

Reaching Out

Second Quarter 2010

Issue #63

Welcome to Reaching Out,

*a different kind of magazine
to serve the community.*

*Our goal is to offer Biblical solutions
to the problems facing our society today.*

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Verdict—Guilty!

—Dallas Witmer

There has been no defense. No jury decided the case. There will be no appeal. The convict trembles as the Judge reads his sentence: *“Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels”* (Matthew 25:41). What a contrast to the godly to whom the Judge will say, *“Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world”* (verse 34).

The judge is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ, *“who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom”* (2 Timothy 4:1).

Who is the convict? What has he done? He’s the man that has broken God’s law. (See Matthew 5—7). The good deeds he had thought might save him are the rags now draped over his shriveled soul. Unrepentant in life, he never believed on the Lord Jesus Christ who would have saved him from his sin, and stood by him at this moment. He never received Him as Lord and Saviour, nor

did he follow Christ in daily life. Now there is no more opportunity to repent.

The poor man departed this life *today*, as thousands do every day. He stands at the judgment bar of the sovereign, righteous God, where justice is always done.

Like him, you too will one day give account of yourself to God. *“For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God”* (Romans 14:11, 12).

“I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (Revelation 20:12, 15). May you be found with the godly who *“have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the [heavenly] city”* (Revelation 22:14).



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or do you know of a friend who might?
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“Reaching Out” Published Quarterly

Issue #63, April, May, June, 2010

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The Christian Home Series

The Greenhouse

—J. Luke Martin

Mark stood gazing at the long rows of cabbage and tomato plants emerging from the moist seedbeds in his newly constructed greenhouse. Spring was a wonderful time. The anticipation of growing sturdy, healthy plants to be transported into other soil inspired Mark to be the best of growers.

Mark learned all he could from other, more experienced, growers. He studied articles and books about greenhouse growing. He discovered what worked and what didn't work. He learned how important it is to pay attention to small details.

Plant nutrition is number one to produce hardy plants. He learned about soil fertility, trace minerals and their benefits. He learned the role of organic matter and soil acidity.

Mark was careful about his plants' environment. Maintaining the right temperature is exceedingly important. The right amount of moisture is also crucial. He learned the role of sunlight and insect control.

Mark is a Christian. He believes in a God who created the universe with all its marvelous functions. He believes in Jesus Christ, God's Son, who came to save sinners like himself. He believes in God's Word, the Bible. From it, he has learned God's wisdom and moral ethics that stand good as he faces the

responsibilities and circumstances of life. Mark believes God wants him to do his best in whatever he does – including the greenhouse work.

Mark is also a parent. He has a lovely wife and six children. As Mark tends his greenhouse, he can't help comparing his role as a father to his occupation of growing plants and healthy produce.

Stable, successful homes require careful planning and diligent effort just as managing a greenhouse does. As he ponders his role as husband and father, he asks himself if he is giving his work with his family his best. Is he providing a safe moral structure and wholesome atmosphere for his growing family? Mark decided to list his moral priorities on paper. He outlined what would constitute a safe environment for his family.

Godly Principles

- I will teach my family that God made the world and claims ownership of all, including their lives (Genesis 1). *"The earth is the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein"* (Psalm 24:1).
- God's ownership delegates to me a stewardship for which I must give account. *"So then every one of us shall give account*

of himself to God” (Romans 14:12).

- God loves His world and desires a relationship with each of His children. *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life”* (John 3:16).
- God’s holy laws are found in the Bible. I will teach and live by God’s laws. *“Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever: for they are the rejoicing of my heart”* (Psalm 119:111).
- I can only live God’s law as I yield my life to Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world. Jesus said, *“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me”* (John 15:4).
- As much as possible, I will establish family worship of God, a time and a place where we gather as a family to read the Bible and pray. *“[Abram] went on his journeys . . . unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first: and there Abram called on the name of the LORD”* (Genesis 13:3, 4).
- With God’s help I will strive to be a worthy example of godly living for my family. *“Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned [unpretended]”* (1 Timothy 1:5).

A Safe Environment

- I will provide a structured order of headship and authority maintained by love and acceptance, loving and caring for my wife and children. I will honor my wife as mother and queen of the family. *“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it”* (Ephesians 5:25).
- I will provide safe educational opportunities for my children in which Biblical values, ethics, and godly behavior patterns are established (Ephesians 6:4; Proverbs 4:10-13).
- I will guard my home against the evils of television, the Internet, DVDs, cell

phones, pornography, and any other morally degrading influences. *“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty”* (2 Corinthians 6:17, 18).

- I will surround my family with friends and associates that share our values. *“[Be] a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate”* (Titus 1:8).
- I will be an active participant in a church brotherhood that maintains Bible standards. *“If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin”* (1 John 1:7).
- I will give a listening ear to the struggles and difficulties my children face as they cope with challenges that come with maturing age.
- I will teach my children to be givers rather than takers, to be servants rather than lords, to be useful rather than useless, to develop their God-given abilities and use them for the benefit of humanity. *“Let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful”* (Titus 3:14).

As Mark reviewed his beliefs and his commitments to do his best as a parent, he felt insufficient for the task. He needed God’s help. Parenting, like tending a greenhouse, requires diligent planning and hard work. Both would be a failure if pursued carelessly.

Mark bowed his head and thanked God for His merciful kindness. He knew that God would bless him in his efforts to raise a family for God. He could not ask for a greater blessing. He prayed that he could encourage others to experience this blessing.

Mark’s experience can be your experience! Turn your life over to Jesus Christ, read the Bible, and apply its teaching to your life and to your family.

Feature Article for Youth . . .

No Fun?

No doubt you are familiar with the pictures and figurines of the three monkeys that cover their ears, eyes, and mouths with their hands—hear no evil, see no evil, speak no evil. A young man recently sported a T-shirt alteration of the traditional monkeys. His shirt depicted four monkeys. One was saying, “Hear no evil.” Another portrayed, “See no evil,” and another, “Speak no evil.” The fourth monkey was saying, “Have no fun.”

The fellow no doubt intended to be funny. He came across with a pathetic philosophy that has permeated our world. “Have no fun” is the pleasure-centered, ego-centered notion of millions when they consider the Christian life and its high moral standards.

The crowd typically mocks the Christian as a sour-faced do-gooder who spoils all the “fun.” Some of their mockery comes from misunderstanding the Christian life and some comes from the way worldlings have seen some Christians live.

Common misconceptions about the Christian life include the following: Christians are burdened down by a list of dos and don’ts; Christians are unhappy and do not enjoy life; Christians are superstitious; Christians don’t have much to live for.

It is true the Bible says little about merrymaking, joking, feasting, and drinking except when describing the actions of the wicked. But then these are not the only ways to enjoy life. The Bible paints an entirely different picture of the joyful Christian life.

Joy is the word most often used in the Bible to describe the delight the godly can experience in daily living. Christian joy is more than mere happiness or having fun which must always depend on favorable or happy circumstances. Joy can exist even in times of sorrow. “Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning” (Psalm 30:5). Fun is short-lived. Joy endures. Our Lord cares for our needs “in shine and shade.”

“Let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice . . . because thou defendest them” (Psalm 5:11).

The New Testament also repeats the theme of joy in spite of suffering. *“Your sorrow shall be turned into joy . . . and your joy no man taketh from*

you Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace” (John 16:20b, 22b, 24, 33).

This Biblical view of life is totally realistic. The world around us offers pleasures aplenty, but these things do not give joy and peace in times of trouble, sickness, and death. God offers joyful living in the face of life’s realities. It is our job, by word and action, to help the world realize this abiding joy.

“Fun” will not last very long. It runs out with the loss of money, popularity, or health. Christian joy will outlast life itself. *“The triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment”* (Job 20:5). *“Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore”* (Psalm 16:11).

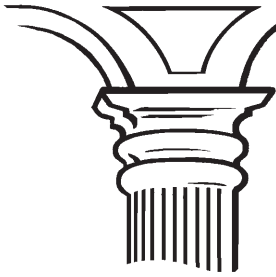
Why doesn’t the world believe the joy found in Christian living? Part of the reason is spiritual blindness and willing ignorance. The Bible says: “In the last days scoffers . . . willingly are ignorant . . . that by the word of God the heavens were of old.” They will not believe the Bible.

Perhaps we cannot do too much about this willing ignorance, but those of us who profess to be Christians can do something about another reason for disbelief. Many do not believe because of professing Christians. Perhaps an unbeliever met a “Christian” who cursed or lied or told dirty jokes. Perhaps he knew a “Christian” who looked miserable or who complained about a “strict” church or old-fashioned parents. He logically concludes that if Christians are unhappy or if Christianity does not change a person’s life, then it is of little value.

Think about how your life must look to others. Can they see a joyful experience? Do you know the joy of the Lord as your strength? Do others see that the Gospel really works? Will your life point others to Jesus Christ, the way, the truth, and the life?

If you cannot honestly answer “yes” to these questions, you are not right with God. Confess your sin, turn to the God of peace, claim the power of the Holy Spirit to live a vibrant Christian life. Ask God for the “want to” to live a consistent, transformed Christian life. The Spirit will lead you into God’s way of truth.

—RLB



—Lester Troyer

Ruin Through Entitlement

When they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened (Romans 1:21).

Thanklessness toward God sees the role of the Almighty God through a distorted lens. This distortion assumes that the ways of God fall short in meeting the needs of humanity. It is the idea that God needs our help for the best arrangement of our circumstances. It assumes the commandments of God such as *love not the world*, and *lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth*, and *love your neighbor as yourself* can be disregarded as relics of an unenlightened past. As a result, material things are trusted, hoarded, and even worshiped, above the Creator who made it all.

However, all the cash in the world is an insufficient keeper of the soul. The love of big bucks inevitably loosens the bands of integrity and destabilizes morality (*“the love of money is the root of all evil”*). Therefore, the transfer of security in God into the lust for things turns human wisdom into foolishness, and ends up overturning ethical and moral absolutes. This leads to a culture seeking answers to perplexing problems and finding none. Materialism produces an underlying madness that defies solutions. (For a current example of such moral, financial, and social chaos, we need look no further than U.S.A. 2010). A culture like this will someday reconnect with the Almighty — but in a tragic outpouring of God’s wrath and judgment.

The beginning Biblical text could trace various cultural missteps down into the same pit. We will retrace a line that has shifted people’s mentality dramatically over the past 120 years, yet evokes little concern across America, not even in the churches. This is the idea that personal financial

means may be rightly supplemented at the expense of others. The tragedy is profound. It transforms people from being cheerful givers who care about the needs of others, and turns them into grabbers and takers. By bleeding prosperity to cover failure, it guarantees that failure survives and that ever greater amounts of money will never be enough.

Recently, I finished a kitchen project I was doing. The respectable customer of many years pointed out that he was writing the check to me personally, rather than to my business. But why? I found that he was suggesting that this was like paying cash so I would not have to report it. “Cash,” he said, as he now quoted someone else, “is the small businessman’s only friend.” Surprised at the suggestion, I assured him that the method of payment made no difference to me. However, all income needs to be reported.

It would be enlightening, I think, to pursue his philosophy to a logical conclusion. Would he tell me at what income level would I no longer qualify to underreport my income? And could a “small” businessman, such as myself, cash in on other advantages as well? For example, not only is Wal-Mart a huge corporation. It is also in much better financial shape than the U.S. government. There are ways of “underreporting” the merchandise going out the door with me. Right? But how big would I need to be to no longer qualify for “free” merchandise from Wal-Mart? In fact, the notion that the genuinely poor are entitled to shoplift, providing the retailer is sufficiently prosperous, was recently suggested openly by a clergyman (to the embarrassment of his denominational leaders). In any case, stolen merchandise and employee theft is a multibillion dollar problem quite apart from what follows.

Let's peer into the present financial near-meltdown. It is triggered by a not-so-negative-sounding term called *entitlement*. The American dream has long dictated that we are entitled to own our own homes. But in recent years, encouragement to ownership was greatly expanded by suspending sane lending practices in the mortgage market. The rest is history. The attempt to put many more Americans into their own homes has resulted in the exact opposite: the loss of homes and jobs for millions of Americans.

Unfortunately, the entitlement mentality is so entrenched in our society that it was the only lens through which the damage could be viewed, thus dictating recovery attempts. This led to personal stimulus checks; bailouts for selective defunct institutions (too big to fail); cash for clunkers; tax breaks for first-time home buyers; and huge infusions of cash to save or to create jobs. Never mind that the cost of these programs far outstrips any possibility of long-term benefit.

At this writing, instead of careful analysis of where all this is headed, the focus goes to yet another entitlement-affordable health care for everyone. Yet the real tragedy in health care is not that millions of us are uninsured (many of us by personal choice), but the idea that health insurance is a personal necessity, and the only viable option for the average American. It appears that way only because it's more glamorous to go into debt for McMansions and Lincoln Navigators than for medicines, appendectomies, or other surgical repairs. The drain of medical costs may indeed impede status for a generation that believes life really does consist of the abundance of things possessed. I challenge that notion. When health really is at stake, of what use are the unaffordable toys? Further, the best of health care plans cannot cover for careless or self-destructive habits, neither do they deliver from accidents and terminal illnesses. (Ten out of ten Americans will die.) This I-am-not-responsible-for-my-bills mentality is accompanied by the continued shrinking of the collective American spine. The fixation on entitlements and insurances, along with the search for quick riches through malpractice suits, is the major cause of skyrocketing costs and then attempts to conceal them. We are easy prey to promises of painless ways of doing things. We seemingly never learn that painless (as in insurance and socialist programs), breaks the vital financial link between medical provider and patient. It provides a free zone of irresponsibility that leaves costs unchecked. Finally then, free ends up costing the most, even while robbing us of character.

Up through Grover Cleveland's presidency, it was understood that the financial support of the people was not the function of government, but that the people supported the necessary expenses of government. He made clear that the plight of poor and needy Americans could be faithfully entrusted to the generosity of their sturdy fellow Americans. (Even modern disaster response proves he was right.) In this, Cleveland was clearly defining the limited role of government. When government is limited to what government needs to do in terms of order, justice, and security, "we the people" do arise to the occasion and find the means to support both the government and the burdens of our fellow citizens.

Wise Mr. Cleveland could have gone on to explain that this truly is the legitimate, permanent separation of powers between the Church and the State. Indeed, it wasn't long after Cleveland that the state started assuming more and more responsibilities the church should have taken. As it is, both church and state have suffered for the switch. The bankrupting costs to the government of entitlement spending is a tragedy. But so is the timid character of a church relieved of direct responsibility to the poor. Not only are Christians supposedly freed from responsibility to the genuinely poor among us, but the sheep of the church are themselves guilty of overgrazing government pastures. The great tragedy is the mentality that has transformed many churches from being churches of compassion and giving (part of the essential nature of the Gospel) into an "owes me" culture of takers and cheaters. And what can we say of the damage to Christian faith when our substance is diverted into shortsighted pleasures and undisciplined materialism?

If only Christians could grasp the fact that the distraction with things that pass away robs us of joy and gratitude in God for things that last, for example, houses not made with hands, eternal in the heavens (2 Corinthians 5:1).

Why not try this solution:

- Prepare for accountability to God by assuming the responsible role as stewards of earthly things as gifts from God.
- Assume responsibility for total integrity in earning, buying, selling, and giving.
- Reject the notion that I can lay claim to the labors and resources of others.
- Take the long view of sharing and laying up treasure in Heaven.
- Remember: "*We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out*" (1 Timothy 6:7).



THE BIBLE AND SCIENCE

—Elvin Stauffer

A Catastrophic Earth Renovation

“For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water. Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished” (2 Peter 3:5, 6).

Geologic evidence confirms that a hydraulic or water catastrophe stirred up the earth’s surface and destroyed the plants and animals of a previous world. Sedimentary layers with fossilized life-forms in them lie an average of 2½ miles deep around the world. They are up to 14 miles deep on the Tibetan plateau.

Examples of Water Cataclysms in Geology

Secular scientists had reason for concern in 1923 when J. Harlen Bretz and Joseph Pardee described evidence for a 48-hour quick washout of the Grand Coulee and channeled scablands of eastern Washington State. The ancient shorelines of glacial Lake Missoula in Montana showed that 530 cubic miles of water suddenly gushed across Washington, dumped into the Colombia River, and deposited rocks on the continental shelf of the Pacific Ocean.

The politically correct uniformitarian view was that slow, weak forces over millions of years formed the features of our earth’s surface. The prominent geologists of Mr. Bretz’s day adamantly opposed a catastrophic explanation. It took a new generation of geologists after Bretz’s detractors died off to accept the facts of the huge Lake Missoula flood. The same bias sidelines the works of recent Creation scientists who propose a catastrophic washout of the Grand Canyon. If the Grand Canyon would be filled today, lakes would be retained that hold 3,000 cubic miles of water. That is three times the volume of Lake Michigan!

Evidence for a Global Flood

Compared to the Grand Coulee and the Grand Canyon formation, the evidence for a sudden worldwide hydraulic event is extensive.

1. Coal layers worldwide show vegetation (tree leaves, tree trunks, ferns, stems, and roots) were buried fresh, preserving leaf details. (Leaves would wilt in a day.)
2. Fossil tree trunks through several layers of

rocks show that the layers they extend through could not be millions of years apart.

3. Closed clams, delicate jellyfish and suchlike show burial had to be quick before any decay took place. Things like this don’t die and lie there until fossilized.
4. Multitudes of fish fossils are found. Fish rot quickly and are devoured by other predators. Dozens of fish are found swallowing other fish, proving a sudden burial.
5. Large and small dinosaur fossils are found around the world. Over three hundred museum-quality specimens were taken from the Red Deer River Valley of Alberta alone.
6. Mammal graveyards are found around the world.
 - a. Cumberland Bone Cave in Maryland. The bones of dozens of species of mammals from bats to mastodons are found mixed together in the rock walls. Animals that today are found from the Arctic to the desert to the wetlands are found together—wolverines, grizzly bears, peccaries, tapirs, antelopes, ground hogs, rabbits, coyotes, hares, beavers, muskrats, and reptiles.
 - b. Lignite beds of Geisetal, Germany. Here is a mixture of plants and insects from all climate zones. Leaves are in such fresh condition scientists could study chlorophyll. The stomach contents of beetles were studied.
 - c. The bone beds of Karoo, South Africa. Paleontologists estimate millions of vertebrate animals are mixed and fossilized together in the Karoo formation.
 - d. Agate Springs, Nebraska. A rock slab from this stratum is on display at the American Museum of Natural History in New York. It is a mix of bones from many species jumbled together. Extinct and present-day animals are found together. Rhinoceroses, camels,

giant boars, glyptodonts, and many others. In these cases, they would have rotted and washed for some time to become detached, mixed, and buried.

- e. Many other animal, plant, fish, dinosaur, and insect graveyards include: the extensive Sicilian hippopotamus beds, the great mammal beds of the Rocky Mountains, the dinosaur beds of the Rockies, Black Hills and Gobi Desert, and the amazing fish beds of the Scottish Devonian layers.

These examples and many more show that this earth is truly a catastrophic graveyard. It is willful ignorance that does not connect this hydraulic earth evidence with God's historic record in the Bible.

"The waters prevail[ed] . . . and the mountains were covered. And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died" (Genesis 7:19, 22).

We could discuss crystals, geodes, and agates formed in cooling hot mineral solutions, petrification of wood, dinosaur footprint tracks in quickly hardening lime mud; coal carbonized under the pressure of rock-forming mud in the absence of oxygen. Such deposits are not occurring today. Neither are masses of animals being laid down and turned to fossils.

The Water Source

The erosion features of the Harlan Bretz's Grand Coulee and channeled scablands of eastern Washington needed a water source. This was found in Joseph T. Pardee's glacial Lake Missoula in Montana. So also the global flood needed a water source. These bodies of water are described in the creation of the first world.

The reservoirs of water that were released and stirred the surface appear to have been held in a water vapor blanket above the earth's atmosphere (firmament), and below it on the earth and under the earth (Genesis 1:7). The first world had a different hydraulic cycle by which mists and artesian-type wells watered the land (Gen. 2:5-10). Apparently the waters went out and sank into the earth, returning to the great deep, which supplied the wells. A warm humid environment is described in which mists came up and kept things wet.

It was these two water sources that were released when God *"brake up for it my decreed place"* (Job 38:10); and in one *"day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened"* (Genesis 7:11). It rained for forty days and all the high hills and mountains were covered. The waters also prevailed exceedingly upon the earth—150 days, that is nearly

half a year! (vv. 19-24).

The sedimentary layers and geologic features that we observe today are the expected result. We see mountains pushed up (the highest Himalayan mountains have seashell fossils on top), canyons eroded, and seven-mile-deep ocean basins holding the floodwaters. Only 30% of the earth's surface is above water.

The Aftereffects

The following period of glacial ice sheets is also the necessary result of opening a warm world to the chill of space. Secularists cannot produce an ice age by slowly cooling the earth because cold air doesn't hold much moisture. Only a sudden change that left the earth with warm oceans and chilled continents could provide the mechanisms to unload the oceans onto the continents. Regular, intense storms from evaporating warm ocean waters precipitated as rain and snow on the cooler continents.

According to meteorologist Michael Ord's computer calculations, it took five hundred years for the glaciers to reach their maximum and two hundred more years for a fast melt. The change came as the oceans mixed and cooled toward the poles and volcanic dust and gases from the flood breakup dispersed, allowing the summers to warm up.

It was at this time of glacial melt that there was massive flooding across Siberia and North America. This is when J. T. Pardee's Lake Missoula formed. When it broke through its ice dam, it eroded the Grand Coulee and scablands of Washington State described by Harlan Bretz.

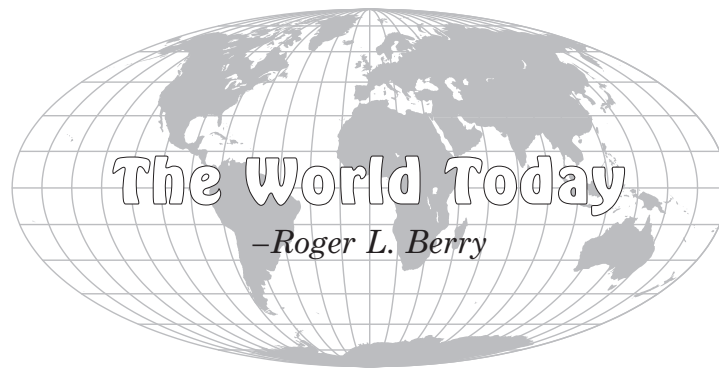
Bias Against the Evidence Today

The latent issue of rebellion against God is the same today as it was in the geologic conflict over the Lake Missoula flood in the early 1900s. Atheists are getting more brazen today, putting up anti-God billboards this past Christmas. "Praise Darwin, Evolve beyond belief (in God)" and other blasphemous statements were displayed. This just shows the long-suffering, patience, and mercy of God, bearing with much long-suffering the blasphemy (Romans 9:22). This knowledge of geology and the fossil record has only been exposed in the last 150 years as a warning that God does act in the real world and will judge His enemies again.

"The world that then was . . . perished. But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" (2 Peter 3:6, 7).

Sources:

The Genesis Flood - Whitcomb and Morris
Glacial Lake Missoula - David Alt
Grand Canyon, Monument to Catastrophe - Steven Austin
An Ice Age Caused by the Genesis Flood - Michael Ord



Security Issues!

Repeated attempts to blow up airplanes and to perpetuate other acts of terror around the world show just how fragile even the tightest security programs can be. Security measures can be evaded or things can slip through. Admittedly, many acts of terrorism have been averted, but all it would take is one huge disaster to shake up the world even more than after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in the United States.

Repeatedly, people's hopes for peace and security have been dashed. When communism fell in Russia and Eastern Europe, aspirations for peace and security soared. Certainly the world would be a safer place with the diminishing threat of communism. After the first Persian Gulf War, people again hoped for some measure of peace in the Middle East, but it was not to be. The self-proclaimed prophetess Jean Dixon prophesied that the year 2000 would usher in an era of peace. She failed to foresee the rise of terrorism that would shake the world. Her prophesy failed as did many other of her predictions. She died in 1997 before seeing the failure of her hopes for world peace.

By the time this article (being written in January) gets to your house in April, more nations could be at war, or other unforeseen security issues may arise. We feel almost helpless to do anything to avert disasters.

Many people have taken personal steps to try to protect themselves from disasters. They have stored food and fuel somewhere on their properties so they can survive (at least for a while) in case of major disruptions of supplies. Others have stored weapons to defend themselves from those who might try to steal these things. This leaves them with some feeling of "security." However, all these things are no guarantee of protection or survival in case of disaster.

Obviously, physical security is uncertain at best even in the countries that have the most sophisticated "homeland security" departments. So, where can we turn in our search of security?

Recently I passed a place of business selling "security" systems for homes and businesses. A huge sign (bigger than the business name) on the front of the store proclaimed, "In God We Trust." Had I had time, I would have stopped to ask them about the intent of their sign. Were they saying that they were trusting God for business? Or that God is more trustworthy than their customers (who might not pay them)? Or were they saying that people need to trust their security devices along with trust in God? Hopefully it is not like U.S. currency which proclaims, "In God We Trust." Obviously, far more people trust the money than trust God. Money can lose its value. Banks can fail. Governments and their programs can go bankrupt. Only God can be trusted completely.

In spite of the irony of the business sign, at least it points us to the place where true security lies. It is found in trusting God, not only with our material things, but also with our lives. Material things deteriorate or pass away, but if we have our security in God, then we will have reason not to fear. The threat of terrorism may make our lives uncertain, but if our trust is in God we can have a degree of security that goes beyond this life. "*We may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me*" (Hebrews 13:6).

When we come to the Lord Jesus Christ in repentance and submission, we find a degree of security that can never be found elsewhere in our fragile world. "*The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of*

my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" (Psalm 27:1).

Certainly God would want us to take reasonable precautions, not leaving our homes and businesses wide open to thieves. He would want us to avoid things that would endanger our own lives or the lives of others. But He also wants us to depend on Him in the situations we cannot control. Most of all, He wants us to depend on Him for eternal life that can never be taken from us by the security breaches around us. With God's help, we can face the security issues of our day.

Can we say with Paul, the Biblical writer, "I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38, 39).



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Are You Ready for Christ's Coming?

Can you answer "yes" to each of these questions?

Do I believe in Jesus Christ?

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36).

"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (John 1:12).

Have I repented of my sins?

"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out" (Acts 3:19).

"Repent, and be baptized . . . in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38).

"Put off the old man with his deeds; and . . . put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" (Colossians 3:9, 10).

Have I confessed Christ as my Master and Saviour?

"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Romans 10:9).

Am I following Jesus as Master?

"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Matthew 16:24).

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21).

Am I part of a spiritual fellowship of believers?

"Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together" (Hebrews 10:24, 25).

"They that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:41).

Am I watching for Christ's return?

"Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man" (Luke 21:36).

