



The Good News

July/August 1996

Jerusalem 3000

An Uncertain Celebration

*Election-Year Challenges Face U.S. President • John: Apostle of Love
Respect: A Dying Virtue? • How Do We Know That We Love God?*

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The City of Truth

For the last issue, this column was written from Jerusalem in the days before the Israeli election. At that time it was a neck-an-neck race with much speculation about the short-term implications for peace in the region should Benjamin Netanyahu emerge as the winner. The election results were so close that Mr. Netanyahu won by a mere 29,507 votes out of 3.1 million—barely a mandate. The new prime minister moved quickly to reassure his Arab neighbors that the peace process would continue, thereby calming jittery voices of various persuasions.

But real peace of the lasting kind is not often found in this region. Benny Begin, son of former Israeli prime minister Menachem Begin, once told me that the Middle East is “a dangerous neighborhood.” And it has been for a long time. This geopolitical crossroads will remain a flashpoint mentioned more frequently in the news than other less strategically significant places on the globe. At the intersection of so many of the great power’s strategic interest, the land of the biblical peoples seems destined to continue its history of conflict.

Is that the reason the Bible names Jerusalem and the territory of the ancient Israelites so often in its prophetic passages? Does the Bible have anything valuable to tell us in the late 20th century about the future of the Middle East?

Home to three religions that claim common origins, the area surely cannot escape prophetic attention. The Bible’s pages are filled with such elements. From time to time *The Good News* will focus on those prophetic passages that illuminate our way in the often confusing rush of daily events. We all need an anchor, and the Bible can provide it. Bible prophecy examined in a measured and balanced way speaks to the action behind the news and gives an invaluable perspective on world events and trends.

In this issue Dan Taylor’s cover article on Jerusalem’s 3,000th- anniversary celebrations addresses the past, present and future of a city second to none in its emotive power over humanity. Not without reason does the Bible refer to Jerusalem as, among other things, “a very heavy stone for all peoples” (Zechariah 12:3) and the future “City of Truth” (Zechariah 8:3). The latter is what all people of goodwill seek for the world’s spiritual capital.

—David Hulme

Does the Bible have anything valuable to tell us in the late 20th century about the future of the Middle East?

Publisher: David Hulme
 Managing editor: Scott Ashley
 Copy editors: Dixon Cartwright, Peter Moore
 Art director: Shaun Venish

Editorial reviewers:

John Bald, Robert Boraker, Roger Foster,
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Address changes: POSTMASTER—Send address changes to *The Good News*, Box 661780, Arcadia, CA 91066-1780.

International addresses:

Australia: United Church of God—Australia
 GPO Box 535, Brisbane, Qld. 4001, Australia
 Phone: 075 5 35 6030 Fax: 075 5 35 6106

Bahamas: United Church of God
 P.O. Box N8873, Nassau, Bahamas
 Phone: (809) 324-3169 Fax: (809) 364-5566

Canada: United Church of God,
 an International Association
 9251-8 Yonge St. No. 303,
 Richmond Hill, ON L4C 9T3, Canada
 Phone: (416) 231-9379, (800) 338-7779
 Fax: (416) 231-8238

South Africa: United Church of God
 P.O. Box 4345, 2125 Randburg, South Africa
 Phone: 011 792-4601 Fax: 011 791-0711

Spanish-speaking areas: United Church of God
 P.O. Box 458, Big Sandy, TX 75755, U.S.A.
 Phone: (903) 636-4928

United Kingdom: United Church of God (UK)
 P.O. Box 5929, Thatcham, Berkshire RG19 6YX,
 United Kingdom
 Phone: 01635-528063 Fax: 01635-522797

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Jerusalem

An Uncertain Celebration

As Israel celebrates Jerusalem 3000, it is clear that political complexities have tied a Gordian knot the likes of which only divine intervention can sever.



A flock of sheep passes by Absalom's Pillar, an ancient tomb outside the Old City walls.



Churches of many religious faiths dot the Mount of Olives outside Jerusalem.

em 3000

by Dan Taylor

About 3,000 years ago, David, son of Jesse, became king over the people of Israel. But he came to the throne of a divided nation. Israel was torn by tribal as well as family loyalties. Some had supported the family of David's predecessor, Saul, and some had shown loyalty to David. So David knew he had to try to bind up old wounds and unify his people.

After reigning over Israel for 7½ years from Hebron, deep in the tribal lands of Judah, David decided he and the nation as a whole needed a fresh start, so he captured the Jebusite stronghold of Jerusalem and made it his capital.

This bold move accomplished two things: It removed the last vestige of Canaanite power in the area. And, since no Israelite tribe had occupied the city for some time, Jerusalem gave David a neutral location from which to rule a united kingdom comprised of 12 tribes whose relationships continued to be strained with tribal jealousies and bickering. David's new capital not only became the unifying governmental and spiritual center of his people, it became—historically and prophetically—the geographic focal point of human history.

This year the modern nation of Israel is celebrating the trimillennial anniversary of the establishment of Jerusalem as David's capital. But, rather than being a celebration of unity as in David's time, Jerusalem 3000, as the festivities are called, ironically has become a source of division. In fact, critics of the celebration abound, and few aspects of the anniversary go unquestioned. Of all the ambivalence surrounding the celebration, nothing seems more uncertain than the future of the city that is at the heart of the celebration.

As Israel celebrates Jerusalem 3000, it is clear that local, national and international political complexities have tied a Gordian knot the likes of which only divine intervention can sever.



An olive grove and poppies decorate the slopes of the Mount of Olives.



Jerusalem's Dome of the Rock

A celebration mired in dispute

“United Jerusalem is ours! Jerusalem forever!” With those words September 4, 1995, the late Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin inaugurated Jerusalem 3000, a 16-month celebration leading up to January 12, 1997. Two months after his announcement, Mr. Rabin was dead, assassinated by a fellow Jew at a peace rally in Tel Aviv. The celebration he launched with such high hopes is now often ridiculed by Jews and non-Jews alike.

Not even the date of the celebration goes uncriticized. In the estimation of many laymen and scholars, the “3000” in Jerusalem 3000 is premature. Scholars from an ultrareligious Jewish sect, the Charedim (meaning “those who tremble”), believe that the anniversary of King David’s conquest of Jerusalem should not take place until the year 2132. Their date is based on the second-century *Sedar Olam Raba*—a document that charts Jewish history.

But, according to Israel’s Ben-Zvi Institute, “[t]he accepted date for this event is based on the account in the Bible, on archaeological data and on external sources, which confirm that it took place about 1004 B.C.E.” (before the common era, the equivalent of B.C.). Still other scholars insist the celebration is three to seven years off. Organizers acknowledge the controversy concerning the date of the celebration but note that, if nothing else, 1996 is a pretty good compromise.

Not even the schedule of cultural events has escaped criticism. Referring to the list of operas, symphonies and other musical performances planned for throughout the celebration, Jerusalem’s ultrareligious Deputy Mayor Meir Porush told the *Jerusalem Post*’s news service: “These celebrations have no Jewish content. They are good for Wash-

ington, D.C., but not for Jerusalem.”

on Jerusalem than its former mayor, Teddy Kollek, who managed the city from 1965 until his electoral defeat in 1993. Among other highly visible projects, Mr. Kollek helped found the Israel Museum and the Jerusalem Foundation. The latter funneled more than \$350 million into the physical transformation of the city into an international cultural center. In fact, one of Jerusalem’s most noted

port, Mayor Olmert, himself not ultrareligious, has favored Charedim politicians with many high local government appointments. This sect, which until recently avoided politics, now holds and exercises the balance of political power in Jerusalem—and it wants to make some changes.

First, with Charedim adherents fast increasing and housing hard to come by,



Detail of a scale model of Jerusalem and the magnificent temple built by King Solomon, son of David, after David made the city Israel's capital.

architectural points of interest stems from a Kollek-era mandate (a holdover from British policy) that all buildings in the city be faced with local Jerusalem limestone. The result of that regulation gives Jerusalem its breathtakingly beautiful tawny glow at sunrise and especially at sunset.

As for Jerusalem 3000, this was to be

one of the first changes involves lifting the ban—stringently enforced during the Kollek years—on high-rise apartments. Next on their agenda is making the rule of law more responsive to conservative religious views. To fans of former mayor Kollek, this means that the wheels are in motion to turn Jerusalem into the center of Jewish fundamentalism.

Still more criticism

From the perspective of the Palestinian population of the city, Jerusalem 3000 is a celebration of Jewish control. The Arab community has pointed out that the only recognition given the Arab contributions to the city’s history is a single museum exhibit called The Contribution of Islam to Western Culture, Science and Art. No one was surprised that the Palestinians have boycotted the opening and subsequent celebrations.

One magazine editorial, noting the lack

To the Palestinian population of the city, Jerusalem 3000 is a celebration of Jewish control.

ington, D.C., but not for Jerusalem.”

The deputy mayor’s comment aptly illustrates not only the deep divisions over Jerusalem 3000 but the dramatic shift in the city’s political climate. Nowhere is that transformation felt more than in the ousting of a political icon.

Shift in city administration

Few men have left more of an imprint

the grand finale for Teddy, as the mayor was commonly called. Instead, Mr. Kollek’s successor, Ehud Olmert, is now running the event.

Mr. Olmert, a member of the conservative Likud Party, defeated Mr. Kollek with the help of the Charedim, Israel’s version of the American religious right. As a payback for the Charedim’s sup-

of recognition for Jerusalem's non-Jewish population in the celebration, said: "What's sad about this amnesia is that this ancient holy city deserves better. If Israel really wants to celebrate Jerusalem, and not just attract homesick tourist dollars . . ., it can further the peace process by recognizing the spiritual feelings of all its citizens" (*Glow*, September 4, 1995).

Another group conspicuously absent at

say or do anything that indicates that any of the world's politicians look upon East Jerusalem as anything other than occupied territory.

Even Zvi Raviv, the international coordinator of Jerusalem 3000, admits that many Palestinians and members of the diplomatic corps hold the impression that, in light of the peace process between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the celebration is not so much a commemoration of the establishment of King David's ancient capital as it is a slick diplomatic move to gain recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

But Mr. Raviv counters the idea by noting that the celebration was planned by the Kollek administration long before the Oslo peace agreement was signed on September 28, 1995.

Whose Jerusalem?

As a spiritual center for three of the world's religions—Judaism, Christianity and Islam—the city faces political realities more complex than those of most other cities on the planet. Jews and Arabs both point to long connections with Jerusalem. Their claims will be put to the test in the next round of bargaining in the peace process.

For Jerusalem's Palestinian

under Israeli sovereignty if the east side is under Palestinian sovereignty" ("Passions Set in Stone," by Paul Goldberger, *New York Times Magazine*, September 10, 1995, p. 76).

The official Israeli position views any such division of Jerusalem as out of the question. Mayor Olmert was quoted as saying, "If Jerusalem is split, the city will be destroyed—it will be a death penalty



Part of the reality of life in Jerusalem. A terrorist bomb blew up this bus in March as part of a string of attacks in Israel.

the opening ceremonies was the diplomatic corps from the European Union. Many other diplomats have approached the celebration with extreme caution so no one will think they advocate Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. None wishes to lend support to any de-facto recognition of Israel's control. And none wishes to

population, the Oslo Agreement and the continuing peace process are much on their minds. To them, the single most important issue is sovereignty, and they make no bones about it. They want East Jerusalem to be the capital of their new state, and they offer a practical view of why this should be so.

"What good is it to control some area if you cannot go there except with guns, and you cannot enjoy life there?" said Faisal Hussein, head of the Palestine Liberation Organization in Jerusalem. "I think people want to enjoy life in Jerusalem, and not to have all this fighting go on. I accept that the west side of the city is



Image Corel Professional Photos

All that remains of Herod's magnificent temple are foundations of the southern and western retaining wall, including what is known by some as the Wailing Wall.

As a spiritual center for three of the world's religions—Judaism, Christianity and Islam—the political realities for Jerusalem are more complex than those of most other cities.

on the city." Yet, clearly, other Israelis seem to be willing to look at the issue. In a poll conducted by the Israel-Palestine Center for Research and Information in May 1995, 28 percent of Israeli adults said they were ready to accept some form of a division of sovereignty of Jerusalem.

The recent election of Benjamin Netanyahu as prime minister of Israel has only further clouded the peace process between Israel and the PLO. The newly elected prime minister has made sweeping promises for strengthening and increasing Israeli settlements in occupied lands. And for those promises he received enormous and unexpected support from religious Jews. Concerning the

Continued on page 11

ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE CITY OF DAVID

Perhaps more than any other academic discipline, archaeology has enlarged our understanding of the historical record in the Bible. Archaeologists have found some of their most spectacular artifacts in the City of David, an area of 12 square miles in the southeast part of modern-day Jerusalem.

From the earliest investigation, conducted by American Edward Robinson in 1838, to the extensive excavation under the direction of Yigal Shiloh from 1978 to 1982, archaeology has progressively and dramatically confirmed the biblical account—from both Old and New Testaments.

The City of David itself contains only a limited amount of material from the actual Davidic period of Iron Age I and II. To date, diggers have unearthed no evidence of Solomon's Temple.

The archaeological record of Jerusalem in the late 11th and early 10th centuries B.C. is not nearly as prolific as we might wish it were. Indeed, one of the noteworthy products of excavation in Jerusalem, commonly called the Tower of David, excavated by archaeologist R.A.S. Macalister in the 1920s, bears a title that can easily mislead. Although the tower's name associates the structure with Israel's most famous monarch, in fact only the lower courses of the tower are from the Davidic period. Most of this fortified edifice dates to the Maccabean period of the 2nd century B.C.

From the earliest investigation to the more recent extensive excavations, archaeology has progressively and dramatically confirmed the biblical accounts.

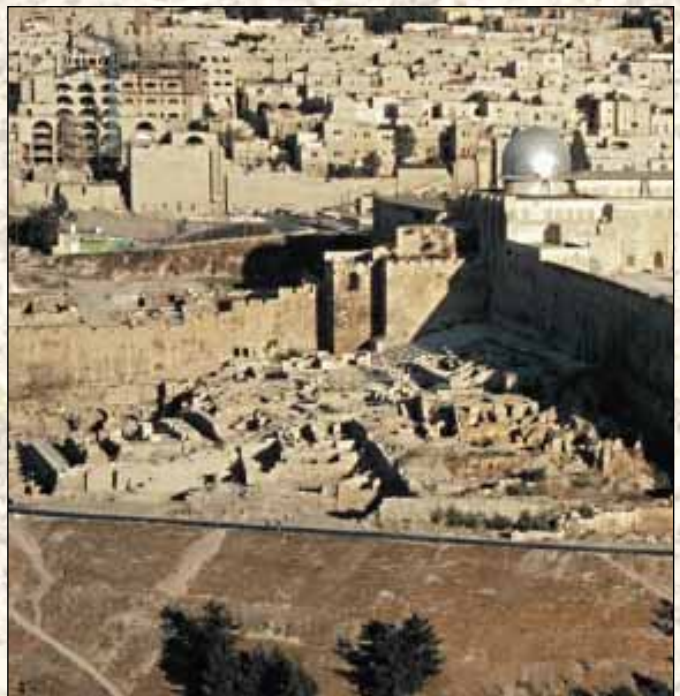
Other archaeological work convincingly documents the history of the Bible. In particular, the grande dame of British biblical archaeology, Kathleen Kenyon, revealed an important archaeological feature from the time of David. In 1961 her excavation exposed a part of the Jebusite wall that surrounded Jerusalem when David took the city near the end of the 11th century B.C. (see 2 Samuel 5:6, 7).

Stealthy fighter

Relevant to this same episode, another discovery numerous archaeologists have examined has supported fascinating speculation about the account of Joab's stealthy entry into Jebusite Jerusalem. The event, related in 2 Samuel 5, occurred near the beginning of David's reign over all 12 Israelite tribes. David had offered to reward the man who took Jerusalem by appointing him leader over Israel's army. David's own nephew, Joab, achieved this seemingly impossible feat

by gaining entrance into the city through the *tsinnor*, loosely translated "gutter" (verse 8) in the King James Version of the Bible and "water shaft" in the New King James Version.

This reference quite possibly describes a subterranean Jebusite water shaft discovered in 1867 by Englishman Capt. Charles Warren. Joab may well have discovered the underground passageway leading to the shaft, then scaled it to gain entry into the city. To demonstrate the possibility of such a feat, one member of the Capt. Montague Parker Mission (1909-1911) climbed the shaft from top to bottom. Though archaeologists still are not certain they have found the right shaft, the wedding of the biblical account and the particular geological feature of the city raises interesting



Jerusalem is one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world and was occupied long before David made it his capital. Numerous archaeological excavations, like these at the base of the Temple Mount area, have been carried out over the years.

possibilities.

Another major feature, not to mention popular tourist attraction, beneath the City of David is Hezekiah's Tunnel. This underground channel is associated with the reign of Judah's 8th-century (B.C.) king and religious reformer Hezekiah (2 Kings 20:20; 2 Chronicles 32:2-4). Edward Robinson was the first man in modern times to explore it. Many others, scholars and tourists alike, have followed in Robinson's footsteps.

Again, the evidence is subject to interpretation, but the tunnel may well be part of a comprehensive defensive response to a late-8th-century Assyrian invasion, first of the Northern Kingdom of Israel and later the kingdom of Judah. The latter military campaign is described in 2 Kings 18:9-19:37 and Isaiah 36, 37. The discovery of the Nahaman Avigad excavation of 1970 is generally considered evidence of the story in 2 Chronicles 32:5, describing significant work on the 8th-century city wall. Hezekiah's concern about an impending military threat is evidenced by the remnants of a wall that expanded to the south and west, considerably beyond the boundaries of the City of David (Isaiah 22:9-11).

This enlarging of the wall suggests that the population of Jerusalem swelled during the years before the Assyrian invasion of Judah. No doubt the project was in part the result of refugees from the falling Northern Kingdom relocating in Jerusalem. Perhaps some Jews as well left the hinterland of the kingdom to seek safety in the capital.

It is plausible that Hezekiah, anticipating the Assyrian onslaught, took measures to ensure a steady water supply should Jerusalem be put to siege. And well he should have; King Sennacherib's Assyrian forces overran the kingdom. According to the biblical record and the Taylor Cylinder (a small cylinder-shaped clay tablet from Sennacherib's archives inscribed with a version of the story of the siege of Jerusalem), Hezekiah found himself, albeit temporarily, trapped like a bird in a cage.

Inscription found

The serpentine tunnel itself runs from the intermittent Gihon Spring, just outside the northeast wall of the City of David, and winds some 1,750 feet before resurfacing at the Pool of Siloam. Evidently Hezekiah's workmen constructed this engineering marvel by tunneling from opposite ends and meeting near the middle. To commemorate such a landmark achievement, someone left a Hebrew inscription on the rock wall near where the two teams of tunnelers eventually met.

When discovered in 1880 near the Pool of Siloam, it was almost entirely preserved. This "Siloam inscription," now housed at the Museum of the Ancient Orient in Istanbul, reads:

"When the tunnel was driven through. And this was the way in which it was cut through: while . . . were still . . . axes, each man toward his fellow, and while there were still three cubits to be cut through, there was heard the voice of a man calling to his fellow, for there was an overlap in the rock on the right and on the left. And when the tunnel was driven through the quarrymen hewed the

rock, each man toward his fellow, ax against ax; and the water flowed from the spring toward the reservoir for 1,200 cubits, and the height of the rock above the heads of the quarrymen was 100 cubits."

The Bible, apparently referring to this engineering marvel, says: "Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah—all his might, and how he made a pool and a tunnel and brought water into the city—are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?" (2 Kings 20:20).

The above examples identify only some of the significant archaeological discoveries scientists have

To commemorate the digging of Hezekiah's Tunnel, an ancient tunneler left an inscription on the rock wall where the two teams of tunnelers eventually met.

unearthed in or near the City of David. Christians can be grateful for the evidence archaeological excavation provides. It inspires faith in the infallible Word of God. **GN**

—Rick Sherrod, Ph.D.

Major Archaeological Excavations in Jerusalem

1838	Edward Robinson	Hezekiah's Tunnel
1864, 1867	Charles Warren, Charles Wilson, Claude R. Conder	Hezekiah's Tunnel and Jebusite shaft
1886	Conrad Schick	Solomonic irrigation channel
1894-1897	F.J. Bliss A.C. Dickie	Byzantine church above Pool of Siloam
1909-1911	Parker Mission	Hezekiah's Tunnel and Jebusite shaft
1913-1914, 1923-1924	Raymond Weill	Tombs believed to be of kings of Judah
1923-1925	R.A.S. Macalister	Tower of David
1961-1967	Kathleen Kenyon	Jebusite city
1968-1982	Benjamin Mazar	Temple Mount area
1970	Nahaman Avigad	Hezekiah's wall
1978-1982	Yigal Shiloh	Gihon water system

This lists only the most prominent excavations in the area of Jerusalem. Many other excavations are not listed.

KING DAVID: MAN OR MYTH?

Suddenly, as David and his men finished climbing the last hill, there it was, the mighty fortress of Jebus, later called Jerusalem. It was not then under Israelite control, but, as in the days of Joshua, the city was a stronghold of the Jebusites.

What chance did David have of conquering the city? Perhaps the reply of the Jebusites can give the best indication. They taunted him: “‘You shall not come in here; but the blind and the lame will repel you,’ thinking, ‘David cannot come in here’” (2 Samuel 5:6). They were so confident of their impenetrable stronghold, they shouted to David they would not even put their best men on the walls to defend the city, but would man them with the weakest and most sickly among them.

Yet, as often happens in life and warfare, in their confidence, they overlooked a weak spot that would prove fatal. At the bottom of the hill of the city was a cave that had a natural spring inside. Since water was so vital, the Jebusites had dug a shaft downward to tap this water. David realized that, if someone could go up the shaft, he could secretly enter the city and open the doors. David said: “Whoever climbs up by way of the water shaft and defeats the Jebusites . . . shall be chief and captain . . . Then David dwelt

Stela. Discovered in 1868, unfortunately it was broken into pieces and it has taken much time and effort to piece together the original words. In 1995 scholar Andre Lemaire finally put it all together and discovered the words “House of David.” In line 31 of the Moabite Stone are the words “. . . the sheep of the land. And *the house [of Da]vid dwelt in Horonen*” (*Biblical Archaeology Review*, May-June, 1994, p. 33).

The article continues: “The recent discovery at Tel Dan of a fragment of a stela containing a reference to the ‘House of David’ (that is, the dynasty of David) is indeed sensational and deserves all the publicity it has received. The Aramaic inscription, dated to the ninth century [B.C.], was originally part of a victory monument erected at Dan, apparently by an enemy of both the ‘King of Israel’ (also referred to in the fragment) and the ‘[King of the] House of David.’ The inscription easily establishes the importance of Israel and Judah on the international scene at this time—no doubt to the chagrin of those modern scholars who maintain that nothing in the Bible before the Babylonian exile can lay claim to any historical accuracy . . . Nearly two years before the discovery of the Tel Dan fragment, I [Lemaire] concluded that the Mesha stela contains a reference to the

In spite of the account of David's life and exploits recorded in the Bible, some critics doubt that King David actually existed.

in the stronghold, and called it the City of David . . .” (2 Samuel 5:8, 9). The parallel account in 1 Chronicles 11:6 adds: “And Joab the son of Zeruiah went up first, and became chief.”

David’s soldiers conquered Jerusalem. Soon David brought the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem, setting the stage for the construction of the temple under Solomon. In so doing, David gave his people a rallying point they have looked to for centuries.

Thus, around the year 1000 B.C., Jerusalem became Israel’s capital and David its first king. This water shaft, which enabled David to capture the city, can still be seen by modern-day visitors.

In spite of the account of David’s life and exploits recorded in the Bible, some critics doubt that King David actually existed. As one of them candidly admits, “I am not the only scholar who suspects that the figure of King David is about as historical as King Arthur” (Philip R. Davies, *Biblical Archaeology Review*, July-August, 1994, p. 55). Recently, however, archaeological discoveries have verified that David, king of Israel, was indeed a real historical figure.

In 1993 a fragment of a monument was found at the site of the ancient Israelite city of Dan that mentioned David and his dynasty dating to about 100 years after David’s death. As *Biblical Archaeology Review* reports: “Avraham Biran and his team of archaeologists found a remarkable inscription from the 9th century [B.C.] that refers both to the ‘House of David’ and to the ‘King of Israel.’ This is the first time that the name David has been found in any ancient inscription outside the Bible. That the inscription refers not simply to a ‘David’ but to the House of David, the dynasty of the great Israelite king, is even more remarkable” (March-April, 1994, p. 26).

Then another mention of King David was found in a monument of about the same time. It is called the Moabite Stone or the Mesha



Woodcut by Gustav Doré

In one mighty act of valor and faith, the young shepherd David thrust himself into the history of Israel by slaying the giant, Goliath.

‘House of David.’ Now the Tel Dan fragment tends to support this conclusion” (ibid., pp. 31, 32).

Slowly, as more excavations bring to light new material, the biblical record continues to gain solid historical backing. So far, archaeology has confirmed the existence of the following kings of Israel and Judah: Omri, Ahab, Jeroboam II, Jehu, Pekah, Hoshea, Ahaz, Hezekiah and Manasseh. Now David is also placed in this growing list of historically confirmed kings and no longer viewed as a myth. **GN**

—Mario Seiglie

Jerusalem

Continued from page 7

issue of Jerusalem specifically, Netanyahu noted in his victory speech the special connection of the Jewish past with the present and applied it specifically to Jerusalem. Mr. Netanyahu called Jerusalem “the eternal capital of the Jewish people and the city that will never be divided again . . .”

Mr. Netanyahu’s election has left many Arab nations cautious at best about further progress toward peace. The threat of violence will loom large if the new Netanyahu government is perceived as renegeing on negotiating in good-faith issues like the status of Jerusalem—issues that were being discussed with the previous Labor government. At this point, Palestinians are relying on foreign governments—especially the United States—to pressure the Israelis to continue the course set by the Rabin-Peres administration.

It is not yet clear what will be the result of the political, social and religious forces at work in Jerusalem. Surely the most difficult issue of the coming peace talks will center on Jerusalem. With the potential for at least a tense peace or another hot war in the Middle East, the stakes for Israelis, Palestinians and the rest of the world are enormous.

Anciently, the Hebrew prophet Zechariah wrote that “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 12:3). His words echo with a striking resonance in today’s circumstances.

What lies ahead for Jerusalem?

Over the centuries, Jerusalem has endured the boot of many an occupying army. Jesus Christ foretold the devastation of Jerusalem that occurred in A.D. 70 by Titus’s Roman legions. “Do you not see all these things?” Christ asked His disciples while surveying the buildings of the temple complex. “Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down” (Matthew 24:1, 2). All that remain today of Herod the Great’s once magnificent temple complex are the foundation stones of the western

and southern retaining walls of the temple enclosure.

After predicting for His disciples the destruction of the temple, Jesus led them out of the city and up to the Mount of Olives for a private conversation. There He answered their questions about the sign of His second coming and of the end of the age. He told them of intervening wars and rumors of wars, of nation rising up against nation, of tribulation and persecution and of a time of the preaching of the gospel message—the good news of the coming Kingdom of God—to all the nations as a witness, “and then the end will come” (Matthew 24:3-15). Christ went on to tell of a terrible war that will befall Judea (verses 16-21).

Sobering times indeed lie ahead. But the good news for Jerusalem—and for other bloodstained cities like Beirut, Sarajevo and Belfast—is that the story doesn’t end there. There is indeed wonderful news ahead.

The book of Zechariah includes a heartening prophecy concerning Jerusalem. In the 14th chapter we read that God says He will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem, and the city will fall. But, as all hope seems lost, we read in verse 3 that “in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives.” And in verse 5 we read, “Thus the LORD my God will come, and all the saints with You.”

This joyous passage concerning the Messiah’s dramatic return gives hope to Jerusalem and all mankind. It closes with the profound statement that “Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited” (verse 11).

Something to celebrate

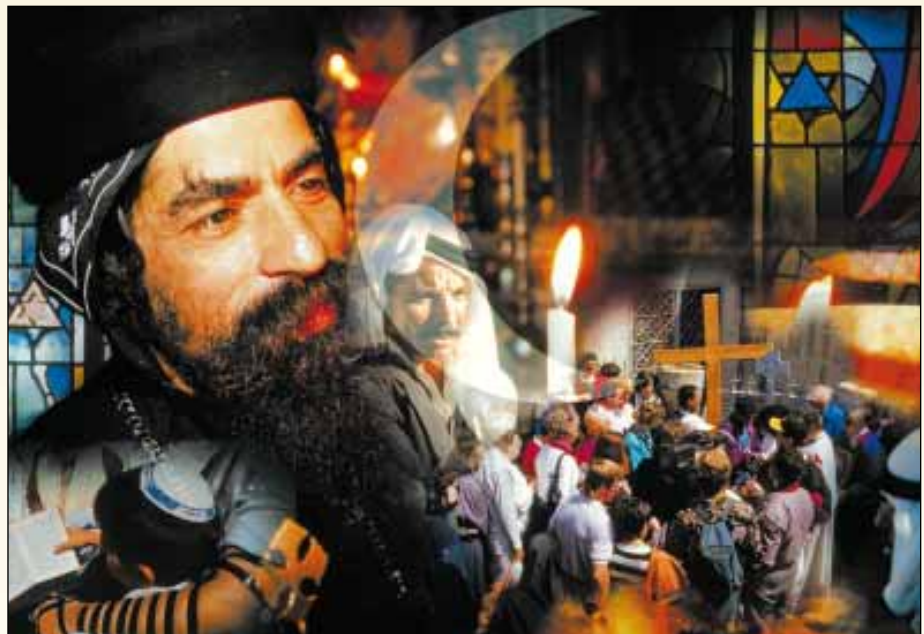
Is a time of peace and safety possible in Jerusalem? According to Bible prophecy, yes, it is possible. No longer a “heavy stone” (Zechariah 12:3) for the nations, Jerusalem will stand as a model city for the entire world. Only under the righteous government of God, administered through Jesus Christ, will such a time arrive.

Jesus will bring to fulfillment such prophetic passages as Isaiah 60 and Ezekiel 40-48, which picture a glorious future for Jerusalem. David, the king who brought peace to Israel 3,000 years ago, will be resurrected to eternal life and will lead the nation, under Christ, to peace once more (Jeremiah 30:9; Ezekiel 37:24, 25). Under the glorious rule of Jesus Christ, the city will become the religious capital of the world (Jeremiah 3:17; Zechariah 14:16, 17).

The Jerusalem of the Kingdom of God will be all that King David, and the celebrants of Jerusalem 3000, could have hoped for—and more.

The modern Jewish state’s celebration of Jerusalem 3000 is a far cry from the event that took place in David’s era. The

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Jerusalem, which has seen many cultures in its 3,000-year history, is revered by three major religions—Christianity, Judaism and Islam.

U.S. Election-Year Challenges Beyond President's Control

by Melvin Rhodes

Former president George Bush optimistically talked of "a new world order" after the fall of the Soviet Union five years ago. His successor, President Bill Clinton, appeared ready to reap the financial and other benefits of presiding over a nation no longer threatened by another major power. But, in this election year, suddenly old problems are reemerging that seem beyond the president's control or influence. Problems in the Far East, Russia and the Middle East are back with us as if they had never gone away.

In this election year, suddenly old problems are reemerging that seem beyond the president's control. Problems in the Far East, Russia and the Middle East are back with us as if they had never gone away.

Other nations have seen the People's Republic of China as a threat ever since Mao Tse-tung's communist forces took control of the Chinese mainland in 1949. Mao's successors may be in the process of switching to a free-market economy, but the ruling dictatorship remains and is once again flexing its muscles.

The major issue this year has been Taiwan, classed as a renegade province by the leaders in Beijing. Mao's defeated enemies fled to the offshore island of Taiwan back in 1949 and continued their "Republic of China" with U.S. military backing. The defeated Chinese nationalists on Taiwan always claimed the mainland, and the communists in control of the mainland always claimed Taiwan. But not anymore.

Now the Taiwanese want independence. Their country is one of the greatest success stories of Asia, with foreign-currency reserves exceeded only by Japan's, making Taiwan one of the richest countries in the world. The Taiwanese want to preserve their capitalist system as well as the democracy that has only recently been introduced there.

Why has independence become an issue? It is partly because of Hong Kong. This British colony is to revert to China at the end of June 1997, after 156 years of British rule. Although the Chinese have

promised to preserve Hong Kong's way of life for 50 years after the takeover, these promises ring hollow to many observers. The inhabitants of Hong Kong fear excessive governmental control resulting in loss of freedom and the collapse of their sophisticated economy, the third most vibrant in the world.

Taiwanese fear that, once China has reclaimed Hong Kong and then Portuguese Macao (scheduled to revert to China on the last day of 1999 after four centuries of Portuguese rule), Chinese attention will turn to Taiwan. Thus the Taiwanese push for independence, but are resisted by Beijing.

Few realize that Taiwan belonged to *Japan* before and during World War II, so the country has a history of separation from the mainland.

Beijing is also concerned about Taiwan's successful democratic election earlier this year, the first free election conducted by a nation of Chinese people. The people of China have not forgotten the stu-



Mainland China launches missiles into waters off the coast of Taiwan during military exercises.

AP/Wide World Photo

dent pro-democracy movement the government crushed in 1989 with loss of life and resulting international condemnation.

China is not the only cause for concern in Washington. China's ally, North Korea, is making threatening noises directed at its neighbor, South Korea, a nation that also depends on the United States for security.

Old battle No. 2

Meanwhile, on a different part of the globe, another chronic problem area has again flared into open conflict.

At a conference of world leaders in Egypt earlier this year in response to a wave of suicide bombings in Israel, Islamic fundamentalist terrorism was

compromise is not likely, in spite of Western leaders' constant attempts to mediate peace.

Jerusalem itself continues as a great cause of division. In words reminiscent of those spoken by the prophet Jeremiah—"Peace, peace!" when there is no peace" (Jeremiah 6:14)—the mayor of Jerusalem lamented that his city is the focus of conflict even as politicians talk peace.

In Luke 21: 20 we see that Jerusalem is destined to be a major battleground at the time of the end, just before Christ's return. Armies have often fought over Jerusalem, but the last 50 years have seen dramatically increased contention and bloodshed as the young Jewish state has

dead, increased the pressure for a Jewish homeland. The modern nation of Israel came into being in May 1948 as a result of a partitioning of Palestine. The partition was imposed by the United Nations aided by the administration of U.S. President Harry Truman. Israel immediately faced a war for survival against the armies of its Arab neighbors.

Further wars followed, in 1956, 1967 and 1973. In the last 20 years Israel has gained recognition from neighboring states once hostile to its existence. Some nations still want to see Israel removed and are willing to help Palestinians seeking retribution for loss of land in 1948. Among those most hostile to Israel are the Islamic leaders (mullahs) who overthrew the shah of Iran in 1979.

Continuing support by the mullahs for Hezbollah, a Palestinian organization based in Lebanon, has enabled the Hezbollah to stage devastating terrorist attacks on civilians inside Israel. Israel retaliated with massive bombing raids on southern Lebanon late in April in an attempt to destroy a Hezbollah support base. A cease-fire was arranged after international intervention, but the problem is far from solved.

We need to keep our eyes on the Middle East.

Old battle No. 3

Add to Asia and the Middle East the possibility of a return to communism in Russia. Recent campaigns and elections have shown that many people are dissatisfied with incumbent Russian President Boris Yeltsin, and many are turning to communist candidates for solutions to the country's problems.

In presidential elections held June 15, President Yeltsin garnered 35 percent of the vote compared to 32 percent for communist party challenger Gennady Zyuganov. Since none of the 10 presidential candidates received a majority, much is at stake in the runoff between Yeltsin and Zyuganov to determine Russia's next president.

Little attention was given in the press to the recent decision by the Duma—the Russian parliament—to resurrect the Soviet Union, dismantled in December 1991. By a vote of 250-98, elected members of the Duma voted to restore the old

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AP/Wide World Photo

In what many believe was a show of intimidation, thousands of communist-Chinese soldiers participate in military exercises on China's coast in March just before the landmark Taiwanese elections.

confronted by unified international rhetoric, but by little else. Virtually nothing can be done to prevent suicide bombers from taking their own lives along with the lives of as many of their enemies as possible. The freedoms we value in the Western world make responding to terrorism difficult.

At stake is Palestine, the area many Christians refer to as the Holy Land, most of which is now a part of or governed by the Jewish state of Israel. Many Islamic fundamentalists want to see nothing less than Israel's destruction. With such deep division, meaningful

sought to establish itself and gain recognition from its neighbors.

From the fall of Jerusalem to the Romans in A.D. 70 until well into this century, the historical lands of Judea and Israel were not occupied by people of Jewish descent. Jews started returning to their former homeland late in the 19th century with the rise of the Zionist movement. After the First World War, with Palestine then under British control, the Jewish population of the area increased to about 500,000.

The Nazi holocaust in World War II, which left six million European Jews



New Three-Pronged Axis on the Rise in Europe?

The concept of a European army—separate and entirely apart from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization—has been in and out of the news for at least 10 years.

A small conference on a standing army for Europe occurred five years ago at Weimar in former East Germany. Reports Britain's *The Independent*: "In the town of Weimar in 1991 the foreign ministers of Germany, France and Poland gathered to inaugurate a new alliance. Their meeting went almost unnoticed by the rest of Europe, but the foreign ministers of the three

The idea of some Euro-federalists is to merge all the national sovereign armies (including Britain's) into a single supranational force with the German heartland at its natural geographic center.

countries have continued to meet annually to devise a common security concept."

Some British observers now talk of a new axis, an alignment of France, Germany and Poland. Britain has not been included in annual discussions of the alliance. Margaret Thatcher, former British prime minister, consistently opposed a common European army that would be an essential component in a European federal state with its own foreign and defense policy.

The idea of some Euro-federalists is to merge all the national sovereign armies (including Britain's) into a single supranational force with the German heartland at its natural geographic center. But, as the *Independent* article pointed out, "France, Germany and Poland have repeatedly been the area for European aggression and war."

Memories of this area tend to be of armed conflict. Could some of these events in central Europe eventually result in history repeating itself? (Sources: *The Independent*, *The Sunday Telegraph*.)

The Environment in Retreat

In spite of some notable successes here and there in the world, the public often has the uneasy, even unspoken, feeling that we are gradually losing ground in the war against pollution and environmental damage to our precious planet. Now even advisers to national governments are confirming our worst fears.

Says Tom Burke (formerly of Friends of the Earth and now an adviser to a British cabinet minister): "Successes of the past 25 years have been mere tactical victories in a long retreat for the environment." Official reports show, for instance, that European Union countries are not meeting targets set at the Earth summit in Rio de Janeiro four years ago. (Source: *The Independent*.)

The Resurgence of Infectious Diseases

Keep a watchful eye on old diseases we thought we had mostly conquered—and potentially many new ones. Says the World Health Organization in its 1996 report, "The world is facing a crisis over infectious diseases which kill at least 17 million people a year." These maladies include cholera, pneumonia, typhoid, malaria, hepatitis and AIDS. A growing resistance to drugs is a big part of the problem.

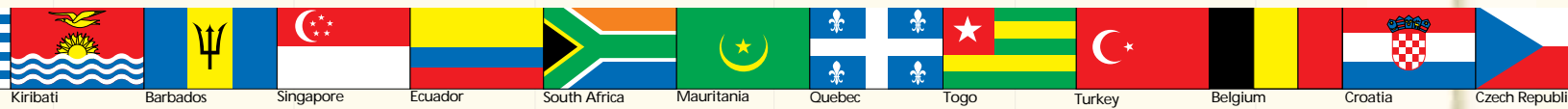
A disturbing factor is our global response to 20th-century diseases. According to an article in *The Independent*: "Despite the emergence of some 30 new diseases in the last 20 years, there is still a lack of national and international political will and resources to develop and support the systems necessary to detect them and stop their spread. Without doubt, diseases as yet unknown,

Despite the emergence of some 30 new diseases in the last 20 years, there is still a lack of national and international political will and resources to develop and support the systems necessary to detect them and stop their spread.

but with the potential to be the AIDS of tomorrow, lurk in the shadows."

Remember that disease epidemics are represented by one of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse as recorded in the Bible. (Sources: *The Independent*, *The Times of London*.)





Adult Men Linked to Teen Births

Contrary to popular perception, adult men, not fellow teenagers, father most babies born to teen mothers in the United States.

Results of a California study appearing in *The American Journal of Public Health* showed that almost two thirds of babies born to teenage girls were fathered by men four to six years older than the girls themselves.

"Most people always assumed a couple of teens fooling around" caused a teen pregnancy, said researcher Mike Males of the University of California, Irvine. "But these are adult men, not [teenagers] in school, not part of the programs and countermeasures that groups have set up to fight teen pregnancy . . . It's a real complicating factor."

More than 500,000 babies are born to U.S. teens annually. (Source: The Associated Press.)

World Sets Good and Bad Records in 1995

The world set both good and bad records in 1995, according to the Worldwatch Institute's annual report, "Vital Signs 1996." The report focuses strongly on what the institute sees as evidence of worsening global climate problems, including grain shortages, mounting insurance claims and anticipated rising food prices.

"In an era of high technology, humanity is suddenly struggling in 1996 with one of the most ancient of challenges: how to make it to the next harvest," warns Lester Brown, leader of the environmental research group for the last two decades.

Citing statistics from both government and private sources, the institute reports records in 1995 for several factors central to human welfare:

- The global grain harvest was the worst since 1988, and world grain reserves—the amount of grain available to humanity if all grain production ceased—reached an all-time low of only 48 days' consumption.

- World meat production reached a new high, putting even greater pressure on grain production. Meat consumption continues to grow in Asia, where population growth and prosperity are bringing rapid increases in demand.

- Insurance companies paid out \$48 billion for weather-related damage in the first half of the 1990s, compared to \$16 billion for the entire decade of the 1980s.

- A record 4.7 million people contracted HIV infections, with most new cases appearing in Asia.

- A record 6.1 billion tons of fossil fuels was consumed, in spite of international agreements to limit carbon emissions into the atmosphere.

- The world population continued to set new records, increasing by 87 million to 5.732 billion total. The population of developing nations increased by more than 80 million.

- The global climate was the warmest since systematic records began to be kept 130 years ago. The average worldwide temperature hit 59.70 degrees Fahrenheit (15.39 degrees Celsius).

Positive developments cited in the report included a 2 percent increase in average annual personal income, to about \$3,500 per person worldwide. The report also noted the spread of democracy, citing several countries that held their first elections or made significant movements toward democracy. (Source: The Associated Press.)

U.S. Society Pays High Price for Crime

Crime costs the United States at least \$450 billion annually, according to the first U.S. Justice Department report to try to calculate the cost of domestic violence and child abuse along with other crimes including murder, robbery and rape.

The report measures such out-of-pocket costs as legal fees, police work and lost work time as well as such intangibles as mental-health-care costs and reduced quality of life for crime victims

According to a United States Justice Department report, the total yearly cost of crime in the United States amounts to almost \$500 billion.

and their families. These figures were released in "Victim Costs and Consequences: A New Look," a report sponsored by the National Institute of Justice, the U.S. Justice Department's research division.

The report excludes the costs of the nation's jails, prisons and probation and parole systems, which add another \$40 billion to the cost of crime, according to Justice Department statistics, bringing the total yearly cost of crime in the United States to almost \$500 billion.

To put this sum in perspective, this estimated total cost of crime is almost double the entire 1995 U.S. Defense Department's budget of \$252.6 billion. (Source: *The New York Times*.) *GN*

—Scott Ashley and John Ross Schroeder



Challenges

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Soviet Union. The vote is not binding on the president. But a change in the Russian leadership could result in yet another name change for the country.

It is not the name that matters so much as the people's perception. After centuries of dictatorship the Russian people are unaccustomed to the democratic process. And they know that in the five years since the collapse of the communist system prices have soared, unemployment has worsened, crime and violence are endemic, and the country's standing in the world has declined.

The simple solution in the minds of some people is to restore the Soviet Union. It is no more realistic a solution than for Americans to restore the British monarchy in the hope that the country will return to pre-1776 levels of crime.

But a return to communism could happen. What would be the consequences? Initially, great fear would emerge in many of the former Soviet republics, now independent nations like Ukraine and the Baltic states. Fear would also likely arise farther afield, among the old Soviet-dominated nations of the Warsaw Pact. A return of communists to power in Russia would send shivers down the spines of most Europeans and would result in greater enthusiasm for a united Europe.

The only other experiment with multi-party democracy in Russia was in 1917. It lasted eight months. Other nations in the Eastern bloc of communist countries are more European in their thinking and will want to continue on the path of reform. Pressure will increase on the West to allow them to seek membership in the Atlantic Alliance and the European Union.

Britain's Queen Elizabeth addressed the Polish parliament at the end of March, pledging British support for Poland's membership in both organizations. Visits to other nations in the former communist bloc are likely to result in similar promises. Russia is opposed. A war of words is likely over the issue, but Russia is not prepared for a conflict on the international front.

Problems closer to home

A worst-case scenario for Mr. Clinton,

then, is that all these problems come to a head at the same time, before the November U.S. elections.

Domestically, President Clinton may not fare much better. In spite of a surprisingly strong economy, rising fuel and food prices are issues that could affect



AP/Wide World Photo

Russian president Boris Yeltsin has been blamed by many Russians for increasing economic problems since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

the election. They are also problems no president or Congress can do much about. Changing weather patterns resulted in one of the worst winters on record, with increased demand for heating fuel, which in turn drove up prices. The same weather problems resulted in fresh-food-price increases averaging 43 percent over last spring.

A substantial tax cut would help people maintain their standard of living, but some fear that could be achieved only by controversial cuts in government programs or raising the already high budget deficit. (Others believe lower taxes would increase government revenues as more money in circulation and controlled by companies and individuals revved up the economy.)

Added to people's worries are concerns among the electorate over corporate downsizing. As big companies shed tens of thousands of jobs—many of them high-paying, white-collar positions—secure, long-term employment with one company is rapidly becoming a thing of the past. American companies must increasingly compete with rivals around the world, many of which pay their employees lower wages with few or no benefits.

Domestically and internationally, there may be little room to maneuver regardless of who is in the White House. *GN*

Jerusalem

Continued from page 11

arguments and political implications concerning the gala have served only to heighten differences. Sadly, much potentially historic significance has been lost in all of the bickering.

When David was crowned king of Israel in Hebron, he began a healing process. We read in 1 Chronicles 11:1-3 of his coronation acclamation: "Indeed we are your bone and your flesh. Also, in time past, even when Saul was king, you were the one who led Israel out and brought them in; and the LORD your God said to you, 'You shall shepherd My people Israel, and be ruler over My people Israel.'"

In many ways, David's long-awaited coronation foreshadowed a far greater coronation than his own: that of Jesus



Woodcut by Gustav Doré

Many inhabitants mourn over Jerusalem's ruins after the city's destruction by Babylonian invaders in 587 B.C.

Christ, the descendant of David. As ancient Israel had to await David's rulership to be unified, humanity awaits the return of Jesus Christ to turn from living a way of confrontation to one of cooperation. As David became the shepherd of his people, Jesus Christ will return as the loving Shepherd, not only of Israel, but of all mankind. He will heal and unify a world torn by strife and sin. Jerusalem will at last see true and lasting peace. *GN*

Reflections on the Dunblane Tragedy

Was the massacre of innocent schoolchildren in Scotland only an isolated incident, or is it an indicator of a much greater problem?

by John Meakin

I will never forget March 13, 1996. I had been out most of the day and returned home around 10 p.m., just as the evening news was beginning. My wife and son were transfixed in front of the television. It was soon obvious why they wore looks of shock, horror and disbelief.

Over the next 30 minutes, I watched as the grim story unfolded. An unprecedented disaster had taken place that day in a quiet Scottish town, a town that I personally knew.

A local man had run amok with four handguns. He rampaged through the local school firing indiscriminately, then entered the gymnasium, where he systematically began slaughtering the first-grade children and their teachers. It was later revealed that more than 100 spent cartridge cases were found at the scene. The gunman killed or wounded 31 before turning a weapon on himself to take his own life.

That night it was impossible not to shed tears for delicate little lives snuffed out so brutally—

horror were painfully exposed and explored. Families and a quiet community known for its peace struggled to come to terms with their shattered world and overwhelming grief.

“Why?” became the dominant question. Why such violence? And why did this happen to so many utterly defenseless, innocent children? The parents, families, news media, government and nation all asked the same question. The stark message on one of hundreds of sprays of flowers asked simply, “Why?” Why did such an appalling evil take place in such a quiet, peaceful town?

Many issues were raised: control of firearms; school security; the man’s twisted character and tortured psyche; his family upbringing; his psychological profile. Every effort will be made to understand why it happened and to learn lessons that can prevent similar tragedies from occurring. An official inquiry examined the event in painstaking detail.

Examining the spiritual dimension

Sadly, Dunblane is not the first, nor will it be the last, occasion when something snaps inside an inadequate, deranged mind and an explosion of violence rips apart multiple lives.

There is an important spiritual dimension to consider and understand in this tragedy. Yet this element will go largely unreported because it is so little comprehended.

Why did this happen? What is the spiritual dimension behind such evil? It all has to do with the nature of man and the forces that act upon us. This is not an attempt at some trite solution that ignores important sensitivities of this tragic situation. But so much flows from correctly understanding our nature: It is one more vitally important angle to take into account when we consider the underlying roots of this and similar disasters.

Dunblane caused many to ask where was God in all this. Did He care at all? Why didn’t

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as well as tears for the shattered lives of tortured parents, tears for the grieving families and tears for the devastated community.

The school’s headmaster, Ron Taylor, commented memorably: “Evil visited us yesterday. We don’t know why, we don’t understand it, and I guess we never will.” The sheer numbing horror of it all stunned a town, disgraced a shocked nation and dominated news headlines around the world.

Over the ensuing days, the facts behind the

How Do We Know That We Love God?

The Bible states over and over again exactly how we are to demonstrate our love to God. The simple answer may surprise you!

by Lyle Welty

How do we know we genuinely love God? That probably seems like an odd question to most of us. Of course, we love God, and we just know that we love Him.

But is that good enough? Is it enough to just know and feel that we love God? Is anything else involved?

Actually, the Bible—God’s inspired Word—is clear about how we show love to God. It is specific about what we are to do to demonstrate that love.

God created people to have a loving relationship with Him. God reveals Himself to us as our heavenly Father and calls us His sons and daughters, His very children. God desires a family relationship with us, with His showing love to us and our showing love to Him.

God is in the process of “bringing many sons to glory” so that He and mankind can ultimately be “of the same family” (Hebrews 2:10, 11, New International Version).

Is love just a warm, nice feeling toward God, or is there more to it? Is it enough to just know and feel that we love God? Is anything else involved?

Mutually exclusive testaments?

Most people view this close, loving God-mankind relationship as an exclusively New Testament concept and think of the Old Testament as strictly a relationship of law and enforced obedience. But is this view accurate? Are love and obedience really two mutually exclusive concepts, as many seem to think?

To answer these questions we need to ask ourselves what kind of relationship has God always wanted with mankind.

A lawyer asked Jesus Christ a vital question: “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”

Christ said to him, “What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?”

The lawyer quoted from the Ten Commandments: “‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,’ and ‘your neighbor as yourself.’”

Jesus replied to him, “You have answered rightly; do this and you will live” (Luke 10:25-28).

As we just read, the man asked Jesus Christ, “What shall I do to inherit *eternal life*?” Eternal life was the issue. The man quoted two Old Testament scriptures, found in Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18. Christ’s response may be surprising to some: He assured the man that he had given the correct answer and added, “Do this and you will live.”

So, to gain eternal life, it is clear that we must love God. But what does that mean? Is love just a warm, nice feeling toward God, or is there more to it?

Love loves

Love can be a noun or a verb. I like to think of love as a verb, because love as an action word implies that something is happening, something is being done.

Love (the noun) requires that someone love (the verb). For example, if we love someone, we demonstrate our love by spending time with our loved one. We do things with and for that person.

We visit him or her, go places together, talk to each other. We may make or buy gifts to demonstrate that we love and value that person. We show our love by our actions.

Since love requires action, by what action does God want us to demonstrate our love for Him? What does the Bible say about this? Some believe that in the Old Testament God focused only on obedience and law, but in the New Testament we are “under grace” and have only to “love God” in some vague way, supposing that obedience and love are mutually exclusive concepts. But can this be true?

In both Exodus 20:2 and Deuteronomy 5:6, God prefaces the Ten Commandments with a statement that demonstrates grace: “I am the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage,” He said.

God focuses us on His loving act of undeserved mercy, deliverance, favor and pardon in His freeing the Israelites from slavery and establishing them as a new nation. He extended grace to them, doing something wonderful for them that they did not deserve.

In verses 9 and 10 of Deuteronomy 5, God says, “I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God . . . *showing mercy* to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments” (emphasis added throughout). Here we see another example of grace, with God promising “mercy to thousands.” We see that grace is built into the Ten Commandments.

Biblical theme of obedience

These passages begin a thread that is woven throughout the Bible. The Scriptures show repeatedly that loving God and keeping His commandments are inextricably connected; one describes the other. God says that we show love for Him by obedience, *by keeping His commandments*.

Let’s notice some of the many examples that show the connection between love and commandment-keeping. In Deuteronomy 6:5, 6, God says, “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. And these words which I command you today [referring

to the Ten Commandments, given in the previous chapter] shall be in your heart.”

This is the verse the lawyer quoted to Christ that we referred to earlier. It says we love God with all our heart, soul and might by keeping “these words, which I command you.” Those specific words were God’s Ten Commandments. These words from the Bible clearly define loving God as obeying His commandments.

Deuteronomy 10:12, 13 summarizes the response God expects from Israel and all mankind. “. . . What does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all

The Scriptures show repeatedly that loving God and keeping His commandments are inextricably connected; one describes the other. God says that we show love for Him by obedience, by keeping His commandments.

His ways and *to love Him*, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and *to keep the commandments of the LORD* and His statutes which I command you today *for your good?*”

This tells us clearly that we love God and serve Him by keeping His commandments, which He gave us for our benefit.

Deuteronomy 11:1 says, “Therefore *you shall love the LORD your God*, and keep His charge, His statutes, His judgments, and *His commandments* always.” We love God by keeping His charge, His statutes, His judgments and His commandments.

The theme of loving God by keeping His commandments continues in verses 13 and 22. God says we are to “earnestly *obey My commandments* which I command you today, *to love the LORD your God* and serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul.” We love Him when we “*carefully keep all these commandments* which I command you to do—*to love the LORD your God*, to walk in all His ways, and to hold fast to Him . . .”

Deuteronomy 13:1-4 warns us about false prophets. Even if they can predict something that comes to pass, if they say we can disobey God and ignore His law, then God’s people are to pay no

attention to them. God says He proves and tests us “to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul” (verse 3).

How do we prove to God that we love Him? Continuing in the very next verse: “You shall walk after the LORD your God and fear Him, and keep His commandments and obey His voice, and you shall serve Him and hold fast to Him” (verse 4).

Love is expressed by doing what God says

Deuteronomy 30:6, 8 continues this theme of showing love by obedience to the commandments: “And the LORD

your God will circumcise your heart [a prophecy of the coming of the Holy Spirit] and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul . . . And you will again obey the voice of the LORD and do all His commandments which I command you today.”

Circumcising the heart (conversion of the mind as described in Romans 2:29), loving God and returning to God are evinced by keeping His commandments.

God says He will “rejoice over you . . . if you obey the voice of the LORD your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this Book of the Law, and if you turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul . . .” (Deuteronomy 30:9, 10). “Turn[ing] to the LORD” is shown by keeping His commandments.

“. . . I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the LORD your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess” (verse 16). God tells us we are to love Him by keeping His commandments, and God promises blessings for our obedience.

The theme continues in the book of Joshua, where God tells His people to

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John

The Apostle of Love

by Jerold Aust

John wrote so extensively about love that Bible scholars call him the apostle of love. Why did he write so much about the subject? And what can we learn from the writings of John about the connection between God's law and love?

Did John perhaps record the depth of God's love in a way none of the other New Testament writers was able to do?

John's friendship with Christ may have given him a writer's edge in describing this most important element in a Christian's life. Let's look at John, the disciple Christ loved (John 19:26), and some of John's writings.

Taught and trained by Jesus

After Jesus called His disciples away from their jobs and professions and into a new way of life, for 3½ years John and the other 11 disciples lived their lives together. Jesus was teaching and training them to become apostles—the ones He would send after His resurrection to preach the Gospel of God's Kingdom to the world.

The Bible depicts the disciples as a close-knit group. John was especially close to Christ; in his own Gospel account he refers to himself repeatedly as "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (John 21:7, for example).

Jesus' example of
love for

His disciples and all people would so affect His immediate followers that they eventually taught and practiced the same love. The godly love Jesus advocated eclipsed any human understanding of love.

The Greek of the original New Testament refers to three categories of love: *eros*, for sexual love; *philos*, for friendship or brotherly love; and *agape*, for a godly, outgoing love for others.

Movies, television programs and novels confuse these kinds of love. This is one reason that the so-called love generation of the 1970s could not discover God's love on its own. God's Word reveals godly *agape* love, which translates from the Greek into an unselfish concern for others.

The apostle John gave attention to the

ing his affection for Jesus, and the Messiah often returned John's open expressions of love with His assurance of love reciprocated. Such direct contact with the Savior of mankind could have only a beneficial influence on John and his capacity to love others.

John's early life perhaps prepared him for his later life's service to God and humanity. Little is written about the disciple's early years, except that he worked closely with his father (Matthew 4:21) and that his mother manifested an earnest desire for the welfare of her sons (Matthew 20:20).

Opportunity to share Christ's love

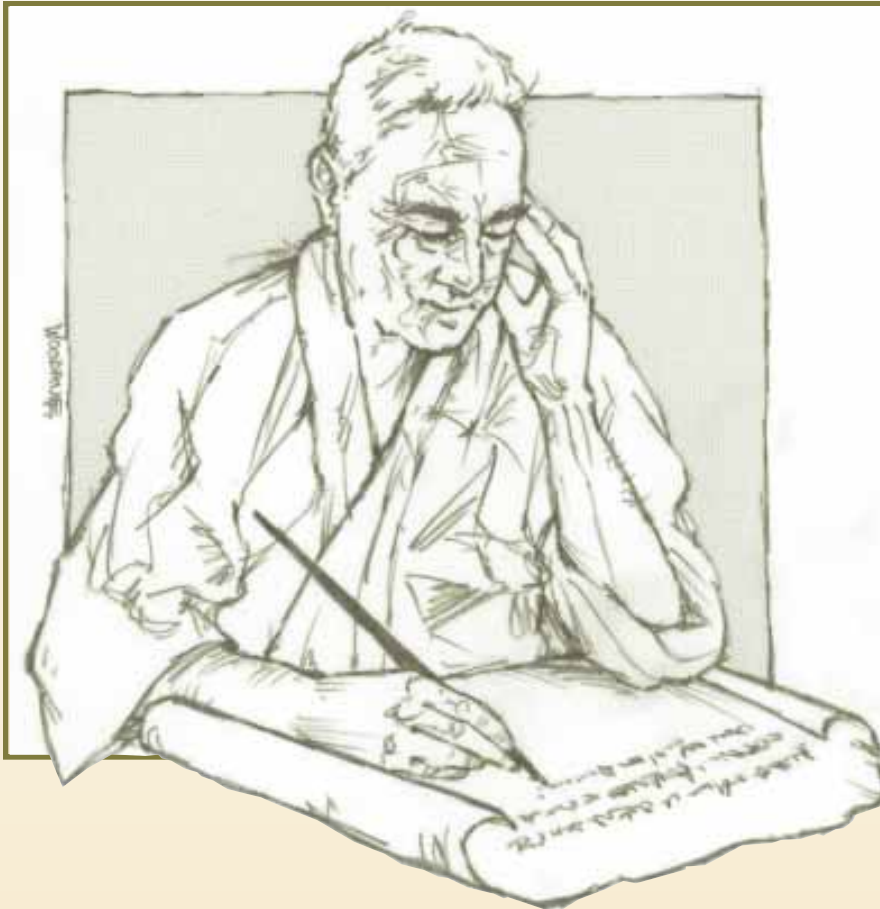
Jesus gave John, along with James and Peter, special opportunities for involvement in certain activities and plans. The Gospel writers all mention John's pres-

John wrote so extensively about love that Bible scholars call him the apostle of love. Why did he write so much about the subject? And what can we learn from the writings of John?

various kinds of love. When Jesus dined with His disciples, the biblical account generally notes the friendship and affection Jesus and John felt for each other: "Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved" (John 13:23).

John was comfortable openly express-

ence in the accounts of Christ and His works. John was there when Jesus restored Peter's mother-in-law to health (Mark 1:29-31). He witnessed Jesus' raising of the daughter of Jairus (Mark 5:35-37). John saw the "transfiguration," the prophetic vision of Jesus as the resurrected Son of God (Matthew 17; Mark 9;



John wrote so extensively about love that Bible scholars call him the apostle of love. Why did he write so much about the subject? And what can we learn from the writings of John about the connection between God's law and love?

Luke 9:28-36).

John was present when the Savior foretold Jerusalem's destruction (Mark 13:2). John helped Peter prepare the last Passover (Luke 22:8). John was the one who asked Jesus who would betray Him (John 13:23-26). John, with Peter and James, received the Master's invitation to watch with Him in Gethsemane as He cried out the anguished prayer just before His crucifixion (Mark 14:32, 33; Luke 22:44).

John, Peter and James, who were supposed to remain alert and on watch the whole night, fell asleep. Later, when Roman guards took Jesus prisoner, John (who is referred to in the account as "the other disciple" or "another disciple"), along with Peter, followed the band of officials to the palace and, because of John's acquaintance with the high priest, gained admittance to the building (John 18:15, 16). Apparently John was also the

apostle immediately at hand when Christ gave up His life at the crucifixion.

During the crucifixion, Jesus appointed John to care for His mother, Mary. At this critical time, John was aware that he also could be arraigned, indicted and imprisoned for his audacity. He likewise could suffer the humiliating death of a convicted criminal.

John later wrote of Jesus' charge to him: "When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, 'Woman, behold your son!' Then He said to the disciple, 'Behold your mother!' And from that hour that disciple [John] took her to his own home" (John 19:26, 27).

John's understanding of God's love

John was there at the last supper and observed the Passover with Jesus, witnessing the loving example of Christ's washing of His disciples' feet. John

records Jesus' teaching about our spiritual cleansing, depicted by the Passover bread and wine, which shows God's magnitude of love: "For God so loved the world that He gave [for our sins] His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

At this pivotal point in history, Jesus was finalizing the personal training of His disciples. The next day He would demonstrate the greatest love mankind has ever known, the greatest love possible: He would lay down His life and allow Himself to be crucified. John records that there can be no greater love than the love that would inspire one to "lay down one's life for his friends" (John 15:13).

John records Jesus' reference, during His final night on earth, to a new kind of love, a love that the disciples would not be capable of giving until they later received the Holy Spirit: "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another" (John 13:34). The love Christ taught His disciples requires God's Spirit. Without the Holy Spirit, we cannot comprehend the *agape* love God wants to share with us.

Because of their human frailties, Christ assured His disciples of the spiritual help—the Holy Spirit—that God the Father would send them some seven weeks after His crucifixion:

"If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15). "And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever . . ." (verse 16). "He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him" (verse 21). "As the Father loved Me, I have also loved you: abide in My love" (John 15:9).

Christ likens a Christian with God's Spirit to the branching of a vine. For the branches to bring forth fruit, they must abide in Christ—the Vine—through the Holy Spirit.

"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes,



that it may bear more fruit” (John 15:1, 2). “Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me” (verse 4). “If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love” (verse 10).

Christ promises spiritual help

John’s writings show that the Holy Spirit is the spirit of truth: “But when the Helper comes, [which] I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth [which] proceeds from the Father, [it] will testify of Me. And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning” (verses 26, 27).

The apostle Paul explains that “the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit . . .” (Romans 5:5).

Christ ended His talk with the disciples on that last evening with prayer. John later mentions one of Jesus’ last conversations with God the Father before His death. Our Savior talked to the Father about the love that John and the others were beginning to understand and that can exist only through God’s Spirit:

“I do not pray for these alone, but also

John was aware that he also could be arraigned, indicted and imprisoned for his audacity. He likewise could suffer the humiliating death of a convicted criminal.

for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me” (John 17:20-23).

“Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before

the foundation of the world. O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me. And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare

it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them” (verses 24-26).

Almost two months after Jesus’ crucifixion and resurrection, John was there when God did indeed send the Holy Spirit to the apostles and others on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 1, 2).

John, along with the other apostles, witnessed Jesus’ ascension into the heavens and participated in the selection of Matthias to replace the betrayer, Judas.

Son of Thunder

John’s example should teach us a lesson. Before God calls us (John 6:44), we walk “according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air [Satan], the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience” (Ephesians 2:2).

But now we have the opportunity to live as Christ’s own disciples: “But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses [that is, we were condemned by our own sins], made us alive together with Christ” (verses 4, 5).

John, the apostle of love, does not appear in Scripture as a weak man, in spite of his portrayal by various artists down through the centuries. In fact, Christ referred to him and his brother as the “Sons of Thunder” (Mark 3:17). When John wrote the powerful book of 1 John, he addressed the spiritual decay of the Church of God. Heresy and apostasy prevailed. The church was scattering (1 John 2:18, 26). John, the apostle of love and a Son of Thunder, fought to preserve the truth of God.

“Little children, let no one deceive you . . . He who sins is of the devil,” John wrote in 1 John 3:7, 8. He contrasted the righteous and the unrighteous. He foretold the many false prophets (1 John 4:1)

who would arise in that day and beyond.

We may now live a godly life of loving others because Jesus Christ first loved us (1 John 4:19), and He is now “our life” (Colossians 3:4). Our life, through God’s Spirit, is Christ’s life. Christ loved us even before we could recognize our sins and repent of them (Romans 5:8). God calls us to follow Christ’s example: “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love” (1 John 4:7, 8).

As an old man, John was used of God to write the book of Revelation, in which God warns and indicts the lawless who will not turn from their evil ways.

In this book, John shows another side of God’s love, with the Eternal meting out discipline, intervening for His elect and allowing terrifying events on the earth. Christ’s followers, however, need not be afraid of the calamities pictured in Revelation: “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love” (1 John 4:18).

Love from disciple to apostle

John, more than any other New Testament writer, waxes eloquent on love from diverse perspectives. He explains that godly love cannot originate with us; it comes only from God: “In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation [atonement] for our sins” (1 John 4:10).

John shows that God’s love is directly tied to the gift of the Holy Spirit: “If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit” (verses 12, 13). John makes the inseparable connection between the ability to love others and the presence of the Holy Spirit.

John also exposes the facade of those who profess their love for God while hating their own brethren: “If someone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother



also” (John 4:20, 21). John says we show that we love God *by* loving our brethren.

Bible definitions of love

First, John defines God’s love in Christians, indirectly and directly: “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments” (1 John 5:2). We could call these “if-then” proofs: *If* we love God, *then* we will be keeping God’s commandments. *If* we obey God’s commandments, *then* we will love God and fellow human beings.

The next verse provides us the most direct definition of godly love: “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments” (verse 3). This is a fundamental biblical definition of God’s love. We must keep in mind that the keeping of God’s commandments is made possible through the power of the Holy Spirit (1 John 3:23, 24).

John is not speaking of some new or different set of commandments in 1 John 5. He is referring to the Ten Commandments, the same law Jesus summarized as the two great commandments (Matthew 22:37-40): “Brethren, I write no new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning” (1 John 2:7). “For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, not as Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother’s righteous” (1 John 3:11, 12).

God’s love manifests itself in right attitudes and actions. A person who expresses God’s love is a person who is becoming like God. As we read earlier, God has called us to follow Christ’s example: “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born [or begotten] of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love” (1 John 4:7, 8).

Love is God’s dominant quality. God is the epitome of love.

Let us act on the inspiring message of love recorded by the apostle John. As God’s children, let us follow our Creator as He is. Through godly love, we will enter into God’s Kingdom and live forever. *GN*

Love God

Continued from page 19

“take careful heed to do the commandment and the law which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, to love the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways, to keep His commandments, to hold fast to Him, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul” (Joshua 22:5).

Love flows both ways

Any healthy relationship of love is a two-way street, with love flowing both ways. In 1 John 4:19 we find why we should love God: “We love Him because He first loved us.” John had earlier explained what he meant by God’s earlier love for us: “In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another” (1 John 4:9-11).

Romans 5:8 gives other examples of ways God has proved His deep love for us: “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” Jesus Christ made the ultimate sacrifice to prove God’s love for us, long before we were capable of returning that love in any way.

The familiar passage in John 3:16 tells us: “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.”

But belief in Jesus Christ as the Son of God means much more than just academic agreement. Belief (Greek *pisteuo*) means acting on knowledge: living one’s life by faith, unswerving devotion and total obedience in the light of that knowledge.

Our God, His people

Jeremiah 31:3 talks of God’s deep love for mankind: “The LORD has appeared of old to me, saying: ‘Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you.’” God has always had as His plan for human beings a loving

relationship within His family. He describes it in eternal terms as “an everlasting love.”

Verse 33 says that, in this loving family relationship, “I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.” His law is permanently planted in our hearts and minds to show us how to love Him as well as how to love each other.

We see this same theme of loving God and keeping His words continuing in the New Testament. John 14:21, 23 makes this clear: “He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me . . . If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word . . .”

The New Testament defines love for God the same way as does the Old: “For *this* is the love of God, *that we keep His commandments*. And His commandments are not burdensome” (1 John 5:3). God’s law is not heavy, oppressive and burdensome. As we read earlier, it was given for the benefit of humankind.

God tells us repeatedly and clearly that we demonstrate our love for Him by keeping His commandments, and that has been His intent from the beginning. The commandments John discussed were not “new,” but were “the word which you heard from the beginning” (1 John 2:7). God’s law has been a law of love from the very beginning—from the creation (1 John 3:11).

Many other scriptures make it clear that keeping God’s commandments is not something we can do by ourselves. As we repent and yield to Jesus Christ, God’s Spirit enables us to allow Jesus Christ to live in us (Galatians 2:20), giving us the desire and capacity to love God and our neighbor.

In Luke 10:25-30, quoted earlier, a man asked Christ what he should do to gain eternal life. Jesus told him the correct answer is “love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind.”

Love requires action, not just feelings. How do we know we love God? The consistent, clear, biblical answer is that we love God by keeping His commandments. *GN*

What Is the Gospel?

What is the gospel? Is it the gospel of God? The gospel of Jesus Christ? The gospel about Christ? The gospel of the Kingdom of God? Or some other gospel? Is there more than one gospel? What gospel did Jesus preach? What did He instruct His disciples to teach? What about Paul? Did he teach the same gospel Jesus Christ taught? Or was it different from the gospel God sent through Christ?

The apostle Paul wrote of contemporaries who were perverting the gospel, teaching something other than what he taught. He marveled that, as a result, some were turning away from the gospel so soon after accepting it. Some say Jesus Christ *is* the gospel. If so, how does that concept fit in with the Kingdom of God, which is the focus of the good news He taught?

What do we mean *gospel*? The literal meaning of the word is “good news.” But good news of what? Let’s understand the exciting answers revealed in the Bible!

Discussion: The gospel, or good news, has its roots in the very beginning, even before the creation of the universe. Contrary to popular opinion, the gospel didn’t begin with Jesus Christ’s earthly ministry in the New Testament.

- Is the gospel revealed by Jesus Christ, even though it had been planned from time immemorial? (2 Timothy 1:9, 10).

Note: From the beginning the message was called the gospel of Jesus Christ and the gospel of the Kingdom of God (Mark 1:1, 14, 15).

- Did Jesus instruct His disciples to preach the same good news? (Luke 9:1, 2).
- Did Jesus preach the same message after His resurrection? (Acts 1:3).
- What gospel did Peter preach? (Acts 15:7).
- Did other followers of Christ continue to teach the same good news? (Acts 8:12).

Discussion: What about Paul? Did he preach a different message?

- Paul called the gospel his gospel. Why? (Romans 2:16).
- Was it because God called him to preach it? (Romans 1:1).
- How did Paul receive the gospel? (Galatians 1:11, 12).
- Was Paul faithful in preaching the same message Jesus and His followers preached? (Acts 20:25).

Note: Paul not only faithfully preached the authen-

tic gospel that had been delivered to him by Jesus Christ, but he was astonished that some tried to teach another gospel.

- Did Paul insist that there was only one real gospel? (Galatians 1:6-8).
- In addition to the gospel of Jesus Christ and the gospel of the Kingdom of God, are there other names for the same message? (Acts 20:24; Romans 10:15, 16; Romans 15:16; Ephesians 1:13).

Note: The gospel is the good news of—or from—God and was taught by Jesus Christ and His disciples. It is God’s message to mankind. This one genuine gospel has different names, each emphasizing an aspect of the message. Focusing on only one aspect while excluding others forms an incomplete picture.

Discussion: A part of the gospel message involves the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He is the key figure—He is of first importance—in God’s plan for mankind.

- How important is this? (1 Corinthians 15:1-5).
- Through whom do the dead and the living receive eternal life? (John 11:25, 26).
- Who is the door through which we enter the Kingdom? (Acts 4:12).
- How are our sins removed? (Hebrews 9:11, 12).

Discussion: What does the gospel tell us about Christ’s present and future role?

- Who is our Savior and High Priest, our Intercessor? (Hebrews 10:19-23).
- Who will be King of Kings and Lord of Lords in the

coming Kingdom of God? (Revelation 19:11-16).

- If Jesus is to become King of Kings, what will be the extent of His Kingdom? (Revelation 11:15).

Note: The Kingdom of God of which Jesus Christ spoke will be a future world-ruling kingdom inaugurated at His return. The entire earth will be brought under His dominion and rulership.

- How long will this kingdom, ruled by Jesus Christ, last? (Daniel 2:44).

Discussion: Jesus Christ is the key figure in the gospel message. But was Jesus Christ the gospel? Does the Bible teach us other things about the gospel?

- Did preaching the good news include announcing the Kingdom of God as well as emphasizing Christ's life, death and resurrection? (Acts 28:31).
- Are repentance of sin and belief in the gospel required? (Mark 1:15).
- Is the gospel also a message of obedience? (Romans 10:16; 1 Peter 4:17).

- Are there other words to describe the good news brought by Jesus Christ? Didn't the apostle John write that Jesus' message was that His people should love one another? Wasn't this message of love in existence from before the beginning of the creation of mankind? (1 John 3:11; 2 John 5, 6).

Discussion: Many believe that the gospel didn't begin until Jesus began teaching it as recorded in the New Testament. But the good news existed long before New Testament days. As alluded to in the first part of this study, the gospel is rooted in God's plan from the very beginning. This is acknowledged by the apostle Paul in one of his letters to Timothy.

- Wasn't our calling from God in place even before creation? Isn't it now made manifest by the appearing, by virtue of His physical birth and life on earth, of our Savior Jesus Christ? (2 Timothy 1:9, 10).
- Christ revealed the gospel to mankind, but didn't it exist, wasn't it in effect, millennia before that time, even before the world began? (Titus 1:2).

Discussion: The book of Genesis starts with an offer of the tree of life to Adam and Eve. They rebelled against God and chose wrongly. Isn't the rest of the Bible the unfurling of God's plan to redeem—to buy back—all of humanity and give it the tree of life, symbolic of immortality? (Revelation 22:1, 2).

Note: The broad theme of Scripture and the message of the gospel is God's plan to give to humanity eternal life in His family. This represents the heart of the gospel. Everything else fits onto this framework.

- Doesn't the message of the gospel mean that we may partake of the very nature of God by escaping the corrupting influence of the world? (2 Peter 1:4).

- Doesn't the gospel of the Kingdom of God mean that we are redeemed, or "bought back," by Jesus' sacrifice, which was planned before the creation of the universe? (1 Peter 1:18-20; Matthew 25:34).

Note: The first chapter of the Gospel of Mark succinctly chronicles the beginning of the gospel of the Kingdom of God as preached by Jesus Christ.

- After Jesus' baptism, what message did He immediately begin to preach? (Mark 1:14).
- In preaching the gospel message, what action did Jesus call for on the part of a new believer? (Mark 1:15, 17).
- Can the gospel be preached from Old Testament scriptures? (Acts 28:23).
- Did the Scriptures preach the gospel to Abraham? (Galatians 3:8, 9).
- Did the prophets of God from the beginning preach the same message—about Christ, repentance and the Kingdom to come? (Acts 3:18-26).
- Did Enoch, one of God's early servants, preach the same basic message of God? (Jude 14, 15).

- Isn't the gospel of the Kingdom the same message, or "mystery," God has revealed to His followers through the ages, both before and after the time of Jesus Christ on earth? (Ephesians 3:9, 10).

Discussion: What about the future of the preaching of the gospel?

- Will the good news continue to be preached? (Matthew 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15, 16).
- How long will the gospel be preached? (Matthew 24:14).

Further study: The one and only gospel is and always has been the message of God to mankind. It has been the same message throughout man's history. That message is called by various names because it has various aspects.

The gospel involves man's need for salvation and God's requirement for man's repentance from sin and a belief in and acceptance of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It foretells the return of our great Savior, who will bring grace, peace and salvation as He establishes His Kingdom on earth. For further information, request our free booklet *The Gospel of the Kingdom*. GN

—Bill Winner

Respect: Is It a Dying Virtue?

Learning to respect others starts when we're young. Sadly, many today aren't learning this vital lesson.

by Elaine Jacobs

A few years ago, as I was taking my morning walk, I entered a park near our home and came upon some young children. As I walked past, one of them suggested that they throw rocks at “that old lady.”

It was bad enough that they considered me, in my early 40s, to be an old lady, but their utter lack of regard for one they thought to be an old lady astounded me.

Many adults are afraid of children, and after this little episode I can understand why.



As we show our children the virtue of honoring other people and their property, there are some specific rules of courtesy that we can teach them.

I am thankful the children who tried to assault me couldn't throw far enough to hit me, but I must admit I was leery of walking in that park again.

One dictionary defines respect as “to

consider worthy of high regard: esteem.” Are we passing this biblical principal on to our children?

The Bible instructs us how and when to teach our children. It says to instruct them by talking to them when we sit in our houses, walk by the way, lie down and rise up (Deuteronomy 6:6, 7).

Children learn their standards of respect from what they see around them. This may seem discouraging when we look at the disrespectful world around us, but parents are in a powerful position to teach by their own example, as well as their instructions.

The way we treat our children is the first model they learn for behavior toward others. They will also learn to copy our behavior and attitudes toward other children and adults.

Respect can seem to be a daunting subject to explain to a child. As we strive to show our children the virtue of honoring other people, there are some specific rules of behavior that we can teach them. We can instruct our children to be courteous toward others even in seemingly unimportant matters.

Some rules of courtesy

It is important for children to learn to respect authority, and respect begins by showing honor to parents and other adults.

If we don't teach our children to respect others, we leave them at a disadvantage in society. We all want our children to be well liked, successful and respected. By teaching them to be courteous, we can help them on their way.

The Bible teaches respect for the elderly (Leviticus 19:32) and the widow (1 Timothy 5:3). Have our children learned to give up their seats to someone older than they when there are no other seats to be had?

Do our children know that, in most societies and cultures, it may be impolite to call an adult by his or her first name unless asked to do so?

Do our children know to share the sidewalks with others by moving to one side? Do they move out of the road quickly when they are about to impede traffic?

Regard for belongings

Have we taught our children to respect others' property? For instance, when we take our children shopping with us, do they know not to touch anything in a shop or store unless they plan to buy it?

When we visit someone else's home, do our children respect that person's property and privacy? It is, of course, impolite to use others' personal belongings without asking. "Ask before taking or using" is a phrase we can teach our

Children learn their standards of respect from what they see around them. Parents are in a powerful position to teach by their own example, as well as their instructions.

children that will cover many situations.

Owning up to accidents

On one occasion my husband, who coached basketball, invited his team of teenage boys over to spend the night before a big game.

Sometime during the evening someone spilled cranberry or grape juice on the carpet and didn't tell anyone. I found the stain the next day covered with a sheet. I never got that discoloration completely out. I might have successfully repaired the damage had someone told me about it right away.

We should explain to our children that accidents can happen to anyone. Rather than hiding the incident, they should tell someone right away so the damage can be minimized.

I know a young man who accidentally broke an antique teacup. He owned up to it immediately and apologized. I respected him for having the courage to come forward. The courtesy he showed by doing the right thing was of far more value than any antique dish.

Along the same lines, do our children know not to put glasses, cups or wet towels on wooden furniture? We should teach them to use coasters and to ask where to put their wet belongings.

Do our children know it is impolite to arrive late and keep others waiting?

When we are late we show a disregard for others. We are saying their time isn't as valuable as ours.

Do our children know it is impolite to eat in front of others without offering them some? Do our children know not to chew with their mouths open, talk with their mouths full or smack their lips while they are eating?

Years ago it was illegal to spit on sidewalks. Why? Because spittle on a walkway makes a repugnant sight and shows disrespect to others. I can tell, as I walk around the school near me, that this behavior is not an uncommon practice.

Changing behavior

Here is a simple four-step plan that

we can use to teach our children:

First, point out incorrect behavior.

Second, explain why the behavior is wrong.

Third, explain the correct behavior.

Fourth, expect correct behavior in the future.

For example, if your child addresses an adult in a too-familiar fashion, privately take the child aside. Tell him you noticed he was impolite to Mr. Smith. You could explain that we are to respect people who are older than we are. One way to do that is by calling them Mr., Mrs. or Miss and using their surname.

You can further explain that it is all right to call other children (and certain adult relatives and family friends, depending upon local custom) by their first names.

Then tell the child that you will expect him to call adults by Mr., Mrs. or Miss from now on.

It is important to give these instructions without disrespecting the child. Parents can quickly lose credibility if they are rude to their children while explaining how to be polite.

Respect is a dying virtue. We individually can't change the world, but we can make a big difference in our little corner of it. Let's make sure we're doing our part to be respectful adults and teach our children to do likewise. *GN*

Letters From Our Readers

The Good News is truly good! Once again we have clarity in learning about our Bible. The articles are very readable, and the reasoning is clearly able to be followed.

Edward Teti
Torrington, Connecticut

Finally, I have found you on the Internet. My friend has shown me your new booklets and the new *Good News*. Could you please put me on your mailing list and send me all your literature.

By the way, thank you for putting your statement of beliefs on the Internet.

Phyllis Cann
Shawnigan Lake, British Columbia

I just wanted to express my sincere thanks for the Web page and the miracle of having literature available at one keystroke. As a blind member, I appreciate Guy Burke's reading of *The Good News*.

Dick Wamser
Euclid, Ohio

*We invite you to access the United Church of God home page on the World Wide Web portion of the Internet. The address <http://www.ucg.org> gives you access to all issues of *The Good News* and booklets published by the United Church of God, as well as other information about the church. The *Good News* is also offered on tape as a service to the visually impaired. To receive tapes, write to the address nearest you on page 2 of this issue.*

The Passover *Good News* was just beautiful! The depth and perception of the writers are far beyond man's reasoning. You've grown and matured, and you brought that growth and maturity with you—and you share it with us! It was awesome reading!

Ann Lee Russell
Rochester, Pennsylvania

Published letters may be edited for clarity and space.

Write to us at: The Good News, Box 661780, Arcadia, CA 91066-1780.

What Happened to the Family Meal?

Here's why it's worth saving—and what you can do to save it.

by Becky Sweat

Waiting in line at the grocery store check-out, the woman behind me pointed to the bags of apples, flour and sugar in my shopping cart and remarked, “Looks like you’re going home to do some baking.”

“We’re going to have apple pie for dessert after dinner tonight,” I replied.

“Dinner?” she asked in a surprised tone of voice. “Dinner with the whole family sitting around the table? About the only time my family eats dinner together anymore is at Thanksgiving.”

Unfortunately, this way of thinking is becom-

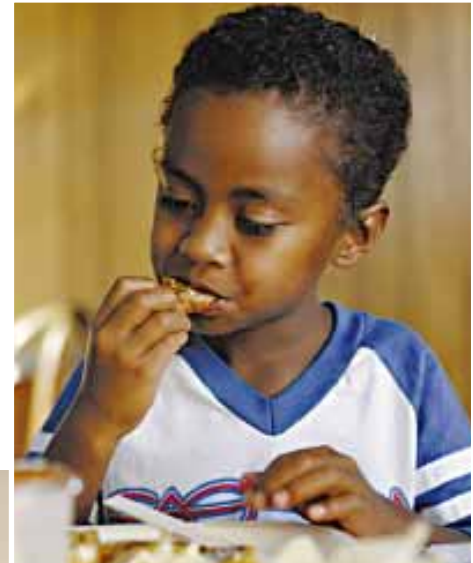


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shows like *Leave It to Beaver* and *Father Knows Best*?

Nutritional reasons alone make the family meal worth saving. Kids left to themselves to find something to eat are likely to choose a diet of toaster pastries, potato chips and frozen pizza. When parents present children with a variety of foods at regular mealtimes, they better their chances of developing good eating habits in their children.

But, perhaps most important, the family dinner gives family members a chance to reconnect

The family meal can be a time to strengthen family bonds and a pleasant time for family members to spend time together.

ing the norm for American families. According to the Food Marketing Institute, only 40 percent of American families eat meals together, and then no more than two or three times a week. Is that bad? Is the family meal worth saving? Or is it destined to become a thing of the past, something seen only on reruns of old U.S. television

with each other after a long day at school or work. “Eating together as a family can help give your children a feeling of security and a sense of knowing who they are and where they come from,” says Margaret Mackenzie, a nutritional anthropologist and member of the American Institute of Wine & Food’s Resetting the Ameri-

can Table project. "The family meal is much more than food on the table. You are creating warm, happy memories and meanings your children will carry with them the rest of their lives."

Clifton Saper, Ph.D., a family psychologist in Evanston, Illinois, adds: "Sometimes the whole focus is on manners and eat your vegetables, and then the meal becomes a negative experience for both the parents and the kids."

"But, if parents can get beyond that, if their focus instead is on open communication and creating an atmosphere that's relaxed and comfortable, then the meal is going to help strengthen family ties."

Keep the interaction positive, though. As Proverbs 17:1 says, "Better a dry crust with peace and quiet than a house full of feasting with strife" (New International Version).

Here are some suggestions for restoring this endangered tradition and

sor of family and consumer sciences at Ohio State University Extension. "Not only does this take the load off Mom's shoulders, it's also a good opportunity for communication and for teaching children how to cook."

Even preschoolers and toddlers can have a part to play. Give your 4-year-old a step stool and let him stir the muffin batter or rinse raw vegetables. Your toddler will enjoy sitting in his high chair, watching you as you cook. Talk about what you're doing as you do it. For example, "This is how we crack eggs for omelettes."

Turn off the television

For many American families, dinner means grabbing a plate of food and a TV tray and sitting down in front of the television. "People are often uncomfortable talking to each other, and television takes away the obligation to do so," Dr. Mackenzie

leave out your children. Tell them what you did at work today in terms they can understand. Ask your children how their own day went; talk about the family's plans for the weekend; get their ideas for family projects.

Be creative

Backyard cookouts, TV trays on the porch and picnics in the park are enjoyable meal alternatives for the summer months. Try ethnic-food themes. One night everything you serve might be German, and another night it might be Italian or Chinese. Fondues, making minipizzas together and Mexican dinners with plenty of tortilla chips and salsa are also fun, and they slow mealtime, allowing for more time to talk.

If your evenings are booked solid, get together with the family for after-school snacks, late-night desserts or Sunday brunches instead of dinners. If

If parents can focus on open communication and creating an atmosphere that's relaxed and comfortable, then the meal is going to help strengthen family ties.

says. "Most people are not terribly good at developing listening skills and talking in terms of what somebody said and hearing their point of view. Under these conditions, television is a refuge."

Make it a goal to eat at the dining-room table for most meals, without a TV on in the background. You may think your kids will hate you if you tell them there will be no TV during dinner, but assure them you are going to abide by the same rules yourself.

Keep conversation pleasant

The family meal is not the time for discipline, lectures, arguments, criticism or sulking. Talk should be light, happy and upbeat. If you had a rough day at work and need to blow off steam, try to do it before you come to the dinner table. Set the tone for your children. Show them that dinner is supposed to be a pleasant time.

Get the whole family involved in the conversation. You may be tempted to use up the mealtime telling your spouse about your business meeting, but don't

you're not much for cooking, pick up a giant submarine sandwich at the sub shop and a ready-made tossed salad at the grocery store.

What matters most is that the family gets together, not that it has to be at dinnertime or everything you serve has to be homemade.

Build family traditions

By creating family traditions, you give your child a sense of unity and stability for the present and happy memories for the rest of his life. Traditions can be simple, like every Saturday morning you have blueberry pancakes or on Friday nights you have banana splits for dessert. Maybe after church services your family always has a formal dinner with the good china, candles and a fresh-flower centerpiece.

Lifestyles may have changed a lot in the last generation, but the importance of the family meal has remained constant. Make shared meals a tradition in your household. Give your children warm family memories they can pass on to their own children. *GN*



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making mealtime a positive family experience.

Get everyone involved

After a long day at work, making dinner may be the last thing Mom wants to do. One solution is to make dinner a family project. "The whole family can be in the kitchen together, one person setting the table, someone else doing the stir-fry, another making a salad, and everyone can help clean up afterwards," says Barbara James, an associate profes-

Too Young to Die

by Tyanne Butler

I remember the first time I met Vicki. We were assigned to share a computer in science class, and we began writing notes back and forth on our computer. She was in two of my classes, and we often walked to class together. As time went by, we hung out together at school and became pretty good friends.

One day Vicki (not her real name) told me she had a few problems that she didn't tell many people about. They included alcohol abuse and smoking. Her brother was in trouble with the law and tended to get her in trouble too. She never tried to influence me to do the things she was doing, and I respected her for that. I think she really didn't like her dysfunctional

Why did she do it? Was Vicki's life so unbearable that she saw no other way out of her problems?

family life and didn't want to do some of the things she did.

The day she told me about the trouble she was in, she seemed afraid to confide in me, but it seemed she needed to talk to someone about it. It was hard to believe that such a sweet girl with such a pleasant and easy-to-like personality could get herself into so much trouble.

I know her family life played a big part in her problems. Vicki's parents divorced when she was 3. She lived with her dad, but they didn't get along. She said she missed her mother. Her home life was anything but happy. To me she seemed more like a victim, not a culprit.

14 is too young

As time passed, we remained friends, but I sort of forgot about what she had told me because she never talked about it again.

Then, when I came back to school after spring break, I heard the horrible news. Vicki had committed suicide.

At first I thought the story about her death was some kind of cruel joke that couldn't possibly be true. I didn't want to believe it even when our science teacher announced her death to the class.

I could think of nothing else for the rest of the day. My friend Vicki was dead. Fourteen is too young to die.

Rumors began to fly, some true, some not.

Questions remain unanswered that even Vicki's suicide note couldn't explain. Some evidence seemed to indicate that she had changed her mind about committing suicide but too late to save herself. Maybe her actions were only a desperate cry for help, and now it was too late.

For the next few days, all kinds of questions raced through my mind. Why did she do it? Was Vicki's life so unbearable that she saw no other way out of her problems? Maybe I should have talked to her more. Was there something I could have done?

All my life I had taken my friends for granted. I had never known what it was like to lose one. Dealing with the loss of a friend is almost unbearable, as is coping with the feelings of denial, blame and fear. Sometimes I still blame myself. Could I have called someone or taken some other action? Those feelings just won't go away.

I've talked to people about Vicki's suicide: my friends and especially my parents. Although they have helped me to see that Vicki's death was not my fault, it still hurts.

Needed to talk

Talking to my parents and surrounding myself with my friends has helped me the most, but sometimes I can't help feeling that tomorrow I may lose another friend.

I ask myself if there is anything in my friendship with Vicki I could have done differently. Could I have spent more time with her or maybe talked to her about her problems? I should have advised her to talk to a counselor at school since she couldn't talk to her father.

But, even through the pain of losing my friend, my parents have helped me see that there is a brighter day ahead for Vicki. I look forward to the time when there will be a resurrection of the dead, to a time when I can be there to help Vicki overcome her problems in a world that will be free of the pain of today's society.

I'm glad Vicki—and numerous others whose lives were cut off prematurely—will live again in a much happier time.

I've learned one thing for sure from this experience: Don't take your friends for granted. You never know when they might be gone. *GN*

Caution!

If you or a friend hears someone speak of suicide, you need to realize that person, even if he or she seems to be joking, may be serious and may be making a last-minute call for help. Encourage such a person, or the person's friends or parents, that professional counseling may be called for. Never take a threat of suicide lightly.

Dunblane

Continued from page 17

He prevent such carnage? To come to some understanding and comfort, let's look at the Bible, a book that authoritatively provides a vital and little-appreciated perspective on human nature. It gives a view that contributes enormously to understanding this and every other human tragedy. It provides a commentary on much of humanity's dark history. Man's inhumanity to his fellowman is, regrettably, nothing new.

A choice with tragic consequences

The biblical perspective goes back to the very beginning. We were created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26, 27). God's intention was that humans would take on His own character—full of love and concern for others. His is a nature that hates evil, but does not hate mankind; a nature that does not hurt or harm innocent people.

Jesus Christ compared it to a childlike mind full of humility (Matthew 18:1-6), like that of those so unnecessarily slain. It is a mind with total concern and love for the well-being of children, ready to bless them in every way (Matthew 19:13-15). Put simply, it is a mind like that of Jesus Christ's, a Christlike mind.

In the first book of the Bible, God records that He placed a choice before Adam and Eve. It was symbolized by two literal trees in the Garden of Eden. The Tree of Life represented God's mind—the way of obedience to God and His revealed way. This choice would lead to every good result and to eternal life. In contrast, the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil represented man's own way of self-reliance that would lead to every kind of evil and eventual death. It pictured rejection of God's way.

Adam and Eve, influenced and deceived by Satan, made the wrong choice. Their minds changed. The results were curses that have plagued humanity ever since. From that time forward, mankind has been cut off from the Tree of Life (Genesis 3:22-24) and generally denied access to the knowledge that would produce peace and happiness and lead to eternal life.

It is immensely difficult to appreciate the enormity of the impact of this ancient choice on our world at large, its history and its development. All of society—and

each individual nature and mind—results from this seminal event in human history (Romans 5:12). Human nature, and all of human society, reflects these curses. Here is the dark side of our nature that surfaces to produce evil under certain circumstances and opportunities.

Biblical description of human mind

The Bible reveals that the natural human mind, cut off from God and influenced by Satan, hates God. It is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can it be (Romans 8:7). Further, it states that "there is a way that seems right to a man, but the end is the way of death" (Proverbs 14:12; 16:25), and "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9).

Look at this description of human nature: "Their feet are swift to shed blood; destruction and misery are in their ways; and the way of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes" (Romans 3:15-18). Ask yourself what is the likely outcome when this type of mind—the natural human mind—is free to set its own course of action.

Our society—perpetuating the choices made by Adam and Eve—continues to reject God and His revealed way. When we avoid following God's ways, it should not surprise us that man's evil nature spills over in response to real or imagined stresses of every kind. Man's nature, under the sway of Satan, *is* evil. It is criminal, and it needs changing!

The spiritual perspective revealed in the Bible shows that this evil and unrestrained mind, hostile to God, is continually acted upon by Satan the devil, the great adversary, who is god of this world (Ephesians 2:2, 3; 2 Corinthians 4:4). The result is an enormously powerful recipe for great evil. One of Satan's names in Greek is *Apolylon*, which means *destroyer* (Revelation 9:11). Unseen, unnoticed and unrecognized, he is our enemy and the true source of the problems that plague humanity (Ephesians 6:11-13).

Man's nature is none other than a reflection of the spiritual mind that dominates and controls it—Satan the devil. Influenced by him, all too often we try to resolve our problems and grievances through force, violence and destruction. Even the apostle Paul, a giant of a man for good, recognized the constant inner conflict caused by our human nature influ-

enced by Satan (Romans 7:15-25).

God's plan to change man's nature

Thankfully, God has a plan to change human nature. That plan begins now for those God calls to see and acknowledge their sins—to repent, accept forgiveness through Jesus Christ's sacrifice and receive the indwelling Holy Spirit of God to transform the human mind. Such a changed mind is characterized by love, peace, gentleness and goodness (Galatians 5:22, 23). It is a sound mind full of love (2 Timothy 1:7). This is tremendous good news.

But this good news comes too late to prevent the Dunblane killer or to save the 17 innocent lives he erased. It comes too late to comfort the bereaved parents and families. Nevertheless, Jesus Christ says: "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls" (Matthew 11:28, 29). Part of this promised rest reveals even more good news and looks forward to a time when this whole world will find true rest from all its evils.

There is coming a time when God will intervene in the affairs of humanity by sending Jesus Christ to reign over the whole earth. The ancient curse on mankind will be lifted, and tragedies like Dunblane will cease to occur. God's ways will be taught throughout the world, and children will be safe and secure both in learning and at play (Isaiah 11:6-9)

Humanity will be delivered from its violence, corruption and evil. Satan will no longer hold sway over human nature because he will be removed and human nature will be changed. The result will be peace and solutions for all problems, a time of perfect justice and truth. To all who have lost little ones through calamity and tragedy there is coming a time when those precious little lives will be restored to life again, to live their lives to the full with their parents present to love and guide them. Truly that rest will be glorious (Isaiah 11:10)

Continue to read *The Good News* to learn in greater detail how God says these things will come to pass. You will find comfort and great hope for a sure future in which you will see precious loved ones restored to life once more. *GN*

How to get more information

Your spiritual nourishment is important to us, and we're ready to help you in any way possible, from simple informational needs to personal ministerial counsel. Here's how to learn more:

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The United Church of God has almost 300 congregations and more than 450 ministers in virtually all states and many international areas. For locations and times of services in your area, write or call the addresses listed inside or dial our fax information service. Visitors are always welcome.

Printed Publications

Two exciting publications are available to you free of charge: *New Beginnings*, which is the newsletter of the United



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Fax Information Service

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