The New Technology and 666:
The thought machine—8
High-tech religion or the real thing?—10
Dark innovation: The role of technology in Revelation 13—18
Privacy in a Facebook world—22
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High-Tech Religion or the Real Thing?
by Elwood McQuaid ......................... 10
Why have so many American youths embraced neopaganism? Contrary to what some people say, the reason has nothing to do with immaturity.

The Rapture: Who Is Left Behind?
by Thomas C. Simcox ......................... 14
The world as we know it will change drastically when Jesus comes for His church. Those left behind can be divided into three categories, as you’ll see here.

Dark Innovation: The Role of Technology in Revelation 13
by Craig L. Parshall ......................... 18
The image of the Beast will be a joint project for interactive imagery coordinated by a central command. Sound far-fetched? Then read this!

Privacy in a Facebook World
by Daniel N. Pearson ......................... 22
You know all those freebies you get when you sign up for something online? It turns out you may be giving far more than you’re getting.

Is One-World Currency Only a Click Away?
by Christopher J. Katulka ..................... 26
A form of one-world currency probably will be in place when the Antichrist rules the world. Here’s a scenario of how that may come about.
What price would I be willing to pay to follow Jesus? The question resonated with me over and over during our recent Up to Jerusalem tour.

Each issue of Israel My Glory runs “They Cry in Silence,” a column devoted to reporting on the persecution of Christians—a subject that rarely makes it into the mainstream news. In fact, it is seldom mentioned in American churches. Most Americans are ignorant about the tremendous persecution Christians suffer regularly in other parts of the world.

On Sunday morning, a few hours after arriving in Israel, I had the privilege of meeting Pastor Umar Mulinde from Kampala, Uganda. He spoke to our tour; and after hearing his incredible story, I was humbled to be in his presence. His testimony left me asking myself, What price would I be willing to pay to follow Jesus?

Pastor Mulinde grew up in Uganda in a Muslim home, the 52nd child of his father. He was raised and educated to be a good Muslim, learning the Qur’an. In college he first encountered the gospel. There he came to faith in Christ and was excommunicated by his family. When they couldn’t convince him to return to Islam, his family was obligated by the teachings of Islam to kill him; and they marked him for death.

God led Umar Mulinde to shepherd a church in Kampala that has grown to more than 1,000 members, 30 percent of whom are former Muslims. As he studied God’s Word, he began to see that the hatred for Israel ingrained in him growing up was contrary to Scripture. In time, God turned his heart from hatred to love for God’s Chosen People.

Several attempts have been made on Pastor Mulinde’s life. Once he survived shots fired at him from close range. On Christmas Eve 2011, as he was leaving the church, a man approached him, asking for help. As soon as he got close to Pastor Mulinde, he poured acid over the top of the pastor’s head, shouting, “Allahu Akbar! Allahu Akbar! Allahu Akbar!” (“Allah is greater!”)

One of the most caustic substances to human flesh, the acid ran down the right side of Pastor Mulinde’s face, melting his skin and damaging his right eye.

Uganda’s medical system was unable to treat his wounds. So Umar Mulinde reached out to a Jewish friend in America, Andrea Gottlieb, executive director of JerusalemU.org. She immediately contacted the Sheba Medical Center, a world-class medical facility near Tel Aviv, which offered to treat him free of charge.

When Pastor Mulinde met us, it had been more than two years and many surgeries since the attack. The skin grafts and reconstruction done by Sheba Medical Center are amazing, but the scars still remain. He will carry them the rest of his life.

The same people who attacked him later destroyed his home as well. He lives in Israel without his wife or children, and he desires to return to his family and the church he shepherds.

Yet Pastor Mulinde told us he does not hate the men who did this to him because they are blinded by spiritual darkness. What they need is to be introduced to Jesus Christ and come to faith in Christ’s redeeming work. It is what everyone needs to do.

I learned shortly after our tour ended that the doctors gave Pastor Mulinde permission to return to Africa and rejoin his family. But the threats on his life continue, and returning to his ministry will be a great challenge.

I closed our time together with prayer for him. But my heart wondered, Would I be willing to pay a similar price to follow Christ?

With the rapid spread of Islam, persecution is a reality that may come to all of us soon. Yet God teaches that His grace is sufficient to give us the strength to face whatever trials come into our lives (2 Cor. 12:9). God’s grace is abundantly evident in Pastor Mulinde’s life.

Meeting this man of God was a remarkable way to begin our tour of Israel and a vivid reminder to me that Jesus Christ endured intense suffering for my sin.

James A. Showers is the executive director of The Friends of Israel.
A bomb shelter bearing The Friends of Israel logo is hoisted into place in Netivot (Courtesy, Operation Lifeshield).
Warning Bells

The identities of those responsible for distributing anti-Semitic leaflets to Jewish people in Donetsk, Ukraine, in April remain sketchy. Implications of the incident do not. The official-looking documents ordered Jews to provide a list of property they own and pay the city a registration fee, “or else have their citizenship revoked, face deportation and see their assets confiscated.”

Although a Ukrainian rabbi referred to the leaflets as a political hoax, the episode sparked legitimate fear because the intent was clear: to inflame anti-Semitic passion and inspire terrorism against Ukraine’s Jews. In fact, days later, the main synagogue in Nikolayev, Ukraine, was firebombed.

For the Jewish people of Ukraine, the incident resurrected the specter of the 1 million Jewish lives obliterated there during World War II. Even the wording of the Donetsk leaflets was a chilly reminder of September 26, 1941, when the Nazis occupying Ukraine posted the following in Kiev:

Jews of the city of Kiev and vicinity!
On Monday, September 29, you are to appear by 7:00 A.M. with your possessions, money, documents, valuables, and warm clothing at Dorogozhitshaya Street, next to the Jewish cemetery. Failure to appear is punishable by death.

Although only “failure to appear” was “punishable by death,” those who complied were massacred.

To Justify Genocide

Genocide always begins with a pretext. To convince a nation to condone mass murder requires a lie; and the bigger the lie, the better the result. The pretext can start with a leaflet or specially crafted document, such as the infamous Protocols of the Elders of Zion, first published in 1903. The Protocols create a phony Jewish plot to take over the world. Russian imperialists, pogromists, Nazis, Islamists, and anti-Semites have used the villainous Protocols for centuries. In fact, Article 32 of the Hamas charter (1988) refers to them as basic to Jewish global ambitions.

A pretext can also be found in an incident, most often having little or nothing to do with the reality of a situation. Prior to World War II, Adolf Hitler had waged a war of discrimination, lies, intimidation, restrictions, and localized violence against Jews. These atrocities, however, were insufficient for him to sell Germany on genocide. So Joseph Goebbels, Hitler’s high chief of propaganda, formulated a pretext from an incident in Paris involving 17-year-old Herschel Grynszpan who was so distraught that the Nazis had confiscated all his parents’ possessions in Germany and deported them that he shot a German official in France.

Goebbels seized on the incident to claim “international Jewry” was conspiring to attack the Third Reich. The claim was ludicrous. But Hitler mobilized forces across Germany to launch a major offensive against the Jewish people—who were basically helpless. On November 9 and 10, 1938, a massive anti-Semitic operation began in which 1,000 synagogues were reduced to ashes, some 7,500 businesses were destroyed, 30,000 Jews were arrested, and nearly 100 were killed. The infamous Kristallnacht (“night of the broken glass”) had turned the Germans into a nation of consenting conspirators. The Holocaust had begun.

None Too Small

No hate language, printed instigation, slander, or vandalism against Jewish institutions or individuals can be ignored. In April a pall descended over the annual Passover celebration for the American Jewish community when three people were killed in a shooting spree outside the Jewish Community Center and assisted-living facility in Overland Park, Kansas. Frazier Glenn Cross, 73, a man with a long history of animosity toward Jews, was arrested. He reportedly yelled “Heil Hitler” while entering the police cruiser. Two of the people he killed were Christians.

Somewhere, sometime, Cross was taught to hate deeply enough to want to murder total strangers solely because he thought they were Jewish. This is America, where no one should be afraid to walk home alone and where no synagogue should be smeared with swastikas. It is inexcusable for us to tolerate vicious propagandizing or to yield to pressure from radical minorities.

Yet anti-Semitism is escalating. Given the libelous defamation of Israel and exclusionary actions being fomented in some circles, we are a nation on notice. Historically, America bears the unique distinction of having incorporated into our national way of life the essence of Genesis 12:3, where God promises to “bless those who bless you [Israel].” What has been good for American Jewry has been good for us all. This country is at a dangerous crossroads. It has a big decision to make. We can only pray that the rise in anti-Semitism does not indicate it has already made it.
Dear Friends,

I am not a Facebook fan. One of my daughters has tried to get me on it, luring me with pictures of my grandchildren. And in a moment of weakness years ago, I allowed her to sign me up using a pseudonym with a profile that provided zero information.

A click here, a click there, and presto! I was on Facebook. Less than 30 seconds later, a slew of people I barely knew tried to friend me; and one person declared, “I know who this is!” and outed me to the entire Facebook world. I promptly unFacebooked myself and never looked back.

I still place a premium on personal privacy, something that no longer exists in an Internet-dominated world. In fact, most people these days seem not to care about privacy, which explains why Facebook has 1.23 billion active users—almost four times the population of the United States of America and approximately one-sixth of the entire world population.

Society, it seems, can no longer function without its social networks. As computers become more sophisticated, they probably will dominate our lives more than we can imagine. Yet by then, perhaps no one will care.

The new technology is crafting a world that will be tailor-made for the biblical events of the end-times. That’s why we decided to focus this issue of Israel My Glory on the new technology and 666.

Who knows what vast changes lie in store in the computer world? An article by John Markoff, “Brainlike Computers, Learning From Experience,” in the December 29, 2013, issue of The New York Times, spoke of a whole new “generation of artificial intelligence systems”—computers that will “learn” from their mistakes and “see, speak, listen, navigate, manipulate and control.” “Designers,” wrote Markoff, “say the computing style can clear the way for robots that can safely walk and drive in the physical world.”

What does that sound like to you? To me it sounds like the book of Revelation. So in this issue, our writers explore some of the new technology in view of Bible prophecy. We offer this issue with a prayer that God will give His people the wisdom to recognize He is setting the stage for things to come and that His Word never returns to Him void.

Waiting for His Appearing,
Lorna Simcox
Editor-in-Chief
The Thought Machine: It May Soon Be Reading Your Mind

Anyone who likes science fiction movies probably remembers Marty McFly’s attempts to get “back to the future.” Marty ends up in a time machine built from a DeLorean automobile and accidentally lands in 1955.

When he finally tracks down a younger version of his scientist friend, Dr. Emmett Brown, who built the machine in the future, he finds Brown wearing a huge, weird-looking helmet that’s hooked up to a contraption Brown hopes will read minds.

Brown slaps a plunger on young Marty’s forehead and has at it. “You want me to buy a subscription to the Saturday Evening Post!” he declares.

After a few more of Brown’s enthusiastic but incorrect stabs at what Marty is thinking, the angst-ridden teenager yanks the plunger from his face and blurts out, “Doc! I’m from the future. I came here in a time machine you invented. And I need your help to get back to the year 1985.”

A lot has happened since Steven Spielberg made the film Back to the Future in 1985. And though the world may not have a time machine, it is rapidly developing a mind-reading device that would make Emmett Brown proud.

It’s called the fMRI (functional magnetic resonance imaging). The type of neuroscientific data it collects has already been admitted as evidence in more than 100 criminal trials and cited in at least one U.S. Supreme Court decision.

The legal profession claims there is great benefit in using the fMRI. According to an article in the Texas Bar Journal, it could potentially screen out biased jurors and provide “objective proof to replace otherwise subjective data and self-reporting.” In other words, what the data claims you are thinking would count for more than your actual words.

It isn’t difficult to carry this scenario a step further: In the hands of a corrupt government, such as that of the future Antichrist, neuroscientific data could become a weapon to ferret out people who are disloyal to the regime and loyal to God.

The fMRI also identifies emotions based on brain activity. Carnegie Mellon University research explains, “Until now, research on emotions has been long stymied by the lack of reliable methods to evaluate them, mostly because people are often reluctant to honestly report their feelings.”

“This research introduces a new method with potential to identify emotions without relying on people’s ability to self-report,” said Karim Kassam, assistant professor of social and

In March, Fox News ran an article titled “We know what you’re thinking: Scientists find a way to read minds.” It explains how these brain scanners enable scientists to “reconstruct the faces that people are thinking of.”

“It is mind reading,” said Alan S. Cowan, a graduate student at the University of California Berkeley who speculated that in 10 to 20 years, “a witness to a crime might want to come in and reconstruct a suspect’s face.”

Fox reported that the brain readings “got the skin color right, . . . and 24 out of 30 reconstructions correctly detected the presence or absence of a smile” but “were worse at determining gender and hair color.”

The fMRI also identifies emotions based on brain activity. Carnegie Mellon University research explains, “Until now, research on emotions has been long stymied by the lack of reliable methods to evaluate them, mostly because people are often reluctant to honestly report their feelings.”

“This research introduces a new method with potential to identify emotions without relying on people’s ability to self-report,” said Karim Kassam, assistant professor of social and

Continued on page 35
JOHANNESBURG, South Africa—Although U.S. officials and other global players were trying to help recover the girls kidnapped from a majority-Christian high school in Nigeria’s Borno state in April, scores of similarly heartbreaking stories of Islamist abductions have gone unheeded.

One such case involved a Christian father of three girls from Chibok, the predominantly Christian town in Borno state where militants from the Islamist terrorist group Boko Haram kidnapped about 300 high school girls. (Editor’s Note: At press time, only 50 had escaped.)

Boko Haram—which took the girls deep into the forest between Nigeria and Cameroon and said it would sell them to be married to its militants—and other Islamic extremists have been kidnapping Christian girls for years. In 2007 a man in Maiduguri lost his daughters to kidnappers after the death of his ex-wife, who had divorced him for converting to Christianity.

His efforts to rescue them from the Muslim relatives of his ex-wife became futile, even though he had custody of them. Muslim leaders bluntly told him that because he was a Christian, an “infidel,” he could not be allowed to be with his children.

“I abducted your girls. I will sell them. . . . There is a market for selling humans. Allah says I should sell.”

—Boko Haram Terrorist

Muslim leaders and government officials ensured a travesty of justice. The judge who presided over the case denied him custody because he was a Christian. The judge stated that under Islam, a non-Muslim cannot be given custody of children unless he converts to Islam. The judge said his decision was rooted in Islamic law and jurisprudence.

The most excruciating experience for this father was that his children were not only forcefully taken away from him, but they were forcefully enrolled in an Islamic school to receive instruction in Islam.

Few news outlets carried the story, although it was available. No government official in Nigeria made any effort to rescue these Christian girls and reunite them with their father.

Because of the conspiracy of some powerful Islamic forces and those in positions of power in the government of Borno state, the kidnapping case went unheard. Now, seven years later, terrorists abduct mainly Christian girls in Borno on a larger scale; and the Nigerian government appears helpless in the face of this tragedy.

Chibok, along with Gwoza and Uba areas, provides Christians in Borno state with a Christian environment they inherited from previous generations. Christian missionary activities were largely centered around these towns. Now Boko Haram seeks to impose strict Sharia (Islamic law) throughout the country.

Most Christians in this part of Nigeria have been forced to flee their homes. Some are now refugees in other countries like Cameroon, while others have been displaced to other parts of Nigeria. Christians in northern Nigeria are left with no other option than to lament over their plight. Will other Christians around the world also look on without doing something about this tragedy?

The time has come for Christians in climates of religious liberty, who have the privilege to worship our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, to speak out against this evil and stand in the gap for persecuted Christians in Nigeria.

by Morning Star News
(morningstarnews.org)
Watching the student riot “celebration” following the University of Connecticut NCAA basketball championship win in April was disturbing, to say the least. Seeing students kick the windshields out of police cruisers and set them aflame, while milling masses behaved like medieval Vandal Hordes in the streets, felt like a dire warning of things to come. The report that the carnage was actually planned, rather than spontaneous, adds to the concern.

Worse yet, the episode was not an isolated incident. Riots seem to be the nearly inevitable consequence these days of spring-break orgies and melées.
Temporary Disorderly Conduct or Future Chaos?

Some argue these young miscreants, like those in the generations before them, will outgrow their tendencies to yield to their baser impulses and will mature into model citizens. But there is a problem: Our culture has changed.

Previously, our society was rooted in a Judeo-Christian moral, ethical, and behavioral standard. Unfortunately, that norm is collapsing. Radical forces are gaining power, and they intend to “transform” America into an anti-God environment that disdains and rejects all that has directed, restrained, and guided the fortunes of the past. So zealous is this breakaway mindset that it is waging all-out war against everything Christian.

Of course, this situation is nothing new. Thousands of years ago, it frustrated godly Israelites and Old Testament prophets. Habakkuk complained, January how long shall I cry, and You will not hear? Even cry out to You, “Violence!” And You will not save. Why do You show me iniquity, and cause me to see trouble? For plundering and violence are before me; there is strife, and contention arises. Therefore the law is powerless, and justice never goes forth. For the wicked surround the righteous; therefore perverse judgment proceeds (Hab. 1:2–4).

In Habakkuk’s day, the national state of affairs had been turned upside down. A new, radical standard of moral and “political correctness” had swept away what had made Israel a unique light among the nations. It was change for the sake of change—deliberate and aggressive. But there was an unanticipated element in the alteration of affairs: the inescapable price a society pays for its revolution to eliminate God.

High-Tech Religion

Anytime people try to drum God out of national life, they find a pathetic substitute to fill the void. In ancient days, it was idols carved by humans themselves—products of their own invention. Earth and environment, creatures, celestial bodies, ancestors, and oneself are a few in an almost inexhaustible list of things people worship instead of God. In the current climate, science and technology are in vogue.

No one can doubt that technology has profoundly changed our way of life. Many technological advancements are unquestionably beneficial. However, there is a downside to the national passion for the mind-spinning gadgetry that is rapidly becoming the grand distraction of this age. The burgeoning addiction to science and technology as twin gods of revolutionary secularism is altering America.

For example, our cultural and educational institutions have enshrined evolution as scientific fact. Those who disagree, regardless of their credentials, are written off as extremists and dimwits. In reality, evolution is faith, not fact; yet it stands as the anointed answer to the creation of the universe. Those who believe in it scorn belief in God and impose a pseudoscientific atheism on the rising generations.

The consequence is a moral, spiritual, and social void that leaves humanity on its own, with no compass for direction or regulated conduct. And when there is no recognized higher power, everyone becomes a power unto himself or herself, opening the door to such concepts as situation ethics, where every individual decides right and wrong according to personal preferences.

Denying God also alters what society deems acceptable. Without God, satisfying individual appetites (no matter how perversive or hurtful to others) is suitable behavior. A compelling statistic illustrates the extremes following sporting competitions and other events that draw large crowds.

Why have so many within America’s most affluent and privileged generation descended into what can best be described as neopaganism? These are the young people who will lead the country someday—a prospect that is not reassuring.
The Bible is never out of style or out of touch with reality. Nor is it myth or a crutch for the personal encounter with Jesus Christ. As Paul said, “The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perish-
ing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God” (1 Cor. 1:18).

The Bible is truth. In fact, it has been far ahead of the times throughout history. What technology can achieve today fulfills what the Bible predicted millennia ago.

For example, the book of Revelation states without equivocation that two witnesses will be slain in the streets of Jerusalem during the future Great Tribulation, and they will be seen the world over (11:9). For centuries scoffers jeered at that prophecy. Two men, dead for three days, seen by people the world over? “Ridiculous!” they said. Modern technology has since put that ridicule to rest.

In Revelation 13 we are told an image will be built with the ability to speak and command the wonder of the people assembled before it (v. 15). How could a man-made image issue commands and make multitudes bow down in adula-
tion? To many it seemed like pure science fiction. Yet technology has trumped the naysayers. The development of robots that do everything from peddling products to scrubbing kitchen floors makes the argument irrelevant.

Truth be told, many modern technological developments affirm rather than repudiate the accuracy of the Bible. The prophetic Scriptures, written long ago, are springing to life in our days as irrevocable witnesses to the One whose thoughts and ways are higher than ours (Isa. 55:8–9). His hand moves history, and His Book delivers instruction and information to finite, mortal men.

To ignore Scripture is not only futile but, in the end, fatal. Our pulpits should make the Scriptures known, without apology or fear of intimidation. There is hope! And that hope will never be extinguished, no matter how fierce or determined the opposition. The good news is that our hope is not in man-made formulas or works of mind or hand. Our hope lies in the Person who dispenses peace without price through the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus.

ENDNOTE


Elwood McQuaid is consulting editor for The Friends of Israel.
A Few Things Out There

Wearable Technology. Fashion and technology are combining to make the next wave of technology more stylish. The media giant Google has created Google Glass, a wearable set of frames that is constantly connected to the Internet, providing you with weather, news, emails, contacts, and phone calls. These glasses are also incredibly invasive and pose a threat to privacy. If hacked, your Google Glass could become the prowling eyes for the police or government.

Biotechnology. After mapping the human genome in 2003, researchers started to examine how to cure the root cause of such diseases as Alzheimer’s, heart disease, and cancer. However, this form of biotechnology could also introduce the world to a DNA-level bioterrorism if not properly managed.

Neurotechnology. Wearable straps that wrap around the head are being connected to computers to monitor the brain activity of air traffic controllers in a Tufts University beta project outside Boston.

This type of neurotechnology looks for stress and fatigue. The vision is that one day, the human brain will interact with computers through mental commands only.

Question: What will the Rapture of the church be like?

Answer: “We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory.’”

—1 Corinthians 15:51–54

by Christopher J. Katulka, a Church Ministries representative in Texas with The Friends of Israel and the director of Origins

Answers From God’s Word

Question: What will the Rapture of the church be like?

Answer: “We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory.’”

—1 Corinthians 15:51–54
A completely different world is coming—one that, for a time, will not contain a single, genuine, Bible-believing Christian.

The event that removes them is called the Rapture of the church. It is a snatching away of those who have been redeemed. The event that will befall the planet when they are gone is called the Great Tribulation. Jesus described the Tribulation as a time of evil and trouble “such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be” (Mt. 24:21). Nothing will compare to it. In that day, Satan will use everything he can, including technology, to consolidate his power through the Antichrist in an attempt to overthrow God.

Today Bible-believing Christians stand in his way. But after the Rapture, they will be gone. For 2,000 years, since Pentecost (Shavuot) in Acts 2, the world has not known a day when the Holy Spirit has not indwelled true believers in Jesus...
Christ. Even in Old Testament days, the Holy Spirit came upon people for service. King David begged God, “Do not take Your Holy Spirit from me” (Ps. 51:11); and the prophet Isaiah spoke of grieving the Holy Spirit (Isa. 63:10).

For millennia the Holy Spirit has restrained evil, enabled people to understand Scripture, and guided believers to a closer walk with God. The Rapture will change everything. The Holy Spirit will no longer restrain (2 Th. 2:7); and God will place the world into the vicious, cruel, satanic hands of the Antichrist.

**Although everyone left behind** will be an unbeliever, not everyone will react to the new world order in the same way:

1. **The Demonically Directed.** These people will follow the Antichrist gladly and worship him as God. They probably will exhibit the characteristics of 2 Timothy 3:1–5:

   *In the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power.*

   Not only will these people refuse to do what is right, they will rebel in doing what is wrong, caring about nobody but themselves. Unfortunately, this is the course the world is taking now:

   //The coming of the lawless one [the Antichrist] is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved// (2 Th. 2:9–10).

   The truth will be available, but the demonically directed will abhor it, refusing to hear it or believe it. Even today it is possible to see how easily people reject truth.

   In 2008 Ben Stein—an American actor, lawyer, political and economic commentator, and presidential speechwriter—coauthored and hosted the movie *Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed.* The film challenges the theory of evolution, discusses academia’s attempts to denigrate people who lean toward creationism, and reveals the link between Darwinism and Nazism. *Expelled* even shows how diehard evolutionist Richard Dawkins, who despises the very idea of God, has no answer for how life began.

   Yet there is no evidence the movie changed the minds of evolutionists. They choose to believe humans evolved from monkeys and that life erupted from a “big bang” whose origin they cannot explain. They “did not receive the love of the truth” (2 Th. 2:10). Refusing to glorify God, they glorify men and manmade theories that fly in the face of Scripture. “Professing to be wise, they became fools” (Rom. 1:22).

   During the Tribulation, such people will refuse to “repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk. And they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or the sexual immorality or their thefts” (Rev. 9:20–21).

   Their reward will be delusion: “And for this reason God will send them a strong delusion, that they should believe the lie” (2 Th. 2:11). These people will welcome the mark of the Beast and seal their fate in the Lake of Fire. (See “Worshiping the Techno Gods,” page 32.)

2. **The Divinely Destined.** As the seven-year Tribulation unfolds, millions on Earth will die. Yet God will supernaturally preserve 144,000 Jewish people, 12,000 from every tribe, to ensure Israel’s survival despite Satan’s best efforts to destroy it:

   //Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, saying, “Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.” And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed// (Rev. 7:2–4).

   The battle between God and Satan will intensify. Satan will control the Antichrist, who initially will seem to protect Israel. Then the Antichrist will demand the world worship him because Satan craves worship and will stop at nothing to obtain it. Fiercely monotheistic, the Jewish people will refuse. Then the Antichrist will reveal his true colors and persecute them mercilessly.

   The 144,000 Jewish people who are sealed are divinely destined to survive the Tribulation and enter the Messianic Kingdom as part of the group spoken of by the prophet Zechariah: “Then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn” (Zech. 12:10).

   (3) **The Duly Delivered.** As events unfold, the process of salvation begins again. Revelation 6:9 speaks of “the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held.”

   Some people left behind at the Rapture will come to faith in Christ. Perhaps they will get hold of Bibles and read them. Or perhaps they will remember a godly parent or spouse who shared the gospel with them. There are many possibilities. Whatever the case, these people will become believers during the Tribulation. They are the duly and supernaturally delivered by God’s amazing grace.

   Yet it will not be easy for them to follow God. Many will be martyred: “They cried with a loud voice, saying, ‘How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the
earth?” (v. 10). God tells them to rest awhile “until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed” (v. 11).

In that day, believing in Christ will cost people everything, including their lives.

Scripture places these martyrs “under the altar” (v. 9). They receive white robes, meaning they take up corporeal space and are not merely disembodied souls.

As great as the evil will be in that day, God’s love will be greater. Although people will blaspheme Him, reject Him, and revile Him, He still will provide the truth that can save them:

Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people—saying with a loud voice, “Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water” (14:6–7).

In the midst of judging the world for its evil, God still will give individuals an opportunity to be saved. The best time to be saved, however, is now. Not only does salvation guarantee that you will escape the Great Tribulation in the future, but it gives you an opportunity to live for God and have Him as a part of your life today.

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Thomas C. Simcox is the Church Ministries training coordinator and a Bible teacher for The Friends of Israel.

Quoteworthy

“If they had a social gospel in the days of the prodigal son, somebody would have given him a bed and a sandwich and he never would have gone home.”
—Vance Havner

“Don’t say that a loving God is going to send you to hell. He’s not. The thing that’s going to send you to hell is that you’re a sinner and you don’t want to admit it.”
—J. Vernon McGee
Free Speech and the Well-Traveled Road

This year the White House has promoted two disconcerting proposals that would cede more power over the Internet to the international community. The result would undoubtedly lessen American control over the Web and could present a profound threat to the free-speech rights of U.S. citizens.

The first initiative involves the Obama administration’s announcement that it will divest the United States of any official Internet oversight, starting in 2015. The Internet was first developed as a project of the U.S. Department of Defense around the mid-20th century. From its inception until it was opened to civilian use, the United States has retained oversight through the Commerce Department and its little-known agency, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration.

The Commerce Department has used a private, nonprofit organization called ICANN (Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers) to do the routine work of overseeing what is basically the address book for the entire World Wide Web (Web addresses that are provided, such as .com, .net).

While this service may sound mundane, until now the United States has maintained the position of the Web’s chief overseer. With the exception of individual governments (China or Iran, for instance) that occasionally censor certain Internet functions for their own citizens, the rest of the world has enjoyed a relatively open flow of information on the Internet, thanks to American oversight.

But now the White House wants to turn the running of the entire Internet over to ICANN and an as-yet unidentified, international body. During a hearing in the House of Representatives in April, former Homeland Security official Paul Rosenzweig testified that this change presents “significant potential risks” to the freedoms of Americans. Even former President Bill Clinton opposes the idea.

The other nations, as well as the UN, have shown themselves to hold a notoriously bankrupt view of religious free speech. If a global conglomerate becomes the Internet gatekeeper, we can envision the possible censorship of email traffic, Web blogs, and other Web postings to and from Christian ministries around the world.

In the second initiative, the White House plans to tie the United States into a “Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement” involving numerous Asian countries. Somewhere, the proposal a secret plan because the White House kept it private until 2012, when documents were leaked to the press.

Further documents were leaked in November 2013. I have reviewed the draft proposals myself. The agreement includes a scheme to shut down websites whenever suspicions of copyright violations arise—even if those suspicions later prove false.

I have seen how complaints of supposed copyright infringement can be used to stifle free speech. In one instance, a blogger quoted from the materials of a well-known, controversial religious group that some consider a cult. The group’s lawyers complained to Google, and Google shut down the blog, even though the blogger probably had the right to quote from the materials, based on the fair-use doctrine under copyright law. Think of the implications if such censorship becomes global.

These types of threats are not new. In the 1600s, John Milton, renowned poet of such Christian-themed works as *Paradise Lost*, passionately opposed the English government’s efforts to restrict the use of the printing press, the Internet of his day. In his famous essay *Areopagitica*, he argued for the concept we today call the “free marketplace of ideas,” the hallmark of free speech.

Milton was a great influence on America’s Founding Fathers. In his April 1776 pamphlet that laid out the basic principles of a free republic, John Adams cited Milton twice. Milton’s argument helped inspire the framers of the First Amendment during the First Congress.

For me, however, the importance of keeping the Internet open and accessible is best illustrated, not in Washington, but in the Galilee region of Israel. During one of my trips there with my wife, Janet, I studied the importance of Galilee to Christ’s ministry.

The region was intersected by several key roadways and trade routes, including the King’s Highway, which connected it to the entire Middle East and served as an effective route for carrying information. Jesus’ ministry that was so focused in that seemingly innocuous part of Israel actually took place at the hub of the first-century version of the Internet.

Can we afford to permit His message to be blocked from the well-traveled lanes of the Internet of today? I don’t think so.

Craig L. Parshall is senior vice president and general counsel for the National Religious Broadcasters. His newest novel with Tim LaHaye is *Mark of Evil*.
Imagine a world of the future. It is a desperate world where human beings are controlled by a single, tyrannical power. If we look behind the curtain to see what energizes this power, we find something much more sinister than a corrupt political agenda or master plan of greed. We find a plot hatched by the dark prince of the universe whose ambition it is to become God.

The book of Revelation prophesies a future government that Satan will control and use to deceive and manipulate the nations through the False Prophet and Antichrist:

*And he [the False Prophet] deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast [the Antichrist] who was wounded by the sword and lived. He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has...*
the mark or the number of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666 (Rev. 13:14–18).

Verses 16–18 are undoubtedly the most familiar passages in Revelation, not only to believers, but also to millions of unchurched people who know nothing about future prophecy and may never have opened a Bible.

Those who receive the mark commit the ultimate, tragic, irrevocable choice to reject Christ and embrace the Antichrist as God, thus reaping everlasting judgment (14:9–11).

Revelation 13:14–15 describes the world stage that precedes the mark of the Beast. The False Prophet, the Antichrist’s coconspirator, will perform counterfeit miracles and exercise global power as a religious leader.1 The most spectacular of his feats will be the Antichrist’s faux resurrection after it appears he was assassinated (v. 14).

Although the False Prophet gives lifelike “breath to the image of the beast” (v. 15), it will be left to individuals around the world to build the image (v. 14). And those who refuse to worship the image will be killed.

This joint project for interactive imagery will be coordinated by a central command that connects everyone worldwide to a despotic system of control, raising the specter of innovation run amok.

How might technology play a part in these events? The manufacturing of this image is obviously significant since Revelation mentions the image six more times (14:9; 11; 15:2; 16:2; 19:20; 20:4). As I worked with my coauthor, Tim LaHaye, on our recent novel, Mark of Evil—the last of our four-book, futuristic fiction series released earlier this year—we wrestled with the relationship between technology and future events. Though it is only fiction, the novel earnestly seeks to examine current innovations to see if and how they might fit into this prophetic landscape.

In the last decade and a half, technology has provided us with a glimpse of how this particular part of the most demonic scheme in human history might be accomplished.

## Big-Data Revolution

Until the digital information explosion in the last half of the 20th century, the thought of a global system of imagery projection and instant, worldwide human control (let’s call it digital devilry, or DD) seemed like science fiction. But with the rise of personal computing, Internet communications, and the stunning increase in digital data transmission, such global control is indeed realistic.

The science of “big data”—the ability of computers to accumulate and then analyze titanic amounts of information extremely rapidly—has made DD possible.

The retrieval and analysis of huge amounts of voter data helped tip the U.S. presidential election in favor of incumbent Barack Obama in 2012, according to a Democratic insider:

Big data gave Obama 2012 the names of all 69 million people who voted for the candidate in 2008 and allowed the campaign to rebuild that winning coalition, vote by vote. Big data told the campaign which voters were undecided, and even which voters with otherwise Republican attitudes could be swayed to vote for the president.2

The author admitted big data can be used for good or evil: “Not all the consequences will be good. New technology can manipulate, empower, or do both.”3

Today we can instantly process and control all of the essential data concerning not just the American electorate, but the entire human race. Google advertises that its “cloud platform” for data storage and retrieval can handle some 4 trillion message transactions per month.

The Knowledge Society has also tabulated some startling facts about the meteoric rise of big data. In 1986, the growth rate of data storage was 23 percent per year. By 1996, it had increased 800 percent; and by 2004, data storage was up by 4,100 percent.4

The report cites Google’s former Chief Executive Officer Eric Schmidt, who said in 2010 the total of all documented information between “the dawn of civilization” through 2003 equaled about 5 exabytes of data—roughly the amount of data being created and stored every two days today.

If DD is going to play a part in the fulfillment of Revelation 13:14-15, then it will require a massive information-retrieval-and-storage capacity to track and manipulate the billions of people on planet Earth. We are rapidly approaching that point. In fact, we may have arrived there without knowing it.

## Connectivity Revolution

Simply having the ability to marshal and control big data, however, is not enough. DD would also require a heightened ability to connect people, collect data about them (such as their identities, locations, behavioral patterns, and movements) and then tie everything to a central portal. Enter the World Wide Web and the universe of digital connections.

This principle of connectivity is a mainstay of new-media Internet communications—notably Facebook, Twitter, and a variety of smartphones like the iPhone. Their developers pride themselves on having created the capability to digitally link people and groups instantaneously—transcending time zones, travel restrictions, and geographic distances. The result is a different way of viewing the world because of technology.

A string of events in 2011 helps shed light on the social and political force of these new-media connections. All these events were coordinated and fueled by cellphone or smartphone texting, emails, Twitter messaging, or Facebook postings:

- Anti-government protests in Tunisia and Tahrir Square in Cairo, Egypt
- Protests in Yemen, Bahrain, Libya, Morocco, and Syria
- The cessation of the “jasmine revolution” in China after cell service was shut down
• Protests in Athens, Greece, over pay and pension cuts
• Hundreds of teens swarming to a beach party in Boston, Massachusetts, after instantly responding to a Facebook invitation, thus warranting the response of a SWAT team
• A similar incident in Shaker Heights, Ohio
• Organized riots due to digital messaging in the United Kingdom cities of Tottenham, Enfield, and Liverpool
• Hundreds of thousands of people marching or protesting in Israel, as well as in U.S. cities like New York City; Portland, Oregon; Boston; Chicago; and San Francisco.

But social protest is not the only evidence of the power of connectivity. Technology companies are making a concerted effort to link the world’s people together through a wide variety of gadgets, activities, and places, using an increasingly smaller number of wireless networks. One commentator described the phenomenon (now dubbed “Internet of things”) this way, regarding only one area—the automobile:

Consider this: The American Automobile Association [AAA] said in its letter to the FTC [Federal Trade Commission] that vehicles are rapidly becoming two-ton smart phones. The number of cars connected to the Internet will grow from less than 1 million in 2009 to an estimated 42 million by 2017, the letter said. And that’s just vehicles. Millions of people connect through security cameras, home appliances, medical devices, and other products. AAA wants to know who controls all that data.6

Meanwhile, tech giants like Qualcomm and Cisco are trying to create a universal global standard (a “language”) to enable all digital devices to “talk” to each other. Such a project has the potential to link together an ocean of digital objects across the globe, such as automatic garage doors in homes, heating and air conditioning thermostats, lawn sprinklers, baby monitors, video games, personal vehicles and taxicabs, central offices’ building controls, restaurants and retail stores, as well as televisions, radios, cellphones, computers, and—of course—millions of security cameras around the world.7

### Facial- and Voice-Recognition Revolution

In the world of the future, Earth’s inhabitants likely will be connected through digital communications and Internet tracking, with the information stored through the big data capacity of ultrafast computer systems.

If that data is ultimately used to manipulate and control them, what about the dissenters? What about those who refuse to engage in technology?

A traveler is fingerprinted using a biometric scanner at JFK International Airport in New York (Ramin Talaie/Corbis).

Today in America, by virtue of the human-recognition innovation, technology can come to people whether they like it or not. Federal agencies like Homeland Security, Federal Bureau of Investigation, and Central Intelligence Agency, and now local police departments, can use biometric technology to match people on the street with a catalog of photographs and identify them in seconds.8

The U.S. government has even granted Apple Corporation a patent for facial recognition features on its iPhone. Presumably, iPhones will eventually recognize callers through photo ID images and instantly identify them based merely on their facial characteristics.9

Facebook has already been using facial recognition technology to mine facial imagery data posted on Facebook, although its current uses are still sketchy.10

But facial recognition is not the only way technology can trace you. Voice recognition systems can identify you through your speech patterns. In Mark of Evil, Tim LaHaye and I wrote a fairly disturbing scenario of the possible sinister uses of these types of technology.

### Kingdom Renewal

However, we need not view technology exclusively as the Devil’s tool. Though Satan’s plan will be impressive, it will not be flawless. Where Satan rules, God can overrule. And we have reason to believe God will provide for the needs of His people who refuse the mark of the Beast, just as He provided for the Israelites during their Exodus from Egypt and their wanderings in the wilderness.

In fact, technology may well play a powerful part in God’s redemptive plan for the human race and in accomplishing His great commission of carrying the gospel of salvation to the ends of the earth.

Christian apologist Ravi Zacharias has called the new-media world of Facebook, Twitter, Apple, and Google “the new tower of Babel.” But he also sees their positive potential and said they are “not intrinsically evil.” His advice: “Be wise, be careful, but harness it for good. It is here to stay and will only multiply in its capacity.”11

Almost daily in my work with the National Religious Broadcasters, I see ways in which gospel communicators are using the tools of new-media technology to penetrate the globe with the Good News of Jesus Christ. When the inventions of radio and television became available to the masses in the 20th century, preachers rushed to the forefront, seeking ways to use them to communicate truth to the world. This
trend is continuing today by followers of Jesus who use Internet-based communications and wireless devices for the glory of God.

Whatever the means of fulfillment of the prophecies in Revelation 13, one thing is certain: God will wrap up human history and establish His Kingdom exactly as He has promised. Unlike the short-lived kingdom of the Evil One, God’s Kingdom will be everlasting and the grand setting for our eternal reunion with Him.

Just imagine for a moment what a world like that will look like. The Bible gives us an electrifying glimpse:

   And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away” (21: 3–4).

All that God has planned and all that He has accomplished through His intervention in the affairs of the human race have been for one purpose: to bring us to Himself. That is the single most important example of “connectivity” in the history of the universe. And that divine and eternal connection is the one that counts.

ENDNOTES


3 Ibid.

4 “The Knowledge Society: The impact of surfing its tsunamis in data storage, communication, and processing” <tinyurl.com/bdataas>.

5 Bill Wasik, “Crowd control—How today’s protests, revolts and riots are self-organising [sic],” WIRED (January 2012), 79–80.

6 Sue Reisinger, “Caught in the Middle,” Corporate Counsel, November 1, 2013 <tinyurl.com/catchInTheM>.

7 Bill Wasik, “Welcome to the Programmable World,” WIRED, May 14, 2013 <tinyurl.com/WelcomeToT>


Craig L. Parshall is senior vice president and general counsel for the National Religious Broadcasters. His newest novel with Tim LaHaye is Mark of Evil.
Stories involving expanding government surveillance, increased law enforcement powers, and the bugging and tracking of American citizens have started appearing regularly in the news. However, the movie Enemy of the State portrayed all these issues in 1998. At the time, the government’s frightening invasion of privacy seemed more in the realm of conspiracy theorists. But today it doesn’t appear so far-fetched.

Scripture foretells a time when a world government led by the Antichrist will have the power and ability to monitor every movement and communication of every individual everywhere. And though the worst conditions will set in after believers are removed from Earth in the Rapture, the church cannot assume it will escape all of the consequences of the new technology that will create the world of the coming Antichrist.

Much of our personal information is already “out there.” How does that happen, and how is it used? It’s a scary reality that government agencies, foreign powers, and international...
corporations have an astounding amount of knowledge about who we are, what we buy, and what we say. In fact, much of that information is given freely by us. We voluntarily put our data on the Internet because we obtain a benefit by doing so.

For example, the popular social network Facebook provides a valuable service by connecting us to our family, friends, and associates. We willingly post our pictures, statuses, and often private conversations in public view because doing so helps us maintain relationships with people who are important to us.

We eagerly use store loyalty cards to receive discounts at vendors we frequent. But we often don’t stop to consider that all our purchasing information is being stored and catalogued in databases and used to determine our buying patterns. We like to get “free” things, but we forget the old adage, “Nothing in life is free.” Those free apps, free discounts, and free social-network accounts aren’t really free. In return, the organizations are collecting our data—our personal information that can be bought and sold.

Advertisers gear their ads to people most likely to buy their products. The more information they have about a person, the better they can target their ads to the potential buyer. Security expert Bruce Schneier warns, “You’re not the customer of any of these companies. You’re the product.”

Another method of obtaining information on Internet use is with tracking cookies. Cookies are small files that websites place on our computers. We benefit from not having to enter the same information every time we go back to a website we like. The site owner, however, also benefits by gaining access to greater amounts of data.

We may be aware of tracking cookies, and maybe we are even diligent to delete cookies regularly. But most of us don’t realize how much information is available to site owners, even without cookies. A website is able to query the browsers of computers viewing the site and collect detailed information about the type of computer you’re using, the size of its screen, the Internet address, and more. Enough information is available to be able to identify your individual computer and “fingerprint” it to be able to track activity over time. This activity takes place without your knowledge or consent and leaves no trace.

So we voluntarily put much of our personal information out into the public. But do we know what is being done with it? Many companies provide privacy-policy agreements that explain how they use the data they collect. But how many of us read through the 10 pages of fine print before we click “Accept”? Yet, because we don’t read the fine print, we sometimes get more than we bargained for.

The popular business social network LinkedIn recently introduced a new product called Intro. It’s designed to integrate LinkedIn information directly into Apple’s Mail app. What LinkedIn may not tell you is that Intro reconfigures your email so that all your mail gets routed and stored on LinkedIn servers. That may not bother you, but considering the fact that last year someone hacked into the LinkedIn servers and stole millions of user names and passwords, there may be a legitimate concern.

In addition to the many ways corporations collect our information, government agencies are also collecting vast amounts of personal data on its citizens.

The National Security Agency (NSA) and other security agencies tap into corporate data. Much of it is passed on voluntarily by companies that have cooperation agreements with federal agencies. What isn’t given voluntarily is often taken involuntarily. Besides many reports of NSA break-ins to corporate data repositories, recent allegations make the case that the NSA has created “back doors” to be able to tap into and remotely access computer hardware, such as Apple iPhones, Dell computers, and Cisco routers, among others.

Following the revelations by Edward Snowden, the American computer specialist who blew the whistle on the extent of the U.S. government’s data collection, alarms are sounding. There are, of course, legitimate uses for surveillance in detecting and apprehending terrorists and criminals. We want that. However, the extent to which the NSA has collected personal data and stored long-term records on average Americans has caused serious concerns about how far it is allowed to go before it destroys our right to privacy. Once the government knows everything, it can control everything—something that will happen in the days of the Antichrist.

**What are the immediate risks** of having our data in government and corporate hands? One risk is identity theft, which has become a serious problem in the United States. Criminals can purchase your personal information and, with the right tools, assume your identity in order to purchase goods without your knowledge and steal your money right from your bank accounts.

Credit-card fraud is one aspect of this problem that has become a particular concern. A recent computer attack on Target stores led to millions of credit-card numbers being stolen. Computer viruses and other forms of malware are often used to extract from your computer information that is sold to criminals who can use it to steal your money and identity.

Another risk to consider is how the government uses the information it gathers. Reports have shown that while the NSA has legitimate reason to delve into the activity of suspected terrorists and criminals, it also apparently has accumulated detailed information on millions of innocent Americans without our knowledge or oversight.

The concern is that, in the not-too-distant future, Christians may find themselves on the wrong side of government surveillance efforts. As the world grows more and more intolerant of biblical Christianity, believers may have a growing problem with their private contacts, conversations, and communications finding their way into the hands of an increasingly hostile government.

It is not difficult to see how such a scenario could pave the way for the
time foretold in Scripture when a world government led by the Antichrist will have the power and ability to monitor every movement and communication of the world populace.

The use of Internet-connected devices, now referred to as the “Internet of things,” makes that capability even more powerful. A few years ago, our computers were connected to the Internet; and that was about it. Now normal household devices like televisions, cellphones, home security systems, webcams, even appliances and thermostats are becoming Internet enabled.

While there are some useful benefits to these features, the power of an antagonistic government to be able to track everywhere we go and everything we say and do is frightening, to say the least. The locks on our doors, the temperature of our homes, and even our computerized stoves and refrigerators become accessible to hackers, potentially creating a future where privacy ceases to exist and “Big Brother” becomes a reality.

Of course, the ultimate evil use of technology will take place after believers are raptured from Earth, before the seven-year Tribulation. However, we cannot assume we will be unaffected as that day approaches.

We must be careful and wise as to how we use technology. It can be a good and powerful tool to spread the Good News of salvation. But it can also be a powerful force for evil in the wrong hands. We must be diligent while we have the opportunity to stand up and let our voices be heard when government and corporate agencies go too far in using our personal information in ways that threaten our privacy and safety.

ENDNOTES


7 Robert X. Cringely, “Welcome to the Internet of things. Please check your privacy at the door,” InfoWorld, November 18, 2013 <tinyurl.com/CheckYourPrivacy>.

Daniel N. Pearson is the director of Information Services for The Friends of Israel.
The results of the most comprehensive survey ever taken on global anti-Semitic attitudes were released recently by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), and they have broad implications for world Jewry. They also show what Christians might expect in the accelerating war on Bible believers.

Conducted in 102 countries and territories, the survey found one in four people—a full 26 percent of respondents—were “deeply infected with anti-Semitic attitudes.” The percentage represents an estimated 1.8 billion adults worldwide.

As one would expect, the most pervasive anti-Semitism is in Middle Eastern and North African countries, with a concentration of 93 percent in the West Bank and Gaza. In nine other countries, all dominated by Islam, 80 percent to 92 percent of those surveyed were anti-Semitic.

It is noteworthy that in those countries, Adolf Hitler’s Mein Kampf and the scurrilous Protocols of the Elders of Zion are bestsellers—a fact that defines the depth of animosity toward Israel and everything Jewish.

ADL National Director Abraham Foxman said 26 percent of American respondents also believe “the Jews have killed Christ.” That statistic is only four percent lower than in 1965. Foxman told the Ruderman Fellows Knesset Mission, “Jews are not as secured in this country [United States] as they pretend to be,” Arutz-7 reported. “We are not as powerful as they think we are nor as powerful as we pretend to be. There is a level of insecurity.”

Eye-opening worldwide findings include:

- 54 percent of those surveyed never heard of the Holocaust.
- 35 percent feel Jewish people have too much power in the business world.
- 74 percent never met a Jewish person, yet of that group 25 percent hold anti-Semitic views.
- 41 percent buy into the widely accepted stereotype that Jewish people are more loyal to Israel than the countries they live in.

The ramifications of these findings are obvious. In times of economic downturns, politicians historically play on the sentiments that Jewish people hold too much power in business and finance; the Jews become the most readily available people to blame for society’s problems. It’s an old story, too obvious to need to be defined.

If there is good news in the ADL global survey, it is that only 13 percent of the people living in English-speaking countries harbor anti-Semitic feelings (9 percent in the United States).

Foxman said, We were profoundly disappointed about the resilience of anti-Semitism in many countries where we had hoped to see lower numbers, particularly some in Eastern Europe that experienced the war and the Holocaust firsthand. On the other hand, there is a silver lining in countries such as Denmark, the U.K., the Netherlands and Sweden—all Protestant majority countries—where we found incredibly low levels of anti-Semitic beliefs.

The views of respondents in Protestant-majority countries speak to these nations’ biblical heritages. The same can be said of other Western nations, such as the United States, where respect for Israel and the Jewish people has been part of the national fabric, transmitted through the Scriptures.

Problematic for the future, however, is the growing repudiation of the biblical heritage, along with efforts to purge Christian beliefs, traditions, and values from Western culture. It is not difficult to predict that turning from biblical Christianity will result in a rise in anti-Semitism.

As a matter of fact, much of the West, including the United States, is headed in that direction, as evidenced by efforts to turn people away from respecting Israel and its legitimacy as a Jewish state and persuading them instead to view Israel as an apartheid, international pariah.

The ADL survey clarifies one of the major issues of our time. It comes as both a warning and a wake-up call and reveals that much needs to be done to combat the plague of anti-Semitism.
The Bible implies that in the end-times, the world will use a universal currency. The apostle John wrote that during the future seven-year Tribulation, the Antichrist “causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name: … 666” (Rev. 13:16–18).

John must have asked himself, How will the Antichrist exert international control and manipulate who buys and sells in a massive economy? But what seemed incomprehensible in John’s time has become a reality today. The Bible implies that in the end-times, the world will use a universal currency. The apostle John wrote that during the future seven-year Tribulation, the Antichrist “causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name: … 666” (Rev. 13:16–18).

For many people today, online shopping is the way to go. You don’t have to fight traffic on the roads or wait in long lines. There are no crowded aisles, and the store never closes. You can turn on your computer, sit down, relax, and shop at your leisure.

You can buy just about anything you want online these days, including books, clothing, electronics—even groceries. That’s right, you can do your grocery shopping online, and the supermarket will deliver your items directly to your doorstep within 24 hours.

Technology is changing the way we do almost everything. It’s even daring to change the currency we use to do it with.

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John must have asked himself, How will the Antichrist exert international control and manipulate who buys and sells in a massive economy? But what seemed incomprehensible in John’s time has become a reality today. Theological developments have made our world much smaller and more connected with the simple click of a computer key.

The “Mark” in Revelation 13:16–17 can be interpreted as a stamp, branding, implanted microchip, or man-made engraving of some sort. Receiving the mark of the Beast will be mandatory for everyone during the Tribulation. According to Revelation, the mark has two main functions:

- Identification. It identifies the people who show loyalty to the mission and work of the Antichrist. Those with the mark accept his aim to unify the nations under his administration and force everyone to worship him in all of his hubris. Verse 16
places no social or cultural boundaries on who can receive the mark. It is for “small and great, rich and poor, free and slave” everywhere; no one is to be exempt from the Antichrist’s plan.

The mark also conveys a message of complete and utter divorce from God. Revelation says those who receive the mark are in rebellion against the Lord and destined to face His wrath (14:9–10; 19:20).

In contrast, those who refuse the mark are in danger of being martyred; but they stand in allegiance with God, and their reward is great: eternal life (20:4).

● Control. The mark of the Beast also functions as a way for the Antichrist to control the populace. Unless one receives the mark, he or she is unable to buy or sell anything in the global market, meaning many probably will accept the mark simply to survive. Managing what people buy and sell on such an immense scale would require a one-world currency to monitor all transactions.

Social and financial control of this magnitude in first-century Rome would have been inconceivable. Yet with today’s social and financial developments in technology, the idea of worldwide financial control is uncomfortably plausible.

Not long after the U.S. recession spread globally in 2008, the UN Conference on Trade and Development proposed a worldwide currency managed by a “Global Reserve Bank” to help move away from dollar domination in order to prevent a single currency from negatively affecting global economics. The 218-page report states an internationally controlled currency would help stabilize every member country.1 The idea of a global currency is not only on the minds of UN bureaucrats, but it is also on the minds of those who have come to distrust the banking system altogether.

Enter Bitcoin, a peer-to-peer, digital currency created by the alias developer Satoshi Nakamoto. The highly controversial currency transcends all countries, currencies, and markets. It lacks regulation and is in no need of a bank acting as the middleman.2

When you want to purchase a product with Bitcoin, you make a time-stamped, digitally cryptic transaction with the person or company with whom you are doing business. You and your computer become the bank. And since there is no physical bank, Bitcoins are saved in a digital wallet that is either on your computer or in cloud storage—meaning it resides in a gigantic data center somewhere in the great unknown.

Anyone can earn, save, and invest Bitcoins; all you need is a computer, tablet, or smartphone to connect you to the Internet. Because Bitcoin is a cashless currency, you acquire Bitcoins through an exchange of products, services, or other currencies. That means if you sell a product or provide labor, you have the option to be paid in Bitcoins. You may also purchase Bitcoins, backed by your country’s currency, through a Bitcoin processing company like BitPay.

This currency proudly offers anonymous transactions. However, the ability to control such a digital currency for overseeing purchases would be simple to establish.

You’re probably thinking this currency is a bizarre, avant-garde, underground invention that doesn’t have two feet to stand on. Not so. You may be surprised to learn that Bitcoin is much more developed than many people realize.

For starters, major corporations love Bitcoin Will Be Worth In 2014,” Forbes Magazine, one of the world’s leading publishers of business news, touts, “Bitcoin began 2013 at $13 a coin, only to ring in 2014 around $800 with worldwide fascination driving the 60-times gain.”3 Bitcoin’s extraordinary rate of growth probably means it isn’t vanishing anytime soon.

John Dyer, author of From the Garden to the City: The Redeeming and Corrupting Power of Technology, says, “When technology has distracted us to the point that we no longer examine it, it gains the greatest opportunity to enslave us.”4 We live in a culture that dives head first into technology without ever evaluating the long-term consequences.

And though Bitcoin may or may not be reliable or the future of one-world legal tender, it reveals there is an infrastructure, desire, and market for a global, digital, cashless currency. The question is, “Who will control it?”

ENDNOTES

4 John Dyer, From the Garden to the City (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2011), 28.

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If you were to die tonight, do you know for certain you would go to heaven?

I've heard all types of answers to this question: “I don't believe in heaven.” “I think I'm going to heaven.” “I hope I'm going.” “I'm not certain I'm going, but I try to be a good person.”

Life does not cease at death; and eternal life versus eternal punishment is not merely a Christian concept. King David said he would “dwell in the house of the Lord forever” (Ps. 23:6). Job said that after his
skin was destroyed, meaning his body was in the grave, “in my flesh I shall see God” (Job 19:26).

Yet not everyone “shall see God.” The prophet Isaiah spoke of sinners dwelling “with the devouring fire” and “everlasting burnings” (Isa. 33:14). The New Testament reveals the site of these burnings: the Lake of Fire (Rev. 19:20; 20:10, 14–15).

So what do you do when you want to tell someone you love how to avoid eternal punishment? You evangelize. You proclaim the Good News. You present the gospel. As the world grows closer to the coming of the Antichrist, many false gospels will be circulating. But only the gospel of Jesus Christ has the power of salvation.

**WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?** The word gospel in Greek is euaggelia, which simply means “good news.” There are various types of good news, and the New Testament uses the word in a variety of ways.

If you take the noun form, euaggelia, and add the verb form ize to the end, you have the Greek verb “to evangelize,” which literally means “to share good news.” This is the same verb used when the angels came to the shepherds in the fields and announced the birth of Christ. The angel basically said, “Do not be afraid, for behold, I evangelize you”: “I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people” (Lk. 2:10).

When you share with people how they can obtain eternal life and avoid the Lake of Fire, you’re sharing the gospel—the Good News.

Four Bible books are called Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. They present the Good News of the earthly ministry of the Son of God who came from heaven to reveal God the Father to mankind and then die a sacrificial death for our sins.

The Hebrew Scriptures—39 books written over a span of 1,000 years—call God “Father” only a dozen times. But in the Gospels, Jesus speaks often of His Father and tells us to pray, “Our Father in heaven” (Mt. 6:9; Lk. 11:2). Being able to call God “Father” is good news. In fact, the truth of Jesus is great news any way you look at it. The gospel of Jesus Christ offers people God’s unending love, forgiveness of sin, help in time of need, direct access to the throne of grace, deliverance from the Lake of Fire, and eternal life in God’s presence.

No wonder the apostle Paul wrote, “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek [Gentile]” (Rom. 1:16). The content of the gospel we share with people usually follows Paul’s message in 1 Corinthians 15:

> I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you. . . . For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas [Peter], then by the twelve. After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once . . . After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. Then last of all He was seen by me also (vv. 1–8).

Christ died according to the Scriptures, was buried, was raised, and appeared to many. That is the gospel in a nutshell.

**THERE ARE MORE THAN** 7 billion people on Earth. Out of that 7 billion, God in His grace reached out to me one day to open my eyes to grasp this Good News. Today He is reaching out to you. He is sharing the gospel with you purely on the basis of His goodness and grace, and He desires to lead you into a personal relationship with Him.

If someone offered you a brand new car for free, would you respond, “No thanks. I have an old clunker I prefer to keep”? Chances are you would be thrilled with the offer. And not only would you be grateful to that person, but you probably would tell everyone else about it as well.

God has made you an offer. He wants to give you forgiveness of sin, membership in His family, and a home in heaven forever. That is good news.

Why can He make that offer? Because Jesus paid the penalty for your sins. He died in your place. Even though you may not care about Jesus, He still cares for you. In fact, He cares so much He died for you: “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8).

Why was it necessary for Jesus to die for us? Because God’s holiness required a perfect, sinless sacrifice. You and I cannot die for each other; we are sinners by birth and by action. In all of human history, only Jesus was qualified to die to pay the penalty for someone else’s sin. You no longer have to pay the penalty yourself in the Lake of Fire. You can obtain forgiveness through faith in Christ: “Christ also suffered [died] once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God” (1 Pet. 3:18).

The Lake of Fire was never prepared for people: “Then He [Jesus] will say to those on the left hand [unbelievers], ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels’” (Mt. 25:41). The Lake of Fire was prepared for the Devil and the demons. But it is also where people will spend eternity if they fail to respond to the Good News.

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**Where will you spend eternity?**

A number of years ago, I was driving on the Garden State Parkway in North Jersey. There is a spot where the highway is walled in on both sides. That day traffic was tied up for miles because a German Shepherd somehow ended up on the highway. People wanted to help the
News. “Without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” (Heb. 11:6).

Psalm 95:8 declares, “Do not harden your hearts, as in the rebellion, as in the day of trial in the wilderness.”

If you have never accepted Jesus as your personal Savior, you may do so right now by praying, “Dear God, I know I’m a sinful human being. I know I can’t get to heaven by myself. I could never be good enough. I believe Jesus is Your Son. I believe He died on the cross in my place. I understand He’s the only way into heaven. Please take my sin away and give me the gift of eternal life. Help me to serve You, and make me a follower of Jesus. Thank You, God, for doing this for me.”

Millions of people throughout the ages have prayed a similar prayer from their hearts and have been transformed from the inside out and born into the family of God. The gospel is the power of God for salvation.

If you were to die tonight, do you know for certain you would go to heaven? As the apostle John neared the end of his first epistle, he wrote the following:

These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God (1 Jn. 5:13, emphasis added).

Faith is the certain victory over death and the Lake of Fire. Faith assures us that we can “dwell in the house of the LORD forever.” And if that isn’t good news, I don’t know what is.

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Worshiping the Techno Gods
With technology, we can change the world.” I was sitting in an examining room at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, listening to my oncologist tell me about “magic bullets” and new medicines that scientists believe can eradicate many forms of cancer. “You probably won’t die of this type of cancer,” he told me. “We’ve come so far so quickly that the treatments you had are becoming obsolete.”

That was certainly good news for me. Though overjoyed with his prognosis, I couldn’t help but feel that perhaps his worldview placed a little too much faith in science.

Today many people believe knowledge can save the world. They think science and technology will conquer disease, stabilize the economy, change weather patterns, preserve our natural resources, replenish food supplies, and even abolish the struggles between nations and religious factions. To hear them tell it, we are merely a few discoveries away from solving all the problems of the universe.

According to this worldview, everything humanity needs to attain Utopia on Earth can be generated by technology, we can do it. So who needs God? Instead of worshiping the Creator, they worship the technological work of their own hands. That philosophy may well become the very heart of the message preached during the future, seven-year Tribulation.

The Techno Beast Cometh

Two distinct beasts appear in Revelation 13. Wrote the apostle John, “I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon” (vv. 1, 11).

The beast from the sea is the pseudo messiah, the Antichrist. His emergence from the sea likely means he will come from the Gentile world. Bible teacher Dr. David Jeremiah explained, “The sea in biblical imagery stands for the general mass of humanity or, more specifically, the Gentile nations.”

The second beast is the False Prophet. His advent “up out of the earth” contrasts him with the beast from the sea and may mean he is Jewish. Bible scholar J. Hampton Keathley, III, said the ground “may symbolize the nation Israel who is consistently related to the land in Scripture.”

The False Prophet’s job is to draw worship to the first beast. Satan’s desire is to be God (Isa. 14:12–14). It appears that, in the future, his goal will come close to being realized. The False Prophet will exercise “all the authority of the first beast” and cause “the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast” (Rev. 13:12). He will instruct “those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast [Antichrist]” (v. 14). Then he is “granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed” (v. 15).

This feat will be accomplished through unique means.

In 1964 Walt Disney unveiled a technological marvel at the New York World’s Fair. It was a representation of Abraham Lincoln that moved, spoke, and even rose to its feet from a sitting position. Disney called this new form of animation Audio-Animatronics. Man had found a way to make an inanimate object move, talk, and exhibit facial expressions using a special form of robotics.

Today at Walt Disney World and Disneyland, you can see all types of man-made, inanimate objects miraculously come to life through Audio-Animatronics. It remains to be seen how far technology will advance before the time comes for the lifelike image of the beast to make its entrance.

The image is reminiscent of the giant statue erected by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon in Daniel 3. Nebuchadnezzar commanded everyone to bow down to the image or die. This future effigy goes a step further: It will appear to be alive. The False Prophet will delude much of humanity into believing he has the power to create life. Is it a miracle, or is it science and technology?

666: The Mark of the Beast

This master deceiver eventually will force “all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads” (Rev. 13:16). The mark will identify them with the Antichrist. Without it, “no one may buy or sell” (v. 17). This mark of the Beast is “the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666” (v. 18).

For decades people have speculated about this dangerous and mysterious mark. No one knows exactly what it is or how it will be applied to human flesh. In The Jeremiah Study Bible, Dr. David Jeremiah wrote the following:

Ruling powers usually have an identifying insignia—Nazi Germany had its swastika; the Soviet Union its hammer and sickle. The idea itself goes back to early history. Babylon, the first Gentile power, was symbolized by a lion with eagle’s wings (Dan. 7:4). . . . Volumes have been filled with fanciful ideas that attempt to identify this mark. Some have identified it with credit cards, computer chips, barcodes, and even names of specific people (Adolf Hitler or Saddam Hussein). No one can say exactly what form the mark of the
Beast will take, but the number six seems to be important. . . .
The number six is the number of man. Humanity was created on
the sixth day and commanded to work six out of seven days. The
number 666 is man’s number—tripled. . . . Perhaps the number of
the Beast represents the ultimate opposition to God.³
Perhaps the number six also represents the best man has to offer—what he
values and trusts in more than anything else: his ability to create new wonders
of science and technology from the recesses of his own mind.
It seems that many people today almost deify science and mankind’s
capacity to make the materials on Earth conform to the human will. They believe it is within their power
to control life utterly, and they arrogantly defy God. The Antichrist will epitomize this spirit of arrogance and rebellion.

A Double-Edged Sword

Of course, science and technology are not inherently evil. Many advancements are good and helpful. I clearly prefer my doctor’s “magic bullet” to all the chemotherapy I was forced to endure. But neither science nor technology will conquer disease and death, though they are trying mightily. And the same technology people may depend on to save them could ultimately be used to hunt them down and destroy them.

For example, the Associated Press has reported that you can have a computer chip the size of a grain of rice implanted in your arm with vital information about your medical history that may save your life. “With the pinch of a syringe, the microchip is inserted under the skin in a procedure that takes less than 20 minutes and leaves no stitches. Silently and invisibly, the dormant chip stores a code that releases patient-specific information when a scanner passes over it.”⁴

Here’s the rub. These microchips also would give someone with the right scanner access to all your personal information. Ultimately, your life-saving chip could become a tracking device capable of monitoring your every move.

The Bible teaches that without the mark of the Beast, no one will be able to buy or sell. Presumably, no one would be able to receive healthcare either. It is a small step from tracking a person’s health to tracking his or her movements and then every aspect of an individual’s life.

It seems the mark is linked to the future world’s economy. Today banks can track people through use of credit and debit cards. We can be tracked from our increasingly more sophisticated cell phones and even the handy electronic toll collectors in our cars. Those who refuse the mark will find life horrendously difficult.

Unfortunately, all the world will follow the Beast and worship “the dragon [Satan] who gave authority to the beast” (Rev. 13:3–4). And the government will seek to kill anyone who worships the true and living God.

Today the world trusts more and more in its ability to solve problems; to right all wrongs; and to bring about a flawless, healthy, Utopian society. Many worship techno gods and mock the God who sits in the heavens.

Though science may help people live longer and provide more gizmos, gadgets, medicines, and conveniences, it will never be able to erase the effects of sin. People will still get sick, die, and rob and murder each other. And neither science nor technology can produce everlasting life. That province belongs exclusively to God.

In fact, many of our advancements have come with consequences. We invented ways to preserve food, but they often use harmful chemicals. We invented air conditioners, but they supposedly destroy the ozone. We invented cars, but they reportedly poison our air.

Humanity cannot heal or repair the world. That task belongs to the Lord. He will return to this planet and set things back to the way they were supposed to be:

For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and reprobate many people; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore (Isa. 2:3–4).

In that day, people will no longer worship the work of their hands: “And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts” (Zech. 14:16).

They will worship the God of Israel—the Messiah—who saved them.

ENDNOTES

3 Jeremiah, “FYI: The Mark of the Beast,” 1,855.

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The Thought Machine: It May Soon Be Reading Your Mind from page 8

decision sciences. . . “It could be used to assess an individual’s emotional response to almost any kind of stimulus, for example, a flag, a brand name or a political candidate.”

So in the future, if you don’t like your government leaders or their flag, a brain scan might betray you.

So far, to have an fMRI, you must lie flat, face side up, and be wheeled into the MRI device that those who suffer with back problems know so well. It is a big, stationary, expensive piece of equipment—nothing at all like the contraption Dr. Brown uses on Marty McFly.

But time changes things. Technology moves on. In the 1930s through 1950s, many polio sufferers were wheeled into big iron lungs that made it possible for them to breathe. Only their heads lay outside the devices. Iron lungs lined hospital wards like matchsticks in boxes.

Today they have virtually disappeared, giving way to more convenient ventilators and the procedures of tracheal intubation and tracheotomy.

Perhaps in the future, the fMRI will be no more inconvenient than Emmett Brown’s plunger and weird-looking hat, turning science fiction into science fact and making it even easier for wicked men to co-opt good technology for their wicked purposes.

At the moment, you can take comfort in the fact that your thoughts still belong to you alone. However, no one knows for how long. It probably comes as no surprise to students of Bible prophecy that something designed to benefit humanity could one day, like so many other things, become a tool of evil in the hands of the wrong people.

ENDNOTES


2 Ibid., 281.


5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid.


9 Ibid.

Lorna Simcox is the editor-in-chief for The Friends of Israel.

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SAINTS AND SINNERS

The First Epistle of John teaches that people who are truly born again are children of God and will practice righteousness (2:29), keeping themselves pure from sin, just as Christ is pure, through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit (3:3).

In 1 John 3:4–10, the apostle John revealed the true nature of sin and that living in sin is diametrically opposed to the Christian’s new nature. How people live in relation to sin and righteousness either validates or repudiates their claims to be Christians.

COMMITTING SIN

Verse 4 describes the nature of sin: “Whoever commits [the] sin also commits [the] lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.” There are no exceptions. Anyone who practices sin commits rebellion or lawlessness against God. The word commit does not refer to one sin committed at a particular time but to an ongoing lifestyle of sin.

The Greek text uses the definite article the before the words sin and lawlessness, indicating the terms are interchangeable when referring to an individual’s nature or disposition of sin. Thus someone who lives in sin willfully defies and rebels against God and His law.

A professing believer who continually lives in sin contradicts the very purpose for Christ’s coming: “And you know that He was manifested [made visible to mankind in the flesh] to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin” (v. 5). The readers of this epistle knew Christ’s mission in coming to Earth was redemptive, “to take away our sins” through His death on the cross. Sins are removed at the moment of belief, but a Christian’s sinful disposition (nature) will remain until he or she receives a glorified body at his or her resurrection.

The phrase and in Him there is no sin (v. 5) literally means, “sin in Jesus does not nor ever did exist.” Scripture is clear that Jesus lived a sinless life on Earth (cf. 2 Cor. 5:21). He had to be sinless to be able to pay for the sins of others. If Jesus were not sinless, He would not have been qualified to remove sin because He would have needed a redeemer Himself.

Through Christ’s sacrificial death on the cross, He destroyed the works of the Devil (cf. Jn. 14:30; Heb. 2:14). Thus Christ is the one after whom all believers should pattern their lives.

COMPARING SAINTS WITH SINNERS

John advanced his argument by contrasting people who are born again in Christ with people who are not: “Whoever [everyone] abides [remains] in Him [Christ] does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him” (1 Jn. 3:6).

Born-again individuals are set apart from unsaved sinners by their ongoing relationship or commitment to Jesus Christ. Saved people “abide” in Him by keeping His commandments (Jn. 15:10). Although John said a saved person “does not sin,” he was not teaching that believers can attain sinless perfection. Not at all! He already said Christians cannot say they never sinned (cf. 1 Jn. 1:8—2:1). All believers must confess and forsake known sin in order to be forgiven. Rather, John was saying true Christians do not willfully rebel against God by habitually practicing sin.

In contrast, “Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him” (3:6). This statement is true of everyone who is not born again. Unredeemed people live in continual rebellion to God’s New Testament commandments, and they habitually sin. The phrase neither seen Him means they have never discerned, perceived, or received spiritual insight into the true nature and character of the incarnate Christ. Such people are spiritually blind and dead in sin.

The words nor known Him reinforce the same thought. Such sinners have never had a born-again relationship with Christ. They never came to know Him personally. They know about Him (as did the Gnostic false teachers), but intellectual comprehension does not equal a born-again experience (cf. 2:3–6).

John again exhorted Christians to guard against deception:

Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning.

For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil (3:7–8).

By addressing his readers as “little children” or children within God’s family (cf. 2:1, 12), he admonished them with tenderness and pastoral concern for their spiritual well-being. The epistle warns readers to be continually vigilant and guard against the deceptive, anti-Christian teachers who left the church (cf. 2:18–19). Earlier John had warned believers about being deceived by false doctrine (v. 26): in this passage he warned about being deceived by the moral practices of false teachers.

True believers are to “practice righteousness, . . . just as He [Christ] is righteous” (3:7). People who are born again should live moral lives as...
a result of the new birth, with Christ as their example. Their lives should not be righteous merely once in a while but always, because they follow Christ’s commands. Such a lifestyle is consistent with the new nature they possess from God.

The phrase just as does not imply believers can acquire the same degree of righteousness as Christ. Christ is infallible; people are fallible sinners. However, it does indicate that people who are born again desire to live morally righteous lives, as the Lord commands. Righteous living provides evidence of being born again.

On the other hand, someone who habitually practices sin reveals his true nature: “He who sins is of the devil” (v. 8). The phrase of the devil means such individuals reject the moral commandments in God’s Word. Instead of allowing God to control their lives, they yield themselves to the program of the Devil, who is out to destroy God’s plan for mankind. Such people are not children of God but children of the Devil.

The Devil has “sinned from the beginning” (v. 8), meaning he is the originator of sin. This verse does not refer to the beginning of existence but, rather, to when Satan fell because of his pride, self-will, rebellion, and desire to be God, rather than God’s servant (cf. Isa. 14:12-14; Ezek. 28:12–19). Since his fall, the Devil has been behind all evil in the world, promoting sin and rebellion against God through man’s sinful disposition (nature).

Deliverance from sin came through the finished work of the incarnate Son of God, Jesus Christ. “For this purpose the Son of God was manifested [visibly appeared in human flesh], that He might destroy the works of the devil” (1 Jn. 3:8). The point of Christ’s coming, ministry, crucifixion, and resurrection was to destroy the Devil’s evil works. The phrase Son of God is the first of seven in this letter and emphasizes Christ’s true identity.

Notice, the word works is plural, encompassing all the plans, plots, programs, and perversions of the Devil. The word destroy refers to Christ’s victory over Satan through His death and resurrection. This does not mean the Devil is inactive today but, rather, that he has no power to hold believers in bondage to sin. Satan is a defeated foe; and believers have power over him by yielding to the Holy Spirit, thus allowing God to have complete control over their lives.

Christians are delivered from the power of sin and spiritual death and will be delivered from the presence of sin at the Rapture of the church. Those who put their faith in Christ need no longer fear the sting of dying because death is swallowed up in the victory and deliverance provided through Christ’s sacrificial death and resurrection (cf. 1 Cor. 15:54–57).

**Convincing Summary**

John summarized his argument concerning the Lord’s deliverance from sin: “Whoever has been born of God does not sin [literally, “sin he is not doing”], for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God” (1 Jn. 3:9).

The phrase born of God identifies believers—people who have been regenerated (cf. 2:29). The regenerated person “does not sin,” meaning does not habitually practice or live in sin.

Why? Because “His [Christ’s] seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.” Scholars differ on what is meant by the phrase His seed remains in him. Some believe seed means the Word of God that produced the new birth remains in the believer. Others say it refers to the Holy Spirit, who was instrumental in the regeneration process and indwells, fills, and guides Christians in righteous living.

Still others believe seed refers to the divine life or new nature the Holy Spirit implants in believers at the time of their regeneration (cf. 2 Pet. 1:4). This view best fits the meaning of the word seed in this context.¹

First John 3:10 provides a test for identifying a believer from a nonbeliever: “In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother.”

The word manifest means to make visible to the world so that one can clearly discern who is a child of God and who is a child of the Devil. People who love other Christians and practice righteousness are truly born again and thus children of God. People who do not live righteously and do not love other Christians are not children of God, regardless of what they profess. There are no exceptions.

These are strong statements in God’s Word, and every believer needs to heed them.

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¹ For a full study on 1 John 3:9, read Dr. Ronald E. Showers’ book The New Nature (pp. 129–135), available through The Friends of Israel.

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**Answers From God’s Word**

**Question:** Why do human beings need glorified bodies in order to live with God?

**Answer:** “Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption.”

—1 Corinthians 15:50
The Wisdom of God (Part 2)

The previous article focused primarily on the wisdom of God the Father. Proverbs 2:6–7 states, “The LORD gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding; He stores up sound wisdom for the upright.” However, the Bible also reveals that God’s Son, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit possess great wisdom as members of the triune Godhead.

The Wisdom of Jesus Christ

The Gospel of Luke records the fact that, as a child, Jesus Christ “grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him” (2:40).

Jesus demonstrated that wisdom when He was 12. His parents took Him to Jerusalem for the annual Feast of the Passover. After the feast, He entered the Temple and conversed with Israel’s official teachers. He listened and asked questions. All “who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers” (vv. 41–47).

After returning with His parents to their home in Nazareth, He “increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men” (vv. 51–52).

Later Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan River and tested by Satan in Jerusalem and on a high mountain. Then He went to Galilee for an extended time of teaching and healing people. After returning to His hometown of Nazareth, He taught in the synagogue. The townspeople were astonished and asked, “Where did this Man get this wisdom and these mighty works? Is this not the carpenter’s son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas? And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this Man get all these things?” (Mt. 13:54–56).

The apostle Paul told believers at Corinth, “You are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—that, as it is written, ‘He who glories, let him glory in the Lord’” (1 Cor. 1:30–31).

The apostle John recorded the following heavenly scene that was revealed to him:

Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice: “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing!” (Rev. 5:11–12).

God’s Distribution of Wisdom

The Bible reveals that during Old Testament days, God distributed true wisdom to Israel and significant individuals.

The Nation of Israel. At the end of his ministry, Moses declared to the Israelites, “Surely I have taught you statutes and judgments, just as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should act according to them in the land which you go to possess. Therefore be careful to observe them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people’” (Dt. 4:5–6).

Gifted Artisans. God said to Moses, “Surely I have taught you statutes and judgments, just as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should act according to them in the land which you go to possess. Therefore be careful to observe them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people’” (Dt. 4:5–6).

Gifted Artisans. God said to Moses, “See, I have called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. And I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to design artistic works, to work in gold, in silver, in bronze, in cutting jewels for setting, in carving wood, and to work in all manner of workmanship. And I, indeed I, have appointed with him Aholiab the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan; and I have put wisdom in the hearts of all the gifted artisans, that they may make all that I have commanded you: the tabernacle of meeting, the ark of the Testimony and the
mercy seat that is on it, and all the furniture of the tabernacle—the table and its utensils, the pure gold lampstand with all its utensils, the altar of incense, the altar of burnt offering with all its utensils, and the laver and its base—the garments of ministry, the holy garments for Aaron the priest and the garments of his sons, to minister as priests, and the anointing oil and sweet incense for the holy place. According to all that I have commanded you they shall do (Ex. 31:2–11).

Joseph. Joseph’s brothers, “the patriarchs, becoming envious, sold Joseph into Egypt. But God was with him and delivered him out of all his troubles, and gave him favor and wisdom in the presence of Pharaoh, king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house” (Acts 7:9–10).

That happened as a result of God giving Pharaoh two puzzling dreams that none of his wise men could interpret. So Pharaoh called for Joseph, whom he was told could accurately interpret dreams. Joseph told Pharaoh that God gave him that ability. Joseph explained that the dreams revealed Egypt would experience seven years of abundance, followed by seven years of famine. He said, “The thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass” (Gen. 41:32).

Pharaoh asked his servants, “Can we find such a one as this, a man in whom is the Spirit of God?” (v. 38) and then told Joseph, “Inasmuch as God has shown you all this, there is no one as discerning and wise as you” (v. 39).

Joshua. The Lord told Moses, 
Take Joshua the son of Nun with you, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him; set him before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation, and inaugurate him in their sight. And you shall give some of your authority to him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient (Num. 27:18–20).

Scripture then says, “Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him; so the children of Israel heeded him, and did as the Lord had commanded Moses” (Dt. 34:9).

Solomon. Near the beginning of Solomon’s reign as king over Israel, he asked God to give him “an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?” (1 Ki. 3:9).

God was so pleased with Solomon’s request He responded by saying, 
Because you have asked this thing, and have not asked long life for yourself, nor have asked riches for yourself, nor have asked the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern justice, behold, I have done according to your words; see, I have given you a wise and understanding heart, so that there has not been anyone like you before you, nor shall any like you arise after you (vv. 11–12).

Not long after, as a result of Solomon’s wise judgment when confronted by a difficult situation (vv. 16–27), “all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had rendered; and they feared the king, for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him to administer justice” (v. 28).

And God gave Solomon wisdom and exceedingly great understanding, and largeness of heart like the sand on the seashore. Thus Solomon’s wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the men of the East and all the wisdom of Egypt. For he was wiser than all men, . . . and his fame was in all the surrounding nations. And men of all nations, from all the kings of the earth who had heard of his wisdom, came to hear the wisdom of Solomon (4:29–31, 34).

After hearing of Solomon’s fame, the queen of Sheba traveled far to Jerusalem: “She came to test him with hard questions” (10:1). Centuries later, Jesus said “she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon” (Mt. 12:42). “She spoke with him about all that was in her heart. So Solomon answered all her questions; there was nothing so difficult for the king that he could not explain it to her” (1 Ki. 10:2–3).

After hearing his wisdom and seeing the magnificent splendor of what he had built, she told Solomon, 
It was a true report which I heard in my own land about your words and your wisdom. However I did not believe the words until I came and saw with my own eyes; and indeed the half was not told me. Your wisdom and prosperity exceed the fame of which I heard. Blessed be the Lord your God, who delighted in you, setting you on the throne of Israel! (vv. 6–7, 9).

More than 200 years after King Solomon died, his wise proverbs were copied by the men of Hezekiah, king of Judah (Prov. 25:1).

Ezra. After the Medo-Persian kingdom conquered the Babylonian kingdom in 539 b.c. and ended the Babylonian captivity of the Jewish people, the Jews returned to their homeland in three stages. The second group returned under the leadership of Ezra, a Jewish priest and scribe. In 458 b.c. King Artaxerxes of Persia gave Ezra permission “to return to Jerusalem to carry out a religious reform.”

“And you, Ezra,” he said, “according to your God-given wisdom, set magistrates and judges who may judge all the people who are in the region beyond the River, all such as know the laws of your God; and teach those who do not know them” (Ezra 7:25).
Cartoon threatens Jewish genocide

An anti-Semitic cartoon published recently in Hamas’s official daily newspaper tries to scare away new immigrants to Israel and threaten everyone living there with genocide.

Captioned “Israel is preparing to accept waves of Jewish immigration from France and Ukraine,” the cartoon features hooked-nosed, bearded Jewish men marching toward Israel with their wives and children in tow. Israel is portrayed as a grave. The epitaph reads, “the invaders’ graves.” The newspaper serves Gaza and parts of the Palestinian Authority.

Hamas recently “celebrated” Israel’s 66th Independence Day with a genocidal-themed video. The song in the video was to the tune of the Israeli national anthem, Hatikvah, which means “the hope.” The Arabic words twisted the message, warning that it is “the end of the hope” for Israel. It also threatens to deport or kill Israelis.

Several days later, a Hamas children’s show encouraged children to “shoot all the Jews.”

Israel’s new ‘best friend’?

India’s new Prime Minister Narendra Modi has expressed his desire to “deepen and develop” ties with Israel, and his record shows he is serious.

The International Business Times (IBT) calls Modi “Israel’s best friend in South Asia.” The right-wing, pro-Hindu nationalist and chief of the conservative Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP), Modi has long courted political and trade links with Israel, reports IBT.

BJP officials strongly endorse the policy, which “has turned into a financial bonanza for the western Indian province of Gujarat,” where Modi served as chief minister for the past 13 years.

“Under Modi’s leadership and encouragement,” IBT adds, “Israel has poured billions of dollars of investment into Gujarat. Officials from both Gujarat and Israel have visited each other over the past few years to deepen trade and economic links. Ongoing mutual endeavors include projects in industrial research and development, solar and thermal power, pharmaceuticals, infrastructure, water recycling and water desalination plants.”

BJP has praised Israel repeatedly as a bulwark against Islamic terrorism.

Israel’s new ‘best friend’?

Israel-based Elbit systems defense company said its wholly owned U.S. subsidiary, Elbit Systems of America, LLC, has been awarded two contracts totaling $20.1 million to support the U.S. upgrade of the U.S. Marine Corps’ Bell AH-1W attack helicopter fleet.

The first contract, for $11.6 million, is for helmet display tracker system (HDTTS) kits on the aircraft. The HDTTS improves flight safety by giving crew members greater situational awareness with enhanced night vision, weapons-sighting and weapons-control capabilities.

The second contract, for $8.5 million, will add tactical video data link (TVDL) technology to the helicopters. TVDL provides aircrew information needed to detect, identify and quickly respond to threats.

Elbit Systems of America President and CEO Raanan Horowitz said, “The AH-1W is on the front lines in the battle against those who wish to harm America. These new technologies give our Marines capabilities and a level of safety never before experienced.”

Netanyahu links PA to global anti-Semitism

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu opened his weekly Cabinet meeting recently by addressing a survey from the Anti-Defamation League that shows more than 25 percent of the world’s population holds anti-Semitic views.

“This is the result of the Palestinian Authority’s endless incitement against Israel and attempts to distort Israel’s image and the character of the Jewish people, as we know from past experience,” Netanyahu said.

Such incitement ranges from the glorification of Nazism and Adolf Hitler to television programs featuring heavily stereotyped Jews as villains and encouraging violence against them.

The prime minister also addressed “Nakba Day,” the anti-Israel hate-fest Palestinian Arabs celebrated in May. “The PA defines the existence and the creation of Israel as a catastrophe,” Netanyahu said. “Those who see the creation of Israel as a catastrophe do not want peace.”

“We have many answers to this,” Netanyahu promised. “The first is that we continue to build our state and our united capital of Jerusalem, and we will also give an additional answer to the Nakba—we will pass the ‘Jewish Nation-State Bill’ that makes clear to the entire world that Israel is the state of the Jewish people.”

Swastikas deface synagogue

About 200 people who recently visited the ancient Judean synagogue at Samoa near Hebron found spray-painted swastikas on the walls and PLO flags flying above them.

Less than two weeks earlier, Rabbi Shmuel Rabinowitz, rabbi of the Western Wall and other holy sites, condemned the desecration of the grave of Rabbi Halafta in the Galilee with anti-Semitic vandalism.

The Samoa ruins were first discovered in 1934. The synagogue dates back to the fourth century. Jews apparently abandoned it in the eighth century, during the beginning of Muslim rule. Muslims have built a mosque adjacent to the ruins.

Israel’s new ‘best friend’?
Chloé Valdary: Standing Up for Israel

Chloé Valdary is not a name on everyone’s lips. Most people probably have never heard of her. Some who have heard of her despise her. Others consider her one of the bravest college students they have ever seen.

Chloé is an international studies major at the University of New Orleans. In 2012 she founded Allies of Israel, and in the spring of 2013 she held a pro-Israel rally called “Declare Your Freedom.” According to Arutz-7, her speech went semiviral in 10 days. Since then, her life has not been the same.

She has become a target for Israel-haters. Richard Silverstein, a Jewish man who claims to be a Zionist but appears to be an anti-Semite, tweeted a message about Chloé: “They finally did it: Found a Negro Zionist: Uncle Tom is dancin’ for joy!”

She replied in a blog post on The Times of Israel:

I am a Zionist. I am unabashedly pro-Israel, and a proponent of the right of the Jewish people to self-determination in their ancestral homeland. Silverstein is not a Zionist, and because I disagree with him—I like the old slave masters who believed that their view of the world was superior to and should be foisted upon the negro slaves—he contends that I am an “Uncle Tom” (a derogatory term meaning “house slave,” or one who is subservient and servile to white masters).

I am certain that Silverstein does not comprehend the irony. After all, white supremacists tend to possess an astounding propensity for cognitive dissonance. . . . Silverstein is judging me on the color of my skin, not on the content of my character, or rather, the content of my treatise. . . . In subsequent tweets, Silverstein also bashed me because of my faith. I am a Christian. ¹

Chloé Valdary has been covered by JewishPress.com, Breitbart.com, The Jerusalem Post, and Israel Hayom; and frontpagemag.com ran an interview with her in March (tinyurl.com/vvcloe). She has also written for Arutz-7, The Jewish Thinker, CAMERA, and The Times of Israel.

To view a brief but powerful clip of her advocating for Israel, go to www.israelvideonetwork.com/powerful-are-we-living-1933-all-over-again.

A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver (Prov. 25:11).

Apples of Gold

The situation in Israel is very tense. There is no peace. Most of the time I am on military duty and am called up to patrol the dark streets of Jerusalem on the Arab side. My task is to look for mines and booby traps. I must watch my step all the time. Our Arab neighbors keep threatening to destroy us, but we are not afraid and trust in the Lord.

We must hold on to this land, otherwise they shall completely drive us into the sea. The Lord has promised this land to our people, and there is no power in the world that can oppose His will.

In the meantime, I am giving as many people as possible my testimony concerning our Messiah and Savior. I have visited many friends to tell them how they can obtain eternal life through faith in Jesus because we do not know what the next day may bring.

Recently I was on patrol in the main street of former Arab Jerusalem. [Editor’s note: The Israel Defense Forces liberated the Old City from Jordanian occupation and reunified Jerusalem under Israeli control in 1967, one year before this column was written.]

It was three o’clock in the morning. I noticed a group of people coming my way. They were fully dressed in black robes. Of course, I thought they were priests. But when they came closer, I realized they were students at an Orthodox Jewish school.

As was my duty, I stopped them and asked what they were doing on the street so early in the morning. They answered in unison, “We are going to the Western Wall [in the Old City] to recite Slichot [penitential prayers usually recited before New Year and the Day of Atonement].”

At first they were frightened. But when they saw I was an Israeli soldier, they took courage. I asked, “When do you think the Temple will be rebuilt? Why do you not begin rebuilding now that you have in your possession the Western Wall?”

One of them replied, “Only when the Messiah comes will the Temple be rebuilt.”

“And where is the Messiah?” I asked.

He answered, “He is already here, but he is waiting to make himself known. He will build the Temple, and all the dead shall rise from their graves. We ourselves have no right to build the Temple. We are unclean and must not touch this work on the Holy Temple.”

Their leader, who was a rabbi, asked me, “What do you think of the Messiah, the Son of David, soldier?”

I answered, “The Messiah, the Son of David, has come and is coming again. I know Him, and many people know Him and receive Him as their Messiah and Savior. He laid down His life for our sins and made full atonement for us, according to Isaiah..."
53 and Psalm 22.” I gave them other Scriptures as well to make my point. They stood there amazed, hearing something they apparently did not know. The Lord Himself put the words into my mouth. Whatever questions they asked, I answered with Scripture. I was amazed at myself and realized the Holy Spirit was guiding me.

Usually the Orthodox will not talk to anyone who confesses Jesus as the Messiah, but these men were most thrilled and impressed by the fact that I was a soldier who guarded their safety while they were asleep or when they went to the Western Wall to pray.

“I am a true Jew who believes in our own Messiah Jesus,” I told them. After I gave them my testimony, explaining how I came to believe in Jesus, I asked, “Do you think I should have the same rights as any other Jewish person here in Israel? Or do you think I do not deserve such rights?”

The rabbi replied, “You ask a hard question, difficult to answer.” I insisted he give me an answer because I wanted to know his opinion. “Well,” he said, “If all the Jewish Christians would be like you, we would have no difficulty at all.” Instead of going to the Western Wall, they lingered around me and discussed the Messiah and Messianic prophecies until nearly six o’clock in the morning. We hardly realized the night had passed and morning had arrived.

by Zvi Kalisher in Jerusalem, from The Friends of Israel Archives, 1968

Please continue to pray for Zvi and Naomi Kalisher. They appreciate your prayers immensely.

Zvi Kalisher has lived in Israel since 1946 and has been a columnist for Israel My Glory since 1959.
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Brooke Goldstein is a New York City-based attorney, author, and award-winning filmmaker. She directs The Lawfare Project, which combats abuse of Western legal systems and human rights law. She is also founder and director of the Children’s Rights Institute, which deals with state-sponsored indoctrination and recruitment of children as suicide-homicide bombers, child soldiers, and human shields.

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