

## HOW! *(continued from inside)*

no reference to the fruit, but only the wood itself. If there is no fruit, as was the case with Israel, then what function could the wood be? None. No one would even make a pin or nail of it to hang something up with. Jesus made use of this symbol in John 15. God further reasoned that if the Vine is worthless for wood as it was before, how much less after it is destroyed by fire! This is what Israel faced and what it experienced, including Jerusalem. Britain and others would do well to consider and act upon the parable in that short chapter of merely 8 verses.

**Ezekiel's warnings were responded to in two main ways;** aptly representing the mentality of the masses *then* and *now* (see Ezek. 12:21-28). **Response 1:** "Time marches on, and all these fearful predictions have come to nothing — just a bunch of religious scaremongering!" **Response 2:** "These visions and prophecies are true, but they will come much later, after I am dead and gone." God wanted the people to stop saying these things. **The first** simply responded in cynical unbelief; dismissing it completely. **The second**, gave them a false sense of comfort and security by shoving God's judgment into the distant future. **When people are determined not to repent and seek God, they often adopt one of these views.**

We have visited **Care Homes** weekly for over 27 years. Recently, an elderly lady—one of our "regulars"—looked at me with a smile as I neared her where she sat. With face beaming, she raised one arm from the

elbow upwards, and said **"HOW!"** It was her innocent copy of an American Indian greeting. I've not seen one person in our 30plus years here in London that has done that. I knelt down in front of her and said, "I have been writing for about two weeks on an article that I have titled **'HOW?'** and that is the first thing you say to me!"

Yes, I want Britain, America and the rest of the world to be spared judgment from God, but **not simply to return to the "good old days" of any generation.** I am seeking **"a new thing"**—unprecedented revival that sweeps across nations like a tsunami of glory, washing away all sin in its path.. May such a move of God prompt wonderment of onlookers more than it did back on that first Pentecost, recorded in Acts 2: 6-8, so that all will say with happiness, yet deep awareness of unworthiness: **"HOW?!"**

### The Curse of Commercialism

**Personal, national or global prosperity are linked to the highest danger ever—a lesson easily...and I fear, gladly... forgotten.**

**I am only saying "Amen" to Jesus and the Bible! This issue's main article draws much from Ezekiel. But in Ezek. 26-28, God speaks of judgement that falls upon prosperous Tyre, a city full of commercial activity. Chap. 27 gives stunning detail of the multi-national commercial activity, yet spiritual deadness and final and irreversible judgment from God. Most world troubles are linked to the twins of *spiritual deadness* and *worldly focus*.**

**Time to stop, turn around and go "full speed ahead" back to God!**

**WONDERFUL WORDS OF LIFE!:** Words need not be merely empty talk. Through the Old Testament prophet, Hosea, God spoke powerfully. At the end of Hosea's "book," God told sin-stumbling Israel to come to Him with WORDS... but "words on fire!"... words of absolutely-thorough repentance toward God!... words of turning from all sin and from dependence on any other strength but God! Upon hearing this, God promised to love them freely and completely heal the backsliding nature deep within their hearts, and the heart of the nation. National fruitfulness resulted...and wisdom! (See chapter 14).

Registered Charity #1092050

SEPTEMBER  
2013

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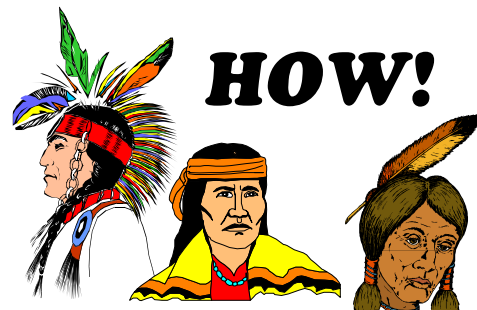
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## London Christian Standard *...and Provincial*

**"Lift up a standard for the people." Isaiah 62:10**

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Gabriel L. Mancino

To a child growing up in America in the mid 50s-60s, the word, **"HOW"** (along with **"UG"**), was easily linked to **the stereotype image of Native American Indians.** No mockery is intended. In our June 2012 issue, I told how, as a lad, I sometimes daydreamed about Indians as I gazed from the "high-level bridge" that spans the Indian-named **Monongahela River** which flows between the East-side and West-side of my hometown of **Fairmont** in northern

**West Virginia.** I imagined Indians paddling canoes on the river below, and how the surrounding landscape might have appeared a few hundred years before.

An elderly USA friend passed away earlier this year. Indians called him **"Chief Hugs Himself,"** due to his posture when roaring with laughter! Besides his many other achievements, **Rev. William D. Gale** lived, laboured and loved many years among the Indians while **President of Brainerd Indian School** (South Dakota) and **Northwest Indian Bible School** (Montana). One of his books about those times is **"I Sat Where They Sat,"** which gets its title from the sympathetic words of the Old Testament prophet, Ezekiel, who **"sat"** (Ezek. 3:15) among the Jewish captives after the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem. Ezekiel was a younger contemporary of the prophet, Jeremiah.

Israel "lost it all." They had been

*(continued inside)*

**THE "HUGGER" in the Bible:** The name of the Old Testament prophet, **Habakkuk**, means "hug" or "embrace." He did not speak to his nation (Israel) nor to others; only to God! But he had a problem with God! Like many, including people today, he couldn't understand why God was doing what He was doing. God's prophet was not arrogant, but intensely earnest. Yet he said that we should keep reverently silent in the face of God's perfectly wise and just government (2:20). God told this prophet that He wanted him to **"write down the vision He gave him, in an easily-understandable way, so that any who read it may run!"** (Hab. 2:2). **"RUN?!"** Yes! We are in the race of life, heading for the finish line in eternity. All may win, but we mustn't quit. Only sin can disqualify a person. Run to win. Help others to run, too! (1 Cor. 9:24-27; Gal. 5:7; Phil. 2:16; 2 Tim. 4: 7,8; Heb. 12: 1,2). Even in perplexity, **HUG!** (Heb. 11:13-16)...and **RUN!**

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repeatedly warned by the prophets. Yet when **“the Babylonian Bomb”** hit and they were carted off to captivity, they sat in amazement and asked: **“HOW?!”**; meaning, “How did this happen?!” You might ask: “How could they not know?!”

The Indians were dispossessed of far more than the scene that I dreamed about on my hometown bridge. Apparently, **Mr. Churchill**, quoting the **“dog in a manger” philosophy**, thought it acceptable that the American Indians (and others) were conquered and replaced by “a stronger, higher-grade and more worldly-wise race.” I can imagine the Indians sitting like Ezekiel and the captives, and asking **“HOW?”**

To my knowledge, the American Indians did not resist and rebel against God and His prophets as God-chosen and God-blessed Israel did. Other nations, like Britain and America, have had the blessing of God in the past. Yet, like Israel, they have progressively...and now *rapidly*... declined. Like ancient Israel, they are in danger of “losing it all.” **Much is lost already.**

Scripture makes it absolutely clear that if individuals or nations entertain any hope of Divine rescue from judgment, they must first ask for rescue from all sin. *That* step always involves backtracking, and making all past wrongs right, as far as possible. We would not have expected less from **The Prodigal Son** (Lk. 15:11ff). The Prodigal cut no corners in confession, and neither can any individual or nation. Cutting corners, in this context, is spiritual and national suicide, paving the way for judgment.

Jeremiah, who was older than Ezekiel, was permitted to stay in Jerusalem’s ruins. His longer book in the Bible is followed by his brief, five-chapter book, **Lamentations**. Jeremiah knew what it meant to lament—

in a unique and severely painful way. He had warned them and wept for them, even though he was ignored, opposed, mocked, rejected and imprisoned! **The first verse of Lamentations chapters 1 and 2 and 4, all start with that word: “HOW?”** The message of both prophets apply powerfully *today*.

Ezekiel revealed God’s decision that **Jerusalem’s destruction could not be evaded or postponed.** In Ezek. 7, verses 2, 3 & 6 the same message is given. Verse 6 says *“An end has come, the end has come; it has dawned for you; behold, it has come!”* **In a nutshell, God said “AN END!”** God’s patience has an end. Though separated by over 500 miles, Jeremiah and Ezekiel shared that same message of finality with their audiences. God had not spared the angels that rebelled, nor Adam and Eve, nor Sodom, and here we see He did not spare His “chosen people” and “the city of David” which He loved. It is useless for sinning nations to trust in supposed connection to God, or long or “noble” history, anthems of bravery and freedom or any such thing. The world’s peoples, in general, have long been provoking God in various ways... just like Israel did.

In Ezekiel 8, **God takes the prophet on a tour through the city** to see all of the abominations. About a half a dozen times

### THE FRACKING WE NEED

A newspaper article cited a supposed USA fracking “success story,” showing how it greatly benefits the nation. What **deceptive reporting!** This fracturing **underground** does vast and irreparable damage to life & natural resources—including the air we breathe. Yet it is a mere glimpse of what is being fractured **ABOVE** the ground in society! There is perversity, deception, corruption & evil of all sorts. “Fracking”- (breaking up) **our hearts before God in GENUINE repentance & salvation from all sin is definitely our #1 Hope!** (Hosea 10:12)

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in that short passage God said to him, *“Do you see all of the abominations they are doing here? Come, I’ll show you more!”*

**One by one, the details of their idolatry and evil were exposed.** “The religious crowd” were centrally involved. No wonder God says that *“judgment must begin at the house of God”* (1 Pet. 4: 17). No wonder, in Ezekiel 9, God says of His immediate judgment, *“and start at My sanctuary!”* (v. 6).

In chapter 9, God commanded a **“mark” to be put on the foreheads** of those who weep over the horrid sin of the people and nation. In the same breath, God commanded to destroy all who do *NOT* have that “mark” of passionate intercession. We have heard of **The Mark of the Beast** (666). **This is The Mark of the BEST.**

Jeremiah’s weeping seems largely to have fallen on **deaf ears**. Due to their rejection of God’s warnings, “the holy city” was wiped and turned upside-down like a dish (2 Kings 21:13). It happened again several centuries later, only *that* time it was *Jesus* who wept over the rebellious, rejecting city (Lk. 13: 34, 35; 19: 41ff).

Yes, political leaders at every level can bring a damning, corrupting influence to a town, city, county, state and/or nation. Babylon is known for actually infecting **the whole world** with its evil! But along with **the politicians** were the false **prophets** and the idolatrous **priests**. This contagion of evil spread further, for **the common people** were equally inclined— *“and My people love to have it so!”* (e.g. Jere. 5: 31).

In Ezek. 13, God promises judgment upon the **false prophets** that were extending a **false hope** and **false security**. They *“strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not turn from his wicked way, by promising him life”* (v. 22). What deception!

God says that if we reject or back away

from the light of His Word and Will, then our prayers (and “praise and worship”) are worse than useless. Isaiah 1 shows God’s feelings on this matter. **He couldn’t “stomach” Israel’s hypocrisy**, and turned His ears away from their praying. Yet, be sure, **“hypocrisy” is found everywhere, not just in religion!**

Also, in Isaiah 1, God condemns the vast shedding of blood. Much blood has been shed **at home**—by abortion and various other means, **and abroad**—in more recent years “spreading democracy and preventing terrorism.” **God hated the hypocrisy back then, and He must find today’s hypocrisies sickening, as well.**

**Yet in Isaiah 1, God also shows the way to recovery!...even to a disgusting people who were utterly blind to their true condition and danger.** He later did the same for those seen in Revelation 3: 14-22.

Already, Britain and other nations have great reason to cry out, with spinning head and gaping jaw, **“HOW?”** Yet, much of the vanished “splendour” of the past—in riches, industry, strength... you name it—has been the empty, superficial stuffing of self-deception. Jeremiah said: *“Your fierceness has deceived you, the pride of your heart.”* (49:16). God’s prophet, Obadiah agreed, saying *“The pride of your heart has deceived you, you who dwell in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; you who say in your heart, ‘Who will bring me down to the ground?’ Though you ascend as high as the eagle, and though you set your nest among the stars, from there I will bring you down, says the LORD”.* (1: 3, 4).

**Israel’s Biblical “symbol” was the Vine.** God pre-eminently wanted Israel to be spiritually fruitful, in order to rightly represent Him to the rest of the world. Failing to be thus fruitful, God used Ezekiel (chap. 15) to reason with them about any alternative purpose for their existing. But in using this symbol of the Vine, God made

*We meet at Christ Church on the corner of Brent Street and Heriot Road in Hendon (NW4) at 5:45 pm Sundays. Nearest Tube: Hendon Central.*