

# Publishing Editor's column

**S**HORTLY BEFORE sitting at my desk to write these words, the latest edition of the American news magazine *Newsweek* arrived through the post. Following a week of great volatility in the world's financial markets, considerable space in the magazine is devoted to the prospects for the future. Various financial experts give their views. Naturally some are optimistic and some pessimistic. Terms such as "meltdown" and "the abyss" are used by some. If the most pessimistic views turn out to be true we are indeed in for difficult times.

A few days ago (as I write) the financial world was stunned by the news that a rogue trader working for a big French bank had lost the bank about three billion pounds by unauthorised trading in shares. How could such losses be made in such a short time? The answer is that there is no such thing as real wealth these days, only figures stored on a computer. Much of this 'wealth' consists of shares, which can, as in recent days, fluctuate widely in value. The Bible warns us that even silver and gold are impermanent things in the ultimate (1 Pet. 1:18). How much more is this so with stocks and shares, bank accounts and insurance policies!

I am mindful of the words of the prophet Isaiah recorded in Isaiah 28. They were spoken in relation, not to a financial crisis, but to the impending Assyrian invasion. There were those in Judah who said, "when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us" (v. 15); and from elsewhere in Isaiah it would appear that they were relying on a peace treaty with Assyria or a defensive alliance with Egypt. In the event, the peace treaty was broken and the alliance

proved useless; and those who relied on them had made lies their refuge and hidden themselves under falsehood. Refuge was only to be found in Zion, where God had laid "for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation" (v. 16), referring to Hezekiah and the other God-fearing leaders of the nation, for whose sake God saved Jerusalem from the Assyrians.

That we can apply these words to our own circumstances is shown by the way the Apostle Peter quotes Isaiah 28 in applying this idea of the sure foundation stone to Christ (1 Pet. 2:6-8). Indeed, Christ himself likens his teachings to a firm foundation on which to build our lives, a foundation that will enable us to stand firm in stormy times (Mt. 7:24-27). Though some readers of this magazine will already be facing stormy times due to unrest or poverty in their countries, most of us live in the peaceful and prosperous West. But how long will this continue? And are we really basing our lives on Christ and his teaching so that we might hold fast to the faith should financial "meltdown" occur? If we think that financial investments of one sort and another will protect us in such circumstances we are making lies our refuge just as much as were the people Isaiah is talking about.

In such circumstances it is important that we keep close to our God and our Lord Jesus Christ through the Word provided for our instruction, and our hope is that the *Testimony* will help to this end. The Testimony Committee thanks readers for their continued support for another year and looks forward to this continuing for another year if the Lord remains away.

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