

COMING THROUGH THE CHAOS

“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.” (2Timothy 1:7)

It's enough to make one crazy! Each week we review some portion of what is going on, - that if taken out of the context of God's plan, - could drive us to utter despair. How do we make sense of the times in which we are living? Are we to believe in the present alone; - that all this will just pass?

We are beset with wars and rumors on every side: Iraq, Afghanistan, an already or soon-to-be nuclear Iran threatening Israel and the world, - a nuclear North Korea threatening its' neighbors, - India and Pakistan on the edge, - Hamas, Hezbollah, Fatah, al-Qaeda, Syria, all threatening Israel, - an ascendant Russia flexing its muscles again, - slaughter on the continent of Africa, - Sudan, Darfur, Nigeria. And we live in such an interconnected world that any of these could explode, drawing in others and bringing on World War III, replete with nuclear devastation and hundreds of millions of dead. It is almost incomprehensible. But the Lord sees all the dangers and all the troubles that are to come. He is in control. The Scriptures clearly warn us of the coming day, - the one many believe we are facing even today. As Paul writes, we have these warnings, **“so that this day should not overtake you”**. Speaking to believers he says, **“You are all sons of light and sons of the day...For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ”**. (1Thessalonians 5:4, 5, 9) And He has promised: **“I am with you always, even to the end of the age”**. (Matthew 28:20)

Yet wars are not all we face. We watch seemingly helplessly as the world we are accustomed to falls apart before our eyes on the evening news. Our economy is teetering, the dollar falling, oil rising, banks failing, economists and world leaders calling for a 'world currency'. Much of the world faces famines and food riots and in the West the cost of food and fuel is changing lifestyles. We are beset by terror on every side. Nature seems out of control; - with hurricanes, tsunamis, tornadoes and floods routinely surpassing old records. Earthquakes are increasing in frequency and severity. But though we may be frightened, we have God's promise of protection, if we are indeed His people. **“Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; You are Mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, Nor shall the flame scorch you. For I am the LORD your God, The Holy One of Israel, your Savior”**. (Isaiah 43:1-2) [This is one of the big ones that always gets to me. Look what it says! God has redeemed you – He's called you by your name – You are His – and you are safe through the fire and safe through the waters!!]

Still we witness the implosion of our culture, - built for centuries, - (though admittedly imperfectly) , - upon the foundation of Christ. It's been replaced by a society whose god is Self, whose truth is relative and whose morality is subject to self-interpretation. Thus we see the celebration – (it goes far beyond tolerance) - of perversion; - homosexuality & lesbianism & transgenderism & the occult & every sort of combination we can think of: - For a culture in which 'God is dead', - or something of our own making, - can only give us a cafeteria spirituality that by definition will never bow to the REALITY that is TRUTH that is CHRIST HIMSELF! And as we are tempted to despair, let us remember that victory comes to those that overcome. **“For whatever is born of God overcomes the world...Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.”** (1John 5:4-5) And he who overcomes has nothing to fear. He will **“eat from the tree of life”** and the **“hidden manna”** and **“not be hurt by the second death”** (Revelation 2:7, 17, 11) **“And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations”,** and **“He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels”**. (Revelation 2:26 & 3:5)

Now these are promises to hang on to in these troubled times...if you know Christ. If you do not...this is your chance. **“Behold now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation.”** (2Corinthians 6:2) If you have not already done so, it is time to end the rebellion, and accept Jesus, the Christ provided by The Father Himself, - as both your Lord and Savior. There is only one way. Scripture is clear. **“He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.”** (1John 5:12) Confess to Him that you are a sinner, - turn from your sins, - accept the fact that He died for you to pay the price for your sins – make Him Lord of your life. You will never be sorry.

ISRAEL: TWO DANGER POINTS

According to some sources, the US seems to have indicated that an American strike at the Iranian nuclear plants is off the table. Elsewhere, the Israelis are working on a limited prisoner exchange with Hezbollah and French President Sarkozy is sounding hopeful about a Israeli-Palestinian peace deal. Yet at least 2 major danger points remain.

First, at the behest of Iran and Syria, Hezbollah has occupied Lebanon’s strategically important Mt Sannine, deploying radar guided anti-aircraft missiles and an early warning radar system on its peak. The new bases serve as a threat to both the Israeli Air Force (IAF), as well as the US 6th Fleet.^{1 2} Now DEBKA is reporting that the Israeli military is expecting a possible Hezbollah attack to follow the exchange of prisoners. The IDF has been put on high alert. Iranian military officers are said to be manning position on the mountain.³

While the prisoner exchange and the new missile bases pose an immediate issue, the always looming prospect of a strike against Tehran’s nuclear program remains in the news. According to the Times of London, President Bush has given the Israelis the go-ahead to continue preparations for an Iranian strike should negotiations and sanctions fail. If reports are to be believed, it will however be an entirely Israeli show, with little but moral support from the Americans. According to one Israeli Defense Ministry official, the President “doesn’t believe that anything but force will deter Iran”. The President has signaled his support despite opposition of some in the Pentagon, who cite the increased danger to American forces in theater.⁴ As to the timing, the Israeli PM was supposedly quoted as saying: “In three months’ time it will be a different Middle East.”⁵

These reports seem to confirm the analysis given by Lt General McNerney, a former big-wig in the Air Force. McNerney see an increased likelihood that Israel will strike and do so massively, with the probability being that the strike will take several nights. They are describing a “multi-phased campaign”, with over 100 planes that will be able to significantly cripple Buhehr and many other facilities with the probable exception of the heavily fortified plant at Natanz. Of course, the political pressure will only increase on Israel, the longer the strikes continue. The success of any Israeli attack may rest on the level of cooperation they get from the Americans. Tehran would undoubtedly set their surrogates, - Hezbollah, Hamas, Syria etc, - on the Israelis in the event of such an attack. Yet, despite all its bluster, the Iranians may hesitate to go after US assets in the region or to close down the heavy oil traffic of the Strait of Hormuz. That would bring in the Americans in spades, something that retired General Paul Vally believes the Israelis would like to engineer. He predicts that US forces would then “unleash hell and more than compliment” the IAF assault.⁶ Whether Israel launches an attack or not is more than a serious question: It is existential. These are incredibly high stakes for Jerusalem. An atomically capable Iran is unthinkable. But miscalculation too, is deadly. If Israel loses: It is the end of Israel.

A WHOLE LOTTA YADAS

There’s been a lot of crazy stuff we haven’t had the space for. Were getting some in this week.

Take Two Prayers & Call Me In The Morning – Here’s one from last year, - an oldie but a goody. Roman Catholic nuns of the Monastery of the Immaculate Conception of Light in Brazil are distributing rice papers inscribed with prayers

that are to be “ingested by those in need”. The prayer bullets, called St Galvao’s Pills, are becoming quite popular. Brazilian believers are lining up for the ‘magic’ pills.⁷ *Why pray when you can just have a snack instead?*

A True Church? – It’s hard to believe there is any controversy at all: But a proposed motion to “proclaim Jesus as the only way to salvation” has divided the members of the General Synod of The Anglican Church. It actually seems that it should be hardly necessary at all – from any body dedicating itself to the proclamation of the Gospel. But some “Senior church leaders” as well as some “Muslim figures” have expressed their disapproval and even “anger” at the proposal that also includes strategies for evangelizing Muslims.⁸ If indeed they believe the Bible, - then anyone not naming Christ and Lord and Savior will be lost for eternity. After all, John 14:6 already proclaims Jesus as the only way, and Romans 4:12 tells us “**Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved**”. John 3:18 states it even more plainly: “**He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God**”.

Breaking Communion – Sticking with the Anglicans for a bit: A crisis is brewing in that body over the issues of gay clergy and women bishops. Three hundred conservative bishops gathered in Jerusalem under the moniker GAFCON, - or the Global Anglican Future Conference and announced that they no longer accept or recognize the authority of the Archbishop of Canterbury. The event that set the whole thing in motion was the 2003 installation of the openly-homosexual Gene Robinson as Bishop of New Hampshire. The 77 million strong worldwide Anglican communion is now deeply divided over just how seriously to take Scripture.⁹ I know of one case myself, where an Episcopal parish has quietly redirected their funds away from the national organization over the last several years.

“I Ain’t Afraid of Your Jesus” – That’s part of the lyric to a song sung by the Turtle Creek Chorale, a gay choir featured in a documentary broadcast by Chicago’s PBS affiliate titled *The Power of Harmony*. The next part of that line reads: “I’m afraid of what you do in the name of your God”. The film goes on to portray Christians who object to sex outside of marriage and gay sex as “ignorant, hateful and prejudiced”.¹⁰

This has long been the tactic of the activist homosexual crowd; - to portray the Biblical position as being intolerant, narrow-minded, homophobic and even anti-Scriptural; - feeding only the prejudices of those that oppose this sin. But the Bible is clear on the matter. Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama for instance, justified the notion of gay marriage by referring to “Sermon on the Mount, which I think is, in my mind, for my faith, more central than an obscure passage in Romans”. It is interesting that the candidate or anyone would take this tack, - for Jesus never made a distinction of one book of the Law over another. First of all it was not just the passage in Romans but others in Deuteronomy and Genesis and Jude and elsewhere that condemn the sin of homosexuality. And it was Jesus himself in that very Sermon on the Mount that proclaimed his adherence to the entire Scripture. “**Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.**” (Matthew 5:17-18)

The Latest Voice in the Debate – It comes perhaps from Anglican Bishop Alan Harper of Ireland. Harper begins by acknowledging the words of Romans 1, - and then putting his own little twist on them. They read in part: “**For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.**” (Romans 1:26-27) It seems on the surface a rather clear statement of the character of these acts being ‘against nature’. But Harper then goes on to argue that such ‘unnatural acts’ are only unnatural for heterosexuals who engage in homosexual acts, - not for homosexuals who engage in criminal acts. Got it? In other words, Bishop Harper suggests that science is proving that, - dare I put it this way, - the inclination toward to become a sodomite is God-given. Here are his own words: “...for some males and some females homosexuality and homosexual acts are natural rather than

unnatural. If such comes to be shown, it will be necessary to acknowledge the full implications of that new aspect of the truth, and that insight applied to establish and acknowledge what may be a new status for homosexual relationships within the life of the Church".¹¹ With such reasoning taken to its logical conclusions, - it also becomes possible to argue that genetic predispositions toward violence, or alcoholism, or that popular favorite – lust, etc could lead to the justification in some sense of assault & murder & drunkenness, and adultery. *Perhaps the Church should be more accepting of these behaviors too?* What then becomes the standard for this man of the cloth: The changing mores of social-science or the unchanging Word of God?

Enter The Presbyterians – Seemingly not to be outdone in their search for post-modern, - (or should I say – *post rational*) Christianity, a committee of the Presbyterian Church USA has recently approved proposals that would soften its requirements for sexuality purity among the clergy and open the door for homosexuality in the ministry. The committee recommended that language that requires “fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman or chastity in singleness” be deleted.¹² The Presbyterian Church USA has long had a history of anti-Israel and pro-Palestinian involvement including acting as almost-apologists for Palestinian terror.

Check This Headline – “*Gay Man Files \$70M Suit Against Bible Publishers Over ‘Homosexual’ Verses*”. It seems the use of the term “homosexuals” in the 1982 & 1987 versions of a Bible published by Zondervan and used by his family’s church has “made him an outcast in his family”.¹³

Thought That Was Crazy? – Here’s another one from the International Herald Tribune. “*Man sues church for injuries after claiming spirit of God forced him to fall*”¹⁴. Let’s just leave this one alone.

Headline #3 – “*Black Churches Gather to Promote Abortion and Homosexuality*” – The article describes the 12th annual National Black Church Summit on Sexuality. Topics covered at the gathering included making churches more “inclusive for homosexuality” and how to disseminate information on to women about all their reproductive options, including “pregnancy termination”.¹⁵

One Guy Who Gets It – Among the many good Christians in the Anglican Church is one Right Reverend Michael Nazir-Ali, Bishop of Rochester. The Pakistan-born prelate has set himself up against the very Archbishop of Canterbury who earlier made statements supporting Sharia law in England. Nazir-Ali has warned against Islamic influence and no-go zones for Christians. He has railed against the onset of multiculturalism, the “social and sexual revolution of the 1960’s”, and against the Marxist tendencies of – and the premature capitulation by liberal clergy to the onslaught of a militant brand of Islam in the West. It is his contention that implosion of British culture can be traced to spiritual death of Christianity.¹⁶ *Kudos to the good Bishop!*

But Is Anglican Church ‘Dissolving’? – Some news from the General Synod of the Church of England. The gathering of bishops just voted to approve the consecration of women bishops, leading many to speculate that this may lead to a mass exodus of conservatives from that denomination. About 1,300 clergy, including 11 bishops have already warned that they are prepared to leave over that very issue. Meanwhile, word leaked of ‘secret negotiations’ between “senior” leaders of the Anglican Church and the Vatican, over a possible return to Catholicism by many. All of this is going on, - behind the back, - as it were, - of the Anglican Primate, Rowan Williams, Bishop of Canterbury. It is believed that Pope Benedict XVI may be open to making some accommodations to the “traditional and highly educated” Anglican clergy.¹⁷

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- ¹ Iranian Early Warning Station, Anti-Air Base on Lebanese Peak, DEBKAFfile, July 12, 2008
 - ² Iran commandeers strategic Lebanese peak..., DEBKAFfile, July 12, 2008
 - ³ High military tension..., DEBKAFfile, July 14, 2008
 - ⁴ Bush gave Israel amber light to attack, Jerusalem Post, July 13, 2008
 - ⁵ Report: Bush Backs Israel Strike Plans on Iran, News Max, July 13, 2008
 - ⁶ W Thomas Smith Jr, Will Israel Strike Iran, Human Events, July 9, 2008
 - ⁷ Brazilians in need, physical or spiritual, seek St Galvao's pills, Georgia Bulletin, CNS, May 15, 2007
 - ⁸ Church of England divided..., Christian Post, May 27, 2008
 - ⁹ Anglicanism faces schism over gay priests, women bishops, AFP, July 1, 2008
 - ¹⁰ PBS Promoting the 'Trendy' Sin of Homosexuality, One News Now, June 25, 2008
 - ¹¹ Anglican primate: Homosexual acts must be accepted, One News Now, July 9, 2008
 - ¹² Presbyterians Advance Gay Clergy Proposal, Christian Post, June 25, 2008
 - ¹³ It was only a matter of time - Gay Man Files \$70M Suit Against Bible Publishers Over 'Homosexual, Christian Post, July 10, 2008
 - ¹⁴ Man sues church for injuries after claiming spirit of God forced him to fall, International Herald Tribune, July 10, 2008
 - ¹⁵ Black Churches Gather to Promote Abortion and Homosexuality, CNS, July 12, 2008
 - ¹⁶ Sean Poulter & Niall Firth, Bishop says collapse of Christianity is wrecking British society..., Daily Mail, (UK), May 29, 2008
 - ¹⁷ Anglicans to Catholics: Ready or Not, Here we Come, Lifesite News, July 7, 2008