

Destiny Newsletter

PUBLISHED BY CHRISTIAN DESTINY HILLSBORO, KANSAS 67063 PHONE 620-947-2345 FAX 620-947-5560



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“THE BIBLICAL PATTERN FOR LEADERS”

THE CHARACTER OF A LEADER

We have many things going on in our time--some good, some bad, some subversive, some encouraging. What is it that engages the amazing diversity of the world in which we live? Why do things develop as they do, and what determines the way those developments impact upon us?

The Bible foretells that in the prophetic days now breaking upon us, there will arise a certain central theme that you and I would do well to address. It is one of the components that makes the world what it is today, and it will have a telling influence upon what the world will finally become.

That component is leadership! Everyone agrees that leadership is tremendously important. The failure of leadership can produce tragic consequences.

Can you imagine the leaders of the world actually taking counsel against God? They will sit down and cogitate about what they are going to do, in their campaign to rid the world of God! Rulers who are against God produce terrible results in the life of a nation. In fact, the third chapter of

the Book of Isaiah tells us that one of the signs of Divine judgment is a failure of leadership.

“The captain of fifty, and the honorable man, and the counselor, and the skillful craftsman, and the eloquent orator. And I will give children to be their princes, and babes shall rule over them. . . As for My people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them” (Isaiah 3:3-4, 12).

So it is that leadership will finally come apart as we move toward the end of the age. Is there something we can do to prevent that, or at least slow the process of decay which eats at the foundations of our society? The Bible speaks about several characteristics of leadership, which are in keeping with the Divine plan.

1. Recognize Divine Ordination

First of all, a leader must recognize his Divine ordination. According to the Bible, even in the political sphere, the authority of a leader is ordained of God. Listen to what the Scripture says concerning this:

“Let every soul be subject to the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God” (Romans 13:1).

“Do you mean to tell me that the President, the King, the Commissioner, is ordained of God?” Yes. I mean to say that every person who has the opportunity to influence the course of somebody else’s life, had better realize that he does so by the permission of God. That makes him answerable to God for his actions. When you leave God out of it, the consequences are terrible indeed. You never heard a Communist leader say, “I’m here because God put me here.” These people were strong and powerful

atheists. They resented God. When you leave God out of the equation, leadership fails. Watch that as it relates to your nation these days. Just as a person is ordained to the ministry, as pastor of a church, even so a leader in the political realm is ordained of God. *“The powers that be are ordained of God.”* Remind every leader of that, because it is one of the pillars of the conduct of a good society.

2. Be Just

Secondly, a leader must be just. God ordains a principle: *“He that ruleth over men must be just.”* That means he must be fair. He must be honest. He must have a degree of righteousness about him. He must have character. He must be able to evenly balance the needs and demands of opposing forces. To be just is a very difficult thing. It takes all the help of God in order to bring it to pass. *“He that ruleth over men must be just.”* That’s the second absolutely necessary quality of a leader. May God give us leaders like that in our time!

3. Realize That We Live in a Fallen World

Now there’s a third characteristic of a leader; He must realize that we live in a fallen world. It is necessary to recognize the doctrine of original sin, if one is to understand the true nature of life. The Bible says:

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).

That has very real implications in the life of a culture, and determines how a leader must deal with that culture.

“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (Romans 5:12).

“There is none righteous,

“He that ruleth over men must be just.”

no, not one: There is none that understands, there is none that seeks after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that does good, no, not one" (Romans 3:10-12).

Original sin affects how many people? Everybody. How many people have sinned? Everyone. So sin lies at the door of every house and every office and every government agency. Sin characterizes the world. The person who would rule must remember that. People cannot be trusted just on their own recognizance.

What are the rules by which we are to govern society? The rules are the very law of God. It is the law of God that inhibits sinful activity. Even though some may resent that law, it requires people to chart a course that makes the government dependable.

Remember, we live in a sinful world. To forget that is to totally misunderstand life.

4. Be a Good Steward of Other People's Money

With whose money does a leader deal? The answer is, other people's money. The Bible gives an indication of what it means to be a good steward. Every person in this world is required to be responsible, accountable, to somebody. He is required to be a good steward. Again, the Scripture is very clear on this:

"Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord, when he comes shall find so doing" (Luke 12:42-43).

Here is presented the picture of a man who has been called away to a far country. While he's away, he's got to have someone take care of his property. The person who takes care of the property of another, who's put in trust of that property, is called a steward. While his master is away, he must be honest and responsible, even when nobody is looking. That good stewardship is what keeps it all going.

5. Must Not Seek Human Glory

The consequences of seeking after human glory and personal aggrandizement are really terrible. That attitude is called pride. The Bible says:

"Pride goes before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall" (Proverbs 16:18).

Pride can be very ruinous. The Bible gives us many accounts of how this works. One of them that is especially striking is found in the 12th chapter of the Book of Acts.

"And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration to them. And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man. And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory, and he was eaten of worms, and died. But the word of God grew and multiplied" (Acts 12:21-24).

Isn't that interesting? This man believed the people when they said, "He is a god. He speaks like other than a human being." In his heart of hearts, he said, "Yes. They are correct." That agreement before the people, taking unto himself glory that he did not deserve, cost him his life.

Watch out for the terrible erosion of pride. Believing the praise that comes to you is a great mistake. Rather, we must be the kind of people that give the glory to God.

Now that comes just from a common-sense realization, does it not? Who enables us to be thoughtful? Who enables our brains to work? Who is it that makes it possible for us to live? In whom do we live and have our being? What's the answer to that question? The answer is that God makes it possible.

We cannot possibly have a government that works, unless God is in the midst of it. We must therefore trust Him and not ourselves. We have a nation under God, because it won't work unless God is running things.

When the Bible says, "*The powers that be are ordained of God,*" it really means it. That means, of course, as we have already said, that the ruler must be loyal to God. But that also states a principle.

The principle is that the only foundation on which a nation can be built is that of God.

Thinking about America for just a moment, there is something that has constantly impressed me. In a very real sense, this nation was built out of people whose initial call, initial concern, was the desire to worship God according to the dictates of their conscience. They came because here they could recognize God in a way that was being obscured back in Europe.

It's that attitude, fidelity to God, that coalesced and made a nation come to pass. It didn't happen because of some great architectural plan. They called democracy a vast experiment. They called government of the people, by the people, for the people, a new thing on the face of the earth. But it succeeded, because it succeeded under God.

I'm concerned about this nation of ours, and about the nations of Western civilization. The faith we profess to have, must finally show itself in the work of improving a nation. Again may I remind us, that leadership will fail as we move toward the end of the age. The kings of the earth will conspire against God. There will be a shortage of leadership, and people who are able to command situations will not be around. Don't let that happen now. It may happen in a generation to come, but we must fight to keep it from happening in ours. Even now, we must pray for those in authority over us, and we must believe the Word of God when it announces that God empowers people for leadership, and makes them able to take over these commanding positions. Put these principles down. Think about any political servant that you may know, about people occupying elected office, about those who are commissioned to be responsible for something, and regard them in this light. Remember, the basis of life is moral. When we lose a moral base, we lose it all. Let's not have that happen in our generation.

From the writings of Dave Breese

THE TIDE OF OUR TIMES

“THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION voted [...] to sever its 99-year relationship with the Baptist World Alliance [...] because the worldwide umbrella group also includes American Baptist Churches USA, which has about 30 congregations that call themselves ‘welcoming and affirming’ to homosexuals.

In a speech to the convention, the Rev. Paige Patterson, president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, said, [...] ‘What you give your name and your money to, you give your tacit approval to’ [...] adding that the Convention ‘can no longer afford to be aligned in any way’ with such churches at a time when homosexual ‘marriage’ is one of the nation’s leading public issues. [...]”

By Julia Duin, The Washington Times

“THE INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE in The Hague ruled [...] that Israel’s security barrier in the West Bank is illegal and ordered Israel to tear down the structure and pay reparations to Palestinians whose property was destroyed during its construction.

Building the barrier, which eventually will be 425 miles long, is ‘tantamount to de facto annexation’ and impedes Palestinians’ right to self-determination, court President Shi Jiuyong said. [...]

Israel says it’s building the barrier to keep out suicide bombers, but the court sided with the Palestinian interpretation. [...]

Israel rejected the ruling, dismissing it as a ‘politically motivated maneuver.’ [...]”

By Soraya Sarhaddi Nelson, Knight Ridder Newspapers

“THE UNITED STATES is strongly committed, and I am strongly committed, to the the security of Israel

as a vibrant Jewish state. Israel is a democracy and a friend, and has every right to defend itself from terror.”

From a speech by President George W. Bush

“CHINA’S ECONOMY IS EXPANDING at a blistering pace. [...]

After two decades of rapid growth, China’s economy is having a global impact in all kinds of surprising ways. [...] Its voracious appetite for raw materials has driven up prices worldwide and created shortages. China consumes 55 percent of the world’s cement, 40 percent of its steel and 25 percent of its aluminum. China’s growing demand for oil is one reason crude prices are so high. [...]

China is now the world’s sixth-largest economy, comparable in size to France or Italy. But unlike France and Italy, it’s growing rapidly, giving it disproportionate influence. [...]

By Ken Moritsugu and Tim Johnson, Knight Ridder Newspapers

First Two Thousand Years. [...]

‘These books read like an adventure, a grand tale of epic proportions, recounting Christendom’s most significant events and people,’ said *AFA Journal* editor Randall Murphree. [...]

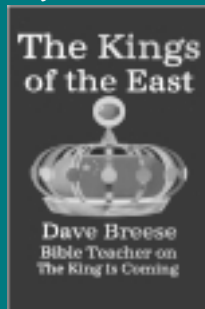
Canadian editor Ten Byfield [...] thinks this history of the faith is imperative because of what the culture has done in recent decades to diminish Christianity’s impact. [...]

Byfield told the *Edmonton Journal* (Alberta, Canada) that increasing anti-Christian bias in North America portends impending persecution. ‘If I make a statement against Jews or Muslims,’ he said, ‘I’m accused immediately of bigotry. If I make them against Christians, which appear all the time, that’s not bigotry, it’s a brownie point in [my] favor.’

The volumes are being marketed via Internet and telephone (www.christianhistoryproject.com or 1-800-853-5402).” *AFA Journal*



THE KINGS OF THE EAST
by Dave Breese



Booklet available:
For Any Contribution

“THE CHRISTIAN HISTORY PROJECT chronicles the history of the faith in a format that is both scholarly and reader-friendly. *The Veil is Torn* is the first in a 15-volume series called *The Christians: The*

THERE IS STILL TIME to register to vote. I pray that all qualified Christians will take part in this election, raising our voices and casting our votes in favor of righteousness wherever possible. Working together, we will do our best to stem the tide of evil.

The Bible assures us that in the end, good, and God, will triumph. But along the way we will encounter terrible opposition from the Enemy. Even in this blessed Church Age, when God has given us an open door of opportunity, we will face trials and challenges of mounting intensity as we move closer to the Rapture of the Church.

THE CHOOSING



Twelve kinds of wonder
 Ten kinds of thrill
 That God has endowed us
 With two words, "I will"
 In loving permission
 He whispers, "You may"
 We're free moral agents
 What can we say?

Upheld in His sovereignty
 His universe stands
 Each infinite detail
 Held fast in His hands.
 Where nothing may vary
 From His precise plan
 No alternate mind
 But then . . .
 He made man!

Within him He placed
 The power to choose
 For good or for evil
 To win or to lose.
 With the image of God
 Anchored deep in his being
 He communes with his Lord
 And by faith waits the seeing.

The loving experiment
 Heaven has designed
 An alternative will
 Though often maligned
 Is the reason for living
 The essence of life
 By this is explained
 The joys and the strife.

So, choices do matter
 Commitments still count
 The law that we live by
 Came down from the mount,
 Guaranteeing us freedom
 From the most to the least
 Marking always the difference
 'Tween the man and the beast.

Let therefore the person
 Who would live life aright
 Be shrewd in his choosing
 'Neath heaven's bright light.
 Led by the Spirit
 Blest from on high
 We follow the pathway
 That leads to the sky.

by Dave Breese

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

“This is just a note to say how very much I appreciate the commentary by Margaret Riedel, re: ‘Election, Predestination, God’s Sovereignty and Man’s Free Will.’ It is the most tenable explanation I have ever read. Thank You!” – Ft. Wayne, IN

“Thanks so much for your **Destiny Newsletter** and **Your Questions Answered**. They are read to me since I can’t see that well anymore, but they are wonderful and very encouraging in the Word. My prayers are always for you and your staff and the work of the ministry that you are so faithfully carrying on.”
– Longmont, CO

“Your publications of Christian Destiny are so informational. Especially the last one on ‘Election, Predestination, God’s Sovereignty and [Man’s] Free Will.’ I have studied but was never quite sure of the meaning of these terms. Now I understand, finally and fully. Thanks for your noteworthy publications.”
– Alhambra, CA

“Enclosed is a small gift to help a little with your Christ-honoring ministry. I have appreciated it through the years and know many souls have been saved through this ministry.”
– Funk, NE

“I pray for you. I know you all miss Dave Breese! Here is a small token in remembrance of the man and his mission! May God provide all your needs. May He give guidance, wisdom, comfort. Keep up the good work!” – Fort Mill, SC

“Your ministry is such a blessing to us. You have our continued support. Our precious Lord will be coming soon, as we now live in perilous times.” – Red Bluff, CA

“Thank you for the times you have written personal notes to me. This has been special to me in a way you can never imagine. One precious, thoughtful word from a fellow Christian far away can lend a joy to many days. Thank you, Carol. I pray for your ministry each time I think of you and it is quite often.”
–Yuma, AZ



WORTH QUOTING

“The world has many religions. It has but one Gospel.”
– George Owen

“Don’t compare your goodness with that of other men; compare it with the goodness of the man of Galilee.”
– Megiddo Message

“Our problem today is that we are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. We seek pleasure as a key to happiness, whereas the only unalterable, lasting way to true happiness is through the pursuit of righteousness.”
– Jack Wyrzten

“It is more dangerous to trifle with God than to bear your chest to a blizzard, or play with a rattlesnake.” – Wilbur Nelson

“The important thing is not that one shall be a scientist, important as that is; not that one shall be a statesman, vastly important as that is; nor even that one should be a theologian, immeasurably important as that is; but that greatest thing of all is for one human being to bring another to Christ Jesus the Savior.” – Lymon Beecher

But especially,
“And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ”
(I Thess. 5:23).

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED



Q. When is Christ coming again?

A. The Scripture says, “*Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth (Prov. 27:1)*”. Concerning His coming, Jesus said, “*But of that day and hour knows no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but My Father only*” (Matt. 24:36). The important question, therefore, is not when Christ is coming, but when he comes, will He find me watching, waiting, and looking for Him. His coming is certain, but before that great day, He gives us the opportunity to work for Him in a very exciting generation.

Q. Why am I here? What is the purpose of life?

A. The Scripture says, “*For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*” (II Cor. 4:17). The purpose of life, therefore, is to prepare us for heaven by being in a place of uncertainty which is this world. The difficulties of life are allowed by God so that we will greatly appreciate heaven when we arrive there. You are here in order to believe the Gospel, accept Christ, grow in Grace, and arrive at heaven a strong son of God. We are certainly not here to live lives of indulgence. Only a fool will think otherwise.

Q. Who are the people who really matter in life?

A. The greatest person you know is the one whom you would most want to pray for you when you are sick or in trouble. The important people in this world are those who represent heaven’s purposes and inject spiritual reality into the business of living. Be happy if you know such a person.

Q. Is there healing in the atonement?

A. Yes, but it cannot be invoked until the physical universe and the body of man is redeemed. The Scripture says, “*Even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body*” (Romans 8:23). The body will be redeemed when Christ comes again for His own. Until then, tragedy, disease, and death will characterize the human condition. Until then, we must labor in the midst of limitation, rather than believe in a non-promised deliverance from every difficulty.

Q. Isn’t it presumptuous to say that Christ is the only way of salvation?

A. It would be if it would not be true, but the Scripture says, “*Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved*” (Acts 4:12). The doctrine that there are many ways of salvation is a violation of the clear teaching of Scripture.

Q. Won’t everybody finally be saved?

A. The Bible, speaking about Jesus Christ, says, “*And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power*” (II Thess. 1:7-9).

Q. How much influence should a Christian leader have?

A. The Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy and said, “*Be you followers of me, even as I also am of Christ*” (I Cor. 11:1). He wrote to Timothy and made a suggestion but then said, “*and the Lord give you understanding in all things*” (II Tim. 2:7). He also announced that he would not be the master of someone else’s fate. Leadership, therefore, should be assumed responsibly, reluctantly, and most carefully. The Bible advises every leader saying, “*be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation*” (James 3:1). That means, “Don’t let the Bible class get too big until you know what you are talking about.” In the Scripture, there is nothing like the call to adulation that is promoted by so many quasi-leaders today. The best credential for leadership is humility.

THINKING TOGETHER

THE CONTINUING PERFORMANCE

The God Who Does Not Tire

by Dave Breese

One of the easiest things to do in life is to begin something. We begin a construction project, we begin reading a book, we begin a program of personal or group development, we begin piano lessons. Indeed, there are a thousand activities in life which we have found easy to begin. The hard part, however, is not the beginning. It is keeping the project going. It is finishing well with a completed task. In this regard, we can be most happy, therefore, that we have a great promise from God. The Apostle Paul wrote to the Church of all time when he said, *"Being confident of this very thing, that He which has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ"* (Phil. 1:6). In this helpful passage of Scripture, we have a promise that should be utilized and appreciated by us all. What is that promise? It is the promise that there will be, through thick and thin, a continuing work done by God in the lives of all of us who are believers.

The promise is that God has begun a good work in each one of our lives and having begun, He will perfectly perform that good work through all of life and into eternity. The promise of divine continuance applied to us who are so easily frustrated is a wonderful promise indeed. What does this promise include?

First of all, we have the promise of continuing salvation. Salvation began for each one of us when we believed the Gospel of the grace of God. We thank God for the day when someone said that Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried and that He rose again on the third day. To our

astonishment, we were promised that, when we believe that Gospel, we are instantly given the gift of God which is eternal life.

When we think of it, eternal life would be impossible if it depended upon us. Happily, it depends on the continuing work of Jesus Christ who has promised never to cease that performance. *"Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come to God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them"* (Heb. 7:25).

***"...find grace to help
in time of need"
(Hebrews 4:16).***

We have also the promise of continuing grace. The Bible teaches that we have the grace of God for salvation and also continued divine grace for living our lives as Christians. The Apostle Paul spoke of his own life and said that what he did was not by his power, but *"by the grace of God which was with me."* It is proper, therefore, for us to sing *"He giveth more grace."* Without the continued flow of the promised grace of God, we would soon tire and expire as Christians. But continuing grace, grace that will never fail, is promised to us by our blessed Lord.

We are also given continued supply of every need. The Apostle Paul gave us a great promise when he said, *"But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus"* (Phil. 4:19). Only an omnipotent God could make such a commitment--but our

wonderful Lord has done exactly that, committed Himself to our well-being. Therefore, we can all say with the Apostle Paul, *"But by the grace of God I am what I am"* (I Cor. 15:10). So it is that the Scripture promises us, *"Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need"* (Heb. 4:16).

There are many disquieted Christians who do not really believe that God supplies all of our needs. They tend to forget that He does not promise to respond to every indulgence, but our needs are the object of His continuing, never-failing supply. Indeed, God has obligated Himself to us.

We are also guaranteed the continued presence of Jesus Christ. Our Lord spoke one day to His disciples and said, *"lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world. Amen"* (Matt.28:20). These disciples must have listened with ecstasy to those beautiful words. They were, thereby, guaranteed by Jesus Christ Himself, that they would face no problem, no temptation, no difficulty alone. They would always have the presence and the help of Jesus Christ. One of the grandest descriptions of the Christian which is found in the Bible is *"Christ in you, the hope of glory"* (Col. 1:27). With our lives lived in Jesus Christ and He in us, we have an inseparable relationship with the God of the universe. Without this, we are failing and disconsolate human individuals. With this, the eternal presence of Jesus Christ, we are supremely confident (sometimes it looks like arrogance) that no legitimate

task is too great and in no case will we be forsaken by the Lord.

Christ also promises us continued guidance to know where we are going in life—a marvelous thing. This knowledge is precisely and exactly ours when we are guided by Jesus Christ. By His Spirit, He leads us correctly through every twist and every turn in time and eternity. So it is that the Scripture says, *“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God”* (Romans 8:14). So the Bible says, *“The Lord shall guide you continually”* (Isa. 58:11). Without that guidance, this is a dark world indeed—even for the Christian. With divine guidance, however, the confusions unravel before us and the crooked road is made straight. How many problems and needless pains we would have avoided in life if we had learned to hear the voice of Christ and had responded correctly to the promptings of His Spirit.

We are, therefore, the people able to continually rejoice, so that Scripture says, “Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice” (Phil. 4:4). Therefore, the happiest group of people in the world are Christians. They are uncowed by the dangers or problems of life, but they daily rejoice at all that they have and are in Jesus Christ. They trust the Scripture which says, *“the joy of the Lord is your strength”* (Neh. 8:10). It is, therefore, impossible to discourage them. *“Behold, you have instructed many, and you have strengthened the weak hands. Your words have upholden him that was falling, and you have strengthened the feeble knees”* (Job 4:3-4). Jesus Christ is with us, and one day He will come for us. Let nothing, or no one, therefore, steal the joy of living in Christ and for Him in these very days.

THE CHRISTIAN AND HIS GOVERNMENT

That is a relationship which is the object of great discussion in our time. Because the evangelical cause has greatly expanded in these days, the question presses all the stronger. **“How much should a Christian be involved in political things?”** is the subject of many an animated discussion.

There is a degree of involvement of which we can be very sure, for it is advocated in the Word of God. The Apostle Paul spoke to Timothy saying, *“I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty”* (1 Tim. 2:1,2).

Therefore, let all of us be admonished to pray for the outcome of this upcoming November election. We are to pray for the president and whoever may be president after November. We are to pray for the Supreme Court, the Cabinet, the Congress and others whose decisions may impact upon us. In that “More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of,” we may see truly surprising results if the Christian community gives itself to earnest prayer. The Bible says, *“This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth”* (1 Tim. 2:3,4). *While praying, let us also pray for spiritual revival within our blessed land. While morals are at a low ebb, spiritual possibilities can be very great.*

FINALLY



Dear Friend of Christian Destiny,

This is certainly turning out to be one of the most exciting years that we have faced in the ministry of Christian Destiny. More people than ever are asking what the Bible may say about the startling events of our time. We are certainly seeing the fulfillment of the promise, *“Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it”* (Rev. 3:8). In the midst of this, your prayers and your financial participation with us have been an encouragement wonderful beyond words.

Sincerely,

Carol Breese
Christian Destiny, Inc.