



You're of no earthly good unless you're...

Heavenly Minded

The News

Bin Laden's Scattered Legions

Taliban Threaten Jihad

WTC Terrorists Linked to Hamas

Russia to Test US Air Defenses

China Denies Links to Taliban

Man-Beast Hybrid

Vol. 1, Issue 11

Rags to Riches, Ragamuffin-Style

ET 101 Counterfeit Controllers

Considering Heaven – Part Two

A Lover's Song

Dear Friends,

You know, eternity is right around the corner. Am I an alarmist? You bet. I will gladly sound the alarm of the Lord's return (Joel 2:1), of the call to make our time here count (Luke 19:13), of the admonition to watch (Mark 13:35-37). Too often, our lives here are 'opiated'. The world and our own sin natures make every effort to 'dumb us down' to the level of the born again skeptic or apathetic. Some have avoided or stopped talking about the return of Christ – too controversial.

Have we become 'Laodicean' while rationalizing, convincing ourselves that we're not? Let us shake loose from the cob webs of mere religion. Let us be fully aware of the days in which we live. Let us turn our hearts to heaven and heavenly pursuits – to trust God absolutely, to love unabashedly, to serve humbly, to give wholeheartedly, to pray always, to doggedly seek the lost and tenderly build up one another.

Several have asked if the recent events in New York, Washington and the Middle East are signaling the end. In response, I've said that we must remember that the Word of God pictures these days as birth pangs, the troubles come and go, building in intensity and they cannot be avoided – the 'birth' is coming. I am inclined to believe that as we've seen these pangs come and go since 1948 when Israel was reborn as a nation, that they are now quite intense. I can't help but believe that it is soon, but I have no idea if this is the last one.

Jesus said that no man would know the day or the hour but He also said that we, His church, should be anticipating/watching for it. Paul wrote that we are NOT in darkness, that the day of His appearing should overtake us as a thief (1 Thes 5:4). We are to be aware of the times and seasons of His return (1 Thes 5:1). Jesus also said that the generation that witnesses the blooming of the fig tree (the blossoming or rebirth of the nation Israel) would be the generation that witnesses all the events leading up to His return. As for me and my house, "Maranatha!"

We very much hope and pray that these articles serve to bless and edify you.

Love in Jesus,

John

A Lover's Song (to the Lord)

You see the rustling of the leaves,

The smiles of summer flowers

Like a dance swaying side to side,

Swaying side to side

In tempo, all the earth's

Dance of Creation

Dance of Creation

And I sigh with their longing

To be at rest at Your feet

To feel the soothing swells of

Your voice

You hear the stampeding of the ocean

And the clapping of

raging rapids

Like music soothing to

the soul,

Soothing to my soul

In tempo, all the earth's

Song of Creation

Song of Creation

And I sigh with their

And I will sing to You a lover's song

Rags to Riches

(Ragamuffin-style)

“All our righteousnesses are like filthy rags...” Isaiah 64:6

Some stories in the Bible really sober me. One such story is that of Achan. It takes place in the time of Joshua and is found in Chapter seven of the book of Joshua.

Here's what happened –

The host of Israel had just crossed the Jordan River and had defeated Jericho. Now, they faced a little stronghold known as Ai. It was so small that they decided to send just 3000 men against it. Clearly, they expected to make quick work of this little town but instead, they were trounced and 36 of their men were killed. Israel ran away that day and the whole camp was traumatized.

Joshua fell before the Lord in desperate prayer thinking everything was lost, that they would soon be surrounded by vengeful Canaanites and be massacred.

But the Lord said, “Get up!” and led him through a process of supernatural detective work which ended in the identification of the problem – one guy – Achan.

With the leadership of Israel looking on, he admitted to taking some booty during the Jericho campaign, something which had been strictly forbidden. And as he described, the loot was found hidden in his tent.

At this point, with the truth of his sin evident before all, he and his family and his livestock and his possessions are first stoned, then burned and then buried in stones – wow! It's not the least bit fuzzy, is it? God hates sin and deals severely with it. And we must remember that He has the right to do this and He is just.

And this sobers me, frankly. It can scare me to pieces because I've done much worse than Achan – I make him look like Billy Graham by comparison.

And the devil is always reminding me of it. Hmmm

Now, I don't know about you, but if you're like me, as you grow older in the Lord, you're becoming increasingly aware of your own wretchedness – the signature of the 'old man' that fights against the redeemed 'inner man'.

You see, it's kind of like the prophet Isaiah who in the first chapters of his book is going, “Woe to you,” and “Woe to you!” and so forth until chapter six where he sees the Lord, high and lifted up in His glory. And then he says ruefully, “Woe is ME for I'm 'un-together' and my 'mouth is unclean'” (slight paraphrase). For at this point, he realizes that the standard is our Lord before Whom we are awed and pained by our 'un-togetherness'.

Yes, I certainly blow it. I don't want to or sometimes even mean to, but I do – and some of Satan's most powerful weapons against me is to try to make me believe these lies:

That I'm uniquely bad
That I'm beyond the forgiveness of God

That God regrets His choosing me
That God's disappointment with me has limited or diminished His love for me
That my weaknesses make me useless to Him

That repentance means I need to get up and prove my worth – to show God that 'I'm really better now.'

That I can't turn to the promises of God because I've over-used them.

And you know, I'm stupid enough to believe some or all of them at times!

Yes, God hates sin. Our world and our hearts are thoroughly polluted by it. If something were killing my child, I would hate it too – and I have. And I think God, knowing that although His righteousness demanded the expression of His anger, that it demanded justice – and knowing that doing so would consequently obliterate anyone or anything upon which

it was vented except Himself – chose to do exactly that. He put his anger upon Himself on the cross – compelled by His love and grace.

When my own son was dying, I begged God to let me take his place, but I couldn't. This attitude of love is by comparison just a small reflection of the infinite love of our Father who looks on our condition and not only desires to take our place but in fact, He did.

And this brings me to grace. You see, God is truth and I need truth, truth about my weakness, my wretchedness, my utter need of a much higher power. The Old Testament is full of illustrations of God's truth. But truth in isolation only brings death in this sin filled world. And now, there's a choice – we can allow ourselves to be confronted with the truth about ourselves here and now or just slip by it time and again. In the latter case, we will ultimately be confronted with it before God's throne – too late to change. In the former, we will find ourselves in a desperate state – perhaps broken, humiliated, even drowning and overwhelmed – way, way out of our comfort zone. But then, as the truth about ourselves hits hard, destroys our fanciful impressions, fills our personal throne rooms with manure, the truth about our God brings freedom. And we see grace. Do you know what grace is?

It's totally unmerited favor. You see, God didn't invent grace for me or anyone else. He just IS gracious – always has been, always will be. It's not like someone just getting an impulse to buy me a gift cause I'm so nice. It's not about me or you; it's about God. Grace is who He is, not some 'effect' I've 'caused'. I'm simply the beneficiary, period.

And you don't really begin to comprehend it until you realize how desperately you need it. As long as you think you can “make it right” with God, that you can somehow show Him you are or were worthy of His forgiveness and goodness – you are really still seeking to atone for your own sins, to observe a low of works.

And much Christian life and service is spent in this pursuit of worthiness – when Paul wrote, “Walk worthy of the calling...” he wasn't saying, “Try to prove your worthiness” but simply, “Walk in the light, walk with the Lord, walk the 'talk' – be an example of the believer.” You see, that's totally different inwardly even though outwardly, it can look the same. However, one leads to spiritual barrenness while the other nurtures a garden.

“The Kingdom belongs to people who aren't trying to look good or impress anybody, even themselves. They are not plotting how they can call attention to themselves, worrying about how their actions will be interpreted or wondering if they will get gold stars for their behavior.”

“Maybe this is the heart of our hang-up, the root of our dilemma. We fluctuate between castigating ourselves and congratulating ourselves because we are deluded into thinking we save ourselves. We develop a false sense of security from our good works and scrupulous observance of the law. Our halo gets too tight and a carefully-disguised attitude of moral superiority results. Or, we are appalled by our inconsistency, devastated that we haven't lived up to our lofty expectations of ourselves. The roller coaster ride of elation and depression continues.” (Brennan Manning)

As I said, when I sin, I am tempted to believe that I've somehow gone beyond the limits of God's grace but, “We must keep in mind also that the grace of God is infinite and eternal. As it had no beginning so it can have no end, and being an attribute of God, it is as boundless as infinitude.”

“We can never know the enormity of our sin, neither is it necessary that we should. What we can know is that “where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.” To “abound” in sin: that is the worst and the most we could or can do. The word abound defines the limit of our finite abilities; and although we feel our iniquities rise over us like a mountain, the mountain, nevertheless, has definable

boundaries: it is so large, so high, it weighs only this certain amount and no more. But who shall define the limitless grace of God?" (A. W. Tozer)

Grace is a purifier, a godly fertilizer for the soul, not a license for licentiousness.

"We who feel ourselves alienated from the fellowship of God can now raise our discouraged heads and look up. Through the virtues of Christ's atoning death the cause of our banishment has been removed. We may return as the Prodigal returned, and be welcome. As we approach the Garden, our home before the Fall, the flaming sword is withdrawn. The keepers of the tree of life stand aside when they see a son of grace approaching." (AW Tozer)

"If Jesus appeared at your dining room table tonight with knowledge of everything you are and are not, total comprehension of your life story and every skeleton hidden in your closet; if He laid out the real state of your present discipleship with the hidden agenda, the mixed motives, and the dark desires buried in your psyche, you would feel His acceptance and forgiveness. For "experiencing God's love in Jesus Christ means experiencing that one has been unreservedly accepted, approved and infinitely loved, that one can and should accept oneself and one's neighbor." (Brennan Manning and Walter Kasper)

C. S. Lewis wrote, "Grace substitutes a full, childlike and delighted acceptance of our need, a joy in total dependence. The good man is sorry for the sins which have increased his need. He is not entirely sorry for the fresh need they have produced."

But Satan wants us to look inwardly in self-deprecation and/or to hang on to our pointless march for merit. That is, to be absorbed in our unworthiness or our drive to attain worthiness. On the other hand, receiving grace takes grace – that is, there is an attitude which is itself an unmerited gift that positions our hearts to receive from God His unmerited favor. John put it, "...of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace." Jn 1:16

"...that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." Ephesians 2:7

This is heavenly mindedness – you're not bound up in continual self-pity nor enslaved by earning any of God's favor – pro-actively or post-factively. This is the understanding of His goodness that naturally brings forth our repentance; this is the aroma of heaven's sweet breeze, the refreshment of living waters; this is the joyful confidence of grace.

Considering Heaven – Part 2 of 5

Thanks to Randy Alcorn for some of these insights.

Q: What will we know in heaven?

A: In heaven, we'll see clearly and know God in a relational way that far surpasses any and all relationships we now enjoy. See 1Corinthians 13:12. However, we won't know everything. If we did, we'd be God. To see clearly and to see with far greater relational understanding is one thing. To see omnisciently is another. God alone is Creator, we are mere creatures. Only God is omniscient; we are and always will be finite. When we go to heaven we become glorified humans, we don't become God. The angels in heaven don't know everything (See Mark 13:32). Neither will we.

Q: Will we learn in heaven?

A: In keeping with our finite natures, we will experience **process** in heaven. We will continually learn more of God "in the coming ages" (See Ephesians 2:7). As angels, also finite, strive to grow in their understanding (See 1Peter 1:12), so presumably will we. The sense of wonder among heaven's inhabitants shows heaven not to be stagnant, but fresh and stimulating, suggesting an ever-deepening appreciation of God's greatness (See Revelation 4,5)

The News

So much is happening now that it is hard to choose the most relevant stories. As a reminder, we aren't trying to scoop anyone or provide the latest-greatest but to give you news that is relevant to the prophetic events of our times and which demonstrate noteworthy trends.

The Bible indicates that the generation which witnesses the rebirth of the nation of Israel will also witness all the events leading up to Christ's 2nd coming. It says that in the last days Jerusalem will be a "cup of trembling" – the focus of attention of the whole world. It predicts a massive war with Russia leading a league of nations including Iran, Iraq, Libya, and many others against Israel. It is thought by many Bible scholars that this war will either immediately precede or be immediately subsequent to the rapture of the Church as mentioned in 1 Cor 15, 1 Thes 5 and several other scriptures.

There is also the prediction of a revival of a major world power arising out of the former Roman Empire and exerting a strong influence over Israel and in particular, Jerusalem. The leader of this coalition, a charismatic man, will be the ultimate false Messiah and lead the world to oppose Christ's return.

Also, Daniel the prophet predicted man's knowledge would dramatically increase in this time.

Without a doubt, we are living in exciting and sobering times.

As we consider these things in light of God's eternal Word, we can take heart that all is moving toward His conclusion. Just a few scriptures to review:

*Middle East -- Zech 12:2,3, Ez 37
Church – 2Tim3:1-5, 1Tim4:1,2
Knowledge growth – Dan 12:4
Final Generation – Mk 13:28-30
Russia – Ez 38, 39*

Middle East

Iraq: Expel the sons of apes and pigs from Palestine

By Sameer N. Yacoub, The Associated Press

Islamic clerics participating in an international conference have urged support for a holy war against Israel.

About 350 Islamic clerics from 15 countries - including Canada, France, Germany and Russia - have come to Baghdad for state-hosted talks on ways to support the Palestinian uprising that has raged for nearly 11 months. In the opening session Monday, the deputy chairman of Iraq's Revolutionary Command Council, Izzat Ibrahim, said Arab and Islamic states should "expel the sons of apes and pigs from the holy places of Palestine."

Iraqi President Saddam Hussein has long called for holy war against Jews in Israel.

There is wide support for such a position among the delegates, but they have not said what practical steps should be taken.

Syria seizes Control of Lebanese Army

MIDDLE EAST NEWSLINE

August 28, 2001

NICOSIA — Syria, alarmed by rising unrest against its occupation of Lebanon, is said to have taken direct control of the Lebanese military.

Lebanese opposition sources said the regime of President Bashar Assad has ordered a direct takeover of the Lebanese military command.

The sources said Syrian officers have moved into key posts in both the Lebanese military and security services. In addition, the sources said, about 5,000 Syrian soldiers have been incorporated in the Lebanese military. These Syrians now wear Lebanese army uniforms.

Annan warns violence could spread beyond Mideast

MENL

The violence of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict could spread beyond the region's borders, United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan said. Speaking in Oslo, Norway, Annan said the present impasse must be brought to an immediate end. "It is dangerous, it is raising tensions in the region and if we do not take concrete steps to contain it, it may spread to other parts of the region and beyond."

Gadaffi bids to be leader of Africa

RW Johnson, Johannesburg

THE new African Union (AU), launched at a summit of the Organisation of African Unity in Lusaka last week, is to have its own parliament. Indeed, the parliament building has already been built - in Tripoli.

For the idea of the AU is being driven by Colonel Muammar Gadaffi, the Libyan president.

In March, Gadaffi announced plans for single a African identity and a union under which the boundaries between states would be scrapped, national armies merged and a single passport introduced.

Amazingly, this vision seems to have been largely accepted by African leaders. It has also been decided that, besides the parliament, there will be a pan-African court of justice, a central bank and a common currency.

Saddam's Poison Gas Kills 20 of His Men

September 3, 2001

The London Electronic Telegraph reports: "At least 20 specially-trained Iraqi soldiers are dead and up to 200 have been admitted to hospital after taking part in a chemical weapons exercise that went wrong. News of the training accident emerged last week amid concerns that Saddam Hussein has rebuilt his chemical weapons

arsenal. The soldiers, based in the Zaafarnia region south of Baghdad, were suffering from severe respiratory problems, according to intelligence received from Iraq.

Syria Calls For EU Peace Role

September 3, 2001

The Jerusalem Post reports: "Europe must take on a larger role in the region, the Syrian government newspaper Al-Thawra demanded today. There is a need to 'curb the Israeli brutality and halt the extermination war,' the paper said.

The paper notes the increasing number of visits to the region by EU officials. 'The European Union states are seeking an effective and important role in this delicate region in order to compensate for the absent US role.

Assad: Israel Will Lose in War With Syria

August 27, 2001

Ha'aretz reports: "Syrian President Bashar Assad said that war with Israel was a distinct possibility, and in such a scenario Israel would be on the losing side in the long term. He also said that 'the Oslo Accords no longer exist.'

Assad made the comments in a brief interview with the Saudi daily to Al-Sharak Al-Awsat published in London.

"The possibility of war with Israel has existed all the time, before (Prime Minister Ariel) Sharon took power and now during his term," said Assad. "We believe that military strength is likely to lead to victory in one or several battles, and in the short term Israel will win," he said. "But Israel will be the main loser in a long-term confrontation, not Syria."

Iraq restores 8 military factories to full production

MIDDLE EAST NEWSLINE

Saturday, September 8, 2001

LONDON — Iraq has expanded and restored a range of military production lines throughout the country. Opposition sources said the factories are meant to produce missile

components and nonconventional weapons. Many of the plants are believed located near the Jordanian and Syrian borders.

So far, at least eight factories have been operating at full production. The sources said the effort began early this year and by June the plants were churning out components and subsystems required for Iraqi military and strategic programs.

The effort is being led by Kusay Hussein, the younger son of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. Kusay is said to be Saddam's heir.

One plant is located at Al Qayem, near the Jordanian and Syrian borders. Western intelligence sources said this plant focuses on chemical warheads for ballistic missiles.



PA Muzzles Celebrations of U.S. Attacks

RAMALLAH [MENL] -- The Palestinian Authority has muzzled coverage of Palestinian celebrations of the Islamic suicide attacks against the United States.

Palestinian sources said PA officials stopped several television crews from broadcasting Palestinian celebrations of the suicide jet crashes in New York and Washington. They said PA Information Minister Yasser Abbed Rabbo and his aides telephoned foreign broadcast crews and said the PA would not be able to guarantee their safety if the footage is broadcast.

The sources said Fatah agents loyal to PA Chairman Yasser Arafat warned Palestinian cameramen to either hand

over their videotape or refuse to relay footage of Palestinian celebrations for international broadcast.

The result, the sources said, is that virtually all television crews failed to broadcast the tape of the celebrations. They said this includes PA officers and Fatah gunmen in the West Bank firing in the air to celebrate the kamikaze attacks. The wildest celebrations were reported in Nablus.

In Ramallah, Fatah gunmen captured a Palestinian television cameraman who worked for a major news agency. The gunmen warned he would be killed if the footage filmed.

Israel's Best Defense

Michael Freund, Jerusalem Post
August, 29 2001

Perhaps it is time to put aside our cynicism and our doubts, and to do what people in trouble have always done in their hour of need - turn to their Father in Heaven and plead for help. The writer served as deputy director of Communications & Policy Planning in the Prime Minister's Office from 1996 to 1999.

The news, it seems, gives us no rest. Every hour brings with it another attack, another victim, more tears and more bloodshed. We reach for the tuner on the radio, like alcoholics grasping a bottle, punch-drunk from its effects yet unable to free ourselves from its stubborn hold.

With each passing day, the danger facing Israel seems to mount, as does our frustration. We all want to help, we all want to do something at this critical hour that will make a difference for our people. And yet, we seem at a loss as to just what we can and should be doing.

The usual array of pro-Israel activities - contacting one's elected representatives, combating media bias or even writing a check - just doesn't seem to cut it anymore. People are dying in the streets, being shot on their way to work or blown up at the local pizza parlor. There must be something

more, something that each and every one of us can do to directly affect the situation, no matter who or where we might be.

And, in fact, there most assuredly is. However you might define yourself - be it Jew or Christian, agnostic or simply confused - the key to Israel's victory may very well lie in the palm of your hands or, more precisely, in the words of your heart. Israel's best defense is the power of prayer, and it is time we unleash this weapon with all the fury and determination that we can muster. The fact is that for the past decade, we have given politics a chance, and it has failed us. Now is the time to give God a chance, for unlike politicians, He can always be relied upon to keep His word.

Bin Laden's Scattered Legions

14 September: Al Qaeda ("the Base"), the militant Islamic movement the Saudi terrorist tycoon Osama Bin Laden founded in 1990, is estimated by **DEBKAfile's** terror experts to number no more than 12,000 fighting men in all. They are scattered round the world, mainly in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Kashmir, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Ethiopia, Albania, Kosovo, Macedonia, Chechenya, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgistan, Tadjikistan and Lebanon.

Some 2,500 live in the United States, many of them US nationals, counting also members of Al Qaeda's fraternal



terrorist group, the fundamentalist Egyptian Jihad Islami. Many are "Afghan Arabs" who fought with Bin Laden against the Russians in Afghanistan in the eighties.

Either involved in local conflicts, like the Balkans, or organized as a sort of international rapid strike force for terror, Bin Laden moves his troops from site to site as needed, usually by chartered commercial flights.

Together with reserves, he can field some 17,000 Islamic militants to pursue what he conceives as his mission: to defeat the United States and its dominant influence as a world superpower. Most Bin Laden operations are large-scale yet precisely pinpointed to achieve that end.

His annual operational budget is estimated as \$125 million, which comes out of revenues from family-owned companies. His relatives are close to Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah. So as to save them and the Saudi ruler embarrassment, he has invested his stock in front companies registered in Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian capital. Most of his investments are in satellite networks and cell phone companies.

Bin Laden is the first terrorist chief to operate in global strategic terms. All his operations - and there have been no more than a dozen - are meticulously prepared and executed and always aim at damaging US superpower standing. His only regional or local targets are Saudi relations with the United States and the American infidel presence in the kingdom, which for him is anathema and profane. Bin Laden differs substantially from Yasser Arafat in that his thinking and targeting are global and ideological. All his associations are with radical Islamic groups and figures.

Gulf War-style anti-terror coalition to include Israel

By Gil Hoffman, Jerusalem Post

JERUSALEM (September 14) - The difference between the international anti-terror coalition that US President George W. Bush is building and the

alliance his father, former president George Bush, formed during the Gulf War is that this time, Israel will be a full partner, a senior Western diplomat told The Jerusalem Post yesterday.

President Bush said the cooperation

The president received the backing of NATO countries when the alliance yesterday invoked its mutual defense principle for the first time in history. The UN Security Council's unprecedented condemnation of terror will also give



of an international coalition would allow him to "rout out and whip" the terrorists. He warned that regimes that harbor terrorists would be held accountable for their actions.

Bush's coalition a free hand.

The diplomat said that Bush would face the same organizational issues in forming the coalition that his father was up against in 1990. It took the former president two months to assemble his coalition against Iraq, which left out Israel in order to avoid offending Arab sensibilities.

The source said the emerging picture is that Israel's inclusion in a coalition against terror may allow it to participate in attacks against Iraq, as well as Iran and Afghanistan, but Israel will be subject to limitations.

Less certain to join the coalition is Saudi Arabia, the birthplace of the man Bush holds responsible for the attacks on New York and Washington, DC, arch-terrorist Osama bin-Laden. The US is unlikely to go out of its way to include the Saudis, who the US believes have not decided whether they support or oppose terror.

The same goes for Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat. Foreign Minister Shimon Peres warned Arafat Wednesday that he would face



the wrath of the world if he does not renounce terrorism.

Taliban Threaten Jihad in Face of U.S. Attacks

By David Fox

ISLAMABAD (Reuters) - Afghanistan's ruling Taliban warned its neighbors on Saturday of "extraordinary danger" if they helped the United States take revenge for the devastating terror attacks on Washington and New York.

Their leader called for a Jihad (Muslim holy war) against anyone cooperating with the United States, while the foreign ministry and the movement's ambassador to Pakistan said Afghanistan would send fighters to exact revenge.

"If a neighboring country or the regional countries -- particularly Islamic countries -- gave a positive response to American demands for military bases, it would spark off extraordinary danger," Ambassador Mullah Abdul Salam Zaeef told a news conference.

"It is not impossible that we would attack such (a) country under compulsion and the mujahideen would have to enter the territory of such a country," he added.

The Taliban also on Saturday told the few remaining foreigners in Afghanistan to leave "for their own security." Most already have, although eight foreign aid workers charged with spreading Christianity remain in Taliban custody in Kabul.

Earlier, the Taliban's leader Mullah Muhammad Omar threatened a jihad against any country which attacked Afghanistan.

"Each Muslim should be ready for a jihad against this and be ready for his religion if there is a need for him to sacrifice himself for Islam and his belief, and make a sacrifice for the symbol of belief in Islam," he said on Voice of Shariat radio monitored by the BBC.

Bin Laden Named Commander and Chief of Afgan Armed Forces

MOSCOW, Aug. 30 (UPI) -- Russia's Foreign Ministry on Thursday condemned the appointment of Saudi terrorism suspect Osama bin Laden as the commander-in-chief of the armed forces of Afghanistan's ruling Taliban regime, the official RIA Novosti news agency reported. Bin Laden's appointment confirmed that a center of international terrorism is being set up in Taliban-controlled territory, the ministry said in a statement. "Pseudo-religious values are being used as a cover to prepare a bridgehead for expansion of militant extremism and separatism far beyond the region's borders," added the statement. This month, Russian media quoted Pakistan's Nation daily as saying that the Taliban had named bin Laden commander of their troops.

Afghanistan's civil war concerns the Kremlin as hundreds of Russian border guards monitor the Afghan-Tajik border and a potential spill of violence could plunge the whole region into chaos. Moreover, the Taliban's aim to build an orthodox Islamic state has given rise to many Islamic extremist movements in the former Soviet republics in Central Asia. In recent years, Islamic insurgents from Afghanistan launched raids on Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

Gulf nations balking at U.S. campaign

MIDDLE EAST NEWSLINE
Monday, September 17, 2001

CAIRO — Arab states are becoming increasingly wary of a proposed U.S. campaign against international terrorism.

Virtually all Arab League members appear unwilling to supply military troops or provide logistical support for U.S. or Western forces in any attack against Saudi billionaire fugitive Osama Bin Laden or any of his government sponsors, Arab diplomatic sources said. The United States is believed to require bases in the Persian Gulf and Pakistan to launch a sustained attack on Bin Laden bases in Afghanistan.

The sources said many governments in the Middle East have expressed reservations over a demand by the United States to join an international coalition against terrorism and have imposed conditions on such participation.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak said such a coalition must be under the auspices of the United Nations. Instead of military retaliation, Mubarak has called for an international conference against terrorism under UN auspices.

"A coalition grouping a select number of countries must not be formed since that will not permit decisive and collective international action against terrorism," Mubarak said. "It would be better to hold an international conference against terrorism under the auspices of the United Nations to adopt binding resolutions for all the countries of the world."

Gulf Cooperation Council states are said to be particularly worried over a U.S. attack. The fear, Gulf diplomatic sources, is that they will be face both a domestic backlash as well as Iraqi-sponsored insurgency attacks.

US

Political buzz from Washington

World on the Web, Aug. 18, 2001
By Joel C. Rosenberg

Key White House policy and political operatives are doing more than crafting new messages and building new coalitions; they're also meeting together for prayer and Bible study from noon to 1:00 p.m. each Thursday. The prayer meeting draws some four dozen staffers

from all over the White House complex, including (not surprisingly) the Office of Faith-based and Community Initiatives. The meeting also includes individuals from presidential personnel, speechwriting, public liaison, the office of the White House Counsel, the Vice President's staff, and even White House interns.

Another prayer and Bible study involving career government employees who work in the White House complex meets on Tuesdays. The meetings,



organized by long-time Bush aides who held similar prayer meetings in Texas, are not designed to advance administration work or career networking. They are to give

Christians the opportunity to break away from their high-stress work for an hour and remember in whose kingdom they really serve.

FBI focuses on Hamas -- in U.S.

WORLD TRIBUNE.COM
Wednesday, September 12, 2001

WASHINGTON — The FBI has targeted Hamas supporters in Florida in the federal investigation into the spate of suicide jet-hijackings that rocked the United States.

FBI agents have raided the homes of four passengers of the hijacked planes, two of them which destroyed the World Trade Center. The residents lived in south Florida and were said to have been active in the Palestinian Hamas movement.

The White House held an emergency meeting on late Tuesday and decided on what officials termed draconian measures to respond to the bombings.

The Bush administration has been urged to launch a campaign against international terrorist groups, including those aligned with the Palestinian Authority.

Airliner terror plan was code-named 'Project Bojinka'

Bill Gertz, World Tribune
9/19/01

The use of hijacked airliners as terrorist cruise missiles has been known to be a tactic used by terrorists linked to Osama Bin Laden since 1995. That's when terrorist Ramsi Youssef was captured by police in the Philippines. Computer hard drives were recovered during the arrest that laid out plans for spectacular terrorist attacks using aircraft. The data on the hard drives belonging to Youssef was decoded and revealed several key operations of Bin Laden operatives. It was ultimately used to convict the terrorists who carried out the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center.

According to an intelligence source involved in decoding the hard drives, the first plan was to assassinate Pope John Paul II during a scheduled visit to the Philippines. The airliner terrorism was outlined as part of a terrorist operation code-named "Project Bojinka."

The operation called for hijacking U.S.-bound commercial airliners from the Philippines, Korea, Thailand, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore. The hijacked aircraft were to be crashed into structures in the United States, including the World Trade Center, the White House, Pentagon, the Transamerica tower in San Francisco and the Sears Tower in Chicago.

"A dry run was even conducted on a Tokyo-bound Philippines Airline flight which fortunately was aborted by our security personnel," the source said.

9/16/01

WASHINGTON [MENL] -- Saudi billionaire fugitive Osama Bin Laden is said to have gone into hiding amid U.S.

plans to retaliate for the suicide attacks in New York and Washington. Bin Laden is hiding in the Kandahar area of Afghanistan, diplomatic sources said. They said the Saudi national left for his new location immediately after the suicide attacks on Sept. 11.

The sources said Bin Laden's movements have been tracked by satellite as well as by agents within Afghanistan. They said Bin Laden continues to enjoy the protection of the ruling Taleban movement.

On Saturday, Iran closed its border with Afghanistan. Officials in Teheran said the move came amid the assessment that the United States would soon attack Afghanistan and that thousands of Afghans would seek to enter Iran.

Terror Groups Met Twice to Plot New Holy War Against U.S., Israel

Fox News
September 16, 2001
By Carl Cameron

WASHINGTON — The world's most extreme terrorist groups met twice earlier this year in an effort to set aside their philosophical differences and unite in a new holy war against the United States and Israel, law enforcement officials tell Fox News.

The two meetings, according to the officials, took place in Beirut, Lebanon in February and the Iranian capital of Tehran in late April. The gatherings are described as "unprecedented," and went largely unnoticed in the west. A handful of officials in the White House were briefed on the event.

Dubbed the "Jerusalem Conference" by its 400 or so participants, the group drafted a document pledging to unite behind the Palestinians and win total Arab control over Jerusalem. "The only decisive option to achieve this strategy is the option of Jihad (holy war) in all its forms," the document says, according to law enforcement officials who have seen it. "America today is a second Israel."

The group — made up of Usama Bin Laden's al-Qaeda, the Palestinians' Hamas and Islamic Jihad factions, the Lebanese Hezbollah and militants from Egypt, Pakistan, Jordan, Qatar, Yemen, Sudan and Algeria — has named its task ahead, "The Jerusalem Project."

Sources tell Fox News that at least one participant went to the conference from the United States and returned here afterward.

The sources say "The Jerusalem Project" is headquartered in Beirut and led by two men -- Musa Abu Marzuq, a Hamas leader who was in 1977 arrested in New York and later deported to Jordan; and Ramadham Abdullah Shallah of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, who has two sons that served in Bin Laden's Mujahedin unit against the Soviet's in Afghanistan. Iran reportedly sent several official diplomats to the meetings, including Hojatoleslam Ali Akbar Mohtashami, a well known Iranian intelligence official.

Arutz Sheva 9/13/01

WTC Terrorists Linked To Fatah, Hizbullah Information leading to the identities of the hijackers and their possible sponsors continues to be collected by the FBI in the U.S. It is now assumed that about 50 people were involved in the planning and execution of the attacks, all of them Arabs from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and the Gulf Emirates. The footprints lead not only to Bin-Laden, but also to Hizbullah and Fatah, according to Senator Charles Grassley of Iowa. He said that he American Justice Department officials had told him that the terrorists are assumed to have had ties not only with Bin-Laden, but with "groups like Fatah and Hizbullah," and that they received extensive help from Arabs living in the United States.

Beware the Second Wave

14 September: DEBKAfile's intelligence sources report that Islamic militants under the command of Saudi

multimillionaire terrorist Osama Bin Laden, the radical Egyptian Jihadi Islami, Iraqi military intelligence and other Middle East groups, stand poised for a second wave of horrendous attacks in America. An estimated 30 to 50 suicide-killers are waiting inside the US for their orders to strike.

This time, while again aiming for the US President, the White House and Capitol Hill, they will also go for a broad spectrum of what they consider strategic targets, such as airports, oil fields and oil installations, sensitive military and intelligence facilities, warships and carriers. The last were indeed ordered out to sea shortly after the first assaults on Tuesday.

Aware that flushing out the terrorists in waiting, many of whom may be US nationals, is akin to finding a needle in a haystack, US leaders quickly resorted to a short cut. Two days ago, they turned to a number of world leaders, including Europeans, the Russian president and Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon, to request a pooling of intelligence. They were asked to share every scrap of information they had on international terror movements, in support of the US effort to eradicate the blight. Quick crosschecking between the services strongly confirmed the second wave thesis. It has kept US security services at the highest level of suspense they have ever known.

Therefore the FBI's dragnet on the trail of the conspiracy behind the deadly airliner suicide attacks on America are moving fast, so that the country is not caught off guard again. US security authorities are concerned to strengthen the two lines of defense against terrorist attack: the first-line barrier, advance intelligence, and the second-line defense, security. Both broke down when New York's landmark the World Trade Center, and America's military nerve center, the Pentagon in Washington, were crushingly assaulted by suicidal terrorists last Tuesday.

Russia/Asia

Russia close to major arms deals with Iran, Libya

SPECIAL TO WORLD TRIBUNE.COM

Monday, August 27, 2001

MOSCOW — Russia is in the final stages of concluding major weapons agreements with both Iran and Libya.

Russian officials said both countries have drafted an accord for the sale of weapons to Iran, Middle East Newline reported. The accord is being examined by the government in Moscow for final approval.

Russian Deputy Defense Minister Mikhail Dmitriev, in remarks reported by the Interfax news agency, said Moscow had completed weapons agreements with other countries, including Libya. He said he expects the agreement to be soon signed by both countries.

Russia Opposes Hasty Action After US Attacks

September 15

YEREVAN (Reuters) - Russia said on Saturday it opposed indiscriminate use of force to punish perpetrators of acts of terror after the U.S. Congress authorized strikes against those responsible for an attack on the United States.

President Vladimir Putin, who has pledged Moscow's support to Washington in efforts to root out "international terrorism," said on a trip to ex-Soviet Armenia that Moscow wanted a thorough investigation to precede any military action.

"The evil must be punished," Putin told a news conference. "But we should not liken ourselves to bandits who strike from behind. We must weigh up our decisions and make them on the basis of proven facts."

China Denies Links to Taliban

September 15

By Andrew Browne

BEIJING (Reuters) - China, seeking to distance itself from Afghanistan's ruling Taliban, on Saturday denied reports it had offered Kabul economic and technical assistance.

China's suspected dealings with the Taliban have come under scrutiny as the United States rallies a global coalition to respond to the worst-ever attack on U.S. soil.

Three aircraft commandeered by unknown hijackers slammed into the Pentagon in Washington and destroyed the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York on Tuesday. A Pakistani newspaper has reported China had signed a memorandum of understanding on economic and technical cooperation with the Taliban, which is sheltering Washington's chief suspect in the attacks, Osama bin Laden.

The Washington Post also reported Chinese telecommunications firm Huawei Technologies signed a contract to provide limited phone service to the area of Afghanistan near where the multi-millionaire militant is reportedly based.

Russia bombers to probe U.S. defenses

Geostrategy-Direct 9/16/01

Russian strategic bombers were deployed recently to a Far Eastern airfield and are expected to test U.S. air defenses during large-scale nuclear exercises this week, according to U.S. intelligence officials.

The strategic war games began Monday with flights of long-range Tu-160 Blackjack and Tu-95 Bear H bombers, along with Tu-22 medium-range maritime bombers. The exercises are expected to be larger than nuclear strike exercises held in December.

The Blackjacks were moved recently to Andyr air base in the Russian arctic. The bombers are expected to fly routes over the polar icecap toward Canada to test out the North American Aerospace Defense Command warning system,

known as NORAD.

China's Support Comes at a Price

September 19, 2001

John Pomfret, Washington Post
Beijing Says U.S. Must Modify Policies on Taiwan and Tibet

China on Tuesday gave its clearest statement to date of the limits to its support for an American war against terrorism.

It linked Beijing's backing for any U.S. action to a demand that America support

China's fight against separatism in Taiwan, Tibet and Xinjiang. The Foreign Ministry spokesman, Zhu Bangzao, said China would discuss any proposals to combat international terrorism, but he specified that such discussions must be taken up at the United Nations Security Council and not unilaterally or within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Mr. Zhu further delineated China's position by stating that military action in retaliation for last week's attacks on the United States would need "concrete evidence," should not hurt civilians and should be conducted within international law. Mr. Zhu's remarks marked the clearest statement of China's position since the attacks in New York and Washington. He followed a worldwide trend that has seen major powers lining up behind the United States at first but staking out independent positions later. Like many other countries, China hopes to wrest policy changes from the United States in exchange for support of an American war against terrorism.

Asians, Wary of a Muslim Backlash

Michael Richardson

International Herald Tribune, 9/19/01

As Washington prepares a possible military strike against Afghanistan, Asian countries with large Muslim populations or close ties to the United States fear that they will be dragged indirectly into the conflict. Such countries include Asia's most populous nations: China, India and Indonesia. Officials and analysts in the region said Monday that these countries - and others, including



Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand - worry that the United States may take military action that causes heavy loss of civilian life among Muslims

and inflames religious conflicts in Asia. Because such countries have offered support and sympathy to the United States, they are also concerned that they could become targets for reprisals by terrorist groups affected by American-led operations.

These concerns in Japan were heightened Monday when the Japanese media reported that possible followers of Osama bin Laden, named by U.S. officials as a prime suspect in the terror attacks last week, may have entered Japan just days before the attacks in the United States. Shortly before those attacks, the U.S. State Department issued warnings to U.S. citizens in Japan, South Korea and Indonesia, saying that it had received information about possible threats to U.S. facilities or citizens there. Japan is home to about 48,000 U.S. military personnel - about half of the American military presence in Asia.

Science

MAN-BEAST HYBRID BEYOND TALKING STAGE

August 24, 2001

The National Post reports: "Melding man and beast may sound like the stuff

of science fiction, but it's not. Amid all the advances in genetic manipulation, the idea of combining the DNA of animals and humans has gone beyond the talking stage -- it's been attempted. Indeed, many scientists and academics

are wondering how far it might go and what the ethical implications would be. If a human were crossed with a chimpanzee, for example, would it still be human? And if not, then what would it be?

The first publicized case of animal-human hybrids took place in 1996 when Jose Cibelli, a scientist at the University of Massachusetts, took DNA from his white blood cells by swabbing the inside of his cheek. He then inserted the DNA sample into a hollowed-out cow

egg. Cibelli's experiment came to an end after a week of growing the cell mass, he told scientists earlier this month at a panel meeting of the National Academy of Sciences in Washington, D.C. This raised the question of what might have emerged had the cell mass continued to develop.

LATE REPORT

War Preparations in Israel

21 September: Without a word to the Israeli public, national emergency war preparations went into high gear Thursday afternoon, September 20.



DEBKAF's military sources report that hospitals were placed on the ready and medical teams ordered to stay on call. The military authorities warned hospital directors to prepare for a heavy intake of casualties. There was no

answer to questions about whether the casualties would come from inside or outside the country – Israeli victims of military operations or enemy attack, or American troops injured after America's war against terror is launched. Israeli civilian airfields were also instructed to close down for civilian air traffic as of today,

Friday, September 21. Israeli airlines, including the national carrier El Al, were ordered to begin transferring some of their aircraft to the military authorities.

Israel's strategic supplies are also in

the process of being moved to underground shelters – especially the oil, gas and petrol depot at Gelliot depot in North Tel Aviv, which is very close to densely inhabited residential areas and army bases. A direct missile hit on that location could cause many casualties.

Since September 11, shortly after the attacks in New York and Washington, Israeli air defense systems and units, including two kinds of anti-missile missiles – the new Israeli Arrow and the American Patriot missiles, have been held at a high level of preparedness.

Counterfeit Controllers

Daniel Chapter 2

In Daniel two, the prophet lays out a vision that is not only amazing in its historical prophetic accuracy as seen from our present day but enlightening in regards to contemporary events. Many Bible scholars who study prophecy (which, by the way is about 1/3 of the Bible) point to it as the foundation lesson.

Now, Daniel was taken from Judah as a boy to Babylon which overthrew the Assyrian capital of Ninevah in 612 BC, thus becoming the newly dominant 'world' power. It then moved on and conquered Egypt's armies in 605 BC. That was the same year it took Jerusalem which had not left the Jews' control since being taken by David about 400 years earlier. (Note: That will be on the test! ☺)

Daniel, as an advisor to the Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar, interpreted a dream that provides us a stunningly accurate picture of the sequence of rising and falling empires which all had/have one thing in common – the control of Jerusalem and the Jewish people. You see, the Lord declared numerous times in the scriptures that He chose Jerusalem and the Jews as His portion in the world. But when His people rejected His rule over them, He committed them unto the governments of man as a school of 'hard knocks' so to speak. This will end when He takes back rulership over them and His chosen city, Jerusalem. Let's look at this dream.

Without delving into the circumstances surrounding the dream and its interpretation, we'll focus on the prophetic message it contains.

Nebuchadnezzar was concerned about what the future held and was troubled by a recurring dream. In Daniel 2:31-45, the prophet miraculously provides the king both the dream and its meaning.

Here's what he saw – a giant image like a man. The image had a head of gold, shoulders and arms of silver, an abdomen of bronze, legs of iron and then feet and toes made of a mixture of iron and clay. As he beheld the image, a rock "cut out without hands" struck the image on its feet and broke them into pieces, then like World Trade Center towers, the image was crushed together and became like chaff blown away in the wind. Meanwhile, the stone which struck it became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

Daniel explained that each material of the image represented another kingdom and as we examine the symbology, it is truly remarkable – so much so that skeptics have for centuries, tried to claim that Daniel was written post-facto. Christ, however, authenticated Daniel Himself in Matt 24:15 and Mark 13:14 and there are many other proofs of authenticity as well (if you need more than Christ's!).

The head of gold represented Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian Empire. After this came the Medo-Persian, the Grecian and then the Roman empires.

Babylon is called the "Golden City" in Isaiah 14:4. The Greek historian, Herodotus, visited Babylon ninety years after Nebuchadnezzar. He said that he was shocked at the amount of gold in Babylon. He added that all the walls and buildings in the city were overlaid with gold. Interestingly, the only nation Babylon actually removed from their homeland was the Jews.

Babylon was conquered in 539 BC by the Medo-Persian Empire. There is a sense in which the image shows the deterioration of value in the kingdoms – gold, silver, bronze, iron, ceramic clay. Also, the materials are getting harder as the interpretation progresses.

The next empire of the image is represented by the two arms but united by the chest. Just as the next historical empire to rule over Jerusalem and the Jews had two parts the Medes and the Persians but which were united as one. (The Kurds, by the way are the modern day descendants to the Medes and Iran is modern day Persia.)

Now this empire had a ruler that was less powerful than the kings of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar was an absolute monarch – total authority. The Medo-Persian rulers though were somewhat restricted by their own laws. This is evident in both historical texts and in Daniel chapter six (the famous lions' den story).

The next empire represented by the bronze belly and thighs was the Greeks who most people remember from their history classes was led to prominence by Alexander the Great. Now the Greeks used a lot of bronze. In their weapons of war, they turned the world upside down with their use of bronze. Also, the belly for the Greeks was the seat of the soul and the Greeks were known for their philosophies and attempts to explain the spiritual.

The two thighs are also significant. Alexander left his empire to four generals, but only two of them became powerful. The empire of Syria, run by the Seleucid dynasty, and the empire of Egypt, run by the Ptolemies. The Greeks were run by an oligarchy which was less powerful

than the Persian constitutional monarchy.

The next empire represented by the iron legs was Rome. The two legs are clearly indicative of Rome and the iron pictures the crushing and shattering that Rome brought to every nation they conquered. There was no empire in world history that so crushed all of its enemies as Rome did. The two legs represent, according to history, the East and West divisions of Rome – the East came to be known as the Byzantine Empire and was based out of the city we now call Istanbul, Turkey. The West remained centered in the city of Rome. It was Rome which destroyed the city of Jerusalem and along with crucifying many tens of thousands of Jews, scattered these people out of their homeland, not to return for about 1900 years. Also, the Roman government was inclusive of a Senate and thus was weaker at the top than the previous three empires.

Finally, however, we come to the feet and toes. Now, since the holy city was destroyed in 70 AD by Titus and his Roman legions, the prophetic 'clock' stopped for the Jews together with Jerusalem were not ruled by any one power. The people were scattered over the whole world and the city passed from power to power to power including Arabs, Crusaders, Turks and the British.

But then, in May of 1948, a UN resolution formalized the creation of a reborn Israel and in 1967, during the famous Six Day War, the Jews regained control over their ancient capital, Jerusalem. This is significant because the scriptures themselves identify the Jewish people as "the clay". For example:

Isaiah 64:8 says, "But now, O Lord, You are our Father; we are the clay

and You our potter; and all we are the work of Your hand."

Jeremiah 18:4-6 says, "And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter; so he made it again into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to make. Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying: "O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter?" says the Lord. "Look, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel!"

But we must remember that in the feet and toes of the image, the clay is mixed with the iron. And although the clay is mingled with the iron, verse 43 of Daniel 2 points out that it will not cling or adhere together. From, this scholars point to the re-emergence of the old Roman empire in some form as a cooperative but not absolute sovereign together with the reborn Jewish state over Jerusalem.

Historically, many commentators have speculated that the ten toes point to the European Union and certainly, the EU could be the iron in the feet and toes but that does not account for the clay. Some have said, based on verses 41 and 42, that this mingling of the iron and clay simply indicates a mix of strong and weak governments in coalition. Personally, I think this is only part of the story. Every other part of the image's materials is clearly linked to a governing body, yet for some reason, many ignore the clay when the scripture has been quite explicit in interpreting itself. The Jews are the clay.

Considering the present day and looking ahead, based upon these and other passages, I think we're soon going to witness (either from here or from heaven!) an EU or perhaps a Papal authority being exerted cooperatively with the Jews over

Jerusalem. Interestingly enough, there have already been many semi-secret discussions along this line at high levels of the respective governments.

Another reason not to omit the imagery of the clay in the prophecy is found in verse 45 where it is mentioned specifically between the bronze and silver rather than with the iron. Now, what happened historically between the dominance of the silver (the Medo-Persians) and the dominance of the bronze (the Greeks)?

Well, it's mentioned in both the Bible and in just about any good encyclopedia – in the final days of Daniel, during the rule of the Medo-Persians (in type, similar to the last days of the church age – i.e. nowadays) the Jews were given authority by the 'world government' of Cyrus, the Medo-Persian king (in type, similar to the action of the UN) to return to Israel and specifically to rebuild Jerusalem. The books of Ezra and Nehemiah also deal with this. Thus, the positioning of the clay, there between the bronze and silver in verse 45, should clue us in to its significance.

Regardless, with the rebirth of the Jewish nation and the re-emergence of the Roman Empire in the form of the EU, we are clearly living in the days of the image's feet. This is the time in which the Rock is going to come from heaven and strike, bringing the governments of man to an end. This Rock, of course, is Jesus Christ. He is returning soon. And His kingdom will never end. (*Thanks to David Hocking for some of this information!*)

Jerusalem's Mystical Appeal

By Hal Lindsey

We are witnessing the unfolding of a drama predicted by the Hebrew prophet Zechariah over 2500 years ago. He predicted, "Behold, I will make Jerusalem a goblet of drunkenness to all the surrounding peoples. Then they will lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem. And in that day I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples; all who try to lift it will be severely injured. All nations of the earth will gather for war because of it." [Literal translation from Hebrew original] (Zechariah 12:2-3)

The time for this prophecy's fulfillment is set by the overall context of Chapters 12 through 14. These chapters contain many prophecies about events that lead to the Messiah's coming to set up God's Kingdom. Christians know this as the Second Coming of Jesus the Messiah.

There are two important things that God says He will do with Jerusalem at that time:

First, Jerusalem will be made a cup or goblet that causes intoxication to all the surrounding peoples. These people are the Muslim nations that surround the re-born state of Israel. The Muslims have been whipped into a state of religiously driven 'intoxication' over the issue of reclaiming Jerusalem for Allah. Like people who are intoxicated, reason has been replaced with fanatical, unrestrained acts of irrational behavior

Second, Jerusalem will become a heavy burdensome stone for all the peoples of the earth. Jerusalem

is increasingly becoming the number one problem facing the nations of the world. All nations depend to some degree on oil from the Muslim Middle East. So whatever troubles them immediately troubles the rest of the world. The United Nations has made this issue a top priority. So have the European Union, the United States, Japan, China and Russia. Virtually all nations realize this could be the fuse of a global war.

On the other hand, the Israelis look back at 3000 years of Jerusalem being the center of their worship. They believe that without Jerusalem, Judaism has no ultimate validity. Jerusalem is the heart of even the non-religious Jew, for it is at the center of their history and culture. I have seen the almost mystical love that all Israelis have for Jerusalem—it goes beyond conscious reason. Now that they have it, after nearly 2000 years of praying for it, they cannot let it go.

The Hebrew prophet Daniel predicted that from the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in AD 70 until the Messiah comes to deliver it, there would be constant wars and desolations in Jerusalem, "... The people of the Prince who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed." (Daniel 9:26b NIV) This has certainly been fulfilled in history.

- The Roman Tenth Legion utterly destroyed Jerusalem in AD70. Over a million Jews were slaughtered. The survivors were scattered to the four corners of the earth.

- The Jews led by Bar Kochba tried to retake Jerusalem in AD132 and were butchered by the Romans.
- The Byzantine Christians took over Jerusalem in the 4th century.
- The Muslims captured Jerusalem in the 7th century
- The Crusaders fought the Muslims over Jerusalem from the 11th century through the 13th century. They were finally driven out by Saladin.
- The Muslim fought among themselves over Jerusalem until the Ottoman Turks took over Jerusalem in AD 1517
- General Allenby led the British army in its capture of Jerusalem in AD1917 and the League of Nations gave Great Britain a Mandate over it until May, 1948
- In 1949, the Jordanians took over guarding Jerusalem for the Muslim world.
- The Israelis re-captured Jerusalem June 7th, 1967.
- The fighting continues as the Muslim world cannot tolerate Israeli control of Jerusalem. They have now elevated Jerusalem to be on slightly less sacred than Mecca and Medina. Jesus Christ predicted, "And they [Israelites] shall fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations [AD70]. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles UNTIL the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled." (Luke 21:24) The 'times of the Gentiles' began to be phased out after June of 1967. The time of God's special favor to the Gentiles is rapidly drawing to a close.

The passion for controlling Jerusalem will soon ignite the most horrific war of all times, according to the Bible prophets—it is called Armageddon.

The prophets tell us that the only one who will be able to stop this war is Jesus the Messiah. The first thing He will do when He returns is to liberate Jerusalem for His dwelling place with mankind.

The time has come for all Christians to recognize that our time on earth is quickly drawing to a close. It is time to focus all resources and efforts on bringing those who will listen to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Whoever may read this article, recognize that Jesus has died for you, and in so doing, he purchased a full pardon for all of your sins. You must receive your pardon by asking him to forgive you and to come into your life. If you do this, you will enter into a new kind of life in which you will be able to know God personally. Don't put this decision off; you may not have another chance.

Dear Friend, if you are lacking absolute assurance of where and with Whom you will spend eternity, make the decision now to receive the complete forgiveness of all your sins. Jesus the Christ died for you personally – He took your place, took the judgment you and I are both worthy of there on the cross. Just accept that fact and confess it. It is all grace – see Ephesians 2:8,9 God deeply loves you.

Grace and Truth

Some stories in the Bible really sober me. One such story is that of Achan. It takes place in the time of Joshua and is found in Chapter seven of the book of Joshua. Here's what happened –

The host of Israel had just crossed the Jordan River and had defeated Jericho. Now, they faced a little stronghold known as Ai. It was so small that they decided to send just 3000 men against it. Clearly, they expected to make quick work of this little town but instead, they were trounced and 36 of their men were killed. Israel ran away that day and the whole camp was traumatized.

Joshua fell before the Lord in desperate prayer thinking everything was lost, that they would soon be surrounded by vengeful Canaanites and be massacred.

But the Lord said, "Get up!" and led him through a process of supernatural detective work which ended in the identification of the problem – one guy – Achan.

With the leadership of Israel looking on, he admitted to taking some booty during the Jericho campaign, something which had been strictly forbidden. And as he described, the loot was found hidden in his tent.

At this point, with the truth of his sin evident before all, he and his family and his livestock and his possessions are first stoned, then burned and then buried in stones – wow! It's not the least bit fuzzy, is it? God hates sin and deals severely with it. And we must remember that He has the right to do this and He is just.

And this sobers me, frankly. It can scare me to pieces because I've done much worse than Achan – I make him look like Billy Graham by comparison.

And the devil is always reminding me of it. Hmmm

Now, I don't know about you, but if you're like me, as you grow older in the Lord, you're becoming increasingly aware of your own wretchedness – the sin-nature of the 'old man' that fights against the redeemed 'inner man'.

You see, it's kind of like the prophet Isaiah who in the first chapters of his book is going, "Woe to you," and "Woe to you!" and so forth until chapter six where he sees the Lord, high and lifted up in His glory. And then he says ruefully, "Woe is ME for I'm 'un-together' and my 'mouth is unclean'" (slight paraphrase). For at this point, he realizes that the standard is our Lord before Whom we are awed and pained by our 'un-togetherness'.

Yes, I certainly blow it. I don't want to or sometimes even mean to, but I do – and some of Satan's most powerful weapons against me is to try to make me believe these lies:

- That I'm uniquely bad
- That I'm beyond the forgiveness of God
- That God regrets His choosing me
- That God's disappointment with me has limited or diminished His love for me
- That my weaknesses make me useless to Him
- That repentance means I need to get up and prove my worth – to show God that 'I'm really better now.'

- That I can't turn to the promises of God because I've over-used them.

And you know, I'm stupid enough to believe some or all of them at times!

Yes, God hates sin. Our world and our hearts are thoroughly polluted by it. If something were killing my child, I would hate it too – and I have. And I think God, knowing that although His righteousness demanded the expression of His anger, that it demanded justice – and knowing that doing so would consequently obliterate anyone or anything upon which it was vented except Himself – chose to do exactly that. He put his anger upon Himself on the cross – compelled by His love and grace.

When my own son was dying, I begged God to let me take his place, but I couldn't. This attitude of love is by comparison just a small reflection of the infinite love of our Father who looks on our condition and not only desires to take our place but in fact, He did.

And this brings me to grace. You see, God is truth and I need truth, truth about my weakness, my wretchedness, my utter need of a much higher power. The Old Testament is full of illustrations of God's truth. But truth in isolation only brings death in this sin filled world. And now, there's a choice – we can allow ourselves to be confronted with the truth about ourselves here and now or just slip by it time and again. In the latter case, we will ultimately be confronted with it before God's throne – too late to change. In the former, we will find ourselves in a

desperate state – perhaps broken, humiliated, even drowning and overwhelmed – way, way out of our comfort zone. But then, as the truth about ourselves hits hard, destroys our fanciful impressions, fills our personal throne rooms with manure, the truth about our God brings freedom. And we see grace. Do you know what grace is?

It's totally unmerited favor. You see, God didn't invent grace for me or anyone else. He just IS gracious – always has been, always will be. It's not like someone just getting an impulse to buy me a gift cause I'm so nice. It's not about me or you; it's about God. Grace is who He is, not some 'effect' I've 'caused'. I'm simply the beneficiary, period.

And you don't really begin to comprehend it until you realize how desperately you need it. As long as you think you can "make it right" with God, that you can somehow show Him you are or were worthy of His forgiveness and goodness – you are really still seeking to atone for your own sins, to observe a low of works.

And much Christian life and service is spent in this pursuit of worthiness – when Paul wrote, "Walk worthy of the calling..." he wasn't saying, "Try to prove your worthiness" but simply, "Walk in the light, walk with the Lord, walk the 'talk' – be an example of the believer." You see, that's totally different inwardly even though outwardly, it can look the same. However, one leads to spiritual barrenness while the other nurtures a garden.

"The Kingdom belongs to people who aren't trying to look good or

impress anybody, even themselves. They are not plotting how they can call attention to themselves, worrying about how their actions will be interpreted or wondering if they will get gold stars for their behavior.”

“Maybe this is the heart of our hang-up, the root of our dilemma. We fluctuate between castigating ourselves and congratulating ourselves because we are deluded into thinking we save ourselves. We develop a false sense of security from our good works and scrupulous observance of the law. Our halo gets too tight and a carefully-disguised attitude of moral superiority results. Or, we are appalled by our inconsistency, devastated that we haven’t lived up to our lofty expectations of ourselves. The roller coaster ride of elation and depression continues.” (Brennan Manning)

As I said, when I sin, I am tempted to believe that I’ve somehow gone beyond the limits of God’s grace but, “We must keep in mind also that the grace of God is infinite and eternal. As it had no beginning so it can have no end, and being an attribute of God, it is as boundless as infinitude.”

“We can never know the enormity of our sin, neither is it necessary that we should. What we can know is that “where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.” To “abound” in sin: that is the worst and the most we could or can do. The word abound defines the limit of our finite abilities; and although we feel our iniquities rise over us like a mountain, the mountain, nevertheless, has definable boundaries: it is so large, so high, it

weighs only this certain amount and no more. But who shall define the limitless grace of God?” (A. W. Tozer)

Grace is a purifier, a godly fertilizer for the soul, not a license for licentiousness.

“We who feel ourselves alienated from the fellowship of God can now raise our discouraged heads and look up. Through the virtues of Christ’s atoning death the cause of our banishment has been removed. We may return as the Prodigal returned, and be welcome. As we approach the Garden, our home before the Fall, the flaming sword is withdrawn. The keepers of the tree of life stand aside when they see a son of grace approaching.” (AW Tozer)

“If Jesus appeared at your dining room table tonight with knowledge of everything you are and are not, total comprehension of your life story and every skeleton hidden in your closet; if He laid out the real state of your present discipleship with the hidden agenda, the mixed motives, and the dark desires buried in your psyche, you would feel His acceptance and forgiveness. For “experiencing God’s love in Jesus Christ means experiencing that one has been unreservedly accepted, approved and infinitely loved, that one can and should accept oneself and one’s neighbor.” (Brennan Manning and Walter Kasper)

C. S. Lewis wrote, “Grace substitutes a full, childlike and delighted acceptance of our need, a joy in total dependence. The good man is sorry for the sins which have increased his need. He is not

entirely sorry for the fresh need they have produced.”

But Satan wants us to look inwardly in self-deprecation and/or to hang on to our pointless march for merit. That is, to be absorbed in our unworthiness or our drive to attain worthiness. On the other hand, receiving grace takes grace – that is, there is an attitude which is itself an unmerited gift that positions our hearts to receive from God His unmerited favor. John put it, “...of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace.” Jn 1:16

This is heavenly mindedness – you’re not bound up in continual self-pity nor enslaved by earning any of God’s favor – pro-actively or post-factively. This is the understanding of His goodness that naturally brings forth our repentance; this is the aroma of heaven’s sweet breeze, the refreshment of living waters; this is the joyful confidence of grace.

