

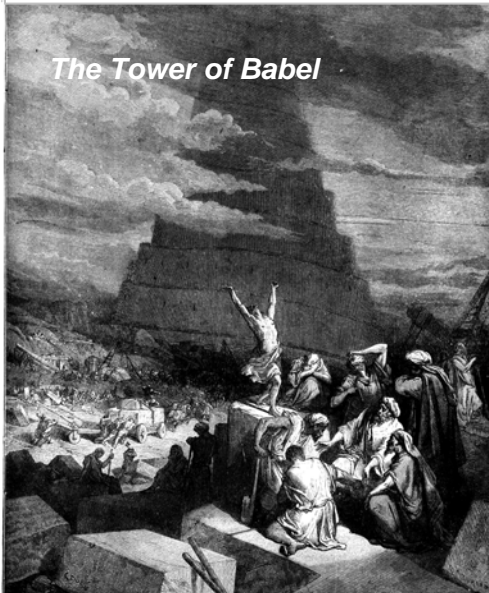
# Heavenly Minded

Vol.3 Iss.10

Dear Friends,

Someone once told me pertaining to loving obedient service unto the Lord that 'if you don't give up, you've won'. Paul, toward the end of his illustrious ministry simply said, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:" Whatever Christ has given you to do, seemingly big or little in importance, be faithful in it. As He has led you on this highway of hope, keep following, one step at a time, walking, running, even stumbling now and then – finish the race. Can you see the tape? – it's there dear one and if you could just see who's in the stands watching...! They're cheering for you; they know you're going to make it. These are the last days, the last laps. Let's encourage one another and break that finish line tape together! God bless and keep you!

John and Darlene



The Tower of Babel

*He rules by His power  
forever;  
His eyes observe the  
nations;  
Do not let the rebellious  
exalt themselves. Selah  
Oh, bless our God, you  
peoples!  
And make the voice of  
His praise to be heard,  
Psalm 66*

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The goal of HM is to encourage our readers to "Set your minds on things above..." and thereby to be the greater and more effective witness to Christ. Our news items are not meant to scoop anyone or to simply "tickle the ear" but rather to show potentially meaningful prophetic trends. Articles may be shared freely and reproduced but only in their entirety. Comments and suggestions are always welcome. God bless you!

## Double- time!

It is probably the oldest written account of scripture; at least that's what many Bible scholars think. No, it's not the story of creation but rather of destruction. It's the journey of Job – a trek that most of us can only faintly fathom. And though it is ancient in its origin, it is thoroughly contemporary in its applicability.

Though its language is poetic, it is not simply an allegory or a parable but a painfully accurate account of one man's tragedy and ultimate triumph. Yet, in that one man is the universal burden of humanity. And so, among the many lessons we could ponder we will consider herein the mystery of unexplainable misery as well as the pain and peace of patience.

Job 'had it all', or so it would appear. The scripture describes his circumstances as far beyond abundant. His riches in livestock alone made him "the greatest of the men of the east". His family was totally 'together' in loving unity – so much so that his children gathered together regularly to celebrate with feasts. On top of that, Job himself was known on earth and in the heavenly kingdom of God as an extremely righteous man, a man of prayer and confession, of godly counsel and encouragement to all who were in need. Ah, but Job didn't really 'have it all'...not yet.

You may remember the story – God had 'bragging rights' and as he was declaring the exemplary life of Job to Satan, the first shoe dropped so to speak. The devil claimed that Job was only living a righteous life because God had hedged him in and protected him from all trouble. It is here that some people have a hard time for it appears

that God allowed incredible evil to come into his servant's life simply to prove a point to Satan.

Indeed, God did permit the destroyer to have his way with all that Job had – in one fell swoop, the devil devastated Job's fortune and family. It seems that only his wife was left.

It was at this point however that Job showed a heretofore hidden aspect of his character – his utter submission to God's authority. Here, he proclaimed what is perhaps the most powerful praise of the Old Testament when he confessed, "Naked I came from my mother's womb and naked shall I return there. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD."

Oh, it is far too easy to glibly pass over this story with simply an intellectual assent to Job's losses. Who among us can comprehend the grief associated with losing ten children together with every form of sustenance -- all in one horrific day? Apart from the sufferings of Christ, this is perhaps the greatest account of individual grief and suffering in scripture. Nevertheless, the 'other shoe was about to drop'.

Again, Satan approached God and again he obtained permission to take the test even further – he could plague Job personally in any way he desired short of taking his life. As if his holocaustic tribulation hadn't been crushing enough, Job himself was then pulverized by poisonous and painful boils from head to toe – he became unrecognizable even to his friends. Scraping the puss from the infections with broken pottery, he lamented in a pile of ashes – what a sight! What a horrendous plague!

Still, Job did not let the intense misery corrupt his respect for the Almighty. He cursed the day he was born and wished it out of existence. He longed for death and was clearly near the end of his rope.

Consequently, Satan brought along some 'lubricant' – enter, three of Job's 'friends' with their 'slick' counsel on the reasons behind his condition. As if it were even possible, they made Job's trial worse. But Job, though he did not understand the reason for or purpose behind his plight, did not cave in to their slippery words nor to his wife who advised him to "curse God and die."

Wow! How could a man be more isolated, more desolate, more devastated, more broken? Only one way...I'll get to that.

Satan had done his worst, yet when God threatened to bring judgment upon Job's miserable counselors, Job prayed for them. How could a man be more generous, more forgiving, more overcoming? Only one way... I'll get to that too.

The misery of the righteous is indeed a mystery. And it can seem like God's 'tuned out' somehow or angry. Nevertheless, these trials work out to far, far more blessedness and ultimate good than mere mortal minds can appreciate. No, God is not far away in our times of tempest. No, He is not indifferent to our turmoil. No, He is not taking out His anger with sin on us. This is exactly what our enemy wants us to believe.

There is in the overall process a glorious and purposeful result – patient perseverance, godly character and the hope of heaven. *"Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in*

*which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope."* Rom 5:1-4

Now, in reading the last chapter of Job, you might get the impression that Job's perseverance in the trial paid off so to speak. We read, *"And the LORD restored Job's losses when he prayed for his friends. Indeed the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before. Then all his brothers, all his sisters, and all those who had been his acquaintances before, came to him and ate food with him in his house; and they consoled him and comforted him for all the adversity that the LORD had brought upon him. Each one gave him a piece of silver and each a ring of gold."*

*"Now the LORD blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning; for he had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, one thousand yoke of oxen, and one thousand female donkeys. He also had seven sons and three daughters."* Job 42:10-13

(Sounds like the first 'prayer of Jabez' so to speak was not with a me-focus but rather an unselfish intercession on the behalf of some confused friends.)

Yes, his self-righteousness was exposed and he repented of it, but there is more to this story than that. Job, though he may have found out what happened in the heavenlies to cause his calamity, it's not evident that he ever understood why. It remained a mystery. But, in allowing it, God produced in him a far greater capacity. You see, his perseverance wasn't limited to the time in which Satan had license to lay on heavy trials. He also obtained the capacity to persevere an additional 140 years! Do you think he came by the latter days blessings in the course of a

day? a month? a year? How about decades? At least several decades!

The capacity to persevere only prospers when it is planted in persecution or trial. By definition, it cannot come about suddenly. To persevere -- in Greek the word is HUPOMONE. *"In Classical Greece it described the ability of a plant to thrive in a harsh environment - literally in the deserts and rocky slopes. In later Greek and Jewish literature, it was used to refer to the 'spiritual staying power' which enabled the faithful to die for their God."* Scott Coltrane

And next, there was character. Perseverance in turn produced in Job a character capacity – that is godliness, which most of us can only faintly imagine. He is alluded to in scripture as one of the three most righteous men, apart from Christ, who ever lived (Eze 14:14,20) -- not in spite of the trials but because of them! Understand -- this was, is and will be to his benefit for all eternity.

And next, there was hope – specifically the hope of heaven. Why do I say that? First, because the Bible tells us that like the Colossians, the way we live is, *"Because of the hope [of experiencing what is] laid up (reserved and waiting) for you in heaven. Of this [hope] you heard in the past in the message of the truth of the Gospel..."* (Col 1:5 Amplified Version).

Second, Job had treasure laid up in heaven. You see, as we look at how God blessed his latter days we can specifically note that in all his possessions he received double – twice as many sheep, twice as many camels, twice as many oxen and twice as many donkeys. What does that have to do with heaven? Hang with me.

Now, we all know that these things, these earthly possessions don't go with us. When the incredibly wealthy J.D.

Rockefeller died, someone asked, "How much did he leave behind?" The answer came tersely, "All of it!" What was lost or stolen during Job's trial was gone.

With that in mind, it may at first seem odd that after doubling of all his earlier possessions, the Word then goes on to say that God gave him another seven sons and three daughters – the same as before. Hey, you might wonder, why not 14 sons and 6 daughters? 'I thought this was double-time?' Think with me – this was indeed a doubling as well. See, he already had seven sons and three daughters -- waiting in heaven.

Yes, some misery is a mystery, but in the pain of patient perseverance there can also be peace – peace with God. It, in turn, will bring forth the capacity for godly character and the hope of heaven – NOT suddenly, not like a 'Mc-blessing', but in God's good time.

Job understood this – he specifically named his latter three daughters in such a way as to make that evident. They were called Jemima meaning "day by day" or "warmth and affection", Kezia which means "cassia" the cinnamon-like spice so lovely it was part of the recipe for the holy anointing oil, and finally, Keren-happuch which means "a striking mascara that beautifies the eyes."

Job undoubtedly learned that this terrible, troubling and mysterious work of God, day by day, brought, in the end, warmth, affection, the beauty of a holy anointing and a strikingly beautiful countenance before the Lord -- not only of benefit in this short earthly life but throughout eternity.

*"For the Christian, perseverance is not an unbearable burden. It's not a matter of just trudging along, day after day, bowed down by grief and sorrow. On the contrary, by faith, our hearts can always be lifted up, because we're not bearing our burdens alone; Christ is bearing them with us and for us. As Paul prays for the Roman Christians, 'May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.' (Romans 15:13)" Alan Perkins*

In closing, how could a man be more isolated, more desolate, more devastated, more broken than Job? How could a man be more generous, more forgiving, more overcoming?

Only One way – only one person can make that claim in truth – only our God and Savior Jesus Christ. Job is a picture of Jesus – in suffering, in patience, in gracious intercession, in ultimate blessing and with children both in heaven and on earth one day to be united in Him forever.

You know, Job thought in the beginning that he was a pretty together guy. But at the end of the book when he actually saw the Lord (undoubtedly Christ) he said that he abhorred himself by comparison. It's kind of like Isaiah in Isaiah chapter six. Just seeing Him made all the difference – no more justifications, no more pity parties, no more self-centeredness. Simply beholding the King of kings settled the whole issue.

God never gave him answers to his tragedies, never explained a thing to Job. Yet his life turned around, his head was lifted up, his perspective on everything changed when He saw the Lord Jesus. That's frankly because in Christ everything is right, redeemed and restored. Such is heaven and the

heavenly minded. Now, Job truly has it all. Someday, so will you.

*"Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything." James 1:2-4*

He's coming soon – so persevere dear friend.

*For your consideration and further study: 1 Chron. 16:11; Job 17:9; Ezek. 18:24; Hos. 12:6; Mic. 6:8; Matt. 10:22; Mark 4:3-8; Luke 22:31-32; John 8:31-32; John 15:4-10, 14; Acts 11:23; 13:43; 14:21-22; Rom. 2:6-8; 1 Cor. 10:12-13; 15:1-2, 58; 16:13; 2 Cor. 13:5; Gal. 5:1-4; 6:9; Eph. 6:13, 16, 18; Phil. 1:27; 3:12-15; 4:1; Col. 1:22-23; 2:5-6; 1 Thess. 5:21; 2 Thess. 2:15-17; 1 Tim. 6:11-12; 2 Tim. 2:12; 3:14; 4:7-8; Heb. 2:1; 3:14; 4:14; 6:4-6, 11-12; 10:23, 35-36; 11:27; 12:1-13; James 1:2-4, 12; 5:10-11; 1 Pet. 1:5-7; 2 Pet. 1:10-11; 3:17; Jude 21; Rev. 2:10, 17; 3:5, 11-12, 21; 14:12; 16:15; 21:7; 22:11*

*Job was one of the most righteous men whole ever lived yet it took his incredible afflictions to reveal a self-righteousness which made him as filthy as the ashes he sat in. If you are one who has sought to please God in 'your own way' or on 'your own terms' you are going to fall short. The only righteousness God accepts is Christ's and the only way to have that is by accepting it as a free gift. Jesus gave His dear life for you and He is ready and willing to make you a vital part of His family when you acknowledge your sins and simply ask Him to indwell you by faith. That is the difference between life and death. Do it now.*

# World News

*...with potential for prophetic importance*

## Middle East

### Israeli Cabinet Decides in Principle for Arafat Expulsion

FoxNews 9/11/03

JERUSALEM — Israel's security Cabinet on Thursday decided to expel Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, Fox News has confirmed.

An Israeli television station said the ministers ordered the army to come up with a plan to oust Arafat, but that could take days, if not weeks.

"Arafat is an obstacle to peace, and Israel will act to remove this obstacle," Channel Two quoted a Cabinet statement as saying.

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has not made his view public.

The report said this constituted a decision in principle to remove the Palestinian leader, and that the army has been asked to come up with operative proposals.

### Quartet to meet over pushing road map forward

Jerusalem Post 9/15/03

Renewing efforts to bridge tensions in the Middle East, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan on Saturday urged Israel and the Palestinians to resume implementation of the road map peace plan.

Annan announced that the four main backers of the peace document - the United States, the United Nations, the European Union and Russia - have agreed to meet in New York later this month to consider all relevant aspects of the issue and help the parties move forward with the process.

Speaking to journalists after a meeting of the foreign ministers of the five permanent UN Security Council members, Annan said that the senior diplomats have reaffirmed their commitment to the roadmap for peace

*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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 an alliance 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. Isaiah 17:1, 14 tells us of the coming utter destruction of Damascus.*

*In addition, there is the prediction of a revival of a major world power arising out of the former Roman Empire (the EU) and exerting a strong influence over Israel and in particular, Jerusalem. (Dan. 2) The leader of this coalition, a charismatic man, will be the ultimate false Messiah and lead the world to oppose Christ's return. He will insist upon a one world religion with ultimately himself as god. Punishment for not following this religion will be, as with Islam, death. And no man will be allowed to buy or sell without his "mark" in his hand or forehead. He will also confirm a significant covenant (i.e. treaty) with many (the UN?).*

*In addition, 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**

**Knowledge growth – Dan 12:4**

**Russia – Ez 38, 39**

**Church – 2Tim3:1-5, 1Tim4:1,2**

**Final Generation – Mk 13:28-30**

**One World Religion -- Revelation 13**

in the Middle East.

"The ministers recognize that both sides have obligations under the plan," Annan said and added that it was essential to go ahead with its implementation. Recent attacks by both sides and Israel's decision in principle to deport Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat have fueled tensions in the region.

In a statement issued earlier this week in Geneva, Annan urged Israel to reconsider its decision to deport Yasser Arafat. He called it "dangerous and counterproductive in a situation of tension and instability in the region."

### **Israel ready to risk widening conflict** Financial Times 10/6/03

Israel's air strike on what it described as a Palestinian training camp deep inside Syria was a signal that it is prepared to risk widening the Middle East conflict as part of its "war on terror". "We needed to send a strong message to the international community that we are fed up with suicide attacks," said a senior official. He acknowledged, however, that the decision to strike Syria also reflected the difficulties in taking action against a central target on Israel's hit list - Yassir Arafat, the Palestinian Authority president.

The first Israeli raid inside Syria territory for 2 decades came after an Islamic Jihad bomb attack in Haifa on Saturday in which 19 people, including several children, were killed, and many wounded. The timing of the bomb was replete with symbolism for the Israelis: it came on the eve of Yom Kippur, the most solemn day in the Jewish calendar; it struck a city that prides itself on good relations between Arabs and Jews; and it came after a period of Israeli soul-searching about the 1973 Middle East war that began 30 years ago on Monday.

A renewed public debate about the conduct of that war, in which a combined attack by Egypt and Syria caught Israel off-guard, steered Israeli

military planners to opt for a Syrian target yesterday from what officials said was a basket of options. Despite the approach of the Yom Kippur fast at dusk on Sunday, the Israeli government decided to stage an immediate response to Saturday's bomb, while avoiding pressure to carry out a decision taken in principle last month to "remove" Mr Arafat. The Israeli government of Ariel Sharon, prime minister, apparently also calculated that an attack against Damascus would not be opposed by the US, which had warned against expelling or killing Mr Arafat. Since the end of the Iraq war, Syria has come under intense pressure from Washington to curb militant Palestinian terror groups with offices in Damascus, besides the other terror groups as well.

But hitting deep into the territory of a sovereign country puts Syria, whose Golan Heights are still occupied by Israel, under domestic pressure to respond. The government of Bashar al-Assad, Syrian president, said it would show restraint and seek a diplomatic reaction through the UN. Syria can ill-afford to retaliate against Israel's superior military strength. But action could come through the Syrian backed Hizbollah group in Lebanon, which has intermittently attacked Israeli forces occupying Shebaa farms, a swathe of territory claimed by Lebanon on the Lebanese-Syrian border.

### **Israeli Map Shows 'Terror Network' in Damascus**

Reuters 10/7/03

JERUSALEM - "We know where you live." That was the unmistakable message of the release by Israeli authorities Tuesday of a map pinpointing what it said were homes and offices of Palestinian militant leaders in Damascus.

The army said the map was intended to illustrate the extent of the "Terror Network in the Damascus Region." It came on the same day that Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said Israel would attack its enemies "any place, and in any way."



*Arafat's health has gone downhill*

Sunday Israeli planes bombed what the Israeli military said was a training camp for Palestinian militants near Damascus, after a suicide bomb killed 19 people in Haifa. Syria said the target of the Damascus strike was a civilian site.

The Israeli army map shows supposed locations of the homes of senior Hamas leaders Mousa Abu Marzook and Khaled Mashal, Islamic Jihad leader Ramadan Shallah and Ahmed Jibril, chief of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine -- General Command, or PFLP-GC.

It also shows 10 sites in Damascus the army says are the political, military and in some cases media offices for Islamic Jihad, Hamas, Fatah and the PFLP-GC. Hamas and Islamic Jihad sources in the West Bank and Gaza Strip said Abu Marzook, Mashal and Shallah moved between Damascus and Beirut for "security reasons."

"The map is proof of the extensive presence of Palestinian terror groups in Syria," an Israeli security source said. "We said it before and we say it again, everyone that is involved in terror and

endangers the lives of Israeli citizens is not immune."

### **Syria Says Ready to Fight if Israel Attacks Again**

Reuters 10/8/03

JERUSALEM/MADRID - Syria's ambassador to Spain said on Wednesday Damascus would respond militarily against Israel if the Jewish state carried out new attacks on Syrian territory.

A senior Israeli security source swiftly dismissed the threat, saying Israel did not want to escalate tensions and believed Syria did not want to start a war. The source said the envoy's statement was mainly intended to impress the Arab world.

But the comments increased tensions simmering since Israel carried out an air strike on Sunday on what it said was a training camp for Palestinian militants near Damascus, one day after a Palestinian suicide bombing killed 19 people in Israel.

Syria says the target was a civilian site and has said it has the right to defend itself.

"If Israel attacks Syria one, two and three times, of course the people of Syria and the government of Syria and the army will react to defend ourselves," Syrian Ambassador Mohsen Bilal told Reuters in Madrid.

Asked if that meant responding militarily, he said: "By all means. If Israel continues to attack us and continues its aggression of course we shall react to the attacks in spite of the fact that we are fighting for peace and wish to reopen the (1991) Madrid (peace) conference."

### **Saudis Consider Nuclear Bomb**

The Guardian 9/18/03

Saudi Arabia, in response to the current upheaval in the Middle East, has embarked on a strategic review



that includes acquiring nuclear weapons, the Guardian has learned.

This new threat of proliferation in one of the most dangerous regions of the world comes on top of a crisis over Iran's alleged nuclear program.

A strategy paper being considered at the highest levels in Riyadh sets out three options:

- To acquire a nuclear capability as a deterrent;
- To maintain or enter into an alliance with an existing nuclear power that would offer protection;
- To try to reach a regional agreement on having a nuclear-free Middle East.

Until now, the assumption in Washington was that Saudi Arabia was content to remain under the US nuclear umbrella. But the relationship between Saudi Arabia and the US has steadily worsened since the September 11 attacks on New York and Washington: 15 of the 19 attackers were Saudi.

## European Union

### France says no to Christianity in Constitution

EU Observer 9//15/03

Despite strong lobbying from the Vatican and representatives of the Orthodox Church in Europe, the preamble of the draft treaty establishing the Constitution for Europe - produced by the European Convention in June - has resisted any reference to Christianity.

France along with Turkey are the main countries contending such a reference.

"France is a lay state and as such she does not have a habit of calling for insertions of a religious nature into constitutional texts", the French President told reporters at a visit in Quintos de Moro where he met Spanish Prime Minister, José Maria Aznar.

"The lay character of French institutions does not allow them to accept a religious reference" in a domestic or EU constitution, Mr Chirac

concluded.

Several countries, Italy, Spain and Poland among them, have backed the idea of having a reference to Christianity included in the Constitution.

Warsaw intends to raise this issue in its four-point strategy for the Intergovernmental Conference which begins next month in Rome.

### European super-region plan touted

EU Observer 9/23/03

Proposals are being put forward for the creation of a European super-region which could radically reshape the face of the Union.

In what is being billed as a reworking of the Austro-Hungarian empire, regions spanning four countries - Austria, Italy, Croatia and Slovenia - want to create a region of closer integration.

According to the Guardian, unlike existing cross-border regional agreements this would cover more than one policy area. Most existing regional agreements cover only one or two policy areas.

If it were to go ahead, the plan would pose significant problems for those countries in Europe who have traditionally sought to limit the powers of the regions, such as France and the UK.

It may also serve as a catalyst for further integration projects.

### French home secretary announces chip ID card

Silicon.com 10/2/03

A "perfectly secure" electronic identity card will be in use in France by 2006, French Home Secretary Nicolas Sarkozy has announced. The card will carry a chip which will combine "the standard type of personal data you get in this type of document and an electronic certification system". A digital authentication system with a public key infrastructure (PKI) will be used to guarantee the authenticity of the holder and ensure confidentiality.

But when it comes to whether the card will contain biometrics, Sarkozy said it is still too early to tell but underlined that the

card is still in the project stage. For Sarkozy, the potential applications for the card are far clearer, however. Citizens will be able to use the card with central government, local authorities as well as businesses, he said.

### EU as divided as ever on Constitution

EU Observer 10/2/03

EUOBSERVER

/ BRUSSELS -

Just five days before the formal start of talks to finalise the draft Constitution, member states have shown that they are as divided as ever on the fundamental issues.

At a meeting of EU foreign ministers yesterday (29 September), several countries firmly staked out their position ahead of the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) on Saturday.

Poland, the largest newcomer to the EU next year, reiterated its strong opposition to the proposed changes to the voting weights in the Council.

Currently, their 'voting weight' equals that of a large country, but under the new treaty their voting strength would be reduced to that of a medium-sized country. The same will happen to Spain, Warsaw's staunchest ally on this matter.

### EU Leaders Aim to Fast-Track Constitution

AP 10/5/03

ROME -- European Union leaders said Saturday they hope to endorse their new constitution in mid-December, setting a

tight deadline for overcoming a power struggle between small and large nations.

The leaders emerged from a four-hour summit in Rome promising the constitution will take effect in 2005. By then, 10 more nations will have joined the bloc, raising the EU membership to 25.

But tough bargaining lies ahead in the next 10 weeks.

As the leaders left the summit Saturday, their foreign ministers began the first of a series of debates to settle disagreements over the text.

"We have opened a new page in Europe's history," French President Jacques Chirac said. Chirac and other leaders cautioned against a

wholesale re-negotiation of the draft.

The constitution foresees an EU president, a foreign minister, a structured defense policy and provisions to make it more difficult to wield vetoes that cause bureaucratic gridlock. It also calls for an EU executive of only 15 members, denying each state the automatic right to one European Commissioner.

Italian Premier Silvio Berlusconi, whose country holds the EU presidency, said "a very difficult task awaits us" in overcoming differences.

It is the fourth time in a decade that EU states have undertaken to rewrite the rule book. A final constitution must be ratified by all EU legislatures and the European Parliament if it is to take effect in 2005.



## EU and US should forge economic alliance

EU Observer 10/6/03

BRUSSELS - A radical new vision of transatlantic economic policy was unveiled today by a group that includes the German Deputy Finance Minister.

The Transatlantic Strategy Group proposes that the EU and the US forge an informal "G2" economic alliance, co-operating more closely on currency and trade issues. This could eventually lead to a currency alliance between the two economic blocks.

The EU and the US, claim the co-Chairmen of the group in a joint article in the FT, are the only remaining global economic superpowers. Japan has declined in significance and China has some way to go until it can be described in this way.

The EU-US economic alliance should therefore be forged to "provide leadership for the world economy".

"They cannot provide such leadership if they are battling against each other", they continue.

## Russia

### Russia May Send Troops to the Middle East

Newsmax 9/18/03

Wednesday Russia may take part in international peacekeeping in the Middle East.

Fedotov told reporters in Moscow: "If a relevant decision is made by the U.N. Security Council, most likely, a question will arise to engage Russia in the fulfillment of the task. It would be useful to bring international forces or international observers into the conflict zone to ensure control over the parties' fulfillment of their obligations and statements of 'the road map.'"

"The UN Security Council's inability to adopt a resolution requiring the Israeli government to withhold from Yasser Arafat's deportation confirms the

necessity of stepping up international efforts to overcome the crisis."



*Despite terror, great progress has been made in rebuilding Iraq.*

## United States

### US Prevents Israeli Raid of Arafat's Headquarters

MENL 9/16/03

The United States has prevented Israel's military from capturing the headquarters of Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat.

U.S. government sources said the Bush administration sent a harsh message to Israel to suspend plans to capture Arafat's headquarters in Ramallah over the weekend. The sources said the military planned to raid the so-called Muqata'a on late Friday and capture Arafat.

Secretary of State Colin Powell and National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice telephoned Israeli and PA leaders and sought to defuse the situation. Both senior U.S. officials warned Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to suspend the military plans.

"The United States does not support either the elimination or the exile of Mr. Arafat," Powell said. "It is not our position and the Israeli government knows this. There would be rage in the Arab world and the Muslim world. And I don't see this moving forward the roadmap."

## Democrats Say Establishment Media's Iraq Reporting Biased

CNS 9/24/03

Democrats on the House Armed Services Committee returned from a recent tour of Iraq with a message for the American people: The establishment media is presenting a biased and unnecessarily negative portrayal of the military and political progress in the newly freed Middle East nation.

"I flew from Baghdad to Kuwait with Sgt. Trevor A. Blumberg from Dearborn, Mich. He was in a body bag. He'd been ambushed and killed that afternoon," wrote Rep. Jim Marshall (D-Ga.) Monday in the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. "Sitting in the cargo bay of a C 130E, I found myself wondering whether the news media were somehow complicit in his death."

Marshall is one of seven members of the House Armed Services Committee who traveled to Iraq earlier this month to see for themselves whether the American military has become "mired" in its efforts to rebuild the country. He decided to make the trip because of "bleak" news media reports that "contrast sharply with reports of hope and progress" from the Defense Department. What Marshall found surprised him.

"I'm afraid the news media are hurting our chances. They are dwelling upon the mistakes, the ambushes, the soldiers killed, the wounded, the Blumbergs," Marshall wrote. "Fair enough. But it is not balancing this bad news with 'the rest of the story,' the progress made daily, the good news."

"The falsely bleak picture weakens our national resolve, discourages Iraqi cooperation and emboldens our enemy," Marshall added.

Marshall is not alone in his criticism. Rep. Ike Skelton (D-Mo.), the ranking minority member of the committee, said at a press conference last week that the establishment media is dwelling on the negative news to the exclusion of the positive.

"The media stresses the wounds, the

injuries and the deaths, as they should," Skelton said. "But, for instance, in Northern Iraq, General [David] Petraeus has 3,100 projects, from soccer fields to schools to refineries. It's all the good stuff that isn't being reported."

Steve Rendall, senior analyst with Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR), a liberal media watchdog group, acknowledged that the U.S. news presence in Iraq lacks depth.

Tim Graham is director of media analysis for the conservative Media Research Center, of which CNSNews.com is a division. He believes Marshall's analysis of the news coverage coming from Iraq is accurate, even if his conclusion is exaggerated.

"The media's coverage of this sounds more like a campaign and less like objective reporting," Graham said. "It sounds like 'softening up' the opponent."

In a limited defense of reporters, Graham said the nature of the news business is also affecting the coverage.

"Anybody who's going to vote, anybody who's going to form an opinion on how we're doing in Iraq," Graham cautioned, "ought to realize, with a grain of salt, that the news media doesn't feed you the happy news."

## U.S.: Syria supporting terror groups, developing WMD

Ha'aretz 10/6/03

Undersecretary of State John Bolton on Tuesday vehemently attacked Syria and said it was a rebellious country, like Iran, North Korea and Libya. Bolton told a congressional hearing that Syria is developing weapons of mass destruction and supporting terror organizations, and that the combination poses a serious threat to both U.S. and international security.

Bolton said that the United States must keep open the option of using "every tool" - code for the remote possibility of military action - to dissuade Syria and others from pursuing chemical, biological or nuclear weapons.

While saying the United States had yet not found any information to substantiate media reports that Iraq might have transferred some of its suspected weapons of mass destruction to Syria, Bolton said Washington was concerned by the reports.

Bolton added that Syria continues to support Hezbollah, Hamas and Islamic Jihad - groups the United States considers terrorists - and that it is allowing militants to cross the border into Iraq.

### **More Depravity at Disney 'Gay Days'** Agape Press 10/2/03

The Christian Action Network (CAN) has once again provided the world with proof of the shocking behavior that families visiting Walt Disney World can encounter during "Gay Days." For the 13th year running, Disney has hosted "Gay Days," the annual week-long summer event during which thousands of homosexuals descend on the Magic Kingdom to flaunt their sinful lifestyle to the city of Orlando and the rest of the nation. The festivities center around the first Saturday in June each year.

This past June, CAN president Martin Mawyer attended "Gay Days" with his video camera in order to document what goes on at the Disney event. Mawyer's videotape shows homosexual men engaged in public kissing, fondling, and even simulated sex acts. According to CNSNews, the filmed incidents occurred in public, on Disney property, and while the park remained open to the general public -- including children. "The video footage we captured on film is the most brazen and shameless display of public homosexuality I've ever seen," Mawyer says." And to think it occurred

at Disney World is simply stunning and beyond belief."

## *United Nations*

### **U.N. holds emergency meeting over Israeli strike in Syria**

*Security Council members discuss retaliatory bombing after Haifa blast*  
WND 10/5/03

The United Nations Security Council convened an emergency session to discuss an Israeli airstrike on a purported Palestinian terrorist-training camp inside Syria.

The unusual summit came at the request of Syria, which seeks a resolution condemning Israel's "aggression." The draft calls for Israel to stop committing acts that could threaten regional security or expose "the already deteriorating situation in the region to dire consequences."

"Arabs and many people across the globe feel that Israel is above the law," Syria's U.N. ambassador Fayssal Mekdad told the council.

While some council diplomats called the airstrike a violation of international law, others condemned both the airstrike and yesterday's deadly suicide bombing in the northern city of Haifa, which prompted Israel's retaliatory airstrike.

Israeli Ambassador Dan Gillerman expressed outrage the meeting had been called on the eve of the holiest Jewish holiday, Yom Kippur, and pointed to the irony of the situation.

"[It was] as if [Osama] bin Laden would have asked for a Security Council meeting after 9-11," the Israeli daily Haaretz quotes Gillerman as saying.

Today's airstrike marks the first time in nearly 30 years that Israel's military struck deep into Syria. On April 16, 2001, Israeli warplanes hit a Syrian radar station in Lebanon in retaliation for an attack by Syrian-backed guerrillas. That strike killed three Syrian soldiers.

Earlier today, Israeli helicopters fired missiles at a refugee camp and a small house near the beach in Gaza City,

witnesses said. The house belonged to a prominent Gaza family, whose members are active in Hamas and Islamic Jihad.

In response, Hamas vowed revenge.

## *Religion*

### **Cardinal: Pope 'is in a very bad way'** MSNBC 9/30/03

Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, the head of the Vatican body which oversees doctrinal matters, was quoted on Tuesday as saying Pope John Paul was in very poor health and the faithful should pray for him.

"He is in a very bad way," Ratzinger told Germany's Bunte magazine in an interview. "We should pray for the pope."

Ratzinger, who heads the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, told the magazine that the 83-year-old pope had taken on too much, but he was unable to stop him.

The increasingly frail pope was particularly weak earlier this month on a trip to Slovakia and needed help reading his sermons. Last week, he skipped his general audience because of what the Vatican said was an intestinal problem.

Ratzinger's private secretary, Georg Gaenswein, said it was amazing how the pope, who suffers from Parkinson's disease, kept going.

### **African touted as Pope's successor; Vatican preparing public for Pope John Paul's death**

Herald Sun 10/2/03

The man tipped to be the 1st black pope has set out his credentials [as the Vatican continues to prepare the public for the death of Pope John Paul II](#). Following comments from top Vatican official Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger that the Pope was in "very bad" health, the Pope's private secretary Georg Gaenswein said yesterday the 83-year-old pontiff could not walk or stand. "He is a hero for the faithful," Mr Gaenswein said. "The fact he doesn't give up despite his illness makes him even more credible ... When he is no longer allowed to travel, then dear God will come for him."

Meanwhile, Cardinal Francis Arinze of Nigeria has become the first possible successor to be publicly promoted. In a book of interviews published this week called God's Invisible Hand, Cardinal Arinze presents himself as a man who has risen from humble origins in a Nigerian village to a senior position in the Vatican, and as a conservative capable of reaching other constituencies. Cardinals do not publicly campaign for advancement, yet an Arinze bandwagon is beginning to roll. This week the Archbishop of Rio de Janeiro, Eusebio Oscar Scheid - one of 31 new cardinals appointed by the Pope last Sunday - said that although a Latin American pope was a possibility, he would vote for an African one. And his views were echoed by Claudio Hummes, the Archbishop of Sao Paulo. Even Cardinal Ratzinger, who heads the Vatican's congregation on doctrine and will play a key role as Dean of the College of Cardinals that will appoint the next pontiff, said he could envisage a black pope.

Cardinal Arinze, 70, is Africa's only possible papal candidate. He became Africa's youngest bishop, and records his ordeal as a "bishop on the run" during the Biafran War, his studies in London in the 1960s, and his surprise at being made a cardinal in 1985. After 18 years as head of the Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue in Rome, he was put in charge of liturgy and the sacraments last year, giving him vital experience of internal affairs. **He suggests Christianity can learn from other faiths, and calls for greater tolerance and free discussion within the Catholic church.**

### **Chandlers testimony from Haiti**

Dear friends & family,

As we've been in Haiti now for six months, we are glad to have made

this milestone with God's help. The following account inspires us, and we hope that it will give you a taste of the flourishing work here.

A Christian Haitian girl recently received a solar-powered radio. She in turn gave it to her father. After listening to Radio 4VEH about three months, her father accepted Jesus as his Savior. He then gave the radio to his friend, a witch doctor. The witch doctor, too, accepted the Lord.

While some OMS missionaries were visiting Haiti, they went to the home of this young lady's father. As the father gave his clear testimony others gathered around. After two hours, 17 people had accepted the Lord. Afterwards, they went to the witch doctor's home. As they came up to his home, there was a white cloth covered table with a solar-powered radio in the center of it.

When the witch doctor came out of the house, he graciously seated his guests. Once again they heard a clear testimony of salvation. "No one comes to me as a witch doctor anymore, for they know I have accepted Jesus." Twelve of his 13 children had accepted Christ, but not his wife.

As people gathered around, a Christian Haitian walked over to the witch doctor's wife, who was shelling corn. In a caring manner he talked to her and others nearby. At the close of their time together, five more had accepted the Lord, including the witch doctor's wife! From this one radio, 36 people accept Christ.

Thank you for your part in Haiti by standing behind us.

The Chandlers, Ted, Angela, Lydia, Trisha & Kylie

### **'The Bible As Hate Speech' Bill Passes**

WND 9/19/03

Canada's House of Commons passed a controversial bill yesterday opposed by religious believers and free-speech advocates who say it will criminalize

public expression against homosexual behavior.

The bill, passed 141-110, adds sexual orientation as a protected category in Canada's genocide and hate-crimes legislation, which carries a penalty of up to five years in prison.

'It's been a good week for equality in Canada,' said the bill's sponsor, Svend Robinson, an openly homosexual member of Parliament.

The vote came just a day after MPs narrowly defeated a nonbinding motion reaffirming marriage is between a man and woman only.

### **Structural collapse on Temple Mount Muslims blame Israel for failure of interior wall in Al-Aqsa Mosque**

WND 9/24/03

An interior wall has collapsed at a hotly contested Jerusalem holy site, setting off fears of religious violence between Muslims and Jews.

The Islamic Waqf, which administers the Al-Aqsa Mosque and Dome of the Rock shrines atop the Temple Mount, accused Israeli authorities of instigating the failure of the wall by preventing engineers from maintaining it.

The collapsed wall is situated near the Islamic Museum.

"It looks terrible," said Eliat Mazar, an Israeli archaeologist and Temple Mount expert and a leader of the committee for preventing the destruction of antiquities at the site. "This collapse might cause a terrific series of collapses."

Israeli archeologists believe the bulge and the new wall collapse are due to unauthorized Waqf construction at an underground area known as Solomon's Stables, located on the other side of the wall. Reports say Muslim authorities are constructing yet another mosque at the Jewish holy site.

Newsweek has called the southern wall "The Armageddon wall," because the old rocks help support an enormous stone platform that holds the Al Aqsa Mosque

and the Dome of the Rock, among Islam's most sacred shrines.

Should it collapse, some archeologists fear a doomsday effect – dead worshippers, perhaps in the thousands, riots throughout the Middle East and charges that Israel is responsible.

### **A call for 'United Nations of Religions' Kazakhstan conference brings together leaders of 18 faiths**

WND 9/30/03

As a two-day conference of major religions ended in Kazakhstan, key leaders of 18 faiths agreed to meet regularly under the banner "Congress of World and Traditional Religions."

One delegate hoped the group would translate into a "United Nations of Religions." Speeches touched on how to address differences between religions, the need for more dialogue, and the issue of terrorism.

The secretary-general of the Muslim World League, Sheikh Abdullah Al-Turki, from Saudi Arabia, said the Koran prohibits any acts of violence.

He told the delegates, "Islam is against all killing that is without a just cause. We cannot accept those who say that Islam is a religion that kills or harms others." Sheikh Al-Turki said Muslims also oppose those who use religion for political purposes.

The senior Jewish representative at the conference was Jonah Metzger, the chief rabbi of Israel. He spoke of the need for greater understanding between faiths, directing his remarks to the delegations from Saudi Arabia, Iran, Pakistan, and Egypt, who were sitting just a short distance away.

Metzger invited all of those present to come to Jerusalem, which he called by its Islamic name of "Al-Quds." He told the conference that the invitation applied to everyone, even those with whom Israel does not have diplomatic relations.

During the conference there were private meetings between delegates from the Catholic and Russian Orthodox churches,

which have spiritual differences going back centuries as well as more recent disputes over property in the former Soviet Union.

Hindus from India also had a chance to talk with their historical Muslim adversaries from Pakistan. Representatives of other faiths at the congress included Taoists and Buddhists from China, and a Shinto delegation from Japan.

The congress was chaired by President Nursultan Nazarbayev, who initiated the idea of holding the meeting in Kazakhstan's new capital city, Astana. The delegations agreed that Kazakhstan would be the appropriate place for a new, permanent organization to allow for more dialogue between peoples of all religions. Nazarbayev offered to provide a new building.

## **Science**

### **First Human Clone Embryo Ready for Implantation**

New Scientist 9/16/03

The first human cloned embryo could be implanted into a surrogate mother's womb before the end of the year, US fertility expert Panayiotis Zavos claimed on Monday.

The attempt follows months of 'practicing' in the lab on hundreds of hybrid embryos made by fusing human cells with empty cow eggs, Zavos told a press conference in London.

If the human pregnancy proceeds and goes to term, the baby will be a girl, he adds.

'We've created the first human embryo for reproductive purposes,' says Zavos, director of the Andrology Institute of America and associate director of the Kentucky Center for Reproductive Medicine and IVF.

Zavos says that the frozen human embryo should have been implanted in July, but the surrogate mother



developed complications which meant that the attempt had to be postponed. But it's still 'on the agenda this year', he says.

#### **Stem Cells Grown Into Sperm Cells** Newsday 9/15/03

WASHINGTON -- Embryonic stem cells have been encouraged to grow into sperm cells for the first time, Japanese scientists report.

The work is very preliminary, and was done in the laboratory with mouse stem cells. The next step would be to see if it can be repeated in live animals.

Stem cells are the basic building blocks of animals, forming in the new embryo and later developing into the various organs and tissues as the fetus grows.

Researchers have grown stem cells into many other types of cells, including egg cells, but this is the first time a sperm cell has been developed, the scientists said.

#### **Ban cloning babies, demand world's top scientists**

NewScientist 9/22/03

Cloning babies should be banned worldwide by the United Nations, more than 60 of the world's leading scientific academies demanded on Monday.

"Human reproductive cloning is unsafe, and no responsible scientist would attempt it given the huge health risks that are involved," said Yves Quéré of the InterAcademy Panel on International Issues, which launched the joint declaration in Trieste, Italy on behalf of the 63 academies.

But the ban should not extend to therapeutic cloning - the creation of cloned cells which could form tissue for transplant into diseased or injured patients - they added.

Already, the UN has made two failed attempts at a treaty. Almost every delegation wants a ban on cloned babies, but some countries including the US, the Vatican and other Roman

Catholic countries have held out for a ban on therapeutic cloning too.

The practice is controversial because in humans, the first step would be to grow an embryo-like ball of cells created by fusing a human cell with an empty egg cell.

Implanted into a woman's womb, the cloned cells have the potential to grow into a baby. But if grown for a few days in the lab, the same ball of cells yields stem cells which could theoretically be grown into tissue of choice for transplant.

#### **Record closest ever asteroid flyby to Earth - Saturday, Sept. 27th, 2003 (Feast of Trumpets Weekend)** New Scientist 10/3/03

An asteroid about the size of a small house passed just 88,000 kilometres from the Earth by on Saturday 27 September - the closest approach of a natural object ever recorded. Geostationary communication satellites circle the Earth 42,000km from the planet's centre. The asteroid, designated 2003 SQ222, came from inside the Earth's orbit and so was only spotted after it had whizzed by.



**ARE YOU SETTING YOUR  
AFFECTION ON THINGS  
ABOVE? COL 3:1-4!**

## *Pinnacles of Prayer*

**"This, then, is how you should pray:** " (See Matt 6:9-13)

**"Our Father..."** In coming before God, the first thing HE wants US to remember is that He is our Father. This is NOT a reminder for Him but for us. He is a true, a loving, a faithful Father and ever will be. Although the world has indeed corrupted the image of fatherhood in its moral meltdown, God is unchanged – He's compassionate, capable and purely interested in your good.

**"...Who art in heaven..."** There is a heaven and there is a hell. We are in neither place as yet, but ALL of us one day will be. God is in heaven, what the scriptures refer to as the "third heaven" – the sky and the cosmos being the first and second respectively. That is, God is above all, above all the mess of a sinful and cursed creation. He Himself is untouched by sin nor can He be. Perfectly pure and forever holy, holy, holy, His character is not like ours – He is loving to the uttermost, all-knowing, all-powerful and all-present. Yes, even though He is in heaven, He is also in the midst of His creation everywhere – there is nowhere you can go that He will not be with you. How does He do that??

**"...hallowed be Thy name."** Gayle Erwin wrote a wonderful work entitled "The Yhwh Style" in which he reminds us that from a biblical standpoint that "name" is synonymous with "nature". Now, hallowed comes from the Greek word pronounced 'hagios' meaning 'a most holy thing'. Therefore, here we are reminded that in addition to remembering He is our Father, we are

to ponder that His nature/name is most holy. In a day in which the concept of holiness is so poorly understood, one might ask, 'Why is this so important?'

Being separate, special, above all – these attributes are a part of holiness certainly, but by no means do they constitute even the 'tip of the iceberg' so to speak. In the Bible, we note that the quality which moves all of heaven, even the highest created beings, to worship God is His holiness. Describing it with mere words is like trying to impress an ant with the Mona Lisa. Suffice it to say that this prayer leads us as believers to esteem His very nature as infinitely higher than our own and expresses the desire for the whole world to have the same awe.

**"Thy kingdom come..."**

Someone once told me that this really says. "Come, Thy kingdom." Now, His kingdom has come in a measure through the spread of the church, but it is indeed in a limited measure. One day, God's ways will fill all creation and there will be a day in which sin and its rotten fruit are long gone -- no more devil, no more demonic activity, no more sickness, pain, suffering or death. We'll know pleasures forevermore, glorious reunions, justice and truth, grace and mercy, overflowing joy, perfect peace, endless love – these wonderful things will no longer be the topic of sermons but revealed in God to us as He reigns.

**"Thy will be done,..."** We sometimes need to be reminded

that God's will applies not only to the means but to the end as well. God's will was the cross of Calvary (the means) as well as universal reconciliation (the 'end'). Tough 'medicine' for a tough situation but yielding the most tender of outcomes. Submitting to God's will for the means means trusting that His will for the outcome is always worth it. And it is. Jesus submitted to the cross because of the joy set before Him on the other side. So, is His will as to 'the means' always a hard pill to swallow? No, but don't be surprised or even disappointed when it is.

**"...on earth as it is in heaven."** Did you know, heaven is coming to earth? For some radical and unfathomable reason, God will establish His very throne in our proximity. His heavenly city will descend close to earth and not only will He rule and reign our own once wayward planet but all of creation as well – from here! Heaven is perfect because of God. His presence makes it heaven and one day, earth will be a part of it. What better way for Him to demonstrate who He is than to turn the devil's own stomping grounds into His paradise. Only He can do such a thing. Only God can clean up this mess – and that's exactly what He's going to do. Earth will be as heaven! Wow!

**"Give us this day our daily bread..."** This request applies to all our daily necessity. We must never look to our Father as grudgingly coughing up some scraps of stale crackers as we beg. Remember, He's the One who is giving us this model prayer in the first place. If He has told us to ask, you can be sure

it is because He loves to give. Note, however, the daily part – 'oh, if we could just get ahead a little – you know, put aside a little stash so we didn't have to DAILY come to Him.' That's exactly what the sin nature wants because every day you don't depend on God, you'll drift from Him. This 'daily' business is more important than the provision itself. Those who are in the greatest sense of material security, if they depart from the daily seeking of God, are rather in the greatest spiritual peril. Yet, we tend to see it the other way – we just want the stuff. We want to be stuffed with the stuff. Like a bunch of 'turkeys' we gobble, gobble, gobble and then want to kick back and check in with God next week or when the 'pantry' gets low. This applies to both material and spiritual needs. But daily-ness is the recipe. Daily dependence on God leads to godliness.

**"And forgive us our debts..."** We owe God big time! We are in HUGE debt. Frankly we owe Him everything everywhere forever. And yet we are bankrupt. We can never pay for the forgiveness, the redemption, the eternal life He has provided. We can never ever EVER compensate Him for His Son. Every sincere Christian acknowledges this – our sin has been paid for in full, by Christ's blood. You can't sincerely ask God to cancel your debt if you don't first accept that it exists. When I came to Christ, it was as the result of a 'search for meaning and truth'. God, however, loved me too much to leave me in that ignorance. It was after years of wallowing in the gutters of lust and misguided depravity (as a 'Christian') that I realized how desperately I needed His forgiveness and

redemption. It wasn't until then that I really knew I had a debt and a Redeemer. There is no humility without humiliation. And here's the kicker... Jesus said, *"to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little."* (Luke 7:47) It wasn't until I began to fathom the extent of my forgiveness that I began to truly love my Lord. True, love is the driver behind obedience (John 14:15) but love is driven itself by the appreciation of mercy and grace.

**"...as we forgive our debtors..."** Oh-oh, look out for that "as". That little conjunction in the Greek means "and" or "also" or "indeed". Forgiveness is not really optional for the believer. The sense of forgiveness we enjoy in this life is directly related to the forgiveness we extend to others. Now, I don't believe this is a 'conditional addendum' on the contract of the cross so to speak. If you have truly accepted the gift of salvation provided for at Calvary, you are covered by Christ's own righteousness – in God's view, you are as righteous as Jesus Himself. Your place in heaven is secure.

However, your peace on earth or sense of rightness with God will be impacted by a hard heart toward others who frankly owe you immeasurably less than you owe God. And He does that purposefully – you cannot fully embody the love of God or a love for God if your heart is hardened by unforgiveness. Many of you know the story of Corrie ten Boom who was undoubtedly one of the dearest saints to preach the gospel. You remember how she shared her testimony of surviving Ravensbruck, a torturous prison camp in WWII where her sister was brutally treated and eventually died. One day after the

war, as she spoke to a crowd about the Lord, she was approached by a man whose presence made her shake – the very prison guard who so harshly treated she and her dear sister. He had come to Christ himself and now asked for her forgiveness. Corrie recalled that she could not forgive him, she could not extend her hand to even touch his. However, she prayed for God's strength to do His will and slowly reached out her hand in greeting. As their hands were joined, she sensed a supernatural quality of divine forgiveness overflowing in her heart. Like her, you cannot escape it. Quit trying. Forgive that person. Do it now!

**"Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil."** The word temptation literally means a test. This is interesting for although the Bible clearly teaches that God tests our hearts (Psa 7:9; 11:5; Pro 17:3; 1 Thes 2:4) and that He will not let us be tested beyond what we can bear (1 Cor 10:13), Christ seems to teach us to pray 'Don't do it, Lord'. Why? He says it again in Matt 26:41. Is Jesus saying something contrary to what God desires for us? No way.

There are at least a couple of reasons – first, the humble, broken person is not necessarily afraid of God's tests but is absolutely aware of the seriousness of them. Jesus is affirming the posture of the humble servant. In the garden of Gethsemane, He told the sleepy Peter, James and John *"the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is*

weak.” Next, there are unnecessary tests or trials that come to us when we are disobedient and sinful. Paul wrote, *“But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.”* (1 Tim6:9) Jesus told us to pray that God would lead us away from such circumstances. That is made evident when he completes the sentence with *“but deliver us from evil.”* God’s tests may be difficult, but they are always for our good.

Also, it could be that there is an eschatological application in this phrase for Jesus said concerning the trying tribulation events of the last days, *“Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.”* (Luke 21:36)

**“For Thine is the kingdom,...”** “Kingdom” here is “royal power” not to be confused with an actual kingdom but rather the right or authority to rule over a kingdom. It may seem like Satan rules our world, but after Calvary that simply has not been the case. The devil has no more authority to rule. When Christ rose from the dead, the devil’s goose was cooked if you would. What he connived to obtain from Adam and Eve, he lost through the just redemption of our world. It was a traumatic thing in heaven you know, at least for John. He observed it as recorded in Revelation – *“And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back,*

*sealed with seven seals. Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, ‘Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?’ And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it. So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it. But one of the elders said to me, ‘Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals.’ And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth. Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.”* (Rev 5:1-7)

What is this scroll? I agree with those who claim that it’s likely either the divine inheritance and/or the deed to the planet. In the days this scripture was written such scrolls were used for these purposes. They had seals and notations linked to obligations or liens. You’ll note John cried at first for no man could redeem earth from Satan’s brutal rule for if in the set time a redeemer could not be found, Jewish law passed the right of ownership permanently to the one temporarily possessing it. (e.g. Lev 25:30) Can you imagine a world ruled forever by Satan?? Talk about hell on earth! But Christ’s is the scroll, Christ’s is the kingdom!! He alone has the right to rule our world.

**“...and the power...”** Christ is no powerless monarch. He not only has the right and authority to rule, He has

the power – unmatched and limitless. Jesus said in prayer to the Father, *“... You have given him (the Son of God) power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as You have given him.”* (John 17:2) *“And (after He had risen from the dead) Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.”* (Matt 28:18) Wow, just think – total power combined with infinite love, wisdom, a perfectly pure heart and the desire to do good!

**“...and the glory...”** Although, glory can mean a brightness or brilliance, it’s probably more accurately understood here to mean a judgment, opinion or view. Because Christ has the right, authority and power to rule, His judgment or view is all that

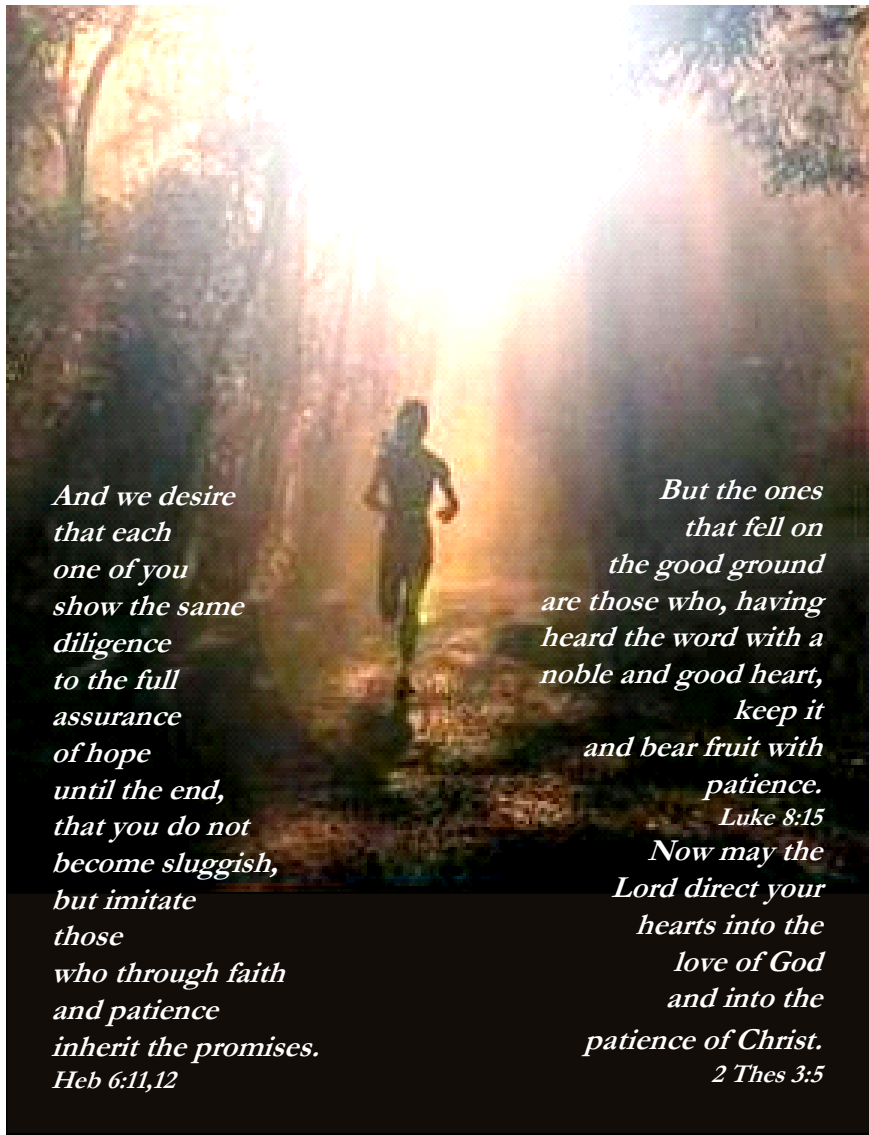
matters, really. Right? So why be hung up on man’s opinions or what the devil tells you about yourself. In the NT, this word translated often as ‘glory’ always refers to *“a good opinion concerning one, resulting in praise, honour, and glory”* (Strong’s). If you’re His child, you can depend upon His judgment, His view of you as being good.

**“...forever.”** That’s a long time. For nearly two thousand years, believers have lifted up this prayer and many, many like it. But two millennia is a comparatively non-existent wisp or vapor of time in the context of eternity. So let’s pray it like we mean it! Maranatha! Come, Lord Jesus!



*“...this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” Phil 3:13,14*





*And we desire  
that each  
one of you  
show the same  
diligence  
to the full  
assurance  
of hope  
until the end,  
that you do not  
become sluggish,  
but imitate  
those  
who through faith  
and patience  
inherit the promises.  
Heb 6:11,12*

*But the ones  
that fell on  
the good ground  
are those who, having  
heard the word with a  
noble and good heart,  
keep it  
and bear fruit with  
patience.  
Luke 8:15  
Now may the  
Lord direct your  
hearts into the  
love of God  
and into the  
patience of Christ.  
2 Thes 3:5*

## *The Voice of Christ*

Selected quotations from 'The Imitation of Christ' by Thomas a Kempis

"I shall teach you those things which are right and pleasing to

Me. Consider your sins with great displeasure and sorrow, and never think yourself to be someone because of your good works. You are truly a sinner. You are subject to many passions and entangled in them. Of yourself you always tend to

nothing. You fall quickly, are quickly overcome, quickly troubled, and quickly undone. You have nothing in which you can glory, but you have many things for which you should think yourself vile, for you are much weaker than you can comprehend. Hence, let none of the things you do seem great to you. Let nothing seem important or precious or desirable except that which is everlasting. Let the eternal truth please you above all things, and let your extreme unworthiness always displease you. Fear nothing, abhor nothing, and fly nothing as you do your own vices and sins; these should be more unpleasant for you than any material losses."

"The brave lover stands firm in temptations and pays no heed to the crafty persuasions of the enemy. As I please him in prosperity, so in adversity I am not displeasing to him. The wise lover regards not so much the gift of Him Who loves as the love of Him Who gives. He regards the affection of the Giver rather than the value of the gift, and sets his Beloved above all gifts. The noble lover does not rest in the gift but in Me Who am above every gift."

"All is not lost, then, if you sometimes feel less devout than you wish toward Me or My saints. That good and sweet feeling which you sometimes have is the effect of present grace and a certain foretaste of your heavenly home. You must not lean upon it too much, because it comes and goes. But to fight against evil thoughts which attack you is a sign

of virtue and great merit. Do not, therefore, let strange fantasies disturb you, no matter what they concern. Hold strongly to your resolution and keep a right intention toward God."

"It is not an illusion that you are sometimes rapt in ecstasy and then quickly returned to the usual follies of your heart. For these are evils which you suffer rather than commit; and so long as they displease you and you struggle against them, it is a matter of merit and not a loss."

"You must know that the old enemy tries by all means in his power to hinder your desire for good and to turn you from every devotional practice, ...from devout meditation on My passion, and from your firm purpose of advancing in virtue. He suggests many evil thoughts that he may cause you weariness and horror, and thus draw you away from prayer and holy reading."

"Fight like a good soldier and if you sometimes fall through weakness, rise again with greater strength than before, trusting in My most abundant grace. But beware of vain complacency and pride. For many are led into error through these faults and sometimes fall into almost perpetual blindness. Let the fall of these, who proudly presume on self, be a warning to you and a constant incentive to humility."