

# “In gold we trust”

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**T**HE TITLE above, which apes the motto on the US dollar bill “In God we trust,” heads an article in a financial newsletter lauding the benefits of gold investment. The price of gold has hit record highs in recent weeks. In fact gold has been the strongest-performing asset class of the last decade, rising from a low of around \$200 per ounce in the early 1990s (when Gordon Brown famously sold hundreds of tons of British gold) to over \$1,400 per ounce in early November 2010—an increase of more than 600 per cent!

What are the reasons for this meteoric rise in the value of this ancient metal, once famously referred to in financial circles as a ‘barbarous relic’? Another financial newsletter, specialising in mining and precious-metals investing, recently advised its subscribers to “buy gold and get a gun . . .” Strange advice? Perhaps not, depending upon your perspective. What should we do? Buy gold? Get a gun?

## “Europe stumbles blindly towards its 1931 moment”

The financial crisis is far from over, reports Telegraph online ([telegraph.co.uk](http://telegraph.co.uk), 14 Nov. 2010). A number of Eurozone countries are in very serious financial difficulty and no one seems quite sure what to do about it, least of all the European Central Bank. Should they turn on the printing presses to print money to buy government bonds (debt) from these debt-ridden nations (a process known as quantitative easing)? Should they allow Portugal, Ireland and others to default on their debt and effectively declare bankruptcy? Is the solution to allow record levels of debt? These actions are fraught with extreme economic, political and societal risk.

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*The price of the bank bailout in 2009 would be enough to feed 1.4 billion people for fifty years (Source: Oxfam).*

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These proposed remedies for the extreme greed and stupidity of the last twenty years could lead to significant

socioeconomic pain and strife. Allowing countries to default on their debt could lead to a domino effect in the nations to whom the debt is owed. France, for example, has a large exposure to Portuguese debt; if Portugal defaulted it could plunge the French banking system into free-fall, causing widespread panic amongst politicians and public alike.

The case is similar for the UK and Ireland. Many German politicians are strongly opposed to further bailouts of failing nations within the Eurozone, fearing that such increases in Euro debt and instability would seriously damage the German economy. We are increasingly seeing a two-tier system developing in the Eurozone, with nations such as France and Germany, in particular, diverging from the poorer, more indebted southern nations already mentioned, as well as Italy and Spain. All this has led the head of the International Monetary Fund to call for European nations to cede more power to Brussels (*cf.* Rev. 17:12-14) so that funds can be moved around more easily to stabilise the Euro—in other words, rob the prudent and give to the spendthrift. What a mess!

## Nowhere to turn

Herein lies the reason for gold’s increasing popularity. Down through the ages gold has maintained a relatively constant value. Due to its inherent value and relative scarcity it is what is described as a ‘store of wealth’; in other words, when things look decidedly risky and paper currencies are failing (as we see in the world around us today) then people turn to gold to preserve their wealth. Our paper currencies rely solely on confidence in the government that issued them; they are not backed by anything tangible.

In the past, most of the world’s paper currencies were backed by gold. In theory you could go



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***“He that trusteth in his riches shall fall: but the righteous shall flourish as a branch” (Prov. 11:28).***

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to the vaults of the Bank of England and present your paper money in exchange for gold. Of course, in reality this never happened. In the early 1970s the USA removed this pegging to gold, as other nations had done. The mighty dollar was now the ultimate store of wealth, the benchmark against which all others measured themselves.

The dollar is not looking quite so mighty these days, and there are growing cries in some circles for the gold standard to be reintroduced—hence the advice coming from these investment newsletters. This is all about *wealth preservation*; the only place these people have left to go in a bid to ensure their future prosperity is gold!

There is a beautiful paradox presented to us in Peter’s first letter, where we read: “. . . ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold . . . but with the precious blood of Christ . . . that your faith and hope might be in God” (1:18-21). This seems perverse! If I were to place an ingot of gold and a spot of blood in my garden and leave them for a year, which of them would still be there in twelve months’ time? The blood would be long gone, but the precious metal would still be there 1,000 years later (provided none of my neighbours got wind that I had left it there!).

Under inspiration this conscious play on human values presents a fundamental truth to us: the Word of God turns the investment advice of these financial advisors on its head. Precious metals are corruptible and perishing; and blood, specifically the blood of Christ, is precious and everlasting. The currency we need to invest is our life, and the commodity we need to invest it in is the blood of Christ. The material things that are considered precious and valued by man are ultimately worthless. Why? Because we die and leave them all behind. A life invested in Christ will provide prosperity now in the hope and fellowship we share with our brothers and sisters, and has a guaranteed future return in the form of life everlasting, free from sin and death.

“There is no man that hath left house . . . or lands, for my sake, and the gospel’s, but he

shall receive an hundredfold now in this time . . . and in the world to come eternal life” (Mk. 10:29,30).

***“It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man” (Ps. 118:8)***

In our increasingly godless world, men and women have put their trust in material things (I refer primarily to the Western world in the following examples). We do not need God; we have nice holidays, a nice home, a nice car (all fully insured just to make sure we are never without such necessities) and a good pension scheme to ensure a comfortable old age.

This attitude and way of life all too easily creeps into ecclesial life and emasculates the fervour that we should be displaying and verbalising as we look forward with hope to the establishment of God’s Kingdom. We can become very caught up in the ‘here and now’: the things that we leave behind when we die, the things that are passing away and will no more be remembered in the age to come.

Sadly, the conversations we hear when we meet with our brothers and sisters in Christ often focus on the holiday plans, the new home or home renovations, the latest electronic gizmo, or any number of other things we could think of. These things are part of life and are not inherently evil, but if we are not on our guard and watching we can lose sight of those things which are as yet unseen and eternal (2 Cor. 4:16-18). These material and financial comforts are not looking so secure anymore. People are worried. If our pension fund is decimated by inflation or our income curbed because of higher taxes, what can we do?

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***“Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, Who giveth us richly all things to enjoy” (1 Tim 6:17).***

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We are grateful that the advice available to us is not “buy gold and get a gun,” but, “. . . when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh” (Lk. 21:28).

If our understanding of prophecy is correct then this is indeed just the beginning of "these things." Throughout human history, economic turmoil has inevitably led to political turmoil and often to war. Political and economic uncertainty are often the means by which God brings the "basest of men" to power in order that His

will might be accomplished. We take no pleasure in the inevitable suffering and hardship that is coming on mankind as a result of his greed and sin, but we do rejoice that these things are but a passing phase that will lead to the glory of the Kingdom age when all the families of the earth will be blessed.