

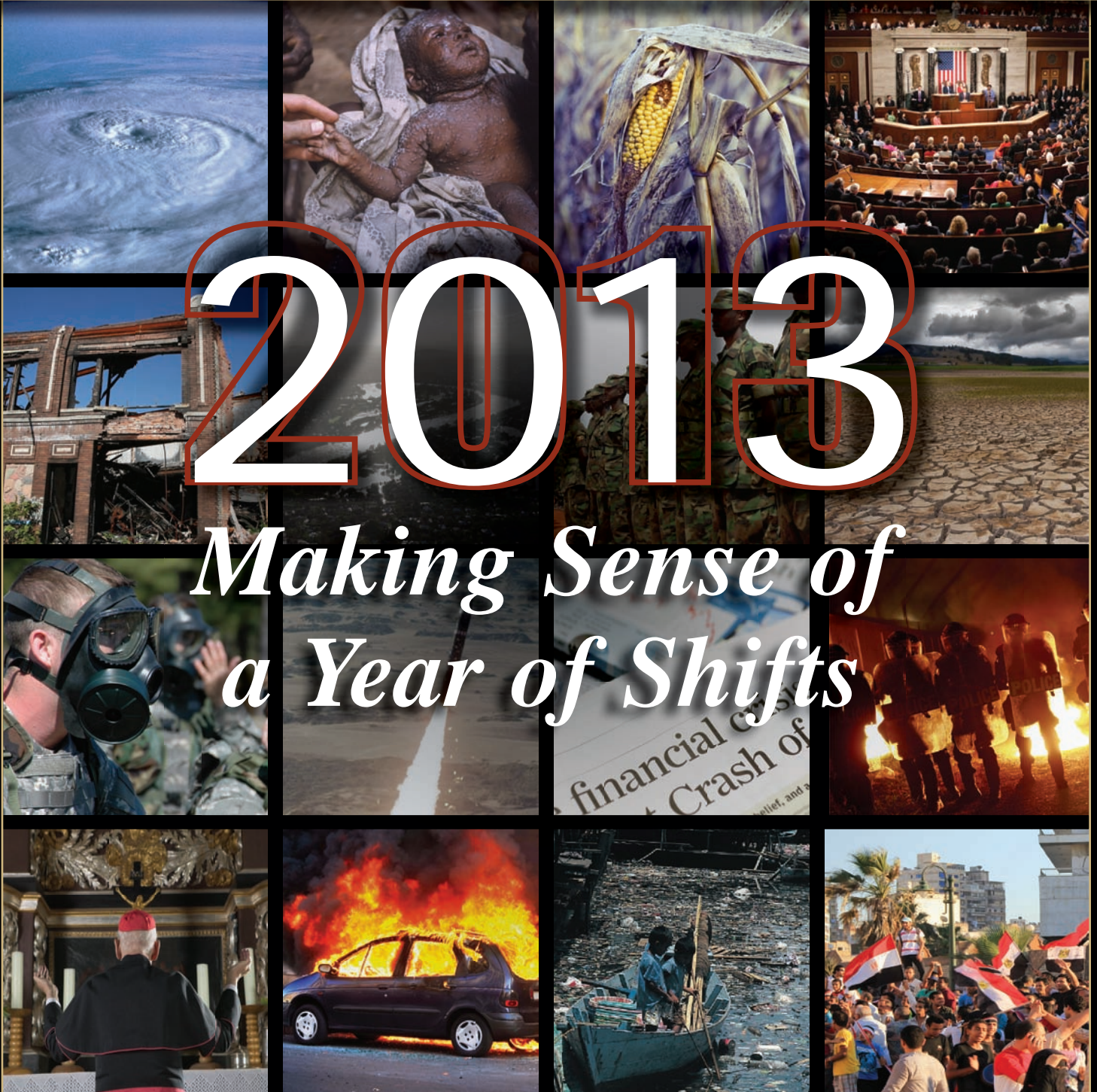
DECEMBER 2013

THE

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# REAL TRUTH™

A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING



# 2013

*Making Sense of  
a Year of Shifts*

THE  
**REAL TRUTH**

A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING

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PHOTO: DAN KITWOOD/GETTY IMAGES

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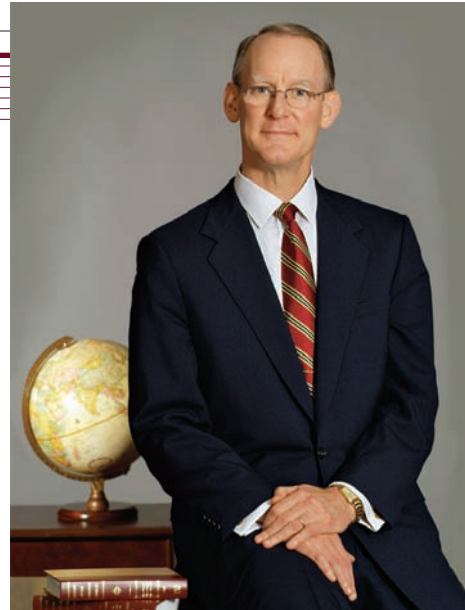
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## PERSONAL FROM

David C. Fack



# The True Church— Identifying It Part 3

**I**N THIS SERIES, we have been covering the Church that Jesus Christ promised to build. He told the apostle Peter (three times) to “Feed My sheep” (John 21:15-17). But how is this done? Who carries the authority—*God’s* authority—to do it? Are all ministers equal? Who introduces doctrine? Do members have a voice in this and other decisions?

The Christ of the Bible does not lead the world’s churches—its people do! But how exactly does Christ head *His* Church? How is it governed? And what prophecies, large and small, does God’s Church, and no other, correctly understand and teach? Part 3 of this series brings the plain answers.

### Built Upon Which Rock?

God’s ministry leads, organizes, protects and feeds His Flock. In the Church built by Jesus, there is careful, vigilant oversight under *God’s* form of government. Numerous verses explain that God gives *His* ministers necessary authority—so they are better able to teach and

defend His flock. God’s Church has and teaches the truth about His government, and the scriptures supporting it.

Remember, Jesus said in Matthew 16:18, “I will build My Church”—*His* Church. Everything about this Church is *Christ’s*—including its government. How Christ governs His Church has everything to do with what it is built upon.

Let’s return to Matthew 16 and read the whole passage for background: “And I say unto you, That you are Peter, and upon *this rock* I will build My church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto you the *keys* of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (vs. 18-19).

To learn the meaning, we must start from verse 13. Jesus asked the disciples, “...Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?” Peter answered, “...You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (vs. 16). Christ went on, “... You are *Peter* [*petros*, which means “a piece of rock or pebble”], and upon *this rock* [*petra*, meaning “a mass of, or great, rock”] I will build My Church...” (vs.18).

John 1:42 is helpful in explaining Peter’s name. Let’s read: “...When Jesus beheld him [Peter], He said,

You are Simon the son of Jona: you shall be called *Cephas* [an Aramaic word], which is by interpretation, *A stone*.” This is *petros* again, the same word used for Peter in Matthew 16:18.

Many people—and one huge church—assume Jesus meant He would build His Church *on Peter*, a mere pebble next to Christ. But this is not what it says. *Jesus Christ*—not Peter—is the giant “Rock” upon which the Church is built. Peter, a piece of stone, is not a massive rock—but Christ is!

### Where Christ Was Speaking

Matthew 16:13 says Jesus was at Caesarea Philippi. His choice of site to describe His Church is significant! Here is why.

This city is in the far north of Israel, about 25 miles northeast of the Sea of Galilee. I have stood on the spot where Jesus spoke. This is what I saw—and what anyone would see: Immediately above where one of the three main branches of the Jordan River springs directly out of the base of a cliff is a massive rock outcropping that dominates the topography. Its presence literally towers over the landscape. None who were present could possibly have believed Jesus was talking about building on Peter, whom He compared to a *little* rock. The enormous size of the immense cliff directly above Him reinforced the message that He was building the Church on a *giant* Rock—HIMSELF!

Let’s understand. *Jesus* was the God—the Rock!—of the Old Testament! I Corinthians 10:4 is just one proof—and it is impossible to misunderstand: “And [ancient Israel] did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock [*petra*] that followed them: and that Rock [*petra*] was Christ.” Deuteronomy 32:15 and 18, as well as Psalm 18:2, are just *some* examples of how the Old Testament God is commonly referred to as a Rock.

Yet, theologians and religionists routinely place Christ in conflict with—in opposition to—the God of the Old Testament. Ridiculous! He *was* the God of the Old Testament—the Rock of Israel!

Let’s summarize. Jesus was telling Peter that He (Christ) would soon build the New Testament Church *on Himself*—that He would be its *Head*—as well as remain with it *always*—Matthew 28:20—meaning never leave nor forsake it—Hebrews 13:5—which is why the gates of hell could never prevail against it—with all of this continuing just as He had been the Rock of, and had led, the Old Testament “*church in the wilderness*,” referenced in Acts 7:38.

Matthew 7:24 instructs individual Christians to build their *personal* “houses” on a “Rock” (again, the word is *petra*). No one would suggest a house could be built on a small stone or pebble. This alone eliminates the Church being built on Peter.

Christ also said, “I will give unto you the KEYS of the kingdom of heaven...” (Matt. 16:19). “Keys” is symbolic language describing giving His leaders the knowledge of *how* to enter God’s kingdom—the way of life a Christian must follow to achieve salvation. In Luke 11:52, Christ reproves lawyers for hiding or suppressing this *key of knowledge*, and thus preventing themselves and others from entering God’s kingdom.

Grasp this! By no definition was Jesus appointing Peter and his so-called successors to be His earthly replacement, or vicar, meaning “in place of”! Peter was simply not the first pope given “keys” authorizing him to change God’s laws and teachings at will, binding men’s rules and traditions in their place, supposedly making these decisions on Christ’s behalf.

Do not misunderstand. Jesus Christ, and no one else, heads His Church. Let’s see this: “And [God] has put all things under [Christ’s] feet, and gave *Him* to be the Head over *all things* to the Church, which is His Body...” (Eph. 1:22-23) and also “[Christ] is the Head of the Body, the Church...” (Col. 1:18).

### An Astonishing Passage

Let’s even better understand Christ as the Rock His Church is built upon.

Since Christians are to build on this Rock, we must learn what this means. But let’s turn this subject around. Notice what Peter said *about Christ*: “Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture [in Isaiah], Behold, I lay in Zion a *Chief Cornerstone*, elect, precious: and he that believes on Him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe He is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the *stone* which the builders *DISALLOWED*, the same is made the Head of the corner, and a *stone* of stumbling, and a *rock* [*petra*] of offense, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient...” (I Pet. 2:6-8).

Peter was quoting who and what the prophet Isaiah long before knew, and foretold, would come: “Therefore thus says the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a *stone*, a tried *stone*, a precious *cornerstone*, a *sure foundation*...” (Isa. 28:16).

These verses further demonstrate that Jesus Christ is the Rock—the God—of both the Old and New Testaments!

Now notice what the apostle Paul recorded: “And [the saints] are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, *Jesus Christ* Himself being the *Chief Cornerstone*” (Eph. 2:20). Christ is the Head (or Chief) *Stone* of the Church and its true—as well as *only*—foundation. The apostle Paul continues: “For *other foundation* can no man lay than that is laid, which is *Jesus Christ*” (I Cor. 3:11).

So Peter, and any man after him, fails the test.

### God’s Government

In the Church that Jesus leads, a related subject must be addressed: How is peace, unity and organization maintained? What is the entity that permits these qualities to thrive and everything to be done “decently and in order”?

The answer: GOVERNMENT!—*God’s* form of government.

Government is central to *everything* in life. It is the glue that keeps things together. Families cannot properly function without it. Neither can nations, armies, institutions, compa-

nies, churches, schools, teams, organizations or clubs—nor virtually any entity of more than one person. Where there is no government, there is no order—only chaos, confusion and everyone doing “that which [is] right in his own eyes,” as the book of Judges records in chapter 17 verse 6. Institutions without at least some kind of governing body do not and cannot last for long.

Think. God preserves His entire creation through government and law—and both the Earth and the entire universe reflect this. Government, in the right form, brings structure, order, organization, stability, peace, protection, guidelines—right boundaries—and a host of other benefits to groups of every kind!

If government is central to everything in life, it should not be a surprise that Jesus designed and established a specific form to lead His Church.

### Organizational Structure

The very greatest hallmarks of the true Church are (1) that Jesus Christ built it and (2) *He* is its Head—He leads it. As its Founder, He is at the top of the governmental structure. This is not the case in other churches. Since Jesus built but one Church, then *men* must have built *all* other churches in existence today.

Men have devised various means to govern *their* organizations. Naturally, this includes *their* churches. The top leaders in the large mainstream churches are elected by lower ministers, and many of these ministers are hired and fired by deacons or members under them in the organization they purport to lead.

There are different ministerial offices in the Church. Let’s read what Paul wrote: “And He [Jesus] gave some apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith...” (Eph. 4:11-13).

Paul added this: “And God has set some in the church, *first* apostles,

*secondarily* prophets, *thirdly* teachers [evangelists, pastors and elders]...” (I Cor. 12:28).

Combining these passages, some points emerge. There are specific ministerial positions in the Church, and the words “first, secondarily” and “thirdly” show each office carries a different level of authority. Apostles are *first*, directly under Christ, followed by prophets, who are *second*, then evangelists, *third*, and so on. Each office is subordinate to those above it. Apostle carries the most authority of any human office in the Church. Authority and teaching of truth flow from Christ, through the apostle, and then down through the other offices. The goal is always unity in the faith.

These scriptures also reveal that Jesus Himself calls and appoints some, after necessary careful training, to the various offices (or ranks) in His Church. As Head of the Church, Jesus has the authority to do this. As the Father calls people into the Church, Christ calls members into the ministry—His ministry. It is not up to individual members to decide whether to become a minister.

Lay members and ministers alike in Christ’s Church recognize that God’s government is from the top down, not the bottom up, as is found in all democratic governments of men, where the people are ultimately in charge.

Most know the phrase “Government of the people, by the people and for the people.” The true Church is different. While its government is certainly *for* the people, it is not run *by* the people, nor is it *of* them—it is by and of Christ, on Whom it stands! For the Church to operate smoothly and efficiently, no other way would work.

Peace, unity, harmony and doctrinal purity cannot be maintained under a government that rules from the bottom up. Christ must be the Head! Just because a church may operate from the top down, and have some correct ranks of the ministry, does not mean it is God’s government—and His Church. Christ must be in charge—and He can lead only one organization, or He is divided!

To prevent separate, independent and competing factions, which would lead to confusion and division, driving many out of the Body of Christ, God has organized government in His Church. This is the GOVERNMENT OF GOD, and it results in teamwork, not division! God knows that cooperation multiplies and competition *always* divides.

The Church is the kingdom of God in embryo, meaning members are being formed—daily preparing—in the womb of the Church, which is also called a Mother. They are *begotten*, but not yet *born*, into the kingdom. God’s government is similar—it is now only present in the Church, not yet over all nations.

### Overview of Offices

Here is an overview of the functions of each office. Space precludes full descriptions.

Apostles are charged with announcing Christ’s gospel to the world, and supervising the proclaiming of that message. This office also oversees the entire Church and all administrative functions within it. Peter simply was designated as the apostle in charge, nothing more.

Prophets foretell events before they happen. Their mission in the first century was to receive messages or prophecies directly from God, and to convey these to the apostles. Two extraordinary prophets, the Two Witnesses, will arrive just before the Great Tribulation.

Evangelists are senior ministers who proclaim the gospel to the public and in some cases raise up local churches. Working under an apostle, they can supervise a number of congregations, or hold executive duties at Headquarters.

Pastors generally serve locally over one or more congregations and oversee day-to-day operations. This responsibility is central to the overall unity, stability and spiritual growth of congregations individually, and the whole Church collectively. In fact, certain parables given by Christ, such as the

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# Bridging the Turkey-EU Divide

## *Part 2*

What is motivating ties between the European Union and Turkey?

BY EDWARD L. WINKFIELD  
AND SAMUEL C. BAXTER

**T**URKEY IS A nation where continents collide. Literally. The Anatolian tectonic plate covers most of the country and it is surrounded: the Eurasian Plate borders the north while the African and Arabian plates line the south and southeast, respectively.

Seismic tension builds from every compass direction and results in regular devastating earthquakes. Centuries ago, architects and civil engineers took this factor into account. Many times after a temblor, modern structures have collapsed while centuries-old palaces

and mosques remain standing with little or no damage.

Even today, geologists study these still-standing buildings to glean information on how to make structures “earthquake proof.” Byzantine and Ottoman landmarks—such as Hagia Sophia, Sultan Ahmed Mosque (the Blue Mosque), and Selimiye Mosque—have stood for many hundreds of years. Each was built to resist the clash of continental plates.

Turkey is also built for continental collisions of a different sort. The nation, often called “the crossroads of civilizations,” is where Europe meets Asia and the Middle East.

A strong potpourri of historical and cultural influences defines the nation. Greek and Roman fingerprints still exist from their respective empires. Byzantine culture left its mark before the Ottoman Turks rose to power. The ubiquitous presence of Islam in the country means there is a strong Middle Eastern flavor. Also, since the Turks came to Anatolia from western Mongolia, there are Asian influences.

Supercharging these influences is Turkey’s central location, which has made it a major trade route from antiquity until today.

A *Financial Times* article “Silk Roads Lead to Turkey’s Resurgent Power” demonstrated this point. CEO of export firm TAV Group told the newspaper, “We used to say that Turkey was surrounded by three seas”—the Black Sea, the Aegean, and the Mediterranean—“Now we say Turkey is surrounded by markets.”

According to *The World Factbook*, the main nations where Turkey shipped goods in 2012 were “Germany 8.6%, Iraq 7.1%, Iran 6.5%, UK 5.7%, UAE 5.4%, Russia 4.4%, Italy 4.2%, France 4.1%.” This represents an even spread of West and East.

The same *Financial Times* article continued, “Vaunting cultural, religious and historical ties, Turkish businesses have fanned out elsewhere in

the Middle East and Africa, central Asia and beyond.”

There is also a budding interest in Southeast Asia.

At the Grand Bazaar in Istanbul, Turkey’s most-populous city, the mercantile character of the nation is clear. There, one can purchase Russian caviar, Chinese tea, and Indian curry along with Turkish specialties of fine apparel, foodstuffs, ornate rugs, and elegant metalwork.

So where does Turkey fit? The Middle East? Europe? Asia? Most Turks would probably tell you somewhere in between.

Yet, as Part 1 of this series showed, Turkey has been leaning heavily toward the European Union. Despite the cavernous divides of history, religion and politics, Ankara and Brussels have been courting each other for about a century.

The reasons for this “politics makes strange bedfellows” situation is only clear when looking at the few similarities between these two powers. To uncover these, one must turn to the pages of history.

### Common Ground

The clearest common trait between Turkish and European empires was an unmistakable interest in the land of Israel. For many centuries, both powers coveted this tiny sliver of land. The territory was under Ottoman control from 1517 to 1917, the majority of the empire’s 600-year-plus reign.

In 1799, Napoleon Bonaparte, who was later crowned Holy Roman Emperor, intended to capture Jerusalem during a military campaign in Egypt and Syria. A loss at the Siege of Acre (in today’s northern Israel) meant he never made it to the “City of Peace.”

During the Crusades, European forces entered Jerusalem in triumph in 1099 and held the city until falling to Muslim ruler Saladin in 1187. There were numerous attempts to regain control of the Holy Land up until the last major medieval Crusade in 1272.

In the centuries before the Middle Ages, the Romans controlled Israel. The Roman Empire gained control of the region by defeating the Greco-Macedonian Empire.

At its peak, this Grecian empire touched three separate continents, stretching from Greece to the north, Egypt to the south, and to parts of India to the east. The Holy Land was part of its vast territory.

The empire’s most well-known ruler was Alexander the Great. He had a special link to Israel.

Jewish historian Josephus recorded in his *Antiquities of the Jews* that Alexander visited Jerusalem before confronting the Persians. The account states: “...and when he [Alexander] went up into the temple, he offered sacrifice to God, according to the high priest’s direction, and magnificently treated both the high priest and the priests. And when the [Bible] book of Daniel was showed him, wherein Daniel declared that one of the Greeks should destroy the empire of the Persians, he supposed that himself [Alexander] was the person intended...”

Daniel 8:5-7 tells of a military leader, represented by a “he goat” with a “notable horn,” that comes from the West to defeat a great power in the East.

Sure enough, the Greco-Macedonian Empire completely defeated the formidable Medo-Persian Empire, verifying Alexander’s supposition. Palestine, which up until then was under Persian rule, was included in the Greeks’ spoils of victory.

Yet the prophecy in Daniel does not stop there.

Read verse 8: “Therefore the he goat [Alexander] waxed very great: and when he was strong, the great horn was broken; and for it came up four notable ones toward the four winds of heaven.”

After Alexander’s death at age 33, his kingdom was split between his four generals, Lysimachus, Ptolemy, Seleucus and Cassander.

Daniel 11 adds more: “And when he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven; and not to

■ **SPANNING CONTINENTS:** Automobiles cross the Bosphorus Bridge, which connects Europe and Asia.

PHOTO: THINKSTOCK

his posterity [Alexander had no heir to take his place], nor according to his dominion which he ruled: for his kingdom shall be plucked up, even for others beside those” (vs. 4).

This all came true! This is just one proof of the validity of the Bible. There are many more. Watch *The World to Come*™ with David C. Pack broadcast “You Can Prove the Bible’s Authority” at [worldtoCome.org](http://worldtoCome.org) to learn more.

Another proof of Bible prophecy is found in Daniel 2. It lists a succession of kingdoms that conquered Israel—including the great European empires.

Chapter 2 describes a peculiar “great image” revealed to be a giant statue of a man. This man was made of four separate metals from head to toe—gold, silver, bronze and iron—each metal equating to a successive world-ruling kingdom or empire.

Verse 38 reveals that Nebuchadnezzar II’s Neo-Babylonian Empire was the statue’s head of gold. Following this was the Persian/Achaemenid Empire torso of silver. The bronze was Alexander’s Greco-Macedonian Empire. And the legs and feet of iron represented the Roman Empire. All four world-ruling kingdoms held the land of Israel.

Where were the Turks in all of this? Did they have ties to the Holy Land? Again, the biblical record, coupled with history, provides answers.

### Origin of the Turks

*Encyclopaedia Britannica* explains the dual branches of Turks: “The Turkic peoples may be divided into two main groups: the western and the eastern. The western group includes the Turkic peoples of southeastern Europe and those of southwestern Asia inhabiting Anatolia (Asian Turkey) and northwestern Iran. The eastern group comprises the Turkic peoples of Central Asia, Kazakhstan, and the autonomous region of Xinjiang in China. Turkic peoples display a great variety of ethnic types.”

While there has been some intermarriage, the western Turks are generally Caucasoid (white) and known as Oguz. The eastern clans are distinctly Mongoloid (Asian descent).

*Britannica* continues by stating that when eastern tribes fought for control of Mongolia from the 8th to 11th century, the western Oguz Turks “migrated westward into Iran and Afghanistan. In Iran the family of Oguz tribes known as Seljuqs created an empire...In 1071 the Seljuq sultan Alp-Arslan defeated the Byzantine Empire at the Battle of Manzikert and thereby opened the way for several million Oguz tribesmen to settle in Anatolia [modern Turkey].”

The source continues, “These Turks came to form the bulk of the population there, and one Oguz tribal chief, Osman, founded the Ottoman dynasty (early 14th century)...The Oguz are the primary ancestors of the Turks of present-day Turkey.”

Notice that the Oguz did not fit in with the eastern Turks. The reason? Central Asia was not their original homeland.

A clue to the origin of the Oguz Turks can be found in the name “Ottoman.” Note that it was adapted from the ruler Osman, which is also spelled Othman and Uthman. Volume II of Edward Gibbons’ *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* includes additional spellings: “...Thaman, or Athman, whose Turkish name has been melted into the appellation of the caliph Othman.”

Thaman was a family name with roots in the Bible: Teman was a chieftain of the ancient Edomite kingdom and the grandson of Esau. William Hazlit’s *The Classical Gazetteer* spells Teman as *Thaman*.

Old Testament passages show that Esau was the son of Isaac and older twin of Jacob (who was renamed Israel). Both brothers were grandsons of the patriarch Abraham.

The Oguz Turks have a direct tie to Israel. Esau was born in that region!

What most do not realize is that nations are simply families grown large. Many modern nations today are populated by the descendants of single families. More often than not, these peoples are unaware of their origins.

Two examples of this are the Assyrians (the modern Germans and Austrians) and ancient Israel (which

today includes Israel, America, Britain and many Western European nations). For more on the history of these two peoples, read the article “Germany’s Renewed Nationalism” at [realtruth.org](http://realtruth.org) and *America and Britain in Prophecy* at [rcg.org/aabibp](http://rcg.org/aabibp).

Esau also became a great nation that has forgotten its ancient roots. Read Genesis 36: “These were dukes [chieftains] of the sons of Esau: the sons of *Eliphaz*, the firstborn son of Esau; duke *Teman*, duke Omar, duke Zepho, duke Kenaz” (vs. 15).

The Esau-Eliphaz-Teman line gave rise to the Ottoman Turks, and modern Turkey.

### Earmarks of Edom

The Ottoman-Teman connection is just one proof of where the majority of Esau’s descendants reside today. Esau is synonymous with Edom: “Thus dwelt Esau in mount Seir: Esau is Edom” (Gen. 36:8).

A classic Edomite trait is allying with other peoples and adopting their cultures—such as the Oguz among the Mongoloid Turks.

This started with Esau himself. He married a daughter of Ishmael (the father of the modern Arabs), a daughter of the Hittites, and another Hittite woman who also had ties to the Hivites (Gen. 36:2-3).

Yet Esau still retained characteristics that have defined his offspring throughout history.

While the descendants of Esau spread throughout the region, many originally made their home in Mount Seir, a mountain range east of Israel. The Edomites set up a kingdom there with cave dwellings and a formidable rock fortress. Many considered Edom to be invincible because of this defensive stronghold. Remnants of cities built into rock can be found throughout the region. The most notable example is the city of Petra, which was inhabited by the Nabataeans—a people who took over the region after most Edomites moved east.

*Britannica* adds, “Edom prospered because of its strategic location on the trade route between Arabia and the





■ **ROCK DWELLINGS:** Left, Uchisar Castle, a rock fortress in the Cappadocia region of Turkey, was once used as a defensive stronghold. Right, in Petra, Jordan, manmade caves can be found throughout the entire region.

PHOTOS: THINKSTOCK

Mediterranean and its copper industry at Ezion-geber.”

Is it any wonder that the Ottoman Turks settled in Anatolia, a significant trade route even today?

Amazingly, one of the routes of the famed Silk Road from Asia to Europe was Urgup in Cappadocia (Eastern Turkey). In this area, unique rock formations were carved out for use as dwellings. The locations of Uchisar and Ortahisar were rock fortresses.

As with the Edomites, the Ottomans were often believed to be *invincible* by their enemies.

Another interesting point stems from the Turkish flag, which is red. Turkish tradition assigns colors to compass directions, with red meaning “south.” In Hebrew, the name Edom means *red* and Teman means *south*.

Information from Brown University reveals even more connections: “According to tradition, in [circa] 1200 BCE, the Petra area (but not necessarily the site itself) was populated

by Edomites and the area was known as Edom (‘red’). Before the Israelite incursions, the Edomites controlled the trade routes from Arabia in the south to Damascus in the north. Little is known about the Edomites at Petra itself, but as a people they were known for their wisdom, their writing, their textile industry, the excellence and fineness of their ceramics, and their skilled metal working.”

Even today, Turkey’s main exports include apparel, textiles and manufactured metal products. In addition, beautifully crafted Ottoman-period Iznik pottery, characterized by its intricate blue patterns, is famed the world over. Also, many Turkish sultans were renowned for their wisdom, such as Suleiman the Magnificent.

To summarize, the descendants of Teman, Esau’s grandson, migrated to Central Asia and then to the Anatolia region (modern Turkey).

In addition, other Edomites almost certainly moved north *much* earlier. Recall that Esau married two Hittites.

The majority of these peoples resided in the Anatolia region.

### **Allies and Rivals**

Throughout history, Esau’s descendants have regularly allied with other nations, especially against the Israelites.

In the biblical book of Judges, the Amalekites (descendants of Esau) joined forces with the king of Moab to attack ancient Israel (3:12-13). Later in the book, an army of Midianites and Edomites come against Israel (6:3).

Yet Edom also worked with the “metal man” empires foretold in Daniel 2.

In 586 BC, Edom was involved when Nebuchadnezzar II’s army razed Jerusalem and destroyed Solomon’s Temple. Psalm 137 states: “Remember, O LORD, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Raze it, raze it, even to the foundation thereof” (vs. 7).

Edomites also held prominent places in the “metal man” governments.

Haman the Agagite was influential in the Medo-Persian Empire, during the reign of King Xerxes I. He hatched a plot against the captured Jews.

Esau has even deeper ties to this empire, which reveals how early some of his descendants began moving east. The Edomite King Husham of Genesis 36:31-43 was a descendant of Teman. He likely controlled Mount Seir and parts of what are today Iraq and Iran. There are strong indications that Husham is the same as Hushang, a fabled early king of the Persians.

Under supervision of the Roman Empire, Herod the Great and his successors ruled over Judea from 37 BC to AD 92. This was an Idumean family. Idumea is the Greek term for Edom.

The motivation for the animosity between Edom and Israel stems from a bitter sibling rivalry.

Genesis 25 and 27 show that Esau was the elder brother, yet Jacob tricked him out of his birthright. This blessing was later passed onto Jacob's grandsons Ephraim and Manasseh and can be summarized as "a multitude of nations" and a singular "great" nation (48:19). Centuries later, this came to pass with the British Empire and the United States—the greatest multitude of nations and single nation of all time.

Losing this awesome birthright has been perpetuated in bitterness toward Israel—which has been evident in Esau's descendants throughout history.

This rivalry will again push the modern Edomites, including Turkey, to another alliance with Europe.

### Coming Confederation

Bible prophecy outlines this Turkey-Europe coalition. The first details come in Psalm 83. This chapter lists a confederation of nations: "The tabernacles of Edom, and the Ishmaelites [Saudi Arabia]; of Moab [southern Jordan], and the Hagarenes [Syria]; Gebal [Lebanon], and Ammon [northern Jordan], and Amalek [Edomites scattered throughout the Middle East]; the Philistines [Palestinian Arabs, including Gaza] with the inhabitants of Tyre [Lebanon]" (vs. 6-7).

Verse 8 states that "Assur also is joined with them: they have [helped] the children of Lot..."

Assur is another term for Assyria. Again, these are the modern Germans and Austrians. The children of Lot live in modern Jordan.

This describes a confederation of moderate Muslim nations allied with a German-led Europe.

Daniel 11 shows that Europe will send armed forces to the Middle East, likely to stabilize the region. Verse 41 states that these troops "shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape...even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon."

Notice that Europe will invade certain nations, but Edom is spared due to its alliance with Germany.

Obadiah, a book entirely about Edom's future, reveals Turkey's role as armed forces enter Israel. Notice: "In the day that you stood on the other side, in the day that...foreigners entered into [Israel's] gates, and cast lots upon Jerusalem, *even you were as one of them*" (1:11).

As forces take on the modern Israelites, today's Edomites will be "as one of them"—in league with the European power.

While it is clear why Turkey would align itself with these invading forces, what benefits will Europe receive from this confederation?

The Bible states that during the time of this coalition, a sort of United States of Europe will create a global trade empire. Revelation 18 describes the goods that will be shipped worldwide: "The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, and cinnamon, and odors, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots..." (vs. 12-13).

Turkey—as an exporter of many of the items on this list and with its

location on a major trade route—will certainly fit into this system!

### Guiding Force

The animosity of Edom toward Israel will fuel its partnership with Europe, but it is *not* the main motivating factor.

Daniel reveals the true driving force behind world events: "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever: for wisdom and might are His: and He changes the times and the seasons: *He removes kings, and sets up kings*: He gives wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding" (2:20-21).

Realize that it is the God of the Bible who places rulers into power—"removes kings, and sets up kings"—and who is ultimately guiding world events. He is willing to reveal His incredible purpose for mankind to those who will listen.

The enduring pull of Turkey and Europe together is an important element of this plan, but small in comparison with God's supreme goal: salvation for ALL mankind.

Note that He is "not willing that any should perish" (II Pet. 3:9) and wants "all men to be saved, and come unto the knowledge of truth" (I Tim. 2:4). He will do everything in His power to make sure the vast majority of humankind receive salvation.

This crucial fact brings purpose and reason to the tumultuous prophecies found in the Bible that could otherwise be seen as cruel and harsh.

Mankind as a whole is not ready to be governed by God, and is intent on ruling himself—despite millennia of failed governments. The only way man will listen is through national punishment.

This will not happen unexpectedly. As with any loving parent, God warns before He chastises. A main purpose for *The Real Truth* magazine is to carry out this warning of coming calamity to the world.

As has been seen, Europe and Turkey will be allowed to mete out punishment on modern Israelitish

Please see **TURKEY**, page 25



# MINICOURSE

## OF GAMBLING

### Part 2

Gambling has progressed from pastime to plague! Why?  
What is the biblical perspective on this activity?

**S**OME PEOPLE can gamble, lose a little money and walk away. Lesson learned. Others, however, lose more than just cash. They lose control and, possibly, everything else in their lives.

The thrill of winning big has its downside—the very real pos-

sibility of losing big. Gambling can become a vicious cycle, a quest to make up for losses. Some people find themselves gambling more and losing more. A segment of those who gamble fall into two related

categories: Problem gamblers and compulsive (also known as “pathological”) gamblers. According to *WebMD*, more than 8 percent of new gamblers may end up having some type of gambling addiction.

■ **PLAYING THE SLOTS:** Guests fill a gaming floor during the grand opening of a casino in Biloxi, Mississippi (May 22, 2012).

PHOTO: JOHN FITZHUGH/BILOXI SUN HERALD/MCT VIA GETTY IMAGES

*Problem* gambling has been described as “an involvement in risky gambling behaviors that adversely affects the individual’s well-being: this may include issues of relationships, family, financial matters, social standing and vocational pursuits” (Arizona Council on Compulsive Gambling, or AZCCG).

*Compulsive* gambling is more severe. It is defined as “...a progressive disorder characterized by a continuous or periodic loss of control over gambling; a preoccupation with gambling and with obtaining money with which to gamble; irrational thinking; and a continuation of the behavior despite adverse consequences” (*Psychiatric Annals*, Dr. Richard Rosenthal).

Risk factors associated with problem or compulsive gambling include a family history of gambling, availability of gambling (especially during the formative years of life), and inadequate psychological coping strategies. Statistically, men are more likely to fall into this category.

A study in the journal *Nature Neuroscience* indicated “that compulsive gamblers and drug addicts have similar patterns of brain activity,” *WebMD* reported.

Dr. Eric Nestler was blunter in his assessment in the *Daily Mail*. A psychiatrist who studies the science of addiction told the media outlet that “there is very little biological difference between what goes on in the head of a compulsive gambler and in that of a crack addict.”

In fact, similarities between the brains of compulsive gamblers and drug addicts have been documented, such as a high tolerance to dopamine (a chemical neurotransmitter associated with feelings of reward or satisfaction), within both groups. However, researchers admit that these chemical irregularities may be a *result* of pathological gambling rather than the *cause* (“Gambling Fever Starts in Brain,” *The Washington Post*).

Scientists who have studied compulsive gambling have documented four phases through which a patho-



■ **SLIM CHANCE:** A man in Chicago, Illinois, selects numbers for a Powerball lottery ticket with a chance to win a \$425 million jackpot (Aug. 7, 2013).

PHOTO: SCOTT OLSON/GETTY IMAGES

logical gambler typically progresses. Phase one is called the “winning phase” or the “introductory phase.” This is a period, or sometimes just a single occurrence, of monetary

gain from gambling. Phase two is the “losing phase,” in which losses begin to accumulate and the gambler often pursues larger bets or greater odds, and rationalizes that it is just

a streak of bad luck. Phase three is the “desperation phase.” This is when gambling consumes most of an individual’s time and energy, sometimes to the point of neglecting physical health, habitual lying, and the loss of possessions and family. Finally, the fourth phase is called the “hopeless phase”—characterized by clinical depression, bankruptcy, nervous breakdown, suicide attempts, and, sometimes, prison.

### Pathological Gamblers

Compulsive gamblers are divided into two categories: “action gamblers” and “escape gamblers.” The personality of the gambler, and thus the motivation to gamble, determine one’s type.

The typical *action* gambler is described as a domineering, manipulative male who is confident, energetic and has an IQ over 120. This is the most pervasive type of compulsive gambler, in both legal and illegal gambling. The action gambler’s motivation is tied to the goal of beating other individuals at his chosen game and “beating the house.” He seeks to gain wealth and status at the expense of other players and the betting establishment (for example, a casino). These individuals often believe that they can devise a personal “system” to achieve these victories.

Conversely, *escape* gamblers are typically female (according to some estimates, more than 90 percent of female pathological gamblers fall into this category). Most are considered to be caring, nurturing and introverted, with no apparent tendencies toward egotism or narcissism. Their profiles are essentially opposite that of action gamblers. Here, the motivation is relief—escape—from emotional pain, which is a result of present or past trauma.

### High-Risk Groups

Organizations that provide help for compulsive gamblers have noted that the problem is growing fastest among two demographic segments: seniors and teenagers. The common denominator between these two groups is that

each has relatively large amounts of free time. The motivation to gamble between these groups, however, is age-specific.

Seniors are usually described as escape gamblers. They typically gamble in order to escape pain or discomfort in their lives—for example, the loss of a spouse or feeling useless after retirement. According to the AZCCG, the casino machines in particular create an anesthetizing quality that temporarily releases them from emotional and even physical pain.

Teenagers most often fall into the category of action gambler. They generally gamble for excitement, that is, as an antidote to boredom. As games of chance increase in popularity among youth, peer pressure to follow the crowd is mounting—gambling is now seen as fashionable and trendy. An additional appeal to certain teenagers can be summarized as a “reversal of the pecking order”: The best poker players are often studious introverts, the opposite of the “popular athlete” high school stereotype (MSNBC).

The *International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviours*, based in Montreal, Canada, found that gambling is more popular among teens than other high-risk pursuits such as alcohol abuse, illegal drug use, and cigarette smoking.

Women have also experienced a dramatic increase in problem/pathological gambling. Prior to the early 1980s, gambling among women was widely considered socially unacceptable, with the exception of local bingo games. Gambling was to a great degree a “men’s club.” Before this time, virtually all *Gamblers Anonymous* attendees were male. Currently, however, an estimated *one-third* of compulsive gamblers are women. The large majority of these female gamblers are, like seniors, classified as escape gamblers.

Today, the industry is courting women who gamble by opening establishments that are more comfortable and inviting. Rather than sitting in a smoke-filled corner bar, women in

Illinois now have the option of relaxing in a cozy cafe that feature sandwiches, free coffee, and video gambling machines.

According to the *Chicago Tribune*, “...critics say the cafes prey on women and could exacerbate the plight of problem gamblers by making gambling even more accessible.

“‘Because of the stigma...many women don’t go into bars,’ said Anita Bedell, executive director of Illinois Church Action on Alcohol & Addiction Problems, an anti-gambling group.”

“‘But these are labeled as country kitchens or upscale Starbucks, and that’s why they’re getting approved,’ Bedell said. ‘They’re coming into neighborhoods, by shopping malls and schools, and it’s making gambling too accessible in communities’” (*Chicago Tribune*).

### Biblical View

Is all gambling wrong—or just certain types? Should Christians participate? What does the Bible teach?

First, recognize that God’s Word does not contain the specific command, “Thou shalt not gamble.” On the other hand, neither does it command, “Thou shalt not smoke cigarettes”—yet, it can be proven through the spiritual application of His Word that God forbids smoking. (To learn more, read our article “The Truth About Smoking” at [rcg.org/ttas](http://rcg.org/ttas).) In the same way, we can know God’s will regarding Christians and gambling. We simply need to study the laws, examples and spiritual principles found throughout the Bible.

As stated in Part 1, gambling involves (1) relying on chance, while (2) risking the loss of something of value in order to (3) gain an advantage—and achieve instant gratification. The higher the stakes, the more reckless the risk involved.

Does this seem compatible with Christ’s statement, “...it is more blessed to *give* than to *receive*”? (Acts 20:35; also see Phil. 4:5.)

### Samson and the Riddle

Let’s examine a biblical account of gambling: As a faithful servant

of God, the mighty Samson was brave and had a gift of supernatural strength—yet he also had a weakness for foreign women of poor character. With his father’s reluctant permission, Samson married a Philistine woman, one who had a tarnished reputation (Judges 14:1-3).

A grand seven-day wedding feast was held in honor of the bride and groom. Among the guests were 30 male “companions” provided for the bridegroom by the Philistines (vs. 10-11). According to the custom of the time, these Philistine attendees were there to protect the wedding party from invading marauders.

Another popular custom of the day was to tell riddles at feasts and special occasions. Samson posed such a riddle to his 30 wedding companions: “I will now put forth a riddle unto you: if you can certainly declare it me within the seven days of the feast, and find it out, then I will give you thirty sheets and thirty change of garments: But if you cannot declare it me, then shall you give me thirty sheets and thirty change of garments...” (vs. 12-13). The Philistine companions accepted Samson’s wager.

Notice: Samson (1) played a game of chance—believing that the odds of the Philistines not solving the riddle were in his favor—and (2) risked the loss of something of value—“thirty sheets and thirty change of garments”—in order to (3) gain an advantage. In other words, Samson gambled big. And he *lost* big.

The Philistine companions cheated by coercing Samson’s new bride into betraying her husband. In doing so, the wife revealed her true character: given enough pressure, she would betray her husband in a heartbeat—even deceiving him and wearing him down with her tears. Samson learned this the hard way. He honored his bet and paid off the cheaters—but he did it through slaughtering thirty other Philistines, taking their fine clothing and giving them to the thirty wedding companions (vs. 15-19).

These were the sordid and deadly results of Samson gambling.

### “For the Love of Money”

It has been said that there are only two ways of life: The way of GIVE—helping, assisting, serving, showing outgoing concern for others—summed up by the word *love*. And the way of GET—taking, competing, loving one’s self ahead of others.

Which way of life does gambling represent?

Las Vegas is often called “Sin City.” A close examination of its history reveals the fingerprints of organized crime, murder, theft, prostitution, adultery, fornication, drunkenness, illegal drug use, and, of course, gambling. Empowering these are the attitudes of deceit, greed, lust for “instant wealth” and making the “big score,” competition, selfishness, laziness—the way of get.

Simply stated, gamblers seek to “get rich quick.” But the apostle Paul warned, “...they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. *For the love of money is [a] root of all [kinds of] evil*: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows” (I Tim. 6:9-10).

As described by *Gamblers Anonymous*, “A desire to have all the good things in life without any great effort on their part seems to be the common character pattern of problem gamblers...time is spent creating images of the great and wonderful things they are going to do as soon as they make the big win...servants, penthouses, nice clothes, charming friends, yachts, and world tours are a few of the wonderful things that are just around the corner...”

Investing one’s heart, being and purpose in the single-minded pursuit of money will “drown” one’s spiritual life. And it truly will lead to “many sorrows”—including death!

This is why, in I Timothy 6, Paul warns the reader to “...flee these things; and follow after righteousness...” (vs. 11)—to keep God’s com-

mandments (Psa. 119:10, 110, 172; 111:10). This fulfills His Law through LOVE (Rom. 13:8-10), first toward God, then toward neighbor.

Proverbs 6 admonishes, “Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provides her meat in the summer, and gathers her food in the harvest” (vs. 6-8). The ant works and saves. She is productive. She does not waste effort, time or resources on get-rich-quick schemes.

The book of Proverbs has much to say about earning a living through hard, honest work:

■ “He becomes poor that deals with a slack hand: but the hand of the diligent makes rich” (10:4).

■ “The slothful man roasts not that which he took in hunting: but the substance of a diligent man is precious” (12:27).

■ “He that tills his land shall have plenty of bread: but he that follows after vain persons [emptiness, idleness, worthlessness] shall have poverty enough” (28:19).

■ “A faithful man shall abound with blessings: but he that makes haste to be rich shall not be innocent [unpunished]” (vs. 20).

■ “He that *hastens to be rich* has an evil eye, and considers not that poverty shall come upon him” (vs. 22).

Laziness and taking the “quick and easy” path to material wealth was a problem in the first-century Church. Circumstances among the brethren caused Paul to command that “if any would not work, neither should he eat...Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread” (II Thes. 3:10, 12).

Hard work and productivity yield patience, longsuffering, endurance and many other godly traits.

Nowhere does God’s inspired Word endorse risking something of worth in order to get instant wealth! Nowhere do the Holy Scriptures support squandering money away in the pursuit of satisfying the appetites of the flesh!

The reason is simple: Gambling is *foolishness*. And the Bible teaches that even “The *thought* of foolishness is SIN...” (Prov. 24:9).

Just a superficial investigation shows that the odds are definitely stacked against the gambler. For example, the odds of winning the multistate Powerball jackpot are nearly one in 175 million—astronomical! Also, gambling establishments such as casinos are assured to be “in the black” due to what is called the “house edge.” This is defined as the ratio of the gambler’s average loss to his or her initial bet. This percentage of loss on games such as blackjack and poker can vary from 0.02 percent to almost 19 percent. Slot machines are *programmed* to make a profit of up to 15 cents per dollar inserted, and the house edge for Keno ranges from 25 to 29 percent! Whether “the house” is taking the gambler’s money in most cases is not a question—it is a mathematical certainty! It is foolish to ignore this reality in pursuit of a selfish fantasy.

Yet human reasoning will ask, “What about low-risk gambling such as bingo, raffles and office pools? Surely, there’s nothing wrong with a ‘friendly’ wager now and then—right?”

Wrong!

ALL gambling is wasteful, unproductive and foolish—and contrary to what the Bible teaches. Even low-risk gambling is sin; it breaks God’s Law. Notice that God’s Word states that even “...a *little* leaven [representing sin] leavens the whole lump” (I Cor. 5:6).

Those who are led by God’s Spirit will seek to obey the spirit of the Law, not merely the letter. They will diligently follow God’s will and reject all human reasoning, for they know—and believe—that “The heart is *deceitful above all things*, and desperately wicked...” (Jer. 17:9), and “...the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walks to direct his steps” (10:23), and “There is a way which seems right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” (Prov. 14:12; 16:25), as well as “Every way

of a man is right in his own eyes...” (21:2).

Ultimately, the basic motivation of the gambler is *covetousness*—a desire for that which belongs to others. Speaking of the modern nations of the West, God states, “For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one is given to covetousness...” (Jer. 6:13). The possessions and status that the gambler longs for become his “god”! *Anything* that one gives deference to above his Creator becomes his god (Ex. 20:3).

### What About the Stock Market?

Some have wondered if purchasing stocks is wrong. Generally, no. When done in moderation, with companies that have reliable financial track records, this can be a method of wise investment. But the motivation must not be for a quick return. Today many employers provide the option of buying company stocks, sometimes at a discount. If you have the opportunity to take part in this, you would be investing in your employer’s future—as well as your own. Therefore, this would not be considered gambling. But, of course, you should be prudent and conservative.

In addition, investing in a company whose products you regularly use and trust is not gambling, but it must always be done in moderation.

Also understand, while not gambling, buying stocks can, after a certain point, become just another get-rich-quick scheme. It must always be done with wisdom and restraint.

Any type of trading based on fast-paced rumor and innuendo that relies solely on time and chance (like day trading and commodity markets) is akin to gambling. These involve foolishly—and recklessly—risking money to accumulate quick wealth.

### It’s All in How You Play

It is human nature to go to extremes. Christians, however, must be balanced in all things. Recognize that bingo, rolling dice, card playing, etc., are not inherently wrong. Problems stem from foolishly risking something of value or

worth (no matter how small) in order to make a quick profit.

For example, in most cases, bingo matches (especially those sponsored by the churches of this world) require players to pay a nominal fee in order to play. This is gambling, regardless of the size of the fee. However, playing bingo is not gambling IF one is allowed to play *for free*, where nothing of worth or value is *at risk*.

Taking part in a raffle may appear harmless, but it produces the desire to gain for yourself what others have contributed. Therefore, like all other types of gambling, this is self-centeredness and “covetousness, which is idolatry” (Col. 3:5).

On the other hand, a draw that comes as a *bonus* of purchasing tickets for a dance, for example, is not gambling, as long as it does not involve winning at someone else’s expense. The same applies to a promotional draw in which the winner is picked and purchasing a ticket is not required. Remember, gambling is the way of getting, competing, taking and focusing on self at the expense of others.

It is not practical to list every possible scenario involving games of chance. However, a good rule of thumb is if one is required to “pay to play” (such as in lotteries) or risk losing something of value, then this is gambling.

### When All Is Said and Done

Gambling is not of God—and is clearly unchristian in purpose. It reflects the way of GET—the way of competition, strife, lust, greed, instant gratification, selfishness and laziness—the mindset of carnal human nature. All betting, from penny-ante wagers to high-stakes risk-taking, is reckless and foolish, and therefore sin.

The principles found in Scripture make plain that God created man to be productive, to work, earn, save and build, and give to others—never to squander our resources or covet those of our neighbor.

Christianity and gambling are utterly incompatible. And by God’s standards, ALL gambling is wrong. □

# 2013

## MAKING SENSE OF A YEAR OF SHIFTS

Like morphing patterns in a kaleidoscope, 13 powerful changes shifted world affairs last year—creating a substantially modified global outlook for 2014.

BY NESTOR A. TORO

**F**ORMER MEMBER OF British Parliament Paddy Ashdown set forth his view of changing global superpowers in a lecture titled “The Global Power Shift” at a December 2011 TED (Technology, Entertainment, Design) convention in Brussels, Belgium.

Mr. Ashdown stated, “My guess is...that the United States will remain

the most powerful nation on earth for the next 10 years, 15, but the context in which she holds her power has now...radically changed.”

“We are coming out of 50 years, most unusual years, of history in which we have had a totally mono-polar world, in which every compass needle for or against has to be referenced by its position to Washington—a world bestrode by a single colossus. But

that’s not a usual case in history. In fact, what’s now emerging is the much more normal case of history. You’re beginning to see the emergence of a multi-polar world.”

How the world has changed in the nearly two years since Mr. Ashdown uttered those words!

A “multi-polar” reality is lining up like images in a kaleidoscope—one dynamic shift at a time. Events in 2013 further defined it. It was a



year in which not only were international relations transformed, but also the economy and society were altered. These significant changes mean a substantially different global landscape at the onset of 2014.

Here are 13 shifts that made headlines in 2013.

### Shift 1: Global Financial Restructuring

Think back to 12 months ago. The fight in Washington was in full swing to keep America from casting itself off the dreaded fiscal cliff. The nation did eventually go over the precipice with expired Bush-era tax cuts and sequestration cuts for the first minutes of the new year before politicians relented with a last-minute bipartisan deal in the Senate.

But a seemingly worse crisis loomed. January 15 went “down as the first day European policy makers fired a shot in the 2013 currency war,” Chris Turner, the head of foreign-exchange strategy at ING Groep NV in London told *Bloomberg*.

The article warned of how the dispute could “lead to a clash of G-20 finance ministers and central banks” during a meeting in Moscow, “three months after reiterating their 2009 pledge to ‘refrain from competitive devaluation of currencies.’”

Then a report arrived from professional services firm PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC). At the time, *Telegraph* reported: “Britain will be overtaken by Mexico and Indonesia in the next four decades to push the nation’s GDP to 11th place in world rankings...”

“PwC’s report, *BRICs and Beyond*, projected a rapid rise of the so-called E7 of emerging economies, also pushing the US, Japan, Germany, France and Italy down the league table—although only the UK and Italy lost their top ten status.”

These events begin to illuminate the transition to a world of multiple economic powers—each grappling for their own interests.

Another significant shift came about a month later, but not in the realm of economics.

### Shift 2: Pope Steps Down

“Like a bolt from the blue overnight,” *The Sydney Morning Herald* described Pope Benedict XVI’s resignation. The choice of words alluded to a lightning bolt that literally struck St. Peter’s Basilica on the same day, leaving many to wonder if it was “a sign from above.”

The election of his successor Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio as Pope Francis also came with its own mystical “signs.”

“Cardinal Christoph Schonborn, the Archbishop of Vienna, who was himself widely tipped as a possible successor to Pope Benedict, said he had personally had two ‘strong signs’ that Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio was ‘the chosen one’ in the run up to vote,” *Telegraph* reported.

The article added: “Speaking to an Anglican conference in London, he also said the Archbishop of Canterbury [leader of the Anglican church]...had a ‘strange similarity’ to the new Pope... [and] that the two churches should work towards closer unity.”

Since the world was markedly fixated on the Vatican, many missed the next shift.

### Shift 3: China Now World’s Biggest Trader

News in February confirmed Chinese exports surpassed America’s. Financial newspaper *Mint*, which collaborates with *The Wall Street Journal*, reported: “China surpassed the U.S. to become the world’s biggest trading nation last year as measured by the sum of exports and imports of goods, official figures from both countries show.

“U.S. exports and imports of goods last year totaled \$3.82 trillion, the U.S. Commerce Department said...China’s customs administration reported...that the country’s trade in goods in 2012 amounted to \$3.87 trillion.”

Later in the year, Beijing acknowledged that the world should “de-Americanize” amid fears of another global financial crisis.

Yet the U.S. was not the only nation under economic duress in 2013.

### Shift 4: Cyprus Bailed Out

Depositors with over 100,000 euros in their accounts at one of the two largest Cypriot banks were forced to pay a chunk of the bill when the nation became the fifth to be bailed out by the European Union.

The transfer of cash prompted warnings that the unexpected grab could become the new norm in an ever more financially fragmented world.

“It will happen everywhere in the world, in Western democracies,” investment analyst Marc Faber told *CNBC*. “You have more people that vote for a living than work for a living. I think you have to be prepared to lose 20 to 30 percent. I think you’re lucky if you don’t lose your life.”

Meanwhile, back at the Vatican...

### Shift 5: New Pope Ignores Catholic Tradition

If Pope Benedict was known as ultra conservative, his successor Pope Francis quickly gained an avant-garde reputation as he sought to make the Catholic Church less “Vatican-centric.” His breaks from protocol caught the world’s attention.

**Ad-lib address:** “As [Francis] made his first Sunday window appearance from the balcony of a papal apartment high above St Peter’s Square, he delivered off-the-cuff remarks about God’s power to forgive instead of reading from a written speech” (*Sky News*).

**Controversial foot washing:** “While popes have for centuries washed the feet of the faithful on the day before Good Friday, never before had a pontiff washed the feet of a woman. That one of the female inmates at the prison in Rome was also a Serbian Muslim was also a break with tradition” (*Telegraph*).

**Papal media sensation:** “Pope Francis has broken protocol once again, appearing with a puzzled look on his face in a ‘selfie’ photo taken with a group of teenagers visiting the Vatican. The picture appeared on the Facebook page of one of the youngsters, who used it as his profile picture, and was going viral on social



■ **CHANGING LANDSCAPE:** Above, Pope Francis greets followers as he arrives for his general audience at the Vatican's St. Peter's Square (Oct. 16, 2013). Opposite page, top right, supporters hold a picture of former Egyptian President Mohammed Morsi during demonstrations in Cairo, Egypt (July 5, 2013). Opposite page, top left, a crowd protests the surveillance tactics of the U.S. National Security Agency in Berlin, Germany (July 27, 2013). Opposite page, middle left, a column of smoke rises from the besieged Westgate shopping mall in Nairobi, Kenya (Sept. 23, 2013). Opposite page, bottom, German Chancellor Angela Merkel talks at a press conference in Brussels, Belgium (Oct. 25, 2013).

PHOTOS: ALBERTO PIZZOLI/AFP/ (ABOVE); ED GILES/ (OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP RIGHT); SEAN GALLUP/ (OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP LEFT); CARL DE SOUZA/AFP/ (OPPOSITE PAGE, MIDDLE LEFT); AFP/ (OPPOSITE PAGE, BOTTOM) GETTY IMAGES

media on Saturday” (*Agence France-Presse*).

### Shift 6: Brazen Public Terror Attacks

The Boston Marathon bombings, the first such attack against the public on U.S. soil since 9/11, and the Kenyan shopping mall hostage crisis that took place more recently, continued to shift the mindset of public safety—that anyone at anyplace at any time is a possible target.

Though not all considered terrorist attacks by definition, the increase in mass shootings in America has further solidified this belief.

Of the Nairobi attack, *International Business Times* stated: “The perpetrators of the Westgate attack chose their

target strategically. The shopping center is a popular destination not only for well-heeled Kenyans but also for international tourists and dignitaries. It has been reported that among those killed were the Ghanaian poet, professor and former ambassador Kofi Awoonor, a Canadian diplomat, and nationals from countries including India, the U.K., France and South Africa. Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta said his own nephew was also among the dead.”

### Shift 7: Germany Voted World's Most Popular Nation

It seemed nothing was more unexpected than the new Pope's popularity. Then certain poll results came in: “The survey, carried out for the *BBC*, polled

26,000 people in 25 countries and asked them to rate 16 countries and the European Union as a whole on whether their influence on the world was mainly positive or negative,” *CNBC* reported.

“Germany came out on top, with 59 percent of survey participants giving it a positive rating. The country moved up three percentage points from its 2012 position. It displaced Japan, which saw its positive rating fall from 58 percent last year to 51 percent, going from first to fourth place.”

The German nation has effectively gone from being watched with a wary eye to being beloved by the masses.

More long-held beliefs changed with the next shift.



### Shift 8: Marriage Redefined

Uruguay, France and New Zealand all legalized same-sex marriage, joining more than 12 other countries and several sub-national jurisdictions worldwide.

In America, “A duo of landmark Supreme Court decisions legalized same-sex marriage in California and granted [homosexual] married couples access to hundreds of federal benefits—related to employment, taxes, and immigration, for example—that had long been denied to them,” *France24* stated.

The article added: “A look at the gay rights ‘landscape’ today reveals the sweeping changes the past few years have seen... Same-sex marriage is now legal in 13 states, plus Washington DC (a considerable chunk of the country, accounting for 30% of the US population).”

New Jersey became the 14th state to approve same-sex marriage as of October.

Then another financial shift occurred...

### Shift 9: Detroit Bankrupt

Bankruptcy is expensive. “The uncharted scale of Detroit’s bankruptcy—it is the largest municipal bankruptcy filing in the nation’s history in terms of both the city’s population and its debt—suggests that it may also become the costliest, experts say,” *The New York Times* reported.

“City officials offer no estimate for a final tab, but some bankruptcy experts say the collapse could ultimately cost Detroit taxpayers as much as \$100 million.”

While Detroit’s fate came into focus, the Middle East stole the spotlight.

### Shift 10: Egyptian President Removed

Some called it a coup d’etat when the Egyptian military toppled President Mohammed Morsi and installed army chief General Abdul-Fatah el-Sisi into power. While the event itself was a shift, so was America’s tiptoe reaction.

Labeling it “rhetorical gymnastics,” *Reuters* reported in October how “Congressional aides said officials from the State Department,

Pentagon and Agency for International Development who discussed Egypt on Capitol Hill still refused to use what they wryly termed ‘the C word’ to describe the ouster of [Morsi], an Islamist and Egypt’s first freely elected president...”

Washington has avoided using the term coup because it would then be forced to cut off financial and military aid to its longtime Middle Eastern ally.

*Reuters* continued, “The language issue illustrates what some analysts see as a tortured U.S. policy toward Egypt, where the desire to be seen as supporting human rights and democracy has clashed with a hope of retaining influence in a strategically vital country and not upsetting the Egyptian army.”

Egypt remained center stage until another shift flipped the attention back to the U.S.

### Shift 11: Classified Information Leak

In July, the pursuit of CIA whistleblower Edward Snowden dominated the world conversation. Snowden is accused of sharing information related to numerous top-secret programs to the press.

“Snowden has enough information to cause [more] harm to the U.S. government in a single minute than any other person has ever had,” [Glenn] Greenwald said in an interview in Rio de Janeiro with the Argentinean daily *La Nacion*.”

“The U.S. government should be on its knees every day begging that nothing [happens] to Snowden, because if something does happen to him, all the information will be revealed and it could be its worst nightmare” (*Reuters*).

More recent reports have begun to question the potency of the information Snowden shared and its ability to bring real damage to U.S. interests.

Snowden was eventually granted one-year temporary asylum in Russia. This shift segued to...

### Shift 12: Russia Calls the Shots

Appalling news that chemical weapons were used on citizens during Syria’s two-year-plus civil war was another

unprecedented shift that left the world grasping for a fitting response.

Controversy ensued about how the United States should react, including President Barack Obama’s request for approval of some “limited” strike—without “boots on the ground.”

But, once more, times have changed: “When the commander-in-chief wants to go to war, Congress is usually happy to comply (if it is even asked for permission, which is rare),” the *Guardian* stated.

“This time, Congress is refusing to bite... Public opinion polls show that a majority of Americans are strongly against US involvement in Syria.”

America’s indecision left a power vacuum. As a result, Russian President Vladimir Putin stepped in to broker a deal for Syria, allowing international control of its chemical weapons. This sudden development brought to a halt, at least temporarily, any final decision from Washington.

“Rep. Mike Rogers, chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, said the U.S. is ‘being led by the nose by’ Russian President Vladimir Putin,” *National Post* reported.

Congressman Rogers continued: “So, if we wanted a transition with Assad, we just fired our last round, and we have taken our ability to negotiate a settlement from the White House, and we’ve sent it with Russia to the United Nations,” Rogers, R-Mich., said. “That’s a dangerous place for us to be if you want an overall settlement to the problems.”

Eyes also turned to Israel after Syrian President Bashar Assad’s pledge to retaliate on its neighbor if hit by America. Then U.S. political gridlock took center stage.

### Shift 13: American Government Shuts Down

The potential global effect of the U.S. government shutdown had the world on its toes. *BBC* reported that International Monetary Fund head Christine Lagarde warned that a U.S. default “could tip the world into recession,” and cause “massive disruption the world over.”

In the U.S., all “nonessential” federal employees stopped working. Visitors were turned away from various national parks and monuments. Many industries, including crab fishing in Alaska, had to wait for permits until government offices reopened.

The 16-day shutdown eventually came to an end, but not before trust in American soundness took a serious blow. The Chinese credit agency Dagong, for example, “...lowered its ratings for US local and foreign currency credit from A to A-, maintaining a negative outlook, the agency said in a statement” (*Agence France-Presse*).

The shutdown cost at least \$24 billion, equaling about \$1.5 billion per day (*ABCNews*). This further accentuated America’s ongoing shift from a financially sound nation to one that cannot manage itself.

These and other similar developments made up the abstract “2013 kaleidoscope” of shifting global power.

### Making Sense of It All

If you have ever looked through the eyepiece of a kaleidoscope, you know its inner parts shift to reveal symmetrical patterns—patterns which precisely line up because the scope’s mirrors are set at a particular angle.

Likewise, the world scene emerging out of the 2013 kaleidoscope begins to “line up” when discerned from the right point of view.

Some try to make sense of events through filters of political or educational ideologies. Others look to the opinions of so-called experts or their own personal experience.

*The Real Truth* magazine uses the only reliable lens through which the kaleidoscope of world events can be understood: the Bible.

In the book of Job, we find an astonishing statement about God’s direct involvement in world events. Read carefully: “He [God] leads counselors away stripped, and judges He makes fools. He loosens the bonds



of kings, and binds a waistcloth on their loins...He deprives of speech those who are trusted, and takes away the discernment of the elders...He uncovers the deeps out of darkness, and brings deep darkness to light. He makes nations great, and He destroys them: He enlarges nations, and leads them away. He takes away understanding from the chiefs of the people of the earth, and makes them wander in a pathless waste. They grope in the dark without light; and He makes them stagger like a drunken man” (Job 12:17-25, *Revised Standard Version*).

Eroding credibility, lack of leadership and discernment, uncovered secrets, the rising and falling of nations, grasping for solutions, global power shifts—all major themes of 2013.

### Propesied Times

The Bible also shows where these events will lead. Luke chapter 21 recounts what Jesus Christ said would come about in our age. Notice that His disciples, like many today, wanted to make sense of what was ahead: “And they asked Him, saying, Master, but when will these things be? And what sign will there be when these things will come to pass?” (vs. 7).

In verses 8-11, He warned of religious deception, wars, disasters and “great signs.”

Later, in verse 24, Christ references a specific period: “...until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.”

The Greek word translated “Gentiles” simply means non-Israelite.

Christ spoke these words to the Jews (those descended from Judah—one of the 12 tribes of ancient Israel) of His time. The other 11 tribes, called the “lost tribes of Israel” by many, are also not considered Gentiles. “The times of the Gentiles” is a period when non-Israelite nations will rise up and dominate world events. In effect, “the times of Israel” will be over!

Grasp this crucial understanding: The people of the United States, Britain and various nations of Western Europe

are descended from the lost tribes of Israel—though they mistakenly consider themselves Gentiles.

Remember Paddy Ashton’s words: “We are coming out of 50 years, most unusual years, of history in which we have had a totally mono-polar world, in which every compass needle for or against has to be referenced by its position to Washington—a world bestrode by a single colossus.”

These “unusual years” we are “coming out of” are part of the times of Israel. *They are coming to an end.* We are moving into the “times of the Gentiles.”

The identity of the modern descendants of Israel can be traced through history and the Bible. In fact, proving this is a vital key in making sense of many more Bible prophecies being fulfilled in our time!

*Real Truth* Editor-in-Chief David C. Pack’s free book *America and Britain in Prophecy* at [rcg.org/aabibp](http://rcg.org/aabibp), will help you see this in astonishing detail.

As increasingly drastic shifts come to the global political landscape, in 2014 and beyond, you do not need to be left in confusion. Continue to read *The Real Truth* magazine for world news in light of Bible prophecy. Also, watch *The World to Come with David C. Pack*, which is televised worldwide and available online at [worldtocome.org](http://worldtocome.org).

Like no others, this magazine and TV program will help you make sense of it all—and know for certain what the coming years will bring! □



# MOUNTING WORLDWIDE CRISIS IN AGRICULTURE

## *Part 6*

Too often, agriculturists see only the *effects*, while the actual *causes* of the crisis grow worse and more complicated. Yet we must *recognize* our agricultural problems—their *causes*—and CORRECT THEM.

BY DALE L. SCHURTER



This article is the final excerpted installment of the book *Mounting Worldwide Crisis in Agriculture* by Dale L. Schurter, the world's foremost authority on biblical agriculture and sustainable husbandry.

**M**AN HAS THE choice between two ways of life summarized as “life and blessing” or “death and cursing.” This is the same decision he has faced since the beginning.

In the Garden of Eden, God placed two trees symbolizing two opposing ways of life: “the tree of life” and “the tree of knowledge of good and evil” (Genesis 2:9).

Man has been living the way of “the tree of knowledge of good and evil” for millennia. Simplified, this means he decides *for himself* what is good and evil, what is right and wrong.

The results have been drastically mixed. The genius of the human mind has brought incredible advancement and progress coupled with dastardly evil acts.

God warned man to not eat from this tree, saying, “But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall *not* eat of it [do not eat the fruit representing a mix of true knowledge with false]: for in the day that you eat thereof you will surely die [relying on humanly devised knowledge leads to sickness, disease and death]” (vs. 17).

Man deciding what is right and wrong is the core problem of the agricultural crisis. Trying to change nature through genetic and chemical manipulation is a futile effort.

Notice: “And God saw *everything* that He had made, and, behold, it was *very good*...” (Genesis 1:31). For



example, God created insects for our good. But in man's eyes, insects are a *mix* of good and evil.

The laws of nature implemented by the Creator are GOOD. They do not need "perfecting" by a meddling mankind!

Left on his own, man can—at *best*—produce results that are both good and evil. History proves this true. Due to this, there is a dire need to educate humankind in proper farming practices. And the solution must be implemented on a *global* scale.

World leaders have often echoed the need for a close-knit worldwide government. Sir Winston Churchill once said: "The creation of an authoritative all-powerful world order is the ultimate aim towards which we must strive. Unless some effective World Super-Government can be set up and brought quickly into action, the prospects for peace and human progress are dark and doubtful" (*Never Give In!: The Best of Winston Churchill's Speeches*).

And a SUPERGOVERNMENT is exactly what God has in mind.

Yet the Creator's solution will *not* come in the way men seem to think, and *not* through any so-called "united" coalition of nations or any other "world order" of *man's* design. Yet it is *guaranteed* to happen.

Notice Daniel 2: "But there is a God in heaven that reveals secrets, and makes known...what shall be in the latter days...And in [those days] shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall NEVER be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people...and it SHALL STAND FOREVER" (vs. 28, 44).

Under this kingdom, the whole world is going to learn the right way to farm—the right way to live—the way to abundance and happiness. *All* destructive and toxic agricultural, social and religious practices *will* come to an *end!* They will be replaced

by the life-giving and life-sustaining laws and blessings of God's government. They will produce far-reaching breakthroughs in food production and prosperity that will stagger the imagination. It will deeply and directly affect the life of every person in every country on Earth.

### **Agriculture's Fantastic Future**

The Bible paints an exciting picture about some of the tremendous and wonderful changes that will occur in coming years.

At that time, society will be agriculturally oriented. Farming and gardening, orchards and vineyards, livestock and poultry husbandries will be so popular that even city dwellers will want to take part. But not in the way so many do today, "playing at" farming just to gain tax benefits.

Rather, people in tomorrow's cities will want to have their own gardens and small orchards just for the pleasure of working with the soil, of being close to God's Creation, and of growing part of their own food.

Because of changes in tomorrow's urban areas, many people in towns and cities will have room for small-scale agricultural activities. Some may even keep a few chickens, cows, sheep or goats!

Vast new acreages of fertile, well-watered land will become available for growing crops and raising livestock. Perfect weather and bumper crops will become the rule—not the exception.

Remember the Great Educator's promised blessings in Leviticus 26: "...rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit" (vs. 4).

Hunger and malnutrition will become a thing of the past. Everyone in every land will be able to enjoy fresh, clean, wholesome, tasty, nutritious food—grains and nuts, meat and dairy products, and fruits and veg-

etables in unbelievable variety and abundance. No, it will not happen overnight, but it *will* happen!

A large percentage of the world's populace will live on prosperous family-sized farms. Millions of these well-kept country areas with spacious, beautiful homes on them will dot the landscape. Families will enjoy stable economic prosperity, radiant health, and a sense of satisfaction, accomplishment and fulfillment from their work.

They will strive to work in harmony with the laws of God in every aspect of their husbandry operations. Farming will be a respected occupation and farmers will take pride in what they produce. Their goal will be to produce food that is high in *true quality*—tasty and nutritious—not just a lot of "bulk."

This means that careful attention will be paid to building up the land. Management practices will be used that produce healthy soil rich in humus and biological life—with vegetation practically impervious to insect infestation and disease. This fertile soil will be protected and further built up by proper tillage methods, diversification, crop rotation, and other conservation practices. Such carefully managed soil will make maximum use of available moisture. It will not be plagued with erosion and a troublesome amount of weeds.

Diversification will replace monoculture. Farmers in the world to come will raise a large variety of crops, planted at the right time on the right soil.

*Pesticides and other harmful chemicals will be totally unnecessary!* Forcing and mining soil, which produces yields of inferior quality, simply will not be practiced.

A land sabbath will be observed every seventh year, during which the land will rest—yet with an abundance of food for all. Recall from earlier: "Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your



vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof; but in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land, a sabbath for the LORD: you shall neither sow your field, nor prune your vineyard. That which grows of its own accord of your harvest you shall not reap [for market or storage], neither gather the grapes of your vine undressed [for market or storage]: for it is a year of rest unto the land.

“And the sabbath of the land shall be meat [food] for you; for you, and for your servant, and for your maid, and for your hired servant, and for your stranger that sojourns with you. And for your cattle, and for the beast that are in your land, shall all the increase thereof be meat [food].”

“Wherefore you shall do My statutes, and keep My judgments, and do them; and you shall dwell in the

land in safety. And the land shall yield her fruit, and *you shall eat your fill, and dwell therein in safety*” (Leviticus 25:3-7, 18-19).

The government of God will be in place ensuring proper care of the soil, plants, animals and people. *The give way of life*—the way of the KINGDOM OF GOD—will be in place *everywhere!* Gone will be the way that leads to death, which we see all around us today!

### Healthy Livestock and Poultry

Since animals play an important part in the ecology of the life cycle, tomorrow’s farms will have a variety of poultry and livestock. Animal wastes will be properly used to make an important contribution to soil fertility.

Though livestock may be temporarily penned for fattening purposes,

they will not spend most of their lives confined in crowded feedlots. Neither will chickens stay cooped up in cages so small they can barely turn around.

These farm animals will not be given a host of drugs and shots, and feeds of unnatural, unbalanced, highly concentrated mixtures that cannot possibly produce high-quality meat. Rather, poultry and livestock will be given healthful feed and forage that is clean, balanced and high in nutritional value. This wholesome feed will produce strong and healthy stock that will result in robust offspring of the same high caliber.

Selective breeding of both plants and animals will be practiced to build up factors of, again, true quality—*not* genetically engineered by man. Development and use of inferior hybrid strains and GMOs will be nei-

## Coming Solution!

In his book *Tomorrow’s Wonderful World – An Inside View!*, *Real Truth* Editor-in-Chief David C. Pack outlines the dramatic changes that will occur with the establishment of the kingdom of God:

“At the end of Christ’s 1,000-year rule...vast billions will be resurrected to physical life and given an opportunity to receive salvation. The Earth must be ready to receive them. God has a plan to prepare and reclaim potentially available land, in such vast expanses, that this problem will be solved for all time.

“Catastrophic prophesies, to be fulfilled just prior to Christ’s Return, will bring unparalleled devastation and destruction to the earth’s surface. God is most specific about what will happen. Weapons of mass destruction will be unleashed before, and possibly during, Christ’s Coming. The ‘waste places’ spoken of previously may include nuclear ‘dead zones’ in multiple places. Biological and nerve weapon releases may leave vast areas uninhabitable.

“God will have to literally *rehabilitate* the surface of the earth in order to make it fit, once again, for human habitation. Bear in mind that 77 percent of the earth’s surface is already uninhabitable oceans and seas. (Indications are that this percentage could actually temporarily increase for a short time

due to climate change.) Enormous deserts and great mountain ranges occupy a large percentage of Earth’s landmasses, including islands. Some regions of land (the two Poles) are too cold to inhabit. Only about 10 percent of the earth’s surface is suitable for agriculture, with no more than 15 percent inhabitable.

“God has a Master Plan! No man could ever think of it, or bring it to pass if he did. Yet it will solve every problem related to overpopulation, pollution, and production, procurement and distribution of food and water. It will involve a complete change in entire weather patterns around the earth, including ocean currents, jet streams, and flow of Arctic air. Beautiful, clear water will be available—and in abundance—in all parts of the world. The nature of mountain ranges, islands, and even placement of continents will allow a repopulation of Earth simply inconceivable to modern planners of cities and nations.

“Let’s take a look.

### Deserts Disappear—Water Plentiful

“The world is now running out of fresh drinking water—but that will soon change dramatically. Here is one of the most incredible prophesies in the entire Bible: ‘Then shall the lame man leap...and 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’ (Isa. 35:6-7).





ther permitted nor desired. Neither will there be such practices as artificial insemination.

It is actually a violation of God's laws to interbreed different kinds of animals. "You shall keep My statutes. You shall not let your cattle gender with a different kind: you shall not sow your field with mingled [blended, hybrid] seed..." (Leviticus 19:19).

This scripture speaks of gendering cattle with diverse kinds. But the Hebrew has only one word that means both "kind" and "variety" or "breed," in the sense used here. It would be better translated "variety" or "breed," not kind. It would normally be impossible to gender cattle with any other kind—such as horses, sheep or dogs, buffalo, elk or deer. "In the wild," none of these animals interbreed, and we are not to "force" it. (Read the example of

Jacob in Genesis 30:29-43 for more about correct selective breeding for herd improvement.) From time to time throughout history, a new breed (or variety) has occurred, but this is only through a natural mutation process that reproduces *like kind*.

When God, for a purpose beneficial to mankind, blesses us with different varieties derived from parent stock, He wants those varieties kept pure. He does not want what He has wisely done to be undone by man (through methods such as hybridization of plants and animals).

Varieties in both animals and plants are a blessing!

#### **Abundant Living for the Farmer**

The high quality evident in farm produce will also be reflected in the personal life of a husbandman and his

family. There will be work, of course, but it will be enjoyable, challenging and rewarding. Remember, Adam and Eve were given a very large garden and the responsibility to "dress [work, serve, till] it and to keep [save, hedge about, guard, protect, preserve] it" (Genesis 2:15). Work is good when work is *for* good. And farm life will not be a humdrum existence of toil and sweat from dawn to dusk with no time out for culture, relaxation and enjoyment of a rewarding life.

In this world to come, all farmers will be educated, cultured individuals—in a profession looked up to by the rest of society, not "looked down on" as it is in many regions today.

Nearby cities will offer additional rich varieties of cultural, recreational, educational and social opportunities for rural families. And scenic areas

"Verses 1-2 add more to what this will mean for all the deserts of the world: 'The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the LORD, and the excellency of our God' (Isa. 35:1-2). Take time to read the entire inspiring 35th chapter of Isaiah.

"The following is a phenomenal prophecy about a river that does not yet exist. It will flow from Jerusalem—in what will no doubt be the largest natural spring in the world, even bigger than Mammoth Springs, Arkansas—eventually reaching around the world: 'And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be' (Zech. 14:8).

"Wastelands of sand and cactus will break forth into a scenic beauty of lush greenery that is hard to imagine. Pasturelands, trees, shrubs, brooks, streams, rivers, and gardens will replace all the deserts of the world.

"But it is not just the deserts that will radically change in tomorrow's world.

#### **Mountains Altered**

"Take a moment to savor the meaning pictured in this related prophecy, also in Isaiah. Notice what will happen to the mountains:

"Fear not...you men of Israel; I will help you, says the LORD, and your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel. Behold, I will make you a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth: you shall thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shall make the hills as chaff. You shall fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them: and you shall rejoice in the LORD, and shall glory in the Holy One of Israel. When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue fails for thirst, I the LORD will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah tree, and the myrtle, and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the fir tree, and the pine, and the box tree together: that they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of the LORD has done this, and the Holy One of Israel has created it' (Isa. 41:14-20).

"Can you imagine this happening around the world? Mountains and hills being shred like mulch, bubbling springs and new rivers appearing suddenly, and wilderness areas disappearing and being replaced by great forests of diverse trees. God says to 'see,' 'know,' 'consider,' and 'understand' the scope of what He promises.

"How awesome are the ways of God!

"This amazing prophecy depicts a world with plenty of room for people—and cities, parks, forests, recreation areas,



and parks of natural beauty will be available for hiking, boating, camping, fishing and more.

**Entire Society Agriculturally Oriented**

As mentioned earlier, in this new world, nations “shall beat their swords into *plowshares*, and their spears into *pruninghooks*: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more” (Micah 4:3).

Instead of making instruments of destruction for a war-oriented society, men will make instruments of peace, and society will become agriculturally oriented, productive and service-oriented—excited about serving our Creator, family and neighbors. Agriculture will be a respected profession, and many, many people will be engaged in it: “But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid:

for the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken it” (vs. 4).

Can you imagine what it will be like when man wholeheartedly works in harmony with all of God’s physical and spiritual laws? The results will be breathtaking.

The Bible describes it in these terms: “Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the LORD, for wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock and of the herd: and their soul shall be as a watered garden; and they shall not sorrow any more at all” (Jeremiah 31:12).

And again, “Behold, the days come, says the LORD, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that sows seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt...and they shall

plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them” (Amos 9:13-14).

Yes, there is fantastic hope for the future! There is wonderful *good news* that lies ahead. With the establishment of the government of God throughout the earth, there will be no famine, no malnutrition or hunger, and no war any more—in the world to come for ALL who respond to His benevolent rule.

*You* can begin to live a foretaste of this way now—if you choose to live by the guidelines found in the Bible!

Once again, read God’s solemn but inspiring words: “I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore *choose life*, THAT BOTH YOU AND YOUR SEED MAY LIVE.” □

crops, lakes, and rivers. The biggest challenge might be where to store the gargantuan food reserves that could soon appear. This would be a much better ‘problem’ than the food wars that numerous experts predict will come, if something does not happen soon. (Incidentally, do not forget that millions of pounds of beef on the hoof will be available in places such as India, once superstition and ignorance is replaced by cooperation and *true* knowledge. So will the perhaps half of India’s crops that are lost annually during the typhoon-monsoon season.)

“And why should Isaiah’s prophecy seem strange? God’s purpose has always been that people be happy and peaceful, contented and joyful. While this is strange and unusual in *this* world, it is neither strange nor unusual to God. This is what He always intended for His creation. He wanted Adam and Eve to enjoy the garden from which they eventually had to be expelled.

“Since God formed the mountains (Psa. 90:2; Amos 4:13), He can also re-form them in any way that He wishes. He apparently will use great earthquakes to do much of the work (Zech. 14:4; Rev. 16:18), because He states, ‘The mountains quake at Him, and the hills melt...’ (Nah. 1:5).

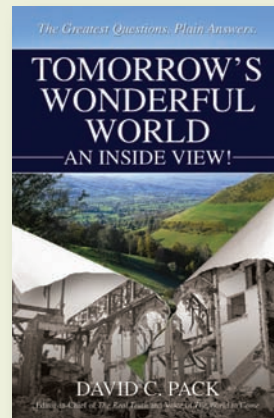
“Isaiah 40:4 states, ‘Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain.’

“There are *many* great mountain ranges on Earth. Imagine the desolate, snow-covered, windswept stretches of

the Himalayas, Alps, Rockies, Andes, Hindu Kush, Sierras, Pyrenees, and other great mountain ranges lowered or leveled and made fertile and inhabitable. Then picture the vast icepacks and mountain ranges of Antarctica, Greenland, and Siberia, including immense areas of tundra and permafrost, becoming available. Countless millions of acres will be made available to a mankind that could never do this for itself. (Could all the nuclear weapons on Earth blast away even a few of the world’s great mountains? And what would remain if they could?)

“Now imagine how many great deserts would disappear. Start with much of the Middle East and almost all of Northern Africa. Picture the Sahara in Africa and nearly all of Saudi Arabia becoming lush and verdant. Then picture the Gobi desert in Asia and the Kalahari and Lake Chad basin, also in Africa, suddenly turning green, along with much of the American West and Southwest. More countless millions of acres of virtually useless land will become available for multiple purposes.

“Astonishing, but true—and in your lifetime!” □



## TURKEY

Continued from page 8

nations. Yet Revelation 18 reveals that the coming European trade empire, symbolically represented as Babylon, will ultimately end in ruin. Why?

While God allows nations to punish Israel, they cruelly enjoy the task. Jeremiah 51 explains: “Yes, Babylon shall fall, O slain of Israel, as slain men have fallen everywhere for Babylon” (vs. 49, *Moffatt Translation*).

Similarly, God reserves a special punishment for Edom: “As you [Edom] did rejoice at the inheritance of the house of Israel, because it was desolate, so will I do unto you: you shalt be desolate, O mount Seir, and all Idumea, even all of it: and they shall know that I am the LORD” (Ezek. 35:15).

While this obviously is severe chastisement, God makes His purpose clear: “...that they shall know that I am the LORD.”

Human nature makes mankind hardheaded. Without this swift and severe action, only a scant few would listen!

Isaiah 63 shows another element of Edom’s punishment: “Who is this that comes from Edom, with dyed garments...that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save” (vs. 1).

Yes, who *is* this that comes from Edom?

The answer comes at the end of the previous chapter of Isaiah: “Behold, the LORD has proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say you to the daughter of Zion, Behold, your salvation comes; behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him” (62:11).

This is a returning Jesus Christ! Yet what is the “work before Him”?

### Ultimate World Government

Return again to the book of Daniel, it adds a crucial point about Christ’s Return. Read carefully the text immediately following the description of the “metal man:” “You saw [the statue]



■ **AT A GLANCE:** Top, Turkish anti-government protesters gather for a meal after their first day of fasting for the Muslim holy month of Ramadan in Istanbul, Turkey (July 9, 2013). Bottom left, a Turkish metalworker adds fine details to a handmade copper pot. Bottom right, fine textile products are displayed at Istanbul’s Grand Bazaar.

PHOTOS: TOP, BULENT KILIC/AFP/GETTY IMAGES; BOTTOM RIGHT AND BOTTOM LEFT, THINKSTOCK

until that *a stone was cut out without hands*, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay [representing an unstable European empire], and broke them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass [Greco-Macedonian Empire], the silver [Medo-Persian Empire], and the gold [Neo-Babylonian Empire], broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff...and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth (2:34-35).

The governments of men, represented by these four humanly shaped and crafted metals, will eventually be destroyed by a “stone.” This “stone” is Jesus Christ! He is commonly referred to as a “stone” and a “rock” throughout Scripture (I Pet. 2:8).

Christ will come and smash the governments of men when he sets up His kingdom—a world-ruling SUPER-GOVERNMENT—and bring about the next phase of God’s Plan. Remember, however, that there is “*work before*

Him,” which means change will not occur overnight. It will take a number of years to repair an Earth corrupted by mankind and to teach all of its inhabitants to fully follow God’s Law.

Ultimately, the Creator will offer salvation to everyone who has ever lived, *both past and present*. This includes those who perished during the national punishments mentioned earlier.

With Christ in charge, governments of men will cease. His kingdom, as a great “mountain” (a prophetic term symbolizing a government), will fill the entire Earth—and erase all crippling effects of national rivalries.

The Bible contains much more information on coming world events—including what is in store for Europe and Turkey. The one-of-a-kind book by David C. Pack, *The Bible’s Greatest Prophecies Unlocked! – A Voice Cries Out*, lays out in great detail the prophetic picture painted in God’s Word.

Read it today at [rcg.org/tbgpu](http://rcg.org/tbgpu)—it will change your view of world events forever! □



# “AFFLUENZA”— A MODERN EPIDEMIC

An insatiable appetite for material goods has led millions to become dissatisfied with life. What drives this worsening phenomenon?

**A**S FALL TURNS to winter, the colder weather and time spent cooped up indoors can leave us susceptible to the influenza virus. Marked by a sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, headache, fever and sometimes

digestive upset, this airborne bug spreads easily. It can take you out of work for a week or more and possibly send you to the hospital.

This change of seasons also fuels another, more insidious virus. It gains its strength the day after Thanksgiving—“Black Friday,” which kicks off the Christmas shopping season. The “affluenza” virus is marked by low self-esteem, depression, a loss of motivation, an inability to delay gratification, and a false

sense of entitlement, according to the website The Affluenza Project. It can weigh you down with debt, cause you to default on your credit cards or mortgage, and lead you to file for bankruptcy.

The holiday shopping season also leaves us susceptible to affluenza—the name sociologists use to describe the West’s insatiable appetite for more and more material goods. In 2012, “...a record 247 million shoppers visited stores and websites over the four-day weekend starting on Thanksgiving, up

■ **SHOPPING RUSH:** People fill Macy’s department store during Black Friday sales in New York City (Nov. 23, 2012).

PHOTO: ANDREW KELLY/GETTY IMAGES

9.2 percent [from the year before], according to a survey of 4,000 shoppers that was conducted by research firm BIGinsight..." *The Associated Press* reported.

"Americans spent more too: The average holiday shopper spent \$423 over the entire weekend, up from \$398 [the previous year]. Total spending over the four-day weekend totaled \$59.1 billion, up 12.8 percent from 2011."

This social "virus," first described in America, is spreading throughout the prosperous nations of the West and is mutating into a terminal illness. What stokes people's desire to consume more, despite already having all they need?

### **Virus of Desire**

The term affluenza is derived from two words: *affluent* and *influenza*. Just as a virus spreads until it consumes its host, the social virus of affluenza infects millions of people, consuming their lives with the shameless pursuit of material possessions.

One hundred years ago, affluenza was virtually unknown. During World War I and the Great Depression, most people had very little, yet learned to be content. Those of the "Greatest Generation" generally worked hard, saved money, and bought only what they could afford, usually with cash. Times were hard, so thrift and frugality were the order of the day. As the saying went, "A penny saved is a penny earned."

After World War II, America entered an age of prosperity and companies began employing aggressive tactics to attract new customers. The concept of "targeted advertising" sprang to life, as companies bombarded clearly defined age demographic segments with carefully tailored advertisements, especially targeting teenagers and young adults. The emergence of television as the major media bolstered advertising effectiveness and allowed companies to reach multiple millions of people simultaneously with each commercial.

Meanwhile, the Greatest Generation gave birth to "Baby Boomers." Parents

who had suffered hardships during the Depression wanted easier lives for their children. In their desire to give their sons and daughters a better life, parents showered them with possessions. This unintentionally led to a culture of entitlement as well as an insatiable desire to attain more "stuff."

As Baby Boomers matured, they too sought to give their children an easier life—and so the cycle continued throughout the decades, with each successive generation feeling entitled to the best things in life, regardless of whether they could afford it.

Added to these factors was the longest period of unparalleled prosperity in modern history. Successive generations born after World War II had never known hardship. They had never known anything other than good times and instant gratification. The standard of living in Western countries rose to heights never before experienced.

Relentless advertising, combined with prosperity and permissive parenting, gave rise to generations accustomed to getting whatever they wanted, whenever they wanted—a culture obsessed with what others had. It also produced a set of values that deemed material possessions and status as more important than character. Thriftiness, hard work, integrity, fiscal responsibility, and other similar values were abandoned. Spurred on by advertising, celebrities, game shows, music videos, reality television, and the media at large, many became infected with the desire to obtain.

### **Culture of Greed**

By the 21st century, the affluenza virus spread even further. For example, in 2010, the total amount of consumer debt in the U.S. was nearly \$2.4 trillion, or \$7,800 per American, according to Economy Watch. The culture of "buy now and forget about tomorrow" was well entrenched.

Even the federal government has been infected. America's national debt is nearly \$17 trillion, equating to about \$54,000 per citizen. The hope of ever repaying it is long gone, yet the government continues to over-

spend, leaving the burden to future generations.

The situation throughout other Western nations is similar: consumers, businesses and governments are loaded with compounding levels of debt.

The mood of excess is everywhere. In the book *Stop Me Because I Can't Stop Myself*, a woman described how she shopped online six to eight hours a day and ended up \$80,000 in debt. She eventually lost her job, got divorced and, finally in desperation, checked herself into a psychiatric institution after admitting, "Shopping ruined my family."

This lady is not alone in her plight—the motto "shop till you drop" is a mantra for our time.

The extravagance even extends to basics such as food. For example, Americans buy much more food than they consume. Whatever is not used is simply thrown away, wasted. According to *Reuters*, each American throws away about 400 pounds of food per year. The United States Environmental Protection Agency reported that in 2010, 33 million tons of food waste ended up in landfills.

Affluenza permeates Western society. People fiercely compete with each other for who has the largest house, fanciest car, and most exotic vacation spot—even the cutest dog! They envy the notoriety, fame and fortune of public figures, especially celebrities.

This social disease particularly affects young adults. Research by American Demographics found that among 18- to 34-year-olds (children of Baby Boomers and Generation X), 23 percent of men and 26 percent of women confessed to "always or frequently" coveting their neighbors' goods. Sixty percent of the same age group confirmed they were jealous of "celebrities or public figures," whose lifestyles are glamorized by television shows. Not surprisingly, money is the item most coveted among this age group.

Truly, as the prophet Jeremiah prophesied about the modern English-speaking nations in our time, "From the least of them even unto the greatest

of them everyone is given to *covetousness...*” (6:13).

### Nothing New

Throughout history, affluenza has infected great empires to one degree or another. To find examples, you need look no further than the Bible.

Perhaps the greatest human example of affluenza was King Solomon, who enjoyed a life of excess and splendor unlike any other in history. He directed great public works projects, built palatial houses, planted lush vineyards and gardens, had large numbers of servants, and generated tremendous riches—so much that gold and silver were as abundant as stones in Jerusalem in his day. To top it off, he had 700 wives and 300 concubines. Whatever he wanted, he got.

Yet Solomon, the wisest and one of the richest men who ever lived, wrote, “Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labor that I had labored to do: and, behold, all was *vanity* and *vexation* of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun” (Ecc. 2:11).

Despite his great wealth and accomplishments, Solomon felt unsatisfied. As with so many, affluenza does not satisfy. The more one has, the more one wants.

### How Much Longer?

In the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and other prosperous Western nations where affluenza is most prevalent, citizens do not entertain the thought that the lifestyle to which they have grown accustomed could quickly and radically change.

Despite persistent unemployment, diminishing job prospects, and other gathering dark clouds, times are still good in the U.S. compared to the rest of the globe. Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid funds have not run out, lights stay on, and roads are still drivable. Food stamps are still accepted, free government-subsidized cell-phones still ring. Mortgage lending has tightened somewhat, but credit cards are still easy to obtain. Buy-one-get-one sales, rebates and no-interest store financing are taken for granted.



■ **WANTING MORE:** Shoppers reach out for discounted perfumes inside a department store at a post-Christmas Boxing Day sale in central London (Dec. 26, 2012).

PHOTO: JUSTIN TALLIS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Even a casual student of history, however, knows that current conditions are unsustainable!

In light of this, questions arise: What happens when *necessities* become scarce? When grocery store shelves become bare, hospitals shut down, social services and safety nets fall apart, how will a shopper infected with the affluenza virus cope?

In a letter to American statesman Adlai Stevenson, author John Steinbeck wrote, “If I wanted to destroy a nation, I would give it too much and I would have it on its knees, miserable, greedy and sick” (“Travels with Charley: In Search of America”).

The Bible backs this up. The apostle Paul wrote in I Timothy: “But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition” (6:9).

The United States has lived beyond its means for a long time. Measured against the yardstick of what we can actually afford, we *have* had too much! We increasingly cannot say “no” to ourselves—whether, “No, I don’t need a third helping of turkey,” or “No, I cannot afford a 3-D television this year.”

### Diagnosing Affluenza

To conquer the affluenza virus, though, one must first recognize it within himself and ask why and from where it comes. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Do you frequently buy things you do not really need?
- When shopping, are you unable to control how much you spend?
- Do you envy the lifestyles of the rich and famous?
- Do you feel bad when your neighbors have things you do not?
- Do you measure yourself by what others have?
- Do you ever use shopping as a means of escape?
- Do you use your possessions to impress others?
- Do you compare your possessions with what your peers have? If so, do you experience a feeling of superiority that yours are better?
- Do you speak often about the things you want?
- Do you find yourself complaining about the things you want but cannot afford?
- Do you think of spending your money more often than saving it?

■ Do you often think your life would be more complete if you had more money and possessions?

If you find yourself answering yes to any of the above, you may well be infected!

In his book *The Selfish Capitalist: Origins of Affluenza*, psychologist Oliver James said that “selfish capitalism” (affluenza) is literally making us sick. He added that the emergence of selfish capitalism in the late 1970s has led to an increase in mental illness. The World Health Organization, along with nationally representative studies in the United States, Britain and Australia, show that incidences of mental illness have almost doubled between the 1980s and the turn of the 21st century—to the point that an average of 23 percent of Americans, Britons, Australians, New Zealanders, and Canadians suffered from it in 2007 (*Guardian*).

Affluenza leads to worry, anxiety, depression and possibly, if left unchecked, mental illness. Why?

The reason is that it creates unrealistic expectations that cannot be met. Those infected end up blaming themselves and feel like failures. With their self-esteem battered, they strive even harder to attain their unreachable goals and eventually end up anxious, nervous, sad and depressed.

Ultimately, basing one’s values on material success leads to an unsatisfied, unfulfilled life: “He that loves silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loves abundance with increase...” (Ecc. 5:10).

Jesus Christ warned, “Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consists not of the abundance of the things which he possesses” (Luke 12:15).

### Learn to be Content

The Bible, God’s instruction manual for mankind, describes two ways of life—one of GIVE and one of GET. Those who live the get way of life suffer the effects of affluenza—competition, vanity, jealousy, envy, lust and greed, all of which ultimately lead to empty, discontented lives.

DECEMBER 2013

Yet there is another way that leads to happiness. This way—God’s Way—is the antidote for affluenza. It is a life of caring, sharing, cooperating, looking out for one’s fellow man—the way of GIVE. The Bible spells out exactly how to live this way of life. In Acts 20:35, Paul stated, “I have showed you all things, how that so laboring you ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

The result of following this instruction is found in the Old Testament: “There is that scatters [gives], and yet increases; and *there is* that withholds more than is meet, but *it tends* to poverty” (Prov. 11:24).

God’s Way leads to happy, successful, productive lives, full of achievement and joy. In fact, science has finally caught up with Scripture. Recent studies indicate that the human brain may be “hard-wired for giving.” According to an adaption from Elizabeth Svoboda’s book “What Makes a Hero? The Surprising Science of Selflessness,” printed in *The Wall Street Journal*, researchers con-

cluded that giving makes one happier. While studying the brains of subjects using an fMRI, neuroscientist Jordan Grafman discovered, “While we often tend to think of altruism as a kind of sophisticated moral capacity we use to squelch our urges to dominate others, this new evidence suggests that giving is actually inherently rewarding: The brain churns out a pleasurable response when we engage in it.”

Jesus Christ, the Author of the Bible, revealed the life He wants all men to live: “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.”

Living the GIVE way is attainable! To learn more about this principle backed by both science and scripture, read our article “You Can Live the Abundant Life!” available at [rcg.org/ycltal](http://rcg.org/ycltal).

In addition, you may also want to read *The True Origin of Christmas* available at [rcg.org/ttooc](http://rcg.org/ttooc) to understand why this holiday came to be and how its origins contribute to the virus of affluenza that characterizes this time of year. □

# ‘Tis the Season?



How did Christmas come to be? What is the real origin of Santa Claus, mistletoe, Christmas trees, holly wreaths, and the custom of exchanging gifts?

For the stunning answers, read *The True Origin of Christmas*, available at [rcg.org/ttooc](http://rcg.org/ttooc).

## PERSONAL

Continued from page 3

“wheat and tares” and the “sheep, wolves and hirelings,” center on laborers in the field—pastors!

The word “teachers” generally refers either to an evangelist, pastor or elder, but the apostle Paul also referred to himself as a teacher. The word means “an instructor, doctor, master, teacher.” So a teacher is simply one who dispenses *spiritual* knowledge.

An elder is under a pastor in a particular congregation, and assists in overseeing it.

Deacon is the only physical office in the Church. These men and women assist with physical needs. Acts 6:1-6 details how this office came into existence and some of the qualifications for it.

### Submitting to God’s Government

Through His Church, Jesus is training people to fill positions in God’s future world-ruling GOVERNMENT. Members understand that to be born into the kingdom of God and to rule with Christ, they must first obey God and follow His government *now*. God will not hand *ultimate* divine power and authority to those who have not built righteous character under God’s government *in His Church*.

Paul gave further instruction regarding Christ’s government. He told the Hebrews, “Obey them that have the *rule over you*, and *submit* yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you” (13:17), and “Salute all them that have the *rule over you...*” (vs. 24).

He said this to the Thessalonians: “And we beseech you, brethren, to *know* them which labor among you, and are *over you* in the Lord, and *admonish* you” (1 Thes. 5:12). Admonishment is strong correction, and this means people must know who has the authority to do this—who they are supposed to listen to and who they are not!

It is the ministry of the true Church that forms these boundaries.

These are basic scriptures, and there are others, that members in the churches of men largely ignore. But in the Church of God, Christ actively works through offices that He has placed for its good.

Even the all-powerful Christ submits to the authority of the Father—the supreme in command. Notice this example of ultimate submission: “And being found in fashion as a man, He [Jesus] humbled Himself, and became *obedient* unto death, even the death of the cross” (Phil. 2:8). As a result, “Wherefore God also has highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth” (vs. 9-10).

The Father has always been supreme in command, and Christ has always been number two.

Jesus Himself had to first submit to power and authority—God’s government—before He could qualify to rule during the Millennium, and after. Would anyone think that Jesus’ servants are exempt from what He had to do? Of course not! True, Spirit-led disciples follow His example and come under *His* authority. They submit themselves to the government of God *now*—in His Church. The whole world will do this later!

### Power and Authority

Now notice what Christ had received from the Father, and would shortly give to His soon-to-be-apostles. The *Revised Standard Version* of the Bible, states, “And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All *authority* in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them...teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age’” (Matt. 28:18-20).

The end of Jesus’ statement that authority would come to the disciples—He had “all authority,” and thus could give it—carries a promise that He would be with them *always*.

Not only would His authority be with them, but there is clear evidence that very real POWER would accompany it. The Greek word translated “authority” in this passage means BOTH power and authority. In fact, the *King James Version* states, “All POWER is given unto Me...” (Matt. 28:18).

Both of these most crucial elements in the apostles’ ministry were to be given to them on the day of Pentecost. On this day, the Holy Spirit was to be given for the first time to large numbers of people. Imagine the administrative challenge of managing 3,000 converts (plus children) arriving on the Church’s first day in existence. There would be an immediate need for responsible authority with God’s power to be in place over the governance of the Church, as well as in the enormous task of preaching the gospel in surrounding regions. Pentecost symbolized this remarkable beginning, as Christ built the New Testament Church, with the appearance and use of special, miraculous power evident *from the beginning*. He had to *simultaneously* give His Church the *two* most important *elements* to its survival through the ages—His POWER and His AUTHORITY!

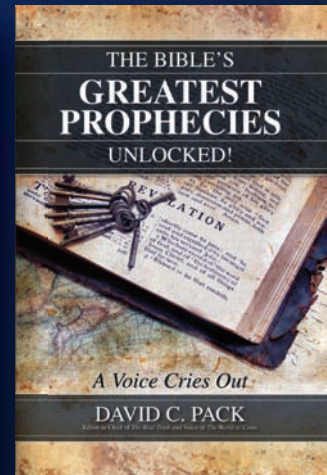
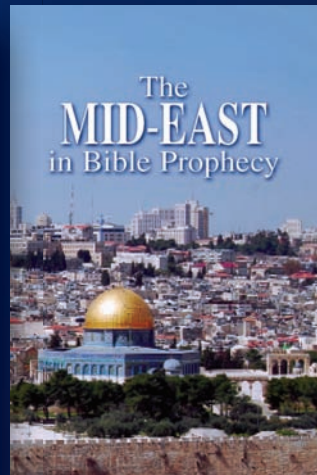
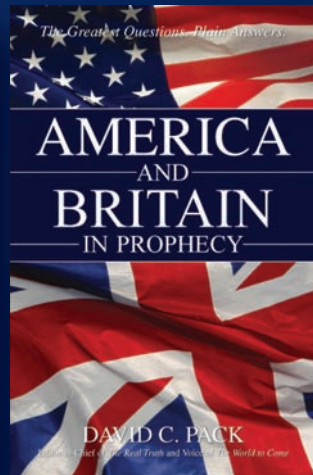
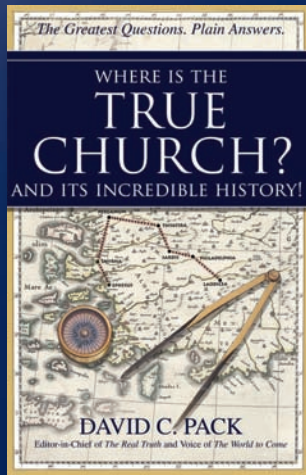
God’s government would be necessary throughout the existence of His Church!

### Explaining Soon-coming Prophetic Events

Let’s look at an even bigger part of the picture. Its Christ-backed government is what permits the true Church to take the gospel to the world and the warning message to the modern nations of Israel effectively. But the Church cannot do this unless God has granted it special understanding of the one-third of the Bible that is prophecy, history written in advance. Many events—some of them earth-rattling!—are foretold to occur before and during the Return of Christ. It is crucial that these things also be correctly understood and taught—in all cases to the Church, but in others to the world at large.



# The Greatest Questions. PLAIN ANSWERS.



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Consider just a few. The true Church understands and teaches how the white horse of Revelation appears, as well as when and why the red, black and pale horses appear *and accelerate*. It is able to identify and harmonize the events leading up to what is the final head of the Beast of Revelation. It also understands the Great Tribulation and the planet-shattering Day of the Lord, as well as the many events that precede them. And it understands a myriad of details about the 1,000-year reign of Christ that follows.

The Church can answer questions such as “Are we in the Last Days?” and explain how and why the pride of power of today’s nations of Israel will be broken.

Other time periods are understood, such as “the famine of the word,” and the central, biblically revealed intervals of the 1,335, 1,290 and 1,260 days before, and counting down to, Christ’s Return. This includes prophecies that speak of the Church’s special, divine protection through all that is to occur.

The Bible describes a time when Jerusalem will be surrounded by armies,

and a figure the prophet Daniel called the “King of the North.” What do these mean? And what is the “Abomination of Desolation”? Who “measures the temple” in Revelation 11, and why, with this occurring just before the Two Witnesses appear—whose purpose and timing are also understood? Who are the “144,000,” and when are they sealed?

Again, for more information about all of the above topics, be sure to read our free book *The Bible’s Greatest Prophecies Unlocked! – A Voice Cries Out*. And explore our other books, booklets and articles throughout our vast library of literature.

The true Church also understands Matthew 24:14 and how the true gospel must be preached in all nations before Christ’s Return, as well as when this duty ends, and why. It understands all of these things.

Many other prophecies can be explained—and in detail—that no other organization or church can even *begin* to explain correctly. Yes, God’s Church understands the outline of what the future holds. Under Christ’s direc-

tion, it has correctly pieced together the complex “jigsaw puzzle” of prophecy.

As we near the end of this series, some may still wonder if the Bible is clear—absolutely plain!—that Jesus has and works through only one Church organization. God’s Word is *unequivocal*—and the scriptural proofs are many. This series would not be complete without them, and Part 4 will address a number. We will also look at how the true Church is protected from false doctrine and false ministers—at how it is kept—how it *remains*—one. Do not miss it.

Finally, many ask us every day about how they may attend with and become part of the Church built by Christ. You may contact us by email or letter at addresses found in this magazine and on our websites. We have trained ministers all across the world who will be happy to answer your questions.

Be sure to read our thorough book *Where Is the True Church? – and Its Incredible History!* at [rcg.org/thogtc](http://rcg.org/thogtc). □

## WEATHER &amp; ENVIRONMENT

## Triple Threat Stresses Ocean Ecosystems

Global changes in climate, depleted oxygen levels, and acidification threaten the health of the world's oceans, according to a joint report by the International Program on the State of the Ocean and the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

*Nature World News* reported: “The findings, published in the journal *Marine Pollution Bulletin*, pointed to acidification, warming and declining oxygen levels as the ‘deadly trio’ that together are affecting the ocean’s productivity and efficiency. Should they continue unchecked, the researchers warn of ‘cascading consequences for marine biology,’ including changes in the food web and spread of pathogens.”

The current problem was expected, however.

In 2003, the Pew Oceans Commission released a report on the state of the oceans and recommended certain actions to help curtail any more damage.

Despite some headway since the 2003 report, this year the commission noted there are still challenges ahead: “Many of our ocean ecosystems have been severely compromised by decades of overfishing, habitat-damaging fishing practices, the use of indiscriminate fishing gear that captures and kills vast amounts of non-targeted ocean wildlife, and limits on forage fish that are too high to ensure adequate food for the larger ecosystem.”

“On top of that, major challenges that the commission could not see as clearly in 2003—including ocean acidification and rising ocean temperatures—further threaten some of our most valuable fisheries, such as cod in New England.”

Deteriorating ocean conditions were markedly evident during a voyage by yachtsman Ivan MacFadyen. He recently wrote about his experience traveling from Melbourne, Australia, to Osaka, Japan—a route he had tra-



■ **POLLUTED WATER:** Volunteers remove garbage that washed ashore along the coastline of Freedom Island in Paranaque City in suburban Manila, Philippines, during a coastal clean-up drive for World Ocean Day (June 8, 2013).

PHOTO: TED ALJIBE/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

versed a decade earlier. The differences between the two trips were startling.

“In 2003, I caught a fish every day,” he told *Guardian Australia*. “Ten years later to the day, sailing almost exactly the same course, I caught nothing. It started to strike me the closer we got to Japan that the ocean was dead.”

The newspaper continued, “MacFadyen said that the lack of ocean life started at the edge of the Great Barrier Reef, describing Queensland

waters as ‘barren’ and ‘unquestionably overfished.’”

But it was not just the lack of fish that startled Mr. MacFadyen. The Pacific Ocean is host to an immense amount of garbage left behind by the tsunami that struck Japan in 2011.

“The wave came in over the land, picked up an unbelievable load of stuff and carried it out to sea. And it’s still out there, everywhere you look,” Mr. MacFadyen wrote in a column for the *Newcastle Herald*. □

## Internet Child Pornography on the Rise

The Internet has made it easier for child abusers to document and anonymously post proof of their vile deeds for like-minded individuals to view. And, according to Peter Davies, director of the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre in the United Kingdom, the victims appear “to be getting younger and younger.”

The *BBC* reported that Davies “told the Culture, Media and Sport Committee the dissemination of pictures of abuse had become ‘industrialised.’”

“Most victims were under the age of 10, with images including rape, [Members of Parliament] heard.”

The child pornography market has also exploded in the United States, where, according to Mr. Davies, half of the websites distributing such images are based.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice’s Child Exploitation and

Obscenity Section, “...child pornography images are readily available through virtually every Internet technology including websites, email, instant messaging/ICQ, Internet Relay Chat (IRC), newsgroups, bulletin boards, peer-to-peer networks, and social networking sites. Child pornography offenders can connect on Internet networks and forums to share their interests, desires, and experiences abusing children in addition to selling, sharing, and trading images.”

While the Internet has made it easier for offenders to connect with one another, their sheer numbers have made it more difficult to bring them to justice.

“In a typical week, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children in Virginia fields about 10,000 child pornography-related tips, said Michelle Collins, vice president of the center’s exploited children

division. About 91 million child porn images and videos have been seized by authorities since 2002,” *The Dallas Morning News* reported.

“In comparison, the number of child pornography arrests is small: An estimated 5,000 people nationwide were arrested in child porn crimes, such as possession or distribution, in 2009, the latest figures from the Crimes Against Children Research Center at the University of New Hampshire,” the newspaper stated. “Law enforcement groups target the problem, but their numbers are small and the caseload heavy.”

Speaking at the National Strategy Conference on Combating Child Exploitation in San Jose, California, U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder said, “Unfortunately, we’ve also seen a historic rise in the distribution of child pornography, in the number of images being shared online, and in the level of violence associated with child exploitation and sexual abuse crimes. Tragically, the only place we’ve seen a decrease is in the age of victims.” □

## HEALTH ISSUES

### Study: Sleep May Clear Brain of Toxins

A good night’s sleep may flush from the brain the harmful toxic proteins that play a role in disorders such as Alzheimer’s disease. At least that is what a group of researchers led by Dr. Maiken Nedergaard from the University of Rochester Medical Center suggests in a study in the journal *Science*.

“Their findings build on last year’s discovery of the brain’s own network of plumbing pipes—known as the glymphatic system—which carry waste material out of the brain.

“Scientists, who imaged the brains of mice, showed that the glymphatic system became 10-times more active when the mice were asleep.

“Cells in the brain...shrink during sleep. This increases the size of the interstitial space, the gaps between

brain tissue, allowing more fluid to be pumped in and wash the toxins away,” *BBC* reported.

Scientists agree that sleep is essential. According to the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS), “Sleep appears necessary for our nervous systems to work properly. Too little sleep leaves us drowsy and unable to concentrate the next day. It also leads to impaired memory and physical performance and reduced ability to carry out math calculations...Some experts believe sleep gives neurons used while we are awake a chance to shut down and repair themselves. Without sleep, neurons may become so depleted in energy or so polluted with byproducts of normal cellular activities that they begin to malfunction...”

The study reinforces “what Charles Czeisler, a sleep researcher at Harvard Medical School in Boston, calls the ‘first direct experimental evidence at the molecular level’ for what could be sleep’s basic purpose: It clears the brain of toxic metabolic byproducts” *Science* reported.

A lack of sufficient sleep “...can add to a person’s impairment and cause confusion, frustration, or depression,” according to NINDS.

“Many neurological diseases—from Alzheimer’s disease to stroke and dementia—are associated with sleep disturbances, Nedergaard notes. The study suggests that lack of sleep could have a causal role, by allowing the byproducts to build up and cause brain damage. ‘This could open a lot of debate for shift workers, who work during the nighttime,’ Nedergaard predicts. ‘You probably develop damage if you don’t get your sleep’” (*Science*). □

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Thaicom 5: The Word Network

– Satellite Free-to-Air  
Sunday 15:30 GMT

## AUSTRALIA

Optus D2: The Word Network

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a.m. CST

Thaicom 5: The Word Network

– Satellite Free-to-Air  
Sunday 11:30 p.m. WST  
Monday 1:30 a.m. EST, 1:00  
a.m. CST

## CANADA

Galaxy 25: The Word Network

– Satellite Free-to-Air  
Sunday 12:00 p.m. NT, 11:30  
a.m. AT, 10:30 a.m. ET, 9:30 a.m.  
CT, 8:30 a.m. MT, 7:30 a.m. PT

## CARIBBEAN

Galaxy 25: The Word Network

– Satellite Free-to-Air  
Sunday 11:30 a.m. AT, 10:30  
a.m. ET

## CENTRAL AMERICA

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– Satellite Free-to-Air  
Sunday 10:30 a.m. ET, 9:30  
a.m. CT

## CURACAO

RTNS: theWALKtv

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Hot Bird 6: The Word Network

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15:30 WET

## FINLAND

IRR-TV: theWALKtv

Varies Check Local Listings

## ICELAND

Hot Bird 6: The Word Network

– Satellite Free-to-Air  
Sunday 15:30 GMT

## INDIA

Tata Sky: The Word Network

Sunday 9:00 p.m. IST  
Thaicom 5: The Word Network  
– Satellite Free-to-Air  
Sunday 9:00 p.m. IST

Velugu TV: theWALKtv

Varies Check Local Listings

## ITALY

Sky Italia: The Word Network

– Channel 823

Sunday 16:30 CET

## JAMAICA

Flow TV: The Word Network

– Channel 668

Sunday 10:30 a.m. ET

## MIDDLE EAST

Arabsat (Eurobird 2): The Word Network – Satellite Free-to-Air

Sunday 18:30 EAT, 17:30 CAT,  
16:30 WAT, 15:30 GMT

## NEW ZEALAND

Optus D2: The Word Network

– Satellite Free-to-Air  
Monday 3:30 a.m. NZT

## NORTH AFRICA

Arabsat (Eurobird 2): The Word Network – Satellite Free-to-Air

Sunday 18:30 EAT, 17:30 CAT,  
16:30 WAT, 15:30 GMT

## NORTH AMERICA

FilmOn: LIFESTYLE – theWALKtv

Sunday 1:00 p.m. NT, 12:30 p.m.  
AT, 11:30 a.m. ET, 10:30 a.m. CT,  
9:30 a.m. MT, 8:30 a.m. PT

Galaxy 19: theWALKtv – Satellite Free-to-Air

Sunday 1:00 p.m. NT, 12:30 p.m.  
AT, 11:30 a.m. ET, 10:30 a.m. CT,  
9:30 a.m. MT, 8:30 a.m. PT

Galaxy 25: The Word Network

– Satellite Free-to-Air  
Sunday 12:00 p.m. NT, 11:30  
a.m. AT, 10:30 a.m. ET, 9:30 a.m.  
CT, 8:30 a.m. MT, 7:30 a.m. PT

Roku: Omniverse – theWALKtv

Sunday 1:00 p.m. NT, 12:30 p.m.  
AT, 11:30 a.m. ET, 10:30 a.m. CT,  
9:30 a.m. MT, 8:30 a.m. PT

## PHILIPPINES

Thaicom 5: The Word Network

– Satellite Free-to-Air  
Sunday 11:30 p.m. PHT

## SOUTH AFRICA

Thaicom 5: The Word Network

– Satellite Free-to-Air  
Sunday 17:30 SAT

## UNITED KINGDOM

Sky UK: The Word Network

– Channel 590

Sunday 3:30 p.m. GMT

## UNITED STATES

BROADBAND: Sky Angel Faith & Family TV

– Channel 537

Sunday 10:30 a.m. ET, 9:30 a.m.  
CT, 8:30 a.m. MT, 7:30 a.m. PT

DIRECTV: The Word Network

– Channel 373

Sunday 10:30 a.m. ET, 9:30 a.m.  
CT, 8:30 a.m. MT, 7:30 a.m. PT

## U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

WCVI: theWALKtv

– Channel 23

Sunday 11:30 a.m. ET