

AUGUST 2014

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A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING



## FIVE TRAITS NEEDED TO LEAD EUROPE

**Millennials  
Minus Marriage?**

**Emerging Disease Epidemics**  
*From Pests to Pestilence*

**Iran and the United States**  
*Unlikely Partners?*

**Never Stop  
Learning!**

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VOL. XII | NO. 7 | AUGUST 2014

A R T I C L E S

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■ **NUCLEAR TALKS:** Iranian President Hassan Rouhani addresses a Turkish-Iranian business forum in Ankara, Turkey (June 10, 2014).

PHOTO: ADEM ALTAN/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

## Iran and the United States *Unlikely Partners?* (Part 1)

The trend of seemingly positive dealings between the two nations must be viewed through the lens of Iran's history with the U.S.  
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**FRONT COVER:** A composite illustration shows clockwise from upper left Charlemagne, Otto the Great, Charles V, Giuseppe Garibaldi, Napoleon and Justinian, who all famously led in Europe.

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION: JODY E. LYDICK/THE REAL TRUTH

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**HOW THIS MAGAZINE IS PAID FOR:**  
*The Real Truth*<sup>™</sup> is made possible by the voluntary, freely given tithes and offerings of the members of The Restored Church of God<sup>®</sup>, and by the offerings and donations of co-workers and donors around the world. Contributions are gratefully welcomed and are tax deductible in the U.S. and Canada. Those who wish to voluntarily aid and support the Work of God in preaching and publishing the gospel to all nations are gladly welcomed as co-workers. Contributions may be sent to the following address:

#### *The Real Truth*

1000 Ambassador Drive  
Wadsworth, OH 44281  
[realtruth.org](http://realtruth.org)

**PUBLISHER/EDITOR-IN-CHIEF**  
DAVID C. PACK

**EXECUTIVE EDITOR**  
JEFFREY R. AMBROSE

**MANAGING EDITOR**  
EDWARD L. WINKFIELD

**SENIOR EDITORS**  
WILLIAM H. BEHRER  
KEVIN D. DENEE  
GABRIEL N. LISCHAK  
DALE L. SCHURTER

#### **CONTRIBUTING WRITERS**

DAVID C. PACK  
JEFFREY R. AMBROSE  
SAMUEL C. BAXTER  
WILLIAM H. BEHRER  
RYAN L. CASWELL  
KEVIN D. DENEE  
ROBERT R. FARRELL  
GREGORY E. K Aidannek  
GABRIEL N. LISCHAK  
KENNETH M. OREL  
JUSTIN T. PALM  
JAMES F. PASTOR  
DANIEL A. QUIMBY  
BRADFORD G. SCHLEIFER  
DALE L. SCHURTER  
NESTOR A. TORO  
JAMES F. TURCK  
F. JACO VILJOEN  
VIDAL N. WACHUKU  
EDWARD L. WINKFIELD

**ASSOCIATE EDITOR**  
STACEY L. PALM

**ART/GRAPHICS**  
JODY E. LYDICK  
PAULA C. RONDEAU  
EILEEN M. WILLARD

**WEBSITE SERVICES**  
BRADFORD G. SCHLEIFER  
ANGELA K. BAXTER  
JEFFREY D. DAVIS

**INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**  
TIMOTHY C. WILLARD

The preparation and production of this magazine involved the work of editors, proofreaders, graphic artists, illustrators, writers, researchers and those who support the Work of God.

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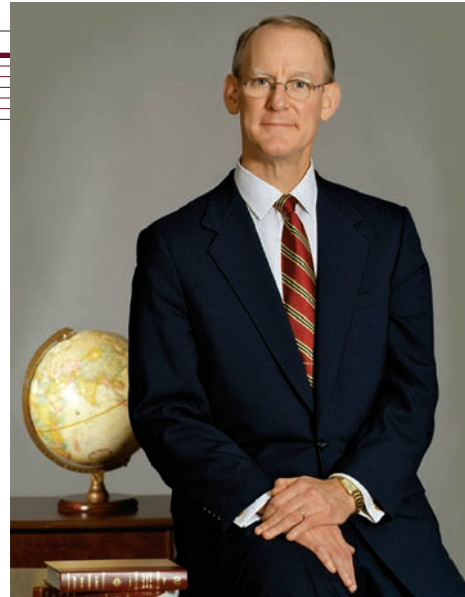
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PERSONAL FROM

David C. Fack



# *The Existence of God— Logically Proven!*

**W**HY SHOULD THERE be such doubt—such confusion—about the existence of God? For thousands of years, people have debated whether God exists. Most conclude that it cannot be proven—one way or the other. It is surmised that the correct answer lies in the area of abstract philosophy and the metaphysical.

Others become *agnostics*, asserting that they “don’t know” if God exists. Those who *do* accept God’s existence often do so passively, merely because they were taught it from childhood. Some do not even care. Such people probably cannot be moved from their apathy.

Atheists have concluded that God does *not* exist. These people represent a special category that God describes as, “The *fool* has said in his heart, There is no God” (Psa. 14:1). This scripture is repeated in Psalm 53:1. What follows will explain *why* God calls atheists “fools.”

Over 45 years ago, I learned of absolute proof that God exists. My studies lasted two-and-a-half years. I came to realize that I did not have to accept His existence “on faith.” Since that time, science has learned much

more and the “case” for God’s existence has become far stronger than at any time in history.

This Personal presents numerous absolute, immutable proofs that God *does* exist. After reading it, you will never again doubt the answer to this greatest of questions! Some proofs will amaze you. Others will inspire you. Still others will surprise or even excite you. All of them will fascinate you with their simplicity. We will first examine some traditional proofs and then consider material that rests on the cutting edge of scientific understanding, before returning to established proofs. You will learn from biology, astronomy, chemistry and mathematics.

## **Creation or Evolution?**

There is an all-important question that is inseparable from the question of God’s existence. The question of whether life on Earth exists, because of blind, dumb luck and chance, through evolution, or because of special creation by a Supreme Being, cannot be avoided in studying the existence of God.

Did all life on Earth evolve over millions of years, as evolutionists assert—or did an all-powerful God author it at Creation? Most people *assume* evolution is true, just as those who believe in God *assume* His existence. I also

studied this question—evolution vs. Creation—in depth, during the same period that I sought to prove God’s existence.

I learned that it takes far more “faith” to believe in the intellectually chic and fashionable evolutionary *myth* than it does to believe in the existence of God. In fact, I learned that *evolution is based entirely on faith* because no facts or proof have ever been found to support it! (We have prepared a thorough and most inspiring magazine-sized brochure “Evolution – Facts, Fallacies and Implications,” available at [rcg.org/effai](http://rcg.org/effai). Those who read this powerful publication will never again doubt the scientific case for Creation!)

### Faith and Proof

Faith *does* play a role in the life of a Christian. For the person who truly wants to seek God and learn to please Him, notice: “Without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that comes to God *must believe that He is*, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him...” (Heb. 11:6).

Faith is vital to a Christian. In fact, without it, no one can please God. Notice that this verse says that those seeking God “*must believe that He is.*” A deep belief in God, who “rewards” all who “diligently seek Him,” requires PROOF of His existence. After proof has been established, then—and only then—can one have FAITH—absolute CONFIDENCE—that what he does is being recorded in God’s mind, to be remembered when he receives his reward. If you are uncertain that God exists because proof of that existence has not been firmly established, then, under fire, your faith will wane or disappear.

### But Which God?

The apostle Paul wrote, “For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be *gods many, and lords many,*) but to us there is but *one God*, the Father, *of whom* are *all things*...HOWBEIT THERE IS NOT IN EVERY MAN THAT KNOWLEDGE...” (I Cor. 8:5-7).

The religions of this world have created many gods of wood, stone and other material. Others exist only in the minds of men. The ancient Greeks alone served 30,000 gods and modern Hindus worship 5 million gods! Truly, there are, and have always been, “gods *many*, and lords *many*.” Yet, the God of the Bible created all the materials that men use to design their own gods. But, as Paul said, “there is not in every man that knowledge.”

Such unnecessary ignorance and confusion!

The God of the Bible has shown the way to peace, happiness and abundant life for all people willing to *study* His Instruction Book. Doing this would rid mankind of the confusion and evils that encompass this world. But it is not our purpose here to prove that the God of the Bible is the one true God of Creation. (To learn more, read my booklet *Bible Authority... Can It Be Proven?* at [rcg.org/bacibp](http://rcg.org/bacibp).)

### What Science Tells Us

Be willing to examine science. As we reason, do not *suppose* or *hope*. Stand on indisputable *facts*. We will see facts from a broad array of different kinds of science. They will demonstrate that an all-powerful Supreme Being, of infinite intelligence, carefully provided more than sufficient proof to remove all doubt that He exists.

The Bible is God’s instruction to mankind. He expects all who are willing to read it to, “*Prove* all things; hold fast that which is good” (I Thes. 5:21). Surely *this* God would not then expect us to *assume* His existence while instructing us to *prove everything else* from His Word!

Before beginning this study, remember, *assumptions do not count!* Neither do superstitious myths or traditions based on ignorance! What can be known from science? Only accept *facts*. Think rationally and clearly. Then accept what *can* be proven!

### The Most Perfect Clock

You probably have a watch. Without it, you would be lost in a world that demands that people “be on time.”

Some watches are more accurate than others. How accurate is *yours*? How long before it loses a *second*? When this happens, you adjust it by reckoning from a more accurate source. That source, whatever it is, is also imperfect and has to be regularly updated, though not as often, to be in accord with the Master Clock of the United States at the Naval Observatory in Washington, D.C.

For many years, until 1967, Naval Observatory astronomers “observed” the motion of the earth, in relation to the heavens, to accurately measure time. All clocks in this country were set in relation to these very precise measurements. *It was God who made this Master Clock of the Universe!* He set the heavens in motion and mankind learned how to use its wonderful accuracy. As marvelous as this Master Clock is, the story does not end here.

In 1967, scientists built an “Atomic Clock.” It uses Cesium 133 atoms because they oscillate (vibrate) at the rate of 9,192,631,770 times per second. This produces accuracy within *ONE SECOND EVERY 30 MILLION YEARS!* Wouldn’t you love a watch that accurate? Cesium 133 atoms never vary a single vibration. They are steady—constant—reliable—and cannot be an accident of nature that just “happens” to always turn out exactly the same. God had to design the complexity and reliability of these atoms. No honest mind can believe otherwise. Men merely learned how to capture what God designed, for use in time measurement. Again, the story continues.

Doubters, consider this!

Scientists in Boulder, Colorado, at the National Institute of Standards and Technology, built an *optical* clock that is even *more accurate*. How? By measuring time with *light*. Time is now measured in what are called *femtoseconds*—or a million-billionth of a second. These clocks use mercury ions at their “heart” to count the number of times they vibrate in a second.

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# WHY WERE YOU BORN?



## Does your life have a purpose?



- **Atheists** refuse to know.
- **Cynics** scoff at the possibility of knowing.
- **Scientists** cannot discover this knowledge through laboratory analysis.
- **Philosophers** cannot discern it through meditation or discussion.
- **Educators** cannot teach what they themselves were never taught.
- **Theologians** offer humanly devised counterfeits.

### *What about you?*

The booklet *Why Do You Exist?* is one of the most important pieces of literature you will EVER read.

Order your free copy at [rcg.org/wdye](http://rcg.org/wdye)





# FIVE TRAITS Needed to Lead Europe

The political landscape of the European Union is shifting. History makes plain what this means for the continent.

BY SAMUEL C. BAXTER

**V**ISITORS TO THE Pergamon Museum in Berlin, Germany, can experience a piece of truly ancient history: the towering Ishtar Gate of King Nebuchadnezzar II's Babylon.

The awesome structure was rebuilt in the museum from remnants excavated from the ancient site. Among the royal blue stones and promenade of snarling lions is an inscription from the king himself. He declared that he had the gates built and "adorned them with luxurious splendor so that people might gaze on them in wonder."

Europe could wish they had a Nebuchadnezzar right now. A leader who would not only engage in impressive public works, but also reinvigorate and refocus the flagging continent.

The book *World Military Leaders: A Biographical Dictionary* described the king's industriousness upon assuming the throne: "As the new leader of the Babylonian Empire, he began a campaign of economic and military revival of his nation-state. He instituted a program of building canals for agriculture and rebuilding old canals that had fallen into disrepair...He constructed a port on the Persian Gulf for trade and ordered the assembly of a terrace with brick arches filled with flowers, now known as the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world."

For now, such a dynamic and active leader for the continent is nowhere to be found. One reason for this is that Euroskepticism—opposition to increased unity—appears to be on the

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rise. Case in point: June's European Parliament elections. Two of its biggest countries, France and Britain, had anti-EU parties take them by storm. Other fringe groups also saw modest but notable gains elsewhere.

It was nowhere near a complete stampede out of the union, however. The majority of other nations stuck with more typical choices—ones that will keep the power bloc on an even keel.

But what is a Euroskeptic really? The negative label is usually reserved for those who work to preserve individual national sovereignty at any cost. If one is honest, however, most everyone in the 28 member states remains skeptical. If citizens and politicians were really clamoring for "more Europe," there would be a United-States style president by now, one with true executive power.

Instead of working toward a more efficient, tightly-knit power bloc, the continent usually stacks the deck for *less* unity. Its *four* European presidents make this clear. There is the European Parliament president, the European Commission president, and the European Council President, which is not to be confused with the rotating presidency of the European Council.

Those who have been selected to the bloc's top spots have generally been safe choices—politicians known to shun the limelight and avoid making waves.

Yet the time of status quo leadership appears to be coming to an end. The shifting landscape in the parliament, joined by continuing financial, political and geopolitical crises, all cry out for sure hands at the helm of Europe.

But what would such a leader look like?

### Proposed Solutions

Many of the continent's leading politicians and economists see the EU's dearth in leadership and are speaking out. *Project Syndicate* collected their thoughts in a cynically titled section of its website "Europe's Ever-closer Disunion."

Javier Solana, who was formerly the EU high representative for foreign and security policy and the secretary-general of NATO, wrote: "The EU's institutions need to revitalize themselves and recover the support of Europe's citizens. They must demonstrate their efficiency, capacity to innovate, and ability to invigorate the continent with renewed dynamism and drive."

The same publication printed former British Prime Minister Tony Blair's "manifesto for change": "The new approach should begin with the European Council asserting its responsibility to give Europe direction by setting a clear, focused, and convincing platform of change that connects with European citizens' concerns and transforms the view of what Europe can actively, not reactively, achieve."

He also stated that "if Europe wants to exercise power commensurate with its economic weight, it must have the capacity to play its part both in military operations and in the essential role of security-sector building in potential partners emerging from turmoil or conflict."

Efficient. Dynamic. Proactive. Military-minded. None of these terms describe the European Union's current leadership.

Despite such calls for change, the power bloc has continually stuck with "more of the same" when appointing persons to its most powerful posts. This trend has marked every appointment in 2014—a year that would normally signal seismic shifts for any other government. The presidents of the commission, council *and* parliament have already or will soon end their terms, which means a fresh cast of faces. (Notably, European Council President Herman Van Rompuy will be replaced in November.)

Howard Davies, an economist and professor at the university Sciences Po in Paris, wrote that to face its deepening problems Europe "will need the strongest leadership team that it can find to steer through treacherous waters and implement crucial financial reforms. Just now, the signs are far

from promising. There are few new faces or ideas on the horizon. We must hope to be surprised" (*ibid.*).

While it can be easy to blame the leadership for Europe's current situation, leading the continent is definitely not for the faint of heart. Heading the EU means grappling with 28 distinct member states, 505 million citizens, disparate millennia-old cultures, and an estimated 225 indigenous languages.

Yet the continent has faced similar problems before and individuals have risen to the occasion. The clear pattern of history reveals *five time-tested characteristics* that have delivered European unity and prosperity.

### Facing Facts

The EU today can make it easy to forget that the landmass was split only a handful of decades ago by the Iron Curtain. Even further out of mind is that *twice in the last 100 years* the continent hosted world wars. Borderless Europe and all that comes with it—coupled with 20 to 30 years' time—have made it astonishingly easy for the human mind to forget the recent past. For example, a 2011 poll commissioned by the European Jewish Congress found that two out of three European "respondents under-45 surveyed did not know that six million Jews died in the Holocaust."

Similarly, without concerted effort, one can forget that the Europe of today is an extreme outlier of European history. The length of time that the continent has peacefully existed under the somewhat contradictory EU motto "United in Diversity" is just a blip on the historical timeline.

At the start of WWI, Europe and the globe were a patchwork quilt of competing empires: today's Germany, Italy, Great Britain, Russia, China, France, Japan, Austria, Hungary and Turkey all had colonies throughout the world. There are still people alive today who were born around that time, yet it has faded into the musty pages of history.

These events disappearing from the collective memories of nations and continents obscures what should be *obvious* patterns of history.



To many, the European Union is simply the way it has always been. Realize, however, that since WWII—and even more so since 1989—the continent has been going *against* a historical model, one of empires, kings and strongmen.

### Five Traits

Studying centuries past, one can see what it takes to lead the continent. Historical emperors and kings who reclaimed some of the grandeur of the Roman Empire top the list. Among them are Justinian (who reigned from AD 527-564), Charlemagne (768-814), Otto I (936-973), Charles V (1516-1556), and Napoleon Bonaparte (1804-1815).

These men, and the governments they led, faced the same roadblocks modern EU politicians do: a cacophony of languages, cultures and historical rivalries.

Although spread over the centuries, they were united in purpose. Charlemagne wanted to be like Justinian, and both wanted to emulate Constantine, the Roman emperor who set the pattern for a Catholic-backed empire. Most everyone after Charlemagne wanted to be like him. Tellingly, some historical sources state that Charlemagne, Charles V, and Napoleon were even coronated with the same Iron Crown of Lombardy—despite the first and the last of these three reigning 1,000 years apart!

Five traits made these men a cut above the rest. (While each ruler displayed all five characteristics, only a sampling of examples has been included.)

**(1) Broad appeal:** Charlemagne was a charismatic man of the people. He regularly conversed with his soldiers and peasants. H.A. Guerber's *The Story of Old France* stated that “every year Charlemagne held two great assemblies out in the open air. Anyone who wished to speak to him, but was afraid to enter the palace, could then approach him freely, and make known his request or complaint.”

Just after the popular uprising of the French Revolution, which resulted in the beheading of King Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette, Napoleon was overwhelmingly voted into a lifelong political position. During a national election, the question was asked: “Is Napoleon Bonaparte to be made Consul for Life?” A total of 3,568,885 voted affirmative and only 8,374 voted “no” (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th edition).

In addition, “All areas under Otto’s rule prospered, and the resultant flowering of culture has been called the Ottonian renaissance” (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*).

James Bryce’s *The Holy Roman Empire* stated this about Otto: “Constantly traversing his dominions, he introduced a peace and prosperity

before unknown, and left everywhere the impress of an heroic character.”

**(2) Political prowess:** Justinian streamlined the laws of the land, which formed the basis for how judicial systems work in the West today. For example, his *Codex Justinianus* stated that a man is innocent until proven guilty. He also fostered artistic and cultural renewal, which can still be seen through his numerous and ambitious building projects, such as the iconic Hagia Sophia.

Many of the Holy Roman emperors were skilled speakers and most often multilingual. The historian Einhard, a contemporary of Charlemagne, wrote that the king “was a gifted and ready speaker, able to express clearly whatever he wished to say. Not being content with knowing only his own native tongue [German], he also made an effort to learn foreign languages. Among those, he learned Latin so well, that he spoke it as well as he did his own native language, but he was able to understand Greek better than he could speak it. Indeed, he was such a fluent speaker, that [at times] he actually seemed verbose.”

Charlemagne used his legislative power to preserve and systematize written language, which provided the basis for the Roman lettering still used today. For example, this process brought about the invention of the question mark. Also, he ordered the preservation of literary works from

PHOTO: PUBLIC DOMAIN/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS



**Justinian**  
AD 527



**Charlemagne**  
AD 768



**Otto the Great**  
AD 936



**Char**  
AD 1



ancient Rome. Without his intervention, much knowledge would have been lost.

*The Catholic Encyclopedia* wrote of Otto: “A shrewd calculator, always convincing and always toiling, he correctly estimated the importance of diplomatic negotiations. He was a keen observer and possessed a fine knowledge of human nature which always enabled him to select the proper persons for important offices in the government.”

The skills of Charles V—whose empire included the Spanish colonies in the New World—allowed him to navigate a complex and crowded political landscape. He consistently bested the larger-than-life personalities of England’s King Henry VIII, France’s Francis I, Pope Clement VII, and the Ottoman Empire’s Suleiman the Magnificent.

Likewise, Napoleon appeared able to morph his personality to meet any situation. *History Today* wrote: “[Historian] Geoffrey Ellis saw in Napoleon’s ‘changeable and contradictory character’ and ‘mercurial moods’ the ability to adjust to and exploit any situation, while for R. S. Alexander, Napoleon was a ‘chameleon,’ able to change appearance at will to adapt to his surroundings and allow others to see in him what they wanted.”

The magazine wrote that Napoleon’s personal contradictions

can “help us understand the man’s dexterity in manipulating situations for both his personal benefit and that of France.”

**(3) Military might:** Justinian’s battles were fought by his great and virtually invincible general, Belisarius. Under the emperor’s direction, the Byzantine armies maintained the empire in Europe, Africa and Asia.

Some sources state that Charlemagne’s soldiers never lost a battle when he was present. He fought one military campaign after another and ultimately doubled the territory inherited from his father.

France under Napoleon took Europe in a matter of years and repeatedly defeated coalitions of multiple nations that included Great Britain, Austria, Prussia and Russia. His winning record led to one of these coalition forces enacting the Trachtenberg Plan, which included only engaging in battle when Napoleon was not present.

**(4) Relentless drive:** Known as the emperor who never slept, Justinian set the pace for those who came after him. The 11th edition of *Britannica* stated that he was “a man of considerable abilities, wonderful activity of mind, and admirable industry. He was interested in many things, and threw himself with ardour into whatever he took up; he contrived schemes quickly, and pushed them on with an energy which usually made them succeed...”

The publication also stated: “Otto was a man of untiring perseverance and relentless energy, with a high idea of his position...Otto was of tall and commanding presence, and although subject to violent bursts of passion, was liberal to his friends and just to his enemies.”

*Britannica* stated that Charles V’s “unswerving resolve and his refusal to give up any part whatsoever of his patrimony [inherited kingdom] are evidence of a strong and unconditional will to power.”

Napoleon was also known for sleeping little and being relentless. After being forced to abdicate his throne and imprisoned on the island of Elba, he escaped and roused an army to again take on all of Europe at once. He was finally narrowly defeated at the battle of Waterloo.

The biographies of these men all speak about a belief in a *divine mission* that was central to their decision making. For example, Charlemagne felt it was his personal responsibility to expand God’s kingdom on Earth.

This leads to the final trait...

**(5) Religious ties:** Justinian started a model of maintaining close ties between church and state after he reclaimed Rome and reunited the eastern and western halves of the Roman Empire in AD 554. He considered himself both “king and priest.” Although the arrangement sometimes resulted in power struggles,

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Charles V  
AD 1516



Napoleon  
AD 1804



Giuseppe Garibaldi  
AD 1870



Future EU  
Leader

# Never Stop Learning

No matter your age, the time to stop learning is *never*! Your awesome future depends on you continuing to educate yourself. Find out how and why.

BY KENNETH M. OREL

**T**HE OLD ADAGE, “You cannot teach an old dog new tricks” is a generally accepted premise. Willadene Zedan, however, did not buy into this line of thinking.

At the age of 85, Ms. Zedan defied common stereotypes by graduating from Marian University in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. Having started taking college classes in 1999 at age 71 and traveling abroad for five weeks to Rome, Italy, at 84, the mother of five children, grandmother of 15, and great-grandmother of 26 had other ideas about what she would do with her retirement years.

“Every day is a new adventure. Every day,” Ms. Zedan told *Marian University Magazine*. “You’re never too old to learn.”

Indeed, age should not matter when it comes to learning.

Even scientists are confirming this statement. A *New York Times* article titled “How to Train the Aging Brain” explained that when an older adult’s mind is continually used over time, it builds on itself, producing pathways that allow it to solve problems faster than those who are younger.

“The brain is plastic and continues to change, not in getting bigger but allowing for greater complexity and deeper understanding,” Dr. Kathleen Taylor, a professor in California and author of the book *Developing Adult Learners*, told the media outlet. “As

adults we may not always learn quite as fast, but we are set up for this next developmental step.”

Another study published by *WebMD* supports this. According to the article, researchers found that an adult brain’s ability to change occurs faster than previously thought. An increase in brain matter, a sign of learning, was previously thought to happen in adults only after weeks or months of training. Yet studies now show it increases in less than two hours!

Eduard Lindeman, an American pioneer in adult learning, stated in his book *The Meaning of Adult Education*, “The whole of life is learning, therefore education can have no endings.”

One should never stop learning—and it appears our bodies were never meant to!

## Inherent Benefits

Tragically, lack of desire to learn is not just a problem at an individual level—it has permeated our society. In the book *Future Shock* by Alvin Toffler, the author quoted Herbert Gerjuoy of the Human Resources Research Organization as stating, “Tomorrow’s illiterate will not be the man who can’t read; he will be the man who has not learned how to learn.”

But to learn, one must have the ability to think. And regrettably, many have lost this crucial skill.

Modern electronic gadgets, the Internet, and other 21st-century marvels have conditioned us to not think for ourselves. Everything is at the push

of a button, meaning that we need less brainpower to accomplish tasks. After all, television, movies and the Internet do our thinking for us!

Many of these “passive” technologies and forms of entertainment cause our minds to disengage from reality, which reduces our need to think for ourselves.

Nicholas Carr wrote in *The Shallows – What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains*, “Experiments show that just as the brain can build new or stronger circuits through physical or mental practice, those circuits can weaken or dissolve with neglect.”

Mr. Carr quoted research psychiatrist Norman Doidge, who stated, “If we stop exercising our mental skills, we do not just forget them: the brain map space for those skills is turned over to the skills we practice instead.”

Human beings were not designed to stop absorbing new information.

An overall benefit to learning is that it allows the expansion of the mind and increased perspective. It *changes* us.

When we learn something new, our store of knowledge automatically increases. A new piece of information will add new “substance” to our minds and produce “open doors” for it to increase even more.

The brain has been described as “photographic film.” Once there has been a picture captured on this film, it is never the same. It has an impression that was not there before, changing it forever. Human brains are the same. The more impressions we make by



# Learning!

continuing the learning process, the more our brains change.

Another benefit of learning is that it allows us to become more well-rounded individuals. Well-rounded can be defined as “fully developed” and “balanced.” Have you ever been around this type of person? The conversation never gets boring.

Becoming well-rounded is a matter of activating the brain. Reading, writing, composing poetry or music, conversing and asking questions, deliberate and deep thinking—all these behaviors stimulate the brain because they are creative in nature.

Continuing to learn can also help you stay younger. According to Rush University Medical Center’s Memory and Aging Project, increased cognitive activity in the elderly slowed their decline in brain function and decreased their risk of mild cognitive impairment. The study showed that cognitively active seniors were 2.6 times less likely to develop Alzheimer’s disease and dementia compared to seniors with less cognitive activity.

Ms. Zedan is a good example of this principle. She avoided the debilitating habit of shutting down her mind after a certain age and forced herself to continue learning.

More and more stories like hers are continuing to surface as others are tossing aside the notion of winding down in their later years and instead are expanding their minds in anticipation of new and exciting opportunities ahead.

## Good vs. Bad

You have probably heard the saying “garbage in, garbage out.” This term was coined by an IBM technician and

instructor and generally applies to the world of computer science. It means that whatever is programmed into a computer will come out of a computer. Bad input will produce bad output.

The principle, however, can also apply to learning. Our brain is a “supercomputer” and what we allow into our lives will shape us—in either good ways or bad.

If we want to take advantage of our ability to learn and grow in a positive, constructive way, it is imperative that we keep the “garbage” out. Admittedly this can be difficult. It is not hard to see that we live in a world filled with both good and evil, with seemingly more evil every day.

But separating the good from the bad can be tricky. For instance, there are interesting, wholesome movies and documentaries—but there are also perverse and mentally destructive ones. There are helpful and interesting Internet sites—and ones that feature pornography and other illicit content. There are educational and edifying books and magazines—and rotten, vile publications. You get the idea.

What you take in will ultimately determine who and what you are. The challenge every human being faces therefore is: what will I allow to enter my mind?

## Where to Begin

The world is filled with staggering amounts of statistics, facts and figures—so much so that this time in world history has been labeled the “Information Age.” One can spend a lifetime learning about a myriad of topics. Knowing where to start is vital.

One source has proven time and again to stand above all others. It





■ **LEARNING SOMETHING NEW:** Women work during a sewing class in Bordeaux, France (June 14, 2013).

PHOTO: MEHDI FEDOUACH/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

has been called the foundation of all knowledge and is recognized across the globe. As the world's bestselling book, it has been read and studied for millennia. It is a source for life principles in both business and private settings, and has been read by people of diverse backgrounds including leaders of industry, academia, young and old, rich and poor.

This source is the Bible.

Consider the following quotes by some of the world's great leaders and thinkers about this all-encompassing Book.

■ **Abraham Lincoln:** "I am profitably engaged in reading the Bible. Take all of this book upon reason that you can, and the balance on faith, and you will live and die a better man" (*Lincoln's Use of the Bible*).

■ **Winston Churchill:** "[Those] who produced this masterpiece [the Bible]...forged an enduring link, literary and religious, between the English-speaking peoples of the

world" (*Churchill's History of the English-speaking Peoples*).

■ **Horace Greeley:** "It is impossible to mentally or socially enslave a Bible-reading people. The principles of the Bible are the groundwork for human freedom" (*A Dictionary of Thoughts*).

■ **John Quincy Adams:** "In what light soever we regard the Bible, whether with reference to revelation, to history, or, to morality, it is an invaluable and inexhaustible mine of knowledge and virtue" (*ibid.*).

These individuals all found practical statements within the pages of God's Word that they learned to apply to be successful.

Consider some of the following pieces of advice it contains:

**"A soft answer turns away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger" (Prov. 15:1).** In other words, a gentle response to someone who is upset can reduce their level of anger while a harsh response will provoke them. Think how many arguments—and even wars—that

could have been avoided if this advice had been heeded!

**"Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall" (Prov. 16:18).** This is a clear warning to avoid being self-important or acting arrogant. It only leads to failure.

**"A merry heart does good like a medicine: but a broken spirit dries the bones" (Prov. 17:22).** This adage shows that being happy contributes to good health—mentally and physically.

These are only three verses from just *one book* of the Bible. Proverbs alone has *31 chapters* of practical, life-changing words of wisdom.

Aside from practical knowledge, the Bible is also a book of history, science, math, social studies, poetry and much more. It does not contain all knowledge, but it is the starting point—or beginning—for all subsequent learning.

### Much More

Of course, the Bible is also a book of spiritual knowledge and it is in this realm where it far exceeds any other source of learning. In fact, no other medium compares. God's written word is a window into the mind of our Creator. It reveals the vast distance between His level of knowledge and understanding and ours.

Consider these words from the book of Isaiah: "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, says the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts" (55:8-9).

What an incredible description of how advanced God is compared to mankind!

Another illustration of God's pre-eminent knowledge is found in a fascinating exchange between God and a man named Job. In an effort to teach Job a vital lesson, God reminded him of how much more he had to learn through a series of questions.

He asks: "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare [or answer] if you have understanding. Who has laid the measures thereof, if you know? Or who has

Please see **LEARNING** page 28





# IRAN

## AND THE UNITED STATES

### *UNLIKELY PARTNERS?*

#### *PART 1*

The trend of seemingly positive dealings between the two nations must be viewed through the lens of Iran's history with the U.S.

**R**ELATIONS BETWEEN Iran and the United States have been rocky for decades. At one end of the spectrum, Iran has been linked to numerous terrorist activities against the West—while the U.S. has responded with everything from outright retaliation to economic sanctions. At the same time, opposite these aggressive actions have been diplomatic concessions.

Within the past year, relations appear to have taken a slightly friendlier tone, with the drumbeat of war from the last few decades fading to

a faint background noise. Diplomatic courses are being pursued. Mindsets on both sides appear to be changing. Hopes for a peaceful outcome are high.

“For more than 100 years, the United States and Iran have engaged in an ambivalent relationship,” an article titled “Frenemies: Iran and America since 1900” published in *Origins* stated. (The word “frenemy” means one who pretends to be a friend but is really an enemy.)

“Throughout the 20th century and into the 21st, America and Iran have butted heads over issues as diverse as oil, communism, radical Islam, and nuclear proliferation, often framing their

mutual antagonism as a clash between civilization and barbarism. Yet with a new administration in Washington eager to improve U.S. relations in the Muslim world and with young men and women calling for democracy in the streets of Tehran, the old ‘frenemies’ may find that they have more in common than they think” (ibid.).

Is a new day dawning in Iran-U.S. relations? Will tensions in the region push them to become unlikely partners? To best answer this question, it is necessary to peer into the history of Iran's on-again-off-again dealings with the West.

#### **Historical Perspective**

Even though U.S.-Iranian relations officially started in 1883, most people



■ **ISLAMIC REVOLUTION:** Left, the Islamic Revolution's founder Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini is greeted in Tehran by his supporters during his return to Iran after 15 years in exile in Iraq and France (Feb. 2, 1979). Right, hundreds of thousands of people gather in Tehran's streets to cheer the motorcade carrying the Iranian opposition leader and founder of Iran's Islamic republic on his return from exile (Feb. 1, 1979).

PHOTOS: GABRIEL DUVAL/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

understand their tumultuous history from the perspective of Tehran's 1979 hostage crisis. During this time, Iran openly defied America on the world stage, as recounted by *The History Channel*.

"On November 4, 1979, a group of Iranian students stormed the U.S. Embassy in Tehran, taking more than 60 American hostages. The immediate cause of this action was President Jimmy Carter's decision to allow Iran's deposed Shah, a pro-Western autocrat who had been expelled from his country some months before, to come to the United States for cancer treatment. However, the hostage-taking was about more than the Shah's medical care: it was a dramatic way for the student revolutionaries to declare a break with Iran's past and an end to American interference in its affairs. It was also a way to raise the intra- and international profile of the revolution's leader, the anti-American cleric Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. The students set their hostages free on January 21, 1981, 444 days after the crisis began and just hours after President Ronald Reagan delivered his inaugural address."

While the hostage situation is often considered the start of the two countries' frequent stalemates, the

seeds of conflict actually started with another Western power—Britain. The European nation had stepped in to help Iran centuries earlier with military and economic aid. It also assisted the deposed shah's father, Reza Shah Pahlavi, at the time of the first world war. The clash is explained by this necessarily longer passage from *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

"Until the beginning of World War I, Russia effectively ruled Iran, but, with the outbreak of hostilities, Russian troops withdrew from the north of the country...Jubilation was short-lived, however, as the country quickly turned into a battlefield between British, German, Russian, and Turkish forces. The landed elite hoped to find in Germany a foil [opposing force] for the British and Russians, but change eventually was to come from the north.

"Following the Russian Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, the new Soviet government unilaterally canceled the tsarist concessions in Iran, an action that created tremendous goodwill toward the new Soviet Union and, after the Central Powers were defeated, left Britain the sole Great Power in Iran. In 1919 the Majles [Iranian parliament], after much internal wrangling, refused a British offer of military and financial aid that effectively would have made Iran into a

protectorate of Britain. The British were initially loath to withdraw from Iran but caved to international pressure and removed their advisers by 1921."

Yet the British were persistent about their involvement in Iran, which provided the Western power much needed oil resources.

"In that same year British diplomats lent their support to an Iranian officer...Reza Khan, who...had been instrumental in putting down a rebellion led by Mirza Kuchak Khan, who had sought to form an independent Soviet-style republic in Iran's northern province...Reza Khan staged a coup in 1921 and took control of all military forces in Iran," *Britannica* continued. "Between 1921 and 1925 Reza Khan—first as war minister and later as prime minister under Ahmad Shah—built an army that was loyal solely to him. He also managed to forge political order in a country that for years had known nothing but turmoil. Initially Reza Khan wished to declare himself president in the style of Turkey's secular nationalist president, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk [a Sunni Muslim]—a move fiercely opposed by the Shiite ulama [head religious body]—but instead he deposed the weak Ahmad Shah in 1925 and had himself crowned Reza Shah Pahlavi."





■ **IN PROTEST:** Left and right, anti-American crowds demonstrate outside of the United States embassy in Tehran (Nov. 1979).

PHOTOS: STAFF/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

The new shah infuriated many religious clerics because he intended to make Iran a secular state as opposed to one driven by religious principles.

“A wide range of legal affairs that had previously been the purview of Shiite religious courts were now either administered by secular courts or overseen by state bureaucracies, and, as a result, the status of women improved,” *Britannica* further stated. “The custom of women wearing veils was banned, the minimum age for marriage was raised, and strict religious divorce laws (which invariably favoured the husband) were made more equitable.”

“Reza Shah’s need to expand trade, his fear of Soviet control over Iran’s overland routes to Europe, and his apprehension at renewed Soviet and continued British presence in Iran drove him to expand trade with Nazi Germany in the 1930s. His refusal to abandon what he considered to be obligations to numerous Germans in Iran served as a pretext for an Anglo-Soviet invasion of his country in 1941. Intent on ensuring the safe passage of U.S. war materiel to the Soviet Union through Iran, the Allies forced Reza Shah to abdicate, placing his young son Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi on the throne” (ibid.).

### New Generation

The latest shah was loyal to Western powers, which angered many Iranians.

“Mohammad Reza Shah succeeded to the throne in a country occupied by foreign powers, crippled by wartime inflation, and politically fragmented,” *Britannica* continued. “Paradoxically, however, the war and occupation had brought a greater degree of economic activity, freedom of the press, and political openness than had been possible under Reza Shah. Many political parties were formed in this period, including the pro-British National Will and the pro-Soviet Tudeh (‘Masses’) parties. These, along with a fledgling trade union movement, challenged the power of the young shah, who did not wield the absolute authority of his father.”

“Following the war, a loose coalition of nationalists, clerics, and non-communist left-wing parties, known as the National Front, coalesced under Mohammad Mosaddeq, a career politician and lawyer who wished to reduce the powers of the monarchy and the clergy in Iran. Most important, the National Front, angered by years of foreign exploitation, wanted to regain control of Iran’s natural resources, and, when Mosaddeq became prime minis-

ter in 1951, he immediately nationalized the country’s oil industry. Britain, the main benefactor of Iranian oil concessions, imposed an economic embargo on Iran and pressed the International Court of Justice to consider the matter. The court, however, decided not to intervene, thereby tacitly lending its support to Iran” (ibid.).

The moves between the two nations were strategic. By nationalizing the oil industry, Iranians hoped to end British domination and regain the wealth of its own resources. On the other hand, the West considered a stable, secular Iranian government backed by foreign powers in its best interest.

“British leaders Winston Churchill and Anthony Eden pushed for a joint U.S.-British coup to oust Mosaddeq, and the election of President Dwight D. Eisenhower in the United States in November 1952 bolstered those inside the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) who wished to support such an action.

“Within Iran, Mosaddeq’s social democratic policies, as well as the growth of the communist Tudeh Party, weakened the always-tenuous support of his few allies among Iran’s religious class, whose ability to generate public support was important to Mosaddeq’s government. In August

1953, following a round of political skirmishing, Mosaddeq's quarrels with the shah came to a head, and the Iranian monarch fled the country. Almost immediately, despite still-strong public support, the Mosaddeq government buckled during a coup funded by the CIA. Within a week of his departure, Mohammad Reza Shah returned to Iran and appointed a new prime minister."

"There was no further talk of nationalization, as the shah firmly squelched subsequent political dissent within Iran. In 1957, with the aid of U.S. and Israeli intelligence services, the shah's government formed a special branch to monitor domestic dissidents. The shah's secret police—the Organization of National Security and Information...developed into an omnipresent force within Iranian society and became a symbol of the fear by which the Pahlavi regime was to dominate Iran."

This laid the groundwork for what would eventually be a major turning point in the relationship between the two countries.

### **Power Struggle**

"By the 1970s, many Iranians were fed up with the Shah's government," *The History Channel* stated. "In protest, they turned to the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, a radical cleric whose revolutionary Islamist movement seemed to promise a break from the past and a turn toward greater autonomy for the Iranian people. In July 1979, the revolutionaries forced the Shah to disband his government and flee to Egypt. The Ayatollah installed a militant Islamist government in its place."

Ayatollah Khomeini wanted to orchestrate a revolution to bring Iranians back to their Islamic roots and restore Sharia—strict Islamic law—throughout the country. He routinely spoke out against the United States and Israel, which he referred to as the "Great Satan" and "Little Satan," respectively.

After the revolution, he was given the title of "Supreme Spiritual Leader" for life—meaning that he became the highest-ranking Iranian cleric—a post

that has only been given twice in Iran's history. It is currently held by Ali Khamenei.

"Diplomatic maneuvers had no discernible effect on the Ayatollah's anti-American stance; neither did economic sanctions such as the seizure of Iranian assets in the United States," the outlet continued. "Meanwhile, while the hostages were never seriously injured, they were subjected to a rich variety of demeaning and terrifying treatment...The hostages never knew whether they were going to be tortured, murdered or set free."

Because of the 1979 hostage crisis, the U.S. broke diplomatic relations with Iran in 1980—a policy still in practice today that fuels the power struggle between the two nations.

### **Surrounding Connections**

After Iran's Islamic Revolution, neighboring nations feared religious revolts could occur within their own borders. This was a significant factor for Iraq, which shares a border with Iran, to invade its neighbor in what was known as the First Persian Gulf War.

"When Iraq attacked Iran in September 1980, the United States did not immediately back either combatant," the book *Becoming Enemies: U.S.-Iran Relations and the Iran-Iraq War, 1979-1988* stated. "Yet by the summer of 1982, the Reagan administration had decided it could not tolerate an Iranian victory in the Iran-Iraq War. The fiery anti-American rhetoric out of Tehran continued, as did Iranian efforts to 'export the revolution' throughout the Islamic world. Concerned about Iranian threats to U.S. allies in the region, and about the flow of oil from the Persian Gulf to the West, the United States became ever more deeply involved in the conflict between Iran and Iraq."

The book continued: "Beginning in mid-1982, Iran turned the tables on Baghdad and launched a counteroffensive into Iraq. The Reagan administration then began 'tilting' noticeably toward Iraq in its increasingly brutal and destructive war with Iran... It began to share with Baghdad some

U.S. satellite intelligence regarding the location and apparent trajectory of Iranian troop formations...In these and other ways, it became clear that the Reagan administration had decided that the revolutionary government in Tehran must not be allowed to conquer Iraq, as Ayatollah Khomeini had vowed to do. The government in Tehran noticed the U.S. 'tilt' toward Iraq, which led to a further escalation of anti-American rhetoric and actions."

In the end, Iraq was unsuccessful with the First Persian Gulf War. Yet the U.S.'s involvement produced more anti-American sentiments from Iran.

### **Recent Goodwill?**

Since that time, Iran has seen various administrations that have both minimally supported and outright shunned any interaction with the West. Each change in leadership has resulted from the nation's poor overall economic conditions: when the reforms of one regime do not work, another faction gains support and comes into power. This pattern of ongoing struggle between being under a more secular versus a religious-leaning government has been a mainstay of Iran's history.

This additional factor also helps explain Iran's continuing conflict with the U.S. and the difficulties the two countries have forming a partnership.

Currently, one of the largest areas of contention between the two countries is with nuclear weapons. Iran has been pursuing nuclear capabilities for the past decade, and is making significant strides—despite international demands to cease its efforts. According to the United Nations nuclear watchdog, Iran now has about 19,000 centrifuges, of which roughly 10,000 are operating. With nuclear power, the enriched uranium has either civilian or military uses—with the degree of refinement making the difference.

Iran has long maintained that it needs to enrich uranium to fuel a planned network of nuclear power plants and therefore not have to rely on foreign energy suppliers. The West, however, believes this to be a cover for a desire to have nuclear arms



capability and threaten its long-time enemy, Israel. Iran openly supports Palestinian causes and has also been tied to supplying long-range missiles to the Palestinian terrorist organization, Hamas, for use on Israelis.

Yet while Israel and Iran stand on the brink, the U.S. appears to be taking a different path in its relationship with Iran. Since taking office in 2009, U.S. President Barack Obama has gradually chosen to pursue a less fiery course of action. Crippling sanctions were the mode of operation for a time, but with the election of a new Iranian president, Hassan Rouhani, prospects of diplomacy and a palatable deal for the two nations seem possible.

In November 2013, the United States, Britain, France, Germany, Russia and China (known as the P5+1) struck a temporary deal in which Iran agreed to suspend some sensitive nuclear activities in exchange for limited relief from sanctions. The hope was to strike a permanent deal by July 20, 2014.

President Rouhani, a former chief nuclear negotiator for Tehran, stated in a *Reuters* article, “The major powers and Iran have agreed on two issues with Iran: We will continue our uranium enrichment activities and all sanctions on Iran will be lifted.”

He added that neither side would benefit if the talks were to collapse

and any remaining disputes “can be resolved with goodwill and flexibility” (ibid.).

But as the deadline neared and countries involved with the deal continued wrangling the details of it, little seemed to change.

*The Associated Press* reported: “Tehran’s resistance was underscored...when Iran’s supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei rejected pressure by the U.S. and its allies at the [latest round of talks in Vienna, Austria] to force Iran into making concessions. He said the Islamic republic would not give in to attempts by the West to greatly restrict its uranium enrichment program.

“Khamenei told top officials that the country should plan as if sanctions will remain in place so that Iran will be immune to outside threats.”

Others outside of Iranian circles are also skeptical about the apparent strengthening of the relationship and the concept of the U.S. and Iran moving past their differences.

“I don’t think we are anywhere near normalization of relations between the United States and Iran,” Suzanne Maloney, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution Saban Center for Middle East Policy, said. “This is in part because neither side has a compelling political interest in alter-

ing the context of their relationship. A nuclear agreement would be a very important arms control agreement, but it wouldn’t change the competing interests between the two countries and the conflict between the ideology of the Islamic Republic and that of Washington and the broader Western world.

“What we are seeing with respect to the nuclear agreement is extremely important and would be a major step forward. It would inevitably open up channels for additional dialogue on other issues, but it’s quite clear from the statements of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the Supreme Leader of Iran, and other senior leaders within Iran that the political climate there is not one in which they envision a warming of relations between the two countries—at least not at this time.”

Despite this, the rhetorical jostling between the two nations does appear to be slowing down.

With this understanding, further questions remain. What alliances does Iran have with other countries that could threaten Western interests? And what part will President Rouhani play in nuclear negotiations?

Part 2 of this article series will examine these questions and expand on Iran’s modern relationships with surrounding countries. □

■ **MARATHON TALKS:** Negotiators from Iran and six world powers begin a final round of discussions toward a potentially historic agreement on Tehran’s nuclear program before the July 20, 2014, deadline (July 3, 2014).

PHOTO: JOE KLAMAR/AFP/GETTY IMAGES





# EMERGING DISEASE EPIDEMICS

## *From Pests to Pestilence*

An increase in the animal population in urban areas has led to renewed concerns about the impact of disease on humans.

BY EDWARD L. WINKFIELD

**“PLEASE DON’T FEED the raccoons.”** What was once good advice is now the law in more and more communities—and for good reason. Depending on where you live, your city or town may be under siege by an overabundance of the ringed-tailed critters.

In Germany, over one million raccoons (a species introduced to

the nation in the 1920s) are overrunning a country known for precision and cleanliness. The pests routinely rifle through garbage cans, eat food intended for pets, and pilfer scraps from backyard barbecue grills.

During the spring of 2013, an estimated 71,071 raccoons were killed by residents—3,365 more than the year before—according to the German Hunting Association. Yet this coun-

terattack has done little to combat the “furry blitzkrieg.”

Japan has not fared much better. The “animal that scratches with its hands” (raccoon is derived from the Native American for this phrase) is causing irreparable damage, such as mutilating 80 percent of the nation’s temples, many of which are thousands of years old. They claw, scratch and chew dens into the ancient structures, and cause even more damage with urine and feces.

Raccoons are just *one* species of animal multiplying in human environments. Media outlets now regularly feature stories on the overpopulation of deer, snakes and even domesticated animals such as dogs and cats.

A *Time* article spoke to this sudden emergence in the U.S.: “We have too many wild animals—from swine to swans. Thirty million strong and growing, the population of white-

■ **DENGUE FEVER VICTIM:** Above, a boy affected by dengue fever rests at the pediatric ward of the University Hospital in Tegucigalpa, Honduras (March 3, 2014). The World Health Organization estimates that there are 50-100 million dengue infections worldwide each year.

PHOTO: ORLANDO SIERRA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



tailed deer in the U.S. is larger today than it was when Columbus sailed the ocean blue...They gobble up crops and vegetable gardens, dart into traffic and spread tick-borne diseases. Then there are the wild hogs. From a little herd imported to feed explorer Hernando de Soto's 16th century expedition, some 5 million feral pigs are rooting through city parks and private lawns in 48 of the 50 states."

The article continued naming beavers, bald eagles, Burmese pythons, wild turkeys, and coyotes, among others, as part of the growing predicament.

"Whether you're a Walmart employee in Florida wondering what to do with the alligator at your door, a New Yorker with a hawk nesting on your high-rise or an Ohio golfer scattering a flock of Canada geese, you now live, work and play in closer proximity to untamed fauna than any other generation of Americans in more than a century. Even as the human population climbs toward 320 million in the U.S., plenty of other creatures are flourishing too" (*Time*).

Unless you are directly affected, this expansion can seem trivial. Yet a 2013 report from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations revealed, "More than *seventy percent* of emerging infectious diseases in humans over the past few decades have jumped species from animals to humans" (emphasis added).

Read this quote again. *Seventy percent*. This means that the exponential population growth of animals in dense human populations is more than just a fleeting annoyance. Instead it is a sign of a *significant* and growing threat to human health.

Find this hard to believe? Keep reading!

### Zoonotic Diseases

One disease after another has been traced back to animals. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), of the more than 1,400 human pathogens (disease causing agents) recorded, 60 percent of them are zoonotic (zoh-o-NOT-ic),

which means they are transferred between animals and people. The term specifically refers to diseases that normally exist in animals but that can infect humans. Zoonoses can be classified as parasites, bacteria, viruses, fungi or prions.

This broad category covers less deadly ailments such as ringworm and Lyme disease to potentially fatal ailments such as HIV/AIDS or anthrax. Just 13 zoonotic diseases are responsible for 2.4 billion cases of human illness and 2.2 million deaths per year.

Many zoonoses exist in what is referred to as a reservoir host, an animal species that can carry the pathogen yet display little to no associated illness. For example, take the aforementioned masked invaders. Baylisascaris procyonis, commonly known as roundworm, affects more than half of North America's raccoon population. While mostly harmless to raccoons, the jump of the parasite to human beings or other animals can have grave consequences.

In its larval stage, the roundworm penetrates the walls of the small intestines and attacks the central nervous system. A severe enough infection can eventually cause blindness, paralysis and possibly death. There is no known cure.

Even more unnerving is how rapidly the parasite can spread. Inside of its reservoir host, the adult roundworm can lay hundreds of thousands of microscopic eggs per day. Raccoons, which are increasingly showing up in urban areas, leave multiple deposits of the spawns in their fecal matter. A single elimination can have as many as 10 million eggs!

People and animals become infected by either inhaling or somehow ingesting the eggs, which have been known to survive in soil for several years and



■ **SCAVENGER:** A wild raccoon tries to steal cat food from a suburban backyard. Raccoons are known carriers of rabies.

PHOTO: THINKSTOCK



■ **INFESTATION:** Brown rats congregate around food sources in an open sewer. Rats and fleas have long been blamed for spreading Bubonic plague.

PHOTO: THINKSTOCK



■ **CONTINUING SCOURGE:** Two virologists examine a bat as part of their search for dangerous animal pathogens in the Global Viral Forecasting Initiative Lab in Yaounde, Cameroon (July 28, 2011).

PHOTO: BRENT STIRTON/GETTY IMAGES





■ **BIRD FLU OUTBREAK:** Health workers cull chickens at a poultry farm suspected of having a bird flu outbreak on the outskirts of Kathmandu, Nepal (Aug. 16, 2013).

PHOTO: PRAKASH MATHEMA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



■ **MERS VIRUS:** A Saudi wears a mouth and nose mask as he leads camels, which are considered a source of MERS, at his farm (May 12, 2014).

PHOTO: FAYEZ NURELDINE/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



■ **FIGHTING MALARIA:** An employee of the Institute of Public Hygiene sprays insecticide against mosquitoes in Koumassi, Ivory Coast, during an operation to prevent malaria as part of the World Malaria Day (April 28, 2014).

PHOTO: SIA KAMBOU/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

endure cold winter months. In fact, the most effective way to destroy the eggs is to burn them!

One does not have to look far for other acute instances of zoonotic transfer. These include hantavirus, a fatal lung disease discovered in 1993, transmitted to people by mice; West Nile virus, which is spread by mosquitoes and infects the brain and spinal cord; and tularemia (rabbit fever), a potentially deadly disease contracted from rabbits or parasites infected by them.

While these and other zoonoses may not represent the next global pandemic, they do offer a clear illustration of how increasing animal populations can lead to higher levels of disease.

### Companion Animals

Contact between people and animals with infectious diseases, however, is not limited to chance encounters in the wild. Household pets have also become a threat.

A 2012 report in the Centers for Disease Control's *Emerging Infectious Diseases Journal* described the landscape for the developing risk: "Over millennia, cats and dogs have played an integral role in many aspects of human life... This bond with pets has strengthened over the past 50 years. The cat and dog have moved from the barn, into the house, and now, routinely, into the owner's bed."

The report stated that an estimated 72 million dogs live in 37 percent of U.S. households and about 81 million cats are in 32 percent of U.S. households. The UK, which was also included in the narrative, has from 16 to 20 million dogs and cats living in approximately a quarter of British households.

The report continued: "More problematic is the vast number of free-roaming or community-owned dogs and cats that receive... less veterinary medical

attention and provide a potential huge and uncontrolled reservoir for existing and new emerging zoonoses. Also of concern is the close association that domestic cats and dogs might have with wildlife, resulting in direct or indirect... transfer of pathogens. This association might be particularly likely for free-roaming animals in rural areas, but it is also possible for pets in urban areas where there is potential for interchange of infectious agents between cats and dogs and wild animals such as raccoons, opossums, urban foxes, and wild rodent species."

In Britain, several people caught tuberculosis from their cats, the first recorded cases of their kind. It is believed that the cats contracted it while hunting rodents and other animals involved in a local tuberculosis outbreak.

Harmful organisms can also jump to humans from pets by way of fleas or other parasites an animal brings home and transfers to people's bed linens or seating areas. Though rare, pet owners have even been infected by allowing their animals to lick them in the face or mouth after they have used their tongues to clean their fur or certain other regions. Even stroking an animal's fur and then eating without hand-washing can cause disease transfer.

Isolated incidents? Perhaps. But history reveals the zoonotic threat to human health is very real.

### World's Deadliest Diseases

Review just about any list of history's deadliest diseases. The order and impact of the conditions may vary, yet what is not debatable is that animals were the original source and/or the primary mode of transfer for the majority of ailments.

The following is a sampling of lethal zoonotic diseases. Notice they are among the most familiar and extreme diseases in human history:

■ **Spanish flu:** This deadly influenza virus infected more than half a billion people between January 1918 and December 1920. One of the first forms of H1N1, Spanish flu killed more people than World War I, making



it one of the deadliest zoonotic diseases in history. The final death toll is estimated to be between 20-50 million people (some estimates go as high as 100 million deaths).

This flu virus, which surprisingly was on the scene less than 100 years ago, is believed to have started in birds, was transferred to pigs, and then passed to humans after mutating into its deadly form.

Other flu outbreaks since 1918 include one in 1957-58 that killed around two million people worldwide, including some 70,000 in the U.S., and a pandemic from 1968-69 that killed approximately one million, including some 34,000 Americans. More than 12,000 Americans perished during the H1N1 (or “swine flu”) pandemic that occurred from 2009 to 2010 (*History.com*).

■ **Bubonic plague:** The bacteria, known as the Black Death, killed nearly 25 million people in the 14th century—about one-third of the world’s population at the time. An early symptom of infection is the swelling of the lymph glands, or buboes. Eventually, the bacteria spreads through the body, leading to chills, high fever, gangrene of the toes, fingers, lips and nose, seizures, continuous vomiting of blood, and extreme pain. Once infected, death can occur in as little as four days.

The disease originated as an ordinary bacteria living in the digestive tracts of certain mammals, most likely rodents. It is generally transferred from host to host by fleas, which are not harmed by the pathogen. Once contracted, the bacteria is spread person to person by coughing or sneezing.

Though it was mostly eradicated with antibiotics, a resurgence of bubonic plague in Madagascar in 2013 renewed concerns about future outbreaks.

■ **HIV/AIDS:** This widespread virus is believed to have been originally transferred from chimpanzee blood to human blood in the late 19th century or early 20th century. After the initial transfer, the virus spread rapidly in

Africa and eventually made its way to the U.S. It expanded quickly due to being misdiagnosed for decades. By 1981, it was finally recognized as a disease—Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) when first contracted then Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) once the virus overwhelms the immune system.

Since the epidemic began, nearly 75 million people have been infected with HIV and approximately 36 million have died. Worldwide, 35.3 million people were living with HIV at the end of 2012, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). While vaccines can slow its development, there is no known cure for the virus.

■ **Yellow fever:** This illness has the unique distinction of being the first human virus ever discovered. Believed to have originated in primates, the dominant method of transmission is through a specific species of mosquito. The virus, which only affects human beings and primates, causes jaundiced or yellowed skin and inflammation of the liver. If untreated, it causes internal bleeding and multisystem organ failure, leading to death.

Despite being studied for so long, yellow fever remains virulent. The WHO estimates 200,000 people are infected annually, leading to about 30,000 deaths.

This sampling of illnesses, along with monkeypox, rabies, anthrax and Q fever to name a few, all serve as a warning of the legitimate impact of animal-to-human disease transfer.

### Preventing the Problem

Battling to treat existing diseases and keep old ones at bay requires a vast amount of resources. Therefore, *emerging* zoonoses only add to the problem.

A *Washington Post* article elaborated on their increasing danger: “[A high] proportion of human diseases that have emerged in recent decades, such as SARS and Lyme disease, have their origins in animals. And since the 1970s, the emergence of

new zoonotic diseases has been accelerating. If we’re watching for the source of the next big epidemic, look to the animals.”

As advanced as science and medicine have become, zoonoses are developing more quickly than are ways to treat them. Experts are finding it difficult to keep up.

*The Lancet*, a leading world medical journal stated, “Understanding the ecology of zoonotic diseases at the human being-animal interface is a complex challenge. It requires knowledge of animal and human medicine, ecology, sociology, [and] microbial ecology...”

Specialists refer to this required collaborative effort between multiple disciplines as “One Health.”

Yet this alliance cannot develop as fast as new illnesses appear. Consider the spread of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS). It came seemingly out of nowhere in 2012, and has killed from one-third up to half of those infected. The origin of the virus has been linked to camels or bats—just another such disease added to the growing list.

Zoonotic diseases can also be unpredictable. Just when you think you have one under control, things can quickly change.

“Some [zoonoses] are widespread and famously lethal, still killing humans by the thousands despite centuries of effort at coping with their effects, concerted international attempts to eradicate or control them, and a clear scientific understanding of how they work,” *National Geographic* reported. “Others are new and inexplicably sporadic, claiming a few victims...or a few hundred in this place or that, and then disappearing for years.”

Take the Ebola virus that has reappeared in parts of West Africa. It first surfaced in the mid-1970s with various outbreaks occurring over the years. Now, in the midst of a “second wave,” it is being described as “totally out of control.” An infected

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# MILLENNIALS

## *Minus* MARRIAGE?



Young adults are breaking with nearly every matrimonial tradition. What is behind the shift?

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BY NESTOR A. TORO

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**S**OMETHING HAS GONE terribly wrong with marriage when 74 percent of young adults delay it or choose not to pursue it at all.

Consider. Throughout most of mankind's history, one's general life path has been predictable: you grew up, became acquainted with a member of the opposite sex, and became a husband or wife. Marriage led to babies. Children birthed grandchildren, who later wed and repeated the cycle. With few exceptions, if people were single past age 27, they felt it would be *too late* for them to enjoy grandchildren.

Then Generation Y came along. Suddenly, the old path shifted. Securing a good education and career neared the top of the list for these "millennials." Close friendships, partying and no-strings-attached sex were right up there as well.

Emphasis on these pursuits swept aside the process for finding a husband or wife and starting a family. Unlike generations past, marrying *before* age 27 is now considered too soon!

Those in Generation Y, though, are not against marriage or even relationships, for that matter. They just prefer to wed later.

"This distinction—that we still marry, but do so at a more mature age than we used to—is commonly called 'The Marriage Delay,'" a *Time* editorial stated. "Delay, however, is a bad choice of words... Young people don't delay marriage; they get married when they can marry because they just have so much more to do before they consider themselves ready to marry.

"Fifty years ago, after all, a woman didn't need to attend college or have a career before marrying, and she didn't need to 'live on her own' to get to know herself. Today, a young woman needs to graduate college, perhaps get some grad school, and try a few jobs before she finds the profession that fits her. Once she has established her own merits—her own self-worth—she's ready to shop for a husband; she might be 30 by then. Did she delay marriage? Hardly. She was racing through society's hurdles as fast as she could."





As with this marriage trend, there are similar statistics regarding other major facets of life: “The Millennial generation is forging a distinctive path into adulthood,” the Pew Research Center stated. “Now ranging in age from 18 to 31, they are relatively unattached to organized politics and religion, linked by social media, burdened by debt, distrustful of people, in no rush to marry—and optimistic about the future.”

The organization also stated that “half of Millennials (50%) now describe themselves as political independents and about three-in-ten (29%) say they are not affiliated with any religion. These are at or near the highest levels of political and religious disaffiliation recorded for any generation in the quarter-century that the Pew Research Center has been polling on these topics.”

Society rationalizes that these young adults have simply forged a distinct path for themselves in both the areas of religion and marriage. Yet others see real trouble down the non-nuptials-until-I’m-older-or-not-at-all road—and its societal implications.

University of Virginia sociology professor W. Bradford Wilcox cautioned in *The National Review*: “The Millennial retreat from marriage is particularly worrisome because it hasn’t stopped many of them from having children. In 2012, 47 percent of births to Millennial women took place outside marriage, a troubling trend because such children are much more likely to end up in single-parent families that put them at higher risk of educational failure, poverty, and emotional distress.”

Later in the article, Mr. Wilcox stated, “If today’s events in Europe, not to mention of the last century, tell us anything, it is that a generation of young adults ‘unmoored’ from the institutions of work, family, and civil society, and distrustful of their fellow citizens, can end up succumbing to the siren song of demagogues, especially if the economy dips into a depression.

“It’s for that reason, among others, that policymakers, civic leaders, and business executives, not to mention young adults themselves, need to redouble their efforts to revive the American economy and better integrate today’s Millennials into the nation’s economic, familial, and civic fabric.”

Families are the “cells” of society. A society without normal, healthy marriages that produce strong families is like a body without normal, healthy cells that produce properly functioning organs. Therefore to build a stronger society, it is necessary that an entire generation realizes they are heading down the wrong track—and turn back before it is too late.

### **Terribly Wrong?**

Generation Y is a product of its upbringing. Millennials have seen the marriage institution belittled, ridiculed and disregarded throughout their lives by the mainstream media. Many who are pessimistic about it were most likely raised by parents who themselves were divorced. In such an environment, who would not consider marriage less than fondly?

“I’ve always been slightly hesitant about the idea of marriage,” a *Telegraph* opinion piece stated. “Apart from the tiny little issue that I may never find The One or will accidentally pick the wrong One, I have larger reservations about the institution as a whole.

“The idea of spending thousands on what’s meant to be ‘the best day of your life’—including a dress you’ll never, ever wear again—combined with the not insignificant fact that the wedding certificate only requires your father’s name and not your mother’s, puts me off the whole thing.

“But at the same time, even though I’m still only 24, I know I want a family, and I’m practical enough to realise that marriage will offer my future babies and I...a lot more security than just living with their dad would. I know it’s not the most romantic of views, but my parents split up when I was a teenager, and I haven’t really ever seen a blissful marriage up close



so I'm not fully set on the idea of publicly committing to someone—only to have to later break those vows.”

To a certain degree, this mindset is understandable. Millennials were the first generation to be raised by Generation X (those born between 1965 and 1980), which was the first era to experience the commonality of divorce. This trend meant they went on to forge their own paths in a similar way that millennials are doing now.

“Orphans as parents—that’s not a bad way to understand Generation X parents,” an editorial in *The Wall Street Journal* explained. “Having grown up without stable homes, we pour everything that we have into giving our children just that, no matter how many sacrifices it involves. Indeed, Gen-X’s quest for perfect nests drove us to take out more home equity loans and to spend more on remodeling, per capita, than any generation before it, according to Harvard’s Joint Center for Housing Studies.”

During the millennial generation, the concept of raising children was transformed. Never before were youth exposed to so much unsupervised television, violent video games, and all the vices the Internet afforded. Nor did so many mothers have to work outside the home to single-handedly support a family, instead of staying at home with the children to teach and nurture them.

“In many communities, a generation is being raised expecting that fathers will be around intermittently, that adult relationships will be unstable,” *The Chicago Tribune* reported in an article titled “Millennials Pass on Marriage and Mortgages.” “They will carry that expectation into their own adult lives. They will also carry economic and psychological handicaps, because kids raised in these unstable families will have fewer emotional and financial resources invested in their upbringing and education.”

In addition, since they often do not have jobs until well after their teen years, many millennials reach adulthood with zero savings for marriage, a family, or a home. On top of that, they often are in debt with student loans taken out for

pricey graduate degrees or have maxed-out credit cards.

Some millennials have even watched their divorced mothers and fathers “celebrate” separation proceedings with upside-down wedding cakes and ceremonies in which the bride retraces her steps *up* the aisle.

“Marriage has shifted from being the cornerstone to the capstone of adult life,” the study “Knot Yet: The Benefits and Costs of Delayed Marriage in America” stated: “No longer the foundation on which young adults build their prospects for future prosperity and happiness, marriage now comes only after they have moved toward financial and psychological independence. It’s not hard to understand this mindset, especially given that many of today’s young adults are children of divorce and express worry about divorce themselves; they view marriage as something that should not be undertaken without a suitable exit strategy. Unfortunately, declining job prospects for Middle Americans may simply put this capstone ideal out of reach for many.

“Moreover, one of the primary reasons for getting married—starting a family—is increasingly viewed as a relic of the past. The institution of marriage, and even the presence of two parents, are seen as nice but not necessary for raising children. Thus, even when a baby is coming, many young adults see no need to rush to the altar. Finally, many young adults in romantic relationships greatly overestimate the chances that they have already met their future spouse, which makes them vulnerable to sliding into parenthood even though they haven’t married.”

Yet the effects of this can be tragic.

The study continued: “...nearly 40 percent of cohabiting twentysomething parents who had a baby between 2000 and 2005 split up by the time their child was five; that’s three times higher than the rate for twentysomething parents who were married when they had a child. The cohabitants were also more than three times more likely than married parents to move on to a cohabiting or marital relationship with a new partner if their relationship did break up.

Researchers paint a sorry picture of the effect these disruptions have; children suffer emotionally, academically, and financially when they are thrown onto this kind of relationship carousel.

“This isn’t to say that unmarried mothers and fathers are faring much better emotionally than their children. New findings in this report show that unmarried twentysomething parents, both women and men, report high rates of depression and dissatisfaction; the mood among cohabiting parents is a little better than that of singles but still gloomier than that of married mothers and fathers. Actually, singles and cohabitants *without* children are also more likely to be depressed than are young married men and women. Compared to married twentysomething men, their single and cohabiting peers are less satisfied with their lives and markedly more likely to drink too much...”

Could too much divorce and cynical attitudes, among other aspects, be the answer to what has gone terribly wrong with marriage?

Addressing these factors may contribute to some improvement, but ultimately cannot change the pattern. To understand the *true* reason, another Generation Y trend needs to be considered.

### Crucial Reading

Since the statement was made that something has gone terribly wrong with marriage, it is fair to wonder whether something has gone terribly wrong with Generation Y. From the perspective of past generations, the answer could be “yes.”

While millennials are open-minded and tech-savvy, they are also considered the “Me” Generation—meaning they focus only on themselves, are driven by their emotions, question established morals in order to benefit themselves, are rude, lax in their appearances, lack self-control and commitment, do not respect authority, and do not consider premarital sex taboo.

There is a real reason for these characteristics—and it directly relates to one of the parts of life millennials steer clear of: religion.



“The State of the Bible survey, conducted by the Barna Group and the American Bible Society, shows that 19 percent of American adults are ‘skeptical’ about the Bible and 19 percent are ‘engaged’ with the book,” *The Washington Times* stated.

“It’s the first time in the four years of the survey that the two groups are tied, with skeptics growing by 10 percentage points since 2011. The shift is attributed in large part to the growing doubts of the millennial generation and Generation X.

“‘I think young people have always questioned their parents, questioned the church,’ said Roy Peterson, president of the American Bible Society. ‘In our experience, they may not necessarily be coming back like previous generations. Young people might have said, ‘God’s word is written by God, and it’s an important book.’ Today the skeptics are saying, ‘It’s just like any other piece of literature, and it’s no different from that.’”

“Only 36 percent of the millennials said the phrase ‘a religious person’ described them very well, compared with 52 percent of the Gen Xers, 55 percent of the baby boomers and 61 percent of the Silent Generation,” *The Associated Press* reported. “And they’re significantly less religious than their immediate predecessors, the Gen Xers. When they were the same age, almost half of the Gen Xers—47 percent—identified themselves as religious.

“The 64 percent of the millennials who say that they are not religious ‘is the highest for any age group we’ve ever measured,’ [Paul Taylor, Pew’s executive vice president and co-author of the report] said.”

A *Business Insider* article titled “Millennials Are America’s Most Godless Grown-Ups” highlighted another telling study: “The position that humans evolved and God had nothing to do with it has grown in popularity, with nearly twice as large a share of respondents believing this in 2014 than in 1982.

“Gallup found that education, religious behavior, and age all were big factors in how one views human origins.

The younger, better-educated, and less religious you are, the more likely you are to agree with the scientific consensus on where we come from...Age is especially interesting: almost two-thirds of 18- to 29-year-olds believe in evolution, while just 39% of people over 65 do. Millennials are the only age group with a majority believing in evolution.”

This is where the significant generation gap enters. Yes, modern life’s hurdles hinder marriage. Yes, bad economies hinder marriage. Yes, high divorce rates hinder marriage. But has anyone considered that prior generations with more biblical knowledge yielded more marriages?

After all, the concept of marriage comes from the Bible!

### What Millennials Are *Not* Reading

Deep at its core, the Bible is a book about marriage. From Genesis to Revelation, it has all the information pertaining to the who, what, when, where, why and how of marriage. The following is just a preview from the book of Proverbs:

■ **Dating and Courtship:** “There be three things which are too wonderful for me, yes, four which I know not: the way of an eagle in the air; the way of a serpent upon a rock; the way of a ship in the midst of the sea; and *the way of a man with a maid*” (30:18-19).

■ **Marriage:** “Whoso finds a wife finds a good thing, and obtains favor of the LORD” (18:22).

■ **Sex only within marriage:** “Drink waters out of your own cistern, and running waters out of your own well...Let your fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of your youth. Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy you at all times; and be you ravished always with her love” (5:15; 18-19).

■ **Childrearing:** “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Prov. 22:6).

■ **Solving marital disputes:** “A soft answer turns away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger” (15:1).

Is it any wonder that a generation not reading these verses does not marry as much?

Hebrews 13:4 makes the ultimate marriage statement: “Marriage is honorable in all...” According to *Strong’s Concordance of the Bible*, the word *honorable* means “valuable, that is, (objectively) costly, or (subjectively) honored, esteemed, or (figuratively) beloved.” Throughout the *King James Version*, this word is translated “dear,” “honorable” and “most precious.”

In other words, marriage is something valuable, costly, to be honored, esteemed, beloved, held dear, as something most precious in life.

Sadly, not many today can say they feel this way!

Marriage within God’s guidelines brings unparalleled blessings, the likes of which Proverbs calls “favor of the LORD.” What a contrast to the modern view of marriage! If people in younger generations were directed to pick up their Bibles, these verses would pop in front of their eyes! They would realize that they have been missing out by putting off something God calls “honorable.” They would realize that they have been led down the wrong path by society. And they would realize it is time to ask for directions.

### Old Paths

Recall Mr. Wilcox’s warning: “If today’s events in Europe, not to mention of the last century, tell us anything, it is that a generation of young adults ‘unmoored’ from the institutions of work, family, and civil society, and distrustful of their fellow citizens, can end up succumbing to the siren song of demagogues, especially if the economy dips into a depression.”

Jeremiah was a prophet of God who preached and wrote during one of the most difficult times of ancient Israel’s history—when Jerusalem fell into the hands of foreign rulers due to their disobedience of God’s laws.

Not coincidentally, Jeremiah wrote of a generation that had taken a wrong turn from God’s ways: “Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? No, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush...” (Jer. 6:15).

As a result, God advised His people to ask for directions: “Thus says the LORD, Stand you in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and you shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein” (vs. 16).

The Bible shows that Generation Y, X, and all other generations alive today face difficulties in their relationships because they do not look to God and His Word as the ultimate source of wisdom.

“Today’s twentysomething men and women get little in the way of constructive guidance on the topic of marriage,” the “Knot Yet” study showed. “To the extent marriage is a topic at all, it’s often framed as something best left for a young adult’s late twenties or thirties, often after a string of failed relationships. Media images have largely steered clear of addressing the central role that parenthood continues to play in the lives of most twentysomethings.

“Equally important, today’s relationship culture offers virtually no signposts for young adults seeking to navigate romance, sex, and relationships in ways that will be fruitful for their current lives and their future families.”

Schools do not teach effective marriage skills. Neither do educators, reli-

gionists, policymakers, the media, and fathers and mothers who have not themselves been taught to parent.

“Home economics” classes may include activities such as decorating an uncooked egg and pretending it is a baby, or taking a make-believe husband out for a picnic, but do not teach how to live with a spouse. Boys may be advised to read literature such as *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus*, but they enter adulthood with no idea of what women need, other than solving everything with “Yes, dear.”

Instead, they have been immersed in a culture in which people’s word is no longer their bond and the phrase “I do” simply means “sure, whatever” and “perhaps...”

Because 50 percent of Generation Y has divorced parents, they have not learned through observation that a healthy marriage takes diligence and involves years of character building and cooperation. No wonder it makes more sense to millennials to remain single longer rather than to start a family!

Millennials have been shortchanged by the idea

that marriage is merely a “tradition”—not an institution and a necessity for any stable society—along with the thought that they can be self-sufficient with no religion or Creator to guide them.

It is time to stop, retrace steps, and ask for directions. It is time to clear away any and all misconceptions about marriage. It is time to ask for the old paths.

Turning to the Bible is the only real solution.

For God’s direction on dating, courtship and marriage, including how you can have a successful and long-lasting one, read *Dating and Courtship – God’s Way* at [rcg.org/aadac](http://rcg.org/aadac), *You Can Build a Happy Marriage*, at [rcg.org/ycbahm](http://rcg.org/ycbahm), and *The Purpose of Marriage – Ever Obsolete?* at [rcg.org/tpomeo](http://rcg.org/tpomeo). All these informative books are free of charge and will help you better understand the concept of marriage.

Regardless of what path you may have started down, a wonderful and stable life with a loving spouse can be a reality for you. □



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## DISEASE

Continued from page 19

person starts with a fever, then nausea, vomiting, difficulty breathing, and bleeding inside and outside the body. It is believed to have multiple reservoir hosts including bats, gorillas, dogs and possibly pigs.

The comeback of the Ebola virus demonstrates the difficulty in effectively combating zoonotic diseases compared to other ailments.

*National Geographic* expanded on the struggle: “Smallpox, [for example], is not a zoonosis. It’s caused by a virus that infects [humans] and, in very exceptional cases, certain nonhuman primates, but not horses or rats or other species...Smallpox could be eradicated

because its virus, lacking ability to reside virtually anywhere other than in humans, couldn’t hide. Zoonotic pathogens can hide.”

“When a disease seems to disappear between outbreaks...its causal pathogen may indeed have died out, at least from the region—but then again, maybe not. Maybe it’s still lingering nearby, all around, within some reservoir host. A rodent? A bird? A butterfly? Possibly a bat? To reside undetected within a reservoir host is probably easiest wherever biological diversity is high and the ecosystem is relatively undisturbed. The converse is also true: Ecological disturbance causes diseases to emerge. Shake a tree, and things fall out.”

In short, these “disturbances” are increasing in frequency, leading to

increased animal-to-animal contact and ultimately animal-to-human contact. The byproduct is the spread of disease and a threat to basic human health.

### Reasons for Increase

The continuous and increasing spread of zoonotic disease has been tied to numerous factors.

One is increased world travel. Man traversing the planet has long been seen as a cause of the spread of disease. Centuries ago, people traveled by land via trade routes carrying goods from one place to another. Often, along with the exchange of goods and livestock, was an exchange of the foreign zoonotic organisms they carried.

Modern transportation has furthered this expansion as people and goods routinely crisscross the globe. Diseased



animals are still transported from place to place—though sometimes unintentionally. For instance, scientists believe West Nile Virus made its way to the United States in 1999 by mosquitos hiding inside airplane wheel wells.

Population density and the resulting poor sanitary conditions are also cited as reasons for the rapid spread of sickness. According to *populationeducation.org*, "...over 50% of the global population lives in urban areas. With more people living in dense conditions, there is frequent contact between more individuals, allowing disease transmission to easily occur."

Worsening environmental conditions are also believed to have a negative impact. Warmer climates and flooding in some areas have allowed certain ailments to flourish—such as cholera, malaria and dengue fever as the parasites that carry them thrive in these environments.

At the same time, drought can cause just as many problems as "viruses, protozoa, and bacteria can pollute both groundwater and surface water when rainfall decreases" (CDC). The lack of water also leads to diverse animal species congregating at or near diminishing water sources, which causes pathogens to spread to new hosts.

The list of reasons diseases are spreading includes other factors such as people's worsening diets, poor medical facilities, and overuse of antibiotics.

### Another Way to View Disease

Of the problems mankind has to overcome—lagging economies, food shortages, battles over religion, war, among others—disease remains a persistent foe. No amount of effort seems capable of making it go away completely. In fact, the more we do, the worse things seem to become.

Many see human beings as just "another species of animal." To them, disease is simply a natural element of human existence. Yet a review of Scripture sheds different light on how mankind *should* view the scourge of disease.

First, understand that when God completed Creation He looked over

everything He had done and called it "very good" (Gen. 1:31). This meant that it was perfect. God's handiwork, including the human body, was made to function without the threat of disease.

The apostle John provided a further glimpse into what God meant when he was inspired to record, "...I wish above all things that you may prosper and be in health, even as your soul [life] prospers" (III John 2). Disease was not intended as a "fact of life."

Yet the Creator also established bedrock laws and principles for mankind. One such law is the familiar rule of cause and effect: *if you do this—you can expect that*. Certain actions lead to consequences.

This principle manifested itself early on with a promise that disobedience would ultimately lead to death (Gen. 2:17). This plain statement opened the door for sickness and human suffering as a possibility.

Notice an exchange between God and the children of Israel found in the book of Leviticus in which He further explained the consequences of failing to obey instruction: "And if you will not be reformed by Me by these things, but will walk contrary unto Me; then will I also walk contrary unto you, and will punish you yet seven times for your sins. And I will bring a sword upon you, that shall avenge the quarrel of My covenant: and when you are gathered together within your cities, *I will send the pestilence among you; and you shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy*" (26:23-25).

Pestilence—disease outbreaks—were a consequence of failing to keep God's commands.

Another warning occurred in Deuteronomy 28: "But it shall come to pass, if you will not hearken unto the voice of the LORD your God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes which I command you this day; that all these curses shall come upon you, and overtake you... The LORD shall make the pestilence cleave unto you, until He have consumed you from off the land, whither you go to possess it. *The LORD shall smite you with a consumption, and*

*with a fever, and with an inflammation, and with an extreme burning, and with the sword, and with blasting [drought], and with mildew [flooding]; and they shall pursue you until you perish*" (vs. 15, 21-22).

Strong words! God not only described a people being pursued by disease, but He also described conditions that allow it to flourish.

Understand. Every instance of sickness and disease should not be viewed as a "curse from God" on a particular individual. Jesus made this principle clear when He said that some suffer not necessarily because of their personal sin but instead "that the works of God should be made manifest [obvious]..." (John 9:1-3).

Yet this does not negate the fact that poor decisions lead to poor consequences. This can be on a national level as was the case with ancient Israel or on an individual level when people disobey certain health principles and become sick, a topic also covered thoroughly in scripture. (For more information on ways to maintain good health and help avoid the onset of disease, read David C. Pack's informative booklet titled *God's Principles of Healthful Living* available at [rcg.org/glohl](http://rcg.org/glohl).)

Unknown to most, though, disease, especially its sudden increase and its connection with animals, has other implications.

### Pestilence in Prophecy

As with so many today, those with Christ when He walked the Earth wondered about prophecy—specifically the timing of His Second Coming and signs indicating the end times.

Remarkably, when asked, Jesus was forthcoming in His response. He told the disciples exactly what would occur and what to look for. Included in the "signs" or indications of the end was *increased* "pestilences" or plagues and disease epidemics (Matt. 24:3, 7).

The key is that there would be an *upsurge* in disease. This is obvious because disease is an age-old problem. Its proliferation, though, is an

indication of what the Bible refers to as the “end of the age.”

God’s Word goes further pronouncing what role animals will play. Read the following from the book of Revelation: “And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and *with the beasts of the earth*” (Rev. 6:8).

The last part of the verse means exactly what it says. During the end times, along with war and hunger, animals will be a key cause of death for many millions either through direct attacks or even more problematic, through the spread of zoonotic diseases—recall

Spanish flu killed up to 100 million people and Bubonic plague destroyed one-third of Earth’s population! What is coming will be *much* more severe.

Mr. Pack summarized the coming impact of disease in his extraordinary book *The Bible’s Greatest Prophecies Unlocked! – A Voice Cries Out*: “Disease will soon alter the course of history in a profound way. The coming disease pandemics will dwarf all that have previously occurred. Hundreds of millions will perish—and this will not only happen in poor, underdeveloped countries. Horrific epidemics, the likes of which have never been seen, will strike the world’s wealthiest nations—which will collapse from the impact. The ensuing chaos will affect you, and all of your

loved ones. Everything around you will change for the worse. Your life will be at risk.”

The pages of Mr. Pack’s book are filled with information that paints a crystal clear picture of what will slam into an unsuspecting world. Among other certainties, it thoroughly explains the Four Horsemen of Revelation, the Mark of the Beast, the Antichrist, and many other biblical concepts that have confused many.

To learn more about what is to come, read this unique volume available free of charge at [rcg.org/tbgpu](http://rcg.org/tbgpu).

Studying this book with an open Bible will forever change your view of prophecy—and the role of animals in it. □

## EUROPE

*Continued from page 7*

it was mutually beneficial and served to capture both the nation’s head (politics) and heart (religion).

Similarly, Charlemagne and Otto I ushered in the *Holy Roman Empire*, which began a tradition of being crowned by a pope. Napoleon, though not a Holy Roman emperor, also had the Catholic leader involved in his coronation.

In addition, Charles V believed it was his God-ordained mission to protect Christendom.

### Four Kingdoms

What makes these men the standard for European leadership? It was not that they were perfect. Many of them had deep flaws such as a penchant for overspending, being ruthlessly violent, using deception to get what they wanted, and holding petty grudges.

Instead, the answer to this question has everything to do with Justinian in AD 554. Most are unaware that this is a most crucial date in history. But to understand it, one must go much further back in time—again to the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II and the Neo-Babylonian Empire.

The king had a nightmare that vexed him. The details of the dream are

related in the biblical book of Daniel: “This image’s head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay” (Dan. 2:32-33).

In the account, the king did not know what this strange metal man meant until Daniel interpreted it.

Yet this vision—tucked in a biblical book few read—is far more important than you might realize! It offers absolute proof of what to look for in the future leadership of Europe.

Bible prophecy, which takes up a full one-third of the Book, can be likened to *history written in advance*. Foretelling events and bringing them to pass is one of God’s ways to allow mankind to PROVE the absolute authority of His Word.

Any open-minded person can do this by placing the words of the Bible next to the record of history.

Returning to the story, the king’s dream foretold a number of successive empires. Read Daniel 2:37: “You, O king [Nebuchadnezzar], are a king of kings: for the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory.” Verse 38 adds, “You are this head of gold.”

As always, the Bible interprets itself. Nebuchadnezzar and the Neo-Babylonian Empire represent the first

kingdom of gold. What are the other three empires?

Daniel later had his own dream, which offers additional clues. In his vision he saw “four great beasts” (7:3) that matched the four metals of gold, silver, bronze and iron that Nebuchadnezzar had dreamed about.

**Verse 4:** “The first was like a lion, and had eagle’s wings...” Again, this is Nebuchadnezzar’s empire.

**Verse 5:** “And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear...” This stood for the Medo-Persian Empire (558-330 BC), which had an army that overwhelmed its opponents with superior size and strength.

**Verse 6:** “After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it.” This was the Greco-Macedonian Empire (333-31 BC). In just 13 years, its leader Alexander the Great amassed the largest kingdom in the ancient world. This can be likened to the unexpected swiftness of a leopard pouncing on its prey. Also, upon his death, the empire was given to his four generals, here likened to four heads.

**Verse 7:** “After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a *fourth beast*, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great



iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and *it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it*; and it had ten horns.” This is the Roman Empire, the most efficient, effective, and longest-lasting empire of human history.

History and prophecy align perfectly!

To remove any doubt, the Bible makes clear what is meant by the term “beasts” in verse 17: “These great beasts, which are four, *are four kings*, which shall arise out of the earth.”

Kings must have a kingdom or government. The word “beast” is symbolically used to represent a governmental system.

### Throughout History

Although it does not seem so on the surface, the fourth beast—government system—of Daniel 7 has much to do with Justinian in AD 554 and the trends to watch for in modern Europe.

A parallel to this beast is found in the book of Revelation. Chapter 13 states: “And I [the apostle John] stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and *ten horns*, and upon his horns *ten crowns*, and...the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion...” (vs. 1-2).

Recall that in Daniel, the beast representing the Roman Empire “was diverse from all the beasts that were before it.” The Romans spread and devoured the territory of the three previous kingdoms. They also had the top characteristics of these previous empires: the speed and cunning of a leopard, the military toughness of a bear, and the grandeur and ferocity of a lion.

Also notice that in both Daniel 7 and Revelation 13, the beasts have 10 horns. The Bible defines these: “And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings [governments] that shall arise” (Dan. 7:24).

Read on in Revelation 13: “And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was

healed; and all the world wondered after the beast” (vs. 3).

Putting this picture together, the Bible states that the Roman Empire would have 10 distinct “horns” (kingdoms) and that it would have a “deadly wound,” which would later be “healed.”

History clearly supports every part of this!

Ancient Rome enjoyed an extended period of power and splendor, which was followed by a long and steady decline. In AD 476, it was finally overrun by a series of three Germanic tribes, the Vandals, Heruli and Ostrogoths.

This date marks the start of the “deadly wound”—it looked like the Roman Empire was dead!—and the three tribes are the first three horns.

Yet, in AD 554, Justinian’s army recaptured Italy and led his Imperial Restoration. Rome was back! This was the *fourth* of the 10 horns.

The next four horns were Charlemagne’s Frankish Kingdom, Otto I’s Holy Roman Empire, Charles V’s Hapsburg dynasty, and Napoleon’s kingdom.

From AD 554 until Napoleon was forced to abdicate the throne in 1814, this system repeatedly united Europe for a period of 1,260 years.

After this deadly wound was healed, the Bible states that “power was given unto him [the Roman governmental system] to continue *forty and two months*” (vs. 5).

What does 42 months have to do with 1,260 years? *Real Truth* Editor-in-Chief David C. Pack answers this in his booklet *Who or What Is the Beast of Revelation?*

He writes: “Ezekiel 4:4-6 and Numbers 14:34 show that, in prophetic fulfillment, each day counts for a year. This is critical to understand in regard to many other prophecies. Without recognizing this principle, all of these Bible prophecies have remained closed—sealed—to those who sought to understand them. How does ‘a day for a year’ apply here?”

“Forty-two months is three and a half years. God’s sacred years contain 360 days. 360 days times 3 1/2

equals 1,260 days—or 1,260 years in prophecy.”

Astonishingly, AD 554 to 1814—from Justinian to Napoleon—is exactly 1,260 years!

There was another weaker resurrection of the Roman system (ninth horn) that began when Giuseppe Garibaldi united Italy in 1870. This culminated with the Axis powers during WWII.

This leaves one final time for the governmental system to reappear in Europe. Revelation 17 describes it as one “not yet come” (vs. 10).

### One Last Time

The FINAL restoration—which will have the good *and* bad traits of this system—will need a leader. One with *broad appeal* to unite Europe and establish its leading role on the world stage. Revelation 13 states: “And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship [or pay homage to] him...” (vs. 8).

He will need *political prowess* to enact economic changes to allow abundant prosperity. Revelation 18 states that “the merchants of the earth” will become “rich through the abundance of [Europe’s] delicacies” (vs. 3).

He will also have incredible *military might*: “Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him?” (Rev. 13:4).

As happened from Justinian to Napoleon, he will have *relentless drive* and close *religious ties*.

In both Mark 13:37 and Luke 21:36, Jesus Christ had a simple command: “watch.” By this He meant prophetic trends and conditions as outlined in God’s Word. More details regarding the prophetic beasts mentioned in the Bible can be found in Mr. Pack’s thorough booklet *Who or What Is the Beast of Revelation?* It is available at [rcg.org/wowitbor](http://rcg.org/wowitbor). It also explains *why* Christ said to keep an eye on world events.

Your Bible, coupled with history, shows you the signs to look for in both Europe and the entire world. Now, it is your job to WATCH. □



■ **EDUCATION AT EVERY AGE:** An elderly woman receives computer help from a teenage student in Barnet, England (Dec. 4, 2013).

PHOTO: BETHANY CLARKE/GETTY IMAGES

## LEARNING

Continued from page 10

stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? Or who laid the corner stone thereof?" (38:4-6).

These questions, related to how the Earth was formed and how it floats through outer space, were only the beginning. For four chapters, God asks Job basic questions about Creation—none of which Job as a physical human being could answer.

This exchange alone proves the point that we can never stop learning because there is so much to learn!

God's knowledge and understanding far exceeds that of man. However, His goal has never been to keep this knowledge to Himself. The Bible itself is proof of this!

The same God who created the heavens and Earth also created the brain and its capacity to never stop learning. There is a reason for this.

In David C. Pack's book *The Awesome Potential of Man*, he states: "People do not instinctively know everything that they need to know to operate successfully throughout their lives. They must acquire ever more knowledge as they grow older and as more demands are placed upon them."

Continuing, Mr. Pack writes, "God gave Adam and Eve 'dominion' over the earth (Gen. 1:26). This meant that man would be able and need to learn and produce—to generate—much knowledge as he subjugated the planet."

The opportunity to have dominion (the power or right of governing and controlling) over the earth is a shocking reality that most do not understand.

The Author of the Bible actually promises man "dominion over the works of His hands" (Psa. 8:6). When you consider the vast limitless universe, this is a statement that certainly should arouse curiosity and one that *requires* additional study.

Can this possibly be true?

Another verse that expands this statement is found in Hebrews: "What is man, that You are mindful of him? Or the son of man that You visit him? You made him a little lower than the angels; You crowned him with glory and honor, and did set him over the works of Your hands: You have put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him" (2:6-8). Some translations of this say "the universe" instead of "all things."

We have been given the ability—and quite literally the charge—to never stop learning. Not only is it our intended destiny to inherit the Earth, but God has reserved the universe for all who accept His way of life!

These are stunning promises! You most likely have never heard such words as these, and yet, there they are in your own Bible!

There is much more to learn about your awesome potential and no better time to start than right now. Order a free copy of *The Awesome Potential of Man*. Available at [rcg.org/tapom](http://rcg.org/tapom), it goes into much greater detail about what is in store for mankind's future.

Learning is something that one should continue to do for a lifetime. Make it something you do every day. Never stop learning because the opportunities before you are out of this world! □



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## Seven Laws that Guarantee

# SUCCESS!



1

### Set Proper Goals

Circumstances generally dictate the course of people's lives. To be a success, you must set goals—with the *right* goal being all-important.



2

### Get the Right Education

People do not instinctively know how to function in life. Right education involves understanding how to *live*, not just how to earn a living.



3

### Maintain Good Health

Poor health can rob a person of true success. If you lack energy and are sick, you will never accomplish as much as you would like.



4

### Develop Drive

In order to move toward success, you must have drive—the ability to push oneself to achieve. This is not natural and must be developed.



5

### Practice Resourcefulness

Things can and will go wrong. One must be able to maneuver around and overcome obstacles that are sure to appear along the path to true success.



6

### Apply Perseverance

Achieving lasting success requires stick-to-it-iveness—the ability to never give up because of unforeseen circumstances.



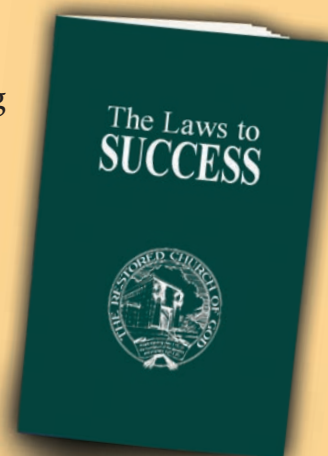
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### The Final Law—the Hidden Key to Success

The all-important seventh law is one few understand. But you can learn how this law will give purpose and meaning to your life by reading *The Laws to Success*.

*Begin changing  
your life today!*

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## PERSONAL

Continued from page 2

Optical frequencies regularly oscillate at one million-billion (1,000,000,000,000,000—*one quadrillion*) times per second. By using lasers and “cooled down” mercury ions, scientists have harnessed God’s precision to better measure time. Optical clocks only slip by *ONE SECOND EVERY 30 BILLION YEARS!* This is *1,000 times* more accurate than atomic clocks!

All human watchmakers use extraordinary precision in their work. *Quartz* watches measure time by counting the exact number of oscillations of a quartz crystal through use of a digital counter. *Digital* clocks use the oscillations of quartz crystals or power lines (60 cycles per second in the United States), but may also count through use of digital counters. *Grandfather* clocks use the swing of a pendulum, once every second and recorded by metal gears inside the clock, to keep time.

As with the movement of the heavens, men have learned to capture the reliability of Cesium 133 atoms and the movement of cooled mercury ions to count time. Their number of oscillations per second *never* varies. Could this perfect order be the product of an *accident*?

In summary, only with great time and effort, the finest watchmakers in the world can, at best, devise several kinds of *relatively imprecise* clocks. Can any honest, fair-minded person then believe that the three *highly precise* clocks—the heavens, atomic and optical clocks—came about by *accident*? In other words, are we to believe that while very sophisticated, *humanly devised* watches required the effort and ingenuity of skilled, intelligent men to create them, clocks of far greater sophistication, precision and design developed *on their own*? How utterly ridiculous!

You have seen ABSOLUTE PROOF that only the “Greatest Watchmaker” could have devised these “greatest watches.”

### First Law of Thermodynamics

What is the truth of modern science regarding the origin of all matter in the universe? Do scientists tell us that it has *always existed*? Or have they determined that there was a moment in time in which all matter came into existence? The answer to the second question is, yes! But what is the *proof* that this is true?

The FIRST LAW OF THERMODYNAMICS is stated as follows: matter and energy can be neither created nor destroyed. There are no natural processes that can alter either matter or energy in this way. This means that there is no *new* matter or energy coming into existence and there is no *new* matter or energy passing out of existence. All who state that the universe came into existence from *nothing* violate the first law of thermodynamics, which was established by the very scientific community who now seem willing to ignore it. In summary, this law plainly demonstrates that the universe, and all matter and energy within it, must have had a divine origin—a specific moment in which it was created by someone who was all-powerful.

With the coming of the Atomic Age, beginning with the discovery of radium in 1898 by Madame Curie, came the knowledge that all radioactive elements continually give off radiation. Consider! Uranium has an atomic weight of 238.0. As it decomposes, it releases a helium atom three times. Each helium atom has a weight of 4. With the new weight of 226.0, uranium becomes radium. Radium continues to give off additional atoms until eventually the end product becomes the heavy inert element called *lead*. This takes a tremendous amount of time. While the process of uranium turning into radium is very long, the radium turns into lead in 1,590 years.

What are we saying? There was a point in time when the uranium could not have existed, because it always breaks down in a highly systematic, controlled way. It is not stable like lead or other elements. It breaks down. This

means there was a specific moment in time when all radioactive elements came into existence. Remember, all of them—uranium, radium, thorium, radon, polonium, francium, protactinium and others—have not existed forever. This represents absolute proof that *matter came into existence* or, in other words, *matter has not always existed!*

This flies directly in the face of evolutionary thought—that everything gradually evolved into something else. Here is the problem. You cannot have *something* slowly come into existence *from nothing!* Matter could not have come into existence by itself. No rational person could believe that the entire universe—including all of the radioactive elements that prove there was a specific time of beginning—gradually came into existence *BY ITSELF!*

Through your own efforts, try to build something—anything—from *nothing*. Even with your creative power engaged in the effort, you would never be able to do it. You would not be able—in a hundred lifetimes of trying—to produce a single thing from NOTHING!

Can any doubter believe that *everything in the entirety of the universe*, in all of its exquisite detail, came into existence completely by itself? Be honest. Accept facts. This is proof that the existing natural realm demands the existence of a Great Creator!

### Second Law of Thermodynamics

The SECOND LAW OF THERMODYNAMICS is best summarized by saying that everything moves toward *disorder*—or a condition known as *entropy*. This bears some explanation and we will consider several examples.

Remember that evolutionists teach that everything is constantly evolving into a higher and more complex order. In other words, they believe things continue to get better and better instead of worse and worse.

If water being heated on a stove is at 150 degrees Fahrenheit, and the burner is turned off, the temperature



will drop instead of rise. It will move toward colder rather than hotter. If a ball is placed on a hill, it will always roll downhill and not uphill. Energy used to perform any particular task changes from usable energy to unusable in the performing of that task. It will always go from a higher energy level to a lower energy level—where less and less energy is available for use.

When applied to the universe, the second law of thermodynamics indicates that the universe is winding down—moving toward *disorder* or *entropy*—not winding up or moving toward more perfect order and structure. In short, *the entire universe is WINDING DOWN!*

Even evolutionists admit that the theory of evolution and the second law of thermodynamics are completely incompatible with each other. Consider: “Regarding the second law of thermodynamics [universally accepted scientific law which states that all things left to themselves will tend to run down] or the law of entropy, it is observed, ‘It would hardly be possible to conceive of two more completely opposite principles than this principle of entropy increase and the principle of evolution. Each is precisely the converse of the other. As [Aldous] Huxley defined it, evolution involves a continual *increase* of order, of organization, of size, of complexity...It seems axiomatic that both cannot possibly be true. But there is no question whatever that the second law of thermodynamics is true’” (*The Twilight of Evolution*).

Like a top or a yo-yo, the universe must have been “wound up.” Since the universe is constantly winding down,

the second law of thermodynamics looms before us in the form of a great question: *who wound it up?* The only plausible answer is *God!*

### Theory Debunked

We have established that Creation demands a Creator. Where does this leave evolution?

The theory of evolution is shot full of inconsistencies. Evolutionists have seized on many theories, within the overall *theory* of evolution, in an attempt to explain the origins of plants, animals, the heavens, and the Earth.

Over and over, these “theorists” try to explain *how* life evolved from inanimate material into more complex life forms until it reached the pinnacle—human beings.

Yet, as one geologist wrote, “It must be significant that nearly all the evolutionary stories I learned as [a] student... have been debunked” (*The Nature of the Fossil Record, Proceedings of the Geological Association*).

Perhaps the biggest reason that so many theories within the overall theory of evolution collapse is because they contain terrible logic requiring great leaps in faith to believe. Here is one example of a “debunked” theory: “Many evolutionists have tried to argue that humans are 99% similar chemically to apes and blood precipitation tests do indicate that the chimpanzee is people’s closest relative. Yet regarding this we must observe the following: ‘Milk chemistry indicates that the donkey is man’s closest relative.’ ‘Cholesterol level tests indicate that the garter snake is man’s closest relative.’ ‘Tear enzyme chemistry indicates

that the chicken is man’s closest relative.’ ‘On the basis of another type of blood chemistry test, the butter bean is man’s closest relative’” (*The Twilight of Evolution*).

### Complexity of Life

Everyone has witnessed explosions. Have you ever seen one that was orderly? Or one that created a watch or a clock? Or one that produced a single thing of exquisite design—instead of the certain result of chaos and destruction? If you threw a million hand grenades, you would see them produce chaos and destruction a million times! There would never be an exception.

Consider the following quotes, involving the likelihood of an explosion creating the entire natural realm of life all around us on Earth—let alone the beautiful magnificence and order seen no matter how far one looks out into space.

Dr. B.G. Ranganathan said, “... the probability of life originating from accident is comparable to the unabridged dictionary resulting from an explosion in a printing shop” (*Origins?*). And this only speaks to the likelihood of *any life at all*, rather than the most highly complex forms such as large animals or human beings—let alone all the different kinds of life that exist today.

In this Personal, we have explained just a tiny fraction of all there is to know about this subject.

For more *undeniable* proof of the existence of God, be sure to read my booklet *Does God Exist?* at [rcg.org/dge](http://rcg.org/dge). □



Does God Exist?

YOU CAN KNOW THE TRUTH!

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## CRIME &amp; PUNISHMENT

## Police Deaths Up By More Than 50 Percent in 2014

The growing influence of radical groups combined with a noted increase in overall lawlessness is sparking a greater number of police killings across the United States.

“This year is on track to be one of the most deadly for police officers since 2001, when terrorists hit the World Trade Center...” *The Washington Times* reported.

The newspaper also stated, “Overall, 62 police officers have been killed this year, compared with 45 this time last year.”

While the numbers are not overwhelmingly large, the media outlet stated: “A few years ago, we really started to see a rash of violence against law enforcement, so much so that the community had to band together to address that situation from the top, starting at the Department of Justice,” said Steve Groeninger, a spokesman for the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund. “There was a focus on training and safety and responding to calls. The point was to make sure that each and every officer made it home at the end of their shift. It’s disheartening to see these numbers tick up again.”

According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the majority of deaths are caused by firearms. For example, “Of officers killed in 2012 [the most recent data published], most (44) were killed with firearms. Of these, 32 were killed with handguns,” the organization reported in its yearly “Law Enforcement Officers Killed & Assaulted” study.

“Over the last 25 years or so there’s been a gradual erosion toward authority figures and of respect for police officers. It’s highly visible,” Jim Pasco, executive director of the Fraternal Order of Police, the nation’s largest police officers union, told *The Washington Times*.

He continued, “The vast majority of people respect police officers and what they do, but there’s always going to be that deranged minority with unfocused rage and resentment.” □



■ **FALLEN COMRADES:** Above, Los Angeles Police Department officers wear a badge honoring fallen officer Roberto Sanchez during a memorial service in Los Angeles, California (May 14, 2014). Below, the coffin of fallen New York Police Department officer Dennis Guerra is brought out from St. Rose of Lima Church in Far Rockaway, Queens, New York (April 14, 2014).

PHOTOS: MARK BOSTER-POOL/GETTY IMAGES (ABOVE); SPENCER PLATT/GETTY IMAGES (BELOW)





# “Islamic State” Could Eclipse al-Qaida as Dominant Militant Group

The emergence of the Islamic State, formerly known as ISIS or Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, has led some authorities to regard the faction as a potential replacement to al-Qaida, the longtime global militant Islamic group.

ISIS, which began in 2003 in Iraq, initially joined forces with al-Qaida. Both Sunni Muslim organizations were united in their conflict against the West. After internal squabbles, however, the larger, more established al-Qaida renounced association with the emerging group—an unprecedented move.

*The Washington Post* quoted a statement by al-Qaida’s General Command, in which their leadership declared that “ISIS ‘is not a branch of the [al-Qaida]

group... does not have an organizational relationship with it and [al-Qaida] is not the group responsible for their actions.”

Both organizations have the goal of the establishment of a caliphate or an Islamic state, but seem to differ on how to achieve this. Over the last several months, they have shown themselves to be fundamentally different organizations.

Al-Qaida’s governmental structure was developed and long operated under the military principle of “centralization of decision and decentralization of execution” (ibid.). Though they achieved some success under the leadership of Osama bin Laden, al-Qaida’s founder,

account-keeping, and centrally controlled but locally implemented military-political coordination.”

But unlike al-Qaida, it has also “developed an increasingly efficient model of governance, capable of simultaneously implementing harsh medieval justice and a whole range of modern social services” (ibid.).

Mr. Lister described al-Qaida as willing to take a more “gradual approach to success” while the Islamic State has a “hunger for rapid results.”

Another factor in the deviation from al-Qaida is how much actual territory the Islamic State controls. Analyst Shiraz Maher noted in *Business Insider* that “ISIS controls more territory than the governments of Israel and Lebanon. It controls nearly a third of Iraq alone, according to the Long War Journal.’ Iraq has a population of 35 million, and is the fourth most populous member of the Arab League.”

The influence of the Islamic State is mostly due to current volatility in the region, namely the collapse of the Iraqi government and three-year Syrian civil war. Being able to control land in both of these regions has been a major factor in making a true Islamic state become a reality. Because of its progress, the group declared in late June that the caliphate has been reinstated. □

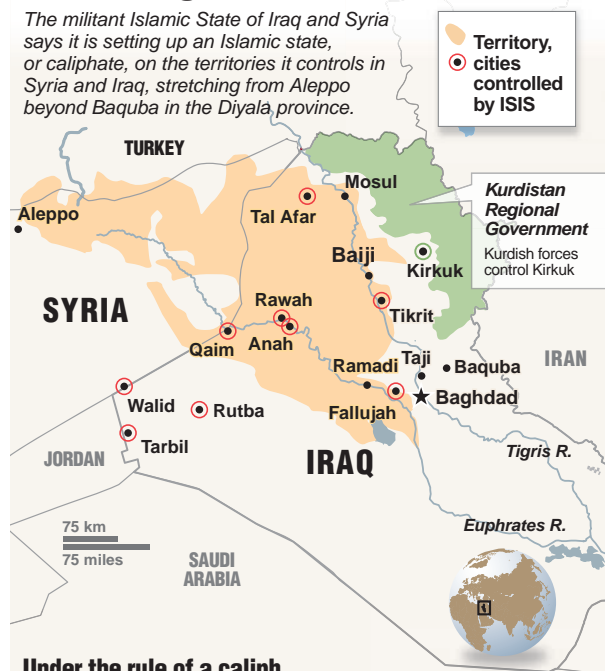
the organization has of late become more fragmented.

The Islamic State’s leadership appears to have strengthened al-Qaida’s original approach, but with some key differences.

Charles Lister of the Brookings Institute told *CNN*, “...ISIS has evolved as a tightly controlled group with ‘an almost obsessive level of bureaucracy,

## Declaring an Islamic state

The militant Islamic State of Iraq and Syria says it is setting up an Islamic state, or caliphate, on the territories it controls in Syria and Iraq, stretching from Aleppo beyond Baquba in the Diyala province.



### Under the rule of a caliph

- A caliphate is an Islamic state ruled by a caliph, or religious leader thought by his followers to be the successor of Mohammed
- The first caliphate was established after Mohammed’s death in 632, and caliphs controlled the Middle East and North Africa for centuries

- Turkish leader Kemal Ataturk abolished the last widely accepted caliphate in 1924, after the fall of the Ottoman Empire

© 2014 MCT  
Source: McClatchy Washington Bureau, BBC, AP, Reuters, The Long War Journal



■ **FLEEING ISIS:** A refugee family takes shelter under a truck. They are part of over 1,000 Iraqis who have fled fighting in and around the city of Mosul, Iraq (July 1, 2014).

PHOTO: SPENCER PLATT/GETTY IMAGES



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# THE REAL TRUTH

## 100 ISSUES AND COUNTING...

