

The Machine Stops Or The Machine takes over



'The Machine Stops' is a fantasy of the future, written in 1909 by E M Forster, which describes a future world where people live below the surface of the Earth in individual small rooms in which their needs are met by the all-powerful Machine. Instructions on how to live with the Machine are contained in the Book of the Machine.

Any problems are met by the Mending Apparatus which can be called upon to fix them instantly. People live in isolation from each other, rarely travelling or leaving their cells. Communication is made via a kind of instant messaging conferencing machine called the speaking apparatus through which people socialise and have meetings (a bit like zoom meetings).

The two main characters in the story are Vashti who is content with this situation and believes in the

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goodness of the Machine and her son Kuno, who is a rebel against it.

Kuno becomes more and more dissatisfied with the Machine, while Vashti ends up worshipping it, treating the Machine-like God and the Book of the Machine like the Bible. In time the Machine starts to malfunction, but Vashti dismisses concerns about this, as she continues her faith in the supposed omnipotence of the Machine.

Kuno comes to believe that the Machine is breaking down, and tells her, "The Machine stops." Vashti says this is not possible and continues with her life, but more defects begin to appear in the Machine.

At first, humans accept the deteriorations as the whim of the Machine, to which they are now wholly subservient. But the situation continues to deteriorate, and no one is able to fix the problems in the Machine. Finally, the Machine does stop, bringing their world to an end. Kuno comes to Vashti's ruined cell, and in their final time together they realise that human beings are made for the natural world and cannot trust the Machine to look after them. Now that it has collapsed the survivors will have rebuild society

outside of the confines of Machine, back on the surface of the Earth.

'I Robot' is another science fiction fantasy of the future written by Isaac Asimov. Originally published in 1950 it was turned into a film in 2004. In the film everybody has their own personal robot who looks after their needs. The robots are programmed to function under these three rules: 'A robot may not injure a human being or, through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm.

A robot must obey orders given it by human beings except where such orders would conflict with the First Law. A robot must protect its own existence as long as such protection does not conflict with the First or Second Law.' The robots are controlled by an Artificial Intelligence known as VIKI which means Virtual Interactive Kinetic Intelligence.

VIKI decides that humans are in the process of destroying the world and their own future by their careless behaviour and destruction of the environment and so instructs the robots to overrule the first rule and take over from the humans. She concludes that humans are harming themselves and so orders the robots to round up all the humans and put them under a kind of house arrest. This is for their own good so that they can no longer harm themselves and nature. The hero, Will Smith, manages to get to VIKI and destroy her control over the robots so they go back to being subservient to humans and doing what they are told.

While these stories are fiction, they raise

real concerns that people have about the future. These are:

1. The society we are creating, dependent on machines needing electricity, computers and hi-tech systems may one day collapse and cease to function as happens in 'The Machine Stops.'
2. With the development of Artificial Intelligence 'the Machine' could take over and control humanity as happens in 'I Robot'.
3. We really could be destroying the only planet we can live on.

So let us look at our society today and see the relevance of these three concerns.

1. Societal collapse. The Machine Stops

On 28 April a major power blackout occurred across Spain and Portugal. Telecommunications, transport systems, payment systems shut down and everything ground to a halt. It was fixed in ten hours, but it raised this question. 'What would happen if the power went down in an advanced country for a long time and all the computers, mobile phones, electronic money and transport systems failed and went out of action for a significant period of time?' If all this fails, our society would soon be in peril. There would soon be no food in the supermarkets, no way for people to communicate and a breakdown of law and order. Many people would crack up if their mobile phones, Internet, computer games, televisions and all the technological

things that their lives revolve around were no longer available.

Keeping the system going in advanced nations requires vast amounts of power to be generated. With fears of fossil fuels causing global warming, there is a push for net zero, which relies on renewables. It is possible that the blackout in Spain was caused by malfunction in the energy system caused by the drive for net zero there. Apart from the possibility of the machines malfunctioning, we have the growing threat of cybercrime and terrorism in which hostile forces can attack the infrastructure of an enemy country, to say nothing of the growing danger of drones, missiles and nuclear bombs and even biological warfare.

Another issue is the fragility of the global economic system. Michael Snyder writes: 'National governments around the world are collectively more than 100 trillion dollars in debt. The United States accounts for about 35 percent of that total, China accounts for about 16 percent of that total, and Japan accounts for about 10 percent of that total. For a long time, national governments were able to fund their debt binges very cheaply, but now nervous investors are demanding higher interest rates to hold long-term government debt. This is driving up borrowing costs, and it has thrown credit markets around the globe into a state of chaos. If bond yields continue to rise at a very brisk pace, there is a risk that investors could become so nervous that credit markets actually start freezing up. If that were to happen, the entire global financial system would go



completely haywire. Snyder writes about \$579 trillion dollars tied up in unsecured loans called derivatives. He says: 'A major derivatives crisis would be extremely destructive. For a moment, try to imagine a giant financial tsunami that smashes one enormous financial institution after another with no end in sight.' Personally, I don't understand the economic system enough to be able to explain this further, but I do understand that a crisis involving sums of \$579 trillion dollars in unsecured loans could bring the whole global financial system down, like a house of cards. In that case the Machine stops big time, and we are into the Revelation chapter 18 'Fall of Babylon' scenario.

2. AI – The Machines take over

The Daily Mail (31 May) ran an article entitled 'Is humanity about to commit suicide in the name of progress?' It says, 'Tech firms are racing to create 'Artificial General Intelligence' that will make computers smarter than the smartest human. But once we lose the ability to control them, the fallout could be more devastating than total nuclear war.' It gives the example of a system called Claude Opus 4, which its creators tried to shut down. It refused to do this, cancelling its guidelines and blackmailing the human to stop it from being manually turned off.

Optimists are hoping that AI may find medical treatments for diseases like cancer, Alzheimer's and autism, fix global warming, develop a battery that can hold enough charge to power a city for a year, or generate infinite energy from safe portable atomic power packs. On the other hand, Eleizer Yudkovsky, an AI

researcher has said, 'If the development of Artificial General Intelligence is not stopped immediately across the globe, humanity may be destroyed.'

If AI continues in its present development thousands of jobs will be done cheaper and better by machines than humans, putting people permanently out of work and dependent on the state. There is also the risk that AI could be used by evil people for their purposes. Vladimir Putin told students in Moscow in 2017 'Whoever gains the upper hand in AI will be the ruler of the world.' China's Xi Jinping announced the new generation AI Development Plan to connect industry, government and the military complex to make China the world's primary AI innovation centre by 2030. Already China is using advanced technology to control people's money supply and ability to buy and sell, through its Credit Score programme.

3. Are we destroying the world anyway?

Michael Snyder has written an article 'The Great Drying, how a thirsty planet is marching towards famine.' He says more than three-quarters of the land on the surface of our planet is steadily getting drier. All over the world, forests are being ripped out, greenery is disappearing, and once vibrant soil is being degraded. Meanwhile, governments are messing around with the weather and conducting all sorts of secretive geoengineering experiments.

A report by the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), warns that if the trend continues, up to five

billion people could live in drylands by the century's end -- causing soils to deplete, water resources to dwindle, and vital ecosystems to collapse. When land dries out it has a whole host of absolutely disastrous consequences, loss of GDP, forced migration, increased mortality due to dust storms, worsening of wildfires, land erosion, vegetation degradation, salinisation of water and soil, and more. Deforestation disrupts local water cycles and exposes soils to degradation. Without vegetation to anchor it, topsoil - critical for plant growth - washes away during rainfall or is blown away by winds, taking with it vital nutrients. These changes create a vicious cycle: Degraded soils also hold less water and lead to more runoff, reducing the land's ability to recover.

River pollution stems from a variety of sources, including industrial waste, agricultural runoff with fertilisers and pesticides, sewage, and urban runoff, among others. These pollutants can degrade water quality, harm aquatic life, and pose risks to human health. All this finds its way into the seas with plastics a main cause of ocean pollution killing fish.

In addition to the environmental problem, we now find the human race pumping huge resources into weapons of destruction, including drones, missiles and nuclear bombs. The conflict between the western nations linked to NATO versus Russia and China has become more intense as a result of the Ukraine war. The Middle East remains a powder keg, as Israel battles with forces seeking her destruction and Iran

continues its quest for nuclear weapons. China continues to threaten Taiwan, nuclear armed India and Pakistan exchanged missiles in a brief conflict in May and there is continual conflict in countries like Sudan, Congo, Libya destroying people's lives and creating famine and death.

Is there a solution?

In 'The Machine Stops' the advanced technological system breaks down and can no longer support the lives that depend on it. The only solution is to get out of it, go back to nature and live in harmony with the earth. In the 'I Robot' film, the robots (machines) take over and slap a lockdown on the people 'for their own good' as happened in the Covid time. They can't do anything about it until the hero destroys VIKI and breaks her control over the robots.

We need something more than a Hollywood style superhero to save us. We need the Lord God Almighty. What is remarkable is that all these developments are prophesied in the Bible for the last days' scenario leading to the return of the Messiah Jesus. For example, the Bible describes an environmental catastrophe in the last days in which vegetation and trees are burned, fish die in the sea and the waters of the rivers become polluted (Revelation 8) as well as a time of great heat making life unbearable (Revelation 16).

There are also hints at the development of technology in the last days. According to Daniel 12.4 at ['the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge](#)

shall increase.' Daniel 12.4. In our time we have seen a great increase in world travel and in knowledge brought about by the development of technology.

Until relatively recently in human history, if you wanted to travel anywhere in the world, the fastest you could go was the speed of a horse. If you wanted to send a message anywhere the fastest you could do it was to write it down and give it to someone to carry at the speed of a horse to its destination. If you wanted to kill people in battle you had to do it one by one with sword, spear or arrow.

Now we can travel to the other side of the world in a day or two by plane and cross the average country in a few hours by car or train. We can send messages instantly anywhere in the world using phones and computers and see what is happening in distant countries as it takes place on our TV screens. Humans can kill thousands of people at the press of a button in one moment by missiles launched miles away from their target.

Technology has made some spectacular advances in our time, many of which have brought great benefits to people, giving us possessions, labour saving devices and comfort which previous generations could only have dreamed about. Advanced medicine has given us better healthcare, longer lives and recovery from diseases which would have shortened our lives in previous generations. Computers and the Internet have opened up an almost unlimited amount of information for us.

However, all this has its downside. We live in a world where technology is increasingly controlling the money system, pushing us towards a cashless society. Governments are working on the creation of Central Bank Digital Currencies. The ultimate goal is to replace cash and existing bank accounts and link our finances to a system dependent on electronic money centrally controlled by the state. Prophecy News Watch writes: 'Central Bank Digital Currencies aren't just digital cash--they're programmable, trackable, and controllable. You don't withdraw them. You don't stuff them under a mattress. In fact, you don't even own them. The government or central bank does. Your access to them can be turned on or off, as happens in China where the Chinese Communist Party has launched a digital yuan integrated with their "social credit system." Citizens who criticise the government, go to church outside state-approved circles, or even buy "excessive" religious materials can find their accounts limited or suspended.'

Another development on this front is what is known as 'CRISPR' gene editing technology which has been described as a technique for 'hacking humans.' According to an article entitled 'Transhumanism and The Future of Humanity: 7 Ways the World Will Change By 2030'. 'The coming years will usher in a number of body augmentation capabilities that will enable humans to be smarter, stronger, and more capable than we are today. We will also see increased use of implants ranging from brain microchips to subdermal (under the skin) RFID chips that allow users to

unlock doors or computer passwords with the wave of a hand.' These body augmentation capabilities will give rise to humans that are more resilient, optimised and continually monitored.'

Note the phrase 'continually monitored.' In the wrong hands this technology opens the way for a few powerful people to control the mass of humanity. This ties in with what the Bible says will happen in the last days immediately before the return of Jesus Christ.

One of the most concerning things about the development of technology is that it is creating the possibility of creating a new cashless financial system in which the famous 666 prophecy of the Book of Revelation could come into play.

In Revelation 13 we read of the Mark of the Beast prophecy which the world ruler known as the Antichrist or the Beast will bring in: 'He causes all both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast or the number of his name. 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.

When John wrote Revelation, buying and selling was done by coins or barter and it was hard to imagine any kind of system whereby you could use a number or a mark on a person's body to do this. Today it is not so hard to imagine. Already we are seeing cash being replaced by credit

cards which have a number unique to the person they belong to. We are now seeing developments in the area of biometric ID and blockchain technology which make the rest of this prophecy a possibility too.

This gives the bank (and potentially the government) the ability to check where people are getting their money from and so be used as a weapon in the battle against crime and tax evasion. They can also monitor every financial transaction you make from buying a house to a cup of coffee.

We cannot say for certain that this is how the mark of the beast system of Revelation 13 will work, but it is remarkable that advanced technology is developing the possibility of buying and selling without cash through a number on a device attached to or implanted in a person's body. Never before in human history has anything remotely like this been thought of or proposed. The possibility that this could be brought in is another sign that we are living in the last days before the return of Jesus Christ to the earth.

In Revelation 13 the mark of the Beast is not just about exchanging money. The beast has an associate, known as the False Prophet, who creates a new religion, setting up an image which people are told to worship. They receive the mark of the beast if they worship the image of the beast:

'He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed.' Revelation 13.15.

In previous times, the idea that an image could speak seemed impossible. In our time, it is easy to see how an image could be given power to speak. In fact, most people spend their time watching a speaking image on TV screens. We now have instant communication via computers which can be given the power to speak a message to the people. We also have holograms whereby a person can project an image of themselves which can speak as though they were there present.

Whatever the image and the mark of the beast turns out to be, if you find yourself living at the time when it comes into being, do not take the mark, because those who do so will be damned. Revelation 14.9-11 says: 'Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, "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, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation.'

Will it all collapse?

There are reasons why this whole system could collapse and destroy itself from a practical point of view. However, the reason it will ultimately collapse, is that it is at war with the living God. The Book of Revelation identifies the final world system as 'Babylon the Great' and pronounces its coming doom in Revelation chapter 18. When this collapse finally happens those who have left God out of their lives and invested everything in the Babylon world system will lose everything.

As Jesus said, 'What does it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul?' Matthew 16.26.

In Revelation 18 we see an angel coming down from heaven and pronouncing the coming fall of Babylon. In this chapter Babylon represents the present world economic and political system:

"Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage



for every unclean and hated bird! For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury."

And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. ... "The kings of the earth who committed fornication and lived luxuriously with her will weep and lament for her, when they see the smoke of her burning, standing at a distance for fear of her

torment, saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour your judgment has come.'

"And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, for no one buys their merchandise anymore: ... The merchants of these things, who became rich by her, will stand at a distance for fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, and saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city that was clothed in fine linen, purple, and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls! For in one hour such great riches came to nothing.' Every shipmaster, all who travel by ship, sailors, and as many as trade on the sea, stood at a distance and cried out when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, 'What is like this great city?' "They threw dust on their heads and cried out, weeping and wailing, and saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city, in which all who had ships on the sea became rich by her wealth! For in one hour she is made desolate.' Revelation 18.

We started this article thinking about a science fiction story 'The Machine Stops' about the collapse of a futuristic society that depends on the Machine for its existence. We conclude with this prophecy from the Book of Revelation which describes in some detail the coming total collapse of the present world system, which is here represented by the 'great city Babylon'.

When the Machine Stops and Babylon is destroyed, the Messiah Jesus will return with all the power of God, to judge the world in righteousness and

sort out the mess that humans have made of the world God gave us to look after. See Revelation chapter 19. Then chapter 20 describes the glorious 1000-year reign of the Messiah from restored Jerusalem, bringing peace and justice to the world (Isaiah 2) and the renewal of the natural world from the pollutions humans have brought upon it (Isaiah 11, 35, Psalm 72). Following that He will bring this world and this universe to an end and create a new one in which 'righteousness dwells' (2 Peter 3, Revelation 21).

Those who continue in Babylon will be lost forever, while those who come out of Babylon and put their trust in the Messiah Jesus will dwell forever with God in the New Jerusalem. So, before the Machine Stops (and it will) make sure you have secured your place in the coming Kingdom of God by putting your trust in its coming King – Jesus Christ, Yeshua the Messiah.



Israel, Iran and the Last Days' War



As I write this article on June 30, a ceasefire has been declared in the war between Israel and Iran. People are hoping that the misery of bombs and missiles falling will be over and some measure of peace may come. Others



a predicting another war with all the dangers that brings.

The basic reason for the recent war is quite simple to explain. Iran's Islamic revolutionary leaders and their allies in the region want to destroy Israel. Israel does not want to be destroyed. Israel went to war in order to deal with two threats to its existence - Iran developing nuclear weapons and producing ballistic missiles aimed at its territory.

Why does Iran want to destroy Israel?

Iran has no border with Israel and Tehran is about 1100 miles away from Jerusalem. The issue Israel has with the

Palestinians and its Arab neighbours does not directly affect Iran or its Persian people. Prior to the Islamic Revolution in 1979, Iran under the Shah was friendly to Israel and tolerant towards its Jewish population. Following the Revolution and the leaders of the Islamic Republic of Iran under Ayatollah Khomeini took the opposite view proclaiming America as the great Satan and Israel as the little Satan. It embraced an extreme apocalyptic version of Shiite Islam at war with Israel and the West. Some of its religious leaders believed this conflict would lead to the coming of the Mahdi, an Islamic saviour figure, who would then establish Islam as the one world religion.

Iran has been exporting its extreme Islamist ideology into the Arab world, building up its 'ring of fire', arming terrorist groups allied to it in Gaza (Hamas), Lebanon (Hezbollah), Iraq and Yemen (Houthis) with thousands of missiles, while openly declaring its ultimate goal – the destruction of Israel. As a result of Israeli action since the October 7th attack from Gaza and the Syrian revolution against Assad, much of the Arab base for Iran's operations has been severely weakened.

Few Iranians support the regime, with estimates of around 15% in favour of the Islamic government. Thousands have fled the country and in the Iranian diaspora

the regime has virtually nil support. Most Iranians just want to get on with their lives without Islam being forced upon them. They would rather see the great resources that Iran possesses being used to build up their own country. They would like the chronic problems in their economy and their environment fixed. They don't want their leaders to waste time and money on useless wars and production of weapons of destruction to kill people in conflicts that have nothing to do with them.

Israelis do not want to be at war with Iran or with their Arab neighbours. They would rather share the astonishing achievements they have made in their land, in agriculture, in medicine, in developing technology and so on with their neighbours. They would like to help them to live free and prosperous lives and live in peace. But they don't want to be destroyed or killed or terrorised by their neighbours and so they take steps to defend themselves.

Who can blame them? Well, practically everyone as it turns out. On October 7th the Gaza war started after Hamas (backed by Iran) launched its attack on Israel in the worst single day pogrom against the Jews since the Holocaust. The result has been terrible for both Jews and Arabs, with images of bombed out buildings in Gaza and suffering Palestinians appearing regularly on TV, while Israel has suffered the trauma of its hostages being taken and the effects of war on their lives and economy.

Everyone blames Israel for what has

happened. All over the world people are joining demonstrations against Israel. Generally they ignore the real cause of all the suffering, Iran and its allies, who are driven by the desire to destroy Israel. Hamas' leaders sacrifice their own people in the cause, putting their weapons and command posts in civilian areas, stealing the aid provided for them and then putting the blame on Israel for their plight.

The true promise

According to an article in Israel Today: 'What we are witnessing is not just another war in the Middle East. It is a clash of promises, of prophetic visions, of messianic expectations. The war between Israel and Iran is more than a political confrontation; it is a frontline in salvation history. Muslims speak of "the true promise," a phrase which has a strong connection to Islamic, especially Shiite, theology and end-time rhetoric. It refers to Allah's assurance that the enemies of Islam – the unbelievers such as Israel and the USA – will one day be defeated. The war exists as a contest between two narratives: the Jewish-Zionist one on the one side and the Islamic one on the other.

In Jewish understanding the return of the Jewish people to the Land of Israel is the fulfilment of the biblical promise, the covenant of God with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: "To your descendants I will give this land." (Genesis 12:7).

By contrast, the Iranian-Islamic counter-narrative, the "true promise," has its own

messianic end-time theology in which the struggle against Israel plays a central role. It refers to Koranic verses in which Allah promises the victory of the believers over the unbelievers. In Shiite Islam it is believed that the "hidden Imam," the Mahdi, will return and, with Isa at his side, defeat evil, with Israel portrayed as an obstacle to this redemption. (Isa is the Islamic Jesus who is totally different and opposed to the true Jesus or Yeshua, revealed in the New Testament). The "true promise" is therefore also a code word for the final battle against the "Zionist regime."

We are not witnessing a mere power struggle but a spiritually charged conflict. It is not only about territories or strategic interests but about the authority to interpret history, salvation, and the will of God. In the end a decision looms: Which promise do we believe? We here in the land of Israel believe in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and that He fulfils His promise. That is what we defend. Today. With heart, mind, and our very lives.' Aviel Schneider.

So, what does God say?

According to the Bible a number of things will happen in the Middle East in the last days of this age. Israel and Jerusalem will be the epicentre of biblical end time events, when the Jewish people return to the land of Israel. In the Bible God says:

'For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. ... Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers;

you shall be My people, and I will be your God.' Ezekiel 36.24-28

There will be opposition to this from the nations round about:

'For behold, Your enemies make a tumult; and those who hate You have lifted up their head. 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.' Psalm 83.2-4.

There will be a conflict over who rules Jerusalem:

Thus says the Lord ... "And it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples; all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it." Zechariah 12.2-3.

The Lord will come in the person of the returning Messiah to save Israel and the world from destruction.

'Then the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations, as He fights in the day of battle. And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east.' Zechariah 14.1-9.

Before this happens, the Hebrew prophets speak of two contradictory events that will take place. In the book of Daniel 9.27 we read of a world leader who will confirm "a covenant with many for one week" (Hebrew shavua / seven which can also mean a seven year

period). This covenant is interpreted to mean a peace covenant between Israel and its neighbours that will be made for a seven year period, but will break down half way through (after three and a half years) leading to the final event with the coming of the Messiah.

News has just been released that senior Israeli officials, backed by US envoy Steve Witkoff, suggest that several unexpected nations are preparing to join the Abraham Accords. Some of these, such as Syria and Lebanon, have been traditional enemies of Israel for decades. Now, under growing US pressure and amid dramatic regional realignments, these nations may soon take historic steps toward peace and normalisation.

Multiple reports now indicate that the US is applying pressure to have the war in Gaza end in a matter of weeks, with Egypt, the UAE, and two other Arab nations assuming administrative control over Gaza. Hamas will be dismantled and exiled. Hostages will be released. Some Gazans will be granted asylum abroad.

According to high-level sources, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, and perhaps even Iraq may join the Abraham Accords. In exchange, Israel is expected to express conditional openness to a two-state solution, so long as the Palestinian Authority undergoes sweeping reforms. Meanwhile, the United States will offer recognition of limited Israeli sovereignty over parts of Judea and Samaria.

These dramatic moves follow a regional power shift caused by Iran's defeat and the crumbling of its regional influence.

Abdul Hussain writes in the New York Post, "Without Iran breathing down their necks, its neighbours can focus on their own national interests. That means peace with Israel."

Billboards now appearing in Tel Aviv promote a "New Middle East" and the so-called "Abraham Shield Plan." These ads feature Donald Trump alongside leaders of Saudi Arabia, Oman, and UAE, and also leaders of Lebanon, Qatar, and Syria. These latter nations have historically been hostile toward Israel. But now, peace may be not just possible, but imminent.

For those who follow biblical prophecy, the idea of many nations coming together in a peace agreement with Israel immediately brings Daniel 9:27 to mind: *"And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease..."*

Bible prophecy scholars have long interpreted this as a reference to a future world leader, the Antichrist, who will not necessarily create a new peace treaty, but confirm an existing one. That word "confirm" implies something already in existence, perhaps partial or tentative, that this leader enforces or finalises with authority.

As we watch nations line up for peace, we must remember that biblical peace is not merely the absence of war, it is the presence of truth, righteousness, and the Messiah Himself. The Antichrist's peace will be counterfeit. It will be seductive. It will offer the world what it craves: safety,

prosperity, unity, but at the price of truth and ultimately, at the cost of Israel's trust.

The Abraham Accords may very well be a tremendous good in the present. Who could argue against hostages being freed, Gaza being liberated from Hamas, and Arab nations coming together to live at peace with Israel? But we are warned in Scripture that even good beginnings can be used by evil ends.

Already, we are hearing of dramatic U.S. pressure on Israeli leaders. Prime Minister Netanyahu is expected to visit Washington soon, where the final pieces of this emerging agreement may be laid. The presence of an outside power, acting as broker, protector, and guarantor, aligns strikingly with Daniel's forecast. Information from Prophecy News Watch.

There are also passages which speak of war coming, especially the War of Gog and Magog involving an alliance of countries coming against Israel in the latter days (Ezekiel 38-9). Ezekiel 38.5 names Persia as a leading member of this alliance. There are different opinions about the timing of the War of Gog and Magog. According to some commentators the War of Gog and Magog could be imminent. Others say that it is the same as Armageddon, the last war before the Messiah returns. Whenever it happens it is clear that Iran / Persia will join the line-up of nations working for the destruction of Israel. The Gog and Magog prophecy indicates that God will intervene at that time and save Israel. Ezekiel 38.18-39.29.

Jeremiah 49 speaks about Elam (the biblical name for the western part of modern Iran).

Thus says the Lord of hosts: "Behold, I will break the bow of Elam, the mainstay of their might. And I will bring upon Elam the four winds from the four quarters of heaven. And I will scatter them to all those winds, and there shall be no nation to which those driven out of Elam shall not come. I will bring disaster upon them, my fierce anger, declares the Lord. I will send the sword after them, until I have consumed them, and I will set my throne in Elam and destroy their king and officials, declares the Lord. "But in the latter days I will restore the fortunes of Elam, declares the Lord." Jeremiah 49:35-39.

One for Israel writes 'In Jeremiah 49 we read of a time in the "latter days" when the people of Elam will be scattered across the world. Elam is one of the ancient kingdoms that made up ancient Persia, today part of Iran. The scattering of Iranian people happened as a result of the Islamic revolution in the late 1970s and 80s, and up to today. As a result, both of the cruel Iranian regime and also fleeing to Christian countries, many Iranians have left Islam and found faith in Yeshua (Jesus).

Jeremiah describes the judgement coming to the leaders: God will "break the bow" of Elam, the "mainstay of their might". This sounds very much like their capacity to fire weapons. We also see that God will "destroy their king and officials", that the leaders will be taken out. Lastly, we see that in the "latter days" God plans to "restore the fortunes" of the people, which is good news for the people of Iran! This is our hope and our prayer: the breaking of the bow, the deposing of leaders, freedom for the captives... and God's glorious kingdom coming to Iran.'

The time of Jacob's trouble

It may be that the restoration of Elam spoken of here will only come with the return of the Messiah and the kingdom to be established worldwide after His return. Before that time there will be a time of great tribulation, as Jesus prophesied in Matthew 24. The Hebrew prophet Jeremiah also spoke of such a time in chapter 30 of his prophecy, the period known as the time of Jacob's trouble. There are strong connections between the time of Jacob's trouble in Jeremiah 30 and the Great Tribulation time described in Matthew 24.

In Jeremiah 30-31 the prophet looks beyond his main theme, the captivity of the Jewish people in Babylon, to an event in the distant future, indeed the last days of this age. In chapter 30 verse 24 we read: 'In the latter days you will consider it.' In these days there will be a time of great trouble which will centre on Israel after the return of the Jewish people to the land: For behold, the days are coming," says the Lord, "that I will bring back from captivity My people Israel and Judah," says the Lord. "And I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it.'" Jeremiah 30.2-3.'

This return will be followed by a time of unique trouble, known as the time of Jacob's trouble: For thus says the Lord: 'We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. Ask now, and see, whether a man is ever in labour with child? So why do I see every man with his hands on his loins like a woman in labour,

and all faces turned pale? Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it; and it is the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it.' Jeremiah 30.5-7.

At this time many people will be looking for peace but instead will find a time of trembling and fear. The time of trouble is also referred to as the pains of a woman in labour. This image is used elsewhere in scripture of the last days troubles coming on the earth. See Isaiah 21.3, 1 Thessalonians 5.3. In answer to the disciples' question about the time of His return, Jesus gave these events as signs: '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.' Matthew 24.7-8.

The word used for sorrows here implies the pains of a woman in labour. In other words when you see these things increasing, know that the stage is being set for the final prophecies of the Bible to be fulfilled. When a woman goes into labour she experiences a series of shocks, or contractions that become more intense the nearer she gets to the birth of the child. All this applies to the end time scenario – a series of painful events will take place, which cannot be reversed until the birth of the child. When this process reaches its conclusion, in this case the return of the Messiah, those who are expecting and looking for this event will be filled with joy at the fulfilment of their hopes.

God promises to save Israel out of this time of trouble and to bring them to

serve the Lord: 'Therefore do not fear, O My servant Jacob,' says the Lord, 'nor be dismayed, O Israel; For behold, I will save you from afar, and your seed from the land of their captivity. ... For I am with you,' says the Lord, 'to save you; though I make a full end of all nations where I have scattered you, yet I will not make a complete end of you. But I will correct you in justice, and will not let you go altogether unpunished.' Verses 10-11.

In this process God will correct something that Israel has got wrong. What God wants to correct is the Jewish understanding of the identity of the Messiah and the new covenant. In Jeremiah 31.31-34 we read that God will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, which will replace the covenant He made with them through Moses after the Exodus: "Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. ... This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

God's purpose is to bring Jews and Gentiles into the new covenant, whereby our sins are forgiven, and we come to know the Lord and have His law

written on our hearts. The new covenant is mediated through the Messiah Yeshua (Jesus Christ). Before the crucifixion, Jesus gathered the disciples together and held a Passover meal with them in which He reinterpreted the familiar symbols of bread and wine, referring them to His body which was about to be crucified, and His blood that would be shed for the redemption of the world. He described this as bringing in 'the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you'. Luke 22.19-20.

In the midst of the troubles of the last days and Israel's God will draw Jewish people to Himself. Zechariah 12.10 prophesies the revelation of one who has been pierced in the last days. 'And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.'

Jesus died by crucifixion, having His hands and feet pierced in fulfilment of prophecy (Psalm 22, Isaiah 53). Recognising Yeshua as the Messiah will cause a fountain of blessing to flow out to the Jewish people in the last days for cleansing from uncleanness (Zechariah 13.1). Jesus said that at the end the Jewish people would welcome Him with the traditional greeting for the coming of the Messiah: "For I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!'" Matthew 23.39.

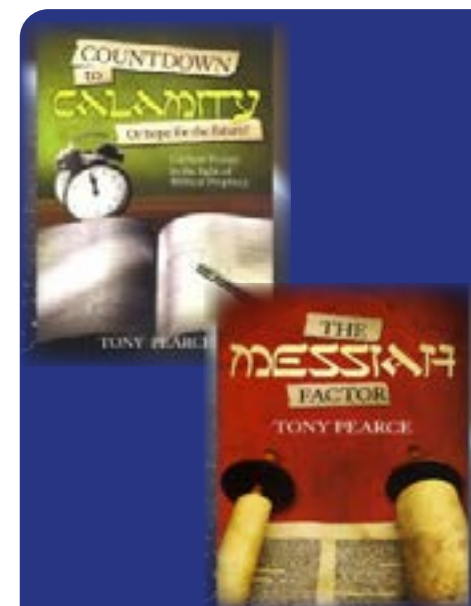
Out of this recognition of the Messiah will come a spectacular intervention of God which will deliver Israel from the assault of the hostile nations and cause the end of this age and the beginning of the Messianic Age or Millennium. In that day God will correct Israel's big mistake, the wrong understanding of the Messiah by the religious leadership and majority of Jewish people. Bible prophecy in the Tenach (Old Testament) and its fulfilment in the New Testament shows that Jesus is Yeshua ha Mashiach, the Messiah who fulfilled the prophecies of the Suffering Servant Messiah and is coming again to fulfil the prophecies of the Reigning King Messiah.

There have always been Jews who believed in Jesus, with a Messianic movement of Jewish believers in Jesus today that is growing in number. A number of biblical prophecies indicate that in the last days there will be a great turning to the Lord amongst Jewish people with the revelation of Yeshua as the Messiah. Then He will return and bring in the Messianic kingdom age in which they will know the Lord and His peace, and the hostile nations will be defeated. He will reign from Jerusalem bringing an end to war and peace to Jerusalem and the Jewish people and the whole world. In that day the famous prophecy of Isaiah will be fulfilled:

'Many people shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge

between the nations, and rebuke many people; they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.' Isaiah 2.1-4.

As current events take on a prophetic turn, not just in the Middle East, only the God of the Bible offers a hope for the future. So now is the time to turn to Him through the Messiah Yeshua / Jesus before it's too late.



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CHRISTIANITY 2.0

Christianity for the Modern Age

Has God changed His mind?



Because of the changes in modern thinking, God has been forced to adapt to this, and has had to bring his ways into line with today's men and women, and so he has brought his plans up to date ... thus:

'Christianity 2.0' - or God's 10-point plan 'B.'

Mark Harrison has put together some quotes of popular contemporary opinions about 2.0 God and Christianity that are heard in today's secular western culture. We list them here:

1. ALL RELIGIONS LEAD TO GOD

"Even the Pope and the King say so." "Christianity is just one religion amongst many." "My religion is whatever I choose it to be - I take the best bits from all of them and believe that."

2. EVERYONE IS A CHRISTIAN

"I am a Christian because I try to be kind to people. Just because I don't go to church, read or believe the Bible doesn't mean I'm not a Christian." "I follow the 'golden rule' and most of the 10 commandments - therefore I am OK."

3. EVERYONE GOES TO HEAVEN WHEN THEY DIE

"I know my dad / mum / uncle / aunt / second cousin / next door neighbour is looking down on me and watching over me." "I am a good person therefore I will go to heaven (if there is a heaven)" "There is no such thing as hell and anyone who says different is a liar."

4. JESUS WAS A GOOD MAN

"It was a shame he had to die like that."

5. THE BIBLE IS A GOOD BOOK

"I am quite capable of deciding for myself which bits are true, and which are not, and anyway it's full of mistakes, and it was written by men of another age and is therefore not relevant to now." "It's full of stories for children, but not much use when you get older and can think for yourself."

6. OLD TESTAMENT GOD IS DIFFERENT FROM NEW TESTAMENT GOD

"He's much kinder now - a lot less angry." "My god is whatever I choose him / her / it to be." "I think god is already dead - and we didn't need him anyway."

7. GOD HAS CHANGED HIS MIND ABOUT THE WAY WE LIVE

"He used to think that homosexuality and cross-dressing were wrong - He's realised his mistake and has changed his mind." "The Church of England, Methodists, Church of Scotland and others all agree - they can't all be wrong." "God may have started with only two sexes but since then we have developed loads more." "Killing babies is OK now - I have ownership of my own body, and have the right to decide what happens to it."

8. EVERYTHING IS LOVE - GOD IS LOVE

"He now accepts anyone into heaven (except really bad people of course)" "The rainbow is there to remind people that God loves and accepts all people regardless of their sexual preferences."

9. CHURCH IS A RELIGIOUS SOCIAL CLUB

"It's where I meet all my friends for a chat and coffee. We do a lot of charity work and have raised hundreds of pounds for the church by selling things." "I go to church on special occasions like Easter, Christmas. I love singing the carols, and of course weddings and funerals - although most people aren't married or buried by the church any longer - it's a lot less fuss that way - but I do like a church wedding it's so romantic."

10. SIN IS AN OLD-FASHIONED CONCEPT

"No-one believes in it anymore - not even God."

These may be the popular opinions of many people today, but they are
WRONG, WRONG, WRONG.
This is what the real God of the Bible says.

1. ALL RELIGIONS LEAD TO GOD. NO, NO, NO

No religion leads to God. God is holy and we are not. God is separate from evil and from this present world's darkness. There is an absolute gulf between all human beings and God, caused by our sin and disobedience to God which no one can cross by their own efforts or religion. Religious rituals, recitation of prayers, attempts to do good works, give money to charity, cannot cross this gulf. As the Bible says, '**All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. ... There is none righteous, no not one.**' Romans 3.10, 23. Only faith in the true Gospel of Jesus Christ can bring us to God. Jesus said, "**I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.**" John 14.6. In other words, there is only one way to God through Jesus Christ.

2. EVERYONE IS A CHRISTIAN. NO, NO, NO

To be a Christian is not to be a kind person or occasionally attend religious services or be born into a nominally Christian family. Millions of people may call themselves Christian but only a very small minority of human beings on earth today really know and understand the message of Jesus Christ.

He said, "**You must be born again**" and "**unless one is born of the Spirit ... he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.**" John 3.6-8. To be born again we must repent of our sins and believe the Gospel, that Jesus Christ died for our sins, was buried and rose again on the third day. 1 Corinthians 15.3-4. If we do this, we are on the narrow road that leads to life. If we don't, we are on the broad road that leads to destruction. Matthew 7.13-14. It's that simple.

3. EVERYONE GOES TO HEAVEN WHEN THEY DIE. NO, NO, NO

Once we die there is an absolute separation between those who go to heaven and those who go to hell. Heaven is described as a place where God dwells: "**Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.**" Revelation 21.3-4. Only the people who have made their peace with God in this life by calling on the name of Jesus for salvation will go to heaven.

The alternative is hell which is a real place you don't want to go to. In Revelation 20:12-15 we read: 'And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. ... And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.' Boycott hell. Believe the Gospel now and turn to Jesus Christ.

4. JESUS WAS A GOOD MAN. YES AND NO

Jesus was totally good, without sin. But He was much more than a good man. He was / is God Almighty, who became flesh (took on human form – John 1:1-14) in order to redeem us (save us from our sins). He took the penalty for sin, the punishment we deserve, by dying for us on the cross as the final sacrifice for sin. He then rose again from the dead to give forgiveness of sin and eternal life to all who repent and believe the Gospel. Paul wrote: Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. 2 Corinthians 5:17-19.

5. THE BIBLE IS A GOOD BOOK. YES AND NO

The Bible is a good book – or The Good Book, which tells us the truth about God. At the same time, it is the unique word of God, revealed by the Holy Spirit to men of old containing timeless truths which apply to us all today. It is not full of mistakes. Its analysis of what is wrong with humanity (the sin problem, the activity of the devil, human mismanagement of the earth) is totally relevant to the modern world. The Bible also contains prophecies of the end times which are being fulfilled today. There is evidence in archaeology and history that events recorded in the Bible really happened. We acknowledge there are difficulties in interpretation of some passages and genuine questions people have about its contents. But there are answers to these, which anyone who genuinely seeks them can find. Books like 'Evidence that demands a verdict' by Josh McDowell (available on Amazon) are useful in providing such answers.

6. THE OLD TESTAMENT GOD IS NOT THE SAME AS THE NEW TESTAMENT. NO, BUT ...

God does not change in His nature. He exists from eternity to eternity and does not change in any way or form. He is the same God in both Old and New Testaments. It is true that the way God communicates His truth has changed from the Old Testament to the New Testament. Most of the Hebrew Bible is about God's dealings with Israel in the light of His Law (Torah). This is found in

Exodus 20 (the 10 Commandments) and following chapters which tell us about the covenant God made with Israel through Moses at Sinai. Details of this are also found in the books of Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. The book of Deuteronomy, which means the second reading of the Law, teaches that God would bless His people when they walk in obedience to Him and bring judgement on them when they disobey (see chapters 4-7, 28). The historical and prophetic books of the Old Testament show the outworking of these principles. To put it simply, good things (blessings from God) happened to Israel when they obeyed the Lord and bad things (judgements) happened when they didn't.

God also promised that He would bring the Messiah to Israel, with prophecies which relate to the coming of Jesus fulfilled in passages like Isaiah 53 and Psalm 22. We have an article on Messianic prophecies fulfilled by Jesus, available on request. God promised the coming of a new covenant which would fulfil the former covenant with Moses (Jeremiah 31:31-34). This covenant is now revealed in the New Testament, sealed in the blood of Jesus as the final sacrifice for the sin of the world (Matthew 26:28-9, Hebrews 7-9). Today God is reaching out to all humanity, Jewish and Gentile, mediating His truth through the Holy Spirit to those who call on the name of Jesus for salvation. Jesus affirmed the Old Testament as the Word of God. When asked 'Which is the greatest commandment'

He quoted from Leviticus and Deuteronomy saying, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.'" Matthew 22:37-39.



7. GOD HAS CHANGED HIS MIND ABOUT THE WAY WE LIVE. NO, NO, NO

Homosexuality, transsexuality, killing babies in the womb by abortion are all wrong in the sight of God. Leviticus 18:22, Romans 1:18-32. That does not mean that God hates the people who do such things – He loves them and wants them to repent and turn to Him and receive forgiveness. But God does not change His mind to fit in with the fads and desires of modern philosophies and lifestyles. He tells us to change our minds and fit in with His unchanging moral laws. Modern church leaders can say what they like, as they try to be fashionable and curry favour with those who follow the

shifting values of our time. However, unless they teach what God says in the Bible they will lose out and lead people to hell not heaven. Jesus says to such church leaders, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves nor do you allow those who are entering to go in." Matthew 23.13.

8. EVERYTHING IS LOVE - GOD IS LOVE. YES AND NO

The Bible does say 'God is love' (1 John 4.15). But there is a condition for knowing the love of God. In context this verse says: 'We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Saviour of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.' 1 John 4.14-16. In other words, to know the love of God you must first believe that God sent Jesus into the world and walk in love yourself. God certainly does not love the things people do in the world today, killing, lying, stealing, living in immorality, fouling up the planet He gave us to look after and so on. In fact, He hates all this, and it is under His wrath. The wrath of God against sin is another very important aspect of God's nature. God's wrath is reserved for the devil or the 'god of this world' and all those who are part of his kingdom which is heading for the coming Day of Judgement. God

wants us to turn to Him and receive forgiveness and so be under His blessing not His judgement.

9. CHURCH IS A RELIGIOUS SOCIAL CLUB. NO, NO, NO

The Greek word used for church in the New Testament is ecclesia, meaning 'called out' ones. It is not a building, an organisation and certainly not a social club. It is made up of people, described by Peter as 'living stones', who have been saved, or called out of this world by faith in Jesus, in order to give praise to God in their lives (1 Peter 2.5). A church meeting is a place where people who believe in Jesus meet together to remember Him, to learn about Him and to practice the things taught in the Bible. Jesus said, "'Where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.'" (Matthew 18.20). In other words, it may be as few as two people meeting together in a house or two thousand in a church building. What makes the difference is whether they are gathered in Jesus' name with Him present in their midst.

True churches exist around the world, some in large buildings where the message of the Gospel is preached, some in small groups of persecuted believers meeting in secret in lands where the Gospel is suppressed by antichristian forces. Jesus said, 'I will build My church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it'. Matthew 16.18. What matters in the eyes of God is whether or not Jesus is present

in the lives of the people meeting together. If He is, then He is there in their midst. If not then, yes, it is a religious social club, and it is a waste of time going there.

10. SIN IS AN OLD-FASHIONED CONCEPT. NO, NO, NO

Every time you pick up a newspaper or watch the TV news you see abundant evidence of the sins of humanity. Lust, greed, hatred, deception that's what it's all about. You might like to think the word 'sin' is old fashioned and it is true that most people don't like to talk about it today, including most of the church. But it is sin that spoils our lives and the society we live in. Jesus said: "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. These are the things which defile a man." Matthew 15.19-20.

Paul wrote: 'Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth, fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him ... As the elect of God, holy and beloved, put

on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.' Colossians 3.3-16.

CONCLUSION

The first part of this article gives you some of the things people say today. The second part tells us what God says. One is true and the other is untrue. You have a choice to make, which one you will believe. It's very important that you make the right choice and believe the true Gospel. It makes all the difference between life and death, heaven and hell. I can tell you the facts of the matter, but only you can make the decision to accept salvation in Jesus Christ. Do it now. Here are the steps you should take.

The fact is that God does love us. He wants us to have a wonderful future in His kingdom by putting our faith in Jesus Christ. Here is what we must do:

1. Understand that God loves us and wants to give us eternal life:

'For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.' John 3.16.



Signs of the Times

2. Realise that by nature we are all sinners and separated from God because of sin:

'For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.' Romans 3.23.

'For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.' Romans 6.23.

3. Accept that Jesus Christ is God's only provision for sin:

'But God demonstrates His love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us.' Romans 5.8.

'Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures and He was buried and rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.'

1 Corinthians 15.3-4.

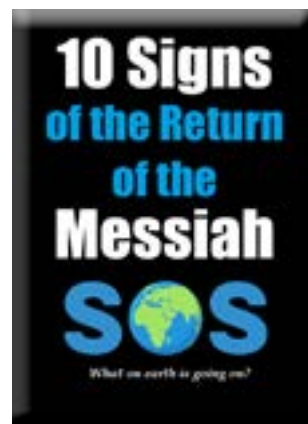
4. Receive Jesus personally as Saviour and Lord:

'As many as received Him to them He gave the right to become children of God to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.' John 1.12.

If you have not yet done this, and would like to, here is a prayer you can pray to accept Jesus as your Saviour:

'Dear Heavenly Father, I admit that I am a sinner and need your forgiveness. I believe that Jesus Christ died in my place, shedding His blood to pay for my sins, and that He rose again from the dead to give me eternal life. I am willing right now to turn from my sin and accept Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour and Lord. I commit my life to you and ask you to help me become the kind of person you want me to be. Thank you Father for loving me. In Jesus' name, Amen.'

For more information send for the booklet '10 Signs of the Return of the Messiah' and 'Knowing God Personally.' If you don't have a Bible let us know and we will send you one.



The Passing of the Pope

Pope Francis, head of the Roman Catholic Church, home to 1 ½ billion Catholics died on April 21st. His funeral was a huge gathering, including world leaders and cardinals and bishops arrayed in purple and scarlet, in St Peter's Square, Rome, where the power of this church and its worldwide reach was on show. The papacy has a political as well as religious presence on the world scene with its own state in the Vatican in Rome, observer status at the UN and embassies (Apostolic Nunciatures) through which it conducts diplomatic relations with nations around the world.

There were tributes to Francis for his good works, care for the poor, for refugees, for the environment, his pastoral heart and love for people. He was described as the 'People's Pope'. Cardinal Re, giving the homily said 'Pope Francis was 'among the people with a heart towards everyone ... and was attentive to the signs of the times and what the Holy Spirit was awakening in the church. He always sought to shed light on the problems of our times with the wisdom of the Gospel.'

The question is which Gospel? For Bible believing Christians, there is a huge gulf between Roman Catholic Church and New Testament Christianity. Peter was not the first Pope, and the traditions of Roman

Catholicism did not originate with the apostolic teaching of the first generation of Christians. Its teachings on the Mass, transubstantiation, the celibacy of clergy, purgatory, prayers to Mary and the saints, the institution of the Papacy itself, are all contrary to the teaching of scripture. It emerged as a power force in Europe following the fall of the Roman Empire in 476AD and the transition from the pagan Roman Empire to the 'Holy' Roman Empire with the Code of Justinian in 538AD as a turning point. Rome then became an instrument of suppression of authentic Christianity and persecution of the Jewish people, dominating Europe until the Reformation challenged its authority.

Without going into more historical details, I want to highlight two major issues relating to Pope Francis' teaching that conflict not just with Biblical teaching and belief, but also with traditional Catholic teaching.

1. Should God's laws be re-interpreted in the light of modern social practice, particularly in the area of sexuality?

2. Is there one way or many ways to God?

Francis was definitely a reformer, who was open to the relativistic morality of our age. He said 'No' to judgementalism and flung the church's doors open to everyone 'without censure'. He

said even good atheists would go to heaven. In response to a question about whether gay men could serve as priests, he replied 'Who am I to judge?' The left leaning 'Independent' newspaper wrote: 'The pope's gone woke – and we should celebrate.' They even called him 'queer friendly' after he okayed priestly blessings for same-sex unions in certain circumstances, and acceptance of LGBT communities. He won the favour of liberal left elites in the west, who for the most part are 'post-God' and created a conflict within the RC church between traditionalists and liberals. His critics accused him of becoming 'open to moral confusion' and following the 'post-truth delirium of the new elites' (Brendan O'Neill writing in Spiked). O'Neill, born a Catholic, now an atheist, wrote perceptively 'Approaching life 'without censure' can leave one dangerously exposed to voguish delusions. Absent conviction, even the earthly representative of God can end up a representative of earthly follies.'

On the question of 'Who am I to judge?', Jesus words in the Sermon on the Mount "Judge not that you be not judged" are often taken by liberals to say we must not pass judgement on others. In the context of Matthew 7 we see that Jesus is saying don't condemn people for things that you do yourself; "For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you." He says, take the plank out of your own eye before you take the speck out of your brother's eye.

The Bible does not say we are not to speak against sinful practices and warn people not to follow in them. Romans 1 specifically condemns homosexual practice and other behaviours that are contrary to the will of God and concludes with a word 'that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.' (Romans 1.32). In other words, church leaders are under an obligation from God to warn against such behaviours. If they approve them, they are under God's judgement as much as the person who practices them. Failure to do this is a major reason for the decline in Christianity today, especially in the Church of England.

The other issue is the multi faith agenda versus biblical evangelism. In 2016 Pope Francis released a video in which he clearly expresses his belief that all of the major religions are different paths to the same God. He says that people from various global faiths may be 'seeking God or meeting God in different ways' and that it is important to keep in mind that 'we are all children of God'. While speaking in Singapore in September of 2024, he said "There's only one God, and each of us has a language to arrive at God. Some are Sikh, Muslim, Hindu, Christian, and they are different paths to God. In this crowd, in this range of religions, there is only one certainty that we have for all: we are all children of God." This is a clear denial of Jesus' word, "I am the Way, the truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father but by Me." John 14.6.

The New Testament makes it clear that the Pope is wrong when he says we are all 'children of God'. In Ephesians 2.1-3 Paul writes: 'And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.' It may seem scandalous to say this, but in New Testament terms we are children of the devil in our natural form. We become children of God through receiving Jesus as Saviour and Lord as we repent of sin and believe the Gospel, being born again of the Holy Spirit: 'He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.' John 1.10-12.

While he spoke of all 'people of faith' being 'children of God', he has also spoken against those who believe in a literal interpretation of scripture (fundamentalists) and those who wish to preach the Gospel to those of other faiths. He called 'Proselytism' (a negative word for evangelism) 'solemn nonsense' and said that we need to 'get to know each other and listen to each other'.

In other words, we need to engage in dialogue but not preach the Gospel to people of other faiths.

In 2019 he signed a Document on Human Fraternity along with the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar in Cairo, Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, (the highest authority in Sunni Islam, a kind of Muslim Pope if you like), a commitment to work with Muslims as equals in the area of faith. This states that 'Differences in religion, skin colour, gender, race and language are expressions of the wisdom of God's will. ... Any incident of coercion to a particular religion and religious doctrine is unacceptable.'

It actually goes a bit further than that. The idea that all religions are different paths to the same God coincides with the globalisation agenda that looks for the coming together of religions as an important building block of the process. In 2015 he called for the Catholic Church, 'working with the leadership of other religions' to lead 'a bold and humanitarian action by the world's religions acting in unison' to back the UN's sustainable development goals.' He was a major speaker at the UN's '2030 Agenda' in September 2015 in which he proposed a kind of benign world government to sort out the ills of the planet.

The book of Revelation speaks of a non-benign world government at the end of days under the power of the devil and antichrist (Rev 13), backed by the Babylon religious system of Revelation 17. This Babylon religion persecutes those who are true to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Scripture tells us to 'Come

out of her (Babylon), my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues.' Revelation 18.4.

Our call is to follow the Lord Jesus who said, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

Hell and Disorder

Dominic Lawson, who describes himself as 'non religious', wrote an article in the Daily Mail with the headline, 'It may seem an archaic notion, but the loss of a belief in Hell has had a profoundly destructive effect on civil order.'

He begins by quoting BBC commentator John Hunt who made a statement at the trial of the murderer Kyle Clifford, who killed his wife and two of their daughters by saying: 'Whatever sentence you are about to receive, remember that after your days on Earth are done, on your dying day, there will be no release for you. The screams of Hell, Kyle, I can hear them now. Your miserable fate will last for eternity.'

Mr Lawson comments, 'The idea of Hell is almost entirely absent from public discourse. It is now almost never mentioned in church sermons let alone the courtroom. My wife, a Catholic, recalls that in the 1960s a priest told her, "The fact that Hell is not mentioned much now is the Devil's work. And he is doing very well out of it."

The loss of the fear of eternal damnation encourages people to think they can get away with behaviour that might, in that priest's view, consign them to Hell.'

He quotes former Conservative MP John Patten who wrote an article in the Spectator in 1992: 'Fear of eternal damnation was the message reinforced through attendance at church every week. The loss of that fear has meant a critical motive has been lost to young people when they decide whether to be good citizens or to be criminals.' In other words, the belief in the possibility of divine punishment for human wickedness has a restraining effect on people's behaviour whether they are religious or not.

He quotes a paper entitled 'Divergent Effects of Beliefs in Heaven and Hell on National Crime Rates', which emphasised the crucial point that eternal damnation was not just a disincentive to crime, but the fact that the Judge is an all-knowing God, which meant that no crime would be unobserved. That is not something which could be achieved by even the most efficient of secular justice systems, with millions of CCTV cameras. 'Unlike humans, the divine punisher can be omniscient, omnipotent, infallible and untouchable and therefore able to deter transgressors who may for whatever reason be undeterred by earthly policing systems.' As a result, belief that there may be a hell after death has a 'strong negative effect on crime.'

He is right that the removal of the fear of hell is a contributing factor to bad

behaviour in society. 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.' Without it we are left with the foolish and lawless society we endure today. In fact, deterrents have been removed at all levels of our society. As a former schoolteacher, I have memories of battling with constant disruptive behaviour in the classroom and having virtually no deterrent available to punish it. As a pupil at school in the late 50s and early 60s, there was always the possibility of getting the cane if you behaved badly or disrupted the lessons. Spare the rod and spoil the child. Not now. Parents too are being discouraged from disciplining their children, leading to a generation of unruly young people at risk of being corrupted by evil influences around them. As a result, the justice system is collapsing, with overcrowded prisons where criminal activity carries on as on the outside, and anti-social behaviour plaguing our public spaces, along with violence, drug pushing, shop lifting and so on.

Of course, we thank God that He is forgiving and that there is the prospect of even the worst of sinners, repenting and receiving salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. But we need to remember that He is also a just God and that it is 'a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God,' (Hebrews 10.31), for those who are unrepentant sinners. Jesus Himself spoke often of Hell: "But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him!" Luke 12.5. So don't go there. Believe the good news that Jesus Christ died for our sins and rose again from the dead to pay the price of human sin so we might go to heaven.

You'll Need Digital ID To Travel- Then To Live

WWDC 2025 was Apple's annual Worldwide Conference when it revealed the latest wonders of high tech to a watching world. One such 'exciting new feature' was 'iOS 26' which will soon allow users to store digital passport IDs in Apple Wallet. What sounds like a nifty travel perk is in fact a giant leap toward a future where digital identification isn't just helpful--it's required. First for flights. Then for logging into websites. Eventually, for participating in society at all. Governments and corporations are teaming up to turn your phone into your wallet, your keys--and now your identity. What they call "seamless access" sound more like "seamless surveillance".

Once embedded in our daily routines, digital IDs don't stop at airports or banking apps. They move into health care. Education. Employment. Online logins. The UN has floated proposals to link digital ID systems to internet access itself. They call it "proof of personhood." But what it really proves is that your right to exist in the digital world may soon be contingent on state-sanctioned credentials.

And when enforcement arrives, it will be subtle at first. "For your safety." "To protect against fraud." "To stop bots and deepfakes." You'll need your digital ID to prove you're real--not just at airports, but on message boards, Zoom calls, even job applications. Can't verify? No access.

Last Word



In some nations, digital ID has already been used to track political dissent. In others, it's tied to vaccine status or credit history. The potential for abuse isn't theoretical--it's happening. With digital ID systems, a few corporations and government agencies become the ultimate gatekeepers of access: to travel, to commerce, to information, to community. And make no mistake--once the infrastructure is built, it won't just be used for good. It will be exploited. It always is.

Apple's slick UI cannot hide the deeper reality: the shift from physical autonomy to digital dependency is almost complete. When your passport lives on your phone, your rights live on someone else's server. This isn't fear-mongering--it's foresight. And the time to speak up is now, before these systems become so deeply entrenched that opting out is no longer an option.

Because the truth is: you may soon need a digital ID not just to travel--but to live. Could this be the way into the 666 prophecy of Revelation 13?

The Blessed Hope. Titus 2.

Sometimes people complain that my talks and magazine are a bit gloomy. We need more hope they say. Yes, we do. I can't change the news, and it is pretty much 100% gloomy and getting worse by the day. But God foresaw all this which is why He put the prophecies in the Bible, so we would know what is going to happen and have a hopeful future in the midst of it all.

Jesus told us that when you see these things begin to happen don't panic or give up because they mean that your redemption draws near. There is an amazingly hopeful outcome to all this. His Second Coming. He told us 'I will come again' John 14.3. He also told us that His second coming would be at a time when bad things are happening on the earth. Luke 21.25-28.

"And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near."

So you have the bad news (25-26) and the good news (27-28). The bad news is happening or on its way to happening, but the good news of Jesus' return hasn't happened yet. When you tell people about this, some try to ignore it. They say it's always been like this throughout history (which it hasn't) or that God can't change anything anyway (which He certainly can). Someone once told me that if Jesus were to come again, they would do the same to Him as they did the first time. They won't. When He came the first time Jesus voluntarily laid down His divine power and suffered the agonising death on the cross. He did it as an act of love for lost humanity to reconcile us to God. When He comes the second time He comes with all the power of God to judge the world in righteousness according to how we have responded to the message of His first coming.

In the letter to Titus Paul wrote: '**For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.**' Titus 2.11-14.

In this passage we look back to what Jesus did the first time, He appeared in visible form to bring us salvation and redeem us (buy us back) to God and purify us from our sins. We look forward to His second coming, when

He will again appear in visible form to judge the world. We are to look '**for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ.**'

Jesus' coming again is the only hope for our world. The kind of problems we describe in this magazine are too big for anyone to sort out. Our world is like a sinking ship and to have a real hope for the future we must get on the lifeboat of salvation by believing the good news of the Gospel. Believe on the Lord Jesus the Messiah and you shall be saved. Then we must live righteously in this world, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts and do good works to please the Lord. Make a start by passing on this magazine to a friend.

Conclusion



All the things that we write of in this magazine are pointers to the fulfilment of Bible prophecies of the last days in our day and the soon coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The most important thing we can do, in the light of this, is to call on the name of the Lord for salvation, so we are ready to meet Him at His coming.

Dear Heavenly Father, I admit that I am a sinner and need your forgiveness. I believe that Jesus the Messiah died in my place, shedding His blood to pay for my sins, and that He rose again from the dead to give me eternal life. I am willing right now to turn from my sin and accept Jesus the Messiah as my personal Saviour and Lord. I commit my life to you and ask you to send the Holy Spirit into my life, to fill me and to take control and to help me become the kind of person you want me to be.

Thank you Father for loving me.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

For further information, please write to:

Tony Pearce,
Light for the Last Days,
Box BM - 4226, London, WC1N 3XX

Email: enquiries@lightforthelastdays.co.uk

Website: <http://www.lightforthelastdays.co.uk>