

UK BIBLE STUDENTS NEWSLETTER

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MAGIC, MYSTERY, AND HEAVENLY TOURISTS

There's never been a better time to be an atheist. A number of related factors have matured which are conducive to the notion: (1) the prevailing mechanistic view of Evolution; (2) the ingrained tendency to interpret *all* data within the context of unbelief; and, (3) the decay of established social mores, especially in the first world nations, the traditional loci of modern science.

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Q&A

All Scriptures are from the New International Version-UK, unless indicated otherwise.

Question: 'Who are 'God's people' today?

Answer: According to the Scriptures, God accepts all those who accept His Son Jesus as their Saviour and King, regardless of creed, denomination, race, sex, or nationality (Acts 17: 30-32; Galatians 3: 28, 29; Colossians 3: 11). Some of these believers will consecrate – give their heart, mind, and will over to God. Others will more or less linger on the fringes of the Christian faith, living lives which are for the most part just and noble. Both types of Christians are justified by faith in Christ, and *Christ alone*. The categories of believers may be subdivided further, but suffice it to say that each of these general types of Christians will actively bear witness, in varying degrees, to the principles and practices of Christianity, by publicising the Word of Truth and demonstrating its power by their godly conduct.

These people are the figurative 7,000 alluded to in 1 Kings 19: 18, and sectarianism has no place in the picture. The actors in this particular scenario come in various guises, usually with differing emphases on aspects of the Divine message. These aspects may take the form of an educated defence of the faith and God's reputation against atheistic Evolution; the assertion of the Biblical view of sex and marriage as against contemporary variations; or godly living through Scriptural devotions; or they may lay emphasis on the work of Christ in saving sinners from various addictions; others may emphasise rigorous Bible study, and so on. No one grouping has a monopoly on the Christian faith or the form the message takes. For however and by whomever the work of God is carried forward, God's witness *must and will be* advanced in these historic days.

Citing another analogy, Jesus averred that had the crowds remained silent during His processional into Jerusalem, the rocks *would have had to cry out*; that is, the prophetic witness cannot be shut up (Luke 19: 40). No matter how secular or raw society may become, there will always be a witness

delivered by the figurative 7,000, who cannot be driven out of existence. Many of these Christians might live over into the earthly Kingdom – that is, they may not die during that transition, though there is no clear Scriptural text on this point.

MUSINGS

‘For decades, America has embraced a baffling contradiction. The majority of its people are churchgoing Christians, many of them evangelical. Yet its mainstream pop culture, especially film, is secular at best, often raw and irreligious. . . . In the broadest sense, movies are getting more religious. . . . Hollywood doesn’t necessarily want to make Christian movies. It wants to make movies Christians think are Christian. Moviemakers are happy to be the money changers in the temple.’

Richard Corliss, *The Gospel According to Spider-Man* (published in *Signs of Life in the USA*; Boston: Bedford/St. Martins; 2006; pp. 427-430).

IN THE REAR-VIEW MIRROR

2001

‘Terrorism is not a new phenomenon. The bomb-throwers and the assassins have been a feature of society for generations. But there has been a rapid increase in political terrorism since the ending of the Second World War in 1945. As the geopolitical structure began to be redefined following that war, peoples and cultures were displaced, sowing the seeds of strife.

‘The Cold War which began soon after the war’s end provoked fierce conflicts based on partisan ideologies. Added to this was the revival of ancient struggles for independence. The breeding ground for terror was fertile and it began to bring forth bad fruit in the 1970s. Violent attacks by terrorists in democratic countries were frequent: France, Germany, Spain, Algeria, Britain, Italy – these countries some years ago adapted to the sense of unease engendered by the circumstances, and enacted counter-terrorism laws, with varying degrees of success. But still the parcel bombs, the car bombs, the shootings, continued.

‘Though engaged abroad in various military and covert ventures, the United States has been relatively immune from terrorist attack within its borders, though there have been occasional aggressive incidents and many more plots which have been thwarted. Now the homeland has been hit. The images of two of the world’s tallest buildings folding down on themselves was so dramatic as to be scarcely credible. We live with the assumption that the man-made constructions around us – like the natural world – are permanent and intended to remain forever. This assumption collapsed into the rubble of steel and concrete.

‘There is today, in the United States, a palpable sense of national hurt and national loss. The national flags which adorn the buildings and houses in each community give voice to the complex feelings which the assault has evoked. Many other democratic nations, many of whom lost significant numbers of their own citizens, now feel more vulnerable. The outpouring of support for the United States from the international community has been touching.’

‘Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness’, *The Bible Standard*, October 2001, p. 76.

1945

'[Churchill] had destroyed the awful tyranny of Hitler, but what had risen in its place? Perhaps his own comments to Macmillan in Cairo in 1943 about Cromwell indicate a degree of self-knowledge: "he made one terrible mistake. Obsessed in his youth by fear of the power of Spain, he failed to observe the rise of France. Will that be said of me?" If "Germany" is substituted for "Spain" and "Russia" for "France", then the answer to Churchill's rhetorical question might well be "yes". . . . Churchill stood for the British Empire, for British independence and for an "anti-Socialist" vision of Britain. By July 1945 the first of these was on the skids, the second was dependent solely upon America and the third had just vanished in a Labour election victory. [I]t was indeed the end of glory.'

John Charmley, *Churchill: The End of Glory* (London: Hodder and Stoughton; 1993; p. 649).

DRAG-NET

News from the World Wide Web

'[This is your brain on atheism](#)' (retrieved 14 Sept. 2011)

'[Revealed: the full picture of sentences handed down to rioters](#)' (retrieved 14 Sept. 2011)

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