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BEAUTY FOR ASHES

Suffering can bring out
sweetness

GIVING THANKS

It's a matter of perspective

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VOL 3, ISSUE 11

November 2002

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Printed in Thailand

www.auroraproduction.com

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personally speaking



I wish you could meet three people who each made a big impression on me this past year. If you could, you'd understand immediately what this issue of *Activated* is about.

The first was a busboy who cleared my table from his wheelchair with such outgoing charm that I wasn't a bit surprised when the manager told me on my way out that he considered that busboy his most valuable employee. "More people come back for him than for the food," the manager confided.

The second was a blind beggar whose smile and heartfelt blessing has me looking for him whenever I'm in the area. Jesus said that it's more blessed to give than receive; my blind friend makes believers.

The third was a middle-aged cashier whose "Have a nice day"—after who knows how many hours on her feet—was so genuine that she completely turned my day around. Never mind that she said the same thing to every customer before and after me, I was the one drowning that day and she was my lifesaver.

What is it about people like these three that leaves us envious—not of their circumstances, perhaps, but of their cheerful dispositions? Like angels in disguise, these unlikely champions of goodwill seem to say to us, "Join the team!"

In search of their secret, I looked for a common denominator—how they manage to not only rise above adversity, but to take so many others with them—and I think I found it. They're all so genuinely thankful for what they have that they don't waste time wishing things were any other way. That kind of victory comes only from knowing and feeling secure in God's love. If you don't feel that way at this moment, I hope you will by the time you finish reading this issue of *Activated*. Join the team!

Keith Phillips
Keith Phillips

For your *Activated* family

WHICH DOES GOD BELIEVE?



NEWVIEW

A tour group was spending the night at a mountaintop resort, and most of the group gathered to watch the sunset from the terrace of the hotel. One man lingered until the last glow faded, and seemed thrilled through and through by the beauty of it all.

One of his fellow travelers noticed this and remarked to him later, “You certainly seemed to enjoy that sunset. Are you an artist?”

“No, I’m a plumber,” the man responded with a slow grin. “But I was blind for five years.”

—Author unknown

PRAYER FOR THE DAY

Dear Jesus,

When I take time to think about You and thank You for all You do for me, there’s no room in my mind or mouth for anything else. Everything I have is from You—from the air I breathe to the wonderful life You’ve given me and the body You’ve given to enjoy it with. I can’t thank You enough!

A family sat down to eat breakfast together, and the husband said the usual prayer, thanking God for the food they were about to eat. One glance at the morning paper and he began to lament the sad state of the economy and how it seemed households like theirs were bearing the brunt of it. What they were eating for breakfast was a handy example of how hard it was becoming to make ends meet. Before long, he was even grumbling about the way the food was cooked.

“Father,” his young daughter asked, “do you suppose God heard what you said a little while ago, when you prayed for the food?”

“Certainly,” the man replied confidently.

“And did He hear what you said about the bacon and the coffee?”

“Of course,” the man said, not quite so confidently.

“Then, Father, which did God believe?”

Even when we remember to thank God for the blessings He sends our way, aren’t we often like this man? Wouldn’t it please God more if we all learned to sincerely thank Him from our hearts and then never gave Him any reason to believe we feel differently?

—Author unknown

OUR VOCABULARY, THE WAY WE LABEL
THINGS AND THE WAY WE EXPRESS
THINGS, HAS A MAJOR BEARING
ON THE WAY WE THINK.

GIVING

THANKS

By Maria David

When my daughter was very young and we were trying to help her form positive attitudes, I overheard her praying for the rain to stop and for the next day to be nice. “Honey, I don’t think the Lord minds us asking for Him to stop the rain,” I told her. “He wants us to make our wants and wishes known to Him, and He promises to give us our needs, but we need to realize that He can’t always give us what we want. The rain is important too. We need both sunny and rainy days. Rainy days can be nice too. If we call sunny days ‘nice days,’ it makes us think of rainy days as ‘bad days,’ so let’s try

to always praise God for the beautiful day He’s given us, whether it’s rainy or sunny.”

It seemed such a simple childish lesson—to be thankful for both rain and sun—but it made me realize that the way we choose to talk about things affects our overall happiness and outlook on life. Sad to say, many of us have formed the bad habit of adopting a negative terminology regarding certain situations. If we want to be more positive, think more positively, and react more positively, we need to work on changing our vocabulary to be more positive, because it’s pretty hard to talk about

a “bad” day and think of it positively. To change the way we think about things, we need to also change the way we talk about them.

Our vocabulary, the way we label things and the way we express things, has a major bearing on the way we think. It would be pretty hard, for example, to think of someone whose nickname was “Pea Brain” as being intelligent and capable. If we want to think positively, we need to speak positively.

It’s not wrong to ask the Lord to change a situation—the weather, for example—if we need or want it to be changed. If something hurts or hinders, we know the Lord can alter the situation in answer to our prayer. But until it happens, and even if it doesn’t happen, we should still have a positive outlook, speak positively, and thank the Lord for what He has given us.

According to the Bible, we’re supposed to be content in whatever state we may find ourselves (Philippians 4:11). On one hand it would seem that whenever we pray for the Lord to change a certain situation, we are, in effect, not being content with the way things are. But we can’t base our whole life and philosophy on that one verse; we have to balance Scripture with Scripture. If we take that verse to mean that we should always be content no matter what, we will never stir ourselves up to “fight the good fight of faith” (1 Timothy 6:12) or pray for one another to be healed (James 5:16)—or pray for *anything*, for that matter.

When we feel something needs to be changed, we should first of all pray and ask the Lord to change it. At the same time we should ask

the Lord and ourselves if there is anything He wants us to do to help bring about that change. But once we’ve prayed and done our part, while we’re waiting for the Lord to answer, we need to give thanks in all things (1 Thessalonians 5:18). If we truly believe that the Lord knows best and is in control, we’ll be content with His answer. And even if the desired change never comes, we are supposed to keep thanking the Lord anyway because we know that “He does all things well” (Mark 7:37).

So even though we may not be thrilled about the rain, for example, we can still be happy in knowing that each day He gives us is “the day which the Lord has made,” which is why we can “rejoice and be glad in it” (Psalm 118:24).

“In everything give thanks” (1 Thessalonians 5:18). In other words, in every situation give thanks. While you may not say, “Thank You, Lord, for sending this storm,” or “Thank You, Lord, for sending this drought,” you can say, “Thank You, Lord, for another day of life.”

If something “bad” teaches us to pray or teaches us lessons of faith or patience or perseverance or love, if the good effect has been more than the bad effect, how can we say it’s been bad? Almost everything in life has its pros and cons. But if the positive outweighs the negative, then we can and should say that it is a good thing—and for those of us who love and trust God, that includes *everything*, because in the long run He always makes the good outweigh the bad for us. “All things work together for good to those who love God” (Romans 8:28).•



the

I was watching some little kids play soccer— what most of the world calls football. These kids were only five or six years old, but they were playing a real game, a serious game. Two teams, complete with coaches, uniforms, and a small crowd of parents watching from sideline bleachers. I didn't know any of them, so I was able to enjoy the game without the distraction of being anxious about winning or losing. I only wished the parents and coaches could have done the same. The teams were pretty evenly matched. I will just call them Team One and Team Two.

Nobody scored in the first period. The kids were hilarious. They were clumsy and earnest as only children can be. They fell over their own feet, stumbled over the ball, and kicked at the ball and missed it, but they didn't seem to

care.—They were having fun!

In the second period, the Team One coach pulled out what must have been his first team players and put in the scrubs, with the exception of his best player, who he left at goalie. The game took a dramatic turn. I guess winning is important even when you are five years old, because the Team Two coach left his best players in, and the Team One scrubs were just no match for them.

Team Two swarmed around the little guy at goalie. He was an outstanding athlete for five, but he was no match for three or four who were equally as good. Team Two began to score.

The little goalie gave it his all, recklessly throwing his body in front of incoming balls, trying valiantly to stop them. Team Two scored two quick goals. This infuri-

ated the young goalie. He became a raging maniac, shouting, running, and diving. With all the stamina he could muster, he finally was able to cover one of the boys as he approached the goal, but that boy kicked the ball to another boy twenty feet away and by the time the goalie repositioned himself, it was too late. They scored a third goal.

I soon learned who the goalie's parents were. They were nice, decent-looking people. I could tell that his dad had just come from the office, tie and all. As they yelled encouragement to their son, I became totally absorbed, watching the boy on the field and his parents in the bleachers. After the third goal, the little kid changed. He could see it was no use; he couldn't stop them. He didn't quit, but he became quietly desperate. Futility was written all over his face.

win[■]ner

Thoughts on a soccer game

His father changed too. He had been urging his son to try harder, yelling advice and encouragement. But then he became anxious. He tried to say that it was okay, and to hang in there. He felt the pain his son was feeling.

After the fourth goal, I knew what was going to happen. I've seen it before. The little boy needed help so badly and there was no help to be had. He retrieved the ball from the net, handed it to the referee, and burst into tears. He just stood there while huge tears rolled down both cheeks. Then he went to his knees.

As the father rose to his feet, his wife clutched his wrist and said, "Don't, Jim. You'll embarrass him."

But the boy's father tore loose, climbed down from the stands, and ran onto the field. He wasn't supposed to, of course,

because the game had resumed. Suit, tie, dress shoes, and all, he charged onto the field and picked up his son so everybody would know that this was his boy. And he hugged him and kissed him and cried with him. I have never been so proud of any man in my life.

He carried him off the field, and when they got close to the sidelines I heard him say, "Son, I'm so proud of you. You were great out there. I want everybody to know that you are my son."

"Daddy," the boy sobbed, "I couldn't stop them. I tried, Daddy, I tried and tried and they scored on me."

"Scotty, it doesn't matter how many times they score on you. You're my son, and I'm proud of you. I want you to go back out there and finish the game. I know you want to quit, but you can't. And son, you're going to get scored on

again, but it doesn't matter. Go on, now."

It made a difference.— I could tell it did. When you're all alone, you're getting scored on, and you can't stop them, it means a lot to know that it doesn't matter to those who love you.

The little guy ran back on to the field. Team Two scored two more times, but it was okay.

I get scored on every day. I try so hard. I recklessly throw my body in every direction. I fume and rage. I struggle with every ounce of my being. The tears come, and I go to my knees, helpless. And my heavenly Father rushes right out on the field, right in front of the crowd—the whole jeering, laughing world—and He picks me up. He hugs me and says, "I am so proud of you! You were great out there. I want everybody to know that you are My child—and I declare you the winner!"

—Author unknown

ACCEPTING THE PLAN

By Gloria M. Cruz

I HAD TRIED
TO PREPARE
MYSELF FOR
PEDRO'S
DEATH, BUT
WHEN IT
HAPPENED,
I WAS
DEVASTATED!



The last year of my husband Pedro's life stretched my faith to the limit. Pedro had known for several years that he had cancer, and by this time he was beyond medical help. Every day was increasingly difficult, but every day he held onto God's Word for strength and trusted Him. Even as his body grew weaker, his spirit grew stronger and stronger. Pedro rose to the challenge—the "good fight of faith," as the Bible calls it (1 Timothy 6:12)—and Jesus rewarded him with the peace that surpasses human understanding (Philippians 4:7).

I wish I could say the same of me. I believed that God could heal Pedro if that was what He knew was best,

and I prayed and waited for a miracle. As time went on and Pedro didn't get better, I resisted the thought that perhaps it was the Lord's time to take him home to Heaven. That was simply too difficult to face. Surely that wasn't what God wanted for him either. After all, he was just 25 years old. I dearly loved Pedro and was afraid of being left alone. God was expecting too much of me.

I prayed desperately one night, trying to convince the Lord that He needed to heal Pedro for my sake as well as Pedro's. "If You take him now, I'm not going to be able to make it," I insisted. "I'm going to give up! I'm going to stop believing in You."

The reply came in the form of this Bible verse: “Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand” (Isaiah 41:10).

The Lord didn’t answer that prayer the way I wanted Him to, but He did answer our many prayers to ease Pedro’s suffering, and thereby showed us His love and power until the end.

I had tried to prepare myself for Pedro’s death, but when it happened, I was devastated! Life became a moment-by-moment struggle until I turned to God’s Word for the strength and grace I so desperately needed. Reading the Bible and other inspirational material became my one sure source of comfort. The pain returned whenever I stopped reading, but as long as I was focused on the Word, I felt the Lord’s loving presence in a way that was beautiful and alive. I couldn’t overcome the pain by my own will or effort. It was all Jesus and nothing of myself.

Something I read in one of my devotional books stuck with me: “If, instead of *trying* to trust we will press closer to the Comforter and lean our weary head upon His sufficient grace, trust will come without our trying and the promised perfect peace will calm every troubled wave of sorrow.”

This was fulfilled in my life as soon as I recognized that every good thing that had happened in my life was thanks to the love, mercy, and grace of God. Now He wanted to use Pedro’s passing to re-create me—not into what I wanted to be or thought I should be, but what I *needed* to be.

Finally I surrendered. God had simply brought home a life that had always belonged to Him. I could be thankful for the wonderful years He gave us together, and also for the way

Pedro had passed peacefully on to his eternal home, where he is with Jesus and there is no more pain or death. I told God that my life, too, was His. He could do whatever He wanted with me. Whatever His plan was, I would try to follow Him.

Pedro’s victory was in the way he trusted God and lived his faith until the very end. Even though everything seemed to go contrary to what we prayed for and expected, Pedro stayed faithful to the end. My victory came in first accepting the Lord’s plan, and then accepting His love and comfort through my tears. Once I did, I grew closer to Jesus than ever before. In both cases, it was faith that withstood and overcame the pain. “This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith” (1 John 5:4 NIV).•

Gloria M. Cruz is a volunteer with The Family in Mexico.

IT DIDN'T JUST HAPPEN

By Alice Reynolds Flower

Things don't just happen to children of God.
They're part of a wonderful plan.
The troubles, reverses, the sorrows, the rod
Are strokes of the Great Sculptor's hand.

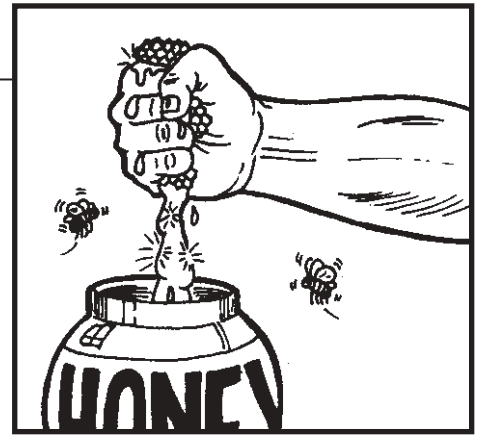
Did some dear one sicken and finally die?
Did your heart break with anguish and woe?
Did you question your Lord, and cry: "My God, why?"
Don't question—He planned it just so.

Things don't just happen to children of God.
The blueprint was made by His hand.
He designed all details to conform to His Son,
So all things that happen are planned.

No matter what happens to those called His own,
Events that are awful or grand,
Every trial of your life He sends from His throne;
Things just don't happen, they're planned.

By David Brandt Berg

BEAUTY FOR ASHES



We used to sing a little song about the Lord:

*He gives me joy in place of sorrow,
He gives me love that casts out fear,
He gives me sunshine for my shadow,
And beauty for ashes dear.*

WE CAN'T
APPRECIATE
JOY UNTIL
WE'VE
KNOWN
SORROW.

In order to bring forth the sweetness, there has to be some suffering. To bring about the beauty of the flame, something must go to ashes.

Blessings come from suffering—"beauty for ashes" (Isaiah 61:3). This is borne out so well in Hebrews 12:11, which says: "Now no chastening seems joyful for the present, but painful: nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it."

It's like a giant hand taking a honeycomb and squeezing it—and out comes the honey. Or it's like when Moses smote the rock: The rock received a fierce blow, but out came the water (Exodus 17:1–7). The heart of stone has to be broken before the water [of God's Spirit] can flow out to refresh the people. It's like a beautiful flower that's pressed and crushed, but out comes the perfume. Or like the beautiful music that comes from the throat of the bird,

almost as though it's in pain, yet it comes forth with song. Even though the bird's song may be sad, it's so sweet. The groans are not murmurs, but songs of praise and thanksgiving to God—a sad, sweet song! As the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley once wrote, "Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thoughts!"

Praise is the voice of faith!

We could never appreciate the light unless we had once been in darkness. We couldn't appreciate health unless we had been sick. We can't appreciate joy until we've known sorrow. We can't appreciate God's mercy until we've known the Devil's justice.

(Prayer:) Lord, help us not to quench that beautiful song, even if it's sad, to thank You in spite of the sorrow. Help us to be willing to go through whatever we need to in order to give forth Your sweetness, Your fragrance, Your beauty, Your song, Your refreshing waters. Out of what seems like defeat come some of Your greatest victories!

"[God] comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God" (2 Corinthians 1:4).•

FEEDING READING



WHAT ABOUT YOU?

If you're having trouble finding that place of peace and rest in God's presence, it may be because you haven't yet received His Son, Jesus, into your heart. Jesus says, "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). You can receive Jesus right now by simply praying the following prayer:

Dear Jesus, thank You for dying for me so I can have eternal life. Please forgive me for every wrong and unloving thing I have ever done. Come into my heart, give me Your gift of eternal life, and help me to know Your love and peace. Thank You for hearing and answering this prayer and for being with me always, from this moment on. Amen.

Thankfulness

We should be thankful for everything the Lord allows or sends our way.

1 Thessalonians 5:18
Psalm 50:14
Psalm 100:4
Psalm 103:1-2
1 Corinthians 15:57
2 Corinthians 2:14
Ephesians 5:20
Colossians 3:17

Giving thanks should be a regular part of our prayers.

Philippians 4:6
Colossians 4:2
1 Thessalonians 1:2
1 Timothy 2:1

When we praise the Lord out loud, we testify to others of His goodness.

Hebrews 13:15
2 Samuel 22:50
1 Chronicles 16:8
Psalm 66:8
Psalm 107:8
1 Peter 2:9

Thank the Lord in song.

Psalm 69:30
Psalm 95:2
Psalm 147:1,7
Ephesians 5:19
Colossians 3:16

Make thankfulness a habit.

Psalm 34:1
Psalm 35:28
Psalm 150:6

WINGS OUT OF WEIGHTS

By Virginia Brandt Berg

No matter what obstacles you face in life, there is a way to live above them. God gives His children wings when things get to be too much. Wings are born out of weights.

There's a sort of devilish gravitation in this old world that daily strives to pull us down. But there's also an upward pull that can lift us up to the very heart of God. "Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint" (Isaiah 40:31). Those who wait in the Lord's presence, in prayer and in His Word, rise to realms of peace and rest.

When wearied with the strain of it all, fly to God. God has the victory for you. God has the answers to your problems. Fly to God for the rest that He has promised. Fly on the wings of prayer and faith and get the relief that He alone can give you. That's the secret to victorious living! •

Q: I'VE READ IN THE BIBLE AND OFTEN HEARD PEOPLE SAY, "GOD IS LOVE," OR "GOD LOVES YOU," BUT IF THAT'S SO, WHY DOES HE ALLOW SO MUCH SUFFERING IN THE WORLD? HE'S ALL-POWERFUL, RIGHT? SO WHY DOESN'T HE PUT A STOP TO THINGS LIKE DISEASE AND POVERTY AND WAR AND NATURAL DISASTERS?



ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS

A: Nearly all of us have asked those questions at one time or another. The answer hinges on two basic truths: First, most suffering is not due to so-called natural causes. In other words, it's not according to the way God intended for things to work; it's not His doing. It's man's doing. Second, He has given us freedom of choice, and this plays a big part in His plan for us. He didn't create us as robots, but with decision-making abilities and the need to exercise them. He put us here to make choices between right and wrong, good and evil.

So when it comes right down to it, most suffering is the result of people's choices. Sometimes people deliberately inflict suffering on others, and sometimes the suffering is a byproduct of selfish choices or indifference—choosing *not* to make choices that could avoid or alleviate the suffering. But either way, *people* are to blame. God doesn't approve of choices that harm others or us, but if He were to step in every time we made

a bad choice, He'd have to put an end to freedom of choice altogether.

Why do people make choices that hurt others?—Because they put themselves first and choose their own ways over God and His loving ways. God has given each of us a conscience—an inborn sense of right and wrong. In the Bible He also gives us the solution to suffering and all the other ills we bring upon ourselves. It's a solution that's so simple it can be summed up in one word: love. "Love does no harm to a neighbor" (Romans 13:10). God tries to guide us into doing what's loving and right, but He won't force us.

Now let's take a closer look at that question, starting with war. Wars are the ultimate manifestation of man's selfishness, greed, pride, and competitive spirit. The Bible puts it this way: "From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?" (James 4:1–2 KJV). God hates war, but

again, to put an end to war He would have to put an end to freedom of choice.

And what about hunger and poverty? God did not create this inequality in the world's wealth or standard of living. He has provided more than enough food and other natural resources so that no one needs to go hungry or be deprived of other basic needs. The world can produce enough food to feed its expanding population. While some famines are caused by drought or other natural disasters, most starvation today could be avoided were it not for man's selfishness and inhumanity. War, embargoes, government corruption, and economic oppression are all to blame. While innocent children starve, some rich nations destroy millions of tons of food in order to keep prices artificially high.

Then there is the health question. If God is so righteous, why does He allow sickness? Much of the suffering brought about by sickness is also man-made. We disobey God's health rules and eat ourselves sick on processed junk food made from genetically altered ingredients and laced with chemical preservatives. We also voluntarily make ourselves sick by smoking, drinking in excess, and taking prescription and illegal drugs that cause cancer and heart disease or harm our minds and bodies in other ways. The stress and rush of our unnatural modern lifestyle also contributes to many psychosomatic

illnesses such as severe headaches, stomach ulcers, and heart trouble.

Possibly the biggest question of all is why God allows so many innocent people to be killed by natural disasters like floods, earthquakes, hurricanes, etc., over which man has little or no control. How you interpret these events depends on whether you believe in a loving, righteous God and an afterlife or not. If there were no afterlife, then natural disasters are a travesty against justice. But to those who have faith in God and implicit confidence in His love and mercy and righteousness and justice, as well as belief in a better life after this one, there is an answer:

God, in His mercy, sometimes sees fit to end people's suffering once and for all by taking them out of this world to the far better one He has waiting for all those who love Him, where all wrongs will be made right and people will be rewarded according to their works, whether they be good or evil.

It's also reassuring to know that it won't always be like this. The day is coming when Jesus Christ will return to put an end to the senseless suffering man inflicts on his fellow man. Then and only then, under the all-powerful rule and reign of Christ and God's children, will there be peace and plenty for all, with no more suffering, no more hunger, no more starvation, no more poor, and no more war!•

If selfishness
and a lack of love are
the root causes of most
of the world's suffering,
then unselfish love is
the solution.

TEN HORNS

EUROPE'S ROLE IN THE ENDTIME

By Joseph Candel

Ken and I had talked many times about Bible prophecy, so when Ken's old friend Dan had some questions Ken couldn't answer, Ken arranged for the three of us to meet.

It turned out that Dan, who is a Buddhist, had picked up a Gideon's Bible in a hotel room out of curiosity and came across a couple of mystifying passages in the Bible's final book, the book of Revelation.

Dan said he could see by world events that we were getting close to the end of the world. He had heard a little about the rise of the Antichrist and the coming one-world government, and wanted to know how that fit in with what he'd read. Specifically, he wanted to know what the "seven heads" and "ten horns"

mentioned in Revelation chapters 13 and 17 meant.

So we read parts of those two chapters, and this is how I explained them to him:

"I [John the Apostle] stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea"—the sea of humanity—"having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name" (Revelation 13:1).

If you read the seventh chapter of the book of Daniel, which was written about 700 years earlier, you'll again see this great beast in its other various forms. The beast represents various world empires.

In Revelation chapter 17, verses 9 and 10, we learn that the seven heads are seven kings or kingdoms. "Five have fallen"—when John wrote this in 90 A.D., five great empires centered in the Mideast, the empires of Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, and Greece, had come and gone—"one is"—the Roman Empire was in power when John wrote this—"and the other"—the Antichrist's final world empire—"has not yet come." "And when he comes, he must continue a short time"—the Antichrist's seven-year reign. So these seven heads are six previous world empires, plus the Antichrist's empire that is rising *now*, but not yet in place.

"The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour"—a very short time—"as kings with the

beast” (Revelation 17:12). Because these ten kings or powers had “received no kingdom as yet” during John’s day, the time of the sixth head, the Roman Empire, it is obvious that these ten horns are all on the seventh and final head, the Antichrist. “These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast” (Revelation 17:13).

These ten powers who help put the Antichrist in power and cooperate with him are described in further detail in Daniel 2:34, 41–43 and Daniel 7:7–8, 20–24. In Daniel 7:7, the ten-horned Antichrist kingdom grows out of the Roman beast. This seems to indicate that these ten kings, nations, or powers of the Endtime Antichrist Empire will come from the remains of the ancient Roman Empire, which ruled much of modern-day Europe. If this interpretation is correct, the European Union (EU) could have quite an important role to play in the Endtime.

For the first time since Rome united Europe under its power, Europe is coming together. In fact, Romano Prodi of Italy, the President of the European Commission, declared to the EU’s economic and social committee in 1999: “For the first time since the fall of the Roman Empire we are uniting Europe, and not by force of arms but on the basis of shared ideals and agreed common rules.”¹ For the first time since the Roman Empire, much of Europe now has adopted a common

currency, the euro, and is also moving forward to unite politically and militarily.

As Europe has become more united, so has the rest of the world. It has not yet been a political uniting, but rather a technological one. Distances have dissolved with the growth of telecommunications; the widespread use of the Internet; and the ease, rapidity, and low cost of travel. With the linking of many economies, financial barriers have also broken down, so that what happens in one corner of the world has a great effect on other parts.

The Antichrist will have much of the world under his control, but it appears likely that Europe will be his primary stronghold and that the “ten horns” will be the European nations that will cooperate with him the most.

“But the good news,” I explained to Dan, “is that at the end of the Antichrist’s seven-year reign, Jesus Christ will return ‘on the clouds of Heaven with power and great glory’ to rescue all His saved children, put a stop to the Antichrist’s evil empire, and set up His own kingdom on earth, where there will be righteousness and peace and plenty for all (Matthew 24:29–31; Revelation 14:14–16; 19:6–9, 11–21; 20:1–4). Your best preparation for these soon-coming events is to be on the side of the final victor, Jesus!”•

¹*The Sunday Times* [London], May 13, 2001.

FOR THE
FIRST TIME
SINCE ROME
UNITED
EUROPE
UNDER ITS
POWER,
EUROPE
IS COMING
TOGETHER.

A hummingbird with iridescent feathers is shown in flight, hovering near a large white flower with red leaves. The background is a soft, warm gradient of pink and orange.

come fly with Me!

FROM JESUS WITH LOVE

Connect with Me by praising Me, and I will carry you to heights in the spirit that you never dreamed existed. It's so simple, and it doesn't need to take long. Start praising Me and see how easy it is. Fill your heart and mind and mouth with something you're thankful for, and the chain reaction will begin. Praise Me for the wonderful life I have given you. Praise Me for the wonderful people I have surrounded you with, to love and be loved by. Praising Me for even the simplest things puts you on My positive channel and in a position to receive more of My positive input.

Open your heart to Me by praising Me, and I will flood you with My love and My Spirit—enough to carry you through the day if you will keep your heart open and turned to Me. Haven't you read that I am light, and in Me is no darkness at all? That's the way it is. Connect with Me and I will flood your heart and mind and life with light, so there will be no room for darkness—the worries and negative thoughts that can so easily spoil your day by keeping you earthbound. Praise is your ticket to ride.