



ETERNAL VALUE REVIEW

MONEY MONITOR & GLOBAL TRENDS REPORT

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“For thinking Christians seeking to understand the times.”

AUGUST 2016

FEATURE REPORT

Christian Negativity: Where Is Positive Witness?

Christians, who are looking up—“for [their] redemption draweth nigh” (Luke 21:28)—sometimes fall into a negativity trap. To them, every trend is dark, terrible and condemned. Since the Bible foretells a day of God’s wrath and an ungodly mankind, they tend to focus only on the media headlines of disaster, strife, and disease. News reports of misfortune, economic or financial market downturns, etc. are repackaged, retweeted and blogged about by Christian news aggregators and conspiracy theorists.

Is there not anything positive to celebrate or condone? Arno Froese (Executive Editor of *Midnight Call* magazine) makes the point that there have been many achievements of mankind, and that, contrary to the doomster’s incessant bleatings, humanity in many ways is actually experiencing the best of times.

If so, would this change the truth and prophecies of the Bible?

No. Without a doubt, we know in advance the choices that mankind will make, which will play a willful part in the events leading to the Apocalypse and Judgment Day. Why? Because the Bible has foreknowledge of these free and ungodly choices of mankind.

But that is not the complete story. The perspectives of the above-described “negativist” are not entirely Biblically-balanced.

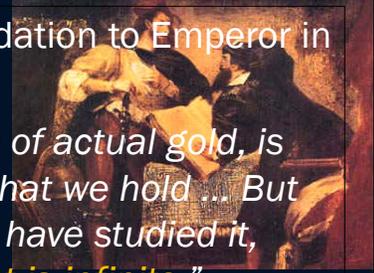
God did bless humans with skills and creativity. After all, the LORD said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky,

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Metaphysical Lures & Carnal Temptations of “Infinite Money”

Mephistopheles recommendation to Emperor in Goethe’s *Faust*:

“Such paper, in the place of actual gold, is practical: we know just what we hold ... But wise men will, when they have studied it, place infinite trust in what is infinite.”



Alluring Idea: “place infinite trust in infinite [money]”

Source: Goethe’s *Faust*: Part Two; Translation by Robert David MacDonald

WORLD MONEY UPDATE

Ex Nihilo: Big Bang Money

Financial markets around the world are probing new highs even as crises of various types worsen. The halcyon era of unlimited fractional-reserve money (the infinite money production of the world’s major central banks) continues to extremes and new levels of perversion.

Just where is all this apparent wealth coming from? While individuals may well profit from the soaring financial markets, the reality is that real wealth is not rising as it may seem. As we often point out, the creation of real wealth is essentially governed by population growth and productivity (leaving out the creation for the sake of this article.)

The Creation was forged from nothing ... ex nihilo. Only God can create mass, natural system order, and genetic information. Not mankind. Nevertheless, that doesn’t stop policymakers from creating money ex nihilo, thereby creating an illusion of rising real net wealth.

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It only follows that mankind would have totally corrupted wealth distribution, once it was discovered how to create money ex nihilo. And so, monetary fabrication and sleight of financial engineering is underway.

Today, there is no lack of an economics priesthood that is willing to provide the theoretical rationale for monetary immorality. Prospects for real balanced portfolio returns over the next decades as such are very likely slim to slight ... if not deeply negative over shorter periods of time.

When interest rates are as low as they are today (5,000 year lows by some measures) it is impossible that investment returns can be high on a sustainable basis. This statement is far from pessimistic. At the same time, we cannot deny that the mother of invention can spur maniacal “crack-up boom” types of market bubbles. Hopefully, we will be spared such irrationality. However, the complete take-over of “humanistic materialism” as the dominant world view today means that there are no moral boundaries. Markets can rise (or fall, for that matter) to whatever level agreed to by the complicit powers.

Human world philosophical views aside, physical science would prove that there can be no other possibility than that returns will be low to deeply negative if the starting-point is a 10-year yield (US treasury) of 1.35%. And yet, this view would be optimistic as near 85% of all global government bonds now yield less than that. Greater than \$10 trillion in bonds worldwide now yield negative rates.

It has been a quite a financial ride since the early 1980s ... more than 4 decades of declining interest rates and steadily rising (but volatile) equity markets. Bill Gross (the famous bond manager of PIMCO fame) put it succinctly in a recent note, stating that in order for the Barclays Capital US Aggregate index (a fixed-income index) to replicate its return record of the last 40 years, yields would need to drop to minus 17%!

Rather than allow negative total returns (interest yield plus capital depreciation), markets and policymakers have instead chosen negative rates and capital appreciation. They have chosen to continue the ruse to the point of the unimaginable. Capital markets are therefore the tail wagging the dog of commerce and industry. Interest rates and the cost of capital are being suited to serve the needs of inflating financial assets. This essentially leads to extractive behavior in the real economy. It smothers investment spending and household income and stymies productivity growth. Debt continues to rise. All of these are developments that are not sustainable and are certainly not the route to real prosperity.

Thus what is occurring is a moderating “real” wealth-generation capability (this hidden to most observers) while nominal investment returns (what we see published and celebrate in the media) are artificially pumped up. How long can this last? How negative can interest rates go?

As long as policymakers and key managers of capital collectively agree to perpetuate the illusion of nominal investment returns, it can go on longer than may be imagined. However, at the same time, negative interest rate policy (NIRP) is bad for banking and disastrous for non-banks.

Interest income returns are far below the cost of their liabilities. In time, NIRP will devastate these industries. Therefore, the limitation of the balance sheets of banks and non-banks suggest that the NIRP strategy only has a short track.

Nonetheless, the need for investment income is pressing for pension funds and insurance companies and the like. Their only option is to chase “capital gains” and to hope for the grand arrival of “helicopter money” ... though, this at best is also only a short-term solution. The same predilections apply to almost all investors.

Therefore, the key questions to address for asset managers are of a behavioral type and not necessarily fundamental. Only the following two metrics are needed:

Unit change in wealth accretion (change in the real growth rate of global GDP)

Unit change in the propensity to extract and exploit returns from asset inflation.

As long as the unit change in #2 is greater than that of #1, the nominal value of investment portfolios will continue to levitate and possibly even rise substantially.

Deteriorating fundamentals are now being witnessed in almost every investment type (declining corporate earnings, slumping jobs growth, etc.). But, a case can be made why these troubling symptoms can be overlooked for some time.

A bizarre new world of investing is defined thus: Red is the new Black; Equities are the new safe investment; Bad economic news is bullish; Low negative interest rates are



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positive; Money stored in the mattress is productive; Worrying about heightening risks is against client interests.

The risks of engaging these views, however, are large. Short-term volatility will be episodic and high. If all goes wrong, in retrospect prudence will be seen to have been neglected.

The Big Bang Theory is today the prevalent explanation for an ex nihilo creation (the unproven and contrived idea that matter is balanced off by anti-matter). Money is also a human contrivance. Incidentally, it is a concept for which the theory of evolution has no explanation. By contrast, the “big bangs” of money are destructive, not creative.

EVR

Christian Negativity: Where Is Positive Witness? ... From Front Page

over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground [...] in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them” (Genesis 1:26-27). Moreover, God engaged mankind to “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it” (verse 28).

Mankind here is clearly implored to “subdue” the earth. To do so, therefore, is not necessarily an ungodly endeavor.

Mankind is even capable of achieving things far beyond what the LORD had intended to be ideal. Consider the “advanced-technology” story of the building of the tower of Babel. The people of that era (living not long after the flood) “[...] said to each other, ‘Come, let’s make bricks and bake them thoroughly.’ They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar. Then they said, ‘Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves; otherwise we will be scattered over the face of the whole earth” (Genesis 11:3-5).

We see here how the people of that day quickly translated their achievements into arrogance and the celebration of self-determination without God.

“But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower the people were building. The LORD said, ‘If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them” (Genesis 11:5-6).

We repeat part of the quote from above for emphasis: “[...] then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them”!

We must conclude that mankind indeed has the capability to take dominion over the earth, and in so doing, accomplishes many achievements.

Consider some examples of how mankind has subdued the world since Creation:

Human Productivity: For a great part of human history (even as late as between the fall of the Roman Empire and the Middle Ages), productivity growth was absent. People would spend their short lives fetching water and wood. Today, conditions are comfortably different. Only in parts of the developing world will one not find piped water. The contributors to advanced productivity have been the discovery of electricity, refrigeration, telecommunications, the internal combustion engine, etc.

Technology: Thanks to modern telecommunications, we can today have discussions or exchange information with anyone, virtually anywhere in the world, almost instantly. Mankind has also mastered flight and stepped onto the surface of the moon.

Increasing Lifespan: The Bible documents that mankind enjoyed very long lifespans until shortly after the Flood. More recently, great increases in lifespans have occurred. For example, from the 1500s onward, until around the year 1800, life expectancy throughout Europe hovered between 30 and 40 years of age. Today, by contrast, life expectancy at birth in developing countries has lengthened by nearly one-third, from 50 years of age in 1960 to 65 years of age today. Seen over a longer time frame, the average life expectancy of all humans has more than doubled over the course of the last century.

Human Travel Speed: A normal walking speed for humans is around 5 km per hour. Today, the average travel velocity of humans is much more rapid. We may drive our automobiles at speeds 20 times faster than we can walk. Jet travel is also commonplace, at speeds of 100 times that of walking.

General Health: Improved health care, sanitation, immunizations, antibiotics such as penicillin, access to clean running water, and better nutrition have all contributed to the massive increase in health. In 1960, 22% of children in developing countries died before their fifth birthday, but by 2013, that rate was down to 5%. The rate of child death has declined in every single country in the world. Diarrhea killed five million children a year in 1990, but claimed fewer than one million in 2014. Half as many people now die from malaria as did in 2000.

Poverty: The share of people living in extreme poverty has fallen by half over the last two decades, according to the World Bank. While poverty will never be eradicated (Christ said, “The poor you will always have with you,” Mark 14:7), global poverty is falling faster today than at any other time in human history. In 1993, about two billion people were trapped in extreme poverty. By 2012, that number had dropped to less than one billion.

The above cited accomplishments range from the incredible to the amazing. Man, who was made in the “image” of God, accomplished these (though surely not without God’s allowance and His Creation). Is any one of these to be interpreted negatively? Not in and of themselves. Yes, these achievements can be used for evil by someone with demonic intent, but that does not nullify the beneficial aspects of the inventions and improvements mankind has enjoyed over recent centuries.

Then, for what reason does God bring His wrath? Not for mankind’s achievements, but for a very different cause. To begin, God is no “respector of persons” (Acts 10:34). Mankind becomes smug, proud and independent as a result of his achievements. Subsequently, humanism becomes the world’s most prevalent attitude and religion.

Mankind seeks independence from God and the freedom to do what he considers to be right and good. It is at this point that “ungodliness” emerges. Consider that God charged Israel to “Do what is right and good in the LORD’s sight, so that it may go well with you [...]” (Deuteronomy 6:18).

The Bible provides a number of examples of the admonishments that God brought against nations and peoples that became proud and independent.

Here we cite just one: Ezekiel tells of a high and mighty tree (symbolizing Assyria). God Himself says that “I made it beautiful with abundant branches, the envy of all the trees of Eden in the garden of God” (Ezekiel 31:9). We see that God blessed this people, and then something happened that kindled God’s wrath. What was it?

The people took credit for their greatness, not attributing any glory to God.

“Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: Because the great cedar towered over the thick foliage, and because it was proud of its height, I gave it into the hands of the ruler of the nations, for him to deal with according to its wickedness. I cast it aside” (Ezekiel 31:10-11).

Thoughts to Ponder

Are there achievements of mankind to celebrate? Can we not accept the many conveniences and health improvements that the world increasingly enjoys as a blessing? Yes, definitely. It is not honest to only publish negative news ... as if to imply that Christians are somehow gleeful about bad news, taking delight in the failures and sufferings of mankind. Such an unwarranted bias brings discredit.

Christians have no reason not to provide fair

attribution for the many achievements of mankind in “subduing” the earth. The main difference is that these acknowledgements do not lead to conceit and arrogance. In doing so, we praise and give thanks to God. It is only through Him and His Son that all things are created.

Says the Revelator: “You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being” (Revelation 4:11). That truth doesn’t change, no matter how much God may have enabled mankind to subdue the earth and achieve beneficial accomplishments.

However, today mankind has become quite proud. Humanity has again come to the point of converging languages and materialistic beliefs. Globalism, globalization, monetarism and the interconnectedness of all peoples on this planet have caused mankind to come a long way. Indeed, as God said “[...] nothing they plan will be impossible for them.”

In fact, organized humanity no longer thinks it needs God. Worse, the notion of even believing in a God who is Creator is regarded as primitive.

Mankind’s situation will eventually come to the point described here by Jude: “See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to judge everyone, and to convict all of them of all the ungodly acts they have committed in their ungodliness, and of all the defiant words ungodly sinners have spoken against him” (Jude 1:14-15).

We can already discern the specter shown in Psalm 2 taking place in our day. In this chapter, we note the Psalmist’s prophecy: “Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against the LORD and against his anointed, saying, ‘Let us break their chains and throw off their shackles’” (Psalm 2:1-3).

God therefore responds in wrath: “The LORD Almighty has a day in store for all the proud and lofty, for all that is exalted (and they will be humbled) [...] The arrogance of man will be brought low and human pride humbled; the LORD alone will be exalted in that day, and the idols will totally disappear” (Isaiah 2:12-18).

Christians, who have been given the Great Hope and are therefore saved from wrath, can be thankful for the advances and quality of life afforded today. However, technology (and humanism) is not our strong tower. “The name of the LORD is a fortified tower; the righteous run to it and are safe” (Proverbs 18:10). “For You have been my refuge, a strong tower against the foe” (Psalm 61:3).

EVR

Terrible Times: 10 Challenges Facing Christians in the Last Days—Part VII



Less Understanding in an Age of Knowledge

Many futurists today talk about an age of knowledge. In the 1990s, this notion became very popular as Wall Street and its sister financial centers around the world fanned up a massive technology investment boom. Anything to do with information — information technology (IT), the Internet, computer software, intellectual property rights, patents, etc. — were sought-after investments.

Popular opinion was captured by a new virtual world where thoughts and information would represent the fastest growing area of wealth. The concept of the “information highway” was born. Knowledge is the future, said the seers, and having an occupation as a “knowledge worker” was the thing to do. Near the end of this craze, consultants and commentators were so ecstatic about the emerging information age that nothing seemed impossible. No factories nor labor were necessary.

Presidents and leaders of global organizations were extolling that the information and knowledge available through the World Wide Web would open up all mankind to enlightenment and solve the poverty of many third world countries. Simply by providing everyone access to the Internet, opportunity would be available to all of humanity — from the youngest school kids in America to the Bedouins of Arabia.

We now know that much of this talk was self-serving hype. However, new technologies and powerful information networks have indeed emerged that are radically changing the focus and mindset of the world. In fact, many of these new capabilities are surely facilitating significant trends that may align with the endtimes, such as globalization and a world convergence in other key respects — ideologies of consumerism, humanism and ecumenicism. But has there really been a boom in knowledge? What does the Bible say about knowledge? These are questions worth investigating.

And Knowledge Shall Increase.

Information is definitely booming as studies show. The School for Information Systems and Management at the University of California, Berkeley, periodically produces a study that estimates the amount and growth of information in the world. Its most recent study was released in October 2003, providing their findings for the end of 2002. The report estimates that so much information was produced worldwide that year that it

would amount to 30 feet of books for each person living on earth. This represents an increase of total information in the world of 30% in one year (a similar rate to that of previous years). At that pace, the total information ever existing in the world doubles in less than 3 years. [*These trends have certainly sped-up since.*]

How much data exists today? Researchers measure information in terms of what are called exabytes — an electronic storage unit. To get a sense of the scale of this unit, consider that one typical typewritten page would amount to approximately 2,000 bytes. The number of bytes in one exabyte would require 18 zeros. This number is so large it is difficult to conceive.

How big is an exabyte? According to the study’s estimate, all the words spoken by all human beings that ever lived would amount to 5 exabytes of information. Interestingly, for the three-year period surveyed by the above-mentioned report, total recorded information increased by 5.4 exabytes ... in other words, by more than all the words ever spoken in human creation.

A few more facts from this landmark study will help to frame the scale of the current information explosion. Berkeley’s research group measures information stored in four ways — paper, film, magnetic (computer discs, hard drives, etc.) and optical (a recent form of storage.)

- Information stored on paper is now the most insignificant of the three older technology formats, accounting for only 1 three-thousandth of all new recorded information. All the same, this form of information has grown by approximately a third between 1999 and 2002. Virtually all of this expansion has been in the category of office documents. Though some 300,000 new book titles were published around the world over this period, they only amounted to 3% of the information produced in office document form.
- Film accounts for a little more than 7% of all new information measured in digital terms. Photographs by far represent the largest component. Most of the rest of this category is in the form of visual media, such as films and TV series. If all movies ever made (between 1870 and 2002) were watched continuously, it would require 2,108 years. Consider then that a little more than one-quarter of all film content was produced in the 3 years between 2000 and 2002. (Who is watching all this new content?)
- The fastest-growing form of stored information is magnetic (disks, tapes, etc.) having grown 80% over the period reviewed. More than 90% of all new information is stored in various magnetic formats.

No doubt, information is booming.

Knowledge and Wealth

Indeed, the world has been caught up in a KNOW economy (short for knowledge and wealth). The two are

tightly intertwined in this day and age. Data management — “Big Data” — is a large industry today, taking many forms.

Knowledge from a commercial point of view is called intellectual property (IP). Amongst the biggest areas of IP are media (television rights, ownership of movies, music rights, etc.), medicine (mainly drug patents but also genomes — for example, patents on human genes are a new growth area with over 800 patents established, approximately three-fifths of them held in the US), agriculture (patents on biotech, plants, genetically modified foods, etc., again the majority of these held in the US, approximately two-thirds owned privately) and computer software.¹

Many of the battles on global trade policy have centered on the issue of intellectual property in recent years. Why? As mentioned, knowledge is wealth. Patent ownership has increasingly taken on a global dimension. The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) is now experiencing rapid growth offering protection in over 70 countries around the world. Some 412,000 international trademark registrations were in force with this organization at the end of 2003. Amongst the biggest users of this system are pharmaceutical and electronic companies.

In view of the popular definitions of knowledge, various surveys rank the United States as the most “knowledge intensive.” According to the Knowledge Competitive² Index compiled by Robert Huggins Associates (a British-based consultancy), the United States possesses the world’s top 14 knowledge economies (regions).

Various commentators on world affairs talk of the “knowledge gap” between rich and poor countries. At a recent United Nations’ summit on the “information society,” solutions to close this gap were again cited as an important means to halving world poverty. A main solution to this problem is simply to make more information available to the poor countries. Mostly, this means providing greater access to the Internet.

But do any of these statistics about trends and developments in information tell us anything about true knowledge? What is the state of knowledge in the world today?

The Bible’s View on Knowledge

The Bible has the first and last word on knowledge. “The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.” (Psalm 19:1-4)

Knowledge has always existed. It has never changed and finds its complete genesis in God and His physical creation. Knowledge of eternal significance concerns the knowledge of God and His purposes. The only thing that

has changed is man’s understanding, and more importantly, mankind’s willingness to understand. Understanding begins with the recognition of God’s sovereignty and truth says the Bible. “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline” (Proverbs 1:7).

Scriptures allow us no excuse for lacking this type of knowledge. All of creation points to God. “For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities — his eternal power and divine nature — have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse” (Romans 1:20).

Here we clearly see that knowledge is the foundational information that matters for an eternity.

Prophecy: Words on Knowledge

Is an endtime boom in knowledge prophesied in the Bible? Some teachers suggest that the Bible prophesies an increase in knowledge in the last days. Bible prophecy may indeed provide some insights on the phenomenon of an endtime information boom. However, as we shall see, rather than prophesying a rise in knowledge, it is a boom in ignorance that will mark an endtime world. An increase in information — trivia, distractions and cares of this world — is definitely in alignment with last day trends and developments. As we have reviewed, information — the vast, vast preponderance of which is total trivia — has definitely boomed.

As mentioned, some do interpret scripture as predicting an endtime boom in knowledge. A popular proof text is claimed from Daniel 12:4. “But you, Daniel, close up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end. Many will go here and there to increase knowledge.”

Some also infer from this verse that not only will knowledge increase but also travel. For a number of reasons, it is not likely that this text refers to such phenomena at all. In the first instance, it would be difficult to conclude that this passage refers to more knowledge in the form of new revelation or information.

Here the original Hebrew word used for “knowledge” is more aptly defined as the “act of knowing.” In this sense, it is not knowledge that increases but rather the knowing of it. Also significant is the fact that this statement is mentioned right after the point that Daniel is instructed to “seal up the words.” As such, this would indicate that the explanation of the vision Daniel received is closed until such time that “knowing” would unlock its message. We are safer to interpret this passage as referring to an increase in understanding of prophecy, Scripture, and God’s plan ... not an increase of knowledge in its original sense.

Probably the most convincing argument is that since all of Daniel’s prophecies are concerned with the object of the Jewish people and their future, that the statement applies purely to them. Just as the scripture, “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge” (Hosea 4:6) is expressly

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Facts & Stats ... Ends & Trends



TOPICAL QUOTES

The life-expectancy gap between rich and poor in the United States is actually accelerating. Since 2001, American men among the nation's most affluent 5% have seen their lifespans increase by more than 2 years. American women in that bracket have registered an almost 3-year extension to their life expectancy. Meanwhile, the poorest 5% of Americans have seen essentially no gains at all. – **www.counterpunch.org, May 11, 2016**

The National Center for Health Statistics recently released a major study, examining the national trends in suicide. The results are grim: The age-adjusted suicide rate in the United States increased a staggering 24% from 1999 to 2014. Increases were seen in every age group except for those 75 and above in every racial and gender category except for black men. The national rate rose to 13 deaths per 100,000 people in 2014. Contrast that with homicide, which killed 5.1 Americans per 100,000 in 2013. We instinctively fear the murderer hiding in the bushes, but we are at far greater risk from ourselves. – **http://foreignpolicy.com, April 28, 2016**

The number of U.S. marriage ceremonies peaked in the early 1980s, when almost 2.5 million marriages were recorded each year. Since then, however, the total number of people getting married has fallen steadily. Now only about 2 million marriages happen a year, a drop of almost half a million from their peak. As a result, barely more than half of adults in the U.S. say they're living with a spouse. It is the lowest share on record, and down from 70% in 1967. [...] The drop in marriages is even more dramatic when the rapid growth in the U.S. population is taken into account. In fact, the marriage rate is the lowest in at least 150 years. – **www.alternet.org, June 8, 2016**

By how much did Britain's economy grow in 1959? It would seem to be a question that ought to have been settled long ago. It hasn't been. Samuel Williamson of the University of Illinois finds that in the British government's

annual "Blue Book" reports on GDP in the half-century or so since this uncelebrated year, there have been 18 different answers. The Blue Book published in 1960 said 2.7%; that of 2012 said 4.7%. British GDP, it seems, is under almost constant revision. – **The Economist, April 30, 2016**

Government debt in 20 industrialized countries stands at \$44 trillion. But it's actually a lot more than that, according to a new report. After factoring in public pension and other retirement liabilities, the debt levels nearly triple to a staggering \$122 trillion. That's the math according to a new report from Citigroup Inc. called, 'The Coming Pensions Crisis,' which analyzed government pension liabilities from 20 countries that are members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. – **Timothy W. Martin, Wall Street Journal, March 17, 2016**

If Americans are so happy, then why do we consume 80% of the entire global supply of prescription painkillers? Less than 5% of the world's population lives in this country, and yet we buy four-fifths of these highly addictive drugs. In the United States today, approximately 4.7 million Americans are addicted to prescription pain relievers, and that represents about a 300% increase since 1999. – **www.zerohedge.com, March 15, 2016**

More than \$12tn (£8tn) has been siphoned out of Russia, China and other emerging economies into the secretive world of offshore finance, new research has revealed [...] A detailed 18-month research project has uncovered a sharp increase in the capital flowing offshore from developing countries, in particular Russia and China. [...] 2012 research showed that, worldwide, more than \$20tn was stashed away offshore. [...] The offshore capital belonging to developing countries had increased at 8% a year since 2010; 9% a year for China and Russia, perhaps because of fears of economic and political instability. – **The Guardian, May 8, 2016**

Preach the Gospel at all times and when necessary use words." – **Unknown**

"Nothing is so fatal to religion as indifference." – **Edmund Burke**

"Jesus is ideal and wonderful, but you Christians - you are not like him." – **Mahatma Gandhi**

"There have been three great inventions since the beginning of time: fire, the wheel, and central banking." – **Will Rogers**

"Economics is a subject that does not greatly respect one's wishes." – **Nikita Khrushchev**

"Economics is extremely useful as a form of employment for economists." – **John Kenneth Galbraith**

"To die for a religion is easier than to live it absolutely." – **Jorge Luis Borges**

"Compound interest is the eighth wonder of the world. He who understands it, earns it; he who doesn't, pays it." – **Albert Einstein**



Letters to the Editor

READER: Dear Mr. Hahn, the article Anxiety Merchants and False Prophets [3-part series] absolutely nails the issue. You captured very well the anxiety that is being thrust on the Church for probably as many reasons as there are people doing it. But, whatever the reason behind it, we seem to have become the people of Thessalonica, worrying ourselves to death that we have no hope, that there is no gathering of the Church, and that God will pour out his wrath upon His children (because we deserve it and it serves to purify us). I even heard one of these men, when asked why Jesus would have told us to pray that we may be counted worthy to escape, saying that maybe that meant that we could die to escape. Wow! That sure isn't a blessed hope now is it? One could even understand why the world would have no desire to hear this message of despair. Again, thank you for a very well-written and thoughtful article. – **R.S.**

READER: [Re: Flying Scrolls & Baskets - PART I & Part II] I read your article(s) on the flying scroll issue and yes I think what you say sounds a little more true than what I read before, which described it as a sort of nuclear weapon. Yours was a good article. I enjoyed reading it. – **C.C.**

READER: Thank you for your post in Rapture Ready. There is something that confuses me though. You say “Perhaps only a minority of Christians today believe in the Pre-tribulation Rapture Doctrine. They believe that Christians will go through the Tribulation.” I thought pretribulation Christians are those that will go in the Rapture; not go through the tribulation as the above reads to me. Please can you clarify this for me. – **V.H.**

EVR: Thanks for your note. You indeed point out an editorial gaffe which allows an incorrect interpretation of what I meant. What I intended to convey is that it seems that a minority of Christians today believe that they will not go through the Tribulation and that the Rapture will occur before that point. In contrast, most do not believe in the Rapture and therefore believe that they will enter the Tribulation.

READER: I read your above-referenced article on Rapture Ready and enjoyed it. I have a question though. If all tribulation saints are killed, then who will go live into the millennial kingdom in earthly bodies? Will it be that God resurrects those tribulation saints, but only to human bodies and not immortal ones? I appreciate your insight! – **N.C.**

READER: I am a frequent reader of your articles all of which I find extremely interesting and relevant. With your latest — Rapture Forensics Part 1 — if all of the Tribulation Christians will be killed during the Tribulation, who will repopulate the earth when the Millennium Kingdom begins? I always had the impression that while

most would be killed, there would be some left who would survive into the Millennium and begin the repopulation process. Thank you for your consideration! – **S.P.**

EVR: Thank you for your note(s). You pose a question of a similar nature that I have received from many others. I believe that the following response speaks to your comment.

Who Goes into the Millennium? There are possibly four groups of people that enter the Millennium period according to the Bible. In no particular order: **1. Tribulation Christians.** They also experience the First Resurrection (Revelation 20:4-5). This group would include Messianic Jews, we reason, were they to come to Christ during the first half of the Tribulation period. The Bible says that they “[...] will reign with him for a thousand years” (Revelation 20:4,6) since they all died during the Tribulation period and therefore have already experienced the First Death (the death of the physical bodies that we have today) and the Bible says that generally “man is appointed to die once” (Hebrew 9:27. There are numerous exceptions, most obviously, those that are raptured. They never encounter a physical death.) While this is a general truth, the Bible notes a number of exceptions ... most certainly including amongst these those that are raptured. They then are no longer subject to another First Death. (We must note here that the Bible mentions many individual exceptions to this general rule of “dying once.”) These Tribulation Christians are also exempt from the Second Death. Says the Bible, “The second death has no power over them [...]” (Revelation 20:6). According to our deductions, we lean to the view that resurrected earth-dwelling Christians will not experience death during the Millennium. At the end of the Thousand Year Reign, they will experience the Second Resurrection. If the beginning of this period is indeed the time that “Elijah comes and [...] restores all things” (Matthew 17:11), then it is possible that the human lifespan may again lengthen to what it was in the pre-flood times. However, to our knowledge, the Bible does not confirm this directly. The average age of the patriarchs that the Bible mentions was 960 years ... very near a Millennium. **2 & 3. Tribulation Survivors.** The second and third groups to enter the Millennium period are the small remnants of Jews and Gentiles that survived the Tribulation. All of them “bow their knees” (Isaiah 45:23) to Christ as at this point His Second Coming has occurred. Specifically, this is the time that the Jews “[...] will look on me [Christ], the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son” (Zechariah 12:10. Also see John 19:37). Over the thousand years of the Millennial Kingdom, these groups could become quite large. These “earth-dwellers” would bear children and have bodies that are still subject to natural death. Eventually, they would far outnumber the 144,000 (assuming that they are also earthdwellers, of which we cannot be certain) and the resurrected Tribulation “great multitude.” **4? The**

144,000 Hebrews (Revelation 7:4) who have been sealed against harm during the Tribulation possibly go into the Millennium. No further information is expressly given to us in the New Testament with respect to their future following the Tribulation period. It is possible that since they are Jews (Israelites), the Prophet Daniel may have seen them in his endtime visions, perhaps referring to them as “those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever” (Daniel 12:3) or among those whose name is “in the book” (Daniel 12:1). This may be interesting conjecture; however we cannot make a certain assertion. In any case, since the Bible does not tell us whether the estate and purpose of their election changes after the Tribulation period, it may not be unreasonable to assume that they enter the Millennium. After all, they are shown to be on earth (on Mount Zion) with Christ in Revelation 14:1. Another question would concern what type of bodies they will possess. If they had been sealed against harm during the Tribulation period, will their bodies also be impervious to harm and death during the following Millennial period as well? Should they enter the Millennium, it seems possible that they will not be subject to death during the period. If they are indeed “firstfruits” of the First Resurrection (see Revelation 14:4) then this would further confirm that they will have physical bodies that do not die. Could an argument can be made that the 144,000 are actually resurrected Hebrews from past history, pre-Christ? They are said to be “redeemed from the earth” (Revelation 14:3). Christ is named a “firstfruit” from the dead. In any case, they may be seen as the first major group of OT Jews to be translated. In that sense, they would be considered “firstfruits.” In conclusion, try as we might, there is little that can be confirmed about the destiny of the 144,000. We cannot be certain that they will enter the Millennial period. The above interpretations, I believe, reconcile with this statement by Apostle Paul: “For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power” (1 Corinthians:15:22-24). (See also Luke 14:14, John 5:28-29, and 1 Thessalonians 4:16.) Daniel’s statement(s) also align: “There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people—everyone whose name is found written in the book—will be delivered.”

READER: [Re: Rapture Forensics: Proofs That the Martyrs Tell—Part I] You used Revelation 6:17 from the NIV. In the NIV it says "for the great day of THEIR wrath has come." That is incorrect. The wrath here is the wrath of God. It reads correctly in the Authorized Version of the Bible — “For the great day of HIS wrath is come.”
– **R.B.**

EVR: Thanks for the correction. That is an important

distinction to say the least. I didn't pick up on that point.

READER: Great read, Mr. Hahn! There is one thing that has always stuck with me about this topic. After the thousand year reign Satan is released for a short time and creates havoc once again. Who is creating havoc with him? Is it not man? And those of us who have died are sealed in Christ and cannot rebel against God because we are forever changed, RIGHT? This leads me to believe that the ones who rebel against God are the ancestors of those who survived the tribulation and still have physical deaths. I could be completely wrong and misunderstand the book of Revelations so please enlighten me if you think I am misguided. This has puzzled me for a while now! I have been a born again Christian for a few years but still don't know many people who will engage in this topic with me, I'm a 33 year old stay at home mom and have few Christian friends, so help me understand! In Christ – **R.B.**

EVR: Thank you for your email and question. I have the same sentiments and often lament that human beings are so relentlessly unreliable despite God's great salvation on offer ... and the many dispensations through which He has appealed to Mankind. As you point out, even in the late Millennium period, Satan is let loose one more time and mankind is again led astray. You pose a question over which there is much debate. I am not entirely clear on the answer. Nevertheless, here are my quick thoughts. The 144,000 Hebrews who have been sealed against death during the Tribulation do go into the Millennium. But, will their bodies be subject to death from that point? If they are indeed firstfruits (Revelation 14:4) then they likely will not have bodies that die. The same could apply to those that experience the First Resurrection. Since they have already experienced the First Death (our physical body dying) and "man is appointed to die once", then they also will not experience death during the Tribulation. That leaves the very, very small remnant of Jews and Gentiles who survived the Tribulation and who then enter the Millennium. All of them "bow their knees" (Isaiah 45:23) to Christ when He appears at the Second Coming. Over a thousand years, this group could then become quite large ... far, far outnumbering the 144,000 or the Tribulational "great multitude" that does not take the mark and then later enters the Millennium following their First Resurrection. These "earthdwellers" indeed would have bodies that are still subject to natural death. Their children many generations after the Tribulation period may have long forgotten the lessons of that time. A major question that I have not resolved is how Satan could again have influence over the entire world when Jesus Christ is sitting on the "Seat of David" on earth.

READER: Thank you so much. Your EVR is a mind opener for us who are in a Third World country. God bless you. – **H.C.**

EVR

spoken to the Jews, so Daniel's prophecy of an increase of knowledge may also only apply to the Jews.

The word knowledge here does not refer to technical and scientific information but rather to the knowing of God's plan and His laws. The prophets had often castigated the Hebrews for their lack of knowledge. "Israel's watchmen are blind, they all lack knowledge [...]" said Isaiah (Isaiah 56:10). Hosea confirms that the knowledge being lacked refers to the ignorance of God and His Laws. "Because you have rejected knowledge, I also reject you as my priests; because you have ignored the law of your God, I also will ignore your children" (Hosea 4:6).

During the last days, the Jewish people will again come into an increasing understanding of their destiny, purpose, and identity of their Messiah. Finally, at the end of the Great Tribulation, a remnant will come into a full understanding. "Then I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will lead you with knowledge and understanding. In those days, when your numbers have increased greatly in the land, declares the LORD" (Jeremiah 3: 15-16).

Today's boom in technology and science certainly provides evidence of increased understanding (and in that sense a body of human knowledge). However, this phenomenon would not qualify as the meaning of the prophecy of increased knowledge. If anything, the Bible much more clearly talks about increasing ignorance and forsaking of knowledge.

Points to Ponder

Information is flooding the world — technology, entertainment and media, communications networks, etc. — but only a very small fraction represents true knowledge which is the knowing of God's cosmic plans. Most of it is total trivia. Information, of course, has its uses — both good and bad. Quoting an observation on this point, "Every increase in knowledge [information] may possibly render depravity more depraved, as well as it may increase the strength of virtue. It is in itself only power; and its value depends on its application."³ More information simply increases the power for good or bad.

If anything, today's information boom is an assault upon Truth and Knowledge — a distraction to its recognition and understanding. It is this aspect that finds alignment with Bible prophecy that applies to the entire world. Scripture clearly indicates that in the last days that people would be taken up with the cares and anxieties of the world and its things (Timothy 3:1-5, James 5:1-5). It clearly is a world that is distracted and far from knowing and fearing God.

Despite this mind-jamming and diversionary onslaught, true knowledge is there for the knowing by anyone. We are given the ability to discern and to acknowledge it and to willingly respond. The Bible calls this ability prudence and wisdom. It is given to both Jews and Gentiles, and is operative in both the old and new covenants.

The truths of eternity and God's plan for the cosmos and salvation remain secure. God preserves knowledge ... it does not change. "The eyes of the LORD keep watch over knowledge, but he frustrates the words of the unfaithful" (Proverbs 22:12).

There is another prophetic aspect of today's information explosion. It is significant that information is expanding and more accessible than ever before in these last days. Even though we live in an age of institutionalized corruption and deception, anyone wishing to pursue truth can do so as perhaps never before. Key, crucial facts are all found in the public domain today — a surprising amount available free over the Internet from even the remotest parts of the earth.

When this cosmos finally wraps up and humanity sits in front of the Judgment Seat, there will be no excuse for the world not to have recognized the signs of the times ... the season of Christ's soon-coming return. There won't be any clemency offered to the pleas of involuntary delusion, blindness, misinformation, and organized agendas of deception. The information was available all around. There will be no excuse for not being able to recognize the season of Christ's soon-coming return.

Its interpretation is unlocked by the messages and warnings found in God's informational database — the Bible. This information, too, has been more available than ever before — ignoring some of its corrupted versions — and its gospels more broadly accessible to the average person ... to even lambs and the simple-minded. After all, the world's population has more literacy skills than ever in history and the Bible is available in more forms (electronic text, recordings, printed, etc.) than ever in history.

Moreover, understanding the most important truths of the Bible doesn't require theological training, mysticism, allegorizing, ordainment, an ecclesiastical intermediary, secret revelation or knowledge of what certain theologians or early Fathers may have said. The Bible says what it says and God knows how to say what He means. "You do not need anyone to teach you" other than the Holy Spirit (1 John 2:27). If it were otherwise, the very character of God would be in question.

The Psalmist had this prayer: "Do good to your servant according to your word, O LORD. Teach me knowledge and good judgment, for I believe in your commands" (Psalm 199:65).

May we increase in knowing and understanding in these very last days.

NOTES

1. Wired magazine, The Free and the Unfree, June 2004
2. The Financial Times. US ranks highest in knowledge economies' index. April 13, 2004.
3. Sydney Smith.

Based on the article: Last Day Prophecy: Less Understanding in an Age of Knowledge September 2004, Midnight Call Magazine

EVR

As such, many people do become Christians during the Tribulation. In fact, there are so many that the Bible calls them a “great multitude” (Revelation 7:9).

However, we may be getting ahead of ourselves. Where does this “multitude” of saints come from, and what is their fate?

The Great Winnowing: The great winnowing of tribulational Christians from earth is described in Revelation 13:11-17. The False Prophet (the Second Beast) orders all to worship an image of the First Beast, and presses all to take upon themselves the mark of the First Beast, so that they can buy and sell. Those that DO worship the image of the beast and take this mark will be eternally damned (Revelation 14:11).

What happens to those who DO NOT take the mark of the False Prophet and refuse to worship the image of the beast? The good news: They are redeemed and therefore will not be condemned to the lake of fire. Nevertheless, they will not be spared suffering. These Christians will be killed.

The Bible clearly says that “[...] all those who refused to worship the image [will] be killed” (Revelation 13:15). Revelation 20:4 confirms this, saying: “[...] I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony about Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands.”

Again, the good news amidst the terrors? The tribulational Christians who refuse the “mark” are spared the Second Death. Yet, they must face the First Death before being rewarded with the First Resurrection at the start of the Millennium.

Two Phases of Slain Saints: We place the aforementioned events shown in Revelation 13 as occurring sometime between/during the fifth and sixth seals. Events that the Bible describes during these seal judgments closely align with the Great Winnowing.

To be sure, Christians are already being slain before the fifth seal. We see these first tribulational Christians who are killed shown in Revelation 6:9-11. The Bible says: “When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. They called out in a loud voice, ‘How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?’ Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the full number of their fellow servants, their brothers and sisters, were killed just as they had been.”

Presented here are the souls of the Christians who have been slaughtered between the Rapture and the time of the 5th seal. They are shown under the altar in heaven and are told to stay there “until the full number of their fellow

servants” (Revelation 6:11) are killed as they had been. These earlier Christians are waiting until the rest of the martyrs arrive.

A little later (at the time of the sixth seal), we now see that the “full number” has arrived. As already mentioned, there are so many martyrs at this point that they are called a “great multitude.” John the Revelator says “[...] there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands” (Revelation 7:9). These souls are identified as coming out of the “tribulation” (Revelation 7:14). They are tribulational martyrs ... a very large number. The fact that they now all hold palm branches signifies that they have attained victory and eternal life.

Just what event or development could have caused such a large influx of Christian souls to have arrived in front of the throne in such a short space of time? According to our understanding, the great winnowing of Revelation 13:11-17 occurred. It is the final “dividing line,” we think. A large number of earth dwellers have refused to take the “mark” and are martyred. By the end of the 6th seal, these souls end up in front of the throne.

Envisioning both phases of the slain saints, says the Bible of them: “This calls for patient endurance on the part of the people of God who keep his commands and remain faithful to Jesus. Then I heard a voice from heaven say, ‘Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.’ ‘Yes,’ says the Spirit, ‘they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them’” (Revelation 14:12-13).

Why Christian Dead Tell Tales: The view that all tribulational Christians will be martyred is problematic for many. For one, it nullifies the case for a Rapture occurring any other time than before the Tribulation. If, for example, there were no Christians alive on earth as of the early stages of the second half of the Tribulation, there could be no Mid- or Post-tribulational Rapture. What would be the point? There is no one—or perhaps only an insignificant number—to be raptured.

Or, let’s assume that the Rapture naysayers are right in that there is no Rapture of any kind. To take this position means that all Christians will go into the Tribulation period. And, more Christians may be added to their number through conversions during the earlier stages of the Tribulation (though this is immaterial to the issue here). However, the question then arises: Why would God allow that ALL Christians in the world be killed during the Tribulation?

Critically, why would God allow some non-Christians and Jews to survive ... but no Christians?

(In Part II, we will present more proofs for the Pre-tribulational Rapture, from the tales of Martyred Christians.)

EVR



Personal Perspective

Rapture Forensics: Proofs That the Martyrs Tell – Part I

A recent article, entitled “Checklist: Why the Rapture Is Not a New Delirium,” triggered an outsized number of responses. [Editor’s Note: This article has also met strong responses, striking some to be controversial. We welcome Biblically-referenced viewpoints ... this type of discourse is very profitable for all. Disrespectful and ungodly notes will be ignored.] One frequent query we encountered was in reaction to the claim that ALL tribulational Christians—these being those who come to recognize Christ as Lord and Savior after the Rapture—would perish. None will survive the Tribulation. That view seemed surprising to many readers.

We hold to that view, and will here and in the next part of the series present our reasons. We will conclusively show with Scripture why it will be “impossible” for any tribulational Christian to survive.

We even ask: Why would any Christian want to survive through the Tribulation in the first place? Though tribulational Christians do not have the special position of raptured Christians, they nevertheless are promised a reward at the start of the Millennium, as the Bible clearly states. They will experience the First Resurrection at that point.

As we will show, a literal reading of the Bible clearly and plainly supports the understanding that there will be no Christians who will physically survive the Tribulation period.

But, readers may well ask: Why even concern ourselves with this point? Is it not true that Christians will be removed from the earth (the Rapture) before the time of God’s wrath begins? And if so, why would we even care about the course of prophesied earthly developments after that point?

All Scripture is profitable for teaching (2 Timothy 3:16), and this Biblical issue is no exception. As it turns out, the question regarding the fate of Christians during the Tribulation is a critical one in the defense of the Rapture Doctrine, as we will show.

According to various unofficial surveys, only a minority of those that identify themselves as Christians today believe in the Pre-tribulational Rapture Doctrine. In contrast, most believe that Christians will go into the Tribulation ... presuming that any apocalyptic Scriptures are believed at all. Also, numerous inventive variations of Rapture teachings have emerged—Pre-Wrath, Mid- and Post-tribulational, etc.

The tales that the Christian dead tell us in Scripture in this respect refute all these other beliefs regarding the Rapture. If ALL Christians indeed die in the Tribulation, then some glaring inconsistencies are exposed in these variant views, thus giving credence to the Rapture Doctrine.

Positional Differences of Pre- and Post-Rapture Christians: Do all Christians die in the Apocalypse ... and can we prove it? To answer, we must begin by noting the positional distinctions between ALL tribulational Christians, and those of the pre-Tribulation period who are ALL raptured. During the Tribulation, the Holy Spirit is no longer an unction upon earth as during the Church Age. The Comforter has been removed along with the Church, and the Antichrist has been revealed. Those who come to Christ during the Tribulation are not spared suffering and physical death (the First Death), as are the raptured saints (who are alive at the time).

Pre-tribulational Christians of the Church Age are translated (physically changed for eternity, this the Rapture) to be in Christ’s presence. Tribulational Christians are not translated to new eternal bodies ... at least, not until after the Millennium. The raptured Christians do not experience the First Death; the latter group do. Tribulational Christians ALL must face a physical death. ALL are certain to become martyrs. Graciously, tribulational Christians are promised the First Resurrection (see Revelation 20:4-5) [Note: There are several stages to the First Resurrection which we will not explore here.] at the start of the Millennium.

While both groups of Christians are given eternal life and share a common eternal fate after the Millennium (neither experience the Second Death), their paths, experiences and positions are very different.

Christians During the Time of Wrath: Without a doubt, people will become believers in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, during the Tribulation Period. As the terror of this time erupts, earth dwellers will come to the recognition that Jesus Christ was who He said He was—the Messiah ... the Savior ... the Son of God. The state of evil in the world, as well as the appearance of the Antichrist, will be obvious to all. The timing of remaining prophetic events is then no longer entirely speculative. These are clearly seen to be unfolding. Crucially, the first half of the Tribulation is the period of time during which the Anti-Christ successfully persecutes the Christians (see Daniel 7:25).

By the time of the 6th seal (this the most apocalyptic and shaking to that time), it will be clearly obvious to all that the world is facing God’s wrath. In fact, they openly acknowledge this fact, saying, “The great day of His wrath has come” (KJV6:17)

... continued on page 11

