of future vision to us as we move forward to where we are striving to go?

Contemplating the real world around us

Let’s move off our easy chairs and fully contemplate our real world that continues to move down a one-way conveyor belt leading to prophetic intervention and divine judgment. The Bible clearly underscores the reality that our world has been held captive by the

sway of an aggressive spiritual regime since the first man and woman made a fateful decision to reject God’s sufficiency in the Garden of Eden. A struggle for existence has ensued ever since. The first prophetic words related in Scripture speak to this struggle coupled with assured victory. God told the serpent in Eden, “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel” (Genesis 3:15).

Ever since that time, Satan the devil, referred to as the serpent of old and that great dragon (Revelation 12:9; 20:2), has been out to devour and eliminate humanity. You might say the ultimate genocide is currently underway, with all races and ethnic groups included. This powerful spiritual adversary is striving to extinguish all who are made in God’s image with the destiny to become immortal by God’s grace.

The prophetic passage of Matthew 24:22 describes a future in which this demonic desire nearly becomes a reality. Jesus Christ says of that coming time, “Unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved [alive], but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened.”

“My counsel shall stand”

Oh yes, Satan is busy. But the good news is that God the Father and His Son are even busier and in ultimate control. The prophesied “Seed” of Eve referred to the coming of a Messiah who would ultimately “crush Satan” underfoot (Romans 16:20). God has thus revealed the end from the very beginning.

(See “HEART,” page 14)