

THE SABBATH SCOOP

VOLUME 25

FEBRUARY 2013

NUMBER 11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO Les Misérables

Lyrics from this musical tell much about God's plan of salvation!

By Gregory Dullum

The musical *Les Misérables* opened in movie theaters Christmas day. The recent Hollywood release is based upon a play which has enjoyed success for more than 25 years. I saw the play performed years ago in the fabulous Fox Theatre in St. Louis.

If you have the opportunity to see *Les Misérables* in the movie theater, or to watch it later on DVD, or if you can catch it being performed live in a theater, or recorded in one of its concerts (there is a 10th anniversary and a 25th anniversary concert that were telecast and recorded onto DVDs), I highly recommend watching it.

I can't share with you the voices, the costumes, or the rich, blood-stirring music. But I want to share some of the words, and show how they relate to our Christian experience.

Beginning in Slavery

The musical is based on Victor Hugo's novel. It follows the life of Jean Valjean, beginning in 1815 with the end of his 19-year imprisonment for stealing a loaf of bread. I have yet to see the movie, but the play begins with a stirring beat as prisoners in a quarry sing in powerfully blended male voices:

*Look down, look down,
Don't look 'em in the eye.
Look down, look down,
You're here until you die.*

One prisoner cries out:
I've done no wrong.

Sweet Jesus, hear my prayer.

The chorus of male voices reply:

*Look down, look down,
Sweet Jesus doesn't care.
Look down, look down,
Don't look 'em in the eye.*

Another prisoner:

*How long, O Lord,
Before you let me die?*

CHORUS:

*Look down, look down,
You'll always be a slave.
Look down, look down,
You're standing in your grave.*

Indeed, our Christian lives begin in slavery—slavery to sin. “Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin to death, or of obedience to righteousness?” (Rom. 6:16). Before God called us, we were “slaves of sin” (v. 17) and “slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness, leading to more lawlessness” (v. 19). The end result of that way of living is death (vv. 21, 23).

Our sins had cut us off from God so that He did not even hear our prayers (Isa. 59:1-2). It seemed as if He did not care about us.

Freed from Slavery

God called us out of that bondage, just as He called ancient Israel out of Egypt (a type of sin): “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me” (Ex. 20:2-3).

Valjean is freed from prison after serving his time. But life is not easy for an ex-convict. He finds he is not treated the same as other men. After being paid for his work, he cries:

You have given me half of what other men get.

This handful of tin wouldn't buy my sweat!

Christian Hospitality

Unable to make a living, Valjean breaks parole and flees. He comes upon a Catholic bishop's home. The bishop tells him:

*Come in sir, for you are weary,
And the night is cold out there.
Though our lives are very humble*



Movie poster advertising the recent Hollywood musical, *Les Misérables*.

*What we have, we have to share.
There is wine here to revive you,
There is bread to make you strong.
There's a bed to rest til morning,
Rest from pain and rest from wrong*

This is a good example of Christian charity. Even though this man was a false minister, he sets the proper example for Christians to follow. Paul tells us we should be “distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality” (Rom. 12:13). More specifically, he instructs us, “Let brotherly love continue. Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels” (Heb. 13:1-2).

Valjean is no angel. He looks at the silver with which he eats his meal and realizes it is worth twice what he had earned in his 19 years of slavery. He gets up in the night, takes the silver and takes flight.

He is captured by the police and returned to the bishop's home. The police tell the bishop what Valjean has told them: the silver is a gift and not stolen. The bishop lies, saying:

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Les Misérables

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That is right.

Satan's ministers appear as ministers of light but are deceitful (2 Cor. 11:13-15). The bishop turns to Valjean and continues his lie:

But my friend, you left so early,

Surely something slipped your mind.

You forgot I gave these [candlesticks] also;

Would you leave the best behind?

Again, the bishop, though lying, sets a good example of Christian giving. Christ tells us, "If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also" (Mat. 5:40).

Bought With a Price

When the police leave, the bishop tells Valjean:

But remember this my brother,

See in this some higher plan.

You must take this precious silver

To become an honest man.

By the richness of the martyrs,

By the passion and the blood,

God has raised you out of darkness

I have bought your soul for God.

Indeed, 30 pieces of silver played an important part in the crucifixion of Jesus Christ—the price of his betrayal (Mat. 26:15).

We Christians have been bought with a price—the price of Christ's "passion" and "blood" (1 Cor. 6:20, 7:23).

A New Man

Valjean takes the silver to start a new life. He undergoes a form of repentance and plans to take on a new identity as he sings:

... As I stare into the void

Into the whirlpool of my sins

I'll escape now from this world,

From the world of Jean Valjean

Jean Valjean is nothing now

Another story must begin.

We, as Christians must repent of our sins (Acts 2:38). We must pray, as David did, "Blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin... Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me" (Ps. 51:1-2, 10). Our "old man"—the old, sinful self, was crucified with Christ when we were baptized into his death (Rom. 6:3, 6). Now we are to live a new life in Christ (vv. 8, 11). We are to be a new creation: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Cor. 5:17).

Eight years later we find Valjean has

taken a new identity and is now the owner of a factory and the respectable mayor of a small town.

One of his factory workers, Fantine, is unjustly accused of being a whore by her companions because she had a daughter out of wedlock. She is fired. With no income, she sells her hair to a wigmaker and then turns to prostitution so she can pay two unscrupulous innkeepers who are caring for her daughter while she works. Valjean learns of Fantine's plight, takes her into his care and grows to love her. But Fantine has become ill and just before she dies, makes Valjean promise to take care of her daughter, Cosette.

Death Is But a Sleep

In her sickness, Fantine sings to Valjean:

Take my hand, the night grows ever colder.

Take my child, I give her to your keeping.

For God's sake, please stay til I am sleeping

And tell Cosette I love her and I'll see her when I wake...

The Bible refers to death as sleep (1 Kings 2:10; Luke 8:52; 1 Cor. 11:30, 15:51). True Christians will be resurrected into new bodies, healed of human ailments (1 Cor. 15:42-55).

Valjean makes a promise to Fantine before she dies. After her death, he takes Cosette from the innkeepers and raises her as his own daughter.

Rewarded for Obeying the Law

Always, lurking in the shadows, hunting down Valjean, is Inspector Javert. Javert was a prison guard who knew Valjean in prison. From the time Valjean broke his parole, Javert has made it his life's mission to put Valjean back behind bars.

While pursuing Valjean, Javert sings:

He knows his way in the dark

Mine is the way of the Lord

Those who do follow the path of the righteous

Shall have their reward

And if they fall as Lucifer fell

The flame—the sword!

Although he is the story's antagonist, Javert's words, in this case, ring true. He is the upholder of the man's law; but obeying God's law is the way of the Lord: Jesus tells us, "If you want to enter into life, keep the commandments" (Mat. 19:17). John tells us, "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome" (1 John 5:3).

Those who overcome Satan's way—who live God's way as defined by his laws—will be rewarded for their good works (Rev. 22:12, 14). Salvation is a

gift. But God will give it to those who have learned to live God's way.

Those who rebel against God and his law (as Satan did) have the lake of fire for their reward (Rev. 20:9-10, 15; 2 Peter 3:7).

Valjean and Cosette move to Paris where Cosette falls in love with Marius, a young student rebel, part of a crowd preparing to fight the French king and create a free republic.

The young men have a vision of a new world coming—a world tomorrow. But they realize they must win their battle today before tomorrow comes.

Counting the Cost

At the ABC Café where the rebels meet, Enjolras, a leader, sings:

Have you asked yourselves

What's the price you have to pay?

Is it simply a game

For rich young boys to play?

The colour of the world

Is changing day by day...

Red—the blood of angry men!

Black—the dark of ages past!

Red—a world about to dawn!

Black—the night that ends at last!

Before becoming a Christian, we too, must count the cost (Luke 14:25-33). Indeed, we live in a dark age of Satan's rule that is about to end when the world tomorrow dawns. In the world to come there will be no night (Matt. 24:3; Rev. 21:22-25). It will have ended at last!

Christian Soldiers

Christians are likened to soldiers (2 Tim. 2:3-4) and told to "fight the good fight" (1 Tim. 6:12). We have been warned that some will be martyred (Matt. 24:9-12).

As people who have been freed from the

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Cape Girardeau, MO 63701-3332

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PRINT CIRCULATION: 77 • COST PER ISSUE: FREE
www.thesabbathcoop.org

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slavery of sin, we sing together in Sabbath services. Often our hymns tell of Christ's return and of the world tomorrow.

Enjolras sings a song with his companions to which we Christians can find spiritual meaning:

*Do you hear the people sing?
Singing the song of angry men?
It is the music of a people
Who will not be slaves again!
When the beating of your heart
Echoes the beating of the drums
There is a life about to start
When tomorrow comes!*

COMBEFERRE:

*Will you join in our crusade?
Who will be strong and stand with me?
Beyond the barricade
Is there a world you long to see?*

COURFEYRAC:

*Then join in the fight
That will give you the right to be free....*

FEUILLY:

*Will you give all you can give
So that our banner may advance?
Some will fall and some will live
Will you stand up and take your chance?*

*The blood of the martyrs
Will water the meadows of France!*

Christ tells us, "Do not think I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword... And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it" (Mat. 10:34, 38-39).

Freedom and Kingship Promised

The rebel students, during the song, "One Day More," sing the following words:

*One day to a new beginning
Raise the flag of freedom high
Every man will be a king
Every man will be a king
There's a new world for the winning
There's a new world to be won!
Do you hear the people sing?*

Christ tells us, "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). True Christians understand the Bible because God's word is truth (John 17:17). A Christian's "flag of freedom" is the Holy Bible.

And what does the Bible say is the destiny for Christ's followers? To be kings and priests in a new world of God's kingdom (Rev. 1:6).

The students barricade themselves in the streets throughout Paris. During the night they clash with the king's army. As fighting is heard throughout the city, Valjean prays for Marius, the love of his adopted daughter, Cosette.

God Is With Us

He prays:

*God on high
Hear my prayer
In my need
You have always been there.*

This prayer is similar to a number of psalms. Also, Paul wrote, "Let your conduct be without covetousness, and be content with such things as you have. For He [Christ] Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.' So we may boldly say, 'The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can men do to me?'" (Heb. 13:5-6). God is always there to help true Christians through their trials. "No temptation [or trial] has overtaken you except such as is common to all man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation, will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. 10:13).

The battle goes bad for the student rebels. Marius, though wounded, escapes with his life and finds himself back in the ABC Café where he and his companions had planned the revolution. But now he sits alone. Most of his companions are dead.

A Falling Away

True Christians in the last days must live through a "falling away" before Christ returns (2 Thes. 2:1-12). We have experienced it poignantly through various church break-ups and splits. Many of us still grieve for friends and family who once sang in services with us about the world tomorrow but are now spiritually dead and gone from our midst. The melancholy words of Marius carry special meaning if we substitute "in empty church halls" for "at empty tables" and "about Christ's coming" for the words "of revolution."

*There's a grief that can't be spoken.
There's a pain goes on and on.
Empty chairs at empty tables
Where my friends are dead and gone.*

*Here they talked of revolution.
Here it was they lit the flame.
Here they sang about 'tomorrow'
And tomorrow never came.*

*From the table in the corner
They could see a world reborn,
And they rose with voices ringing.
I can hear them now,
The very words that they have sung,
Became their last communion
On the lonely barricade at dawn!*

*Oh my friends, my friends, forgive me
That I live and you are gone.*

*There's a grief that can't be spoken
There's a pain goes on and on.*

*Phantom faces at the window
Phantom shadows on the floor
Empty chairs at empty tables
Where my friends will meet no more.*

*Oh my friends, my friends, don't ask me
What your sacrifice was for
Empty chairs at empty tables
Where my friends will sing no more.*

An End to Grief

As the musical comes to an end, Valjean himself is about to die. He sings to Cosette:

*Now you are here
Again beside me
Now I can die in peace
For now my life is blessed...*

COSETTE:

*You will live, Papa, you're going to live.
It's too soon, too soon to say good-bye!*

VALJEAN:

*Yes, Cosette, forbid me now to die.
I'll obey. I will try.
On this page I write my last confession.
Read it well when I, at last, am sleeping.
It's a story
Of those who always loved you.
Your mother gave her life for you
Then gave you to my keeping.*

FANTINE [Cosette's mother, singing from beyond the grave]:

*Come with me
Where chains will never bind you
All your grief
At last, at last behind you
Lord in Heaven
Look down on him in mercy.*

VALJEAN:

*Forgive me all my trespasses
and take me to your glory.*

A time is coming when all our grief has ended and we will be freed from whatever burdens we are chained to! "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying; and there shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away" (Rev. 21:4).

The song continues:

VALJEAN, FANTINE, EPONINE:

*Take my hand
and lead me to salvation.
Take my love
For love is everlasting
And remember*

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JOHN THE DISCIPLE WHOM JESUS LOVED

John and the other disciples are tested again on serving bread and cleaning up.

By Gregory Dullum
Part 5

Pharisees Accuse Disciples

It was not always Jesus who was accused of wrongdoing by the religious leaders of that day. The scribes and Pharisees liked to find fault with his followers as well.

It was probably in Capernaum that Pharisees and certain scribes came from Jerusalem and accused some of Christ's disciples of eating without ceremonially washing their hands according to Jewish tradition (Mark 7:1-5).

Jesus told these Jewish religious leaders they were hypocrites. They paid more attention to their traditions than to the law of God. He said, "All too well you reject the commandment of God that you may keep your tradition" (Mark 7:9).

This is true of most religious people today. They cling to their tradition of observing Sunday—which is not commanded in the Bible—and they don't keep holy the seventh-day Sabbath, which is the fourth of the 10 commandments (Ex. 20:8-11). They reject the seven annual festivals which God commands us to keep (Lev. 23:1-2, 4-44) and keep their traditional holidays of Christmas, Easter, Valentine's Day, etc.—days not commanded in the Bible but instead have their origins in pagan worship!

To Tyre, Sidon & Decapolis

Jesus then left the area of the Sea of Galilee and headed northwest to the region of Tyre and Sidon. There, He reluctantly cast a demon out of the daughter of a Greek woman who begged Him for healing (Mark 7:24-30).

Jesus' commission was to the Jews, not to Gentiles. That's why He told the woman, "Let the children be filled first, for it is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs."

Rather than turning away dejected, the woman persisted. She showed Christ her faith in his ability to heal by responding, "Yes Lord, yet even the little dogs under the table eat from the children's crumbs."

Departing from there, Jesus headed east to the region of Decapolis, and then south to the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee (v. 31). He had returned to the area where He had fed the 12,000 people (5,000 men plus women and children).

A man who was deaf and had a speech

impediment was brought to Jesus, and was healed by Him (vv. 32-37).

Disciples Serve 4,000 Men

Ever wonder why we sometimes have the same trial over and over? It may be because we didn't learn the lesson the first time. Sometimes, when we fail a test, we must take it over.

The previous time John and the other disciples were on this mountain, they were not impressed by Jesus' miraculous feeding of 12,000 people. Their hearts were hardened (Mark 6:52). They were about to get a second chance.

Once again, there was a large multitude of followers growing hungry. This time there were 4,000 men, not counting women and children—probably 9,000 to 10,000 in all (Matt. 15:38).

This time there were seven loaves and a few small fish to feed the multitude. Again, Jesus gave thanks, broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to distribute. Again, John and the disciples served a miraculous, unending supply of fish and bread to every man, woman and child. There were not quite as many to feed; each disciple served about 800 people—the previous time each had served about 1,000.

After serving the bread and fish, each disciple went back through the multitude and picked up the fragments. This time there were about half the fragments—seven baskets instead of 12.

Once they were fed, Jesus sent the people away. Then he immediately got into a boat with the disciples and went to Dalmanutha (Mark 8:1-10).

How did John and the other disciples do the second time around? There is no evidence of them grumbling about serving this time. They did not have to get into a boat without Jesus and row all night against a strong wind. We may assume they had learned their lesson, and passed this second test. But did they really?

They arrived in Dalmanutha, which is only mentioned this once in the Bible. It was a town on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee ("Dalmanutha," *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary* by Merrill F. Unger, 1988, p. 271). It also was called Magadan or Magdala (Mat. 15:39).

Pharisees came there and disputed with Christ, asking for a sign. He said none would be given except that of Jonah (Mark 8:11-12, Mat. 16:1-4). As Jonah

was three days and three nights in the belly of the fish, Christ would be three days and three nights in the grave.

Professing Christians today reject the only sign Christ gave that He was the Messiah. They don't believe He was three days and three nights in the grave. They think he died on Good Friday and rose Easter Sunday—spending only two nights and one day in the grave.

Returning to Bethsaida Julias

Jesus and the disciples returned across the lake to Bethsaida Julias. On the way, the disciples realized they had brought just one loaf of bread to feed them all. They were sure it was not enough.

Jesus was still thinking about his dispute with the Pharisees. He said to his disciples, "Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod."

The disciples were not thinking on the same plane. They didn't know what Jesus meant. They were worried about having just one loaf of bread. "So they reasoned among themselves, saying, 'It is because we have no bread.'" (Mark 8:13-16).

"And Jesus, being aware of it, said to them, 'Do you not yet perceive nor understand? Is your heart still hardened?' (v. 17). Note, this was posed as a question. If their hearts were still hardened, Christ would have stated so. Their hearts were no longer hardened; they had passed the test the second time! However, they were still too focused on the physical.

Jesus continued, "Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear? And do you not remember? When I broke the loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments did you take up?" They said to Him, "Twelve."

"'And when I broke the seven for the four thousand, how many large baskets full of fragments did you take up?' And they said, 'Seven.'" (Mark 8:18-20).

"'How is it you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread?—but you should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.'

"Then they understood that He did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees" (Mat. 16:11-12).

We would do well to beware of the doctrines of today's religious leaders who preach contrary to the Bible!

(To be continued!)

In This Modern World, There Are Still People Weeping for Tammuz

By Gregory Dullum

While he sat in Babylonian captivity, the prophet Ezekiel had a vision from God, showing him some of the abominations committed by people in Jerusalem.

Ezekiel wrote, "And He said to me, 'Turn again, and you will see greater abominations that they are doing.' So He brought me to the door of the north gate of the LORD's house; and to my dismay, women were sitting there weeping for Tammuz" (Ezek. 8:12-14).

Who was Tammuz and why were these women weeping? Is there a modern counterpart of this ceremony going on today?

"Tammuz was known by the Babylonians as Dumuzi, god of pasture and flocks, of subterranean water, and of vegetation. He was the husband-brother of Ishtar (Asherah, fertility goddess). Tammuz supposedly died every autumn when he departed to the underworld; from there he was recovered by the disconsolate Ishtar. His reappearance marked the bursting forth of life in the springtime.... Tammuz is equated with the Greek Adonis and the Egyptian Osiris" ("Gods, False," *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary* by Merrill F. Unger, 1988, p. 489).

Tammuz was a pagan god who represented the vegetation. When he died every fall, the vegetation turned brown and died with him. Every spring when he came back to life via resurrection, earth's vegetation sprang forth anew with him.

The origins of Tammuz go back to the Biblical Nimrod, mentioned in Genesis 10: "Cush begot Nimrod; he began to be a mighty one on the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the LORD; therefore it is said, 'Like Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD'" (vv. 8-9).

"Nimrod was an *ungodly ruler*. The scripture says that he was 'a mighty one.' Not only does this indicate that he became famous and politically powerful, but the expression also has a hostile meaning. The expression comes from the Hebrew word 'gibor' which means TYRANT; while the name Nimrod means 'let us rebel.' As THE JEWISH ENCYCLOPEDIA says, Nimrod was 'he who made all the people rebellious against God.'...

"After Nimrod's death, his wife, Queen Semiramis, claimed that he was now the Sun-god. And later, when this adulterous and idolatrous woman gave birth to an illegitimate son, she claimed that this son, Tammuz by name, was Nimrod reborn....

Now the queen-Mother of Tammuz had no doubt heard of the prophecy of the coming Messiah to be born of a woman, for this truth was known from the earliest times (see Gen. 3:15).... Satan, the great counterfeiter, also knew much about the Divine Plan. Thus, he began to set up counterfeits of the true plan centuries before Jesus came. Queen Semiramis, as an instrument in Satan's hands, claimed that her son was supernaturally conceived and that he was the promised seed, the 'savior'" (*Babylon Mystery Religion* by Ralph Woodrow, 1970, pp. 9-10).

Tammuz, the son of Semiramis, wife of Nimrod, was a counterfeit of Jesus Christ!

Today, the resurrection of Tammuz is observed by professing Christians on Easter Sunday. (The real Jesus didn't rise on a Sunday morning. He was exactly three days and three nights in the grave. He was buried before sunset on a Wednesday and rose before sunset on the seventh-day Sabbath!)

For 40 days leading up to Easter, professing Christians keep a time of mourning—a 40-day fast called Lent—which begins this month on Ash Wednesday (Feb. 13). But Lent is NEVER *commanded to be kept* in the Bible! So why do some Christians observe it?

As the Roman Catholic Church spread across Europe, it couldn't stop the pagans from keeping their pagan celebrations. So the church assigned new meaning to those customs. The resurrection of Tammuz became the resurrection of Jesus, and weeping for Tammuz became known as Lent.

"Having adopted the pagan spring festival of Ishtar or Easter into the fallen church, it was but a natural step to adopt the old 'fast' that preceded the spring festival also. Today, this period of forty days before Easter is known as *Lent*. In olden times, these forty days were observed with weeping, fasting, and self-chastisement for Tammuz—to gain anew his favor—so he would come forth from the underworld, end winter, and cause spring to begin. According to the old legends, Tammuz was forty years old when he was killed by a wild boar. And so forty days—a day for each year he lived on the earth—were set aside to 'weep for Tammuz'" (Woodrow, p. 158).

By observing Lent, professing Christians are *unwittingly* continuing the tradition God calls an ABOMINATION—weeping for Tammuz!

Fun Fact



Drawing and Fun Fact are courtesy of NAPS
Abraham Lincoln's schooling lasted less than a year and the rest of his education was self-taught.

Witerature

Wit and wisdom to complement the truths of the Holy Bible can be found in secular writings.

Ah-Choo! The Uncommon Life of Your Common Cold by Jennifer Ackerman, Twelve, 2010, p. 94.

A Cheerful Heart

"[Psychologist Sheldon] Cohen has even unearthed support for the biblical proverb 'A cheerful heart is good medicine.' With the same experimental model he used for his stress studies, he looked at how our sociability and emotional style affect our risk of getting a cold. 'The strongest, most consistent association is extroversion,' he says. 'Extroverts, people who seek out other people, are less susceptible to colds than introverts.' The same is true for people with so-called positive emotional style (PES)—defined as having feelings of enthusiasm, high self-esteem, optimism, happiness, and mastery of their own lives. People with PES are less likely to catch colds. 'The associations are really strong,' says Cohen. 'No matter the size of the study, these two factors are consistently and predictably linked to differences in cold susceptibility.'"

Prov. 12:25; 15:13, 15; 17:22

Quotable Quote

"It is always easier to believe than to deny. Our minds are naturally affirmative." —John Burroughs

Memory Scripture

"A merry heart does good, like medicine, but a broken spirit dries the bones." —Prov. 17:22

Les Misérables

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*The truth that once was spoken,
To love another person
Is to see the face of God.*

CHORUS:

*Do you hear the people sing
Lost in the valley of the night?
It is the music of a people
Who are climbing to the light.
For the wretched of the earth
There is a flame that never dies.
Even the darkest night will end
And the sun will rise.*

*They will live again in freedom
In the garden of the Lord.
They will walk behind the plough-share
They will put away the sword.
The chain will be broken
And all men will have their reward.*

The world will become a “garden of the Lord.” The tree of life, once part of the Garden of Eden, will offer its fruit free for the taking (Rev. 22:14). The desert will blossom as a rose as all creation is renewed (Isa. 4:2, 27:6; 30:23; 32:15; 35:1-2; Rom. 8:18-22).

The world tomorrow will be a time of peace! “They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

“But everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree, and no one shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken. For all people [now] walk each in the name of his god, but we will walk in the name of the LORD our God forever and ever” (Micah 4:3-5).

The chorus of powerful voices gets louder and louder as the musical concludes:

*Will you join in our crusade?
Who will be strong and stand with me?
Somewhere beyond the barricade
Is there a world you long to see?
Do you hear the people sing
Say, do you hear the distant drums?
It is the future that they bring
When tomorrow comes!
Will you join in our crusade?
Who will be strong and stand with me?
Somewhere beyond the barricade
Is there a world you long to see?
Do you hear the people sing
Say, do you hear the distant drums?
It is the future that they bring
When tomorrow comes!
Tomorrow comes!*

Indeed, the world tomorrow is coming. And we shall all experience true freedom and joy and peace. God speed that day!



Britain Threatens to Leave European Union

“Prime Minister David Cameron of Britain has added to Europe’s malaise, vowing to reduce British entanglement with the European Union—or allow his people to vote in a referendum to leave the bloc altogether.

“The pledge from the British prompted swift retorts from France and Germany, which said no member has the option of ‘cherry picking’ whatever European rules it wants to enforce. But it reflected a growing sense of unease, not only in Britain but across the Continent, that while the acute phase of the financial crisis has passed, the challenge to Europe’s mission and even its membership has not....

“[There is] declining public support for British membership in Europe—only 45 percent last year, down from 51 percent in 2011, in polls conducted [in Britain] by the Pew Research Global Attitudes Project” (“Europe Is Edgy as Briton Seeks to Loosen Ties” by Andrew Higgins, *The New York Times*, nytimes.com, Jan. 23, 2013, p. 1).

If the 10-nation final “king of the North” is formed from the EU, it will not include Britain! God will use a German-led union to take Britain and the U.S. (modern-day descendants of Joseph) into captivity prior to Christ’s return.

Economy Worries EU

“[T]he actual news on the economy continues to be grim, with figures released Tuesday [Jan. 15] showing that Germany, the Continent’s flagship economy, contracted by about 0.5 percent in the final months of last year. Combined with a flurry of disappointing results recently in other major economies, the stumble raised questions about Europe’s ability to escape recession” (“Slowdown in Germany Worries Euro Zone” by Nicholas Kulish and Jack Ewing, *The New York Times*, nytimes.com, Jan. 15, 2013, p. 1).

Bad economic times in Germany led to the rise of Adolph Hitler and the Nazi party prior to World War II. A bad economy in Europe could lead to the rise of a

new European dictator called “the beast” (Rev. 13:1-10). This dictator must come to power before Christ returns (Rev. 17:13-14, 19:11-20).

Jihadists Surge in Africa

“As the uprising closed in around him, the Libyan dictator Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi warned that if he fell, chaos and holy war would overtake North Africa....

“In recent days, that unhinged prophecy has acquired a grim new currency. In Mali, French paratroopers arrived this month to battle an advancing force of jihadi fighters who already control an area twice the size of Germany. In Algeria, a one-eyed Islamist bandit organized the brazen takeover of an international gas facility, taking hostages that included more than 40 Americans and Europeans.

“Coming just months after an American ambassador was killed by jihadists in Libya, those assaults have contributed to a sense that North Africa—long a dormant backwater for Al Qaeda—is turning into another zone of dangerous instability....” (“Jihadists’ Surge in North Africa Reveals Grim Side of Arab Spring” by Robert F. Worth, *The New York Times*, nytimes.com, Jan. 19, 2013, p. 1).

At the time of the end, there will be a king of the South—likely a Muslim union of nations across North Africa and the Middle East (Dan. 11:40-43). Jihadists may be forming that union now!

N. Koreans Move Rockets

“The discovery by American intelligence agencies that North Korea is moving mobile missile launchers around the country, some carrying a new generation of powerful rocket, has spurred new assessments [that] Kim Jong-un...appears to be accelerating the country’s ability to attack American allies or forces in Asia, and ultimately to strike across the Pacific” (“Movement of Missiles by North Korea Worries U.S.” by Thom Shanker and David E. Sanger, *The New York Times*, nytimes.com, Jan. 17, 2013, p. 1).

North Korea may be part of the “kings of the east” at the time of Christ’s return (Dan. 11:44, Rev. 16:12-16).