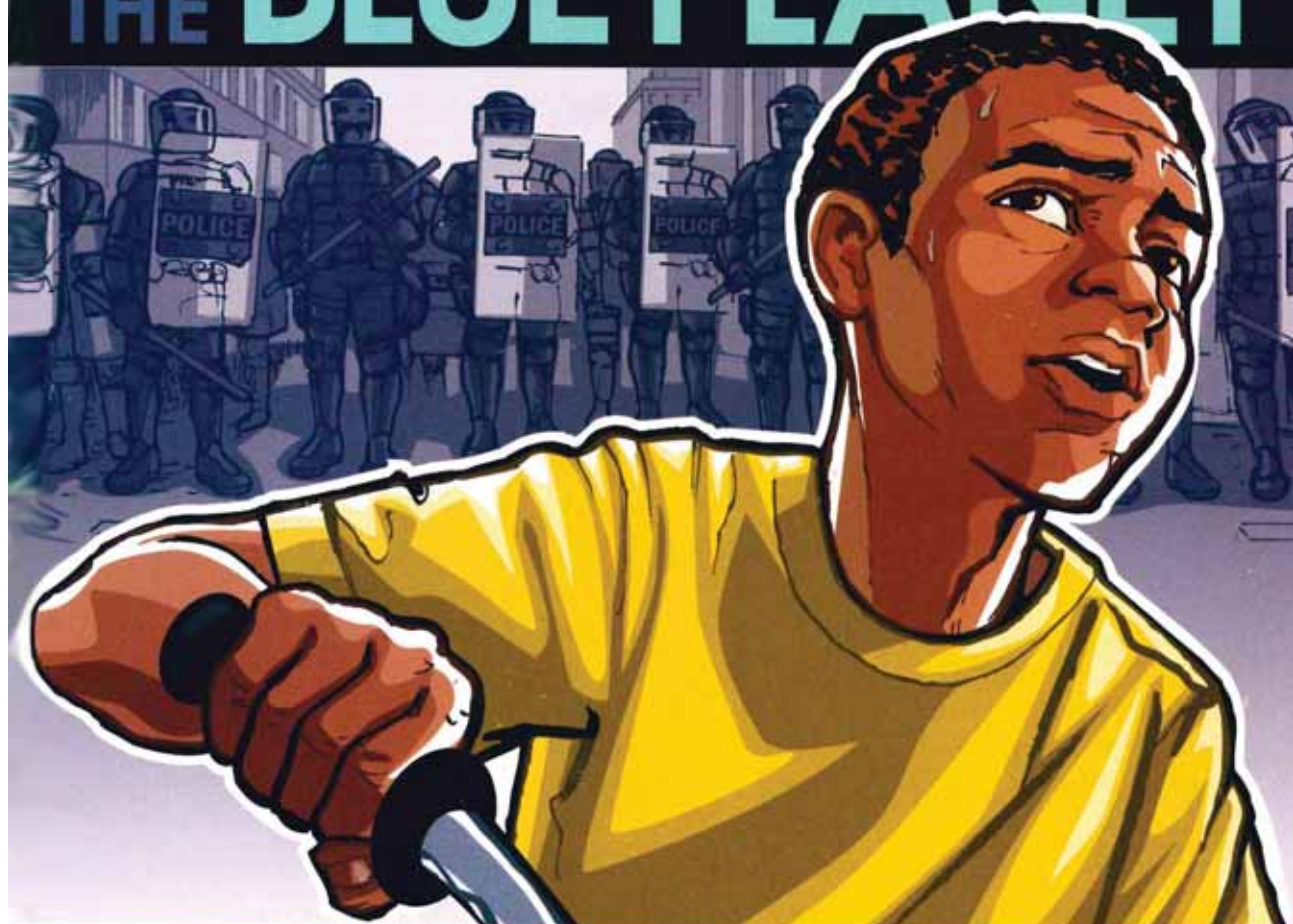


By Richard T. Edison Illustrated by Mariano Santillan

A Visual Introduction to *The Great Controversy*

TROUBLE ON THE BLUE PLANET



Derek's brush with death thrust him into an unseen cosmic struggle.

TROUBLE ON THE BLUE PLANET

WHY AM I HERE?

DOES GOD EXIST? DOES HE CARE?

WHY ARE WE SO POOR?

IT WAS ANOTHER BEAUTIFUL NIGHT IN BERMUDA, BUT DEREK HARDLY NOTICED. HIS MIND WAS FILLED WITH TOO MANY QUESTIONS.

AT 15, DEREK FELT MORE LIKE HE WAS 50. HE WAS TIRED OF QUESTIONS WITHOUT ANSWERS.

DEREK STOPPED AT THE INTERSECTION, LOOKED BOTH WAYS, AND THEN,

AT LEAST I HAD A GOOD TIME PLAYING BASKETBALL.

... PEDALED INTO THE STREET - AND HIS LIFE CHANGED FOREVER!

HE JUST WANTED TO HAVE FUN.

EAGER TO GET HOME ...



DEREK AWOKE TO BEDLAM. BRIGHT LIGHTS BLINDED HIM, DOCTORS SHOUTED ORDERS, NURSES POKED HIM WITH NEEDLES, AND HIS LEG FELT LIKE IT WAS ON FIRE.



I'VE GOT THE IV IN.

CALL THE SURGEON!

WE NEED AN X-RAY HERE!

JUST THEN DEREK HEARD A DOCTOR SHOUT, "GET HIM TO THE OPERATING ROOM STAT! WE HAVE TO TAKE HIS LEG IF WE'RE GOING TO SAVE HIS LIFE!"



HANG IN THERE, SON!

HURRY! HE'S SLIPPING FAST!

AS THE NURSES RUSHED HIM TO THE OPERATING ROOM, ONE THOUGHT BURNED IN DEREK'S MIND. OH, LORD, WHY ME? THEN EVERYTHING WENT BLACK.

DEREK COULDN'T KNOW THAT THE ANSWER TO HIS QUESTION WAS PLAYING OUT THAT VERY MOMENT IN AN UNSEEN DIMENSION.

KEEP FOCUSED, DOCTOR.

THIS KID IS A WASTE OF YOUR TIME, DOC!

YEAH, HE'S DONE FOR!

DON'T LISTEN TO THEM. YOU CAN DO THIS!

A BATTLE HAD BEGUN BEHIND THE SCENES ...

COMMANDING THE FORCES OF DARKNESS WAS SATAN. WITH THE EFFICIENCY OF A GENERAL HE ISSUED VILE ORDERS TO HIS HOVERING MINIONS.

TRY TO GET CLOSER!

DISTRACT THAT NURSE!

NEAR THE HEAD OF DEREK'S BED, THE COMMANDER OF THE FORCES OF LIGHT LOOKED DOWN WITH TENDERNESS AND LOVE ON DEREK'S UNCONSCIOUS FORM.

HOLD THE LINE ...

STAND STRONG!

CONFIDENTLY THE COMMANDER, JESUS, ISSUED QUIET ORDERS TO HIS ANGELS.

DEREK, DRIFTING IN AND OUT OF CONSCIOUSNESS, FELT DESPAIR WELLING UP INSIDE HIM. UNABLE TO GET CLOSE TO DEREK, THE EVIL ANGELS INSTEAD SHOUTED WICKED SUGGESTIONS TOWARD HIM.

IT'S NOT WORTH IT!

GIVE UP!

LET GO!

JUST DIE!

EVENTUALLY THEIR SCREAMS PENETRATED EVEN DEREK'S SEMICONSCIOUS MIND.

FOR A MOMENT DEREK ALMOST GAVE IN. THE PAIN WAS TOO GREAT. THEN SUDDENLY, UNBIDDEN, A LONG-FORGOTTEN PRAYER CAME WEAKLY FROM DEREK'S LIPS ...

"OUR FATHER, WHICH ART IN HEAVEN ..."

INSTANTLY JESUS WAS AT DEREK'S SIDE.

HE LEANED FORWARD AND GENTLY WHISPERED IN DEREK'S EAR ...

HOLD ON, LITTLE BROTHER. DON'T GIVE UP. I'LL ANSWER ALL YOUR QUESTIONS.

DEREK FELT HOPE SURGE THROUGH HIS MIND AND PEACE FILL HIS HEART.

HIS BREATHING CALMED, THE PAIN EASED, AND HE GENTLY SLIPPED INTO UNCONSCIOUSNESS ...

BLOOD PRESSURE IS STABILIZING.

OK. HE'S OUT. LET'S GET TO WORK.

THE SURGERY WAS SUCCESSFUL BUT THE NEXT FEW MONTHS WERE DIFFICULT FOR DEREK.

AT TIMES, DESPAIR NEARLY OVERWHELMED DEREK. SO MUCH ABOUT HIS LIFE HAD CHANGED.

I'LL NEVER PLAY BASKETBALL AGAIN.

NO GIRL IS GOING TO WANT SOMEONE LIKE ME.

WHY ME?

AT OTHER TIMES, ANGER BOILED UP INSIDE OF HIM.

I'M GOING TO KILL THAT DRIVER WHO HIT ME!

PHANTOM PAIN, GRUMPY NURSES, AND LONG REHAB SESSIONS WORE DOWN HIS SPIRITS.

EVENTUALLY DEREK WAS RELEASED FROM THE HOSPITAL AND LEARNED TO WALK ON AN ARTIFICIAL LEG.



THIS IS SO HARD!

YOU'RE DOING GREAT, DEREK.

DEREK OFTEN THOUGHT OF THE MOMENTS JUST BEFORE SURGERY. HE REMEMBERED HIS AGONY AND DESPAIR, BUT HE ALSO RECALLED THAT A GENTLE VOICE HAD CALMED ALL HIS FEARS ...



IF ONLY I COULD HEAR THAT VOICE AGAIN!

I HAVE SO MANY QUESTIONS.

SEVERAL MONTHS LATER DEREK WAS HOBBLING HOME FROM SCHOOL WHEN HE NOTICED A HUGE TENT IN AN OPEN LOT.



WELCOME!

WHAT IS THIS ALL ABOUT?

CURIOUS, HE WENT IN.

DEREK WAS SHOCKED WHEN THE SPEAKER BEGAN HIS PRESENTATION.



DO YOU WONDER WHY THERE IS SO MUCH PAIN IN THE WORLD?

THE BIBLE HAS THE ANSWERS!

IT WAS AS THOUGH HE'D READ DEREK'S MIND!

AS DEREK LISTENED, THE TENT SEEMED TO FADE INTO THE BACKGROUND ...

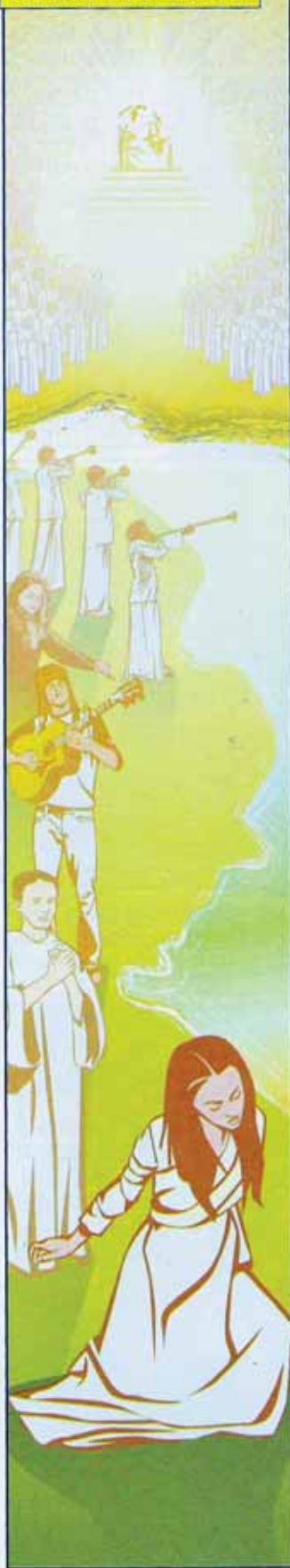


THE STORY BEGINS LONG, LONG AGO ...

AS THE PRESENTER WENT ON, DEREK'S IMAGINATION KICKED INTO HIGH GEAR.

IN HIS MIND HE TRAVELED THROUGH TIME AND SPACE TO A PLACE UNLIKE ANYTHING HE'D EVER KNOWN.

THE SCENE WAS HEAVEN, A PLACE OF INDESCRIBABLE BEAUTY AND PEACE.



BUT ALL WAS NOT AS IT SEEMED.

WHO DOES JESUS THINK HE IS, BOSSING US AROUND?

THINGS WOULD BE BETTER IF I WERE IN CHARGE!

HMMM. YOU MAY HAVE A POINT, LUCIFER.

A NOTE OF DISCORD SUDDENLY SHATTERED THE PEACEFUL SCENE.

DEREK LISTENED IN ASTONISHMENT AS THE SPEAKER EXPLAINED WHAT HAD HAPPENED NEXT.

LUCIFER, A LEADING ANGELIC BEING, WAS JEALOUS OF JESUS.

WHY DOES GOD FAVOR HIM? LUCIFER HAD THOUGHT. WHY SHOULDN'T I BE IN CHARGE?



I WILL DRIVE GOD FROM HIS THRONE!

LUCIFER, WHOSE NAME MEANT "LIGHT BEARER," CHOSE TO BECOME SATAN, "THE ADVERSARY OF GOD."

THE SPEAKER DESCRIBED A WAR THAT HAD RESULTED FROM SATAN'S REBELLION.



IN HIS MIND, DEREK IMAGINED THE TERRIBLE CONFLICT.

FINALLY JESUS
AND HIS LOYAL
ANGELS PREVAILED.



SATAN AND
HIS ANGELS
WERE DRIVEN
FROM HEAVEN
TO EARTH.

SUDDENLY
A QUESTION
LEAPED TO
DEREK'S MIND.

I WONDER
WHY GOD
DIDN'T JUST
DESTROY
THE REBEL
FORCES?



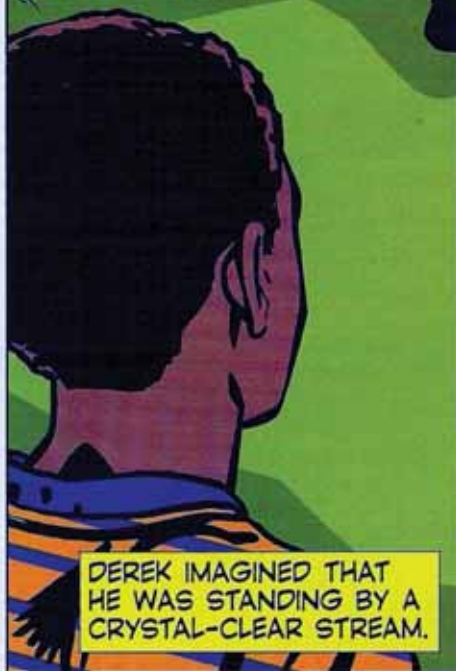
THE SPEAKER ANSWERED
DEREK'S UNSPOKEN QUESTION
BY EXPLAINING THAT SOME
CITIZENS OF THE UNIVERSE
WEREN'T SURE THAT GOD HAD
BEEN FAIR IN EXPELLING SATAN.

GOD WOULD
ALLOW SATAN
TO REVEAL HIS
TRUE CHARACTER
FOR EVERYONE
TO SEE.

THE STORY
CONTINUES
ON PLANET
EARTH ...



THE SPEAKER
DESCRIBED A
PLACE CALLED
THE GARDEN
OF EDEN.



DEREK IMAGINED THAT
HE WAS STANDING BY A
CRYSTAL-CLEAR STREAM.

GOD HAD PLANTED THIS
GARDEN ESPECIALLY FOR
ADAM AND EVE, THE VERY
FIRST HUMAN BEINGS.



THEIR CREATOR
LOVED TO WALK
WITH THEM THERE
IN THE EVENING.

EVERYTHING WAS
PERFECT UNTIL ...

ONE DAY EVE GOT TOO CLOSE TO THE ONE PLACE GOD HAD TOLD HER THAT SHE MUST NEVER GO: THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL.

SUDDENLY SHE HEARD A MELODIOUS VOICE COMING FROM A BEAUTIFUL WINGED CREATURE. IT WAS SATAN IN DISGUISE!

HAVE SOME FRUIT, EVE.

IT'S DELICIOUS.



GOD SAID WE COULD EAT FRUIT FROM EVERY OTHER TREE, BUT THAT WE'D DIE IF WE ATE FROM THIS ONE.

DON'T BE RIDICULOUS!

GOD KNOWS THAT THIS FRUIT WILL MAKE YOU AS SMART AS HE IS! THEN YOU'D SEE HOW UNFAIR HE REALLY IS!

IN REALITY, GOD WAS TESTING THE FIRST HUMAN BEINGS.



THIS IS DELICIOUS!

WOULD THEY CHOOSE TO TRUST AND OBEY THEIR CREATOR OUT OF LOVE? FAILING THE TEST, EVE TOOK A BITE ...

WHEN ADAM APPROACHED, SHE URGED HIM TO TASTE THE DELECTABLE FRUIT.



TRY SOME!



NOW ADAM, TOO, HAD FAILED THE TEST. SUDDENLY THE COUPLE'S EYES WERE OPENED, AND FOR THE VERY FIRST TIME ...

THEY WERE AFRAID!

THE DOORWAY TO SIN HAD BEEN OPENED.



EVER SINCE THAT DAY IN THE GARDEN, EARTH AND ITS INHABITANTS HAVE BEEN DEALING WITH THE CONSEQUENCES OF ADAM AND EVE'S CHOICE.

THE SPEAKER EXPLAINED HOW GOD IS ACTUALLY THREE DISTINCT BEINGS: GOD THE FATHER, JESUS THE SON, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT.

THEY EACH HAVE SEPARATE ROLES, BUT ONE THING LIES BEHIND THEIR ACTIONS: LOVE.



BUT GOD HAD A PLAN FOR DEALING WITH SIN!

WE CALL THEM THE TRINITY.*

*Isaiah 48:12-16

LONG BEFORE THE EARTH WAS CREATED, THE TRINITY HAD DECIDED WHAT TO DO IF HUMANS MADE THE DEVASTATING CHOICE THAT ADAM AND EVE HAD JUST MADE.

THE GREAT LAW OF THE UNIVERSE HAD BEEN BROKEN, AND ONLY ONE WHO WAS EQUAL WITH THAT LAW COULD TAKE THE LAWBREAKERS' PLACE. JESUS WAS THE ANSWER! HE WOULD DISPROVE SATAN'S TWISTED CLAIMS AND THEREBY SET HUMANITY FREE! THE RESCUE PLAN WAS PUT INTO ACTION.

THE PENALTY FOR SIN IS DEATH.

I CAN'T BEAR TO SEE MY CHILDREN DIE!



I WILL TAKE THEIR PLACE. I WILL DIE SO THAT THEY CAN LIVE.

BUT NOW HEAVEN NEEDED SOMEONE TO SHARE THE GOOD NEWS. SOMEONE SUCH AS ...

ENOCH, WHO WAS FAITHFUL TO GOD ... AND WAS REWARDED BY BEING TAKEN TO HEAVEN WITHOUT DYING!



THERE WAS NOAH, WHOM GOD USED TO SAVE HUMANKIND AND THE ANIMALS FROM A GLOBAL FLOOD.



STAY IN LINE.

TAKE YOUR TURN!

ABRAHAM, THE "FRIEND OF GOD," WAS YET ANOTHER TRUSTED MESSENGER OF THE GOOD NEWS THAT A GRAND RESCUE WAS UNDER WAY.



ABRAHAM WAS ALSO THE FATHER OF ...



... THE NATION OF ISRAEL, SPECIALLY CHOSEN BY GOD TO SHARE HEAVEN'S RESCUE PLAN WITH THE WORLD.

ENSLAVED BY THE EGYPTIANS AND FORCED INTO HARD LABOR, ISRAEL APPEARED TO BE ABANDONED BY GOD ...



GET TO WORK, YOU HEBREW DOG!

BUT THEY HAD NOT BEEN FORGOTTEN!

MOSES WAS AN ISRAELITE WHO'D BEEN RAISED AS AN EGYPTIAN PRINCE. LATER HE ESCAPED TO THE DESERT, HAVING KILLED AN EGYPTIAN WHO'D BEEN FIGHTING WITH AN ISRAELITE.



TAKE OFF YOUR SANDALS ...

... YOU'RE ON HOLY GROUND!

MANY YEARS LATER GOD MIRACULOUSLY SPOKE TO MOSES FROM WITHIN A BURNING BUSH, CALLING HIM TO RESCUE HIS PEOPLE, THE NATION OF ISRAEL.

GOD BROUGHT PLAGUES UPON EGYPT, AND THROUGH A SERIES OF MIRACLES ISRAEL WAS DELIVERED FROM EGYPTIAN BONDAGE.



MOSES LED HIS PEOPLE TOWARD A SPECIAL PLACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST WHERE GOD INTENDED THEM TO LIVE.

IT WAS CALLED "THE PROMISED LAND."

THEIR FIRST STOP WAS MOUNT SINAI.



THERE, GOD APPEARED TO THE ISRAELITE PEOPLE FROM WITHIN A CLOUD!

AWESTRUCK, ALL THE PEOPLE BOWED AND WORSHIPPED THEIR CREATOR AND DELIVERER.

GOD CALLED MOSES UP THE MOUNTAIN AND GAVE HIM TWO STONE TABLETS.

THIS IS MY LAW.

I HAVE WRITTEN IT WITH MY OWN FINGER, AND IT WILL GUIDE YOU.

THANK YOU, LORD.

THESE SIMPLE YET PROFOUND TEN COMMANDMENTS ARE THE VERY RULES OF LOVE THAT GOD USES TO GOVERN THE UNIVERSE.

NOW, THROUGH ISRAEL, HE WAS SHARING THEM WITH THE FALLEN WORLD.

GOD'S PLAN WAS FOR ISRAEL TO BE AN EXAMPLE TO OTHER NATIONS, SO THEY TOO WOULD WANT TO BE PART OF HIS KINGDOM.

LOOK WHAT GOD IS DOING FOR ISRAEL!

IT'S AMAZING!

IF ISRAEL HAD BEEN FAITHFUL TO FOLLOW THESE RULES, THEY WOULD HAVE BEEN CONTINUALLY BLESSED WITH HEALTH, WEALTH, AND HAPPINESS.

WORSHIPPING IDOLS ...

O BAAL, SEND US RAIN!

... FIGHTING WITH EACH OTHER ...

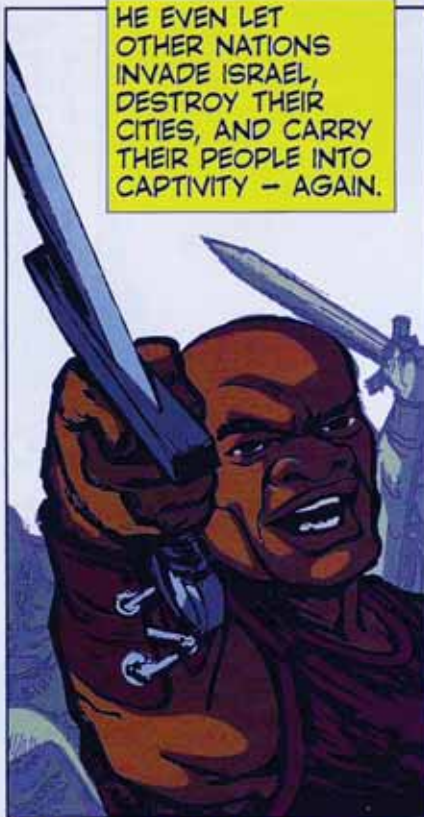
UNFORTUNATELY ISRAEL FREQUENTLY CHOSE A DIFFERENT PATH ...

... AND COMMITTING ADULTERY.

OVER AND OVER GOD ALLOWED FAMINE AND DROUGHT TO OCCUR AS A WAY TO PERSUADE THE ISRAELITE PEOPLE TO CHANGE THEIR WAYS.



HE EVEN LET OTHER NATIONS INVADE ISRAEL, DESTROY THEIR CITIES, AND CARRY THEIR PEOPLE INTO CAPTIVITY — AGAIN.



FINALLY ISRAEL GOT THE MESSAGE.

THEY STOPPED WORSHIPPING IDOLS AND STARTED HONORING GOD AND HIS LAW.



UNFORTUNATELY, THE PEOPLE STARTED THINKING THAT THEIR LAWKEEPING AND SACRIFICES WERE THE "FIX" FOR THE BROKEN RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HEAVEN AND EARTH. THEY'D FORGOTTEN THAT THE REAL PENALTY, THE "WAGES" OF SIN, IS DEATH.



LAW AND SACRIFICE HAD THEIR PLACE, BUT THEY WERE NEVER INTENDED TO BE THE ULTIMATE SOLUTION TO THE WORLD'S SIN PROBLEM.

BUT THERE WAS STILL HOPE!

THE ONLY ONE WHO COULD PAY THE PRICE WAS ABOUT TO ARRIVE IN AN UNEXPECTED WAY ...

ONE NIGHT, JESUS
CAME TO EARTH
AND WAS BORN ...

... IN A MANGER, A
FEEDING TROUGH
FOR ANIMALS!

ISN'T HE
BEAUTIFUL?

YES,
MARY,
HE IS.

EVEN AS A CHILD JESUS
SHOWED GOD'S LOVE TO THE
WORLD BY THE WAY HE LIVED.

YOU LOOK
THIRSTY.

WHEN HE GREW UP, JESUS BEGAN
HIS WORK OF SAVING HUMANITY
BY BEING BAPTIZED IN A RIVER.

THIS SHOWED TO THE UNIVERSE HIS
COMPLETE SURRENDER TO GOD'S LEADING.

GOD WAS VERY PLEASED
WITH WHAT JESUS DID.

THIS IS
MY BELOVED
SON.

I'VE GOT
TO STOP
HIM!

NOW SATAN WAS DESPERATE! HE KNEW
WHY JESUS WAS HERE. HE MUST CAUSE
JESUS TO BREAK GOD'S LAW AND
BECOME JUST ANOTHER SINNER,
UNWORTHY TO PAY SIN'S PENALTY!

ONCE, WHEN JESUS WAS ALONE IN THE DESERT PRAYING FOR SPIRITUAL POWER, SATAN TRIED TO TRICK JESUS INTO DOING WRONG.



IF SATAN HAD SUCCEEDED, HE WOULD HAVE THWARTED GOD'S RESCUE PLAN.

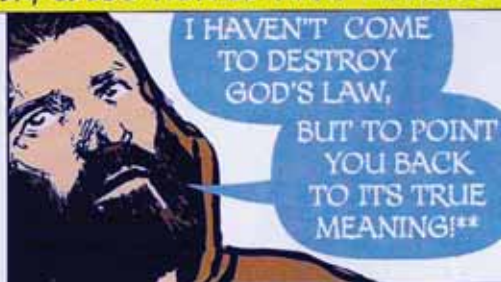
BUT JESUS DID NOT WAVER.

GO AWAY, SATAN!
FOR IT IS WRITTEN, "WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM ONLY!"*

HE SET US AN EXAMPLE BY CONQUERING SATAN THE SAME WAY EVERY HUMAN BEING CAN BEAT HIM ... BY TRUSTING IN GOD AND HIS PROMISES!

*Matthew 4:10

USING HIS HEAVENLY FATHER'S POWER, JESUS WORKED MANY MIRACLES ...



JESUS ALSO MADE IT CLEAR THAT HIS GOAL WASN'T TO GET RID OF GOD'S RULES!

**Matthew 5:17-19

BUT THE VERY PEOPLE JESUS CAME TO SAVE REJECTED HIM. URGED ON BY SATAN, THEY NAILED JESUS TO A CROSS.



BUT THAT WAS NOT THE END.

I AM THE
RESURRECTION
AND THE LIFE ...

THREE DAYS AFTER
JESUS DIED,
HE ROSE FROM
THE GRAVE!

AFTER SPENDING SOME TIME WITH HIS FOLLOWERS, JESUS WENT BACK TO HEAVEN,
PROMISING TO RETURN TO COMPLETE THE RESCUE MISSION.

THIS SAME
JESUS WILL
COME BACK!*

*Acts 1:11

THAT NIGHT, AFTER THE MEETING, DEREK COULD HARDLY SLEEP.

I WANT
TO KNOW
MORE!

HE KEPT THINKING OF THE PROMISE
"THIS SAME JESUS WILL COME BACK ..."

SOON,
LITTLE BROTHER,
SOON. RIGHT
NOW, GET SOME
SLEEP ...

THE NEXT NIGHT DEREK WAS ONE OF THE FIRST TO ARRIVE AT THE MEETING.



ONCE MORE, DEREK WAS QUICKLY LOST IN THE STORY.



... THE LASH



... STORMS




... AND EVEN DEATH.



AFTER MANY YEARS, CHRISTIANS CAME TO BE ACCEPTED.





IT DOESN'T
MATTER WHAT DAY
YOU WORSHIP
ON!

SOME CHRISTIANS COMPROMISED THEIR STANDARDS TO FIT IN WITH OTHERS. EARLIER EFFORTS HADN'T DESTROYED CHRISTIAN FAITH, AND SATAN SAW A NEW OPPORTUNITY ...

WHAT'S
SO SPECIAL
ABOUT
SATURDAY,
ANYWAY?

I AGREE.

SUNDAY IS BETTER FOR ME.
BESIDES, JESUS ROSE FROM
THE GRAVE ON SUNDAY!

CONSTANTINE HAD
ANOTHER IDEA.

LET'S ALL JUST
GET ALONG.

SUNDAY IS NOW
THE SABBATH.

SINCE SUN WORSHIPPERS
ALREADY WORSHIPPED
ON THE FIRST DAY OF
THE WEEK, WHY NOT
UNITE THEIR RELIGION
WITH CHRISTIANITY?

IN A.D. 321 HE OFFICIALLY CHANGED
THE SEVENTH-DAY SABBATH—GOD'S
MEMORIAL OF A FINISHED CREATION
—TO SUNDAY.*

*SEE GENESIS 2:2, 3

THE ROMAN EMPIRE EVENTUALLY
FADED INTO HISTORY, AND A
RELIGIOUS SYSTEM TOOK ITS
PLACE.

FATHER, BLESS ME!

SWEAR ALLEGIANCE
TO ME FIRST!

THE ROMAN CHURCH
DEMANDED ALLEGIANCE
FROM PRINCE AND
PAUPER ALIKE.

BUT NOT ALL CHRISTIANS WOULD COMPROMISE
AND BOW TO THE CHURCH'S AUTHORITY.

WE MUST
STAY TRUE
TO GOD!

YES, EVEN
IF WE LOSE
EVERYTHING!

SOON PERSECUTION AGAIN
RAISED ITS UGLY HEAD ...

IN THE ALPS THE WALDENSES
FOUGHT BRAVELY FOR THEIR
RIGHT TO WORSHIP GOD AS THEY
BELIEVED, INCLUDING KEEPING THE
SEVENTH-DAY SABBATH.



MEN SUCH AS JOHN HUSS PREACHED THE
GOSPEL—THE GOOD NEWS ABOUT JESUS—
PAYING THE PRICE FOR HUMANITY'S SIN—
TO PEOPLE IN THEIR OWN LANGUAGE.

"JESUS, THOU SON
OF DAVID, HAVE
MERCY ON ME."

THIS EXPOSED
ROME'S TREACHERY ...
AND JOHN HUSS
PAID WITH HIS LIFE.



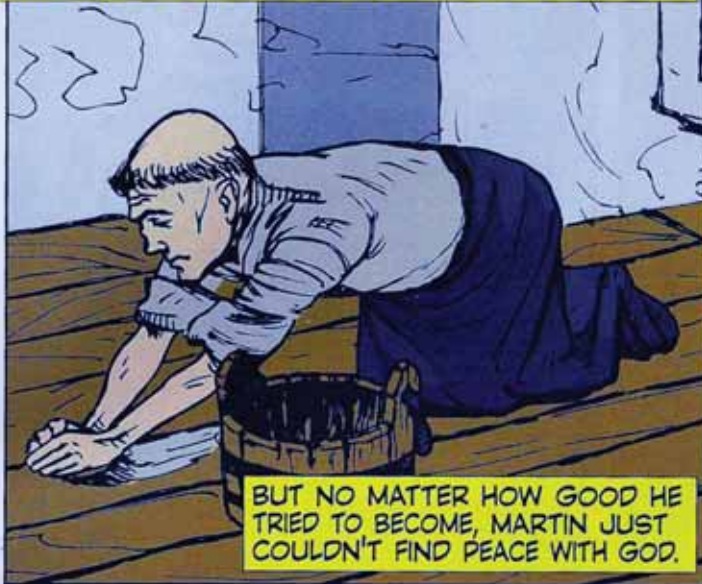
IN A SMALL VILLAGE IN
GERMANY, GOD WAS
PREPARING A YOUNG MAN
NAMED MARTIN LUTHER
FOR A GREAT WORK.

GOD, SAVE
ME, AND I WILL
DEVOTE MY LIFE
TO SERVING YOU.

BUT FIRST HE HAD
MUCH TO LEARN ...

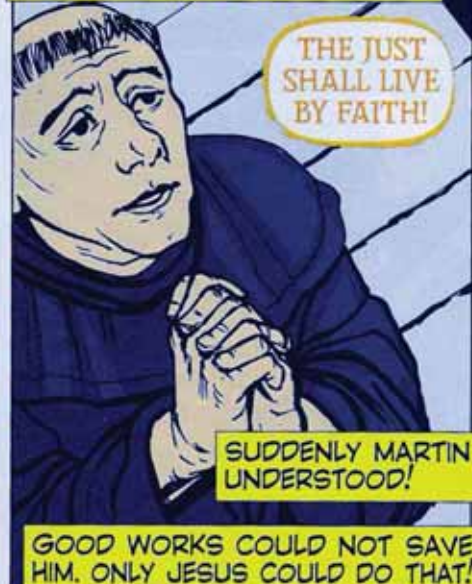


MARTIN THOUGHT THAT IF HE WORKED HARD ENOUGH AND STUDIED ENOUGH, HIS SINS WOULD BE FORGIVEN.



BUT NO MATTER HOW GOOD HE TRIED TO BECOME, MARTIN JUST COULDN'T FIND PEACE WITH GOD.

ONE DAY, WHILE ON HIS KNEES, MARTIN HEARD A VOICE.



THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH!

SUDDENLY MARTIN UNDERSTOOD!

GOOD WORKS COULD NOT SAVE HIM. ONLY JESUS COULD DO THAT!

FROM THAT MOMENT ON, MARTIN LUTHER PREACHED THE GOOD NEWS THAT A PERSON DIDN'T HAVE TO WORK HARD TO BE ACCEPTED BY GOD.



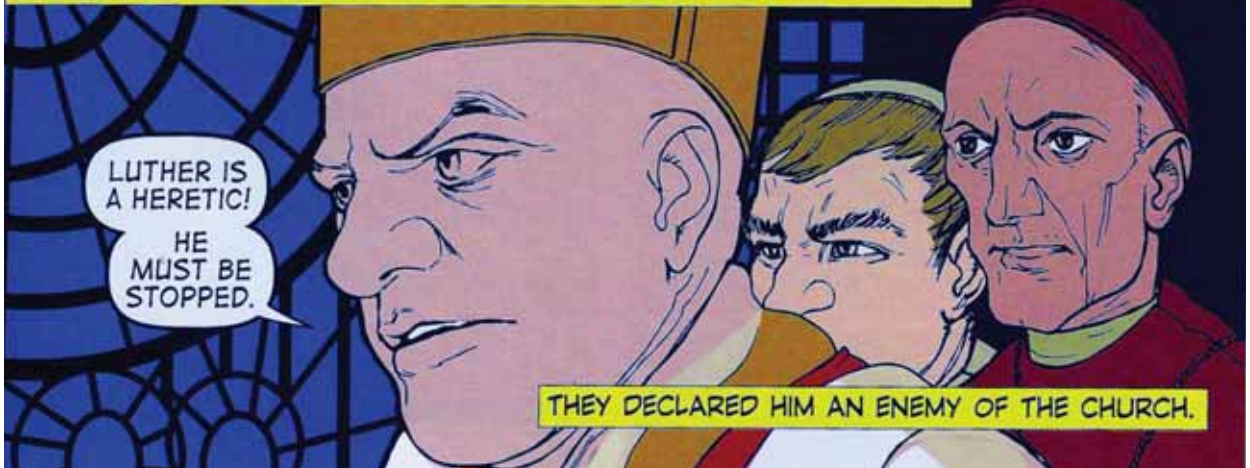
ONLY JESUS CAN FORGIVE YOUR SINS.

TRUST IN HIM, NOT YOUR GOOD WORKS!

SALVATION CAME BY BELIEVING THAT JESUS TOOK OUR PLACE!

MARTIN LUTHER BOLDLY OPPOSED THE FALSE TEACHINGS OF THE PRIESTS, POSTING HIS REASONS ON A CHURCH FOR EVERYONE TO SEE.

THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS WERE DETERMINED TO DESTROY LUTHER'S WORK.



LUTHER IS A HERETIC! HE MUST BE STOPPED.

THEY DECLARED HIM AN ENEMY OF THE CHURCH.

THE CHURCH PUT MARTIN ON TRIAL AND DEMANDED THAT HE RETRACT HIS TEACHINGS AND WRITINGS, BUT MARTIN REMAINED FIRM.

I CANNOT
AND I WILL NOT
RETRACT!

HERE I STAND ...

MAY GOD
HELP ME!

LUTHER CONTINUED TO WRITE.

HE TRANSLATED A LARGE
PORTION OF THE BIBLE INTO
THE GERMAN LANGUAGE.

HIS WRITINGS HELPED BRING ABOUT A MIGHTY
RELIGIOUS AWAKENING IN PLACES SUCH AS ...



JESUS IS THE
TRUE SOURCE OF
SALVATION!

HAVE
FAITH IN
GOD!

... ENGLAND, AND THE REST OF EUROPE. THESE REFORMERS ALL BELIEVED THAT THE BIBLE, WHICH HAD TAKEN A BACK SEAT TO HUMAN TRADITION, MUST REGAIN ITS RIGHTFUL PLACE AS GOD'S TRUTH FOR HUMANKIND.



IN 1798 THE ROMAN RELIGIOUS SYSTEM
LOST MUCH OF ITS POWER WHEN THE
POPE WAS CAPTURED BY THE FRENCH.



AT LAST, PROTESTANTS (THOSE PEOPLE WHO
DIDN'T AGREE WITH THE STATE-RUN CHURCH)
WERE FREE TO WORSHIP AS THEY PLEASED.

UNFORTUNATELY, NOT ALL PROTESTANTS STAYED TRUE TO THEIR BELIEFS.



SOME CHURCHES ADOPTED MANY OF ROME'S TRADITIONS AND PRACTICES.

WHEN A GROUP CALLED THE PURITANS PROTESTED AGAINST THIS, THEY WERE PERSECUTED.



EVENTUALLY, TO ESCAPE PERSECUTION, THE PURITANS SAILED TO AMERICA.



IN AMERICA WE WILL BE FREE TO WORSHIP AS WE CHOOSE.

I CAN HARDLY WAIT!

THERE A NEW NATION WAS FOUNDED ON THE PRINCIPLE OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM, "WITH LIBERTY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL."

DEREK FAITHFULLY ATTENDED THE MEETINGS EACH NIGHT.

HIS HEART THRILLED AT THE COURAGE OF THE REFORMERS IN THE FACE OF PERSECUTION.

COULD JESUS REALLY LOVE ME?

YES, DEREK, I DO.

YOU'LL NEVER BE GOOD ENOUGH TO PLEASE HIM!

HE LONGED FOR A FAITH LIKE THAT OF MARTIN LUTHER, AND THE ASSURANCE THAT HIS OWN SINS WERE REALLY FORGIVEN.

ONE NIGHT THE TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION SEEMED TO JUMP OUT AT DEREK.

THIS I'VE GOT TO HEAR!

DEREK SAT NEAR THE FRONT THAT NIGHT SO HE COULD CATCH EVERY WORD.

SOMETHING TELLS ME THIS IS GOING TO BE GOOD!

WHAT HAPPENED IN HEAVEN IN 1844!

EAGERLY DEREK LISTENED AS THE SPEAKER EXPLAINED HOW BIBLE PROPHECY PREDICTED SEVERAL EVENTS THAT WOULD HAPPEN BEFORE JESUS RETURNS TO EARTH.

LOOK WHAT GOD REVEALED THROUGH PROPHETS!

THE DEVASTATING LISBON, PORTUGAL, EARTHQUAKE IN 1755 ...



THE "DARK DAY" OF MAY 19, 1780 ...



THE MOON TURNING BLOOD-RED THAT SAME EVENING ...



... AND THE GREAT METEORITE SHOWER OF NOVEMBER 13, 1833!*



ALL THESE EVENTS HAD CAUSED PEOPLE TO WONDER WHAT WAS HAPPENING ON PLANET EARTH!

*Mark 13:24, 25; Revelation 6:12

MEANWHILE, IN THE UNITED STATES, A MAN NAMED WILLIAM MILLER HAD DISCOVERED SOMETHING AMAZING WHILE STUDYING HIS BIBLE ...

CAN THIS POSSIBLY BE TRUE?
IT'S INCREDIBLE!

AS MILLER STUDIED THE BIBLE PROPHECY IN DANIEL 8:14, HE REALIZED THAT THE TIME PERIOD MENTIONED WAS TO END IN 1844!

EVENTUALLY, WILLIAM MILLER, AND MANY OTHERS, CONCLUDED THIS MEANT THAT JESUS WAS RETURNING TO EARTH IN 1844.

JESUS IS COMING BACK IN JUST A FEW YEARS!

HE BEGAN TO TELL EVERYONE WHAT HE'D LEARNED.

THE NEWS SPREAD QUICKLY, AND MANY PEOPLE PREPARED FOR THE WONDROUS EVENT.

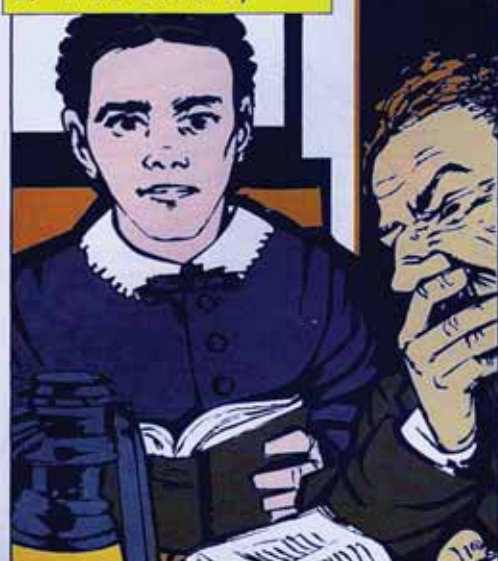
ON THE PREDICTED DAY, MILLER'S FOLLOWERS WAITED EXPECTANTLY FOR JESUS TO APPEAR IN THE SKY ...

NOT MUCH LONGER.

WE'RE FINALLY GOING HOME!

BUT IT NEVER HAPPENED.

DEEPLY DISAPPOINTED,
MANY MILLERITES GAVE
UP THEIR BELIEFS,



BUT A FEW CONTINUED
TO PRAYERFULLY
STUDY THEIR BIBLES,



TRYING TO FIND OUT
WHERE MILLER AND
SO MANY OTHERS
HAD BEEN WRONG.

TO THEIR AMAZEMENT AND JOY,
THEY DISCOVERED THAT DANIEL'S
PROPHECY WAS NOT REFERRING
TO JESUS' RETURN TO EARTH,



SO MILLER GOT
THE DATE RIGHT
AFTER ALL!

YES.

HE SIMPLY GOT THE
EVENT
WRONG.

BUT RATHER TO THE BEGINNING
OF A SPECIAL WORK IN HEAVEN!



"SPECIAL
WORK"?

WHAT
DOES THAT
MEAN?

AS THE SPEAKER CONCLUDED HIS REMARKS,
DEREK FELT CONFUSION FILLING HIS MIND. HE
COULD HARDLY WAIT FOR THE NEXT MEETING
TO ARRIVE SO HE COULD LEARN MORE!

AS DEREK TOOK HIS SEAT THE NEXT EVENING, AN UNSEEN BATTLE RAGED AROUND HIM ...



LISTEN
VERY
CAREFULLY,
DEREK.

A BATTLE FOR DEREK'S MIND!

DON'T
BELIEVE
ANY OF IT.

IT'S JUST A
FAIRY TALE!

FINALLY THE FORCES OF LIGHT PREVAILED.

AS DEREK LISTENED TO THE PRESENTATION, A VEIL SEEMED TO BE PULLED AWAY. IN HIS MIND, DEREK SEEMED TO LOOK INTO HEAVEN ITSELF!

DEREK LISTENED IN WONDER AS THE SPEAKER EXPLAINED THAT JESUS HAD BEGUN A NEW PHASE OF HIS WORK IN HEAVEN IN 1844.

IT WOULD BE HIS FINAL WORK BEFORE HE RETURNS TO EARTH, A WORK OF ... JUDGMENT!

AT THE WORD "JUDGMENT," DEREK CRINGED!

BUT THEN THE SPEAKER CONTINUED. DEREK FELT RELIEF AND JOY FILL HIS MIND AS HE LISTENED TO THE SPEAKER'S EXPLANATION.

AT THE TIME PREDICTED IN DANIEL'S PROPHECY, 1844,

JESUS BEGAN A SPECIAL WORK IN HEAVEN!*

THIS JUDGMENT IS GOOD NEWS!

*See Hebrews 8:1-6

SATAN HAS ACCUSED GOD OF BEING UNJUST.

THE JUDGMENT NOW TAKING PLACE IN GOD'S "HEAVENLY HEADQUARTERS," CALLED THE "SANCTUARY," IS HIS CHANCE TO PROVE HIS CASE TO THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE!



OTHER WORLDS ARE LOOKING ON TO DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT GOD'S WAYS HAVE BEEN FAIR!

*The religious services practiced by the ancient Israelites partially symbolized this final event.

SATAN CLAIMS THAT GOD DOESN'T HAVE THE RIGHT TO SAVE HUMANS WHO'VE ADMITTED THEIR SINFULNESS AND ASKED FOR HIS FORGIVENESS.

ACCORDING TO YOUR OWN LAW, THEY DESERVE TO DIE!



SATAN DEMANDS THAT HUMAN BEINGS MUST PAY THE PRICE FOR THEIR OWN SINS!

BUT JESUS STANDS UP IN THE SANCTUARY AND SAYS, "STOP! WHAT ABOUT ME?"



MY BLOOD PAID THE PRICE FOR THEIR SINS!

GOD IS FAIR.

YES, HE PAID THE PRICE!

ONCE THE UNIVERSE SEES ALL THAT GOD HAS DONE FOR HUMANITY, THEY WILL AGREE THAT HE HAS THE RIGHT TO SAVE THOSE WHO HAVE ACCEPTED JESUS.

FINALLY, WHEN ALL THE EVIDENCE IS IN AND GOD HAS BEEN PROVEN TO BE FAIR, THE RECORDS WILL BE CLOSED ...



THE VERDICT IS FINAL!

... AND JESUS WILL COME TO TAKE HIS PEOPLE HOME!



IT'S TIME TO COMPLETE THE RESCUE!

DEREK'S
HEART
THRILLED
AT THE
THOUGHT
OF JESUS
RETURNING
TO EARTH.

BUT
THERE IS
MORE!

HE LISTENED
EAGERLY AS
THE SPEAKER
CONTINUED ...

SINCE THE END OF THE TIME PERIOD DANIEL
WROTE ABOUT IN HIS PROPHECY, OTHER BIBLICAL
TRUTHS, LONG BURIED UNDER CENTURIES OF
HUMAN TRADITIONS, HAVE BEEN REDISCOVERED.

LOOK
AT THIS!

I DIDN'T KNOW
THAT WAS IN
THE BIBLE!

FOR EXAMPLE, MOST CHURCHES
TEACH THAT WHEN A PERSON
DIES, THEIR "SOUL" GOES TO
HEAVEN OR HELL.

SURELY
AUNT RAMONA IS
SMILING DOWN
AT US RIGHT
NOW!

BUT DOESN'T THAT ALSO
MEAN SHE CAN SEE ALL THE
HORRIBLE THINGS THAT ARE
HAPPENING DOWN HERE ON
PLANET EARTH? HOW CAN
THAT BE "PARADISE"?

BELIEF IN "IMMORTAL
SOULS" HAS LED
SOME PEOPLE TO
PRAY TO DEAD
SAINTS INSTEAD
OF GOD!

MOTHER
MARY,
BLESS
ME!

OTHERS TRY TO CONTACT
THE DEAD FOR GUIDANCE.

WHAT
SHOULD I DO,
FATHER?

BUT AS CHRISTIANS HAVE STUDIED, THEY'VE DISCOVERED THAT THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT DEATH IS LIKE A SLEEP, AND DECEASED HUMAN BEINGS REST IN THE GRAVE UNTIL JESUS COMES AGAIN!



LOOK, IT SAYS
THE DEAD KNOW
NOTHING!*

WHEN
JESUS
COMES BACK,
HE'LL WAKE
THEM UP!

THAT'S GOOD
NEWS!

MANY PEOPLE HAVE
BEEN FASCINATED BY
JOHN'S VISION IN
REVELATION 14, WHERE
THREE ANGELS FLY
THROUGH THE SKY.



THE FIRST ANGEL CALLS
PEOPLE TO WORSHIP
GOD AND PREPARE
FOR THE JUDGMENT.

WORSHIP
YOUR
CREATOR!
HIS COURT
IS IN
SESSION!



THE SECOND ANGEL
WARNS AGAINST
RELIGIONS THAT DON'T
TEACH THE WHOLE
TRUTH FOUND IN THE
BIBLE. HE CALLS THESE
RELIGIONS "BABYLON."**

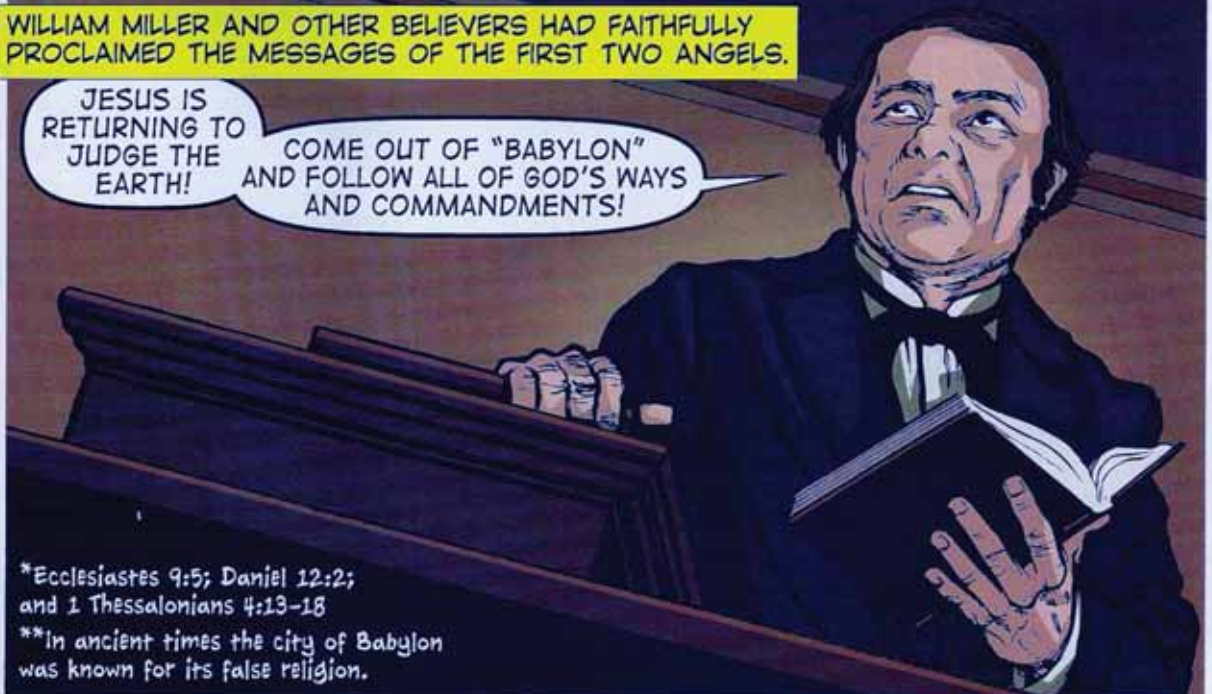
BABYLON
IS FALLEN!



WILLIAM MILLER AND OTHER BELIEVERS HAD FAITHFULLY
PROCLAIMED THE MESSAGES OF THE FIRST TWO ANGELS.

JESUS IS
RETURNING TO
JUDGE THE
EARTH!

COME OUT OF "BABYLON"
AND FOLLOW ALL OF GOD'S WAYS
AND COMMANDMENTS!



*Ecclesiastes 9:5; Daniel 12:2;
and 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

**In ancient times the city of Babylon
was known for its false religion.

AS PEOPLE STUDIED THE MESSAGE OF THE THIRD ANGEL, THEY REALIZED THAT THIS ANGEL IS CALLING PEOPLE TO MAKE A CHOICE.

AND WHEN THEY SAW IN EXODUS 20 THAT THE SEVENTH DAY OF THE WEEK, SATURDAY, NOT SUNDAY, THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK, IS GOD'S TRUE SABBATH, THEY REALIZED THAT THIS WAS PART OF THE CHOICE.

BUT PRACTICALLY EVERYONE ELSE WORSHIPS ON SUNDAY!

THAT MAY BE SO, BUT GOD'S SEVENTH-DAY SABBATH IS A MEMORIAL OF HIS CREATION. I'M GOING TO OBEY GOD, NO MATTER WHAT!

WORSHIP THE TRUE GOD!

STAY AWAY FROM COUNTERFEIT SPIRITUALITY AND RELIGION!



THE SPEAKER NOW PAUSED AND GAZED AT HIS AUDIENCE. THEN HE SAID ...



SOMEDAY, PERHAPS VERY SOON, WE WILL EACH NEED TO MAKE A CHOICE



DEREK LISTENED CLOSELY AS THE SPEAKER EXPLAINED WHAT HE MEANT.

ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE, WE ARE LIVING IN THE TIME OF THAT THIRD ANGEL! AND IN THESE LAST DAYS OF EARTH'S HISTORY WE MUST EACH DECIDE IF WE ARE GOING TO WORSHIP GOD THE WAY THAT HE HAS SHOWN US IN THE BIBLE ...



... OR FOLLOW THE REST OF THE WORLD IN CHOOSING ANOTHER WAY.

AS THE TIME FOR JESUS' RETURN APPROACHES, THE WORLD WILL BE IN TURMOIL.



PEOPLE WILL SHAKE WITH FEAR
AS ECONOMIES COLLAPSE ...



... AND CRIME RUNS RAMPANT.



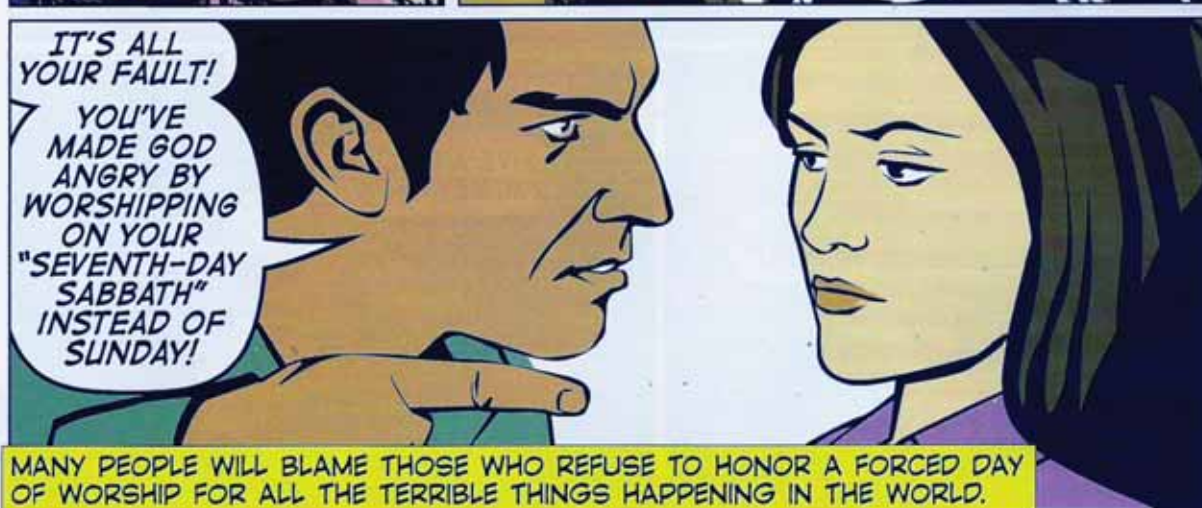
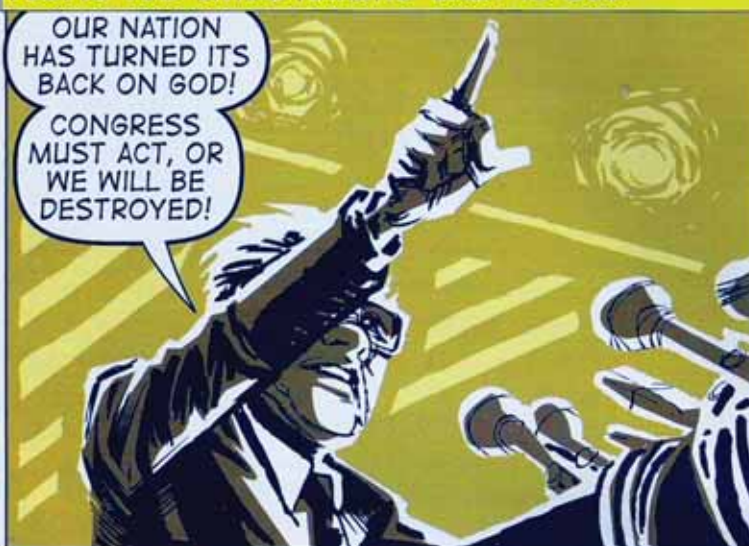
EVEN NATURE WILL SEEM OUT OF CONTROL!



AS THE SITUATION WORSENS, PEOPLE WILL BEGIN TO ASK QUESTIONS ...



IN THE HALLS OF GOVERNMENT AND ON THE STREET, CALLS WILL BE HEARD FOR LAWS AIMED AT FORCING PEOPLE—AND ENTIRE NATIONS—BACK TO GOD.



MANY PEOPLE WILL BLAME THOSE WHO REFUSE TO HONOR A FORCED DAY OF WORSHIP FOR ALL THE TERRIBLE THINGS HAPPENING IN THE WORLD.

BUT SOME WILL RECOGNIZE THAT ALL OF THESE EVENTS ARE SIGNS OF JESUS' SOON RETURN!



*Revelation 13:11, 12; 18:3, etc.

THEY WILL DECIDE TO OBEY GOD NO MATTER WHAT, EVEN IF IT MEANS BREAKING THE NEW RELIGIOUS LAWS.



**The Bible often calls such a group a "remnant."

AS GOD'S PEOPLE STRUGGLE TO SURVIVE IN A WORLD GONE MAD, SATAN AND HIS ANGELS WILL RENEW THEIR ASSAULT.

ADMIT IT -
GOD HAS
DERESERTED
YOU!

THE SPIRITUAL BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON HAS BEGUN.

SATAN AND HIS ARMY ARE ENGAGED
IN ONE LAST DESPERATE ATTEMPT TO
DECEIVE HUMANITY AND WOO MORE
FOLLOWERS TO JOIN THE EVIL FORCES.

YOUR CASE
IS HOPELESS!
COME OVER TO
OUR SIDE!

YOUR SINS ARE
TOO GREAT!

WHOEVER
BELIEVES IN
ME WILL BE
SAVED!*

CONFUSED AND AFRAID, GOD'S TRUE BELIEVERS
WILL BE TEMPTED TO GIVE UP, BUT THEN THEY
WILL REMEMBER JESUS' PROMISE ...

*John 3:16

JOY WILL FILL THEIR HEARTS AS THEY REALIZE THAT THEIR SINS ARE FOREVER FORGIVEN! NOW THEY CAN FACE THE FUTURE UNAFRAID!

GOD WILL SAVE US!

JESUS PAID THE PRICE!

MEANWHILE, SATAN'S RAGE WILL GROW AGAINST GOD'S FAITHFUL FOLLOWERS, AND HE WILL URGE A "FINAL SOLUTION."

KILL THEM ALL!
DESTROY THE REBELS!

SURROUNDED AND CONDEMNED, GOD'S PEOPLE WILL SEEM TO BE HOPELESSLY LOST.

GOD, PLEASE HELP US!

SUDDENLY A SMALL CLOUD WILL APPEAR IN THE EAST ...

JESUS IS RETURNING!



SATAN'S FOLLOWERS WILL COWER IN FEAR, PLEADING FOR ROCKS TO FALL ON THEM TO HIDE THEM FROM JESUS' PIERCING GAZE!



BUT THE FAITHFUL WILL SHOUT WITH JOY!



A MIGHTY EARTHQUAKE WILL RIP OPEN THE GRAVES OF GOD'S PEOPLE, AND THEY WILL BE BROUGHT BACK TO LIFE!

TOGETHER WITH THOSE WHO HAVE LIVED THROUGH THE LAST DAYS, THEY WILL RISE UP TO MEET JESUS IN THE CLOUDS!

THEY ARE GOING HOME!



FOR A THOUSAND YEARS GOD'S PEOPLE WILL LIVE IN HEAVEN.*

*Revelation 20:6

FAMILIES WILL BE REUNITED, OLD FRIENDSHIPS WILL BE RENEWED ...

IT'S SO GOOD TO SEE YOU!

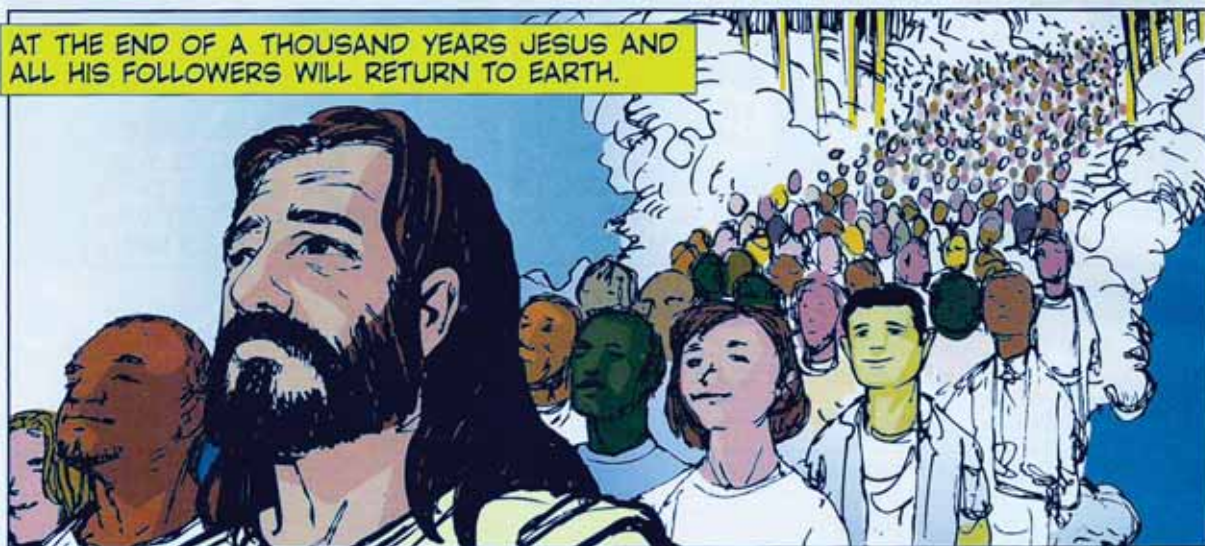
WHY ISN'T CRYSTAL HERE?

LET'S TAKE A WALK AND I'LL EXPLAIN EVERYTHING ...

... AND QUESTIONS WILL BE ANSWERED.



ON EARTH, JUST SATAN AND HIS EVIL ANGELS ARE LEFT ALIVE. THEY WANDER ITS DESOLATE SURFACE, ALONE WITH THEIR THOUGHTS ...



AT THE END OF A THOUSAND YEARS JESUS AND ALL HIS FOLLOWERS WILL RETURN TO EARTH.



SATAN WILL MARSHAL THE VAST MULTITUDE FOR A FINAL ASSAULT ON GOD AND HIS PEOPLE.

BUT FIRE WILL COME DOWN FROM HEAVEN AND CLEANSE THE EARTH OF EVERY TRACE OF SIN.

SIN HAS BEEN DESTROYED FOREVER.

THE WAR IS OVER.



THEN GOD WILL CREATE "A NEW HEAVEN AND A NEW EARTH," WHERE HUMANKIND WILL LIVE FOREVER IN JOY AND PEACE WITH THEIR CREATOR.

TEARS TRICKLED DOWN DEREK'S CHEEKS AS THE MEETING CAME TO A CLOSE.



EVERY DOUBT WAS GONE, EVERY QUESTION ANSWERED. QUIETLY HE BOWED HIS HEAD AND PRAYED ...

GOD, I ACCEPT JESUS AS MY SAVIOR ...

THANK YOU FOR FORGIVING MY SINS AND PAYING THE PRICE FOR ME!



AS PEACE AND JOY FLOODED OVER DEREK, HE THOUGHT OF THE DRIVER WHO'D CAUSED HIM TO LOSE HIS LEG.



FOR AN INSTANT THE OLD ANGER FLARED, BUT THEN IT WAS QUENCHED BY OVERWHELMING LOVE AND FORGIVENESS.



AT THAT MOMENT DEREK DETERMINED THAT SOMEDAY HE WOULD FIND THAT YOUNG MAN AND SHARE JESUS' LOVE AND FORGIVENESS WITH HIM.

I FORGIVE YOU' ...
AND I WANT TO TELL YOU SOMETHING ELSE ...



AS DEREK LEFT THE MEETING THAT NIGHT, HE WONDERED WHAT IT WOULD BE LIKE TO WALK THROUGH HEAVEN'S GATES TOGETHER, DEREK WITH A NEW LEG AND BOTH YOUNG MEN WITH HEARTS MADE NEW THANKS TO JESUS CHRIST, THEIR SAVIOR!



BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES



DEREK BOWE grew up in Bermuda, where he was a high school basketball star and popular student. Today he remains grateful that despite the challenges he encountered earlier in life, God led him to the only One who could answer his questions. *Trouble on the Blue Planet* is based on his true-life experience.

JESUS, God's Son, is Creator of our universe and commander of heaven's armies. Today He remains in mortal combat with Satan for the lives of all human beings. As Derek discovered, for Jesus no price is too high if He can just save humanity from Satan's clutches.



SATAN, which means "adversary," was originally named Lucifer. At one time he was the most beautiful and powerful of heaven's angels. Lucifer became jealous of Jesus and led a rebellion that eventually spread to Planet Earth. Now called Satan, the originator of evil has made it his mission to tarnish God's reputation and destroy as many human beings as possible.



SOME HELPFUL BACKGROUND

THE UNSEEN DIMENSION

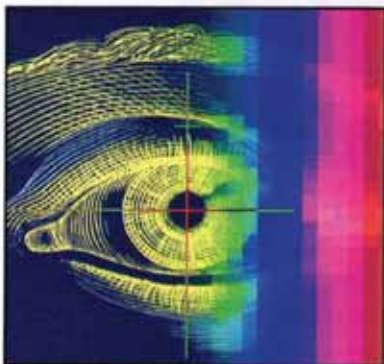
Humans measure reality by what we see or feel. If something doesn't have length, width, or depth, it must not exist. But what about such things as thoughts, feelings, sunshine, and the wind? We can't hold them in our hand or easily measure them, but they are very real. So if we have no trouble believing in these kinds of things, why do we have so much trouble believing in God?

The Bible speaks of another dimension, an unseen world where God dwells and where a war is going on, a war for control of the universe. Ephesians 6:12 speaks of this hidden side of reality:

"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms" (NIV).

This is a war between ultimate good and ultimate evil, between a loving God and a vengeful rebel named Satan, who is intent on the destruction of God's reputation and our lives. Although this conflict started in heaven, it has spilled over to earth (see Revelation 12:7-9). We live each day on a battleground. We see the results of Satan's campaign in the pain and suffering all around us. But we also see God's hand at work in the beauty of a flower or the kindness of a stranger.

Ultimately, every human being must choose whose side they will be on in this conflict; there is no middle ground. Meanwhile, in the unseen dimension, the citizens of the universe watch with intense interest to see what that choice will be.



CREATION, NOT EVOLUTION

God never intended for Planet Earth to be a battleground. He created it to be a beautiful home for His human children. Earth's environment has just the right mixture of air to sustain life, the right amount of sunlight to provide warmth, and the right types of plants to provide nourishment, clean the air, and bring beauty to our surroundings.

We are not here by chance, mere consequences of millions of years of random mutations. The very complexity of the human body testifies to the work of a Master Designer. Consider the human eye, with its retina containing millions of photoreceptor cells, a pupil controlling the light that strikes the retina, a lens that focuses the light, and muscles that move the eye. The sheer complexity of the eye boggles the mind, yet it's just one of many evidences that exist all around us that point toward a loving Creator. This same Master Designer created us for a purpose and is still at work in this world and in our lives.



GOD'S GUIDEBOOK

God has provided humanity a kind of "guidebook for life" called the Bible. It contains answers to many of life's perplexing questions, such as "Where did I come from?" "Why am I here?" and "What lies ahead?" It is far more than just a collection of letters, poems, and stories. The Bible is God's message of love and instruction to humankind, and by following its instructions we can find wonderful peace and a renewed relationship with our Creator. In the Bible we also find practical advice on everyday life. Here are just a few examples:

- Money management (Proverbs 6:1-5)
- Choosing a life partner (Proverbs 31:10, 31 and 2 Corinthians 6:14)
- Getting along with parents (Colossians 3:20)
- Healthful living (Proverbs 20:1)

God has also included prophecies in the Bible, special insights that give us a better understanding of the past and future. A stellar example is an especially amazing prophecy found in the Bible book of Daniel.

A STUNNING STATUE

About the year 600 B.C., Daniel, a young captured Israelite, became one of the most trusted advisors for King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. One night the king had a dream of a huge statue of a man. Daniel, after praying to God for help, interpreted the dream for Nebuchadnezzar.

Daniel explained that the statue represented the different kingdoms that would rule the earth in the future. The head of gold represented Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom. The chest and arms were made of silver, an inferior metal. Babylon was conquered by Media-Persia, a nation inferior to Babylon in culture, architecture, and power. The image's belly and thighs were made of bronze. Greece followed Media-Persia. Interestingly enough, the Greeks were known for the masterful bronze statues they created.

Following Greece, Roman armies, represented by the legs of iron, swept across the then-known world. Rome's iron-fisted rulers would dominate the world stage for centuries. Eventually, though, Rome too fell, breaking up into the nations of Western Europe. These countries have never been able to form a lasting alliance, just as the clay and iron of the image's feet did not bind together.

King Nebuchadnezzar's dream ended with a giant rock crashing into the statue and filling the whole earth! This rock represents God's kingdom, a final kingdom that has not yet arrived but will last forever.

Prophecies such as this one give us confidence that God is ultimately in charge of past events and the future. But the most important part of God's plan would come to pass hundreds of years after Daniel's time.

JESUS' LIFE, MINISTRY, AND DEATH

Clearly, the future is an open book to God. Even before creating human beings, He knew that He'd be taking a risk by granting them true freedom of choice. But that is God's way — He will force no one to love Him or follow His ways.

God had a plan in place, though, should humankind choose the wrong path. It was a plan to deal with sin, the deadly consequence of such wrong choices. This same plan would ultimately allow humans to choose to one day live forever with their Savior.

The Bible makes it clear that by default we're all sinners, and as a result there's a price to be paid: "For the wages ["payoff"] of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). That's the bad news.

The good news is that we don't have to pay the price! In an astonishing move, God became a human being named Jesus and paid the price Himself! Every waking moment Jesus spent proving heaven's love for humankind. Unlike the rest of us, He never sinned. In the end He willingly laid down His life on a cross to pay the price for our sins.

BABYLON:
605-539 B.C.

MEDO-PERSIA:
539-331 B.C.

GREECE
331-168 B.C.

ROME:
168 B.C.-A.D. 476

EUROPEAN NATIONS:
A.D. 476-PRESENT



Jesus' sacrifice for us changed everything. Satan had claimed that God was harsh and that His ways—including the Ten Commandments—were too hard to follow. But Jesus proved to the entire universe that Satan was a liar! No longer was there any reason to doubt God or His love. By His death and resurrection, Jesus won for each of us the right to choose to accept His love and to serve as living proof that following God's ways results in a truly fulfilling life. For those who say yes to His invitation, Jesus has promised to return and take them to heaven. (For the exciting details, pick up a Bible and read John 14:2, 3!)

PAID IN FULL



THE ROMAN EMPIRE

Beginning as a humble village in Italy, Rome eventually extended its power all the way from the Middle East to Britain. While it is true that Rome ruled with an iron fist, the world nevertheless owes a great debt to this empire, particularly in such areas as architecture, literature, and government.

One of Rome's most enduring legacies is a religious system that grew out of its ashes, as it were. This religious power, while claiming to represent God on earth, more closely resembled the style of the Roman emperors, often ruling by deceit, compromise, and violence. Thousands who dared to disagree with the Roman church's policies and doctrines were imprisoned or lost their lives.

The Bible, in Revelation 13, predicted the rise of just such a religious-political power. This power would receive a "deadly wound" that would heal. The Roman church received this "deadly wound" in 1798, when a French army captured and imprisoned the head of the church, Pope Pius VI. Since that time, the Roman church's influence and power have been less than before. But as time has marched on, the "deadly wound" has healed, just as the Bible predicted. The Roman Catholic Church is gaining increasing influence throughout the world. It remains to be seen how it will use this influence in these waning days of earth's history.

THE END OF EARTH'S HISTORY

According to the Bible, life on this earth will not continue on forever just as it is. Jesus will return to earth (an event known as the "second coming") and ultimately remake our world into a beautiful, peaceful paradise as an eternal home for all who love Him.

Every day the news is filled with stories of wars, crime, famine, or another earthquake or tsunami. In Matthew 24 Jesus warned that this would be the case just before His second coming. Some might call this "alarmism," pointing out that war and crime have always existed and that famines and natural disasters are nothing new. Science and research, however, fall on the side of Bible prophecy.

For example, since 1900 there has been a significant increase in natural disasters, especially floods and cyclones. In April 2011 more than 750 tornadoes struck the United States, making it the worst month for tornadoes in history. Earthquakes also have been on the increase, destroying entire towns and causing devastating tsunamis.

Far worse than nature's destructive power is human beings' cruelty to one another. In the twentieth century more than 231 million people were killed in wars and smaller conflicts. As this book is being written, there are 44 ongoing wars and smaller conflicts that have so far resulted in tens of thousands of deaths, 75 percent of which are civilians.

One important last-day event remains to be fulfilled. Jesus predicted that the good news of salvation and the promise of His return would spread throughout the world. Then, and only then, will the end of earth's history arrive. That day is growing ever nearer. Are you ready? If you're not sure, turn to page 43 to find out how to prepare. It might be simpler than you think!



Source: http://www.gidsa.no/graphicslib/detail/trends-in-natural-disasters_0899. Cartographer/designer: Emmanuelle Boumezy, UNEP/GRID-Arendal



SOME HELPFUL BIBLE VERSES

CREATION: Genesis 1:1-2:3

TEN COMMANDMENTS: Exodus 20:1-17

SABBATH: Genesis 2:2, 3; Exodus 20:8-11; Luke 4:16

THE GOLDEN STATUE DREAM: Daniel 2:1-49

THE "LITTLE HORN": Daniel 7:8

LIFE AND MINISTRY OF JESUS: MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE, JOHN (entire books)

CHANGE OF THE SABBATH: Daniel 7:25

SALVATION: John 3:16; Ephesians 2:8; 1 John 5:13

PRAYER: Philippians 4:6, 7

DEATH AS SLEEP: John 11:11; 1 Thessalonians 4:14

JESUS' END-TIME MINISTRY: Daniel 8:14 (starts in 538 B.C. and ends in A.D. 1844)

JUDGMENT BEFORE JESUS' RETURN: Daniel 7:9-14

PROMISE OF JESUS' RETURN: John 14:1-3

JESUS' RETURN DETAILED: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

JUDGMENT OF THE DEAD: Revelation 20:11-15



THE AMAZING 2300-DAY PROPHECY

Does the Bible actually give beginning and ending dates for the 2300-day prophecy found in Daniel 8:14? Absolutely!

The beginning date of the prophecy is actually found in another prophecy: Daniel 9:24-27. In verse 24 an angel tells Daniel that Israel will be granted a certain number of years in which to prepare for and accept Jesus as the world's Savior. The total time period is "seventy sevens." Using the one prophetic day equals one literal year prophecy time principle found in Ezekiel 4:6, this amounts to 490 years. But when does that time period start? Daniel 9:25 states that it begins when the decree to "restore and rebuild Jerusalem" is issued. This happened in 457 B.C. You can read the actual decree in Ezra 7:11-26.

Next, in Daniel 9:27, the angel predicts Jesus' death, which took place in A.D. 31. This helps us to know that our interpretation of the 2300-day prophecy is on track!

Finally, going back to Daniel 8:14, we're told that this entire period of prophecy will last for 2300 prophetic days, or literal years. Starting at 457 B.C. and moving ahead 2300 years brings us to the year A.D. 1844.

Yet there is even further assurance regarding this prophetic time period. A deep study of Daniel's prophecies clearly show four specific events surrounding the 2300-day prophecy:

1. The judgment of God's people occurs after the cross but before the second coming of Jesus.
2. The judgment of God's people, depicted in Daniel 7, occurs after A.D. 1798.
3. The judgment of God's people in Daniel 7 parallels the "cleansing of the sanctuary" in Daniel 8. They are the same event.
4. The cleansing of God's sanctuary, or time of judgment, therefore, must occur after A.D. 1798.* The year A.D. 1844 meets all the requirements!

**For a deeper study on this topic, see the book 1844 Made Simple, by Clifford Goldstein.*

