

THE FUTURE FORETOLD

ANCIENT PROPHECIES NOW BEING FULFILLED



Michael Roy

**THE
FUTURE
FORETOLD**

**Ancient Prophecies Now
Being Fulfilled**

2003 Edition

**First edition by Michael Roy
Updated and revised by Scott MacGregor**

Acknowledgments

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The Future Foretold

AS EVENTS UNFOLD IN THE THIRD MILLENNIUM A.D., many of us can't help but wonder what the future holds for us and our planet. Are we on the threshold of a brave New World Order, with peace and plenty for all? Or are we tottering on the brink of unprecedented chaos and disaster?—Or *both*?

This book provides answers that will prepare you for what's ahead.

Biblical prophets foretold many things that concern today's world. Within the pages of this book we will examine specific predictions and prophecies that are two to three thousand years old, which accurately depict conditions and events that have taken place—or are soon to take place—during our lifetime.

Among the prophecies we will be looking at are predictions describing our modern rapid transportation systems, today's unprecedented increase in world travel, as well as the contemporary explosion in knowledge of all kinds. Other technological advances, such as electronic banking, as well as a soon-to-be-implemented global financial system, are

likewise predicted with uncanny accuracy.

The effects of global warming, as well as the outbreak of modern killer diseases such as AIDS, Ebola, and SARS were also foretold.

Awareness of the predictions covered in this book will give you a new perspective on the radical transformation the world is currently undergoing, as well as prepare you for the cataclysmic changes to come.

THE BIG QUESTION

Throughout the ages a number of great religious teachers and seers have received special insight into the future. A discourse that is regarded by many as the most profound and detailed of its kind was given 2,000 years ago on a hillside just outside the ancient city of Jerusalem. There, a small band of truth-seekers gathered around their teacher, a carpenter-turned-preacher, known as Jesus of Nazareth. The question they asked Him prompted a response that spans the centuries and zeroes in on the days in which we are now living:

“Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, ‘Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?’” (Matthew 24:3)†.

† The parenthetical references following Bible quotations indicate the book, chapter, and verse where the passage may be found.

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What His followers were asking Him about is often referred to as the “Second Coming,” the dramatic personal return of Christ prior to His takeover of the world and the establishing of the kingdom of God on earth. The term “the end of the age” is used here not to signify the end of the planet, but the end of the current unjust and inhumane reign of man.

Jesus answered their question with not only one sign that would indicate when “the end” would be near, but He gave *many* specific indicators to be on the lookout for. Outstanding predictions by a number of other biblical writers help fill in the picture. It is these prophesied “signs” that we will now focus on.

THE EVEN BIGGER ANSWERS

“You will hear of wars and rumors of wars. ... For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows.”—Jesus (Matthew 24:6–8)

Everyone knows that the world has experienced wars, famines, plagues, and earthquakes for millennia. However, you may be surprised to learn just how bad things have become in recent years. Take the first part of this passage, for example...

A World at War

“You will bear of wars and rumors of wars. ... For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.”

WAR HAS BEEN A SCOURGE OF THE WORLD and mankind for millennia, but no period in history has witnessed the escalation of wars as has the last hundred years.

Prior to 1914, war had never been universal, but in both World War I and II, *global war* was waged. In the latter, only 12 small nations of the earth were not militarily or technically involved, and 93 million people served in the armed forces of both sides. Of these, 25 million died. Civilian casualties were unprecedented: In the Soviet Union alone, over 20 million civilians died as a result of the war. The *Washington Post* has noted:

[The] 20th-century wars have been “total wars” against combatants and civilians alike. ... The barbarian wars of centuries past were alley fights in comparison.¹

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Other newspapers and commentators have also described the carnage:

Since the end of World War II, there have been at least 130 wars, killing more than 23 million people directly and another 20 million through famine and other war-related disruptions. Whereas the number of major wars—killing at least 1,000 persons—stood at around a dozen in any given year during the fifties, and rose no higher than 20 a year during the sixties and seventies, it surged at the beginning of the eighties to more than 30.² In the 1990s there were 56 wars in 44 countries. Most were civil upheavals for control of the government or territory.³

Three times as many people—110 million—fell victim to war in the 20th century as in all the wars from the first century A.D. to 1899. And 70 percent of all war casualties since World War II have been civilians, rising to more than 90 percent in the 1990s.⁴

The innocent have paid the greatest price in wars, the data show. Between 1990 and 2000 alone, 2 million children were killed. Since 1945, wars have produced 35 million refugees.⁵

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The world hoped the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 would not only signify the end of the Cold War between the superpowers, but usher in a new era of global peace. Unfortunately, this has not been the case.

Ethnic Cleansing and Tribal Terror

The Greek word for “nation” originally used in this prophecy, “nation shall rise against nation,” is *ethnos*, which is more accurately translated “a race” or “a tribe.” In other words, Jesus was saying that ethnic groups would rise against each other. This has been tragically fulfilled in recent times. Pulitzer prize-winning historian Arthur Schlesinger warns, “If the 20th century has been the century of the warfare of ideologies, the 21st century begins as the century of the warfare of ethnicities.”⁶

The *Associated Press* (AP) reports that during the 20th century the murders perpetrated by nations against their own people exceed the deaths caused by wars with rivals outside their borders! Citing Stalin’s purges, China’s Cultural Revolution, Cambodia’s killing fields, the so-called ethnic cleansing in Bosnia, the horrors of Rwanda, etc., the grim verdict is reached:

War aside, the 20th century is awash in blood. On every continent but North

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America and Australia, governments have murdered those they governed by the thousands and millions, often by turning neighbor against neighbor. In this most civilized century, by one estimate the killing rage has extinguished *170 million* lives. ... Ours is the century that coined the term “genocide.”⁷

The Kosovo conflict brought to a close the most violent century in the history of humankind. As in Kosovo, most wars since World War II have been internal conflicts. Since 1989, 97 out of 103 armed conflicts were internal.⁸

Although the outlook may appear bleak, the day is soon coming when God Himself will intervene in this violent world, and war shall be forever abolished. The Bible tells us that when Christ returns to rule the earth, “He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore” (Isaiah 2:4).

More about this future reign of world peace later, but now, back to the pressing realities of the present.

“Mommy, I’m Hungry!”

“And there will be famines...”

ARE WE LIVING IN A TIME OF INCREASED FAMINE? There are 1.2 billion poor people in developing countries who live on \$1 a day or less. Of these, 780 million suffer from chronic hunger, which means that their daily intake of calories is insufficient for them to lead active and healthy lives. Children are famine’s most visible victims. Malnutrition plays a role in at least half of the 10.9 million child deaths each year.⁹

In June 2002, 32 countries faced exceptional food emergencies, with an estimated 67 million people requiring emergency food aid as a result. As in previous years, drought and conflict were the most common causes and Africa the most affected region.

Worldwide, drought and other unfavorable weather conditions triggered food shortages in 21 of the 32 countries facing emergencies. War, civil strife and the lingering effects of past conflicts

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sparked crises in 15 countries, including several also plagued by bad weather. General economic problems severely undermined food security in eight countries, frequently in combination with adverse weather.

Dry weather and excessive rains during the growing season devastated food crops in several countries in southern Africa for the second consecutive year. In addition, the effects of ongoing and past civil conflicts threaten the food security of over 14 million people in 11 African countries.¹⁰

Sir John Houghton, a climate expert and chairman of Britain's Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution, warns that we have yet to see the ravages that global warming will wreak: "Forests will die, diseases like malaria will spread, and starving refugees will wander across borders as weather becomes more extreme."¹¹

While it took all of human history until 1830 to reach a world population of one billion people, it only took 100 years to add a second billion (1930), 30 years for the third billion (1960), 16 years for the fourth billion (1976), and 11 years for the fifth billion (1987). World population grew by an estimated 77 million in 2002 and now tops 6.2 billion—more than double the level in 1960. The world's

population is expected to reach 8.5 billion by the year 2030. As the number of people increases, per capita availability of water and arable land decreases.

The Simple Solution

The terrible irony is that the world *can* produce enough food to feed its expanding population. While some famines are caused by drought or other natural disasters, most starvation in the world today could be avoided were it not for man's selfishness and inhumanity. War, embargoes, government corruption, and economic oppression are all symptoms of the real problem. While innocent children starve, some rich nations destroy millions of tons of food in order to keep prices artificially high.

An article from *AP* tells us that the authoritative Bread for the World Institute expressed such sentiments in its fifth annual report:

“World hunger is rooted in a breakdown of humanitarian values,” according to the organization, which lobbies for bigger anti-poverty programs. Its report identified violence, political powerlessness, poverty, racial discrimination, and environmental strains as the main causes of malnutrition.¹²

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The world produces enough food to feed everyone. World agriculture produces 17 percent more calories per person today than it did 30 years ago, despite a 70 percent population increase. This is enough to provide everyone in the world with at least 2,720 calories per person per day.¹³ The recommended daily intake of calories for men is approximately 2,500 and women 2,000 according to Britain's Food Standards Agency. The principal problem is that many people in the world do not have sufficient land to grow, or income to purchase, enough food.

The inequities present in the world are brought out when we consider that the amount of money that the richest one percent of the world's people make each year equals what the poorest fifty-seven percent make.¹⁴ As of 2002, one-fifth of the world's population consumes four-fifths of global income.¹⁵

If we could all learn to simply follow the Golden Rule and do unto others as we wish they would do unto us, even such daunting problems as world famine could be eliminated.

The Great Waster: War

Famines are frequently the result of war, so more war usually means more famine. Former U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower highlighted the wanton waste of war when he

declared,

“Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. The world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children. ... Under the cloud of threatening war, it is humanity hanging from a cross of iron. ... Is there no other way the world may live?”¹⁶

Worldwide, there were some 19 million refugees and displaced persons in 2002—largely as a result of wars, political turbulence, civil conflict, and social unrest (e.g., Afghanistan, the Balkans, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, East Timor, Congo, Somalia, and Sudan). In such emergencies, malnutrition runs rampant, exponentially increasing the risk of disease and death.¹⁷

Here are some contemporary facts that put what Eisenhower said in perspective:

The 1991 Gulf War cost the Allies a half billion dollars a day, or about \$350,000 a minute. One fighter plane costs about \$25 million. One Tomahawk cruise missile costs \$1.3 million. One air-to-air missile costs

\$800,000.

Translated into more relatable expenses, for the price of one Sparrow radar-guided missile, a school full of hungry children could eat lunch every day for five years.

These figures are peanuts compared to the billions that are annually poured into weapons and warfare worldwide. The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute reports that world military expenditure in 2001 was \$839 billion. That means an astronomical 1.6 million dollars are spent worldwide on the military every minute! A \$30-billion, 10-year plan to provide clean water to the poor of the developing world would cost just 13 days of military spending. Experts tell us that just 23 days of military spending yearly could eradicate malnutrition worldwide.

Total world military spending for 2001 of 839 billion dollars represents a significant proportion of world economic resources. As a global average it accounted for 2.6 percent of world GDP and 137 dollars per capita. However, both economic resources and military expenditure are unevenly spread. The 15 major spenders account for over three-quarters of world military spending. Five countries account for over half. The United States accounts for 36 percent, followed by Russia with 6 percent and

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France, Japan, and the UK with about 5 percent each. The 63 countries in Africa and Latin America together accounted for 5 percent of world military spending in 2001.¹⁸

Many are appalled at the money that small developing countries spend on armaments while vast numbers of people of those countries are destitute, but are more understanding of the developed countries that “can afford it.” But the developing world is spending a paltry amount compared to the major players.

A Plagued Planet

“And there will be pestilences...”

AS WITH WAR AND FAMINE, the severity and frequency with which “pestilences” (plagues) continue to strike is alarming.

Last century, the medical profession prematurely claimed victory over a wide array of bacterial and viral killers. In 1969, U.S. Surgeon General William Stewart declared, “We can close the books on infectious diseases.”¹⁹

As recently as 1983, a medical textbook declared infectious diseases “more easily prevented and more easily cured” than any other major group of disorders.²⁰

But instead of fading, the cases of infectious diseases have skyrocketed throughout the '90s. Dr. Sherwin Nuland, in his bestselling book, *How We Die*,²¹ laments, “Medicine’s purported triumph over infectious disease has become an illusion.”²² Doctors now warn that the current resurgence of drug-resistant bacteria strains could prove to be more deadly than AIDS. Brad Evenson writes:

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Antibiotic-resistant bacteria kill more than 40,000 North Americans a year, and the numbers will soar unless the so-called supergerms are brought under control, a new book warns.

The book, *The Killers Within*, charts the acceleration of resistant infections that began with a few cases in the late 1980s and are now spiraling out of control. The germs, once killed easily with standard antibiotics, can disintegrate skin, clog the lungs and carve golf-ball-size abscesses in flesh.

“The bad bugs are getting stronger and they’re getting stronger faster,” says co-author Mark Plotkin, a Smithsonian Institution ethnobotanist. [quoting microbiologist Barry Kreiswirth of New York City’s Public Health Research Institute].

While West Nile virus is grabbing headlines for killing about 100 people, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates 44,000 people in North America die annually of infections from drug-resistant germs.

Some experts believe the numbers are higher. The epidemic comes as pharmaceutical companies have all but stopped doing research on antibiotics.²³

The Antibiotic Backfire

Why this sudden reemergence of diseases that were once considered to be waning or almost eliminated? Ironically, the experts say that it's the widespread misuse of drugs designed to eliminate them that is now responsible for the new super-strains.

Critics complain of a "B-52 approach" among some doctors who blitz their patients with a battery of broad-based antibiotics, often when they are unsure exactly what is making them sick. Experts also suspect that the wide use of antibiotics in animal feed is contributing to resistance.²⁴

Viral Killers

The medical community is now warning that not only are bacterial plagues on the rise, but viral killers like AIDS and Ebola are occurring more frequently than ever. The global SARS outbreak showed us how vulnerable we are. But the threat from influenza might be the most dangerous of all.

The influenza virus has developed the ability to circumvent the human body's main defense against the disease, raising the prospect of a deadly new global outbreak, scientists have discovered.

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Research into an outbreak of the illness five years ago, which killed one-third of its victims, has established that the strain responsible was able to bypass completely its victims' first and most crucial immune response to the infection.

Dr. Klaus Stohr, the leader of the World Health Organization's global influenza program, called the 1997 outbreak "the last warning from nature" that the world must prepare for a flu pandemic similar to that of 1918, when 50 million people died.

"The last pandemic was 34 years ago, while the average time between pandemics in the past has been around 28 years. We are beyond the odds now—it is a question of when."²⁵

The AIDS Explosion

As AIDS continues its global rampage, the statistics have become staggering. UNAIDS, the Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS, in its "AIDS Epidemic Update" released in December 2002, stated that 5 million new HIV infections occurred that year. In 2002, 3.1 million people died of AIDS, bringing the total of AIDS-related deaths to nearly 25 million. As of the end of 2002, over 42 million people are living with HIV/AIDS.²⁶

The World Health Organization (WHO) says "around the world *close to 14,000* every day are

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infected with HIV, and the pandemic is getting worse.”

Aside from the above-mentioned plagues, there is, of course, cancer, which is considered non-infectious. Scientists estimate that about 80 percent of cancers are caused by environmental factors, such as tobacco smoke (actively or passively inhaled) and the ingestion of harmful chemicals in our modern food and water supply. Over 100 different kinds of cancer now kill over *6 million* people every year. A dramatic rise in the deadly skin cancer, melanoma, is attributed to the depletion of the earth's ozone layer, which blocks much of the sun's ultraviolet radiation.

Jesus said there would be an abundance of plagues and diseases marking the time of His return. Even though these things will become increasingly widespread in the days to come, the Bible also tells us that God can protect and even heal those who trust in Him: “No evil shall befall you, nor shall any plague come near your dwelling” (Psalm 91:10). “But to you who fear My name the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings” (Malachi 4:2).

The Big Shake-up

“And there will be earthquakes, in various places...”

THE *UNIVERSAL ALMANAC* TELLS US that there were only 21 earthquakes of major strength between the years 1000 and 1800. Between 1800 and 1900 there were 18 major earthquakes. In the next 50 years, between 1900 and 1950, there were 33 major quakes—almost as many as the number in the preceding 850 years!²⁷

The U.S. Geological Survey National Earthquake Information Center reports that there are over 3.3 million earthquakes occurring annually throughout the world. Around 140 of them are magnitude 6.0 or greater on the Richter scale. There is no reliable predictor of when quakes will occur, and they occur over widely scattered areas of the world.

A 1995 top-level meeting of geologists and seismologists warned that the rise of big cities along seismic fault lines will cause unprecedented catastrophes in the near future:

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“It’s virtually certain there will be catastrophes in the coming decades, the likes of which we have never seen,” Roger Bilham told an International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics meeting. “Fatality counts exceeding one million are not an unreasonable projection given that 50 percent of an urban population can be lost in a single earthquake.” While major earthquakes “have generally spared the world’s urban centers in recent decades, this trend will not persist indefinitely,” Bilham said.²⁸

The prophet Isaiah also envisioned monster quakes in the last days, saying, “The foundations of the earth are shaken. The earth is ... shaken exceedingly. The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall totter like a hut ... in the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall” (Isaiah 24:18–20; 30:25).

Our Violent World

ANOTHER CONDITION THAT JESUS SAID would be prevalent immediately prior to His return would be unrestrained violence: “As the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be” (Matthew 24:37).

How were things in “the days of Noah?” The book of Genesis tells us “the earth was corrupt before God, and was *filled* with violence” (Genesis 6:11). We are all painfully aware that today’s headlines are full of tragic stories of senseless violence.

Political violence is the term used to describe the violence perpetrated by governments on their own or conquered people. In the 20th century it is estimated that around 110 million people died as a result of wars. However, this pales in comparison to the 170 million estimated to have been killed in political violence.²⁹ We are all still deeply saddened at the loss of life in the 9/11 attacks in New York and Washington, DC, where it is now estimated that around 2800 people lost their lives.³⁰ However, 170 million deaths translates to around 4,600 people being killed every day

for 100 years. That is equivalent to nearly two attacks such as 9/11 occurring every day for the last 100 years!

Aside from political violence, violence in all its forms surrounds us. One country that has statistics readily available on this is the United States. In the USA more people died from gun-related killings in the 19 years spanning 1979–1997 (651,697) than U.S. servicemen and women that died in combat in all the wars going back to the Revolutionary War (1775–1783) through to the end of the 20th century (650,858).³¹

That's *Entertainment*?

While juvenile violent crime is down from the historic highs of the early to mid '90s, we are all still aware of the violent environment that many of the youth of the world live in. School shootings at places like Columbine High in Littleton, Colorado; West Paducah, Kentucky; Jonesboro, Arkansas; Springfield, Oregon; and Erfurt, Germany, are still vivid memories to most of us.

Why this unprecedented violence among today's youth? Behavioral scientists have concluded that one of the main culprits is so-called entertainment, particularly the images brought into everyone's home courtesy of television and the computer gaming industry.

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In times past, you had to be on the scene where the violence was perpetrated in order to personally witness it. Not now! By the time the average American child is 15 years old, he or she will have witnessed the violent destruction of more than 35,000 human beings on television, as well as 200,000 other brutal acts.

The Erfurt and Columbine killers were avid fans of violent computer games. “Software for a massacre,” ran the headline in the German newspaper *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* on the Erfurt massacre. “The killer was trained by a computer game.” Though media violence is not the only, or even necessarily prime, motivator in the school killings, nevertheless the high level of exposure of children to violence desensitizes and makes children comfortable with such behavior.

The link between violence on film and violence in our streets and homes is strong. United Press International reports on a survey conducted by the 40,000-member Professional Association of Teachers in Britain, which concluded that:

“The impact of violent material is far more widespread than was previously thought,” said Jackie Miller, the association’s deputy secretary general. The survey found that 77 percent of secondary school teachers thought

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children were being “desensitized to violence,” and choosing to glorify and mimic violent activity in the playground.³²

Dr. Leonard D. Efron, Professor of Psychology at the University of Illinois at Chicago, studied the habits of more than 400 viewers for 22 years. He observes: “There can no longer be any doubt that heavy exposure to televised violence is one of the causes of aggressive behavior, crime and violence in society.” Arnold Kahn of the American Psychological Association adds, “The debate over the effects of violence on television is like the debate over cigarette smoking and cancer.”³³

Gayle Hanson, in the article “The Violent World of Video games,” had the following to say:

Among those whose voices have risen to damn the computer-game industry for recklessness is Lt. Col. Dave Grossman, a former professor of psychology at the U.S. Military Academy, who taught a course that analyzed the psychology of killing. He says of some of the games, “They are murder simulators which over time teach a person how to look another person in the eyes and snuff their life out.”

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To understand the virus of violence that seems epidemic to many, Grossman points to statistics showing an increase in assault in many countries. According to statistics provided by INTERPOL, from 1977 to 1993, the assault rate in Australia and New Zealand increased by almost 400 percent. The assault rate tripled in Sweden and doubled in Belgium, Denmark, England, France, Hungary, Holland, and Scotland. In the United States the rate of aggravated assault rose from about 60 per 100,000 in 1957 to more than 440 per 100,000 by the middle of [the 1990s].

“Though we should never downplay child abuse, poverty or racism” Grossman says, “there is only one new variable present in each of these countries, bearing the exact same fruit: media violence presented as entertainment for children.”³⁴

In his book, *High Tech/High Touch: Technology and Our Search for Meaning*, John Naisbitt, the acclaimed social forecaster and author of the #1 *New York Times* bestseller *Megatrends 2000*, plaintively states the following:

The video game industry generates \$16 billion a year in the United States

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alone, more than twice Hollywood's box office gross of \$7 billion. Many of the most popular games are relentlessly violent, and the same video games that are entertaining our children are being used to train our military. Living in the Technologically Intoxicated Zone, we deny that the culture of violence delivered through our television, film, Internet, and video game screens is real. Yet we are perplexed by the violence committed by our young, as epitomized by the Littleton school massacre in Colorado. If we begin to understand that what is on our screens is real, our tolerance for media violence will change forever. And we will no longer send our children into an electronic war zone daily and expect them to remain unaffected and unscarred.³⁵

The “Me” Generation

“Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall grow cold” (Matthew 24:12 KJV).

THIS IS HOW JESUS DESCRIBED the callous condition of people’s hearts in the days to come—just before His return. In a related passage, the apostle Paul writes, “But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God” (2 Timothy 3:1–4).

Selfishness and cold-heartedness seem to be prevalent almost everywhere we look. The *British Press Authority* reflects what’s occurring in most countries:

Britain is in moral decline as people become more selfish and less public-

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spirited, according to a [recent] survey.

The country is less law-abiding than it was 10 years ago, according to 77 percent of people questioned in a Gallup social survey, while 65 percent said the sense of morality was weaker.

People were also “less likely to get involved” than they were 10 years ago, according to 70 percent, while 72 percent thought the country was becoming more selfish.³⁶

This view was echoed in the “Final Report of the National Commission of Civic Renewal” in the United States, co-chaired by the former U.S. Secretary of Education William Bennett and former Senator Sam Nunn. The commission report states:

During the past generation, our families have come under intense pressure, and many have crumbled. Neighborhood and community ties have frayed. Many of our streets and public spaces have become unsafe. Our public schools are mediocre for most students, and catastrophic failures for many. Our character-forming institutions are enfeebled. Much of our popular culture is vulgar, violent, and mindless. Much of our public square is coarse and uncivil. ...

Public trust in our leaders and institutions has plunged.³⁷

The Missing Children

A United Nations study concludes that “the size of the family is shrinking all over the world because women in most countries want fewer children.”³⁸ One reason for reduced family size is the radical increase in the number of abortions performed in the last several decades. Despite the fact that advances in fetal science have made a compelling case that human life begins at conception,³⁹ worldwide an estimated *46 million* unborn children’s lives are snuffed out every year. The Bible says, “On your skirts is found the blood of the lives of the poor innocents. I [God] have not found it by secret search, but plainly on all these things” (Jeremiah 2:34).

A mother’s love for her infant has always been considered as pure and natural as can be. *Reuters* reports that “women around the world are having fewer children and are ending [about] a quarter of all pregnancies in abortion.”⁴⁰

Forty-six million women around the world have abortions each year. 22 percent of all pregnancies are ended by abortion. Belgium, the Netherlands,

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Germany and Switzerland have [annual] abortion rates below 10 per 1,000 women of reproductive age; in all other countries of Western Europe and in the United States and Canada, rates are 10–23 per 1,000. Romania, Cuba and Vietnam have the highest reported abortion rates in the world (78–83 abortions per 1,000 women). Worldwide, the lifetime average is about 1 abortion per woman.⁴¹

Previous generations would be appalled by such statistics, but not ours. Surely the predicted days have arrived when hearts would grow cold and natural affection would fade away.

The Good News Goes Global

“And this Gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come” (Matthew 24:14).

UNLIKE THE RISE IN WARS, famine, plagues, earthquakes, etc., Jesus said that this particular sign—the Gospel being preached in all the world—was not merely something to indicate “the beginning of sorrows,” but was a specific sign that would indicate when the actual *end* of the age—beginning with Christ’s Second Coming—would be upon the world.

According to *The Almanac of the Christian World*,⁴² Christians and Christian churches now exist in every country of the world. Missiologists estimate that between 75 and 85 percent of the world’s population have heard the Gospel at least once.⁴³ Over 50 million Bibles are distributed every year, as well as nearly 80 million New Testaments. Four billion Gospel tracts are also printed each year.

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According to the United Bible Societies, the entire Bible or parts thereof are now available to about 98 percent of the world's population, having been translated partially or entirely into some 2,303 different languages.

Other Christian books are also proliferating. Books primarily about Jesus in today's libraries number 175,000 different titles in 500 languages, increasing by 4 newly published every day.⁴⁴ The Gospel is also preached in 38,000 Christian magazines and on 4,050 radio and television stations.⁴⁵ Ninety-nine percent of the world's population have the Gospel available to them via Christian radio stations.⁴⁶

And then there is the *Jesus* Film:

Forget *Titanic*. Forget *Star Wars* and *Gone with the Wind*. They are small fry compared to the *Jesus* Film, which has been watched by more than two billion people. At first sight, *Jesus*, or the *Jesus* Film as it has come to be known, is an unlikely candidate for the title of most watched—and most translated—film.

Shot on location in the Holy Land, and with a white British Jesus, it is instead a straight-faced retelling of Luke's gospel. It was made in 1979. Filmed in Israel, mostly with Yemenite Jews in the cast. ... [It has been] translated into more than

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760 languages and dialects, among them Uyghur, Jorai, Karakalpak, Hakka, Mongo-Nkudu and Nosu Yi.⁴⁷

Never in the course of history has the Gospel been preached in all the world to all nations as it is right now.—If not directly by missionaries, it is certainly being preached by the modern mediums of radio, television, telecommunications, and the Internet. This is a conclusive prophecy by Jesus that shows that you and I are now living in the time of the end!

Globetrotters and Jetsetters

“Many shall run to and fro...” (Daniel 12:4).

THE MODERN MEANS OF COMMUNICATION and transportation that have made it possible for the Gospel to now be preached in all nations bring to mind another specific prediction regarding Endtime conditions. In 534 B.C., the prophet Daniel received an outstanding revelation. Afterwards, God told him not to worry that he couldn't understand it all, that even though the prophecy was given *to* him, it wasn't *for* him. It's only been in recent years that the book of Daniel has been opened. The Lord told Daniel:

“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).

Many running to and fro literally means “speeding about, here and there,” or as *The Living Bible* renders this verse, “travel shall be vastly increased.”

When you consider that people's means of transportation—horse and buggy, wagons, camels, boats, etc.—did not change substantially for thousands of years, you can appreciate the significance of this prophecy.

Speed Freaks

In 1789 it took George Washington eight days to travel the 200 miles from his home to his inauguration in New York City. The fact that it took eight days is not significant. What is noteworthy is that Julius Caesar could have made the same trip just as rapidly in the year 50 B.C.! No real progress had been made in transportation over the 18 centuries that passed between their lifetimes. But look how mankind has advanced in the past hundred years!

Today we not only drive at enormous speeds and cover great distances in our automobiles, but a jet can fly around the world in 24 hours, and a spacecraft circles the planet in 80 minutes.

Two thousand six hundred years ago, another prophet described the following “in the days of the Lord's preparation” before He returns. “The chariots come with flaming torches in the day of His preparation, and the spears are brandished. The chariots rage in the streets, they jostle one another in the broad roads; they seem like torches, they run like

lightning” (Nahum 2:3–4). No horse-drawn chariot ever ran like lightning. Could this be a vision of our modern highways at night filled with vehicles with their headlights on? It would certainly fit the description. And if it is, our modern vehicle-filled highways are another indication that the Lord is soon to return.

And they certainly jostle one another in the broad roads. “Since the invention of the motor vehicle over a century ago, it is estimated that about 30 million people have been killed in road crashes. A recent review of road deaths worldwide estimated that between 750,000 and 880,000 lives were lost in road crashes in 1999, a conservative estimate compared with earlier WHO figures.”⁴⁸

Travelmania

Before the downturn in the travel industry after the 9/11 attacks, the number of people traveling was absolutely unprecedented. In 1995, John Naisbitt, economic forecaster and author of *Megatrends 2000*,⁴⁹ underscored how the largest industry in the world is now the one which enables people to “run to and fro”:

Travel and tourism is the biggest and the most energetic industry in the world. It will be one of the three super-

industries driving the (global) economy of the next century, along with Information Technology and Telecommunications.

This year, travel and tourism is forecast to generate US\$3.4 trillion in gross product, accounting for 10 percent of global economic output, consumer spending and investment.⁵⁰

According to the International Air Transport Association (IATA), member airlines carried *1.35 billion* passengers on all services in 2001—equivalent to more than one in five of the world's population.⁵¹

The Madrid-based World Tourism Organization in a news release in January 2003 reported:

For the first time in history, the number of international tourist arrivals has exceeded the 700-million mark. ... In total, according to the preliminary data sent to the World Tourism Organization from official sources throughout the world, almost 715 million international tourist arrivals were registered last year. That is 22 million more than in 2001 or, compared with the “millennium year” which many experts claim should be taken as the reference, almost 19 million more than in 2000.⁵²

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One reason that many people today travel to distant lands, particularly young people, is because they are dissatisfied with their own country, culture, or religion, and are searching for solutions or answers elsewhere. These truth seekers and pilgrims bring to mind another prophecy about the last days, given by the Old Testament prophet Amos: “Behold, the days are coming,’ says the Lord God, ‘that I will send a famine on the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord. They shall wander from sea to sea, and from north to east; they shall run to and fro, seeking the word of the Lord’” (Amos 8:11–12).

Never in all of world history have people traveled the distances, the speeds, or with the frequency that hundreds of millions are traveling today. Truly many are running to and fro, just like God said they would in the “time of the end.”

Information Overload

“Knowledge shall increase” (Daniel 12:4).

IT IS WITH GOOD CAUSE that the term “information overload” was coined in recent years. If the amount of information that is available is an indication of the knowledge available, knowledge has increased within our generation almost beyond imagination! Here are just a few mind-boggling facts on this:

► The world produces between 1 and 2 exabytes of unique information [print, film, optical, and magnetic content] per year, which is roughly 250 megabytes for every man, woman, and child on earth. An exabyte is a billion gigabytes, or 10^{18} bytes, or roughly the equivalent to the textual content of a billion books.

► In 2000 the World Wide Web consisted of about 21 terabytes of static HTML pages, and is growing at a rate of 100 percent per year. One terabyte ... is a million megabytes, or the equivalent of the textual content of a million books.

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Many Web pages are generated on-the-fly from data in databases, so the total size of the “deep Web” is considerably larger.⁵³ Google™, the Web’s largest [and fastest growing] search engine, has indexed more than 3 billion documents, including 2 billion Web pages.⁵⁴

► Around a million books are printed annually (that’s titles, not copies), 25,276 newspapers are published (that is separate newspapers, such as the *International Herald Tribune*, not the number of issues), 40,000 scholarly journals, 80,000 mass-market periodicals, 40,000 newsletters.⁵⁵

► According to Dr. Malcolm Todd, one-time president of the American Medical Association, about half of all medical knowledge is outdated every ten years.

Commenting on recent advances in computer technology, Professor Peter Cochrane of the British Telecom Laboratories’ Advanced Application Division said, “There are now wristwatches that wield more computing ability than some 1970s mainframes. Ordinary cars today have more ‘intelligence’ than the original lunar lander.”⁵⁶

Seventy percent of all information in our global society has been created since the

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start of the Internet and is currently doubling every three years. This means we will have 16 times more information than we have today by 2015.⁵⁷

Although we have made tremendous strides scientifically and technologically, are we more fulfilled or happier than our predecessors? Our knowledge has radically increased, but much of our scientific genius has been squandered in the development of armaments and weapons of mass destruction. Hi-tech gadgets and luxuries are given priority while many of our fellow humans are hungry and destitute.

TIME magazine examined this in their 1995 cover story “The Evolution of Despair”:

VCRs and microwave ovens have their virtues, but in the everyday course of our highly efficient lives, there are times when something seems deeply amiss. ... Whatever the source of stress, we at times get the feeling that modern life isn't what we were designed for.

Rates of depression have been doubling in some industrial countries roughly every 10 years. Suicide is the third most common cause of death among young adults in North America, after car wrecks and homicides. Fifteen

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percent of Americans have had a clinical anxiety disorder.⁵⁸

What good is a head full of knowledge if our hearts are empty and we lack peace of mind and purpose in life?

The Pagan Revival

“Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day [of Jesus’ Second Coming] will not come unless the falling away [from faith and belief in Jesus] comes first” (2 Thessalonians 2:3).

THE CIVILIZATIONS OF EUROPE and countries of the Western world have been described by many commentators as now being “post-Christian.” The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O’Connor, gave this bleak assessment of Christianity in the United Kingdom. “Christ is being replaced by music, New Age beliefs, the environmental movement, the occult, and the free-market economy.”⁵⁹

In Jesus’ discourse about the signs that would precede His return, three times He told His disciples that numerous false prophets would arise on the world scene, and that they would attract large followings. “Many false prophets will rise up and deceive many” (Matthew 24:11)[‡].

[‡] See also verses 5 and 24 of Matthew 24.

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Paganism is flourishing. The BBC reports: “A study in 1997 suggested there were 100,000 practicing pagans in the UK, an increase of 95,000 since 1990.”⁶⁰

Would-be witches are being offered government grants to learn how to cast spells. ... Now they can take up home study courses in the ancient art of Wicca run by the British School of Yoga, which qualify for the government’s individual learning accounts, where students get a discount towards course fees. The subject list [includes] Spell Casting, Divination, Spirits, Gods and Goddesses, The Book of Shadows and Moon Magic. Successful students are awarded a Diploma in Wicca/Witchcraft of the New Age Foundation.⁶¹

“Pagan power” is similarly on the increase in North America. *AP* reports,

The witches of the '90s aren't so scary, with pagan beliefs turned into full-blown religions, complete with services and holidays.⁶²

According to the Ontario Consultants on Religious Tolerance, based on data from the *American Religious Identification Survey* (ARIS) conducted in 2001, there are

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approximately 408,000 Wiccan and Pagan adults in the United States. The figure rises to 750,000 if their children are included. This would make it the seventh largest religious grouping in that country. There are an estimated 40,000 in Canada.

The ARIS survey of the American adult population indicates a growth in the Wiccan community of 17-fold between 1990 and 2001—the highest of any faith group monitored. This would indicate a doubling in numbers of adherents about every 2.5 years. If the latter growth rate is accurate and if it continues, then Wicca would be the third largest religious group in the U.S. by about 2012, behind Christianity and Judaism.⁶³

In May 1998 the *Chicago Tribune* reported that, though difficult to quantify due to lack of formal organization, neopaganism is the fastest-growing religion in North America, with the Internet being the prime means of proselytizing.⁶⁴

Although the Bible and prayer were officially banned and removed from U.S. public schools in 1962, many of these same schools now offer their pupils accredited courses in witchcraft and the occult.

Fascination with Satan

“Now the [Holy] Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons” (1 Timothy 4:1).

NOT ONLY ARE MANY PEOPLE unknowingly falling for Satan’s deceptions, increasing numbers are following rank Satanism.

The Bible tells us that if people willfully reject God’s truth, they will be given “strong delusion, that they should believe a lie” (2 Thessalonians 2:10–11). When we refuse the truth, there is nothing left to believe but a lie. This is why much of the world today is wide open for deceivers and false prophets. An abandoning of true faith frequently precedes “giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons.”

Of course, the Devil doesn’t always show himself to be the evil and destructive spiritual force that he is. Quite the contrary. He and his agents frequently portray themselves as messengers of light and goodness. The apostle Paul explains, “Satan himself transforms himself

into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness” (2 Corinthians 11:14–15). He is the arch-deceiver.

Unfortunately, one reason a lot of people get caught up in the dark side of the spirit world is because they’ve been disillusioned by the apparent absence of spiritual reality in traditional religions. A South African expert on Satanism attributes youth involvement in the occult to spiritually dead churches. *Reuters* reports,

“Satanism is increasing, especially the serious cases; murder, assaults,” Colonel Kobus Jonker, head of the police’s Occult Investigations Unit in Pretoria, said in an interview.

Jonker blamed what he calls the spiritual bankruptcy of establishment churches in South Africa for the tendency of teenagers to dabble in the occult. “You can actually feel the deadness in many of our churches. There’s nothing going on. I don’t want to sit in a church like that.”⁶⁵

Two fields in which paganism and Satanism have made tremendous inroads are the popular music business and the computer gaming industry.⁶⁶ Just take a look at the number of album covers and rock videos that come

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complete with all the symbols, liturgies, and rituals of witchcraft and the occult. The most popular genre in computer games is based on demons and violence. Many involve role playing with open worship of Satan and the netherworld. The sights and sounds of Hell have seduced and driven countless people into lifestyles of drugs, perversion, violence, and sometimes even suicide. The most shameless acts of blasphemy and desecration are now socially acceptable in the name of audiovisual and multimedia entertainment and “freedom of expression.”

The Beast That Is to Come

“The Antichrist is coming” (1 John 2:18).

ONE OF THE FINAL SIGNS OF THE END, which the Bible devotes numerous chapters to, is the rise of a world government headed by a Devil-possessed tyrant known as the Antichrist or “the Beast.” The 13th chapter of the book of Revelation says that the world is going to actually worship Satan, in the person of this bestial world leader. “So they worshiped the dragon [the Devil] who gave power to the beast [the Antichrist]; and they worshiped the beast” (Revelation 13:4).

The stage is rapidly being set for the world to accept global leadership. Famed British historian Arnold Toynbee (1889–1975) observed, “The nations are ready to give the kingdoms of the world to any one man who will offer us a solution to our world’s problems.” The first president of the United Nations General Assembly, Paul-Henri Spaak, who was also a prime minister of Belgium as well as a secretary-general of NATO, affirmed, “We do not want another committee, we have too many already. What we want is a man of sufficient stature to

hold the allegiance of all the people and to lift us up out of the economic morass into which we are sinking. Send us such a man, and whether he be God or devil, we will receive him.”

The New World Order

We are hearing more and more about the “New World Order” or the “global community.” President George Bush, Sr. popularized the term when he said in a speech before the U.S. Congress during the 1991 Gulf War, “We stand today at a unique and extraordinary moment. ... Out of these troubled times a New World Order can emerge. ... Today that New World Order is struggling to be born.”⁶⁷

The Jerusalem Peace Accord

It appears that this coming world leader will rise to power on a wave of global euphoria as he arrives on the scene to temporarily save the world from armed conflicts and desperate economic and political woes. Like Satan himself, who appears as an angel of light, this man will deceive most of the world into thinking that he is a great man of peace, a hero. The prophet Daniel wrote of the Antichrist that “he shall come in peaceably, and seize the kingdom by intrigue” (Daniel 11:21).

Whether this world government he heads is already in power or rises to power at the

time the document known in the Bible as the Holy Covenant is signed or not, we don't know for sure. What the Scriptures do state, though, is that this covenant will have a duration of seven years and will be pivotal to his claim to world leadership. This pact will resolve the Middle East crisis (at least temporarily), a seemingly impossible task that has eluded the best efforts by world leaders since the founding of Israel in 1948. He will do so by working out a compromise between the Israelis and the Palestinians regarding Jerusalem and its holy sites. A central issue will be Mount Moriah in Jerusalem, sacred to Jews (their temple stood there before being destroyed by the Romans in 70 A.D.), and sacred to Muslims (the Dome of the Rock, the third most revered shrine in Islam, stands there today). Scripture indicates that the Antichrist's covenant will enable the Jews to rebuild their temple, where they will revive their ancient rituals of animal sacrifice (Daniel 8:23–25; 9:27; 2 Thessalonians 2:1–4). Much of the paraphernalia and building material for this temple have already been fabricated and stored, and the priests and temple attendants are already trained.

Enter Russia

The prophet Ezekiel calls the Antichrist “Gog, of the land of Magog, the prince of

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Rosh, Meshech and Tubal” (Ezekiel 38:2). Scholars agree that the ancient land referred to as Magog would appear to be a powerful country or region of peoples to the north of Israel. Although there was no such land called Russia in Ezekiel’s day, the term “Rosh” is amazingly similar to *Ros* (also spelled *Rus*), the name given to the people that settled along the major rivers of the land now known as Russia, circa 700–800 A.D., and from which the terms Russia and Russians derive. Meshech and Tubal could be renderings of Moscow and Tobolsk, cities that weren’t to exist for one to two thousand years from when Ezekiel lived. Moscow is the capital of Russia, and Tobolsk, until recent times, was the most important city of Siberia. Since the cities didn’t yet exist, it would be understandable that Ezekiel used names that were familiar to him and similar in sound. For these reasons many Bible students believe that the Antichrist will rise out of Russia.

There are also indications in Scripture that the Antichrist will have something to do with Egypt (Daniel 8:22–26). Scripture also points to Europe, indicating that it will be a key player in the Antichrist’s world government, whose leaders will fully unite behind him. “These are of one mind, and they shall give their power and authority to the Beast” (Revelation 17:13).

The Great Tribulation

Although most of the world will initially hail the Beast as a political savior, three and a half years after the enactment of the seven-year covenant, he will revoke the peace pact and show his true colors. At this time he apparently will invade Israel and establish himself in Jerusalem, making that city his world capital (Daniel 11:45).

His government will then outlaw all religions, except the worship of the Antichrist and an image of himself that will somehow be empowered to speak and “cause as many as would not worship [it] to be killed” (Revelation 13:14–15). Jesus said that when you see this image, the “abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place [temple] ... *then* there will be *great tribulation* such as has not been since the beginning of the world” (Matthew 24:15,21). Thus the name given to this period is the “Great Tribulation.” It will be a time when the Beast and his regime will institute a ruthless repression and persecution of believers in God (Daniel 7:21,25; 8:23–24; 11:31–35; 12:7,10; Revelation 13:5–7).

It is at this time that the Antichrist government tries to impose globally the infamous “666” financial system.

The “Mark of the Beast”

“He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on [in] their right hand or on [in] their foreheads, 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. Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666” (Revelation 13:16–18).

THIS PROPHECY IS TRULY REMARKABLE. Think about it: Nearly 2,000 years ago the apostle John, who prior to meeting Jesus had been a fisherman by trade and had been called an “uneducated and untrained” man (Acts 4:13), predicts that a global economic system will one day be instituted in which everyone will be forced to receive a *number*, without which they will not be able to buy or sell. It is only since the recent advent of computers, and now electronic banking, that this prophecy could be fulfilled.

There are currently a number of methods commonly used for purchasing items. You can use cash, you can write a check, you can use a credit card, or you can use a debit card to automatically deduct the amount from your bank account.

Smart cards take this several steps further. They look like an ordinary credit card, but there's a big difference: They have a tiny computer chip embedded in their plastic. These electronic marvels not only give you instant access to your bank account, but they can also contain all your passport information, your medical record, driver's license, photographs, welfare eligibility, and other data. Hundreds of millions of smart cards are in use across Europe in the form of health cards, SIM (Subscriber Identity Module) cards,⁶⁸ and ePurse cards. Smart cards are at the heart of the eEurope initiative. European Union officials have announced plans to introduce the electronic health card Europe-wide in June 2004. Over time the card could become a kind of medical passport entitling holders to medical care anywhere in the EU.⁶⁹

We are well on the way to eliminating cash. Advocates of a cashless society have many compelling reasons for it. A primary one is that cash is the mother's milk of drug smugglers, who often deal in cash a suitcase full at a time. With no cash, the sale of illegal drugs would

be greatly hampered. In fact, law enforcement agencies say that to eliminate cash would eliminate many or even most kinds of criminal activity.

The ID Hurdle

Before cash, checks, and credit cards can be phased out completely, an absolutely foolproof identification system must be developed and implemented to prevent identity theft. Retailers must be sure that the person presenting a card for a transaction is actually the owner of that card.

Various fail-safe ID systems have already been developed, like fingerprint and hand readers, retina scanners, etc., which are collectively known as biometric scanners. For a completely cashless society to work, there would have to be a standardization to the many competing systems and the scanners would need to be installed at every shop and office, no matter how big or small, where goods or services are sold.

While highly accurate biometric scanners would presently be very costly to install everywhere they would be needed, not to mention the expensive infrastructure required to speedily access the databases where people's biometric details are stored, microchips encased in plastic smart cards and the scanners

to read them are a much more cost-efficient alternative.

Your Own Personal Microchip Implant

A cheap and workable solution would be to take a chip similar to those used in smart cards and place it under the skin of each man, woman, and child. In fact, the chip can be even smaller because it is not necessary for all your data to be stored on it, only a unique identifier such as a number sequence. All your data would be stored in gigantic networked databases and the number would access it. Once the chip is implanted, it could be read by an inexpensive scanner, similar in function to the ones that read bar codes in your local grocery store. You would then become your own smart card—and the very expensive problem of making sure the owner of the card is who he says he is has been solved!

And so it has happened. The chipping of people quietly began rolling out in the U.S., via Applied Digital Solutions' VeriChip. In May 2002 the “historic chipping of the Jacobs family” took place. This family and several other volunteers had a unique identifier injected under their skin.⁷⁰ The chip, about the size of the tip of a ballpoint pen, can be read by a handheld VeriChip scanner. The Jacobs family

suffers from various ailments and the storage of their medical history provided the logic behind their volunteering to be the test cases. Already, though, ADS is advertising its service for \$200, along with a \$10 monthly fee. How long will it be till this chipping of people becomes the norm and we turn to it to facilitate all those daily functions such as shopping, etc.?

A global cashless society is in the making. Fiber optics, satellites, and computer databases have the potential to control the world in a way that boggles the imagination. Many governments and private corporations worldwide are pursuing policies to eliminate cash and checks, while many other countries are testing various methods of doing business without physical currency. For the first time, the hi-tech means of fulfilling the chilling vision the apostle John received nearly 2,000 years ago is here.

The Power Behind the Throne

The coming world leader will demand the world's worship not merely because he has a severe ego problem.—He will be empowered or possessed by *Satan* himself. “The dragon [Satan] gave him his power, his throne, and great authority” (Revelation 13:2).

Satan has always wanted to be God. This is why he fell in the first place. The prophet

Isaiah wrote, “How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! ... For you said to yourself, ‘I will ascend to heaven and rule the angels. I will take the highest throne. ... I will climb to the highest heavens and be like the Most High.’ But instead, you will be brought down to the pit of hell, down to its lowest depths” (Isaiah 14:12–15 TLB).

Watch Out for 666!

What Satan is really after when he causes the Antichrist government to set up the coming global financial system is to gain control over the people of the world and to get them to bow down and worship him. This is why the Bible warns, “If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God. ... [T]hey have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name” (Revelation 14:9–11).

Notice there are two components to being the objects of this damnation: worshipping the Beast and taking his mark. The book of Revelation mentions these two things in tandem leading to damnation six separate times. There is a definite link between the two, though at this point in time it is not clear exactly what that will be. At first glance, it would seem the

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Mark is simply an economic and identification system, but from what the Scriptures indicate, it leads to much more. Beware!

So when you see the world government arise and its leader demands your allegiance, your loyalty, and even your worship, don't fall for it. Regardless of the economic incentives offered or the retribution that threatens those who refuse his mark and number, give your love and worship to the true God, your Creator, who loves and cares for you, and who has promised He will see you through the days ahead if you put your trust in Him. The Bible says, "The people who know their God will be strong" (Daniel 11:32). (For more on this subject, see *The Rise and Fall of the Antichrist*, also from Aurora Production.)

The Second Coming

“Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other” (Matthew 24:29–31).

HERE JESUS IS TELLING US that the world’s darkest period of tribulation and horror will abruptly end with the dawning of the brightest day—the day Jesus Christ returns to gather His people to be with Him!

The book of Revelation tells us that prior to Jesus’ return, God will unleash terrible plagues and judgments upon the Beast and his

forces, who will be doing their damndest to wipe out all who refuse to worship him and take his mark. The Bible spells out exactly how long this period of “great tribulation” will last: 3½ years, or 42 months, or 1,260 days (Daniel 7:25; 12:7; Revelation 13:5; 12:6). So on the day that the coming world leader breaks that covenant and sets up his image and demands the world’s worship, we will know exactly how long it will be till Jesus returns.

Bye-Bye Beast, and Hello Heaven!

The world will be shocked by the awesome sights and sounds that will herald Jesus’ Second Coming. When the greatest sign of all is revealed, Jesus Himself coming in the clouds, supernaturally beaming God’s power and might around the world, those who have rejected Him and worshiped the Beast will realize how very wrong they’ve been. “Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him” (Revelation 1:7).

But for those of us who know and love the Lord, His return will bring us greater joy and deliverance and freedom than we have ever known! God’s people who have died since Jesus’ days on earth will be miraculously resurrected in new supernatural bodies, bursting out of their

graves and ascending to meet Him in the air. Those of us still alive on earth will be instantly transformed with new bodies as well, and we'll soar into the clouds to meet the Lord! Jesus will snatch His people out of the reach of their anti-Christ persecutors and whisk them away to the grandest, most thrilling victory celebration that's ever been held—an event known as the “Marriage Supper of the Lamb” in Heaven! (Revelation 14:14–16; 19:6–9).

Meanwhile, the horrific plagues of the wrath of God will be poured out upon the Beast's forces, a time so terrible that the Bible says, “In those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them” (Revelation 9:6).

Jesus will then lead the superhuman hosts of Heaven as He and them return to earth to defeat and destroy the Beast and his wicked empire in the dreaded battle known as “Armageddon.” The name is derived from a hill in the valley of Jezreel, near Haifa, Israel, under which the ancient city of Megiddo is buried (the Hebrew word *Armageddon* means the height or mount of Megiddo). Although the armies of the Antichrist gather at Armageddon, it seems that the focal point of this climactic and horrendous battle will be Jerusalem (Zechariah 14:1–5). It will mark the end of man's cruel rule on earth, as God Himself, through Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords, and His heavenly

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forces, take over the world to rule and reign and run it the way it *should* have been run all along, if man had not disobeyed God and gone his own selfish way! And so begins a period known as the “Millennium,” a thousand years of peace and the building of paradise on earth (Revelation 19:11–21; 20:1–4). (For more on this exciting period to come, don’t miss *The Rise and Reign of the Kingdom of God*, from Aurora Production.)

Faith to Face the Future

WE ARE CERTAINLY LIVING IN EXCITING TIMES and are on the threshold of some cataclysmic changes!

Seeing how prophecies from thousands of years ago accurately predicted world conditions today should encourage your faith in a number of ways. First of all, it's reassuring that God not only has the power to foresee the future, but that He cared enough about us to tell us what is going to happen in advance. As Jesus said, "And now I have told you *before* it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may *believe*" (John 14:29).

Similarly, when you realize that the current state of the world was foretold so specifically, it stands to reason that the biblical prophecies which have not yet been fulfilled will *also* come to pass. A world government with a bestial leader and enforced financial system will arise. Persecution of those who refuse to cooperate with the Antichrist regime will take place, but at the same time God will miraculously care for and empower His people to keep them even in trying times. And then God will

intervene when Jesus Christ returns to rescue His people, defeat the forces of evil at the Battle of Armageddon, and establish His everlasting kingdom of love on earth.

No Need to Fear

As these awesome final events of the Endtime begin to unfold, you don't have to be in fear or confusion, wondering what's going on. Although Jesus warned that in the very last days "men's hearts would be failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth" (Luke 21:26), He also said that those who know and love Him could face these same events positively and victoriously.

He made it clear that as the final signs of the end came to pass, His return to rescue His people was that much closer: "Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption [deliverance] draws near" (Luke 21:28). We may not like everything that is happening, and some of it may look pretty bad, but at least we know the happy ending. In previous persecutions of Christians throughout history, many of which were nearly as vicious as the ones to come in the Great Tribulation, the people of God as a whole have come through victoriously, stronger, and in many cases greatly multiplied in numbers.

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Although the Great Tribulation is a time of great troubles, most of those troubles befall the Antichrist and his followers, not the followers of God. Jesus will do many miracles to empower and protect His people. “The people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits” (Daniel 11:32).

If you have faith in God and His Word, and you are living close to Him, then even if there’s war and turmoil, confusion and chaos on the *outside*, you can have peace on the *inside*—in your own heart—through the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ.

The Best Preparation for the Future

You can prepare for the future—and for all eternity—by receiving Jesus as your Savior. He *loves* you, and will be with you and will guide you through whatever perilous times you may encounter.

The Bible tells us that “God is love” (1 John 4:8). He is the Spirit of Love, and He loves you and wants you to know and experience and revel in His love. But God is so great, so almighty, He is far beyond our finite human understanding. This is why He sent Jesus, His Son, to the world; to show us His love and to help us understand what He, God Himself, is like.

“For God so loved the world [you and me], that He gave His only begotten Son

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[Jesus], that whoever believes in Him should not perish [be separated from God's love], but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). God loves *you* so much that He gave Jesus to die in your place, to take the punishment that you deserve for your wrongdoing, so that you can have His forgiveness and free gift of eternal heavenly life.

If you don't yet know Jesus personally, you can receive Him and all the wonderful things He has to offer you right now. Even if you have questions and doubts about Him, He understands, and if you reach out to Him, He will make Himself real in your life. He says, "I stand at the door [of your heart] and knock. If you hear My voice and open the door, I will come into you" (Revelation 3:20).

Will you give Him a chance? He's waiting for you. Just sincerely pray the following simple prayer:

Dear Jesus, I ask You to come into my heart. Please forgive me for all the wrongs I've done, and give me Your gift of everlasting life. Help me to love You, and help me to share Your love and truth with others. Amen.

Jesus said, "I have come that you might have life, and that you might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). Receiving Jesus not only guarantees you a brighter future, but a more fulfilled present. May His presence fill and bless your life in every way.

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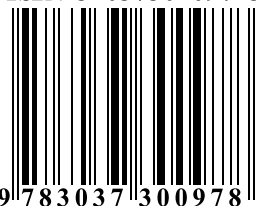
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