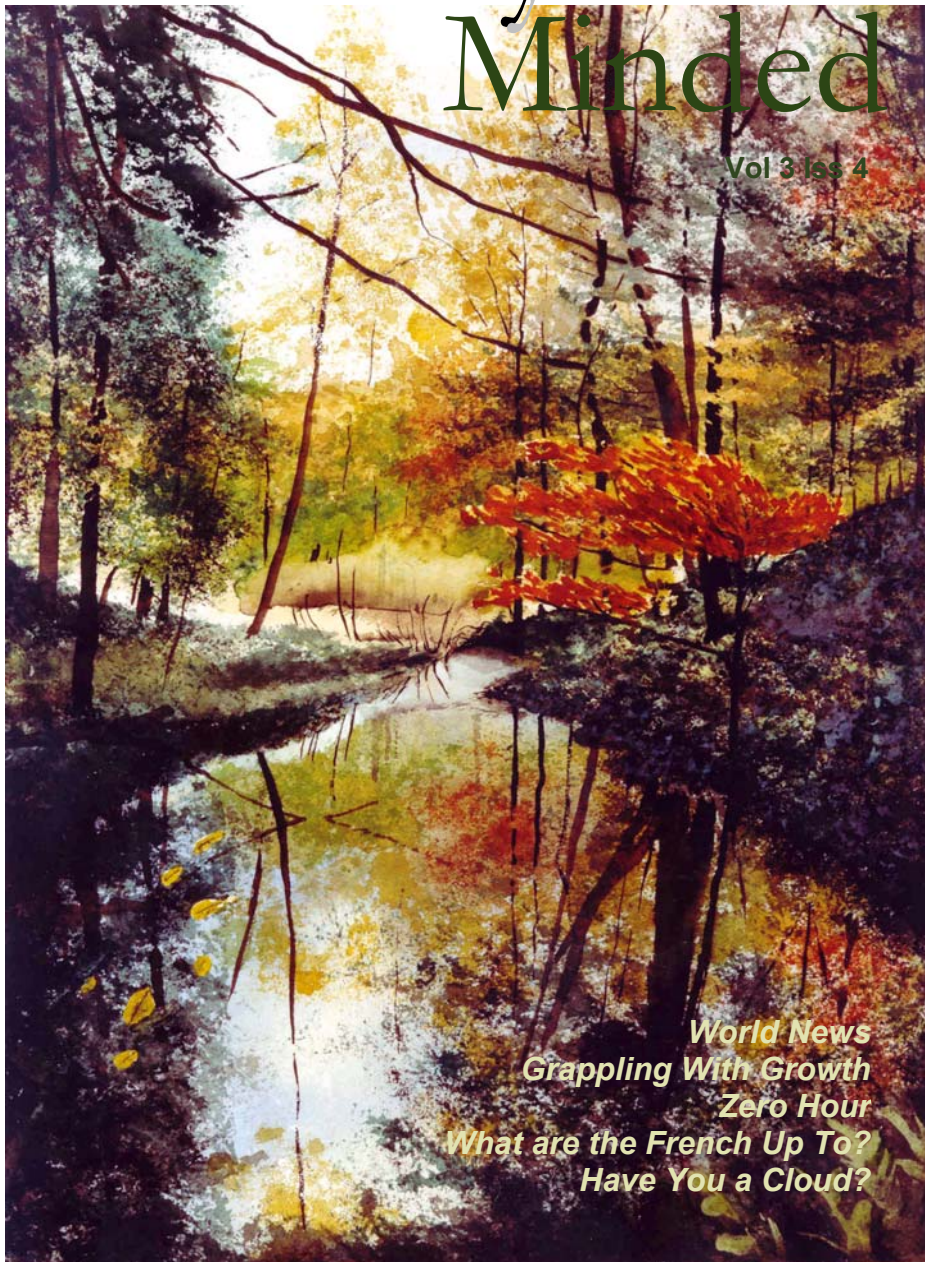


You're of no earthly value unless you're...

# Heavenly

# Minded

Vol 3 Iss 4



**World News  
Grappling With Growth  
Zero Hour  
What are the French Up To?  
Have You a Cloud?**

*Blessed is the man whose strength is in You, whose heart is set on pilgrimage. As they pass through the Valley of Baca, they make it a spring; the rain also covers it with pools. Psalm 84:5,6*



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*Our King is indeed coming again and we believe that it will be quite soon. Whether sooner or later, our hope and prayer is that each of you will grow spiritually and be abundantly fruitful in Him through His Spirit. Remember, from heaven's perspective, those who are 'least' are great in God's kingdom. Those who are lowly now will be honored. Those who are torn will be mended. Those who are smitten will be healed. Those who are faithful will be rewarded. God bless you in your relationship with Him and your service to Him - becoming more like the Lord is directly tied to being more in love with Him!*

*Love in Jesus, John and Darlene*

*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.*

*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**

**Church – 2Tim3:1-5, 1Tim4:1,2**

**Knowledge growth – Dan 12:4**

**Final Generation – Mk 13:28-30**

**Russia – Ez 38, 39**

**One World Religion -- Revelation 13**

# Grappling with Growth

Apart from Jesus Christ, there is no other biography like it in scripture. We observe his life literally from pre-cradle to post grave with a wonderful spotlight on both his highs and lows during the length of his pilgrimage. Jacob. And in his life, we find a treasure trove of insight into spiritual growth.

And we should care intensely about this subject for although much has been written about it, there are many wrong impressions that are rampant in our 'modern' understanding. Oriental mysticism has influenced contemporary thought and perspective on spirituality. Together with the false doctrines of the so-called 'faith' movement and myriad cult twists upon the scripture -- the garden of spiritual growth concepts can use some 'weeding' and 'watering'. So let's survey at a summary level the life of our dear brother Jacob.

We first find him in Genesis 25 where he was in the womb fighting with his brother! Here, though, we discover from Romans 9:10-13 that he was chosen and loved by God which amplifies the Bible's message of God's sovereignty, foreknowledge and grace. That is, the heavenly Father's love was not based upon Jacob's history, good deeds or machismo and stood in stark contrast to his earthly father's favor of his brother Esau. God loves you and I in the same way.

In fact, Jacob turned out to be somewhat of a 'momma's boy' if you would. "Smooth skinned" and a handy guy in the kitchen, he was not

the proverbial 'man's man'. (See Gen 25:27,28)

But he was an intense competitor. In fact, it looks like he always had to come out on top. Taking advantage of his brother's hunger one day, he 'bought' the family birthright with a bowl of lentil porridge. (Gen 25:29-34) Later, though admittedly spurred on by his mother, he boldly lied and deceived his nearly sightless father in order to obtain the patriarchal blessing. (Gen 27) This ultimately propelled him into estrangement and isolation from the family. But still God loved him, and revealed Himself to Jacob in a glorious vision at Bethel. (Gen 28)

Now, I'll suggest that this latter event parallels and typifies the salvation experience of some Christians. You remember, Jacob saw the Lord in heaven with a ladder bridging the gap between heaven and earth, the holy and unholy, the perfect eternal realm of God and the broken, temporal prison of man. Jesus would later indicate that that ladder was Himself (see John 1:51). You could say that Jacob came to a knowledge or an awareness of the Lord. However, though he was awed, he was not yet submitted. His response was like that of many believers when he gave God a conditional allegiance. "*And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, **if** God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; **then** shall the LORD be my God.*" (Gen 28:20,21) He had a lot of growing to do.

Eventually, he made his way to the household of his crafty old uncle Laban to reap a little of what he sowed. There he worked for seven years to merit the reward of the 'girl of his dreams' -- Rachel. Laban, though, pulled a fast one on him for in the dark he switched the 'goods' giving instead his older

daughter Leah. Now she must have been 'a sight for sore eyes' literally because that's what her name can imply -- she was someone who made your eyes hurt. So imagine Jacob's surprise in the morning! But he's got to come out on top, remember.

Consequently, he demanded to have his expected reward, Rachel. Laban capitulated -- but only conditionally -- kind of like Jacob being conditional with God. Hmm. You see, Laban was most certainly God's instrument in Jacob's life to mirror him.

Part of growing him up spiritually was to afflict him with a carnal replica of himself so to speak. As Jacob had deceived his dad who had been 'in the dark', so he was likewise deceived. Sound familiar? He was reaping what he'd sowed. You might already know this to be true -- as we are learning to walk with the Lord, it is often the case that the characteristics that rub us the wrong way are our very own -- in someone else. Generally, they are irritating because they are indeed sinful in nature. Jacob submitted himself to Laban but it was a rough experience.

I think we all understand that growth doesn't just take place in the peaceful sunny climes when all is going well but in the stormy circumstances of life as well. Adversity of environment drives plants to increase their root systems. Recall, the Bible says that the righteous flourish like the palm tree whose living cells are in its core rather than outside just under the bark as with other trees. In fact, palm trees actually bear more and sweeter fruit with age and prosper when their surface bark is scarred. (See Psa 92:12)

Jacob still had a lot of growing to do. Though he had relations with his wife Leah and they had several children as

a result, he hated her. How many of us as believers hate the very things God brings into our lives as blessings simply because they 'hurt our eyes'? If they aren't up to our expectation or if we only see the surface value, we often disdain the ordained so to speak. Conversely, because something is 'pleasing to the eye' doesn't make it heaven-sent.

You see, Jacob's carnal attitude influenced his whole family -- they competed for his favor and attention, and as always, the competition brought envy and strife. But he never seemed to deal with it -- perhaps because he was blind to it or perhaps because he actually got some 'strokes' from it so to speak. It isn't until much later in the story that we find any virtuous qualities observable in his clan. They simply modeled what they saw.

You see, for godly parents, spiritual growth is not just an option -- 'a good thing to do'. It's more important than you or me for it dramatically impacts our families one way or the other.

Next, having given Laban an offer he couldn't refuse regarding his future wages, Jacob set out to do some 'genetic engineering' of the flock. (See Gen 30) Agreeing to take only the mis-colored animals as his wages, he carved some branches with various markings and placed them in the watering trough before the flock.

His method could perhaps be regarded as a little loony or even superstitious, but the Lord helped him anyway. God did, however, speak to Jacob in a dream and clarified that it was He who caused the brown, the spotted and speckled animals in the flock to multiply, not Jacob's branch carvings.

In this setting, Jacob learned that both Laban's past blessings and his

own were from the Lord and not due to his ingenuity. It's not clear that he ever sought the Lord in Haran, but graciously God told him that he should leave that area and return to Canaan and to his credit, he obeyed. One of the early lessons many of us as believers learn is that God will indeed take care of us. (See Phi 4:19)

But he still had a lot of growing to do. He obeyed God and left but he split the scene in fear in the middle of the night and tried to out run Laban. Meanwhile, his wife Rachel put some sticky fingers on her dad's family idols. When Laban discovered they were missing, he headed after them in anger. Seems like Jacob had a habit of leaving angry people behind him. But God directly intervened to protect him telling Laban in a dream not to harm his son-in-law.

Later, after peacefully parting with Laban, Jacob encountered a group of angels and as a result called the place Mahanaim, meaning "two camps" – his and the heavenly host's. However, in typical Jacob fashion, when he learned shortly thereafter that Esau and 400 men were fast approaching, his mind again started conniving. (Gen 32)

He made his own "two camps" by splitting the family into two groups hoping that if one was plundered, the other might escape. That is, he resorted to his natural tendency to scheme and was still not trusting God. Like many of us, he recognized God's presence but in times of testing leaned upon his own wits anyway. Many of us do the same thing.

Now, to his credit, he also sought the Lord humbly for deliverance. But, then immediately he started a caravan of gifts traveling toward Esau to buy his favor. This is really convicting, isn't it? Was Jacob double-minded or

perhaps just thinking that he had to 'cover the bases' with prayer while really trusting in his own scheme? We can't know for sure. However, he was acting like many of us who seek God only in times of turmoil and then act as if God doesn't hear us, like we really believe that it's up to us.

Anyway, by that time, all his fretting and scheming had worn him out, and he needed a good night's sleep so he retreated away from the camp and bedded down. Wouldn't you know it – just then, the Lord showed up in the form of 'a man', that is, a Christopheny, and Jacob wrestled with Him throughout the night. You know the story. During the tussle, the Lord touched Jacob's hip and put it out of joint.

It's not clear that he was 'a chicken', but Jacob had a habit of running away rather than confronting the source(s) of his adversity. We as believers must learn to trust God such that we can face our fears.

**And this grappling was a critical point both for Jacob as it can be for us as we seek to grow in the Lord.** Jacob had for much of his life encountered difficulty. But it had always been of his own making. He had 'gypped' his brother, deceived his dad, angered his in-laws, but now God Himself crippled him and fixed it so that he couldn't escape his adversary. Many of us find it difficult to accept that God would 'lame' us, and we can be tempted to think that it's because He's mad at us as well. We can, at those times, let go of Him – stop trusting that He loves us. We can interpret his method as mean. But God's not mean. He's not upset or put off by our grappling with Him.

But this was where Jacob prevailed. He hung on to the Lord. Hosea makes it clear that at the end he cried out, not in victory, but in humility. (See Hos 12:3-5) *"This is an invaluable place for everyone*

*to come to - the place where we are conquered by God. There is something to be said for every man doing his "wrestling" with God, and then acknowledging God's greatness after having been defeated. We must know we serve a God who is greater than us, and we cannot conquer much at all until we have been conquered by Him"* (Guzik) Does God Himself bring difficulty into the life of His child? Yes.

Typically, most of the trials we face are of our own making – the consequences of our sins. But God sometimes demonstrates His compassion and love toward us in 'touching our hip' so to speak – limiting our options because He ultimately knows it will bring us closer to Him.

*And this was the pivotal point.* "Jacob thought the real enemy was outside of him - Esau. The real enemy was his own carnal, fleshly nature, which had not been conquered by God" (Guzik) *There, Jacob was renamed Israel -- from "heel-snatcher" or "sneaky-conniving guy" to "one governed or ruled by God". This wasn't Jacob's salvation – he already believed. It was his submission. His need for character adjustment was being brought to light. It was a point of demarcation, and from that point on he was a changed AND changing man. You see, he still had a lot of growing to do. "From this point on, he will be called Jacob twice as often as he is called Israel; apparently, there was still plenty of "old man" left in Jacob."* (Guzik) *In fact, he's not referred to directly as Israel again for a couple of chapters.*

*Jacob portrays the 'old man's nature' and Israel the new. And from hereon, we can observe the 'highs and lows' of his spiritual progress associated with his names.*

Personally, I find this very encouraging. God never gave up on Jacob – in fact, the awesome divine promises were made to him, that is, to Jacob. God didn't wait till his character was godly to make his guarantees. I suggest that's why we nearly always have the record of scripture stating that the promises were made to "Abraham, Isaac and Jacob". It's not at all that God prefers the 'old man' – to the contrary! But the promises are and always will be a matter of God's grace, not our merit.

Anyway, he met the day with new courage and went out in front of the family to face Esau. To his surprise, the reunion was wonderfully amiable, but Jacob continued in some bad habits -- he lied to his brother indicating he would follow him back to Mt. Seir and instead, he headed for a place called Succoth and then Shechem. So where was the fruit of his submission? He did show courage but recall, fruit requires patience (see Luke 8:15, James 5:7).

The same is true for us as Christians. *"A vine does not produce grapes by Act of Parliament; they are the fruit of the vine's own life; so the conduct which conforms to the standard of the Kingdom is not produced by any demand, not even God's, but is the fruit of that divine nature which God gives as the result of what he has done in and by Christ."* (Hooke)

We tend to look for 'McFruit' in both our own lives and the lives of our spiritual family. Failures weigh us down because we don't think as God does. *"Our weak hearts, prone to legalism and unbelief, receive these words with great difficulty: God is for us. . . They have failed Him; but He is for them. They are ignorant; but He is for them. They have not yet brought*

*forth much fruit; but He is for them.”* (Newell)

Yes, Jacob still had a lot of growing to do. Contrary to the pilgrim life-style of his father Isaac and Papa Abraham, he built a house in Succoth and later bought land near Shechem. (Gen 33:17-19) Yes, it looked like the pilgrimage was over and he started settling down. With the fear of fratricide abated, the sky was blue again so to speak. Almost inevitably, we as believers come to the same place. Saved and ‘somewhat’ submitted (is that possible?), we can be tempted to abandon the ‘highway’ for the comfort of a ‘little piece of Shechem’.

But God is faithful – it’s been said that in this life, the most uncomfortable place for a Christian to be is a comfortable place. In some ways, that’s true. You see, he’d arrived at Shalem (or Salem) which was then apparently a part of Shechem. Many commentators believe it to be the same Salem visited by his grandpa Abraham – i.e. Jerusalem. Here, Jacob built an altar to the Lord. All this looked good – a place of ‘peace’ and the arrangement of the altar. He had his own ‘Ponderosa’ and a place of worship too. But as nice as it seemed, it wasn’t where he belonged physically or spiritually.

His kids were a mess – he’d allowed them to keep idols and apparently been an ‘open-minded’, tolerant parent – his kids did what felt good at the moment if you would. Here’s what I mean – while out and about with her friends, perhaps shopping at the Shechem mall, his only daughter, Dinah caught the eye of the pagan prince. We don’t know if she went along with it or not, but she was compromised sexually by him.

Now post facto, the prince figured he’d ‘do the right thing’ so he sought to formalize the affair with a marriage. Very contemporary. But Jacob’s bent toward dishonesty had rubbed off on his boys -- though they agreed to the deal, they made the prince promise to circumcise himself and all the males of the city of Shechem. A few days later, while they were in pain and incapacitated, two of Dinah’s brothers slaughtered all the men of the city. Then the rest of the brothers spoiled the place taking all the goods, animals and enslaving the women and children. Whoa! Even Jacob was appalled. He told them that they had made his name to stink and feared a huge reprisal from the other inhabitants of the region.

We as believers just cannot allow ourselves to think that all material ‘blessings’ are necessarily good. We can’t think that because we’ve got our little piece of Shechem and we’ve even ‘built an altar’ that we’re still following the Lord. Jacob had his ranch and his religion, but because he wasn’t in the ‘place’ (spiritually or physically) God wanted him, he wasn’t growing spiritually – bearing good fruit. And not only so, but his family was corrupted. (See Luke 8:14)

Fortunately, the shock of the whole business and the concern over potential new enemies seemed to re-awaken the desire for a pilgrim’s progress in Jacob. The Lord graciously spoke to him and directed him to Bethel – back to Bethel. It means “the house of God.”

This was where he originally encountered the Lord, remember? This was where he said he’d return, and that God would be his God. This was the place where God delivered him in his hour of distress. In type, it speaks of our need as believers to return to the basics of our faith when we’ve strayed or when we’ve settled down in the

wrong ‘place’. We all need to return to our own Bethel. It’s a humbling thing and crucial to our growth. It speaks of humble repentance.

*He told the family to ‘cough up’ their idols, their pagan ear and nose rings, and to change their clothes. Yes! Way to go, Jacob! He didn’t just allow his kids to ‘find the truth’ on their own. There’s a time for that – when you’ve been truly living it out yourself. But Jacob realized his error and knew that he had to set the record straight. For the first time in a while, he exerted healthy spiritual authority. He was repenting himself and resetting the moral parameters of the family. Regardless of Walt Disney’s propaganda, friends, believe me, kids cannot make it on their own!! There’s a time for gentleness and a time for sternness, both in love. But Christian parents who are growing in the Lord must not abdicate their responsibility to guide their kids.*

At Bethel, God visibly appeared to Jacob and told him, “*Your name is Jacob. Your name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be your name.*” And He called his name Israel.”

Much lay ahead for Israel – many sorrows and grief, times of dejection and feeling like ‘all things were against him’. (Gen 42:36) He also had times of joy and restored hope. But from this time forward, he actually does get called Israel once in a while. In fact, as you tract it, he’s generally referred to as such more and more vis-à-vis Jacob and the last mention of him in the recounting of his life is indeed as Israel (see Gen 50:2).

You see, the old man, though he raised his ugly head now and again, ultimately diminished. He never disappeared, but in the end, it was the new man that prevailed. He even

chose to be buried with Leah, the wife whom he’d hated. Thus it is with us as believers in Christ. It’s backwards but it’s correct. It’s the opposite of our natural inclination but actually it’s right. It’s totally counter-intuitive yet all together perfect. To be born again, you must die to self. To grow, you must diminish. To mature, you must be childlike.

And this is my main point. John the Baptist said it, “*He must increase, but I [must] decrease.*” (John 3:30) I submit to you that as long as Jacob was ‘added to’ be it people or possessions, family or flock, he remained Jacob. His ‘salvation’ brought him ‘happy feet’ so to speak (see Gen 29:1 in the Hebrew) but the change was to his attitude and awareness, not his character.

From that point on, he undoubtedly learned a lot. But his character didn’t start changing until **he started decreasing, diminishing**. He lost his ability to run. He lost his daughter’s purity. He lost his dear nanny, Deborah. He lost his ranch in Shechem. He lost his wife Rachel. He lost his relationship with his concubine Bilhah. He lost his son Joseph, his wife Leah, on and on it goes. God caused Jacob to diminish, but in the process Israel grew. It was gradual and with stubbornness.

Friends, growing in God is not a matter of how much you can add to yourself. Contrary to popular best selling theology, it’s not even a matter of how big your ministry is. It all comes down to self-diminishing. That is, who is going to live in you and through you – you or Jesus? Is Christ increasing in you or are you just learning about God?

The only wellspring that will quench your thirst for spiritual growth is honest submission to His Holy Spirit.

As Jesus said in John chapter four – Jacob’s well will never truly satisfy; you’ll always thirst again.

Now, the Lord offers **no condemnation** – only hearty encouragement for the end result for all believers is Christ-likeness! I’ll conclude with this -- it was the apostle John, a good Jewish boy, recall, who would never worship anyone but his Lord, who fell to worship before the one showing him the heavenly Revelation. His companion quickly forbid him to do so saying, “Worship God” and clarified that he was simply his brother and a fellow servant. Clearly, the old apostle knew to worship only the Lord so why did he fall before his brother? I submit that it was because he thought he was indeed Christ. In fact, it happened

twice! (See Rev 19:10 and 22:8,9)

Yes, in heaven, with our souls restored, we will truly resemble Him for Christ will be “all in all”. David wrote, “*I will be satisfied when I awake with Your likeness.*” (Psa 17:15) John wrote, “*when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*” (1 John 3:2)

And to give us a wonderful picture or type of which character continues on in eternity – with over 2500 mentions in the scripture – we read of the land, the nation and the people of **Israel**, not Jacob. Praise God!

We have a LOT to look forward to but like Jacob, we’ve got a lot of growing to do. In love and faith and hope -- in heavenly mindedness -- may we each grow in godliness as we ‘lose ourselves’ in Him!



Have you a cloud?  
Something that is dark and full of dread;  
A messenger of tempest overhead?  
A something that is darkening the sky  
A something growing darker by and by;  
A something that you’re fearful will burst at last;  
A cloud that does a deep, long shadow cast?  
God’s coming in that cloud.  
Have you a cloud?  
It’s Jehovah’s triumph car: in this  
He’s riding to you, o’er the wide abyss.  
It is the robe in which He wraps His form;  
For He does dress Him with the flashing storm.  
It is the veil in which He hides the light  
Of His fair face, too dazzling for your sight.  
God’s coming in that cloud.  
Have you a cloud?  
A trial that is terrible to thee?  
A dark temptation threatening to see?  
A loss of some dear one long your own?  
A mist, a veiling, bringing the unknown?  
A mystery that insubstantial seems:  
A cloud between you and the sun’s bright beams?  
God’s coming in that cloud.  
Have you a cloud?  
A sickness – weak old age – distress and death?  
These clouds will scatter at your last faint breath.  
Fear not the clouds that hover o’er your boat,  
Making the harbor’s entrance woeful to float;  
The cloud of death, though misty, chill and cold,  
Will yet grow radiant with a fringe of gold.  
GOD’S coming in that cloud.  
-- Streams in the Desert

# WORLD NEWS

*With potential for prophetic importance*

## Middle East

### Turkey’s Parliament Rejects US Deployment

MENL 3/3/03  
ANKARA -- Turkey’s parliament has rejected a government request for U.S. military deployment.

A parliament vote on Saturday failed to obtain an absolute majority for the deployment of more than 60,000 U.S. troops. The parliamentary leadership agreed after a closed door session than a simple majority was not enough to approve the request by the government of Prime Minister Abdullah Gul.

### Official: Iraqis Plan Atrocities in U.S. Uniforms

Fox News 3/7/03  
WASHINGTON — Iraq is acquiring military uniforms "identical down to the last detail" to those worn by American and British forces and plans to use them to shift blame for atrocities, a senior U.S. official said Thursday.

Jim Wilkinson, director of strategic communication at Central Command in Tampa, Fla., said Saddam Hussein had ordered procurement of the uniforms, but he would not say how this was known.

"Saddam intends to issue these uniforms to Fedayeen Saddam troops who would wear them when conducting reprisals against the Iraqi people so that they could pass the atrocities off as the work of the United States and the United Kingdom," Wilkinson said.

The Fedayeen Saddam is a paramilitary force of more than 15,000 founded by Saddam's son Odai in 1994, Wilkinson said. The unit's members are recruited from areas noted for loyalty to Saddam.

The Fedayeen Saddam carries out patrols and anti-smuggling duties and is

separate from the regular Iraqi Army command, Wilkinson said. He said its members are paid a salary and, while not an elite fighting force, they deal with unrest during domestic emergencies and report directly to Saddam.

### Assad warns Arabs of befriending U.S.

UPI 3/10/03  
BEIRUT, Lebanon -- Syrian President Bashar Assad said Arabs would be losers whether they are enemies or friends of Washington, Lebanon’s al-Mustaqbal newspaper reported Monday.

"I warned the Arab rulers and told them don't pave the way for the U.S. as they are doing now because their turn will come next," Assad was quoted as telling a group of Lebanese officials and party leaders from among people who joined demonstrators in Damascus Sunday to support his anti-war stands.

Assad said everyone who "befriended and relied on the U.S. was abandoned by her at the end." He cited late Iranian Shah Reza Pahlavi who was deposed by the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979 and the Iraqi Kurds.

He said the first thing Pahlavi told late Egyptian President Anwar Sadat when the shah sought shelter in Cairo "don't ever befriend the U.S."

Assad said the Arab rulers warned him that being an enemy to the United States was dangerous and he replied "it seems that if its enmity is dangerous then its friendship is fatal."

### Mid-East peace plan welcomed

BBC 3/17/03  
The latest moves by the United States to seek an end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have been broadly welcomed around the world.

President George W Bush announced that a long-delayed road map for peace

- which envisages a Palestinian state - would be unveiled once there was a Palestinian prime minister "with real authority".

The European Union's foreign policy chief Javier Solana hailed Mr Bush's statement and said: "The road map which is going to be released is the road map we approve."

The so-called Quartet of the US, the EU, Russia and the United Nations have been trying to restart the Middle East peace process.

Among key suggestions made they have made for resolving the crisis are the creation of a Palestinian state by 2005 and an end to Jewish settlements being built on occupied land.

### **Palestinians Back Premier Post, Cut Arafat's Power**

Reuters 3/18/03

RAMALLAH, West Bank - The Palestinian parliament ratified the new post of prime minister on Tuesday after rebuffing President Yasser Arafat's bid to keep powers seen as impeding reforms sought by U.S.-led peace brokers.

The 69-1 vote eroded Arafat's political dominance, stripping him of the authority to approve cabinet members who will serve under the new prime minister, expected to be Mahmoud Abbas, a leading moderate.

But Arafat's retention of ultimate control over security and peacemaking may clash with a U.S.-backed "roadmap" for Middle East peace which President Bush has pledged to unveil once a premier with "real authority" takes office.

Arafat was expected after Tuesday's vote to call on Abbas, who has been

named to the post but has yet to accept, to select a cabinet within two weeks.

Abbas, better known as Abu Mazen, has criticized militant violence as counterproductive to the goal of independence and said he would take the job only if given significant power.

### **HIZBULLAH DEPLOYS ROCKETS ACROSS FROM ISRAELI BORDER**

MENL 3/20/03

TEL AVIV -- Hizbullah has deployed rockets across from the Lebanese border with Israel.

Israeli military sources said the Iranian-backed organization has recently brought a range of rockets from the Bekaa Valley to the Shebaa Plateau. The plateau, captured by Israel from Syria in the 1967 war, is also claimed by Lebanon.

"We see the Hizbullah bring mules to the area and on both sides are boxes that appear to contain missiles," a senior Israeli officer said.

"There are also boxes with explosives."

The officer said Hizbullah brought the rockets and missiles to the Shebaa Plateau after they were dismantled. He said the forces did not detect rocket batteries in the immediate area.

### **The Kurds: a catastrophe waiting to happen**

IHT 3/20/03

BRUSSELS -- Of all the eruptions that a U.S.-led war on Iraq may unleash, none is more urgent to address than that between Iraqi Kurds and their Turkish neighbor. Turkey stands poised to enter Iraq with military might to prevent the Kurds from

making any move toward statehood, with control of the city of Kirkuk and its oil-rich environs seen as the key. The Kurds, in turn, have threatened to transform their native land into a graveyard for Turkish soldiers. Whether the United States will be able to keep them apart is an open question.

For both sides the stakes are enormous. Turkey fears that the emergence of a sovereign Kurdish entity across the border may inflame its own Kurds, a sizable minority that has long sought greater recognition of its national identity.

Turkey has brought its own troops into a state of preparedness, both to keep Iraqi refugees out and pre-empt a Kurdish dash for Kirkuk. It already has several thousand troops stationed at a small airfield in northern Iraq - over the Kurds' vociferous protests - and tens of thousands more are set to pour into the area.

To the Kurds, the road to independence - or at least a much enhanced degree of autonomy in a post-Saddam Iraq - runs through Kirkuk.

### **UK: Iraq torches 30 oil wells**

CNN 3/21/03

AR RUMAYLAH, Iraq -- Retreating Iraqi soldiers have torched up to 30 oil wells in southern Iraq Friday, according to British Defense Secretary Geoff Hoon.

"Most of the oil infrastructure on the peninsula have been secured intact," he said. "I can confirm however that the Iraqi regime has set fire to a number of oil wells, our latest information is up to 30 oil wells are alight amongst hundreds in southern Iraq.

"The primary aim of our current operations is to prevent further opportunities of such deliberate destruction, and to enable remedial action to be taken as soon as is practical."

In Ar Rumaylah, U.S. Marines battled four oil well fires during the night, managing to bring two of them under

control by dawn, said Philip Ray Smith, a pool reporter embedded with Britain's 7th Parachute Regiment Royal Horse Artillery.

### **Southern Liberation**

CNS News 3/21/03

In some of Iraq's southern cities, the Iraqi people reportedly waved and danced as U.S. troops rolled in. The Associated Press reported that U.S. Marines, using their jeeps, pulled down giant portraits of Saddam Hussein that looked over the impoverished town of Safwan, just over the Kuwait border. "Saddam is done," the report quoted some U.S. troops as telling the townspeople. Many of the people who greeted the Americans indicated they were starving.

### **Iraqi secret envoy seeks aid around the Middle East**

Times 3/24/03

IRAQ launched an appeal for the Arab world to rescue it yesterday after a senior adviser to Saddam Hussein left disguised as a sheikh to make his country's case around the Middle East capitals.

While the besieged Iraqi leadership prepared to defend Baghdad, Naji Sabri, the Foreign Minister, travelled to Damascus and then to Cairo to raise support from Arab leaders and their restless peoples.

The envoy, who acquired a taste for expensive suits during postings to London and Vienna, was barely recognisable when he crossed the Syrian frontier at the weekend. He wore the brown robes of a tribal sheikh and a red-and-white checked keffiyeh (headdress).

Mr Sabri said that he would attend a meeting of Arab League Foreign Ministers today in Cairo, where he would call on member states to take a "true stand". He said: "The Arab people took that stand. Now we hope the regimes will take this stance, too."



911 mural found in Iraqi military HQ

## Iraqi Soldiers Say It Was Fight or Die

New York Times 3/26/03

The aftermath of the firefight was a tableau of twisted Iraqi bodies, tins of unopened food and the dirty mattresses where they had spent their final hours.

But the Iraqi private with a bullet wound in the back of his head suggested something unusually grim. Up and down the 200-mile stretch of desert where the American and British forces have advanced, one Iraqi prisoner after another has told captors a similar tale: that many Iraqi soldiers were fighting at gunpoint, threatened with death by tough loyalists of President Saddam Hussein.

Here, according to American doctors and Iraqi prisoners, appeared to be one confirmation. The wounded Iraqi, whose life was ebbing away outside an American field hospital, had been shot during the firefight Tuesday night with American troops. It was a small-caliber bullet, most likely from a pistol, fired at close range. Iraqi prisoners taken after the battle said their officers had been firing at them, pushing them into battle.

"The officers threatened to shoot us unless we fought," said a wounded Iraqi from his bed in the American field hospital here. "They took out their guns and pointed them and told us to fight."

## Children forced to take up guns?

*U.S.: Youngsters seized from homes, families told males must fight or be executed*

WND 3/27/03

Iraq has sunk to a new low in unconventional warfare, with regime forces threatening children and having them take up guns on the battlefield, according to U.S. officials and a reporter embedded with coalition troops.

Coalition leaders report Iraqi paramilitary forces are going into homes and threatening whole families with death if they don't join the battle.

"Our field commanders report that in the vicinity of Najaf ... Iraqi regime forces are seizing children from their homes and telling their families that the males must fight for the regime or they will all face execution," Brig. Gen. Vincent Brooks said this morning.

## Syria's Assad: 'We will not wait' to be next U.S. target

World Tribune 3/26/03

NICOSIA — Syria, alarmed by the impending collapse of its neighbor and ally, has called for suicide missions against U.S. forces in Iraq.

Syrian President Bashar Assad also called on Arab regimes to oppose the U.S.-led war against Iraq. He warned that Syria could be the next target of Washington.

Assad said in an interview with the Beirut-based A-Safir daily that Damascus would not wait until the United States attacks Syria, Middle East Newsline reported. He did not elaborate.

"We will not wait until we become the next target," Assad said.

The mufti of Syria, appointed by the regime, called on Muslims to launch

suicide attacks on coalition forces in Iraq. The statement came amid concern expressed by the Syrian regime over the U.S. advance on Baghdad.

Western intelligence sources said Syria has increased preparations of its military amid the war in Iraq. They said Assad has ordered accelerated production of the medium-range Scud C and D missiles, which have a range of 550 and 700 kilometers, respectively.

Assad said he expected an Israeli attack. He said Syria would remain under threat as long as Israel exists.

## More U.S. troops, armor head to Iraq

CNN 3/28/03

As President Bush declared the war in Iraq would last "however long it takes to win," the Pentagon said Thursday that 130,000 more troops were being deployed to the Persian Gulf region.

The first wave of about 30,000 soldiers of the 4th Infantry Division and other unidentified units based at Fort Hood, Texas, were expected to deploy in the next few days, Pentagon officials told CNN. Another 100,000 ground troops will be deployed to the region next month, most of them in armored divisions and mechanized units.

Officials said the deployments represent a continuation of the Pentagon's plan and not a change in strategy.

## Russia

### Putin Demands Swift End to Iraq War

AP 3/20/03

Russian President Vladimir Putin demanded Thursday that the United States quickly end its attack on Iraq, and said the use of military force against Saddam Hussein was not justified. Russia, along with France and Germany,

opposed any resolution in the U.N. Security Council that would have sanctioned the use of force. President Bush withdrew the resolution on Monday. "Russia demands the swiftest end to military action," Putin said at the start of a meeting with top officials. "The military action against Iraq is a big



John Moore / AP

Marines don gas masks as Iraqi missiles fly

political mistake."

Putin reiterated his belief that military action wasn't necessary to determine if Iraq has weapons of mass destruction, and if so, to disarm Saddam Hussein. "The military action in Iraq is being conducted in spite of world opinion, in spite of the principles and norms of international law and the U.N. Charter," Putin said. "This military action cannot be justified." Putin said the U.N. Security Council should quickly address the crisis.

## Russia Accused of Selling Military Equipment to Iraq

Weekend News 3/24/03

The Calgary Sun reported today that the US State Department is accusing Russia of selling sensitive military equipment to Iraq, before the war even began.

According to the Washington Times, personnel from a Russian firm are helping the Iraqi military set up and operate electronic jamming equipment against U.S. planes and bombs. Two

other Russian firms are accused of selling anti-tank missiles and thousands of night-vision goggles in violation of UN sanctions. The Washington Post that said complaints about the sales of jamming devices by the firm had begun in June 2002.

The State Department raised the issue with senior levels of the Russian government several times over the past two weeks because the equipment sold could pose a direct threat to coalition forces. Russia has denied this claim, but the State Department says that Moscow's response has been unsatisfactory.

During more than a year of intense discussions, Russian officials initially denied the existence of the company that allegedly sold at least a half-dozen devices designed to jam global positioning system guidance. Later on, however, the Russians assured the Americans that they were closely watching the company.

### **Russia Slams U.S. on Iraq, Scorns 'Liberation' Claim**

Reuters 3/26/03

MOSCOW (Reuters) - Russia on Wednesday fired a new broadside against the United States over its military action against Iraq scolding claims its troops were "liberating" Iraqis and accusing it of defying world opinion.

Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov, using language at times reminiscent of the Cold War rivalry with Washington, said: "What the United States is doing challenges not only Iraq, but the whole world."

Addressing parliament as U.S. and British forces pressed forward to Baghdad, Ivanov said the evidence so far gainsaid U.S. efforts to portray its troops as a liberating force freeing Iraqis from Saddam Hussein's rule.

And he counseled Washington and London not to make unsubstantiated claims to have found caches of banned

weapons in Iraq to justify their military offensive.

### **European Union Russia, France, Germany say Iraq war illegal**

Gazeta.ru 3/20/03

Russia, France and Germany said on Wednesday it was illegal for the Bush administration to depose Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and maintained there was no proof Iraq posed a threat to the United States. With war against Iraq imminent, five foreign ministers addressed a U.N. Security Council meeting called to hear a report by chief U.N. inspector Hans Blix, who expressed disappointment inspections were curtailed.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, the United States and Britain are also promoting a U.N. humanitarian role, such as restarting the oil-for-food program in Iraq, under which Baghdad's oil revenues are used to essential goods. U.S. national security adviser Condoleezza Rice plans to visit Annan "in the next few days" to discuss a future United Nations role in Iraq, a U.N. spokesman said.

### **Berlusconi wants Russia and Israel in the EU**

EU Observer 3/21/03

BRUSSELS - The Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, who takes over the EU helm from July, said the EU should enlarge to encompass even Russia and Israel so as to counterbalance the power currently enjoyed solely by the US.

Speaking to the journalists after the end of the EU summit in Brussels on Friday, Mr Berlusconi said that at the moment there is only one superpower - the US - which decided to take action against Iraq.

Facing an EU split over the Iraq issue, and the UN losing its credibility, Mr Berlusconi, said that the way forward would be for the EU to enlarge and strengthen itself.

"We either have a super power with military capabilities far greater than the EU, or else the US can have another

partner - the EU - which must eliminate its divisions and enlarge to countries like Russia, with its military capabilities, Ukraine, Moldova, Turkey and even Israel," he said.

Italy also proposed last week, that Russia should participate in informal meetings of the EU ambassadors, during its turn at the EU's helm in the second half of this year.

"We see Russia as one of the privileged neighbours," Italian Foreign Affairs Minister Franco Frattini said last week. "The EU-Russia relationship does not only have to be on economy but spread over a 360 degree level."



*US soldiers gather in Kuwait as war begins*

### **Britain's Straw Compares Israel to Iraq**

Arutz Sheva 3/26/03

The Jews of Israel once again, as during the 1940's, find themselves in the awkward position of having to support Great Britain as it wages a foreign war, while at the same time the British take a hostile position to Israeli interests.

Israeli government officials are furious after hearing the remarks of British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw, who compared Iraq and Israel. Speaking on BBC last night, Straw acknowledged Arab concerns "that the West has been guilty of double standards, on the one hand saying the United Nations Security

Council resolutions on Iraq must be implemented, on the other hand, sometimes appearing rather quixotic over the implementation of resolutions about Israel and Palestine." Jerusalem officials said, "It is regrettable that no distinction is made in Europe between a bloodthirsty dictator who threatens the entire world, and a democratic country that is dealing with the worst wave of terrorism in the world."

## *United States*

### **U.S. vows to keep pushing for Palestinian statehood by 2005**

Ha'aretz 3/11/03

The United States vowed Monday to stick with its roadmap for a Palestinian state by 2005 even while war clouds gathered over Iraq.

But a senior U.S. official said that before moving ahead, the administration wanted to be sure a newly appointed Palestinian prime minister would have authority over security and peacemaking.

Reviving the phrase "peace process," the official stressed any shift in power within the Palestinian movement must be credible and genuine.

Earlier, meeting in Ramallah on the West Bank, the Palestinian parliament approved the planned appointment of Mahmoud Abbas as prime minister. But the new position was vested with only limited powers, which could indicate Yasser Arafat remained in charge.

### **American anti-war demonstrators shocked back to reality**

UPI 3/24/03

A group of American anti-war demonstrators who came to Iraq with



Japanese human shield volunteers made it across the border today with 14 hours of uncensored video, all shot without Iraqi government minders present. Kenneth Joseph, a young American pastor with the Assyrian Church of the East, told UPI the trip "had shocked me back to reality."

Some of the Iraqis he interviewed on camera "told me they would commit suicide if American bombing didn't start. They were willing to see their homes demolished to gain their freedom from Saddam's bloody tyranny. They convinced me that Saddam was a monster the likes of which the world had not seen since Stalin and Hitler. He and his sons are sick sadists. Their tales of slow torture and killing made me ill, such as people put in a huge shredder for plastic products, feet first so they could hear their screams as bodies got chewed up from foot to head."

## United Nations

### Saddam 'killed missile chief' to thwart UN team

Telegraph 3/2/03

Western intelligence agencies are investigating claims that Saddam Hussein ordered the murder of a senior Iraqi missile engineer to prevent him passing vital information to United Nations weapons inspectors.

Gen Muhammad Sa'id al-Darraj, who was in charge of Iraq's mobile Scud missiles until three months ago, died 24 hours after talks with Saddam's officials, according to Arab newspaper reports.

The officials wanted to discuss how the general would conceal his knowledge if he were called for interview by the UN.

The London-based Al-Zaman newspaper said that Gen al-Darraj told "indignant" relatives shortly before he died that he had been slipped a poisoned drink during the meeting at one of Saddam's presidential palaces.

Iraqi opposition groups suspect that the general's loyalty to Saddam was in

doubt after he was removed from his post at the end of last year.

### UN leaders draw up secret blueprint for postwar Iraq

*US forces will hand over three months after Saddam is defeated*

The Times 3/5/03

The United Nations has drawn up a confidential plan to establish a post-Saddam government in Iraq in a move that suggests its leaders now consider war all but inevitable.

The plan, obtained by *The Times*, has been produced in great secrecy over the past month, even though Security Council approval of a "war resolution" hangs in the balance.

The UN is breaking a taboo, and arguably breaching its charter, by considering plans for Iraq's future governance while it deals daily with President Saddam Hussein's regime as a legitimate member.

The 60-page plan was ordered by Louise Frechette, the Canadian deputy of Kofi Annan, the Secretary-General, and was drawn up at the UN's New York headquarters by a six-member pre-planning group. It envisages the UN stepping in about three months after a successful conquest of Iraq, and steering the country towards self-government, as in Afghanistan.

## Science/Technology

### Warning on gene 'ID cards'

BBC 3/4/03

*The complete genetic makeup of individuals could soon be scanned and recorded on a smart card, says a leading scientist.*

But pressure groups say that the "genetic identity cards" could lead to discrimination without much benefit to the citizen.

Sir Paul Nurse, the chief executive of Cancer Research UK, predicts that the process of unravelling a human genome

could be completed far more swiftly in future.

### World put on alert for severe pneumonia

New Scientist 3/12/03

The World Health Organization has issued a rare global alert, warning health authorities about a highly contagious form of pneumonia in the Far East.

Several cases of "severe atypical" pneumonia have emerged in hospitals in China, Hong Kong and Vietnam. The disease is highly infectious, with a single patient infecting 20 staff at a hospital in Hanoi, Vietnam.

It can also be fatal, with five deaths reported from 305 cases in China since mid-February. Chlamydia infection was implicated in two of the deaths. The WHO is currently carrying out laboratory tests on samples to confirm find cause and any links between the outbreaks.

### Danger of super germs is immediate, doctors say

The Ottawa Citizen 3/12/03

Half of the most infectious bacteria strain in the United States -- a cause of everything from ear infections to fatal pneumonia and meningitis -- will be resistant to antibiotics just over a year from now, creating an urgent need to cut our use of antibiotics, doctors say.

And *Streptococcus pneumoniae* isn't satisfied with being resistant just to penicillin or to erythromycin, two major drugs used against it. It is evolving resistance to both drugs at once.

Clobbered for years by antibiotics, the bacteria have evolved into superbugs because only the toughest survive each drug use, and these breed more.

A major analysis in eight widely scattered U.S. states found the number of this bacteria strain that's resistant to penicillin rose from 21 to 24 per cent in the middle to late 1990s. The number resistant to erythromycin rose from 10.6 to 20 per cent.

"We predict that by 1 July, 2004, 41 per cent of pneumococci (these bacteria) ... will be dually resistant" to both drugs, the study authors from all over the U.S. write.

### What Your Clothes Say About You

Wired News 3/13/03

In a move wireless industry analysts say will infringe on customers' privacy, clothing designer Benetton plans to weave radio frequency ID chips into its garments to track its clothes worldwide.

The chips will help the Italian clothing manufacturer cut costs by eliminating the need for workers to take inventory by manually scanning individual items of clothing. It will also protect the garments against theft, analysts say.

But analysts warn that the RFID chips could pose significant risks to customers' privacy because they would allow anyone with an RFID receiver to locate customers wearing Benetton clothes, including companies that want to sell them their products.

"Benetton has thousands of retail outlets worldwide and therefore wanted to put in place a future-proof technology to bring clear cost benefits to the business, while seamlessly enabling garments to be tracked throughout their lifetime," Terry Phipps, electronic data processing director at the Benetton Group, said in a prepared statement.

### Dengue fever continues relentless climb

New Scientist 3/13/03

Outbreaks of dengue fever have risen around the world since the start of 2003, continuing the relentless spread of the once rare tropical disease.

Sharp increases in dengue fever, and its deadly complication dengue haemorrhagic fever (DHF), have been seen across the globe, from Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, Australia to South America.

Akib Kamaluddin, head of South Sulawesi's health office in Indonesia,

says the mosquito-borne disease has caused 23 deaths in the first two months of 2003, compared to 38 in the whole of 2002.

In Malaysia, a new strain has caused a massive jump in cases. In 2002, there were over 11,000 cases of dengue fever or DHF. But by 22 February there had already been 3410 recorded cases, with 11 deaths.

And in Vietnam, over 1700 people in Vietnam contracted in the January and February - a 66 per cent rise on the same months in 2002. Three people have died.

### **Test aims to link holy visions with brain disorder**

The Daily Telegraph 3/24/03

LONDON — Does the biological structure of our brains program us to believe in God? Advances in "neurotheology" have prompted some researchers to claim they can induce the kind of holy visions prophets may have experienced — even in those who are not religious believers.

Neuroscience professor Michael Persinger of Laurentian University in Sudbury, Ontario, has devised a helmet that uses electromagnetic fields to induce electrical changes in the brain's temporal lobes, which are linked with religious belief.

So confident is he that God is all in the mind — or the brain at least — that Mr. Persinger says he can induce mystical feelings in a majority of those willing to don his Transcranial Magnetic Stimulator.

### **Synapse chip taps into brain chemistry**

New Scientist 3/24/03

A microchip that uses chemicals instead of pulses of electricity to stimulate neurons has been created. It could open the way to implants that interact with our nervous system in a far more subtle way than is possible now.

While electrical pulses convey impulses along neurons, the cells communicate with each other and with other cells such as muscles by releasing chemical messengers. These neurotransmitters are released from one side of a cell junction, or synapse, and picked up by receptors on the other side, triggering another electrical pulse.

At 5000 nanometres wide, these artificial synapses are closer in size to a whole cell than a real synapse, but even so, the pair have fine-tuned the device so that it can stimulate just one cell in the layer above the chip.

The ultimate ambition is to develop neural prosthetics - implanted devices that can interact with our nervous system. Devices that use electrical stimulation are already commonplace, such as the cochlear implants that partially restore hearing.

## **Religion**

### **In Kuwait, Baptism Before the Gunfire Faced With Threat of War in Iraq, Many Marines Turn to Religion**

Washington Post 2/28/03

LIVING SUPPORT AREA 7, Kuwait -- While hundreds of Marines with rifles slung over their shoulders looked on, eight young men in green shorts and T-shirts approached the altar during last Sunday's church services at this military camp in the northern Kuwaiti desert. One by one they received blessings from a chaplain and plunged into a freshly dug pool to be baptized, emerging to raucous applause.

As war approaches, the canvas chapels in Kuwait's military camps and logistics bases are jammed with worshipers, many of whom have not crossed the threshold of a church back home in years. The sermons on placing faith in a higher power at moments of crisis seem to resonate now more strongly than ever with many Marines.

"I don't know about you, but I find myself talking to God a lot more out here than I

did at the rear," said the Rev. Bill Devine, chaplain for the 7th Marine Regiment, as the wind whipped up clouds of dust and billowed the white flag with a blue cross that flew above his outdoor Mass.

### **Police Chief: Open Temple Mount After War**

Arutz Sheva 2/28/03

Jerusalem Police Chief Mickey Levy says that the Temple Mount should be opened to Jewish worshipers and visitors after the upcoming war with Iraq. He said that the weakening of Fatah and of Yasser Arafat over the past year makes it possible to re-open the holy site to Jews - contingent upon "a diplomatic and police effort." Levy announced that the police closed yesterday PA offices that were operating on the Mount.

The Temple Mount, Jews' most sacred location in the world, has been closed to them since the onset of the Oslo War in September 2000.

### **EGYPT'S AL AZHAR CALLS FOR JIHAD AGAINST U.S.**

MENL 3/11/03

CAIRO -- The most prominent Sunni Muslim seminary, sponsored by the Egyptian government, has called for holy war against the United States and its allies.

The Cairo-based Al Azhar seminary issued a ruling on Monday that called on Muslims to wage a "jihad," or holy war

against the United States and allied forces that participate in the war against Iraq. The seminary said all Muslims are required by their religion to join the jihad



*Pope gives anti-war message*

once the United States attacks Baghdad. The communique referred to the United States as the crusader.

"The jihad against the crusader forces is a commandment on all Muslims should the foreign forces begin hostilities," Al Azhar's Supreme Council said in the ruling.

### **Vatican Becomes Anti-War Rallying Point**

AP 3/12/03

VATICAN CITY-- Pope John Paul II and top Vatican officials are

unleashing a barrage of condemnations of a possible U.S. military strike on Iraq, calling it immoral, risky and a "crime against peace."

The unwavering stance has made the pope one of the most visible opponents of war in current circumstances, and a rallying point for peace groups and politicians who seize on his words counseling against war. Even those supportive of a U.S.-led strike, including the prime ministers of Britain, Spain and Italy, have recently lined up to see him, aware of his leadership role.

"He is looking ahead for the rest of this century where Christian-Muslim relations are key to peace and religious freedom in Africa and many parts of Asia," said the Rev. Thomas Reese, editor of the Jesuit magazine America.

But in some of the Vatican's strongest language against a possible war, its foreign minister Archbishop Jean-Louis Tauran said a unilateral military strike would be a "crime against peace" with no justification on grounds of self-defense.

### Talking Fish Gives "Apocalyptic Warning"

BBC 3/17/03 (*Editors Note: The Bible warns us not to be superstitious!*)

A fish heading for slaughter in a New York market shouted warnings about the end of the world before it was killed, two fish cutters have claimed.

Zalmen Rosen, from the Skver sect of Hasidic Jews, says co-worker Luis Niveló, a Christian, was about to kill a carp to be made into gefilte fish in the city's New Square Fish Market in January when it began shouting in Hebrew.

"It said 'Tzaruch shemirah' and 'Hasof bah'," Mr Rosen later said.

"It essentially means in Hebrew that everyone needs to account for themselves because the end is nigh."

Mr Niveló said he was so shocked he fell into a stack of slimy packing crates, before running in panic to the shop entrance and grabbing Mr Rosen, shouting: "The fish is talking!"

However his co-worker reacted with disbelief.

"I screamed 'It's the devil The devil is here!', but Zalman said to me 'You crazy, you a meshugeneh [mad man]!" Mr Niveló said.

A disbelieving Mr Rosen then rushed to the back of the store, only to hear the fish identifying itself as the soul of a local Hasidic man who had died the previous year.

It instructed him to pray and study the Torah, but Mr Rosen admitted that in a state of panic he attempted to kill the fish, injuring himself in the process and ending up in hospital. The fish was eventually killed by Mr Niveló and sold.

Many members of the city's Jewish

community are now certain that God, troubled by the prospect of war in Iraq, has revealed Himself in fish form.

### In Defense of Harry Potter

Zenit 3/17/03

Monsignor Peter Fleetwood made headlines around the world when he appeared to give the Vatican's official blessing to the Harry Potter series.

At a news conference Feb. 3 on a Vatican document on New Age, he was asked about the fictional adolescent wizard. Monsignor Fleetwood, who helped draft the New Age document when he was a member of the Pontifical Council for Culture, responded: "Harry Potter does not represent a problem... Magic really is a talent, something like mathematical ability or perfect pitch, but with a much greater possibility for good or evil use. Rowling certainly uses details from the history of the occult, ...but it is not the case that Rowling is promoting 'real-life magic.'"

### War in Iraq a crime, says Vatican

The Australian 3/18/03

MILITARY intervention against Iraq would be a crime against peace demanding vengeance before God, the head of the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace has said.

"War is a crime against peace which cries for vengeance before God," said Archbishop Renato Raffaele Martino, speaking on Vatican Radio.

He stressed the deeply unjust and immoral nature of war, saying it was condemned by God because civilians were the worst sufferers.

Martino, formerly Vatican permanent representative to the United Nations, strongly denounced the determination of the United States and its allies to disarm Iraq by force.



Bashar Assad

### Syrian Cleric Calls For Suicide Attacks Against US, British Troops

CNS News 3/27/03

Syrian President Bashar Assad is calling on Arab states to defend Iraq while Syria's top religious authority has called for suicide attacks against U.S. and British troops fighting to topple the regime of Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein. Assad, an outspoken opponent of the allied war against Iraq, said he hopes the Americans will fail, according to an interview published in a Lebanese newspaper on Thursday.

Assad called on the Arab states to invoke the joint Arab defense treaty, which calls on them to defend any Arab country that is being invaded, according to a translation provided by the Middle East Media Research Institute.

Meanwhile, Syria's top Islamic cleric is calling on Muslims to use every means to stop the attack on Iraq.

### Quotes of Note

"It cannot be emphasized too strongly or too often that this great Nation was founded not by religionists, but by Christians; not on religious, but on the Gospel of Jesus Christ. For that reason alone, people of other faiths have been

afforded freedom of worship here." – Patrick Henry

"I am a real Christian, that is to say, a disciple of the doctrines of Jesus. I have little doubt that our whole country will soon be rallied to the unity of our Creator and, I hope, to the pure doctrine of Jesus also." – words that Thomas Jefferson wrote on the front of his well-worn Bible.

"It is impossible to govern the world without God and the Bible. Of all the dispositions and habits that lead to political prosperity, our religion and morality are the indispensable supporters. Let us with caution indulge the

supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. Reason and experience both forbid us to expect that our national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle." – George Washington

James Madison, the primary author of the Constitution of the United States, said this: "We have staked the whole future of our new nation, not upon the power of government; far from it. We have staked the future of all our political constitutions upon the capacity of each of ourselves to govern ourselves according to the moral principles of the Ten Commandments."

"The foundations of our society and our government rest so much on the teachings of the Bible that it would be difficult to support them if faith in these teachings would cease to be practically universal in our country." – Calvin Coolidge, our 30th President of the United States.

"We have no government armed with the power capable of contending with human passions, unbridled by morality and true religion. Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other." – John Adams, our second President.

# *What are the French Up To?*

*Racing toward the New World Order*  
Jack Kinsella 3/8/03

The Prophet Daniel recorded a night vision in which he saw "a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns." (Daniel 7:7)

The 'ten horns' Daniel references are the ten 'kings' of the revived Roman Empire of the last days.

"And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever." (Daniel 2:44)

Most mainstream interpretations of Daniel's ten kings see the ten nations of Western Europe that form the core of the European Union as this revived Roman Empire.

Europe is generally in support of the US, with the exception of France, Germany and Belgium, three members of the original ten states of the EU that also make up the Western European Alliance.

With that in mind, we return to Daniel's vision of the fourth beast.

"I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things." (Daniel 7:8)

It is too soon to say for certain if what is taking place right now is THE event foretold by Daniel. But it appears to be moving that way. And if this IS that event, there remains yet some questions concerning the identity of the eleventh 'little horn' but there are some tantalizing candidates.

A New World Order led by a new form of a United Nations without US membership is one possibility. Another less appealing possibility is that the eleventh horn might be the United States of America itself.

At this stage of the game, trying to identify the eleventh horn is at best, rank speculation, and you deserve better than that from me, so I won't try.

But we are without question seeing the development of a new world order, no matter what name it eventually takes for itself. Leading the charge are three nations of Western Europe, France Germany and Belgium.

On the sidelines at the moment, trying to figure out exactly where its best interests lie, we find Russia, Ezekiel's Gog-Magog of the last days.

At the heart of the issue is historical Babylon. And virtually every diplomat who addressed the Security Council on Friday found some way to bring Israel into it at some level.

Taken together and avoiding speculation, it is still impossible not to see an acceleration of events pushing the world ever closer to a New World Order that looks remarkably like the world order of antichrist foretold in the pages of Scripture.

We are living in the last days -- maybe even in the last hours of natural human government before the supernatural elements are openly put into play.

*Excerpted from the Omega Letter Intelligence Digest Vol: 7 Issue: 8*

## ZERO HOUR APPROACHES

Hal Lindsey 3/18/03 (see complete article at [hallindseyoracle.com](http://hallindseyoracle.com))

The biggest question on my mind is how does this all fit into the Prophetic scenario of the last days?

I remember when I was in Dallas Theological Seminary in 1960. I heard Hebrew scholar, Dr. Merrill Unger, give an unusual interpretation of the prophecy in Zechariah chapter five.

I never forgot it. It deals with Iraq in the end time.

Let me quote the prophecy and then interpret it.

"Then the angel who was speaking with me went out, and said to me, 'Lift up now your eyes, and see what this is, going forth.' And I said, 'What is it?' And he said, 'This is the Ephah going forth.' Again he said, 'This is their appearance in all the earth.' And behold, a lead cover was lifted up; and this is a woman sitting inside the Ephah.' Then he said, 'This is Wickedness!' And he threw her down into the middle of the Ephah and cast the lead weight on its opening. Then I lifted up my eyes and looked, and there two women were coming out with the wind in their wings; and they had wings like the wings of a stork, and they lifted up the Ephah between the earth and the heavens. And I said to the angel who was speaking with me, 'Where are they taking the Ephah?' Then he said to me, 'To build a temple for her in the land of Shinar; and when it is prepared, she will be set there on her own pedestal.'" (Zechariah 5:5-11)

An 'Ephah' was a basket that was the standard unit of measurement for

the ancient Middle East. It is used here has a symbol for economics and commerce. The woman being held against her will is called 'wickedness'.

Dr. Unger believed that she is associated with the 'woman' that is called Mystery Babylon in Revelation chapter 17.

The 'woman' is forcefully transported by economics to the plains of Shinar, which is in modern Iraq. I believe that this prophecy indicates that Iraq, which is ancient Babylon, will be rebuilt by the US and the West to become a major world economic center.

There are a number of prophecies about the end times that predict a major place for Babylon in the final conflict before the Lord Jesus returns.

Apparently, the religious seat of Mystery Babylon will be in Rome. But according to Zechariah, the commercial center will be based in Iraq.

I believe that what is about to take place is setting all of this up. The interesting thing is this: though the United States will cause Iraq to be revived and prosper, this war may cause the beginning of the United States' decline.

Power must soon shift to Europe and the revived Roman culture and people. I believe we are drawing to the close of this age.

Jesus Christ will soon call his own up to meet Him. So lets make our time here count. Lets seek to bring as many as possible to faith in Jesus Christ as Savior.