

The Bible
For Our Times

“WEEPING MAY ENDURE FOR A NIGHT, BUT JOY COMETH IN THE MORNING.” PSALM 30:5

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September/October 2008

World Food Crisis

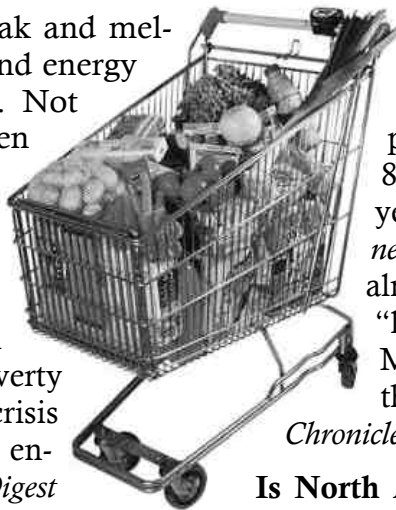
“The tree of the field shall yield her fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase...” Ezekiel 34:27

Crises and trends come and go—peak and mellow out. But the current global food and energy crisis seems to be a sober exception. Not only weather—but man’s greed driven decisions seem to be triggering problems worldwide.

How Bad Is It? “Thirty countries have already seen food riots this year. The ever higher cost of food could push tens of millions of people into abject poverty and starvation. To a large degree, this crisis is man-made—the result of misguided energy and farm policies...” (*NYTimes Digest* July 9, ‘08)

How Does Fuel and Weather Factor In? “The United Nations is warning that the high cost of food and fuel may be more than a trend. The combination of high oil prices, increased consumption, climate change, and growing use of agricultural produce for fuel. (*Network News*, August 7, ‘08)

What Effect Has the Food Crisis on the World? “Nearly half a billion people are suffering from hunger. Its pangs, and some 10,000 deaths from starvation each week in Africa, Asia, Latin America have triggered food riots in Mexico, Haiti, El Salvador, Egypt, Cameroon, Ivory Coast...India... Indonesia and the Philippines. Hungry people get angry and start revolution. And revolutions in the developing world



breed failing and failed states... Thirty-three countries are on the verge of social upheaval...Surging commodity prices have pushed up global food prices 83 percent in the last three years.” (“World Food Crisis Underway,” *newsmax*, August 8, ‘08) When food prices almost double people cannot wait for the “long term adjustments that Commodities Markets” will eventually make. Thus, “in the short run, people die.” (*San Francisco Chronicle*, Aug 18, ‘08)

Is North America also in Jeopardy? “One in six children lives in poverty in America. They don’t need to. Save the Children works in impoverished rural communities in Appalachia, the Southeast, the Mississippi River Delta, the Gulf Coast, the southwest and California’s Central Valley—where conditions resemble parts of the developing world.” (*Save The Children*, “Child Poverty in America: Facts & Figures”) “[A] painful paradox of contemporary America is that in an affluent society many of its most vulnerable members sometimes go hungry. One in every four people in a soup kitchen line is a child, reports America’s Second Harvest.” *The Herald Tribune*, August 14, 2008, reported, “Inflation reached a 17-year high last month, fueled by high gasoline and food prices....Consumer prices were 5.6 percent higher last



month than they were in July 2007....” “Twelve million American children live in poverty, and this number is climbing. The federal government has set the poverty level at \$19,350 for a family of four. The U.S. Census Bureau estimates 12 million children under the age of 18, about 16 percent, live in poverty. The Gulf hurricanes revealed the depth of child poverty in the United States.” (*Save The Children*, “Child Poverty...”)

Does the Food Crisis Relate to the Ethanol Issue? “The question of ethanol and its role in the food crisis is one of the most divisive issues raging in the world today....” (*ALTERNET*, Aug. 7, '08, “The Role of Agribusiness in Our Food Crisis”) *The Atlantic Monthly* (Sept. '08) observed: “The creation of politically popular biofuel mandates by many of the world’s biggest farming nations has been particularly disruptive. The U.S. government has claimed that biofuel demand is responsible for only 3 percent of the increase in global food prices over the past year. But a recent World Bank report estimated that figure to be 75 percent once the resulting economic changes, such as shifts in land use, are considered.”

How does Global Food Crisis Threaten Disease Control? “The global food crisis threatens to undo progress made against HIV as growing numbers of people facing deeper poverty and a lack of nutrition resort to risky behaviors to survive, warns a Latin American health specialist with global aid agency World Vision...Coping behavior puts them [impoverished girls and women] at high risk of acquiring the virus that causes AIDS.” (*World Vision – USA* “Global Food Crisis Threatens HIV Control,” August 7, '08)

Are Workable Solutions on the Horizon? “In July, the Group of 8 (G-8) leading industrialized nations—Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the UK, the US and Russia—released a statement on global food security in July, calling for reinvestment in the agricultural sector...Unfortunately, the G-8’s credibility is low because the member countries still haven’t met their 2005 aid commitments, and these summits aren’t binding in any way. The World Bank’s ‘New

Deal on Global Food Policy’ calls for building a safety net and increasing loans for agricultural production and trade liberalization. Unfortunately, the World Bank’s investment agenda is largely defined by partnerships with international corporations to expand trade flows rather than to support farmers and promote food sovereignty. In this context, agribusiness groups that control the export markets will gain the most.” (*A/Times*, “Global Economy”)

Do We Believe “the Lord’s Prayer” Will Really Be Answered?

Man’s extremity will be God’s opportunity. For those of us who pray the “Lord’s Prayer” including, “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,” do we really understand all that we are asking for? God’s will is always done! But is it now done on our

planet “as it is in heaven”? God has been permitting evil—the consequences of sin—to rest upon mankind for thousands of years. But this reign of evil has a purpose—and a time limit! Experience is the best teacher. But when Adam first sinned and plunged all his descendents into suffering and death, the earth was also cursed:

“Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee...In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread.” (Gen 3:17-19).

How Extensive Will be the Blessings of “Thy Kingdom”? Famines caused by weather or man’s selfishness will be a thing of the past—because everyone will *have a heart*, a compassionate heart, a “new heart” (Ezek. 37:25; Jer. 3:17; 31:33). When God’s Kingdom comes, the blessings will far outweigh—and more than compensate—all the tragedies and agonies of this present life. “Thy Kingdom come...” will mean the “curse” will be



lifted off of mankind as well as the earth—his habitation. When offered even the “water of life” by Jesus and his Bride, his Church—people will be coming back from their graves! Even those who died from hunger will have an opportunity to live forever. At that time, the “curse” will be no more:

“And he showed me a river of the **water of life**, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the middle of its street. And on either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And **there shall no longer be any curse**; and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it...And the Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who hears say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost” (Revelation 22:1-3, 17).

How Will There Be Enough Room on Earth for Everybody? With more people, won’t even more food be needed? Our God who “made the heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that is in them” also can then give “food to the hungry” as well as set all “the prisoners free” from their tombs (Psalm 146:5-10). It will be done gradually. The Earth will be grandly productive in the Kingdom. There will even be space for flowers! “The desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose” (Isaiah 35:1). Man will be in perfect harmony with nature and his environment—instead of destructive. Greed driven giant corporations and agribusinesses will be history.

Will the Kingdom Come Before Man Destroys His Environment? While there are some examples of noble self-consciousness about preserving our earth—it seems

to be a losing battle. The world’s largest trash dump is in the Pacific Ocean. And the garbage patch is 80% plastic, including bottle caps, soap bottles and laundry baskets. Evidence also suggests that the plastic is making its way into wildlife (*SmartBrief*, 8/6/08, “Industry Mulls Solutions for Ocean Pollution”). Once plankton or fish ingest particles of plastic, “poisons both in and on the plastic would enter the food web...poisoning people too” (*New York Times*, “Sea of Trash,” 6/22/08). “While most people seem to appreciate the beauty of the sea, many treat it like a huge garbage dump. This behavior is building up a toxic amount of plastics in the ocean that could one day endanger the sea, all sea life and humanity itself.” (*KTVU.com* “Plastic Waste Creating Ocean-Sized Crisis,” Dec. 27, 2006). However, the foreknowledge of “Our Father in Heaven” anticipated man’s predicaments—and with perfect timing planned His own solutions.

How is it Possible to Expect God to Raise from the Dead all Earth’s Billions? First of all, the Bible says so. “Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming [during Christ’s 1000-year reign when Satan will be bound for those 1000 years], in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; [1] those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life [Christ’s church his Bride who will reign with him], and [2] those who committed the evil deeds [everyone else] to a resurrection [and a first full opportunity] of judgment [Gk. *krisis*, i.e., decision, for or against St. 2920]” (John 5:29 NAS). And Apostle Peter says it will be a 1,000-year Judgment Day—2 Peter 3:7,8. Most will choose life and live. Second of all, it is reasonable. If human scientists can genetically modify tomatoes with a cold water fish gene to make them last longer—our God and Creator (who planned the human genome) can recreate the genetic DNA code to replicate a human being.

If our computers can store gigabytes of data memory on a little “chip”—it is a small “leap of faith” to believe that God stores in memory every human being that ever lived.

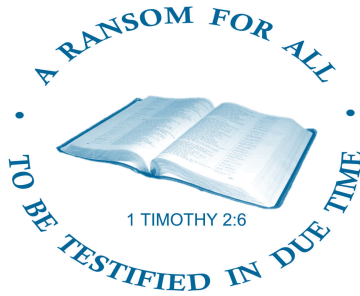


Earth Shall Be Filled With His Glory—None Shall Hunger. In addition to there being enough literal food for everybody on the earth in the Kingdom, there will also be an end of the “famine” for the “hearing of the words of the

(Continued on page 4)

THE BIBLE STUDENTS CONGREGATION OF NEW BRUNSWICK—WHO ARE THEY?

The Bible Students Congregation is a completely autonomous, non-denominational Christian fellowship. This fellowship has no central head, office or central publishing house. It maintains an association through conventions and enjoys a fellowship that is worldwide. We welcome all to share with us in the study of God's Word. There is no organization to join and no creed to affirm. Our services are as simple as the church in the days of the Apostles. Our congregation benefits from the prayer support of one another and our fellowship is warm and friendly.



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THIS ISSUE...

World Food Crisis

LORD” (Amos 8:11). “The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea” (Isaiah 11:9)—and there will be no poor or needy going hungry:

“He shall judge the poor of the people, **he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor....**11 Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him. 12 **For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper. 13 He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy....All nations shall call him blessed...and let the whole earth be filled with his glory.**” (Psalm 72:4-19)

When “all the nations shall call Him blessed,” the will of God will be done “on earth as it is in heaven.” Just as He will execute “justice for the oppressed,” He will also be the One who “gives food for the hungry” (Psalm 146:6,7). The earth will at “filled with His glory.” Our prayer for His Kingdom will then be answered. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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WEEK-NIGHTS	Middlesex County, NJ Somerset County, NJ
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- Please send me a **free** copy of the booklet, “Establishing the Kingdom”
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