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Descending into the Darkness

“... the night [is coming] when no man can work.” – John 9:4

By Mike Wingfield

If you are saved and walking in the light of God's Word, you know we are living in a time of great spiritual darkness. We can see our world descending into a deep, dark pit of depravity. The global culture is rapidly plunging into a deadly cycle of brutal violence, gross immorality, and civil anarchy. All of these developments are being accompanied by an unprecedented global economic collapse. This is extremely dangerous because it is taking place at a time when man continues to create and proliferate powerful weapons of mass destruction around the globe. This will be most deadly because planet earth is currently home to the largest global population in history – 7 billion souls.

The Bible tells us that in this pit of darkness, the world will display the greatest rebellion of all times against the Lord. It is my opinion that the global culture has reached the spiritual tipping point of no return. When this happened in the days of Noah, the Lord said: *“My spirit shall not always strive with man.”* (Genesis 6:3) This simply

means that the culture of Noah's day had collectively destroyed their consciences so that they were never guilty nor ashamed of their gross immorality and brutal violence.

The conscience is the spiritual means whereby the Holy Spirit strives with man to produce guilt and repentance that leads to salvation. Without this work of the Spirit in the conscience of man, no one is able to come to Christ. (1 Corinthians 12:3) Therefore, when a society collectively reaches the final stage when its conscience is seared (see 1 Timothy 4:2), they are vulnerable to demonic influence and possession. In their fanatical rebellion against God, He gives them over to their passionate desires to continue down the path toward eternal damnation, without any spiritual warning. When this happens in the last days, the Lord will allow Satan to use evil men to deceive the global masses. *“And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, That they should believe [the] lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth,*

but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” (2 Thessalonians 2:11-12)

It is true that history has been filled with some of the same sins that are being expressed around the world today. So, how do we know that this hour is any darker spiritually than previous times? How do we know that this spiritual darkness is the one described in the prophetic Scriptures that will usher in the Great Tribulation? To answer these questions, we must turn to the prophetic Word of God and examine the way God will measure spiritual light and darkness in the last days.

I would like to suggest that [Isaiah 60](#) is the perfect Biblical text that gives us insight into to how the Lord will measure spiritual light and darkness in the last days. This text begins with a prophetic promise given to the Jewish people at the beginning of the millennial kingdom. The millennial kingdom will be established by Christ following the Great Tribulation. First, the text focuses upon the spiritual light that will shine greatly at the beginning of this earthly Messianic kingdom. *“Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee.”* ([Isaiah 60:1](#)) When the Lord returns to earth at the end of the seven-year Tribulation Period, the entire living nation of Israel will be saved. ([Ezekiel 36:25-28](#); [Zechariah 13:8-9](#); [Romans 11:26](#)) No unsaved Jew or Gentile will enter the Kingdom of God on earth. Only the saved Gentiles and Jews who have survived the Tribulation Period will physically inhabit the earthly kingdom of God in their natural physical bodies. ([Matthew 25:31-46](#)) The remaining kingdom dwellers will be made up of the redeemed saints of all of the previous ages. These resurrected saints will rule with Christ in His kingdom in their heavenly glorified bodies they respectively received at the time of their resurrection.

This will be a glorious time for planet earth and all those who live to enter this glorious kingdom. *“The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the earth.”* ([Isaiah 11:9](#)) All of the Jewish people will return home to Israel and the Lord will rule over them and all of the nations from Jerusalem, Israel. Finally, the passionate sovereign will of God for His chosen people will be fulfilled. The God of Jacob has declared: *“For Zion’s sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth*

as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.” ([Isaiah 62:1](#)) The entire nation of Israel, every Jew on earth, will be a spiritual light unto the Gentile nations. As believers in Jesus, *“the light of the world”* ([John 8:12](#)), the entire nation of Israel will reflect the glorious light of their Messiah and Redeemer. The Lord has given them His promise: *“The LORD shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory.”* ([Isaiah 60:19](#)) So, the Lord will begin His millennial reign with this command to His redeemed chosen nation: *“Arise, shine: for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.”* ([Isaiah 60:1](#))

However, in sharp contrast to this glorious moment of spiritual light at the beginning of the kingdom, the Lord directed His prophet to remind His people concerning the time that will precede this kingdom – the Tribulation Period. Isaiah wrote: *“For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.”* ([Isaiah 60:2](#)) According to this verse, and many others, the Tribulation Period will be a time of dangerous global spiritual darkness. On what basis does God measure this spiritual light during the Kingdom and the spiritual darkness that will precede His Kingdom? The following context in [Isaiah 60](#) answers this question.

After making his opening statements in the first two verses of [Isaiah 60](#), the prophet was directed to write about the evidences of the great spiritual enlightenment that will exist during the Messianic kingdom for 1,000 years. He lists four major evidences of this time of spiritual light that will shine forth from His physical kingdom in Jerusalem, Israel, and be reflected throughout the Gentile nations over all the earth. Let us briefly examine these four evidences of the spiritual light during Christ’s global kingdom. Understanding this will enable us to know and examine the spiritual darkness that will be displayed during the Tribulation Period.

Spiritual Oneness

We must remember that during His kingdom on earth, the Lord will *“rule all nations with a rod of iron.”* ([Revelation 12:5](#); compare [Psalm 2:9](#)) As the global dictator, He will not tolerate any other gods, idols, or forms of worship that would honor any former pagan deity. Satan and his demons, the great counterfeiters behind all gods and idols,

will be banished from earth and locked away in the bottomless pit until the thousand years are finished. (Revelation 20:1-3)

All of the nations will worship the Messiah on His throne in Jerusalem. *“And the Gentiles shall come to thy light. ... and they shall show forth the praises of the Lord. ... They shall come up with acceptance on mine altar, and I will glorify the house of my glory.”* (Isaiah 60:3, 6-7) Earlier in his prophecy, the prophet Isaiah wrote: *“And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.”* (Isaiah 2:2-3)

In Isaiah 60:6-7, the Spirit of the Lord directed Isaiah to write about the spiritual transformation that will take place in the Arab/Islamic nations that will surround Israel. During the kingdom, the people from Midian, Ephah, Sheba, Kedar and Nebaioth will all come up to Jerusalem to worship the Lord. These ancient names clearly point to a remnant of the Muslims living in the desert areas east of Israel, who will surrender to Christ before He returns to earth at the end of the Tribulation. In this text, the Lord points to the incredible transformation of the people who have violently and passionately rejected the God of Jacob for centuries. Finally, they will be spiritually one with Israel and come to Jerusalem to worship the God of Jacob.

Civil Peace

Because of the spiritual oneness that will be enjoyed by both Jews and Arabs during the kingdom, there will finally be peace in the Middle East and throughout the world. In this context, Isaiah reminded the future Jewish generation that will inhabit the kingdom: *“Violence shall no more be heard in thy walls, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise.”* (Isaiah 60:18) There will be no more war in the Middle East, or among the Gentile nations. *“And he [the Messianic King] shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into prun-*

ing hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.” (Isaiah 2:4)

Therefore, the spiritual light that will permeate the kingdom of God on earth will be evidenced by the dramatic change among the nations in their attitude toward the presence of the Jewish people in their land. The conflict over the land of Israel and the city of Jerusalem will cease. The wars and acts of terrorism that had preceded the kingdom will be over. The gates of the millennial Jerusalem will never need to be closed to defend itself against invading forces. (Isaiah 60:11)

The nations will support the immigration of the final Jewish remnant to the land of Israel. (Isaiah 60:4, 9) Hatred for Israel and the Jews will be replaced with an attitude of honor, service, and acceptance. (Isaiah 60:7, 10, 12) *“The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of the LORD, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel. Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations.”* (Isaiah 60:14-15) With great praise and joy, Isaiah announced to his people: *“the days of thy mourning shall be ended.”* (Isaiah 60:20)

Political Unity

Another amazing evidence of the spiritual light that will exist within the kingdom is the global political unity. The nations of the earth will be in submission to the Messianic administration that will be centrally located in Jerusalem. The king will rule with a rod of iron. There will be no tolerance of any rebellion, defiance, or disobedience. He will have no competition. Those who rule with Him will be in glorified bodies and will not be able to sin or rebel. They will be spiritually and politically one with their Lord and King.

Jesus the Messiah will return to earth as *“KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.”* (Revelation 19:16) The earthly kings of the nations will submit to the Messianic King. Isaiah wrote: *“And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.”* (Isaiah 60:3) Through Isaiah, the Lord promised: *“And the sons of strangers shall build thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee.”* (Isaiah 60:10) Rebellion

against the Jerusalem-based government of the kingdom will be met with swift judgment. *“For the nation and king that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted.”* (Isaiah 60:12)

Economic Submission

The spiritual light of the kingdom age will be evidenced by the economic submission of the nations to the Lord and His people – Israel. All of the kings and their nations will demonstrate their recognition and acceptance of the Jewish Messiah as their King and Lord by flooding Israel with economic wealth. The nations will bring their silver and gold to Israel. (Isaiah 60:6, 9) The abundance of precious metals in Israel during the kingdom will be so astounding that Isaiah offers the following description: *“For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron.”* (Isaiah 60:17)

Therefore, we must conclude that the Lord measures the great spiritual light of His kingdom by the amazing transformation of the Arab/Islamic nations that surround Israel. The light of His kingdom is evidenced by the Arab’s spiritual oneness with Israel. Because their heart has been changed, they will not hate the Jews, but love them because of their Jewish Messiah. Wars and violence over the land of Israel and the Jewish possession of Jerusalem will cease. The Islamic passion to dominate Israel and control the world will be replaced with a submission to the Jewish administration in Jerusalem. Instead of investing in military hardware to destroy Israel, they will give full financial support to the Jewish people and their presence in the land that the Lord has given them.

In light of this understanding, we must now turn to the divine understanding of the darkness that will permeate the earth before the kingdom. Remember what Isaiah wrote: *“For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people.”* (Isaiah 60:2) This spiritual darkness must be the exact and extreme opposite of the spiritual light that is described in Isaiah 60. Let us now examine the evidence of this gross spiritual darkness.

The current developments in Israel are being driven by many prominent radical Islamic groups. The agenda of these radical Islamic terrorists threaten life and freedom in the Middle East and around the world. On Monday, September 29, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu

stood before the United Nations General Assembly and very clearly sounded out a warning to the nations concerning the radical Islamic threat to the entire world. It is my opinion that Israel’s leadership is at this time speaking with the greatest moral clarity and spiritual light within the nations gathered at the U.N. Here are a few of his comments: “The people of Israel pray for peace. But our hopes and the world’s hope for peace are in danger. Because everywhere we look, militant Islam is on the march. ... For the militant Islamists, ‘All politics is global.’ Because their ultimate goal is to dominate the world.

“Now, that threat might seem exaggerated to some, since it starts out small, like a cancer that attacks a particular part of the body. But left unchecked, the cancer grows, metastasizing over wider and wider areas. To protect the peace and security of the world, we must remove this cancer before it’s too late.

“... They all share a fanatic ideology. They all seek to create ever-expanding enclaves of militant Islam where there is no freedom and no tolerance — where women are treated as chattel, Christians are decimated, and minorities are subjugated, sometimes given the stark choice: Convert or die.

“... Militant Islam’s ambition to dominate the world seems mad. But so too did the global ambitions of another fanatic ideology that swept to power eight decades ago.

“The Nazis believed in a master race. The militant Islamists believe in a master faith. They just disagree about who among them will be the master... of the master faith. That’s what they truly disagree about. Therefore, the question before us is whether militant Islam will have the power to realize its unbridled ambitions.

“The fight against militant Islam is indivisible. When militant Islam succeeds anywhere, it’s emboldened everywhere. When it suffers a blow in one place, it’s set back in every place.

“That’s why Israel’s fight against Hamas is not just our fight. It’s your fight.” (<http://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/Full-text-of-Prime-Minister-Netanyahu-UN-speech-376626>)

I applaud Prime Minister Netanyahu's speech. He not only speaks with moral clarity, but from experience. Israel is on the front line of the global battle against militant Islam. In essence, he is acting like the proverbial watchman on the walls of Jerusalem, sending out a warning to all the nations. (See [Ezekiel 3:16-21](#).) The world is facing the same threat and should listen to his warnings and advice. However, it is apparent that this is not the case. Israelis were saddened when they realized that almost half of the U.N. delegation left the auditorium before Netanyahu spoke. The world, including the United States, is not listening to his warning. Our world is doomed to suffer the wrath of God as He allows Islam to dominate the world during the Tribulation Period.

It is not an accident that the agenda of radical Islam is an exact replication of the spiritual darkness defined in the prophetic Scriptures. In essence, three major agendas are being promoted by these radical elements:

The Elimination of Israel

An examination of the prophetic Scriptures quickly reveal that the elimination of Jews from the Middle East and the world will be a major agenda of the Antichrist during the Kingdom. (See [Revelation 12; 16:12-16](#).) Many Biblical texts state that the Tribulation Period will be the darkest page in Jewish history. ([Jeremiah 30:4-7](#); [Daniel 12:1](#)) When the end of the Tribulation arrives, two-thirds of the global Jewish population will have been killed. ([Zechariah 13:7-9](#)) At the very end of the Tribulation Period, at the Armageddon campaign, the Antichrist and his Islamic coalition will lead a global assault against Israel. ([Revelation 16:12-16](#)) This will represent the world's final attempt to slaughter the remaining Jewish population in Israel and return the Promised Land to Islam.

The teachings of the Islamic prophet Mohammed, the rhetoric coming out of the majority of mosques throughout the Middle East, the media outlets of Muslim countries, and the education curriculums in the countries that surround Israel, all espouse an agenda aimed at eliminating the only Jewish state in the Middle East – Israel. In some cases, this seems to be the sole purpose for the creation of some terrorist groups, such as Hezbollah and Hamas. The battle cry to free Palestine and Jerusalem from the Jews is heard throughout the nations and especially in the Muslim lands that surround Israel.

The modern return of the Jewish people to their national homeland has been in progress for about 100 years. This entire century has been filled with many violent attempts to remove the Jewish people from their land. However, it is very apparent that this attack on the modern nation of Israel and the Jewish people living among the nations is reaching a very significant climax.

Many Jewish agencies who monitor and report on global anti-Semitism indicate we are witnessing a frightening rise of hatred against Jews. With the massive influx of Muslims in Europe in recent decades, Europe has become a hot-bed of Jew bashing. Attacks upon Jewish people are becoming very common. Natan Sharansky, the Israeli chairman of the agency that monitors global anti-Semitism, recently commented: "Something historic is happening," ... It may be the beginning of the end of European Jewry." (www.jta.org/2014/07/08/news) As a result, many European Jews are leaving, many of them immigrating to Israel.

The Middle East in general is going through a major shift from a moderate Islamic position to a more radical Islamic agenda that calls for the destruction of Israel and the militant advance of Islam to establish a global Islamic kingdom. This has been the driving force behind what has been called "the Arab Spring." This is not, as some here in the West have proposed, a call for democracy in these countries. It is clearly an attempt to overthrow modern Arab regimes with a more radical element that will join the crusade toward the goal of Islamic world domination. The elimination of Israel is at the heart of this movement.

The rise of the radical and brutal terrorist force called "the Islamic State" in Syria and Iraq demonstrates the sweeping shift that is taking place in the Middle East. The sudden rise of this group and its ability to control large swaths of land in Iraq and Syria is unprecedented in this modern era. When one examines ISIL's stated goals, it is not surprising that it is bent on controlling all Islamic countries and removing the Jewish state of Israel from the center of their proposed Islamic kingdom in the Middle East.

However, from Israel's point of view, the most dangerous threat is the religious leadership in the Islamic State of Iran. While the rest of the world is focused upon other increasingly pressing problems, Iran quietly continues to

move toward the production of its first nuclear weapon. Once again, Prime Minister Netanyahu is warning the world of this grave threat to Israel and the entire world. While speaking about Iran in his recent address to the U.N., he said: “The Islamic Republic is now trying to bamboozle its way to an agreement that will remove the sanctions it still faces, and leave it with the capacity of thousands of centrifuges to enrich uranium. This would effectively cement Iran's place as a threshold military nuclear power. In the future, at a time of its choosing, Iran, the world's most dangerous state in the world's most dangerous region, would obtain the world's most dangerous weapons.

Allowing that to happen would pose the gravest threat to us all. It is one thing to confront militant Islamists on pickup trucks, armed with Kalashnikov rifles. It's another thing to confront militant Islamists armed with weapons of mass destruction.” (<http://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/Full-text-of-Prime-Minister-Netanyahus-UN-speech-376626>)

Anyone who is paying attention to all of these developments must conclude that we are moving toward a major confrontation in the Middle East. While we might not be able to connect all of the dots at this time, it is apparent that the stage is being set for the Gog and Magog invasion of Israel mentioned in [Ezekiel 38-39](#).

A War on Christians

A major agenda of the Antichrist during the Tribulation will be the elimination of all those who reject him and his religion. ([Revelation 13:16-18](#)) His wrath will especially be poured out upon those who received Christ during the Tribulation. He and his global coalition of all nations will declare war on believers in Jesus Christ. ([Daniel 7:25](#); [Revelation 13:7](#))

The second agenda being promoted by the radical Islamic elements in the Middle East is the war on the church of Jesus Christ. In recent years, the number of Christians who have been brutally murdered by the Islamic terrorists in the Middle East has dramatically escalated. Thousands of believers in Egypt, Syria, and Iraq have been targeted by these radicals. For those who have the financial ability, they are leaving their homes in the Middle East. The exo-

odus and death of Christians in the Middle East is a major story that is being ignored by the liberal media in the U.S. For those who are closely following these events, they have concluded “there is likely to be little place for Christian Arabs in a Middle East rebuilt on intolerant ideologies like those of Isis.” (*The Guardian*, July 23, 2014)

The brutal killing of Christians in Iraq and Syria by the ISIL is a precursor to the Tribulation Period. The Antichrist will rule the world from Babylon, Iraq. ([Isaiah 14:4](#)) The chief means whereby he will execute believers is decapitation. ([Revelation 20:4](#)) We are currently witnessing a microscopic picture of what will develop in Iraq and the Middle East on a more grand scale during the final seven years of this age.

The Establishment of a Political-Religious-Economic Kingdom in Iraq

The political, religious, and economic center of the world's final superpower will be in the Middle East in general and in Iraq in particular. All of the nations that participate in the Armageddon campaign as a part of the Antichrist's coalition are mentioned several times in Scripture. They are all Islamic nations. ([Psalm 83:6-8](#)) The religious power that will be in league with the Antichrist's kingdom in the last days is called “*Mystery Babylon*.” ([Revelation 17:5](#)) The context of [Revelation 17-18](#), along with the Old Testament passages alluded to in these two chapters ([Isaiah 13, 47](#); [Jeremiah 50-51](#)), support the conclusion that both the religion and the political structure of the Antichrist will be centered in Iraq. Those who do not submit to this new international economic order will be killed. ([Revelation 13:15-18](#)) These prophetic revelations are an exact carbon copy of the Islamic strategy promoted by the current ISIL forces in Iraq and Syria.

Therefore, in conclusion, we should note that the descriptive distinctions of the spiritual light that will exist during the kingdom age, according to [Isaiah 60](#), will focus upon the incredible spiritual transformation of the Muslim countries that surround Israel. Israel's enemies will become Israel's devoted friends. So, the gross darkness that will permeate the preceding Tribulation Period will be measured by the level of hatred that will motivate these same nations to annihilate the Jewish State.

It is a very sobering thought to grasp the reality that our world is entering into the darkest period in all of human history. This is a difficult conclusion for some to grasp. They look at all of the academic, scientific, medical, and technological achievements of this modern era and conclude that this kind of spiritual darkness does not seem possible at this time. However, one must remember that when Nazi Germany conducted its Holocaust campaign against the Jews almost eight decades ago, it was the academic and scientific giant of the civilized world. While many modern cultures may be excelling in academic and scientific areas, these same cultures are morally and spiritually in a state of self-destruction.

Those who are attempting to warn our present generation about this time of great spiritual darkness are being confronted with rejection and stern opposition. Jesus warned us that this day would come. He said: *“the night [is coming], when no man can work.”* (John 9:4) As we wait for Jesus to come for His church, the darkness will intensify and the global attack on the church and Israel will expand.

It is time for us to join the early church, which was facing persecution and martyrdom at the end of the first century, when they pleaded with the Lord: *“Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”* (Revelation 22:21)

Mike's 2015 Speaking Schedule

Mike is in the process of developing his 2015 speaking schedule. If your church would like to host a prophetic conference or seminar, please let him know. He is available to speak in churches on an expenses plus free-will offering basis. (No minimum is required.) He usually offers a 3-day conference (Sunday- Tuesday). However, he can design a one, two, or three-day conference or seminar to address Biblical prophetic subjects of your choice.

Mike's Upcoming Speaking Schedule

Please pray for these meetings and encourage your family and friends who live near these meetings to attend. It is very important for God's people to have a proper Biblical world-view.

November 3-11-	<u>Mike will be hosting his 9-day tour to Israel. Please pray for a blessed tour.</u>		
November 13	Rocky Mount, VA	Monthly Bible Study at Franklin Heights Baptist	540-798-5110
November 16	Collinsville, VA	Victory Christian Church	276-629-7680
November 20	Roanoke, VA	Monthly Bible Study at Grace Baptist Church	540-798-5110
November 30	Catawba, VA (am only)	Mountain View Baptist Church	540-389-2466
December 4	Rocky Mount, VA	Monthly Bible Study at Franklin Heights Baptist	540-798-5110

Check out our website for directions and more information: www.ptnews.org

Sounding the Alarm

So many in America and around the world are living in spiritual darkness and are unaware of the dangers facing our world. As believers in Jesus Christ, it is our moral responsibility to warn this present generation of the approaching wrathful judgment of God. Read [Ezekiel 3:16-21](#). The church in America is the proverbial watchman on the wall. If we do not warn our fellow Americans, their blood, spiritually speaking, will be on our hands.

You can help us sound the alarm. We give you permission to make copies of our materials (newsletters, CDs, DVDs) for free distribution. This is an excellent way to share the gospel and sound the warning in these last days.