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REAL TRUTH

A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING



BRITAIN IN FLAMES

THE REAL TRUTH

A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING

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PHOTO: BARBARA DAVIDSON/LOS ANGELES TIMES/MCT

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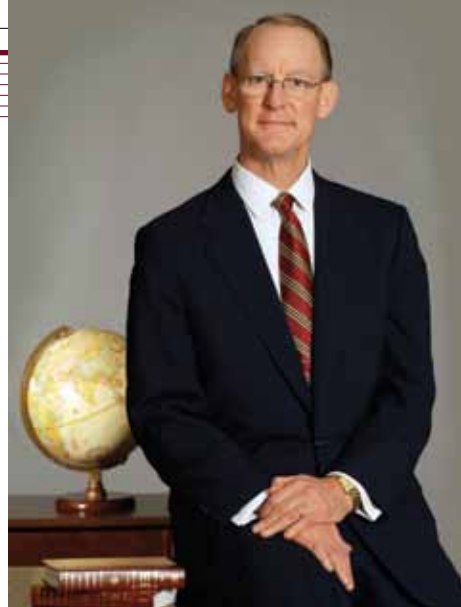
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PERSONAL FROM

David C. Fack



13 End-time Prophetic Events— in Exact Sequence

A PREVIOUS REAL TRUTH article covered the failed prophecy of a radio preacher about May 21, 2011, and his prediction about an October 21, 2011 doomsday. It addressed how to know false prophets from God's servants, and much more.

But what is the *truth* of Bible prophecy?

Jesus Christ, along with Old Testament prophets and other New Testament writers, spoke about specific events and trends that would precede His Return. There are about 70 that occur in sequence, culminating in the Return of Christ. Some are larger than others—but all are *provable*. The purpose of this unique Personal is to simply and briefly reveal in sequential order the first of 13 major events. They form a *foundation* to understand the answers to the most crucial questions about the future!

I will be plain about what is coming! To defeat widespread confusion, no punches can be pulled.

Many sense the world is hurtling toward calamity. Mankind is overwhelmed with every kind of trouble, evil and ill—terrorism, violence of every kind, pollution, overpopulation, political upheaval, religious con-

fusion and tremendous economic turmoil and decline, which suggests an even worse Great Depression is ahead.

New diseases keep emerging and old ones are re-emerging. Famine is decimating entire segments of local populations. And incomprehensibly lethal weapons of mass destruction now threaten humanity.

Hundreds of millions live in abject poverty, ignorance and oppression. Add rampant and worsening immorality and perversion across the world—and the never-ending cycle of hatred and unrest growing ever worse in the Middle East—and earthquakes, volcanoes and frightening weather patterns across the world—and devastating fires, tornadoes, hurricanes, droughts and floods occurring more often and in more places. Headlines scream daily of seemingly endless problems. World conditions, events and trends speak in frightening terms about how things could *quickly* turn in the wrong direction.

Source of Answers

Most do not know *where* or *how* to look within God's Word to get correct understanding of how events will play out, sequentially, within God's Master Plan for the end of the age. And, instead of examining the hundreds

of verses on prophecy themselves for PROOF, many are content to trust supposed experts.

One-third of the Bible is prophecy—history written in advance. Over 80 percent of this *future history* is unfulfilled. Many major events must yet occur. God wants His servants to understand them. He has provided *clues*—necessary VITAL KEYS!—to understanding what lies ahead for the world.

The prophet Isaiah explained that God's Word is written, "...precept upon precept...line upon line...here a little, and there a little..." (28:10). Nowhere is this Bible pattern more true than with prophecy. And another great Bible truth is that this Book interprets itself.

Millions are wondering about the course of events, and whether the world is on the brink of destruction. Jesus' disciples asked Him about final events. Notice: "The disciples came...saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? And what shall be the *sign* of Your coming, and of the end of the world [meaning *age*]?" (Matt. 24:3).

The idea of the world ending has been a subject of discussion and speculation, but also ridicule, for almost 2,000 years. Is the world nearing Christ's Return—are these the *end times*? Can we know?

Now begins examination of 13 events or conditions—in *sequence*—that precede Christ's Return. We will count forward from the present.

NUMBER 1: The worldwide breakdown of character

The apostle Paul warned, "In the *last days* perilous [or dangerous] times shall come..." (II Tim. 3:1). Here is what he describes: "For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady,

highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God" (vs. 2-4). This time has come!—and it is worsening!

Look around. People's conduct is *changing*. More authority figures are sounding the alarm that human nature is running wild—and conditions are exploding out of control! No thinking person can disagree.

Matthew 24, Luke 21 and Mark 13 are parallel accounts of what is called the Olivet Prophecy. This crucial prophecy works in combination with the books of Revelation and Daniel, and puts in sequential order events that span the entire period from Christ's First Coming until His Return 2,000 years later. Jesus explained *exactly* what would occur—what the serious observer should be looking for—and *expect*. He presented, in *plain, clear language*, all key events and trends. These *parallel* Revelation 6 precisely. Matthew 24 provides clues, which explain the *symbols* we will study in Revelation. You will see Jesus gives a direct answer to a direct question.

Paul's last-days description culminates with, "Evil men and seducers shall wax [grow] worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (II Tim. 3:13).

NUMBER 2: False Christianity grows much worse

First, Jesus told His disciples, "*Take heed* that no man *deceive* you. For many shall come in My name, saying, I [Jesus] am Christ; and shall *deceive many*" (Matt. 24:4-5). Jesus goes straight to the problem that would exist—there would be *many* deceivers at work. Christ warned that the many would be deceived by those claiming to represent Him—not the *few*. Are *you* concerned about this?

The number of false teachers and false prophets is exploding, exactly as Jesus warned *three times* (just in Matthew 24) would occur. Most are unaware of this deception—and its impact throughout Christianity.

Now let's read the exact parallel in the *first seal* of Revelation 6. Understand that what the apostle John records is written in *symbols*, not plain language. He introduces the infamous Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse: "The Lamb [Jesus] opened *one of the seals*...behold a *white horse*: and he that sat on him had a *bow*; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth *conquering*, and to *conquer*" (Rev. 6:1-2). The *white horse* represents *false* Christianity. The rider is a counterfeit of the true Christ and a counterfeit of His Second Coming, described in Revelation 19:11-16. There, the *real* Christ wields a sharp two-edged sword, while the false christ is carrying a bow. Do not overlook this critical difference!

Since false teachers, ministers and false prophets have been plying their trade for centuries, Jesus' warning for the end of the age must involve a big increase in the power, prevalence and influence of false Christianity.

NUMBER 3: War grows much worse

Following *false Christianity*, Jesus states, "You shall hear of *wars* and *rumors of wars*: see that you be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom" (Matt. 24:6-7).

This requires no interpretation. In fact, it is Jesus' interpretation of Revelation 6. As we read the remaining seals, we have Jesus telling us *in advance* what we are viewing—what the symbols mean. All mystery disappears.

When the *second* seal opens, a red horse appears: "When He had opened the *second seal*...there went out another *horse that was red*: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth,

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You Can Know the Future...



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BRITAIN IN FLAMES

After riots erupted in England, leaders called the state of British society into question.



■ **CHAOS:** Top, riot police stand near a car as it burns in London, England (Aug. 8, 2011). Bottom left, a riot police officer attempts to break down the door of a house next to a burning car in London, England (Aug. 8, 2011). Bottom right, youths react during riots in Birmingham, England (Aug. 8, 2011). PHOTOS: PETER MACDIARMID/ (TOP); DAN ISTITENE/ (BOTTOM LEFT); JEFF J MITCHELL/ (BOTTOM RIGHT) GETTY IMAGES

FOR SEVERAL DAYS, looters ravaged British cities, smashing windows with baseball bats, setting buildings and vehicles ablaze, burglarizing stores and launching bottles filled with gasoline at tens of thousands of police officers in full riot gear, some patrolling on horseback or in armored vehicles. The London-born violence rapidly spread to at least three other cities, where sev-

eral people—including police—were killed or injured, and hundreds of residents were arrested.

“Two police cars and a double-decker bus were set alight, stores were looted and several buildings along Tottenham’s main street—five miles (eight kilometers) from the site of the 2012 Olympics—were reduced to smoldering shells,” *The Associated Press* reported.

An onsite *BBC* correspondent stated: “I saw 100 or so young men with

ski masks and hoods pulled down. They seemed to be very well-organized, communicating with each other on radio. The police were in force but they did not seem to know what to do.”

During the riots, youth communicated with each other via cellphones and Internet-enabled handheld devices. Social networking was widely used to incite mobs. A *Daily Telegraph* article stated that in Birmingham, a city northwest of London, “Police were prepared for trouble after a campaign on Facebook, BlackBerry Messenger

and Twitter warned of violence and encouraged others to get involved.”

The riots began after what was construed as a race-driven police shooting in London’s northern Tottenham district. But those who stole items from shops constituted a multitude of ethnic backgrounds and classes—from rowdy teenagers to adults who seized the opportunity to simply take something for free.

“First the streets contained people of all backgrounds sprinting off with bicycles looted from Evans Cycles,” *Guardian* reported. “Three Asian men in their 40s, guarding a newsagent, discussed whether they should also take advantage of the apparent suspension of law...Others were not so reticent; a white woman and a man emerged carrying a bike each. A young black teenager, aged about 14, came out smiling, carrying another bike, only for it be snatched from him by an older man.”

Moral Collapse

Although rioters’ behavior showed all-out opportunistic greed, some analysts say the real motivation was Britain’s economic cutbacks.

“In real terms the actual spending reduction program is the most painful if it all came to fruition since the 1940s in terms of its actual squeeze on the levels of public spending,” London’s Economist Intelligence Unit expert told *Voice of America*. “It’s something that the U.K. has not endured for many, many years.”

British Prime Minister David Cameron had another view, denouncing the violence as evidence of the country’s “twisted moral code,” “indifference to right and wrong,” and “complete absence of self restraint” during a speech posted on the British government’s website.

AUGUST 2011

England’s Riots

Riots started Saturday night and spread outside London.

Location of riots

- Saturday night, Aug. 6
- Sunday night, Aug. 7
- Monday night, Aug. 8
- Riots outside London



“In this risk-free ground of moral neutrality there are no bad choices, just different lifestyles,” he said. “People aren’t the architects of their own problems, they are victims of circumstance. ‘Live and let live’

have become “tolerated, indulged—sometimes even incentivized—by a state and its agencies that in parts have become literally de-moralised.”

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■ **PICKING UP THE PIECES:** Top left, fire crews douse burned-out buildings in Croydon, England (Aug. 9, 2011). Bottom left, shopkeepers begin to clean up following a night of civil unrest on the streets of London (Aug. 9, 2011). Right, British Prime Minister David Cameron makes a statement to the media on the recent disturbances around London (Aug. 9, 2011). PHOTOS: STEFAN ROUSSEAU/PA PHOTOS/ (RIGHT); GARETH FULLER/PA PHOTOS/ (TOP LEFT); ANTHONY DEVLIN/PA PHOTOS/ (BOTTOM LEFT) ABACA PRESS/MCT



A “Good Education”?

What Stands in the Way

The same problems have long hindered schooling: student disinterest, low test scores, and disrespect for teachers and administrators. Yet these are merely *effects* of a deeper *cause*.

BY JEFFREY R. AMBROSE AND NESTOR A. TORO

WALKING THROUGH a bustling phalanx of teenagers in a hallway, you enter a warm, dimly lit, poster-filled room. A set of questions displayed on a digital interactive whiteboard prompts each pupil to transmit a response using a personal remote control, or to stand up and manually enter their answer through touch-sensitive icons on the electronic screen. As pupils complete warm-up assignments on school-provided laptop computers, attendance is silently taken using an electronic seating chart featuring each student’s digital photo, which is sent to the main office via computer network.

The usual suspects are goofing off. The teacher separates them and reminds everyone that time management is crucial.

The activities that follow have been carefully planned to require minimal lecture time, quickly shifting to hands-on experience that is strategically designed for age-specific attention spans. The dynamic format allows for much student collaboration and trial and error, with the teacher acting as a facilitator.

But actual learning seems scarce, as the lesson flow is often interrupted by gum-chewers, paper-ball throwers, disrespectful commentators, excessive chatting, missing materials, equipment vandalism, detention assignments,

one-way restroom trips, students sent to the principal’s office, the occasional scuffle—or lockdowns for immediate threats, such as gang fights, an armed intruder, or police inspecting lockers for illegal drugs.

The bell rings as the class period ends. Students stand up and shuffle to the next classroom. Whatever is not finished is typed up by the teacher and posted on a homework webpage.

Welcome to the 21st-century American classroom.

Here, the concept of a teacher verbally presenting information to quietly listening students is largely outdated. Modern educators now have to keep up with every technological advancement, combat ever-shortening attention

■ **HIGH-TECH:** Students use iPad computer tablets during a history lesson at Hillbrook School in Los Gatos, California (Nov. 22, 2010).

PHOTO: GARY REYES/SAN JOSE MERCURY NEWS/MCT



spans, and generally be ready to adapt to what *students* want.

Despite the best efforts of teachers and school administrators, there continues to be widespread scholastic disinterest, high dropout rates, and low test scores.

What is preventing educators from delivering a “good education”?

State of the Classroom

Today’s classroom has drastically changed from years past. Sincerely dedicated teachers look for new and effective ways to make a difference in students’ lives, even if this means constantly altering established patterns or spending personal funds on whatever does not fit the school budget.

Yet many do not find success with contemporary teaching methods and initiatives. The Alliance for Excellent Education reports that “teachers are leaving the profession at an alarming rate: 14 percent of new teachers leave by the end of their first year; 33 percent leave within three years; and almost 50 percent leave in five years. Estimated conservatively, American schools spend more than \$2.6 billion annually replacing teachers who have dropped out of the profession. Many analysts believe that the price is actually much larger and point out that the loss in teacher quality and student achievement must be added to the bill.”

Moreover, large numbers of students also quit, creating for themselves a future with far narrower options. In the United States, “Nearly 1 million kids who start high school every year don’t make it to graduation” (*NPR*). This has a domino effect: “At a time when federal and state budgets are tight, dropouts costs taxpayers hundreds of billions of dollars in lost revenue, health care, welfare and incarceration costs” (*ibid.*).

While there are programs that attempt to counter these trends, the overall trajectory is not changing, and the public has noticed. According to a Gallup poll, “Americans continue to express near record-low confidence in U.S. public schools—holding in the range seen throughout the past few

years of tumult for the U.S. economy and state budgets. The 34% who say they have a ‘great deal’ or ‘quite a lot’ of confidence in public schools is unchanged from last year and statistically similar to what Gallup has found since 2005.”

Starting at Home

While the old adage “it takes a village to raise a child” is held as the standard in modern education, some in the proverbial village are not fulfilling their part in the education endeavor.

A *CNN* editorial highlighted this: “I don’t know the status of parenting in America. But I know a little about the status of education in America. Parents’ growing inability to impose manners and limits on their kids when the kids are in school is reflected in record dropout rates, as well as teen drug and alcohol abuse, teen sex, and unwed pregnancies. Maybe it’s parenting that’s on the decline, more than the schools.”

Dwindling parental involvement (sometimes due to a need to work increased hours to pay the bills) at schools is causing a shift of responsibilities, with children now virtually raised by schools—along with (after school) the Internet, television, video games and friends.

Ultimately, a lack of parental involvement means teachers are toothless. If teachers’ standards are not reinforced at home, more than half the battle is lost.

Add to this the constantly changing approach to disciplinary action: warnings, detention, out-of-school suspension, and so on. With low parental supervision and ever-eroding respect for authority, including school officials, standards become impossible to maintain.

Despite schools’ attempts to keep up with instructional and technological trends, sophisticated teacher training, and specialized programs, something is missing. Many students continue failing, and even among those who graduate, basic knowledge has become increasingly rare.

Another *CNN* article reported: “Test results released in June [2011] showed

that fewer than one quarter of all students are ‘proficient’ in American history...Many of the fourth grade students asked about Lincoln on the tests could identify him, but few could say why he was an important president... One student said he was important because he had a beard.”

United Nations Literacy Decade data shows, “On a global scale, one in five adults cannot read nor write. According to the latest estimates, 776 million people are illiterate and two-thirds of these are women. In a modern world, such levels are unacceptable.”

In the latest International Adult Literacy Survey, “...between 19% and 23% of American adults performed at the top levels for each of the three literacy scales: document literacy, prose literacy and quantitative (number) literacy...Yet many Americans are being left behind. The same survey found that between 21% and 24% of U.S. adults performed at the lowest level for all three scales, a figure echoed by the National Adult Literacy Survey...” (*education-portal.com*).

Illiteracy has a serious impact on a country’s economy and well-being. Statistically, less-educated individuals are more prone to earn lower wages, depend on government programs, and commit crimes. And in the mind of educators, it all starts in the classroom.

Serious issues such as the achievement gap, dropout rates, illiteracy, insufficient funding, and poor parenting are among everyday battles in the 21st-century classroom. Are today’s school systems on the right track to conquer these problems? Or is education on a downward spiral?

Lowering Expectations

Human civilization has seen millennia of various forms of education, and most have required students to reach certain standards. *Encyclopaedia Britannica* states that priests in ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia “dominated the intellectual and educational domain... Methods of teaching and learning were memorization, oral repetition, copying models, and individual instruction. It is believed that the exact copying

of scripts was the hardest and most strenuous and served as the test of excellence in learning. The period of education was long and rigorous, and discipline was harsh.”

Of the Incas, the article states, “The instructors were highly respected encyclopaedic scholars known as amautas. After the completion of this education, the pupils were required to pass a series of rigorous examinations in order to attain full status in the life of the Inca nobility.”

Every advanced human civilization has seen a pattern of rigor in education connected to success. More recently, the 20th century saw increased worldwide academic rigor triggered by the Soviet launching of Sputnik 1, and a resultant scientific revolution.

Conversely, a *Washington Post* commentary stated of today’s expectations, “...the question we should be asking ourselves about our nation’s schools is this: ‘Where’s the rigor?’ Or, ‘Where’s the academic beef?’ Concerns about the lack of rigor in U.S. schools were renewed recently, when new data were published on how prepared—or not—U.S. high school students are for college. Writing in the *Wall Street Journal*, Stephanie Banchemo said, ‘New data show that fewer than 25% of 2010 graduates who took the ACT college-entrance exam possessed the academic skills necessary to pass entry-level [college] courses.’”

Related to these questions are initiatives that lower standards regarding homework. An example is a controversial school policy that advocates for less weight given to homework in determining grades. “Critics—mostly teachers—worry that the policy will encourage students to slack off assigned work and even reward those who already disregard assignments,” *The Los Angeles Times* reported. “And they say it could penalize hardworking students who receive higher marks for effort. Some educators also object to a one-size-fits-all mandate they said could hamstring teaching or homogenize it. They say, too, that students who do their homework perform

significantly better than those who don’t—a view supported by research.”

How far are some educators willing to lower the bar? Consider the case of Atlanta’s standardized test scandal: “Cheating occurred in 44 of the 56 Atlanta elementary and middle schools examined, and with the collusion of at least 178 teachers, including 38 principals,” *The Economist* reported, adding, “Answer-sheets in some classrooms found wrong-to-right erasures on test sheets that had standard deviations 20 to 50 times above the state norm...Some teachers gave pupils answers. Some filled in answers themselves. Some pointed to answers while standing over pupils’ desks. Others let low-scoring children sit near—and copy from—higher-scoring ones. One group of teachers had a test-changing party over the weekend...Governor Nathan Deal released a report that found cheating throughout Atlanta’s school system, not by pupils but by teachers, with the superintendent and her administration either encouraging it or turning a blind eye.”

Low expectations early in a pupil’s academic career have far-reaching impacts. At the college level, where professors increasingly complain of poor freshman academics, “Students are hitting the books less and partying more,” *The New York Times* reported. “Easier courses and easier majors have become more and more popular...What many of those students are not walking away with is something that has long been recognized as invaluable—higher order thinking and reasoning skills. They can get their degrees without putting in more of an effort because in far too many instances the colleges and universities are not demanding more of them.”

Stymied by Division

Different countries, and regions within countries, use a myriad of educational philosophies and approaches, with mixed results. Many see Finland as a model for success. In her book, *The Flat World and Education – How America’s Commitment to Equity Will*

Determine Our Future, author Linda Darling-Hammond states: “Finland has been a poster child for school improvement since it rapidly climbed to the top of the international rankings after it emerged from the Soviet Union’s shadow. Once poorly ranked educationally, with a turgid bureaucratic system that produced low-quality education and large inequalities, it now ranks first among all OECD [Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development] nations on the PISA [Program for International Student Assessments, an international test for 15-year-olds] in mathematics, science, and reading. The country also boasts a highly equitable distribution of achievement, even for its growing share of immigrant students.”

By contrast, American education is sharply divided due to problems outside the classroom. Issues with teacher evaluation, tenure, funding, salaries, benefits and bargaining rights have sparked a series of protests, with ripple effects across the nation—affecting students as well.

On one hand, teachers unions are fighting to preserve collective bargaining in aspects such as teacher-salary, benefit and pension negotiation. On the other, some politicians are working on reforms to limit the influence of these organizations in a severely stressed economy.

Another historically insoluble issue for the system has been diversity of religious ideologies. Since prayer and Bible reading were eradicated in 1963, controversy has arisen regularly over issues such as incorporating multicultural religious holidays, banning or editing the Pledge of Allegiance’s religious language, teaching young children about homosexuality, and the infamous grapple between creation and evolution.

Of a recent Texas School Board vote regarding creation-influenced materials, local newspaper *Beaumont Enterprise* wrote: “It goes without saying that this is an unnecessary argument; modern people shouldn’t have

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America's Weary Allies

Is the Nation's Debt Crisis Devaluing Global Relationships?

BY SAMUEL C. BAXTER

“REMEMBER WHEN...?” In the wake of a drawn-out debate over budget cuts, American economists, government officials, and opinion-editorial writers kept asking a version of this question for the nation.

A *CNN* editorial essentially asked, *Remember when there were effective politicians?*

The article “In Economic Turmoil, U.S. Needs a Leader Like Churchill” concluded that America needs “leaders today who are as defiant in the face of trouble.”

After Standard & Poor's downgraded America's credit rating for the first time in history, New York City-based *International Business Times* seemed to ask, *Remember when the United States buckled down and fixed its problems?*

The article begins, “America is broken and needs to be fixed,” then it proposes how to solve the nation's problems by returning to mostly tried-and-true methods.

These “remember when” questions are being asked by conservatives and liberals alike.

For example, the Republican governor of Texas called for a day of prayer and fasting, saying in effect, *Remember when America turned to God in times of crisis?*

During a gathering of over 30,000, the governor prayed, “Father, our heart breaks for America. We see discord at home. We see fear in the marketplace.

We see anger in the halls of government. And as a nation we have forgotten Who made us, Who protects us, Who blesses us, and for that we cry out for Your forgiveness.”

An opinion piece published in the left-leaning *Huffington Post* recalled the “economic dynamism” of the 20th century, and asked, *Remember when the U.S. was on the cutting edge of technology and innovation?*

The article stated, “If we fail to rise to this moment, then the American era as we know it will end—not all at once, but slowly and surely—as will our ability to lead the world to overcome the defining 21st century challenges.”

Similar sentiments are being offered across the nation: “America is leaderless.” “America lacks vision.” “America is broken.”

While views from within the nation are dim, they are only one side of the coin. In the midst of the worst economic crisis in the country's history, there is something equally important to consider: what the *rest* of the world thinks of America.

The current financial crisis is poised to significantly affect America's global role. With each gridlock debate in Congress, with each worsening financial setback, with each refusal to change its economic course—allies entangled in the U.S. economy grow wearier of their ties to the once-dominant superpower.

Political Theater

As United States Democrats and Republicans bickered over cutting the

budget and raising the debt ceiling, the world took notice. Yes, a decision was reached with a bill cutting more than \$2 trillion across the next decade, but the damage to America's reputation was already done.

This thinking was summed up by *The Associated Press* article “U.S. Malaise, Debt Stalemate Shake Allies Globally.”

The piece began, “Many governments see Washington's paralysis as political theater ahead of a presidential election and wonder how American hard-liners can be allowed to hold up a deal and bring a globalized economy to the brink.

“Across the globe, allies fear that the drama between Republicans and Democrats has eroded U.S. credibility, further weakening the superpower's ability to exercise influence in the Middle East and other trouble spots.”

Asia is worried about slow-moving progress for the chronic deficit problem. As a holder of about \$1.15 trillion of U.S. treasury debt, China has particular interest in what the nation does going forward. Japan holds \$906 billion in American debt.

The Japan Times said, “After being lectured by the U.S. for policy failings in the Asian financial crisis of 1997-98, Asia suffered from the fallout of the 2008 global financial crisis that had ‘made-in America’ written all over it. The reputation of the U.S. for competence as well as reliability was called into question, again enhancing China's standing in the region.”

The article called the debt-ceiling debate an “absurd and irresponsible

political drama,” stating that “serious damage to America’s fiscal reputation has already been done and a dark cloud of uncertainty hangs over future management of the U.S. debt.”

State-run Chinese news agency *Xinhua* said, “Given the United States’ status as the world’s largest economy and the issuer of the dominant international reserve currency, such political brinkmanship in Washington is dangerously irresponsible, for it risks, among other consequences, strangling the still fragile economic recovery of not only the United States but also the world as a whole.”

Europe has also been affected by the credit-rating downgrade, which has caused many of its leaders and media outlets to express similar thoughts on recent events in Washington.

French paper *Le Monde* stated that American politicians who lead the most powerful nation in the world are becoming a laughingstock.

Germany’s former finance minister, Hans Eichel, told *AP*, “A debt default ‘would mean that the USA is no longer seen as a reliable economic power—fatal for the global economy, since it concerns the biggest economy on Earth.’”

Leadership in Doubt

For decades, America set the global stride. Because it has the biggest GDP and largest military, as the U.S. went, so went the rest of the world. This arrangement worked well most of the time. While there has always been some anti-American sentiment, overall, much of the globe has been fine with the U.S. as “Leader of the Free World.” After all, America brought economic prosperity, political freedom, and swift humanitarian aid in times of crisis.

The chance of financial collapse changes everything. After years marching to the pace set by the U.S., many now are thinking, *How can a nation lead if it cannot take care of itself?*

NPR stated: “In the rest of the developed world, the downgrade of United States debt is seen as an important marker in a long process that is

likely to harm both the world economy and America’s reputation as a fiscal steward.”

The article continued: “Foreign observers say that the problem with the U.S. is not so much the Standard & Poor’s decision to downgrade U.S. debt...Rather, they say, the issue is the lack of political will demonstrated by the debt-ceiling debate.”

Amid the uncertainty, China is regularly floating the idea that the world should no longer use the dollar as the global reserve currency. How long until others join in this call?

Charles de Courson, deputy chairman of the finance committee of France’s lower parliament, told *AP* that America defaulting on its debt could provoke “an economic crisis, and then a social crisis, and then a political crisis” for Europe.

Paraphrasing Mr. de Courson, the article continued, “Historically, more debt means less influence in the world...” As America continues to spend, its role will steadily decline, meaning that other nations will gain growing influence over it.

For now, however, the world is stuck with America as the life-blood of the global economy, and that outside sway is limited to verbal chastisement. As things slowly shift—perhaps to Asia, perhaps elsewhere—the U.S. appears to be draining any existing global favor.

Remember When?

To many, the continued financial uncertainty seems to stem from a stubborn resistance to reduce its standard of living—both on the part of the American government and its people. Washington seems to believe that it can ensure dominance through continued spending. Citizens want to keep living the American Dream—the 21st-century version, where entitlement programs complement lifestyles in which more than 50 percent of households have three television sets, superstores brim with abundant choices of food and goods, and credit cards are on hand to obtain whatever is desired. The financial downturn

has been steadily chipping away at that “dream,” but few seem ready to completely let go.

It is this attitude that is drawing international scorn.

What is impressive, however, is that even after years of incessant overspending (both at the federal and personal levels), two unfunded wars, and an outstanding \$14.5 trillion in debt—the United States unquestionably remains the world leader. Its manufacturing sector out-produces China by 40 percent and its GDP of \$14.6 trillion towers over the Asian nation’s \$5.7.

While some are looking for the next nation to fill the role of global superpower, others are asking, *Remember when the U.S. had a solid economy?* They are scouring the nation’s history to find what fueled the incredible machine that is the American economy, and how to revitalize it.

Is it the people? Remember when U.S. citizens banded together during World War II, living with rationed supplies of sugar, butter and meat—even saving bacon grease to be used in munitions factories? Or when the nation bought about \$2.25 trillion (in today’s dollars) worth of bonds to support the war effort?

Is it the government system? Remember when the Founding Fathers sat down and envisioned a new nation centered on rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness?

Is it Judeo-Christian values? Remember when Abraham Lincoln called for a day of fasting and prayer? Or when the U.S. began printing the motto “In God We Trust” on coins in 1864, then paper currency in 1957?

Missing Key

There have been great leaders throughout United States history, as well as inspiring acts of courage during the American Revolution. There have also been mistakes, such as the fiscal irresponsibility and greedy farming tactics that led to the Great Depression and Dust Bowl.

Examining these as case studies does partially explain some of the ways

America obtained unrivaled status on the world stage. For a fuller understanding, however, one must turn back the dial of history much further.

By examining the bibliographies of the kings of ancient Judah, a five-step pattern emerges: (1) obedience to God, (2) incredible success and prominence, (3) complacency and rampant national greed, (4) defeat by a conquering nation, and (5) crying out to God through national repentance. Then the cycle would begin again. Throughout the Bible, this scenario plays out many times. During the “prominence” phase of this cycle, the nation often fell into covetous, materialistic living.

While historical accounts in the Bible reveal patterns strikingly similar to America’s situation, there is another section of the Book that almost all discount: one-third of its text is prophecy, which is history *written in advance*.

The Bible is often dismissed as antiquated Hebrew literature, and any prophecies are largely overlooked even by most who profess to believe it is “God’s Word.” Yet these prophecies hold a greater purpose than simple future-telling. They serve to validate the Book’s authority and give advanced *warning* for things to come.

In the Old Testament book of Isaiah, God says, “I have declared the former things from the beginning; and they went forth out of My mouth, and I showed them; I did them suddenly, and they came to pass...I have even from the beginning declared it to you; before it came to pass I showed it you...” (48:3-5).

Isaiah 46:11 states, “I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it.”

Read these verses as a challenge. When God declares He will do something, He says it *will* happen. If just one event does not come to pass as He declared, then the Bible should be thrown out!

Think again to the unrivaled prominence of America. It is—BY FAR—the most powerful single nation of all time. It is a land of abundance and opportunity, to which immigrants move from distant lands. The United States once

possessed vital sea gates (such as the Panama Canal) to allow for economic and military dominance—a status that made it renowned the world over.

In the book of Genesis, God promised that Abraham’s descendants would “be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of you, and kings shall come out of your loins” (Gen. 35:11).

This promise (or prophecy) was first delivered to Abraham in chapter 22: “That in blessing I will bless you, and in multiplying I will multiply your seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and your seed shall possess the gate of his enemies...because you have obeyed My voice” (vs. 17-18).

Break down the information contained in these two passages. Due to Abraham’s obedience, God promised that the patriarch’s descendants (who gave rise to the ancient nation of Israel) would become a *nation* and *company of nations*.

Throughout history, only two countries have fulfilled the stated qualities: the brother nations of America (a nation) and the United Kingdom (company of nations). At their peak, each utterly dominated the world stage.

Let these passages sink in. This prophecy was fulfilled by God!

In Genesis 48, these prophetic blessings were conferred on two of Joseph’s sons: Ephraim (Britain) and Manasseh (the U.S.), who were Abraham’s great-great grandchildren. Although they faded into history, the descendants of these brothers make up the tribe of Joseph—one of the 10 lost tribes of Israel.

The modern identity of the ancient tribes of Israel is the MISSING KEY to understanding what drove the United States to unrivaled greatness—God fulfilling a promise to Abraham—and also why its allies are beginning to turn on the nation.

Outpouring of Blessings

An extended passage in the book of Ezekiel reaffirms that it is God’s blessings *alone* that have allowed the United States to prosper.

Chapter 16 describes Israel (which today includes America, Britain and many countries of Western Europe, as well as the Middle Eastern nation of Israel). Notice: “I [God] have caused you to multiply as the bud of the field, and you have *increased* and *waxed great*, and you have come to *excellent ornaments...*” (vs. 7).

The next five verses describe these blessings, in which God “clothed [modern Israel] with brodered work,” “girded you about with fine linen,” “covered you with silk,” “decked you also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon your hands, and a chain on your neck,” “I put a jewel on your forehead, and earrings in your ears, and a beautiful crown upon your head.”

Verse 13 continues, “Thus were you decked with gold and silver; and your raiment was of fine linen, and silk, and brodered work; you did eat fine flour, and honey, and oil: and you were exceeding beautiful, and you did prosper into a kingdom.”

Think of the incredible blessings U.S. citizens have long enjoyed—peace, material goods, abundant food and water, rich farmland, and large stores of natural resources.

Due to these blessings, America’s “renown went forth among the heathen [neighboring nations] for your beauty: for it was perfect *through My comeliness*, which I had put upon you, says the Lord God” (vs. 14).

But the United States has ignored the Source of these blessings, leaning solely on its own ingenuity and system of government. Notice: “But you did trust in *your own beauty*, and played the harlot [adulterer] because of your renown...” (vs. 15).

Weakness Uncovered

God kept His promise to Abraham. His promised blessings were poured out on America for all the world to see. For these blessings to continue, however, the nation must return to national obedience to God—to DO what He says.

Please see **ALLIES**, page 20

Evolutionary Marvel or Amazing Creation?

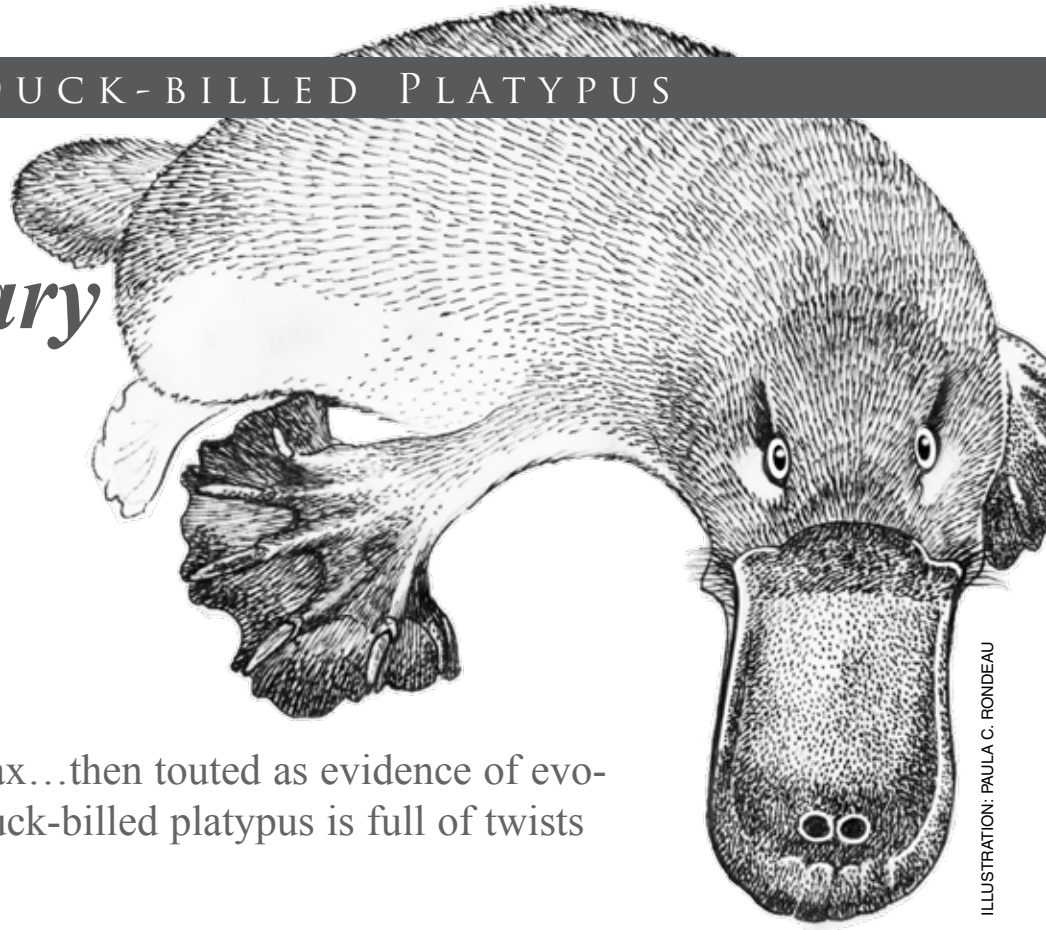


ILLUSTRATION: PAULA C. RONDEAU

First believed to be a hoax...then touted as evidence of evolution, the story of the duck-billed platypus is full of twists and turns.

BY BRADFORD G. SCHLEIFER

IT HAS HAPPENED! Evolutionary scientists rejoice!

A creature has been discovered that connects all the pieces and is truly the “missing link.” While similar stories have ended in disappointment many times before, this is finally the one!

No longer will these experts be peppered with constant questions: Why are there so many gaps in the fossil record? Why do we not see transitional animals today? When did birds, reptiles and mammals evolve from a common ancestor? How exactly did it happen?

Day after day, evolutionists are faced with seemingly insurmountable hurdles. But this ground-breaking discovery has solved their woes.

This time the discovery is not just a bone fragment, or partial fossil—as is often the case—it is a living, breathing creature. It has the features of a reptile, bird and mammal—all in one small, furry package.

The search for proof is over!

This likely was the thinking of evolutionists when they first applied the theory to the duck-billed platypus.

But the mammal’s story began much earlier in 1798, when an artist’s sketch and pelt were sent from Australia to Great Britain describing an exceptional new find. The description was so extraordinary that, when the specimen reached Britain, it was immediately dismissed as a fraud.

Researchers were convinced this was an elaborate hoax by an Asian taxidermist. One scientist actually used scissors to attempt to locate the stitches attaching the supposed duck’s bill to the furry mammalian body.

Much to the embarrassment of the scientists, this remarkable creature was determined to be real. In time, it became a darling of evolutionists.

Yet, as the creature was studied, researchers found it possessed some surprising attributes. With the passing of time, they were continually baffled by this mammal—as are scientists today.

Truly Unique

The platypus looks like no other creature on Earth. Physically, it appears to be a hybrid blend of a bird, beaver, reptile and otter, with additional

characteristics not contained in any of these four!

On cursory examination, the platypus has a bill that most resembles that of a waterfowl, not the mouth of any known mammal. Yet it is not an ordinary bill. It is actually a well-designed sensory organ. Not a nose, but a highly sensitive electrolocation sensor, detecting miniscule electrical impulses generated by its food source of small crustaceans and worms. No other mammal has a sensor so highly developed—in fact, only one other mammal has this ability at all.

Then there are the webbed feet, similar to those found on otters. Unlike an otter, however, the webbing is far more pronounced on the *front* feet of the platypus, which it uses like paddles for swimming. While in the water, the back feet are tucked into its body and hardly used at all.

Another pronounced platypus attribute is its beaver-like tail. As with its other features, upon closer inspection, there are as many differences as similarities. A beaver’s tail is covered in scales, is flattened, and propels the rodent through the water when swim-

ming. On the other hand, the tail of the platypus is covered in fur and is used more in the way a rudder might guide a boat. Once again, initial appearances are deceiving.

Additionally, this remarkable creature does something almost unheard of in the mammalian class. It lays eggs! On first inspection the eggs *appear* reptilian, but internally are structured more like those of a bird. However, *unlike* the process in both birds and reptiles, platypus embryos spend a much longer time in the mother. For instance, chickens lay eggs roughly 24 hours after fertilization, while a platypus waits 28 days. Their eggs spend nearly twice as long developing inside the female's body as outside.

If you were pitted against a platypus in a street fight, you would want to avoid two sharp heel spurs found behind its hind feet. Not only could these spurs pierce your skin, but they could also inject a nasty surprise.

Male (and *only* male) platypuses are able to inject a protein-based toxin strong enough to kill a dog and incapacitate an adult man. When inflicted, the wound rapidly swells with fluid and becomes extremely painful. The victim experiences a heightened sense of pain that can last for days—or even months. The platypus is one of few mammals with venom strong enough to affect a human. The particular toxin contains three proteins unique to the platypus.

Characteristics that initially made evolutionists excited about the platypus are vastly different from what was expected and so seemingly unconnected that scientists are left perplexed to this day.

Evolutionary Quandary

The platypus poses some interesting problems for evolutionary scientists. Here is a creature that appears to be right in the middle of a supposed evolutionary transition, yet fossils dated to millions of years ago look almost identical to the modern animal.

If the platypus is a transitional specimen, why did it seemingly *stop* evolving? Why has it remained virtu-

ally unchanged for its entire existence?

Even the minor changes are disappointing to scientists, as they could more aptly be considered *de*-evolution. For instance, the fossilized adult platypus had functioning teeth. Yet modern platypuses *lose* their teeth at an early age, leaving only a horned plate with which to grind and mash their food to a pulp, prior to swallowing.

Hardly advancement at all!

Further, consider the watery environment in which a platypus survives—in fact, thrives. (When a platypus is removed from its natural habitat, its lifespan is greatly abbreviated.)

As with many other mammals, it has eyes, ears and a nose. All three are fully functioning and would serve a platypus well if it spent much time on land. On the other hand, its heavily webbed front feet mean that it is forced to walk on its knuckles, or risk damaging the somewhat fragile webbing. In the water, the beauty of the animal's design becomes apparent. It maneuvers gracefully with speed and precision while foraging for food.

Though it spends the majority of its time in water, the platypus never evolved an ability to hold its breath for very long, typically no more than 30 seconds. How is it that an animal living primarily in the water for “millions” of years still cannot hold its breath for more than half a minute?

Imagine the hypothetical evolutionary path of this extraordinary creature. Suppose there was a time before all of the animal's features were fully formed. (The fossil record demonstrates no such instance.) These early platypuses would have had no webbed feet or electrolocation system. Instead of gliding skillfully through the water, this poor animal would have flailed about, with no method to navigate or find food. (Yet, somehow, over millions of years, it would have managed to survive drowning, starvation and predators.)

Over time, the platypus would have “decided” that webbed feet were needed, and evolved a version unlike that of any other creature. Then, instead

of its eyes, nose and ears adapting to work underwater, it evolved a device that *looks* like a duck's bill, but instead is the most advanced electrolocation system found on any mammal.

Given this unlikely scenario, this must have happened another way. The fossil record indicates that the platypus appeared fully formed, with all of its “adaptations” perfectly balanced.

There is only one explanation for how so many separate, seemingly disparate, component parts of the platypus could come together in a final product that functions so well. It would take a plan *before* the platypus existed, millennia ago.

The same Creator who is responsible for the complexity of the entire universe—and all life therein—also created this marvelous animal.

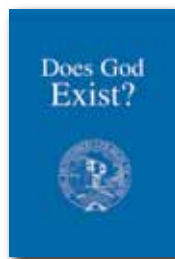
The thinking person, however, wants proof of a Creator—and understandably so. Often, it is at this point that evolutionists think they have the upper hand. They claim to hold to reason, logic, and “just the facts.” When pushed, most people who believe in God will say they can offer no proof, and simply “have faith” that He exists.

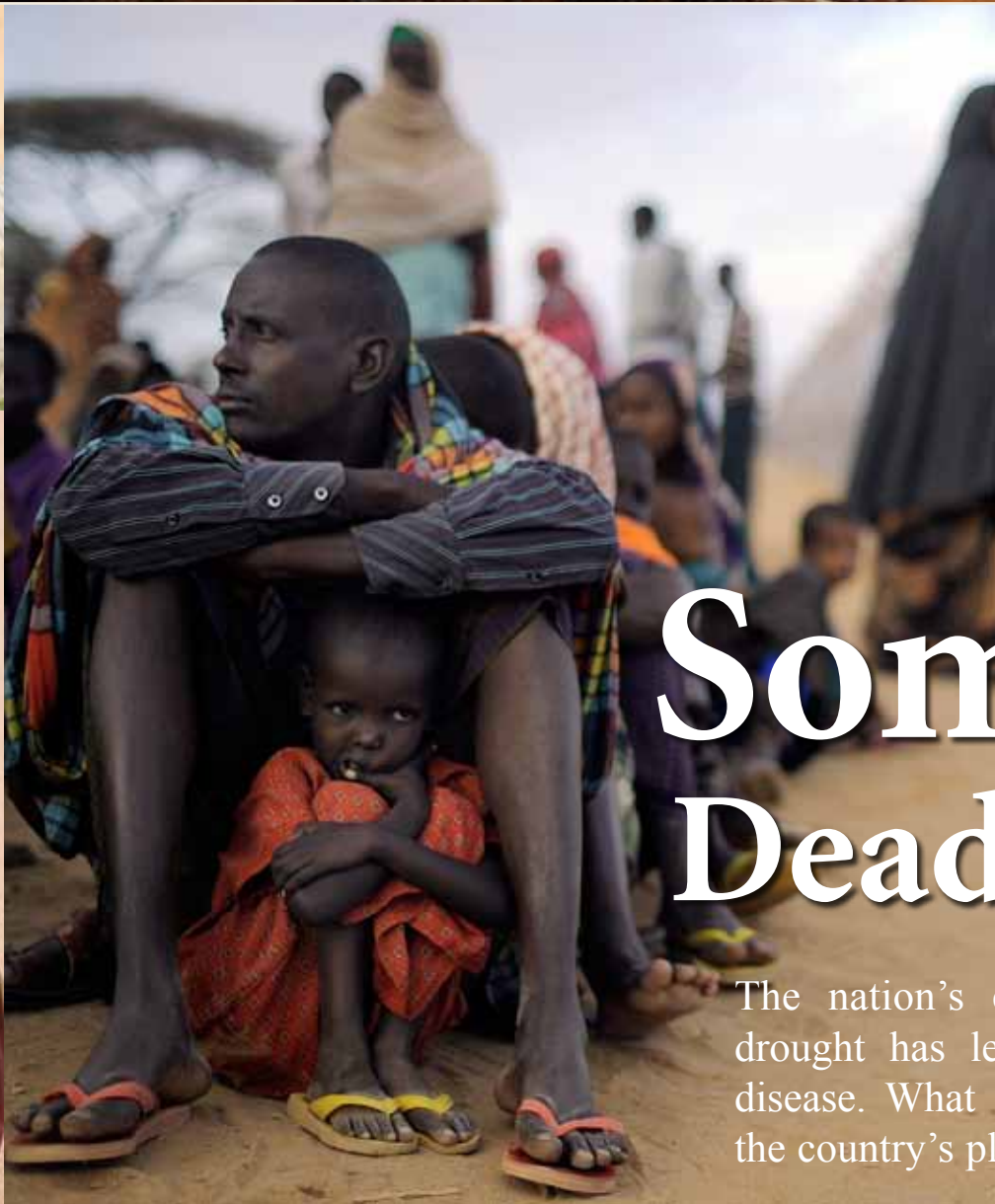
The platypus, on its own, does not prove the existence of an all-powerful God, but it adds more evidence to the case. Once compiled and carefully considered, it leads to the only obvious conclusion.

Think: if God created the entire universe, placed mankind on Earth, and then expected all to obey Him—would He not also offer absolute proof that He exists? The duck-billed platypus does not need to be a mystery, nor does the existence of the God who created it. You can know for certain!

Evolutionists and atheists often claim science proves God does not exist, but this is NOT true! Rock solid

evidence for God's existence is found among the varied fields of biology, astronomy, chemistry and mathematics. Read *Does God Exist?* to learn more. □

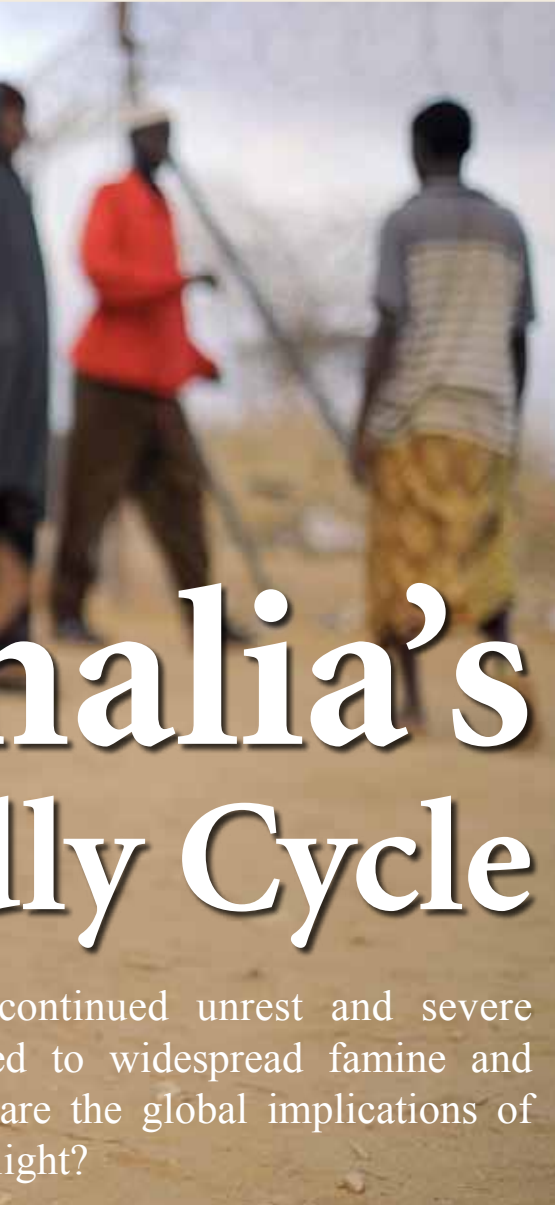




Some Dead

The nation's
drought has led
disease. What
the country's pl





Somalia's Daily Cycle

continued unrest and severe drought have led to widespread famine and displacement. What are the global implications of this crisis?



■ **DESPERATION:** Top left, Somali refugees wait in the registration area of the Dagahaley refugee camp in Dadaab, Kenya (July 23, 2011). Middle left, Somali refugees wait for a bus in Dadaab (July 23, 2011). Bottom left, refugees forage for firewood in Dadaab (July 25, 2011). Top right, a Somali father sits with his daughter at the head of a line with other refugees at a registration center at Dagahaley refugee site within the Dadaab complex in the Horn of Africa region (Aug. 2, 2011). Bottom right, internally displaced women with their children await food rations at a distribution center in Dharkenley district in Mogadishu, Somalia's capital (July 16, 2011).

PHOTOS: OLI SCARFF/ (TOP LEFT, MIDDLE LEFT); BARBARA DAVIDSON/LOS ANGELES TIMES/MCT (BOTTOM LEFT); TONY KARUMBA/AFP/ (TOP RIGHT); ABDURASHID ABDULLE/AFP/ (BOTTOM RIGHT) GETTY IMAGES

TRAUMATIZED, EXHAUSTED, and on the brink of starvation, a Somali family stumbled into Dagahaley refugee camp in Dadaab, Kenya.

The Associated Press interviewed the father, who described the conditions that drove the family to flee across the border. They were farmers, living off their crops and the milk of their animals. After a few seasons passed with little rain, the family moved into a small town.

On his first attempt to flee, militants, with links to the terrorist group al-Qaida, caught him and threw him in jail for two days, where he was beaten and mocked. The man described his jailers' reasoning: "Kenya is a Christian country and if you go there, [they consider you] a Christian."

After he was released, he and his family fled. "We faced hunger, thirst, danger and exhaustion. It took us 17 days to arrive here (at Dagahaley refugee camp). One night a lion almost ate me before I scared it away with my flashlight."

Wild beasts were not the only enemy in the wilderness. The man continued, "The worst experience we faced was when gunmen ambushed. The gang robbed us of the little food we had with us and raped our women in front of us as if they wanted us to witness their horrors...That ordeal was the worst I have ever faced in my life. I once thought of looking for ways to get a gun to take revenge."

Three days later, his 7-year-old boy died of "hunger, exhaustion and disease."

Despite unsanitary conditions and meager rations in the refugee camp, the man said he will remain there for now and go back to Somalia only "if a full peace dominates there."

For the nation, military conflict has led to famine, inevitable starvation, disease and death. A similar deadly cycle exists throughout Africa.

World's Worst Humanitarian Disaster

Somalia is in the throes of its worst drought in 60 years, which has claimed thousands of lives in the last three months, including more than 29,000 children under age 5. The United Nations referred to it as the "worst humanitarian disaster in the world."

"Some 3.7 million people, nearly half the Somali population, are now directly at risk of famine and tens of thousands have already perished," a UN release stated.

"In the first half of 2011 alone, more than 83,000 Somalis fled into Kenya and over 54,000 into Ethiopia," the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees organization stated on its website. "In July, daily arrivals in each country ranged from 1,300 to 1,700. An additional 2,600 Somalis had crossed the northwestern border into Djibouti by mid-2011."

Dadaab is home to the largest refugee complex in the world. It was originally built to house at least 90,000 refugees, but it now holds almost half a million! Conditions there are unsanitary, with overcrowded tent villages becoming breeding grounds for cholera and malaria.

"A measles outbreak was reported in Hagadera camp..." the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said in a statement. "Earlier, a cholera outbreak had been reported."

"We don't see the end of it," Tarik Jasarevic, a World Health Organization spokesman said about the refugees' situation in *The New York Times*. "As long as we have people on the move, in crowded places and using contaminated water, we will see a rise in cases [of cholera]. All the causes are still there."

Hostile Territory

Delivering aid to Somalia is also a challenge as al-Shabaab, an Islamist militant group, governs the area.

"Somalia hasn't been self-sufficient since the early 1970s," politi-

cal science professor Ken Menkhaus told the non-profit *Enough Project*. “But aid delivery has been suspended in recent years for three main reasons: Insecurity—In 2008 a third of all casualties worldwide occurred in Somalia, so aid groups started pulling out because they couldn’t justify the risk. Second, the U.S. government’s suspension of aid due to counter-terrorism grounds; allowing aid to reach Shabaab [the Islamist terrorist group that controls the area] was a violation of the Patriot Act. Third was Shabaab’s ban on most international agencies from working in the areas it controlled, accusing them of being spies and of trying to put Somali farmers out of business...As long as Shabaab continues blocking food aid, we’re limited in what we can do.”

The Somalia Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit warned: “Despite increased attention in recent weeks, current humanitarian response remains inadequate, due in part to ongoing access restrictions and difficulties in scaling-up emergency assistance programs, as well as funding gaps. As a result, famine is expected to spread across all regions of the south in the coming four to six weeks and is likely to persist until at least December 2011.”

Meanwhile, hundreds of people continue to die daily.

Not Alone

Somalia’s plight is just one of many similar crises occurring across the African continent. The countries to which many Somalis are fleeing are themselves facing severe drought.

“An estimated 12.4 million people in the drought-hit Horn of Africa—Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya

and Somalia—are facing severe food shortages and are in need of international assistance...” the United Nations reported in a statement.

For over 30 years, no fewer than 28 countries in sub-Saharan Africa have been at war or are on the brink. Though they are not constantly in the news, it is estimated that over nine million people have lost their lives due to civil unrest in Africa since the Cold War ended. About the same number are either refugees or have been displaced from their homes.

The UN reported that large zones are “cut off because of continued fighting between Government forces, allied militiamen and rebels based in the area...as many as 300,000 people are estimated to have been killed and 2.7 million others displaced.”

According to WHO, “Protracted conflicts and continuing underdevelopment has contributed [to] the exodus of skilled manpower.”

Zimbabwe: The country faced a bloody seven-year civil war in the 1970s. Following the war, it has repeatedly faced food shortages and disease, including a cholera outbreak that claimed the lives of more than 3,000 people. With more than 60,000 currently affected, the WHO describes the situation as their “worst case scenario” (*BBC*).

Ivory Coast: Violence after the November 2010 elections nearly led to outright civil war with approximately 200,000 people displaced. A recent WHO assessment showed that “52% (55 out of 106) of the health centres and five of the eight hospitals were no longer functioning due to lack of staff...Half the district pharmacies

have been looted, ambulances have disappeared and disease surveillance has been interrupted.”

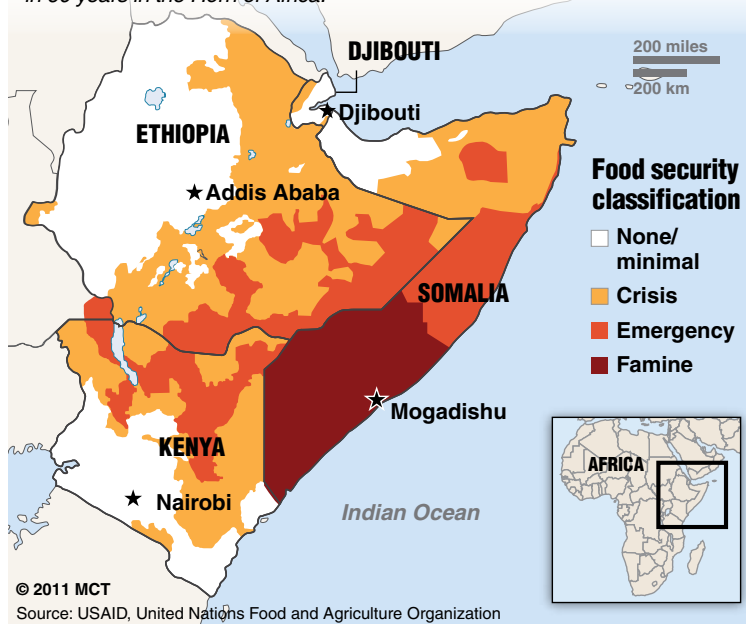
According to the report, malaria, acute respiratory ailments, and cholera are among the main health concerns.

Disastrous Cycle Foretold

Throughout the African continent—and across the world—a cycle repeats itself. War disrupts agricultural procedures because farmers cannot work their fields. War-caused food deficiencies and tumbling markets skyrocket prices, leading to diminished financial resources with which to pur-

Somalia Famine Spreads

More than 11 million people have been affected by the worst drought in 60 years in the Horn of Africa.



Democratic Republic of Congo: The country is still trying to recover from many years of conflict, which claimed the lives of over five million people. Apart from those who fell to the bullets of war, some succumbed to disease and malnutrition.

Even though apparent peace has returned to most parts of the Congo, the eastern part of the country remains unstable.

Sudan: Since 2003, the nation has been in conflict due to accusations of neglect and discrimination leveled by black African tribesmen against the Arab-dominated Sudanese government in Khartoum.

chase food. Malnutrition then leads to disease and death.

These conditions paired with unstable political climates, lack of effective healthcare systems, or limited aid due to hostile environments, form the breeding ground for widespread loss of life.

While war, famine and disease have always plagued mankind to some degree, today's conditions signal increased trouble ahead.

Never has the world's population bordered on seven billion or has its citizenry had the ability to travel across the world in a matter of hours. This alone makes the potential to spread disease unfathomable.

Never has the planet been so polluted. This has weakened immune systems, making disease potentially uncontrollable. Add to this the emergence of multi-drug resistant organisms that never existed before.

And never before has mankind possessed the kind of weapons it does today. Unlike any previous time in history, humanity is now capable of annihilating itself.

This deadly cycle of war, famine and disease was foretold to escalate, as explained in the Bible—a Book most never turn to for keys to understanding the world's greatest problems. Consider what Jesus Christ told His disciples in the book of Matthew: “For *nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom*: and there shall be *famines*, and *pestilences*, and earthquakes, in diverse places” (24:7).

Christ's words are written in the future tense, signifying that these problems would worsen in latter times. His words resonate in what is occurring throughout Africa and other parts of the world today. Yet they were spoken more than 2,000 years ago!

This same cycle is expanded in the book of Revelation, this time as horses riding over the *entire* earth: “...behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer”

(6:2). This first horse symbolizes the trouble that has occurred as a result of manmade religion.

Two verses later it states, “And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon *to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another*: and there was given unto him a *great sword*” (vs. 4). The red horse symbolizes war.

The following verses introduce famine: “And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a *pair of balances* in his hand. And I heard a voice...say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see you hurt not the oil and the wine” (6:5-8).

The fourth horseman brings much more than disease: “And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth [one in every four people!], to kill with sword, and *with hunger*, and with *death*, and with the beasts of the earth.”

All four horses riding together have the power to kill one quarter of all human beings! But what does this mean—and why does this occur?

For millennia, mankind has attempted to solve the problems of competing religions, war, famine and disease, yet without success. Solving war has been through more war. War has led to blocking of resources, causing famine. Malnourishment causes weakened bodies to succumb to disease.

The crisis in Somalia is just a microcosm of what will soon occur WORLDWIDE.

Yet unlike what is happening there, the four horsemen will affect the *whole earth*—not just remote desert areas of Africa or the war-torn Middle East as it does now.

But many who read these words will not believe what the Bible says.

In *The World to Come* broadcast series “A Fourth of Mankind,” David C. Pack states, “Most people do live

their lives believing bad things only happen to others—other people get cancer—other people's homes burn down—other people's children die of drug overdoses—and so forth. The truth is that for everyone who is forced to suffer one of these tragic events there is someone who probably believed such awful things could only happen to someone else.

“But all mankind is on a collision course with cataclysmic events so stunning—so staggering—they defy imagination. Utterly horrific prophecies will soon affect every human being on Earth—every human being—no exceptions! They do not describe a mere few who are hit by ‘accidents’ of ‘time and chance’...”

“While the vast majority remain ignorant of the precise sequence of key prophetic fulfillments, even fewer understand the correct timing and true impact of these events—with both of these of paramount importance in assembling the final prophetic picture.”

Yet there is hope!

When end-time prophecy is understood, the ride of the four horsemen signals that world peace is near, meaning Africa—and all other continents—will finally experience the prosperity they have sought for centuries.

Consider the words of the prophet Isaiah: “The wilderness and the solitary place...and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing...Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes” (35:1-7).

To learn when and how this will occur—and the impact it will have on your life—read *Are These the Last Days?* at www.thercg.org or watch the 12-part “Horsemen of Revelation” series at www.worldtocome.org. □

EDUCATION

Continued from page 8

to choose between faith and science... Our state has created 37 percent of all new jobs in the country since the recession gave way to what is being called a recovery. Squabbles like this undercut our lure to people and businesses that want to move here...The recurring battles over evolution, however, are something Texans can avoid. The State Board of Education should remember the final word in its title and promote classroom standards that give our children the best chance to compete and win in the 21st century.”

Failing Grade

Most teachers enter their profession to be a positive influence on their pupils. Almost everyone can recall those few teachers they will never forget—even decades later. These are the educators who regularly put in 14-hour days. They give their time to their pupils. They want to better their students, by teaching them culture, to think critically, and to enjoy learning. They set out to instill a sense of wonder in their pupils, and to bring meaning to the world in which they live. They teach their classes to fight for positive change in society.

Herein lies a problem in modern education. Even apparently selfless teachers, who devote their lives to their jobs, fail to bring lasting change. They may affect individual lives, but society as a whole continues on the same path.

Fighting for causes of change presents another problem: there is no set standard of right or wrong. Those championing differing ideals adhere to them because they came to them through intellectualism or because they *feel* right. But there are at least two competing camps on every issue, with little common ground.

Without a clear sense of right or wrong, mankind cannot solve its deep-rooted problems of war, famine, disease, poverty, inequality and injustice.

The goals of education and knowledge are to solve these, yet they continue to dog mankind—even grow worse. Does this make any sense?

With this point alone, modern education should get a failing grade!

Right Foundation

Primary schools, middle schools, high schools and universities all have to accept that where man is involved, there will generally be division, dysfunction and social ills. They must build their curriculums around this fact.

Underlying many educational endeavors are attempts to explain what drives human nature. Evolutionary biology textbooks attribute it to animalistic urges. Psychology textbooks say it derives from subconscious desires. Theology textbooks attribute it to “original sin.” Yet these books only theorize the causes of human nature, and cannot solve the problems created by mankind.

There is a complete textbook on human nature, which most overlook. That book is the Bible. Notice: “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” (Jer. 17:9). Also, “The way of peace they know not; and there is no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goes therein shall not know peace” (Isa. 59:8).

Put together, these verses point to a bleak view of man. He is desperately wicked, and does not know how to bring peace!

The Bible goes deeper into what is called the “human condition.” While modern education fails to pinpoint a clear definition of right versus wrong, the book of Proverbs clearly states, “There is a way which *seems* right unto a man, but the end thereof are the *ways of death*” (14:12).

Humanity has always done what “seems right,” with the same failed results. It is as if a man built a house on a swamp, only to have it sink into the mire upon completion. Years later, his son does the same thing, only to have his home destroyed. Then his grandson does the same. And his great-grandson...

Absurd! If this scenario were real, the first man’s son would realize his father’s mistake and not repeat it.

Amazingly, this is essentially what educators have unwittingly done for millennia. They have built on what *they thought* was right, but the track record of this thinking speaks for itself: wars, poverty and corruption—evil continually. (To learn more about this topic, read *Did God Create Human Nature?*)

The Bible alone outlines what constitutes a good education, providing the right foundation on how to overcome and avoid the problems that have always plagued mankind’s education system. Notice what God thinks of mankind’s attempt to govern itself: “My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, says the LORD” (Isa. 55:8).

How far apart from God are mankind’s ways—including its ways to educate? The next verse answers, “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts” (vs. 9).

Government officials, school administrators, teachers and parents must all realize that on their own they can never succeed in providing a truly GOOD education. Without this, students do not have a chance.

The only way this could happen would be for every government and school board to admit they are wrong and follow what is outlined in the Bible—the only RIGHT FOUNDATION for education. This crucial step would unleash true knowledge and incredible *wisdom* the world over. Virtue—true character—would be at the core of every class lesson, bringing students TRUE JOY. Teachers would command students’ full respect and attention, and *finally* experience what is truly a noble vocation.

Rather than learning to “make a living,” humanity would be taught how to LIVE.

To learn what a world living God’s Way would look like, read the book *Tomorrow’s Wonderful World – An Inside View!* □

How World Peace Will Come!

Nations search for peace, but to no avail. Why is it so difficult to achieve?

BY DAVID C. PACK

THE WORLD is filled with war, terrorism, and threats of *more* war and terrorism. Yet all nations long for peace. Leaders negotiate for it. Millions pray for it. Armies fight for it. Despite constant effort, it remains more elusive than ever.

While men have created many amazing technological inventions, they cannot “create” peace. Scientists have unleashed the power of the atom, but are powerless to “unleash” peace upon Earth. Astronomers have discovered much about the size, majesty and precision of the universe, but they cannot “discover” the way to peace. They can find galaxies far away throughout the universe, but they cannot “find” peace here on Earth. Neither can leaders end famine, disease, poverty, overpopulation, religious confusion and hatred, as well as every other misery, evil and woe that unchecked human nature can produce.

But the Bible says world peace will come—and *soon*. How?

Recently, I stood at the very lectern in the United Nations General Assembly where so many presidents, prime ministers, dictators, kings and popes have called for world peace. I could not help but think of which person had ever made a permanent difference.

Consider. The governments of men—all of them—have *never* succeeded in finding permanent solutions to what are, for them, insoluble problems. They do not have any of the

answers to mankind’s biggest questions.

In 1966, as God began to reveal His truth to me, I had the opportunity to meet with my United States congressman. I had applied to attend the United States Naval Academy. All applicants were required to have a personal interview with their congressman prior to acceptance. When the interview ended, he asked if I wished to ask any questions.

I had only one.

I asked the Congressman’s opinion of one world government—if it were in the hands of men. His answer was immediate and emphatic, “I do not believe it would work, but if I did, I would shout it from the housetops.”

Since that time, many have suggested *one world government* IS the only way to world peace and stability. But many questions arise. *Who* would bring it? *How* would it be phased in? *What laws* would it administer? How would they be *enforced*? Would sovereign nations relinquish authority to it? Would it succeed, or would it eventually oppress and enslave all mankind? These questions always stop thinkers, planners, leaders and scientists in their tracks!

Men seem to invariably go to war in search of peace. Eventually, wars usually come to a truce, which always fails to yield permanent peace. This is because men cannot, and never will, find the way to peace *on their own*—without outside help. In reality, they have *no chance* to achieve world peace. *Why*?

As part of an extensive prophecy about world conditions in our time, the prophet Isaiah answers: “The way of peace *they know not*; and there is

no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goes there *shall not know peace*” (59:8).

It has not been given to men to understand the path to peace—or, for that matter, the way to abundance, happiness, health and prosperity. No wonder the greatest thinkers, leaders, educators and scientists have failed miserably in their quest for peace on Earth! God has not yet *revealed* to the vast majority of mankind the solution to its unending wars, and world troubles.

Like a newscaster ahead of his time, Jesus came to make an announcement about a complete change in the way the world would be governed. With this change would come unprecedented world peace—and happiness, harmony, universal health and prosperity.

Everywhere He went, Christ spoke about this coming kingdom. It was the subject of most of His parables. When He commissioned and sent His 12 apostles to preach, the instruction was to preach about the gospel of the kingdom of God (Luke 9:1-2). When He later sent His 70 disciples (10:1), He also commanded they preach the kingdom of God.

The word “gospel” comes from an Old English word meaning “god spell” or *good news*. “Kingdom” also comes from an Old English term simply meaning *government*. In other words, Christ preached “the good news of the *government* of God.”

The coming of world peace, happiness, health and abundance *will* be good news for a mankind that has never known it. To learn more, watch *The World to Come* broadcast, “The New World Order – How World Peace Will Come!” □

ALLIES

Continued from page 11

The book of Ezekiel was written as a warning to *modern* Israel. Chapter 16 begins with God telling the Old Testament prophet to “cause Jerusalem [representing all Israelitish nations] to know her abominations” (vs. 2).

Details of 21st-century America can be seen throughout this chapter. The nation has come to believe it *deserves* the blessings of God, rather than having received them due to one man’s obedience.

In light of this, God has removed His gifts: “Behold, therefore I have stretched out My hand over you, and have diminished your ordinary food, and delivered you unto the will of them that hate you...which are ashamed of your lewd way” (vs. 27).

America’s extravagant, spend-thrift lifestyles raise the ire of many nations around the world. They see entertainment awash in gratuitous sex and violence and a society emulating it. They see drug addiction and alcoholism. They see excessive waste. Worst of all, America is not ashamed of its actions. Rather than the U.S. using its blessings as an example of God’s power, it squanders and flaunts them in the face of the world.

God declares: “How weak is your heart...seeing you do all these things, the work of an imperious [arrogant] whorish woman” (vs. 30).

These are strong words—but they are GOD’S words! American *arrogance* stings the eyes of nations throughout the world. Therefore, He likens the nation to a brazen prostitute.

Long ago, God entered into a marriage covenant with the nation of Israel (Jer. 3:14). Yet time and again, its peoples feigned worship of the true God—all while pursuing other “gods” and idols that allowed them to practice guilt-free covetousness and lust after material goods. How true of the U.S. today!

To this end, the next verses contain strong language meant to shake the nation free from its sin.

Why The Real Truth Warns America

A special warning to the modern nations descended from Israel is found in numerous places in the Bible. In the book of Ezekiel, God appoints a “watchman unto the house of Israel” who is to “warn them from Me” (33:7).

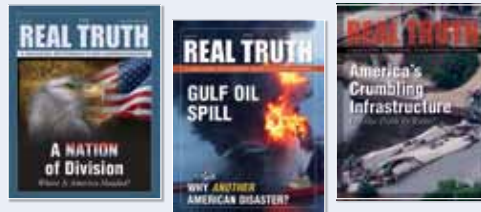
God’s servants are to, “Cry aloud, spare not, lift up your voice like a trumpet, and show...the house of Jacob”—which includes America—“their sins” (Isa. 58:1).

Those being used to deliver this “watchman” message do not relish the thought of the United States being punished. Yet God is a loving Parent who does not want to see His people suffer in sin. Similarly, those delivering the warning are motivated by *out-flowing concern* for their fellow countrymen.

God desires that the U.S. and all Israelitish nations heed His warnings and change their ways. Only then will they be able to regain the success and prosperity they long enjoyed.

Skeptics say the chastisement (national captivity) mentioned by Ezekiel and other Old Testament prophets has already occurred. Yet, when Ezekiel was warning of impending punishment, he was already in captivity! Ancient Israel and Judah had already received punishment. Another lies ahead for their descendants.

Throughout the 20th century, *The Plain Truth* magazine declared this message to America, Britain and their brother nations. *The Real Truth* continues that work today. □



Yet Ezekiel 16:31 describes modern Israel as *unlike* the average “call girl,” saying that it “scorns hire” and instead is “as a wife that commits adultery, which takes strangers instead of her husband!” (vs. 32). Normally a prostitute will be paid for services, but God bluntly states that “you give your gifts to all your lovers, and *hire them*, that they may come unto you on every side...” (vs. 33).

Without God’s blessings, the U.S. can no longer buy lovers (allies). Its world favor will quickly dry out. To awaken the nation, God *has* removed the blessings to remind its people from whom they came.

These are not pleasant verses on which to meditate. But they must be heard—and HEHEDED. God is furious with America: “Thus says the Lord GOD; Because your filthiness was poured out, and your nakedness discovered through your whoredoms with your lovers, and with all the idols of your abominations... Behold, therefore I will gather all your lovers [allies]...round about against you, and will discover your nakedness unto them, that they may see all your nakedness” (vs. 36-37).

As God’s blessings are removed, America’s nakedness—weakness—will be uncovered to the nations of the world. Without God’s hand, the U.S. cannot continue as a lone superpower. As its status wanes, national prominence is being given to its allies, which are gaining global influence.

Unless the nation turns to God, the United States will have to become accustomed to other countries telling it what to do. And as these nations’ influence grows, Americans will have to accept the idea of doing *exactly* what they say!

Recall the cycle repeated throughout the Bible by the kingdom of Judah: (1) obedience, (2) prominence, (3) complacency, (4) defeat, and (5) national repentance.

The United States is somewhere between “complacency” and “defeat.” But there is a positive end to this cycle. Each time the Israelites repented of their covetousness and cried out to God, He heard them, and restored their blessings.

As America’s power dwindles and its weaknesses are uncovered, the nation must *hear* what God says, then OBEY His voice.

To understand what God requires for the United States and all Israelitish nations, read David C. Pack’s book *America and Britain in Prophecy*. □

What Happens When You Die?

From the smallest to the greatest, from the richest to the poorest, everyone eventually dies. But what happens after death? Can you know for sure?



BY KEVIN D. DENEÉ

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN wrote in a personal letter, "...in this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes!" Every minute on earth, 108 people die. Ultimately, everyone dies. It is not a matter of *if*, but *when*.

Sadly, and due to a wide variety of reasons and circumstances, some seek death, considering it the only solution. Others try to delay the inevitable through good health. Still others tragically lose their lives through time and chance. Sometimes disease or other illnesses bring a death sentence, leaving a person with nothing to do but wait for the end.

Many view the end of their lives with uneasiness. They ponder, "What's next?"—"Will I live again?"—"Is this it?"—"Will I ever see my loved ones again?"—"Where am I going after this life?"

In contrast, others view death with fear of the unknown. Some fear the process and the suffering that may accompany death. Others, racked with guilt, have a different type of fear—fear that they will burn forever in "hell fire."



PHOTOS: HILDY73/ (TOP); MARA SUSANNA MARUCCI (BOTTOM) GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO/THINKSTOCK

Whatever the viewpoint, feelings or circumstances of one's life—ultimately, life ends. Because of this unavoidable reality, every person at some point in his or her life thinks about the subject of death.

What about you? Have *you* ever considered where you are heading? Some live fast-paced lives, never stopping to consider such a large question.

On the other hand, most who are religious—including adherents of traditional Christianity—think they know what happens when one dies. Yet they may be surprised to

learn that religions of this world have deceived them about what occurs at death.

In the News...

The drug wars in Mexico, the civil war that has raged in Libya for the last few months, the current atrocities in Congo, where endless numbers of farmers are being slaughtered—news of people dying in wars and conflicts around the world makes headlines on a daily basis. In many instances, horrifying footage and photographs of the dead and dying surface afterward, but much goes unreported.

Then there are natural disasters that end hundreds, even thousands, of lives in an instant. In just the last 18 months, we have seen a devastating tsunami, crushing earthquakes, several destructive hurricanes and cyclones, wildfires and floods. In a matter of hours, families were uprooted, children made orphans, parents made childless.

Then there are criminals who torture, rape, brutalize and murder. For example, in August 2011, a Louisiana man decapitated his handicapped 7-year-old son with a meat cleaver and left his head by the side of the road for his wife to see. For this little boy, death came suddenly, unexpectedly.

Every reasonable human being expresses great sorrow for the victims of such heinous crimes. But what is next for the little boy? Is there any future for him?

There is much controversy surrounding death. For instance, the legality and ethics involving capital punishment is a highly emotional and politicized debate. Also, there have been high-profile cases in the media in which medical patients remain in a persistent vegetative state as family members disagree on whether the person should continue to live. Then there is euthanasia,

the question of whether a person should have the right to choose when and how he dies.

On an almost daily basis, we are confronted with the subject of death in various forms.

Sea of Emotion

Many of the most powerful human emotions are tied to the cessation of life. The end of life can bring families, communities, nations, and sometimes even the world, to a standstill. When a sudden or tragic death occurs, this becomes a time for contemplation.

In the 9/11 World Trade Center attack, the entire world stopped in its tracks. People of every nation found themselves asking, “What if I had lost my family members?” Witnessing other people die on their television screens—in real time—was an emo-

tionally overwhelming experience. What about all the victims of that tragic day? Do they have a future beyond death? Or are their lives over—forever?

Consider the destruction caused by the January 2010 earthquake in Haiti and the March 2011 tsunami that struck Japan. The struggle for survival, hundreds of thousands left homeless, stories of those who would never see their families again—all tugged at the heartstrings of the world.

And then there is the personal grief one feels when a close family member or friend dies, which can almost seem unbearable. There are few things in life starker than facing the harsh reality that you will never again see that person in this life. All that remains are photographs and memories.

Is this all there is to life? Is there *anything* after death?

Religious Views

Religions abound in this world, thus opinions are plentiful. Some feel that all “good people” go to heaven or some form of paradise once they die, and that all “bad people” go to hell. Some believe that only the body dies, while the soul moves on to a “different plane of existence.”

Just as religions vary, so do beliefs surrounding the burial of the dead. Some are buried in watertight caskets so the body is not exposed to the elements underground. Others are not buried in caskets, but rather cloth so that the body does not touch the dirt. Some corpses are buried in warm clothes so they do not get cold underground. Some mourners will cook a chicken for the last meal and put it in the casket of the dead. Many hold viewings with open caskets before funerals, yet others feel that seeing the corpse is disrespectful. The list of superstitions and taboos surrounding dead bodies is endless.



■ **SOBERING REALITY:** For many—such as the woman above, who discovered that she was infected with HIV by her husband—facing the reality of one’s own death comes suddenly.

PHOTO: KRT

But again, what happens to human beings after they die?

Consider the traditional beliefs of professing Christianity, which teaches that the saved go to heaven when they die. Presumably, this view is founded on the Bible—or is it?

Jesus Christ emphatically and clearly stated, “And *no man has ascended up to heaven*, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man [Christ]” (John 3:13). Billions of professing Christians believe that when one dies, he or she goes to heaven—but this contradicts what Jesus said! And keep in mind that when Christ said, “no man has ascended up to heaven,” scores of God’s servants from the Old Testament had already died. Take King David, for example, described as a man after God’s own heart (Acts 13:22). The Bible explains that he will rule in God’s kingdom. Certainly, he would be in heaven, right?

But notice: “Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both *dead and buried*, and his sepulcher is with us unto this day... For David *is not ascended into the heavens*” (Acts 2:29, 34). If we believe Christ’s words, then these faithful servants of God DID NOT ascend to heaven.

Surprisingly, the very groups that profess to follow the Bible do not actually read or understand what is found in it! God’s Word is very clear—heaven is not the reward of the saved. (To learn more, read our booklet *Do the Saved Go to Heaven?*)

Again, we must ask: What is the truth about life after death? What happens when you die?

Agnostics and Atheists

We have seen that the teachings of professing Christianity do not agree with the Bible. But what about atheists, who do not believe God exists—or agnostics, who believe that evidence for and against God’s existence is inconclusive?



For the atheist and agnostic, what happens after death is not important. According to their philosophy, life should be enjoyed in the “here and now.” But what if, like the teachings of traditional Christianity, they are wrong? What if God does exist and He offers an awesome future beyond the grave, not taught by the religions and philosophies of men?

Now consider this. Suppose you came to a fork in the road—how would you decide which way to turn?

If you had been told that one road leads to a dead end in a desert, and another to a beautiful oasis, would you not want to know which one to choose? Wouldn’t it be best to do some research to determine for sure *which is which*, and which path you should be on?

No matter our age or background, we are ALL on a path that leads to the same sobering destination: death.

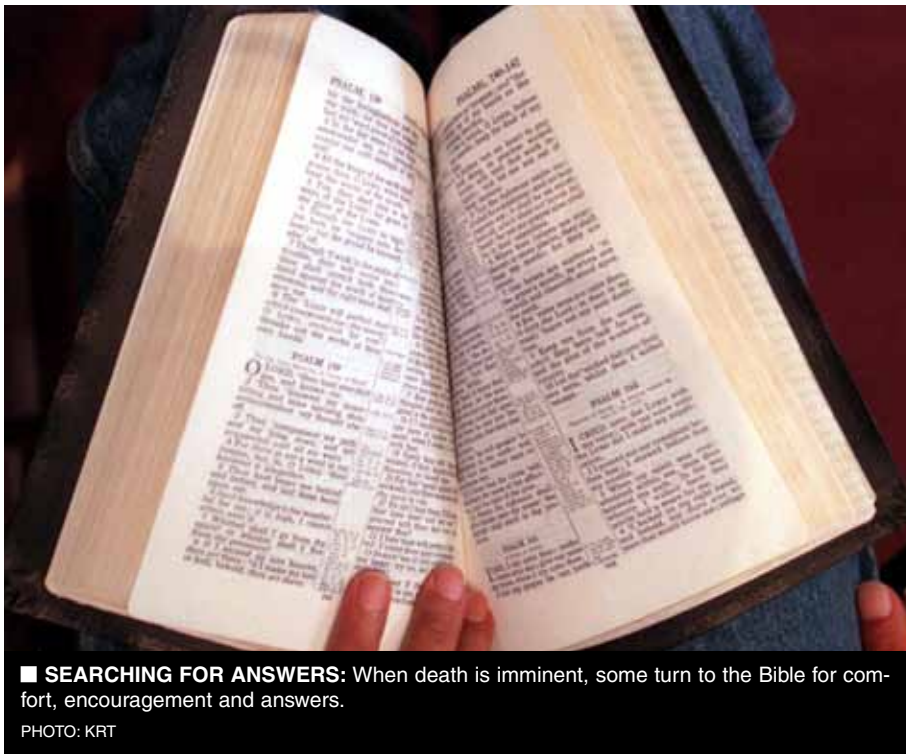
What Does Happen?

Now let’s examine Scripture more closely. The Bible can be proven to be God’s Word, and it is His INSTRUCTION MANUAL to mankind. It provides all the answers necessary to enjoy a wonderful, happy and successful way of life.

First, the Bible is emphatic and clear that *everyone* dies: “For that which befalls the sons of men befalls beasts; even one thing befalls them: as the one dies, so dies the other; yes, they have all one breath; so that a man has no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity. All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again” (Ecc. 3:19-20). This reveals that a human being simply dies and returns to dust like any other living creature on Earth.

The Bible provides even more detail of what happens after death. Notice Psalm 146: “His [man’s] breath goes forth, he returns to his earth; in that very day *his thoughts perish*” (vs. 4). A human being no longer thinks once he is dead; he simply is not conscious.

Now read Ecclesiastes 9: “For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope: for a living dog is better than a dead lion. For the living know that they shall die: but *the dead know not any thing*, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten” (vs. 4-5). Again, the Bible is clear about the state of the dead.



■ **SEARCHING FOR ANSWERS:** When death is imminent, some turn to the Bible for comfort, encouragement and answers.

PHOTO: KRT

But this leads to the age-old question asked in the book of Job: “If a man die, shall he live again?” (14:14). The second half of the verse begins to answer the question: “...all the days of my appointed time will I wait, *till my change come.*”

God’s Word speaks of this “change” in scores of places, but what is it?

God’s Ultimate Goal

Most people believe that they are born with “immortal souls.” But the Bible states otherwise: “*For the wages of sin is death*; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 6:23). Eternal life is a gift. People are not automatically born with it. Since “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (3:23), and “*sin is the transgression of the law*” (I John 3:4), there is a penalty—wages earned—for breaking God’s Law!

Some religionists try to reason around Romans 6:23, saying that “death” merely means separation from God. But these scriptures are plain. God declares, “Behold, all souls are Mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is Mine:

the soul that sins, *it shall die*” (Ezek. 18:4).

When a person dies, he is *dead*. Death is the ultimate “separation.”

However, there is hope after death! Everyone who has ever lived will be resurrected: “In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be *changed*. For this corruptible must put on *incorruption*, and this mortal must put on *immortality*” (I Cor. 15:52-53). This is the “change” of which Job spoke—a change from this temporary, physical existence to eternal life. This is God’s ultimate goal for humanity.

Those who are being called by God *now*—who are being judged (I Pet. 4:17) and are building holy, righteous character—will be a part of the First Resurrection upon the Return of Jesus Christ (I Thes. 4:16-17; Rev. 20:6).

For the following 1,000 years, God’s government will be administered across the world, bringing peace and prosperity for all (Isa. 9:7). Then will come the Second

Resurrection, in which every man, woman and child who has ever lived—but who had not yet received an opportunity for salvation—will be brought back to physical existence (Ezek. 37:5; Rev. 20:12-13). All will be given a chance to learn God’s way of life and to overcome the way of sin. Those who do will be given the precious opportunity to change to immortality.

No one is currently eternally burning in an everlasting hell—and no one ever will. What kind of God would send someone to an ever-burning hell to be tortured forever, without end? What kind of God would inflict such eternal punishing on those who never had the chance to learn His way of life?

Certainly *not* the God of the Bible! He will give all human beings the opportunity for salvation.

Future for You

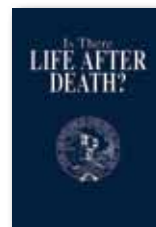
Death is terrible. The Bible describes it as a “sting.”

But there is coming a time when death will lose its sting—a time when death will no longer exist: “So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, *Death is swallowed up in victory*. O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory?” (I Cor. 15:54-55).

Death has no place in mankind’s incredible future!

There are many questions that cannot be answered fully in a few short pages. Take time to study *Is there Life After Death?* and *How Religion Deceives You About Your Incredible Future*.

In the study of your future, as well as everything else you do for the rest of your life, apply Ecclesiastes 9:10: “Whatsoever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, where you go.” □



PERSONAL

Continued from page 2

and that they should *kill* one another: and there was given unto him a great sword” (Rev. 6:3-4).

The *same* Jesus Christ would not give two different versions of what happens immediately before His Return. He would not tell one thing to His disciples of the *first* century, and another to those of the *21st* century! This should be obvious.

The sword of Revelation 6 is shown as an instrument of war and killing. This horse and rider take peace from the earth. When peace leaves, war remains—what Christ described in Matthew 24:6.

Wars have continued and grown steadily worse since the time of Christ’s prophecy. This part of John’s astounding vision has the gravest implications for all alive on Earth today. This horseman represents the dreadful destruction of *world* war. By the end of the age, the potential for devastation in war has become so great it holds the power to take peace not just from two or more nations, but “*from the earth.*”

Only in the modern age have weapons of mass destruction been available. The 20th century saw the two most devastating wars in history, with WWII far more destructive than WWI. We are in the last intermission preceding the truly greatest war, foretold to exceed anything before it. A sinning, rebellious humanity is reaching the end of its rope, when war’s potential cannot grow worse, because it can erase *all* life from Earth in one last blast of total destruction—if Christ did not intervene and cut events “short” (Matt. 24:22).

NUMBER 4: Wars and commotions

Jesus added this in Luke 21: “When you shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass; but the end is not by and by [or yet]” (vs. 9). The Greek word for “commotions” means disorder, confusion and tumult. An expanded definition could include acts and effects of terrorism, such as bombings,

but also demonstrations, protests and riots. These things have almost arrived full force. But civil disobedience and related acts, including violence, will grow *far* worse than today’s mere front edge.

NUMBER 5: Famine

The pattern of history is that *famine* always follows war. In Matthew 24, Christ also said, “There shall be *famines*...” (vs. 7). This is reiterated in Revelation 6—when the black horse appears. Notice: “He...opened the *third seal*...and lo a *black horse*; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice...say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see you hurt not the oil and the wine” (vs. 5-6).

This pictures *extreme worldwide famine*—a widespread lack of food beyond anything civilization has seen. This condition is seen to seize the entire world in a terrible way. Famines are increasing now. They are now far worse than most imagine. Around 24,000 people on Earth starve to death every day—with this number steadily rising!

All nations are poised for a never-before-seen global food crisis. Drastic changes will *soon* come to an interconnected modern world. No more will supermarket shelves brim with abundance. No more vast exports. No more wealthy nations able to assist countries stricken with drought and famine. Articles every day declare that the black horse is just over the horizon for all nations! Believe this!

NUMBER 6: Troubles

Mark’s account of Jesus’ list adds a word not found in Matthew or Luke: “There shall be famines and *troubles*...” (13:8). The Greek word translated *troubles* means “disturbance, that is, (of water) roiling, or (of a mob) sedition: trouble.” While this brings to mind riots, civil uprisings, protests, violent crime and gang war—and these are connected to commotions—it also includes a range of difficulties that would come from floods, tremendous

hurricanes, cyclones and typhoons, and other severe storms—all forms of “roiling water.” Mark’s gospel indicates that these things will also grow worse. Make yourself see what is already happening.

NUMBER 7: Disease

If war leads to famine, and it does—the resulting malnutrition invites a host of *diseases*. Jesus next said, “There shall be...pestilences [or *diseases*]...” (Matt. 24:7). The fourth seal reveals a pale horse: “When He had opened the *fourth seal*...behold a *pale horse*: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over *the fourth part of the earth* [one in every four people], to *kill* with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth” (Rev. 6:7-8).

This horse is depicted as pale because it is *sickly*. It obviously represents disease—*pestilence*! The pale horseman’s arrival portends that hundreds of millions—and not just in poor, underdeveloped countries—will perish through terrifying disease epidemics. The reference to “Death”—the end result of disease—and “Hell”—hades, meaning the grave—make this clear. The death toll now from disease around the world is staggering—82,000 lives lost *every day*, 30 million a year—and growing!

Disease will soon alter the course of history in a profound way. Horrific epidemics, the likes of which have *never* been seen, will strike the world’s wealthiest nations. And coming pandemics will dwarf all that preceded them. The ensuing chaos will affect you, and all of your loved ones. *Everything* around you will change for the worse.

NUMBER 8: Animal attacks

Revelation describes “beasts of the earth.” The prophet Ezekiel recorded, “The *sword* is without, and the *pestilence* and the *famine* within: he that is in the field shall die with the sword; and he that is in the city, famine and pestilence shall devour him” (7:15). First, notice the similarity to Matthew 24 and Revelation 6. When one allows the

Bible to interpret itself, a clear picture emerges every time.

Ezekiel continues, “Thus says the Lord GOD; As I live, surely they that are in the *wastes* shall fall by the sword, and him that is in the *open field* will I give to the *beasts* to be devoured, and they that be in the forts and in the caves shall die of the pestilence” (33:27). The picture painted is almost too horrifying to contemplate.

There is seen to be no way out! God permits *no escape* for those who will not turn to Him! Many will try to flee, but will be unable. Death will literally pursue them like a tracker an outlaw. In fact, you saw one fourth of all human beings will die from the horsemen and wild animals—and this is before things get *much* worse.

Revelation 6:8 becomes one of the Bible’s most powerful single passages—or what might be called a summary statement—on the entire subject of prophecy. Grasp the sheer awesome magnitude of the message here.

NUMBER 9: Earthquakes and volcanic activity

Earthquakes and volcanoes have become *regular* in the news. The greatest period of activity in history is now underway. Jesus warned, “There shall be...earthquakes in [various] places” (Matt. 24:7).

Jesus says earthquakes would be here and there—but also that they would increase in *frequency* and *intensity* before His Return. Luke adds “*great earthquakes*” (21:11). The word translated “great” is *me-gas*, meaning “big,” “great,” “high, large, loud, mighty,” and “strong.” Believe Christ’s words. *Mega*-earthquakes—of awesome magnitude, resulting in tremendous, widespread destruction. This sets apart the time when earthquakes come more often and with more destruction from less frequent relatively “average” quakes in previous periods of history. The same would be true of volcanic activity.

A second point is seen by comparing Luke and Mark to Matthew. The latter lists earthquakes at the *end* of war, famine and disease. Luke and

Mark list them *before* these things. The point is obvious. They will occur throughout the final years when false Christianity, war, famine and disease have grown worse.

Grasp what you have learned! In effect, Jesus has given an advance newscast—or the *headlines*—of events and conditions that are all around us and will grow much worse.

Remember, it is not my purpose here to prove every detail of every prophecy. We can only examine summaries of the most crucial events to come. The serious reader will want detail—and that detail is available. The purpose here is to give the briefest thumbnail—a powerful overview—of what is happening.

NUMBER 10: True gospel is preached

Jesus foretold that a worldwide effort to preach the *true* gospel would occur *before* the end! Notice: “This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in *all the world* for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come” (Matt. 24:14). This means *someone* is preaching the gospel of the kingdom today, in our present age, because the *end*—close as it now is—has not yet come!

Delivering the only *true* gospel to the world—the good news of the coming kingdom of God!—is the Work of God’s Church! While this commission began with the original apostles, The Restored Church of God continues it. The message and goal are the same—only the methods differ. Today, God’s truth is available as never before. Vast thousands the world over are learning sound principles, straight from their Bibles, helping them to live happier lives.

The Restored Church of God offers *more material*—more truth in writing and in video and audio form—than at any time in the history of God working with mankind. Check this for yourself. And we offer it all without cost on our websites. We are the largest (most extensive) religious *publishing operation* in the world—now or ever.

Our websites, collectively—*thercg.org*, *realtruth.org* and *worldto-come.org*—are also the most extensive

religious websites of any kind in the world—now or ever!

NUMBER 11: The world is warned

This event works alongside number 10. The world does not know God. It is unaware of the Plan and Purpose He is working out. Worldwide disobedience to His laws, and rejection of His truths, will cause horrible plagues to be poured out on a God-rejecting humanity. But the God of the Bible is a *loving* God. Before punishment, He always makes certain His “watchman” sounds the alarm to those in harm’s way. Notice: “Son of man, I have set you a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore you shall hear the word at My mouth, and warn them from Me. When I say to the wicked, O wicked man, you shall surely die; if you do not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity [lawlessness]; but his blood will I require at your hand. Nevertheless, if you warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul [your life]” (Ezek. 33:7-9). Also read verses 30-33.

God wants no one to have an excuse, to say, “I didn’t know” or “Why didn’t you tell me?”

It becomes our responsibility to WARN all who will take heed of the seriousness and *meaning* behind world-shaking events and calamities, soon to come on a sleepy, unsuspecting world. The prophet Isaiah wrote, “Cry aloud, spare not, lift up your voice like a trumpet, and *show My people their transgression*, and the house of Jacob their sins” (58:1). The job of *The Real Truth* magazine is to issue this warning while there is still time.

Jesus makes a special promise in Revelation 3: “Behold, I have set before you [His Church, in context] *an open door*, and *no man can shut it*” (3:8). This door refers to the Work God’s Church must carry out and complete.

My book *The Bible’s Greatest Prophecies Unlocked! – A Voice Cries Out* is unlike anything you have ever read. Many have and are reading it. Even greater numbers soon will. I urge

you to read this book. It goes *far* beyond what is covered in this Personal.

NUMBER 12: The Holy Roman Empire is resurrected

Revelation 17:8-9 describes a Beast that ascends out of a bottomless pit and is ridden by a “woman.” Verse 12 shows that this Beast involves 10 kings who shall receive power and unite to bequeath it to a leader who will take the role of the Beast.

Comparing Revelation 13 and 17, with Daniel 2 and 7, brings full understanding of this Beast, and the *system* it represents. Numerous Old Testament scriptures also refer to this system, but these are the most critical chapters to understand. Combined, they explain a staggering—and deeply sobering!—prophecy about latter-day events that will affect *all peoples in your lifetime!*

This seventh, final, short-lived resurrection of the Holy Roman Empire is arising *now* in the heart of Europe! A United Europe *is* coming—and lies just ahead. When it appears, the entire world will stand in shocked amazement.

Revelation 13 describes a symbolic Beast with seven heads, 10 horns and 10 crowns, as well as a *second* beast with two horns. The first Beast represents the Roman Empire—a *political* kingdom. The two-horned beast represents the *headquarters* of an influential, prophetic woman, or *church*, that controls the first Beast. Revelation 13 also describes the “image” and the “mark” of this Beast. The prophet Daniel explained that the “ten horns” of Revelation 13 were 10 successive governments, which arose out of the Roman Empire and continue until Christ’s Second Coming. Daniel states, “The *ten horns* out of this kingdom *are ten kings* [or governments] that shall arise” (7:24). Who are these 10 kings? Start by recognizing they must be *successive*, not simultaneous because they span a period from AD 476 until Christ’s Return. Obviously, no man can live this long and neither has any *single* government, empowered by Rome, lasted this long.

Briefly, beginning in AD 554, the Roman Empire became known as the



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Holy Roman Empire. Historians almost universally acknowledge that the pope’s crowning of *Justinian* signaled this change. Over the centuries, new rulers appeared and were crowned—*Charlemagne* (AD 800)—*Otto the Great* (962)—the Hapsburg Dynasty of *Charles V* (1520)—then *Napoleon* (1805)—with the sixth head being Garibaldi’s united Italian head from 1870-1945! This revival of the *Holy Roman Empire* culminated in the defeat of Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini. Mussolini, after signing a secret agreement with the Vatican in 1929, united Ethiopia, Eritrea and Italian Somaliland back to Italy in 1935. He declared this to be the Roman Empire re-established!

But there is *another* figure who appears on the world scene during this period of end-time events.

NUMBER 13: The False Prophet appears

This event could easily be exchanged with number 12 because these appear at or about the same time. The Revelation 17 “woman” riding the Beast is a great false church—and the evidence of this is overwhelming. This explains the “Holy” attached to “Roman Empire.” Like one who rides a horse, camel or elephant, the woman directs, controls and guides the animal to go where she wants and do what she wants. This church is led by a leader the Bible calls the “False Prophet.” The Beast and False Prophet will combine to rebuild

and lead a powerful religious-governmental system. Many verses show that demons will bring the power to work miracles through this system.

The False Prophet is also called the “Man of Sin,” among other names. Paul wrote, “Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day [the day of Christ] shall not come, except there come a *falling away* first [a prophecy fulfilled in the late 20th century among God’s people], and that *man of sin* be revealed, the *son of perdition*... Who opposes and exalts himself *above all that is called God*, or that is worshipped; so that he *as God* sits in the temple of God, *showing himself that he is God*” (II Thes. 2:3-4). This religious figure will be revealed some time before God’s Work is over.

This final, world-charming False Prophet will lead all nations to worship the Beast! The deception will be *so* widespread that these men will actually deceive all mankind into fighting Christ at His Return (Rev. 16:9, 13-16; 17:13-14).

A regathering of power—under two men—is foretold to happen one more time!

Look for the final 13 events, culminating in Christ’s Second Coming, in an upcoming *Real Truth* issue.

For much more about what will happen in *your* lifetime, read my vital book *The Bible’s Greatest Prophecies Unlocked!* □

FINANCES

U.S. Credit Downgrade Shocks Global Market

After issuing a negative outlook warning on April 18, credit rating agency Standard and Poor's (S&P) downgraded its long-term sovereign debt rating of the United States from "AAA" to "AA+" on August 5. The downgrade generated immediate worldwide repercussions as worried markets plummeted to record lows.

"The outlook on the long-term rating is negative," an S&P release stated. "We could lower the long-term rating to 'AA' within the next two years if we see that less reduction in spending than agreed to, higher interest rates, or new fiscal pressures during the period result in a higher general government debt trajectory than we currently assume in our base case."

The historic move is mainly based on the deep schism between Republican and Democrat parties regarding the nation's high levels of debt.

The agency added: "The political brinksmanship of recent months highlights what we see as America's governance and policymaking becoming less stable, less effective, and less predictable than what we previously believed. The statutory debt ceiling and the threat of default have become political bargaining chips in the debate over fiscal policy."

The next day, the Dow Jones dropped 634.76 points—its worst dive since 2008.

The European Central Bank purchased bonds from Italy and Spain as preventive measures to help stabilize market reactions to the announcement. *Bloomberg* reported that "benchmark equity indexes for Europe, Australia and China extended losses to more than 20 percent from recent peaks, the level some investors consider a bear market."

Anxiety also caused markets worldwide to tumble.

"In China—which holds large amounts of U.S. debt—a commentary published by the official Xinhua news agency was critical of the U.S. government and questioned whether the U.S. dollar should continue to be the global reserve currency," *CNN* reported.

Several American organizations tied to the debt crisis, such as Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac were also downgraded, *NPR* reported. "The agency also lowered the ratings for: farm lenders; long-term U.S. government-backed debt issued by 32 banks and credit unions; and three major clearinghouses, which are used to execute trades of stocks, bonds and options."

Other countries could be next. Analysts warn that "France and Britain are most vulnerable within Europe to a rating review following the U.S. downgrade, with anemic growth and hefty borrowing placing them among the shakiest of the world's triple-A rated lenders," *Reuters* reported. □

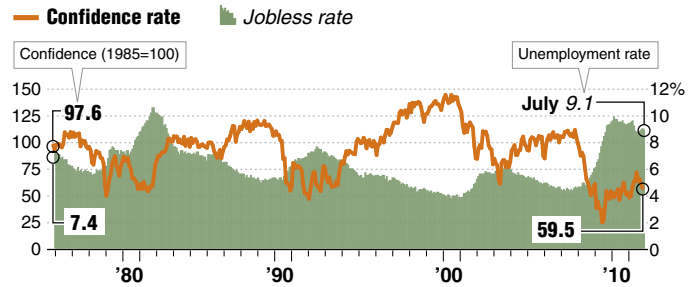
Potential Costs of a Downgrade

Political wrangling over raising the debt ceiling was cited by Standard & Poor's as a reason for their decision to lower their rating of the U.S. government's creditworthiness. Some effects may include:

Weakened consumer confidence

Faith in the economy, which had barely begun to rebound after the recession, is already souring; lack of confidence means less consumer spending, and less demand contributes greatly to fewer jobs

Consumer confidence and unemployment Rates, monthly

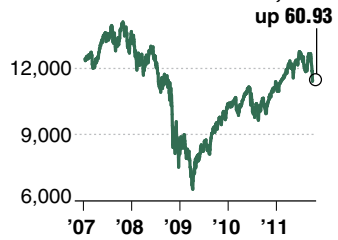


Jittery markets

Unease with the perceived soundness of the economy could spook investors, causing stock prices to drop as they did during the recession and reducing retirement assets, much of which are invested in securities

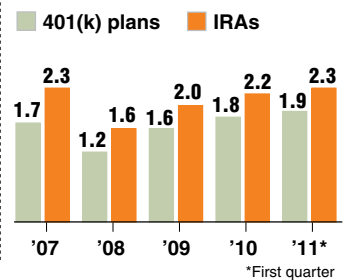
Stocks

Daily closes on the Dow Jones Industrial Average since Jan. 1, 2007



Retirement assets

Assets invested in mutual funds, in trillions of dollars

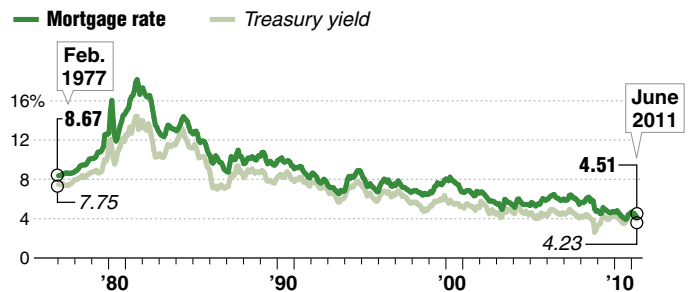


Higher borrowing costs

Rates for much consumer credit, including mortgages and car loans, are tied to Treasury bond rates; if U.S. debt is downgraded, investors would likely demand higher rates, driving interest rates up for consumers

Mortgage and Treasury bond rates, an example

Monthly rates on 30-year conventional mortgages and 30-year Treasuries



- **Corporations**, municipalities and other bond issuers would likely also have to offer higher yields, increasing the cost of their debt and leaving less for shareholders

- **Federal government** would have to pay more to borrow, increasing government spending

Source: Federal Reserve, Freddie Mac, Conference Board, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Yahoo! Finance, Investment Company Institute
Graphic: Pat Carr

ASIA

China Debuts Aircraft Carrier

China's successful test run of its first aircraft carrier—a former Soviet ship refitted with updated weaponry—evoked international concern on its maiden voyage.

Euronews reported the move is considered a step in the nation's "long-term plan to build a carrier force of four vessels to boost its power on the Asian region's seas which are riddled with territorial disputes."

The ship's "symbolic significance outweighed its practical importance," a military expert told the news agency, adding that it is still far from being an "effective war machine" and years of pilot training will be required.

"The vessel nonetheless sends a powerful message both to China's domestic audience, for whom a carrier has for decades been equated with national strength, and to the U.S. and its regional allies, many of whom are embroiled in territorial disputes with Beijing," *The Wall Street Journal* reported.



■ **MILITARY MIGHT:** China's first aircraft carrier sits in a harbor off the nation's coast (July 4, 2011).

PHOTO: STR/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

In response, two American carriers were sent to the region. According to *Voice of America*, "The United States has expressed concern about Beijing's lack of transparency regarding the carrier. But Chinese officials have responded that the vessel is not a threat to anyone and that its primary purpose is scientific research and training. They also have pointed out that China is the only one of the five permanent members of the United

Nations Security Council without an operational aircraft carrier."

Japan and Taiwan also questioned the larger nation's motives, as reported by *Agence France-Presse*.

"Taiwan's defence ministry has expressed alarm at China's naval buildup although experts say it may still take time for the People's Liberation Army to operate its first carrier group complete with fighter jets." □

BRITAIN

Continued from page 5

Role of Greed

In his book *The Bible's Greatest Prophecies Unlocked! – A Voice Cries Out, Real Truth* Editor-in-Chief David C. Pack writes about the worldwide breakdown of character occurring today—and where the financial and moral collapse is headed.

He states, "Obsession with material goods is fueling—in fact, *supercharging*—the mounting debt crisis. People now *routinely* spend more than they make. They want the *best* clothes, *newest* gadgets and *fanciest* cars. 'Keeping up with the Joneses' and 'Everyone else is doing it!' drives millions of consumers.

"Jesus warned, 'Beware of *covetousness*: for a man's life consists *not* in the abundance of the things which he possesses' (Luke 12:15).

"Do *any* still believe this?

"Governments, financial institutions and millions of citizens are *all* sliding toward bankruptcy.

"The present generation is very different from those of the past. Most now live solely for pleasure, ease, comfort, gain and entertainment. Thoughts of personal responsibility and character-building have almost disappeared. Tens of millions today reflect—'I want'—'I want a lot'—and 'I want it *now!*'"

Foretold Long Ago

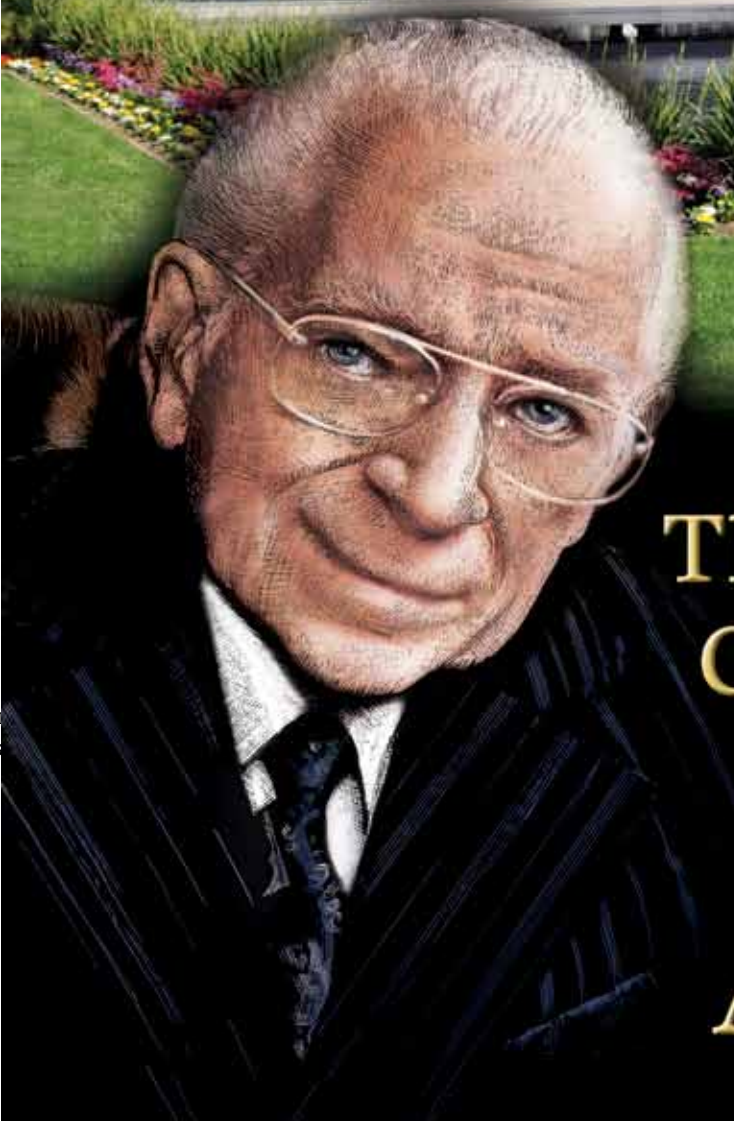
Unknown to most, the Bible foretold all that is happening today: "This know also, that in the last days *perilous* [dangerous] *times* shall come. For men shall

be lovers of their own selves, covetous... unthankful...lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God..." (II Tim. 3:1-2, 4).

Mr. Pack continues, "Make no mistake. As trends and conditions degenerate, violence will ensue—and in a big way. Uprisings, riots and tumults will increase in number and severity—so will violent crime, as the increasing number of desperate people take desperate action in an attempt to save themselves—at all costs. With this, the confusion of people asking, 'What do we *do?*'—'Where do we *go?*'—'Who do we *listen to?*'—will grow beyond anything ever before seen.

"The cacophony of fearful uncertainty will be **DEAFENING!**"

To learn how you can escape—and be protected—read *America and Britain in Prophecy* and *The Bible's Greatest Prophecies Unlocked!* at www.thercg.org. □



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CHURCH OF GOD**
and
**HERBERT W.
ARMSTRONG?**

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