

MARCH-APRIL 2022

THE

RCG.ORG/REALTRUTH

REAL TRUTH™

A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING



The 21st Century Queen

**Earth's Galactic Position
Investigated!**

**The Problem with
Protesting**

**What Makes Us Human
Is It 'Overlooked' DNA?**

**7 Signs of a
Falling Nation**

THE
REAL TRUTH[™]
A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING

VOL. XX | NO. 2 | MARCH-APRIL 2022

A R T I C L E S

RCG.ORG/REALTRUTH



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION: JODY E. LYDICK

**What Makes Us Human
Is It ‘Overlooked’ DNA?**

Scientists stumbled upon an unlikely answer hidden in the part of our DNA that has previously been considered useless. This discovery is just the start of what makes our minds unique.

Page 8

FRONT COVER: A portrait of Queen Elizabeth II by Andrew Festing for the Royal Hospital in Chelsea.

TIM GRAHAM PHOTO LIBRARY VIA GETTY IMAGES

CREDITS: All photos from Getty Images unless otherwise noted. Pages 16-17, 19-22, 31-33 contain information from Reuters and The Associated Press.

**Personal from the Editor-in-Chief
Your Marriage Can Be Happy!**
Page 1

7 Signs of a Falling Nation

No government, kingdom or society of men lasts forever. Here are seven factors that contributed to ancient Rome’s demise—warning signs that exist today within the United States and Britain.

Page 4

**France, Belgium and the Netherlands
Identities Foretold Millennia Ago**

Their ancient origins are unknown to most—yet are key to understanding what lies in their future!

Page 11

The 21st Century Queen

Queen Elizabeth II marked 70 years on the throne this year. The British monarchy’s longevity reveals a prophetic reason for the throne in London.

Page 16

The Problem with Protesting

Demonstrators may mean well, but they often fail to see a fatal flaw in their tactics that keeps them from bringing lasting change.

Page 19

Earth’s Galactic Position Investigated!

Our planet’s location within our solar system and galaxy is more unique than you could imagine.

Page 23

World News Desk

Page 31

HOW THIS MAGAZINE IS PAID FOR:

The Real Truth[™] is made possible by the voluntary, freely given tithes and offerings of the members of The Restored Church of God[®], 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
rcg.org/realtruth

PUBLISHER/EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
DAVID C. PACK

MANAGING EDITOR
EDWARD L. WINKFIELD

SENIOR EDITOR
BRADFORD G. SCHLEIFER

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
SAMUEL C. BAXTER

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

DAVID C. PACK
SAMUEL C. BAXTER
JUSTIN M. FRAZIER
WULPHERT DE GRAAF
ANDREW J. HOLCOMBE
RICHARD O. LEE
DAVID J. LITAVSKY
FRANK LYDICK
KENNETH M. OREL
GARRICK R. OXLEY
TIMOTHY D. RANNEY
DOMINIC J. RIVARD
BRADFORD G. SCHLEIFER
NESTOR A. TORO
F. JACO VILJOEN
VIDAL N. WACHUKU
EDWARD L. WINKFIELD

EDITORIAL ASSISTANTS
MELISSA M. HOLCOMBE
DAVID J. LITAVSKY
GARRICK R. OXLEY

ART/GRAPHICS
FRANK LYDICK
CHAUNTEL A. HOUK
DARNITRA D. JACKSON
JODY E. LYDICK
SARAH O. VIDAL

WEBSITE SERVICES
BRADFORD G. SCHLEIFER
ANGELA K. BAXTER
AMANDA B. DODD

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.

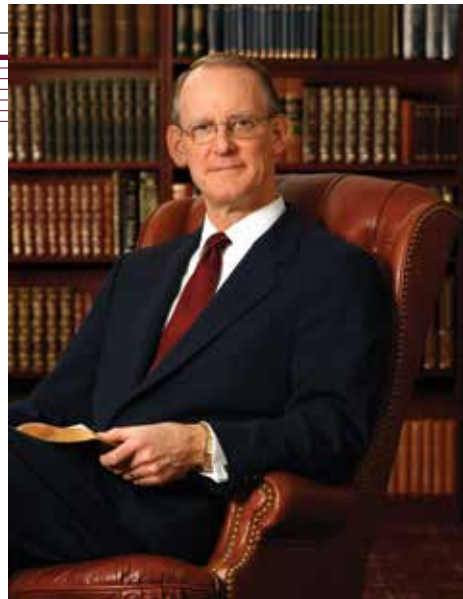
Copyright © 2022, The Restored Church of God. Printed in the USA. All rights reserved.

The Restored Church of God is not responsible for the return of unsolicited articles and photos.

Scriptures are quoted from the King James (or Authorized) Version of the Bible, unless otherwise noted.

PERSONAL FROM

David C. Fack



Your Marriage Can Be Happy!

THE WORLD IS exploding with problems. Much *knowledge* is available about most of them, but little *understanding*. The breakdown of marriage and the family is a classic example. Seemingly everyone knows it is happening, but no one knows what it *means*—or what to do about it.

Ever greater numbers of people are questioning the institution of marriage. Many are concerned about where current trends are heading. Some question whether marriage can even survive. Many get married on their own terms or only on a trial basis. Millions simply live together, unmarried—and increasing numbers now enter “same-sex” partnerships. Other millions have come to believe living single is the best state.

Why is all of this happening?

Religion, education, science and society do not know the true purpose of marriage. They do not even know if marriage *has* a purpose. And many couples do reflect that they are together with no purpose.

Most married people are *unhappy*—with many a virtual study in misery. They have no idea what to *do* about

it, or where to turn for answers. Millions stumble along, bouncing from one marital problem to another, never knowing *how* to address them—let alone solve them!

How many *really* happy married couples do you know?—and are you even sure of these? Is your marriage truly happy? Are you enjoying the life that you anticipated? Statistics suggest the answer is probably “no.”

Married life has been the brunt of endless jokes, where traditional conduct and the roles of husbands and wives are ridiculed—and depicted as a bondage only the foolish enter. Great numbers have come to equate marriage with surrendering “freedom” to a lesser, unhappy state of existence.

Others choose to marry, sincerely believing they will find perfect bliss—will “live on love”—only to discover that true happiness is far from automatic. Some even conclude—often within *days*—that marriage was the worst decision of their lives.

Sadly, so many enter marriage with no understanding, no preparation, no training, and no idea of how to achieve a lifetime of happiness with their chosen partner.

Most couples spend more time planning for a one-day *wedding* than for the lifelong *marriage* that should follow. As a result, half of all marriages fail, ending in

divorce, often with former partners becoming *mortal enemies!* Other couples are just as unhappy, but perhaps cannot afford a divorce, or stay together only because of the children or other social or business reasons.

How tragic! And how completely unnecessary!

Programmed to Fail

Why have so few been able to find even a measure of the enjoyment they originally believed marriage would bring? Why have so many others decided to simply live together, avoiding commitment, thus artificially reducing the already skyrocketing number of divorces? Why do so many openly admit that they do not *trust* their mates? Why do over 80 percent of marriages experience adultery? Why such confusion about marriage and its purpose?

What has brought the once sacred institution of marriage to such a *deplorable state*?

What happened is no accident.

Consider how marriage is routinely portrayed in the media. Wholesome television programs from the 50s, 60s and early 70s about the family—such as *Ozzie and Harriet*, *Leave It to Beaver*, and *Little House on the Prairie*—have been replaced by *The Simpsons*, *Modern Family* and *Keeping Up with the Kardashians*, or worse.

Books and movies have also accelerated this decline, and in every way. Fornication, cohabitation, adultery, homosexuality and every other conceivable “alternative lifestyle,” now including same-sex “marriage,” have been depicted uncounted thousands of times in the media. Invariably, programs, movies and books have portrayed immorality as exciting, fascinating, mysterious—and the virtual “norm” for what is now the large majority.

Their impact on marriage has been stunning. In fact, marriage has become a laughingstock. Wholesome images of marriages, families and role models of the past have almost disappeared. Sadly, millions have copied

new, modern role models, discarding traditional marriages and families as obsolete relics that history has properly scrapped.

Recent generations have been conditioned to believe marriage is better “the second time around.” By this logic, the *third* marriage would be even better!

Accompanying these trends has been a corresponding decline in traditional values and the importance of character. This trend is worldwide. Under constant attack, standards of right and wrong—good and bad—old-fashioned “righteousness” and “unrighteousness”—have been blurring and crumbling. How many people any longer even speak of character, once called virtue?

With the steep decline in the most basic character has come an unwillingness to remain committed to vows exchanged on the wedding day. With the near disappearance of ethics, standards and basic knowledge of right and wrong has come the assumption that when marriage difficulties arise—as they inevitably do with imperfect human beings—couples should simply take the easy way out—divorce!

The Author of Marriage

Why do so few understand there are great principles—transcendent spiritual LAWS!—governing what most think is merely a *civil agreement*? How many recognize that men and women have separate, different, God-ordained roles that must be understood for marriage to succeed? How many couples have been actively taught the real *purpose* of marriage? Most no longer even know the origin of marriage, let alone the vital answers to these and other important related questions!

The answers involve *revealed* knowledge—knowledge men *cannot themselves discern*. God must reveal it.

In place of revealed truth, modern education has taught the great evolutionary lie—that life is continually evolving to a higher state. Scoffers, preferring to believe that human beings are a product of dumb luck, dismiss the

biblical account that God supernaturally created two actual people—Adam and Eve—and then identified them as history’s first married couple.

Of course, those who believe the unproven, and in fact easily disproven, *fiction* of evolution must also believe that, at some point, *men* devised the marriage institution. Believing otherwise is incompatible with evolution. One cannot have it both ways. Either God created marriage—or men did.

But human beings did NOT create marriage! Therefore, apart from God they cannot know its true purpose—or the KEYS to decades of happiness with the *same person*.

It is not our purpose here to prove God exists or that the Bible is His inspired Word. We have several booklets, brochures and articles that address these subjects. We start with the fact that the Almighty God, who designed and made the heavens and the Earth, also designed and created marriage.

Divine Institution

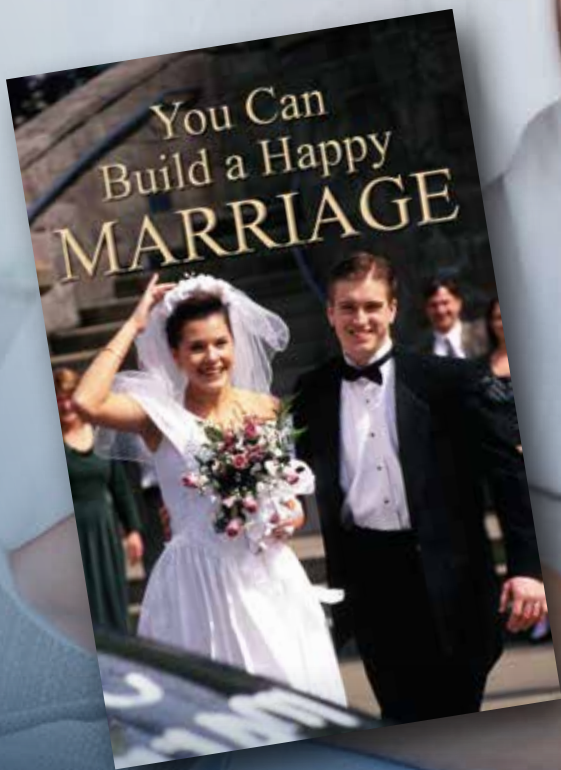
Though marriage appears to be merely a physical union, starting with a wedding ceremony performed by a man, it is actually a *divine institution*. As the true Author of marriage, God understands what makes it succeed, bringing supreme happiness and joy—or fail, bringing divorce and broken lives. This same God clearly reveals this knowledge in His Word.

For every effect, there is a cause. When a marriage experiences all the right effects, it is because right CAUSES have been understood and correct principles practiced. When a marriage is filled with problems of every sort, right causes have been either unknown or ignored.

The Creator God designed marriage to be a source of great happiness, something for which everyone yearns. *You* can have an exciting, happy, successful marriage—but only if you follow God’s prescribed formula. This personal reveals the formula—the causes!—behind a happy marriage. It introduces the truth of how to build a

Please see **PERSONAL**, page 28

Lasting Happiness Is Possible!



With divorce so common in today's society, the idea of "growing old together" with a spouse can seem like a fairy tale. Yet the Bible provides bedrock, time-tested principles that—if applied—can ensure your marriage lasts, and is filled with joy. Read the booklet *You Can Build a Happy Marriage* at rcg.org/ycbahrn to ensure you and your spouse keep your vows for life.

7 Signs of a Falling Nation



No government, kingdom or society of men lasts forever. Here are seven factors that contributed to ancient Rome's demise—warning signs that exist today within the United States and Britain.

IN AN INTERVIEW with *Financial Times*, U.S. Comptroller General David Walker stated that the nation's government "is on a 'burning platform' of unsustainable policies and practices with fiscal deficits, chronic healthcare underfunding, immigration, and overseas military commitments threatening a crisis if action is not taken soon..."

The article added, "Mr. Walker warned that there were 'striking similarities' between America's current situation and the factors that brought down Rome, including 'declining moral values and political civility at home, an over-confident and over-extended military in foreign lands and fiscal irresponsibility by central government.'"

He also said, "I'm trying to sound an alarm and issue a wake-up call."

Realize that Mr. Walker's interview happened *15 years ago*. It could not ring truer for the U.S. today.

History reveals that all governments, empires and kingdoms of men, no matter how grand, no matter how powerful, ultimately fall. It happened to ancient Egypt, Assyria and Babylon. Even Rome was not exempt. Though it dominated much of Europe, Northern Africa, the Middle East and parts of the Near East, and lasted for 500 years, the Roman Empire ultimately fell.

There is an old and popular saying: "Rome was not built in a day." Likewise, the Roman Empire did not fall in one night; its decline was gradual. Not long after it rose to world dominance, several factors were already at work contributing to the empire's demise.

Similarly, these factors are at work among the societies of the American

and British peoples—and serve as warning signs of a civilization destined to fall.

The Family Unit

Few understand that the family unit is the basic building block of every thriving society. Within the family, young minds are first taught the importance of building character, controlling one's emotions, setting worthwhile goals, striving for excellence—or at least this *should* be the case, as it was generations ago.

At the start of the Roman Empire, fathers took seriously their role in properly instructing, training and educating their sons, and mothers taught their daughters as well. The example of strong and active parents daily ingrained into children the importance of obedience, deference to civic authority and respect for the laws of the land.

But as new generations came of age, the family weakened and fractured. Husbands and wives gave in to the pulls of human nature to engage in widespread adultery, inevitably leading to increasing rates of broken marriages. Divorce for virtually any reason became legal. Instead of *getting* a divorce, all one spouse had to do was *consider* himself or herself divorced. The marriage was through.

Likewise, the family unit in America, Britain, Australia, Canada and other nations of the West is under constant assault. Broken marriages and fractured households are now the norm.

Few fathers exercise a strong hand in teaching, guiding and correcting their young, often leaving mothers to fill both parental roles.

Many children grow up pampered and catered to, never learning to accept and recover from setbacks—never being taught to "rise up before

the hoary head, and honor the face of the old man" (Lev. 19:32), which is connected to fearing God—never instructed to think of others before themselves.

They live in a fantasy world in which they "must" have smartphones, they "need" their privacy, they "have rights."

The British and American peoples (like their forefathers, the ancient Israelites) ignore God's counsel: "Stand you in the *old ways*, and see, and ask for the *old paths*" (Jer. 6:16).

The birthright nations of today respond the same way as did their forefathers, ancient Israel: "*We will not walk therein*" (same verse).

Modern parents believe they know better than their Creator, and thus ignore important biblical instruction such as, "The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself brings his mother to shame" (Prov. 29:15) and, "Correct your son, and he shall give you rest; yes, he shall give delight unto your soul" (vs. 17).

The result? A generation of children who oppress and rule over their parents and show no respect for their elders (Isa. 3:4-5, 12).

Education

The Roman Empire began with an educational system that emphasized developing character, morality, patriotism and social values in young lives. The goal was to develop the whole person.

But this was eventually replaced by an emphasis almost exclusively on academics, with no moral or ethical absolutes defining right and wrong.

Similarly, character development, patriotism and civic duty are seldom taught in the public schools of the West, where God and the Bible are banished, and morally unchecked "creative expression" is encouraged.

Because the modern house of Israel rejects God's Word, the foundation of all true knowledge, God declares, "My people are *destroyed* for lack of knowledge" (Hos. 4:6). He describes them as blind men groping around in spiritual darkness (Isa. 59:9-10).

Religion

The Romans were pagan idol worshippers who took the gods of the Greeks and gave them Roman names. Accompanying the assortment of false gods were lascivious religious rituals and customs. Temple prostitution, drunkenness and other vices that appealed to the flesh were common across the empire. Similar to the Greeks, the Romans worshipped mythological figures who freely gave in to carnal desires—deceiving, stealing, getting drunk and committing fornication, adultery, even rape!

Today, millions of Americans, Britons and others claim to worship only one deity, the God of the Bible—yet their actions scream something quite different!

The word *worship* means to “regard with great or extravagant respect, honor, or devotion.” Do the British and American peoples *truly* worship the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob? Or do their actions show they revere manmade “gods”—celebrities who by

word and example influence shallow minds to copy their irresponsible behavior? Politicians are forgiven for reckless conduct as long as they demonstrate they will never stand in the way of pleasing the masses.

Millions within America’s religious community are quick to proclaim their religious fervor. But among them are those leading hypocritical lives, speaking out against sexual immorality, yet secretly engaging in it. Among priests, preachers and other prominent religionists are child molesters, sexual predators and serial adulterers.

Pagan worshippers of ancient Rome sought an endless plethora of gods—but their religious beliefs were shallow, lifeless and without true meaning. Followers were left without direction, seeking spiritual purpose but never finding it.

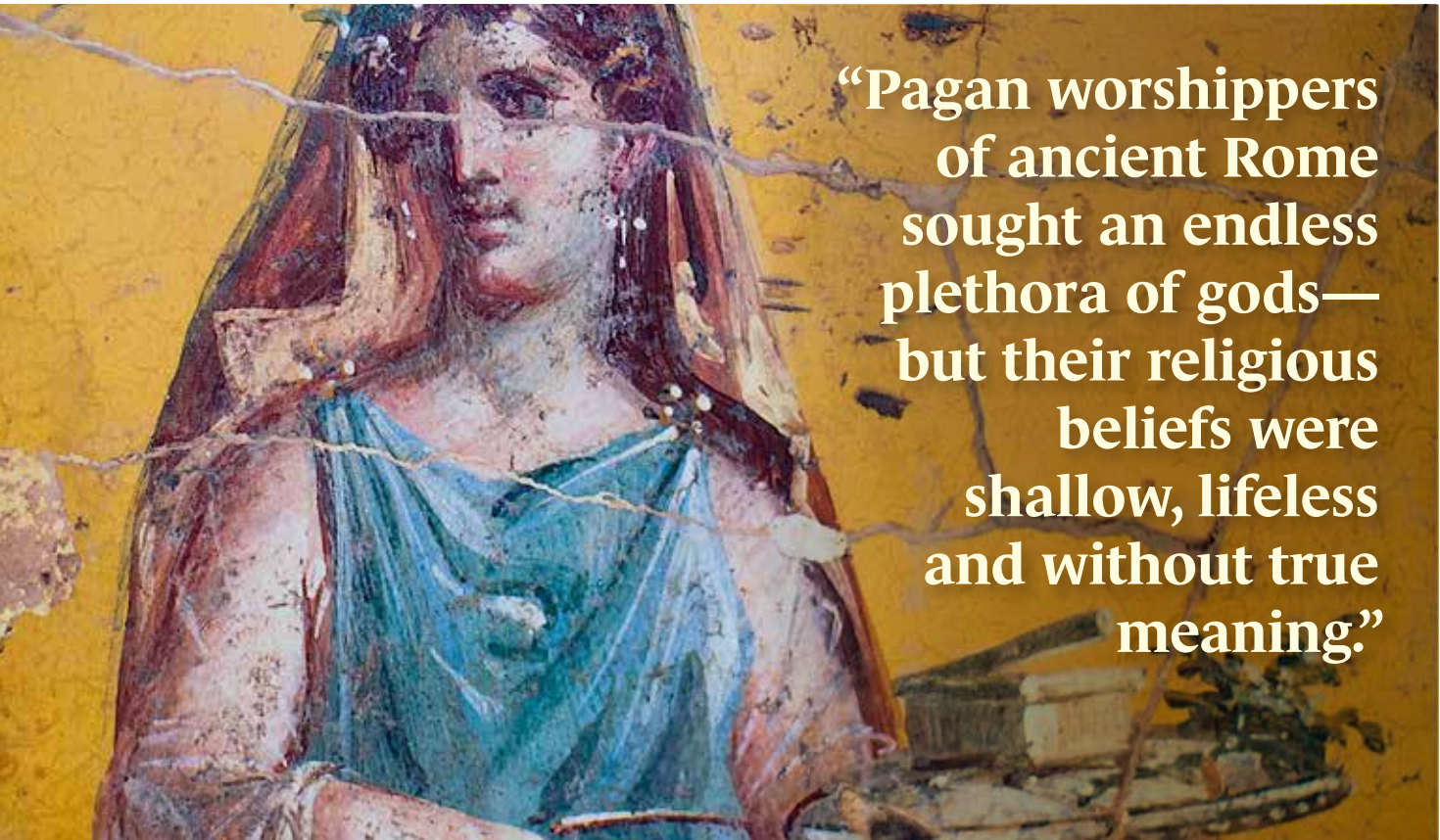
It is the same in modern times. The hypocrisy of religious leaders has jaded millions, and their message of a God without laws—who does not hold followers to a higher standard

of conduct and thinking—a “prosperity gospel” without expectations from believers—is ultimately empty. The result is a spiritual wasteland of human ideas that may sound appealing, but are not of the Bible—and have nothing to do with the true gospel (literally “good news”) that Jesus Christ preached: the Kingdom of God (Mark 1:14-15).

The religions of Rome, which encouraged and empowered the people to live a life of excess, contributed to the empire’s death. The religions of the West, especially in the U.S., are no better.

Pleasure-Seeking

The Romans were masters of extreme pleasure-seeking. They entertained themselves with gladiators (rockstars of the day) and gambled on who would live or die. They enjoyed the sight of Christians, Jews and other enemies of the state being eaten alive by wild animals shipped from exotic regions. Residents were proud of their lavish villas, imported cuisine and fine attire.



“Pagan worshippers of ancient Rome sought an endless plethora of gods—but their religious beliefs were shallow, lifeless and without true meaning.”

They thrilled themselves with plays, bathhouses, indoor pools and drunken parties held in the honor of Bacchus, the false god of wine and sensual pleasures.

Similarly, the modern descendants of the “lost” tribes of Israel entertain themselves, with television programs teeming with gratuitous sex and nudity. With superstar athletes who pride themselves on their multi-million-dollar contracts—yet are void of prudence, judgment and character.

Advertising, news media and Hollywood promotes materialism and covetousness. A society that loves to emulate wanton lifestyles portrayed in movies and pursue sports, gambling, music and other distractions over seeking true values is destined to collapse—as did Rome.

Economy, Government and the Military

Originally, agriculture and land ownership were Rome’s chief sources of wealth—and became the most heavily taxed. Over time, landowners who operated large farms on the backs of slaves eventually undersold smaller farmers, forcing them out of business. In addition, importing foods from both conquered lands and more easily accessible distant foreign ports also began to take its toll. Commercial trade in Rome created a massive consumer economy that focused on services rather than production and growth—just as in modern-day America and Britain.

As the Roman Empire expanded, so did the costs of operating it. Rapidly growing government bureaucracy became expensive to maintain. For instance, it took an army of officials to man and work the increasingly complicated red-tape filing system, which faced demands from both government services and the military.

To compensate for inflation, Roman emperors in the second and third centuries produced more coins, but these were no longer made of silver and gold alloys, which had become scarce. Roman currency dwindled in value.

The citizenry strained under heavy tax burdens, as the government left no

stone unturned in seeking potential revenue sources.

Today, Americans pay local, municipal, county, state and federal taxes before even receiving their paychecks, and contend with numerous consumer taxes: sales, gasoline, vehicles, property, licenses, pets, luxury items, airline flights—the list seems endless.

“Today, millions of Americans, Britons and others claim to worship only one deity, the God of the Bible—yet their actions scream something quite different!”

Taxes combined with inflation and a desire to maintain an unrealistic standard of living have driven a growing majority to live on credit and practice the materialistic principle of “live for today, forget about tomorrow.” Consumers survive paycheck to paycheck, partly due to wrong financial priorities and living beyond their means. A new car or home suddenly becomes a “necessity” based on the maximum amount of a “pre-qualified” bank loan, rather than *actual* needs.

British, Canadian, Australian and American consumers are strapped with the debt, resulting in a staggering number of defaulted home loans and personal bankruptcies.

As in ancient Rome, strong belief in self-determination and self-reliance has been replaced with an attitude of expecting something for nothing. Government-run systems originally intended to assist those in genuine need are now considered an entitlement.

Americans want to have their economic “cake and eat it too”—to work less and play more—to obtain better health insurance, but force employers to pay for it—to receive social security when they retire, but not increase how much they pay into it now.

Of course, how can the average consumer be expected to show fiscal responsibility when government leaders fail to do so? The U.S. national debt, which surpassed \$30 trillion (which amounts to more than \$240,000 per taxpayer), tells of the Fed’s financial incompetence.

And just as the Roman army was overstretched and overextended in foreign lands, so is the American military. Just think of our armed forces’ pull-out from Afghanistan after a practically fruitless 20-year presence.

A Kingdom that Will Never Fall

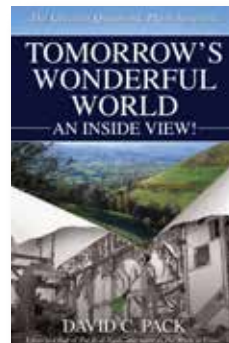
Family, education, religion, the economy, government and the military. The failure of these and other factors have contributed to the death of men’s governments—and are at work in the birthright nations of America and Britain.

However, there *is* a future government that will be established by a perfect leader, as foretold in Isaiah 9: “For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end” (vs. 6-7).

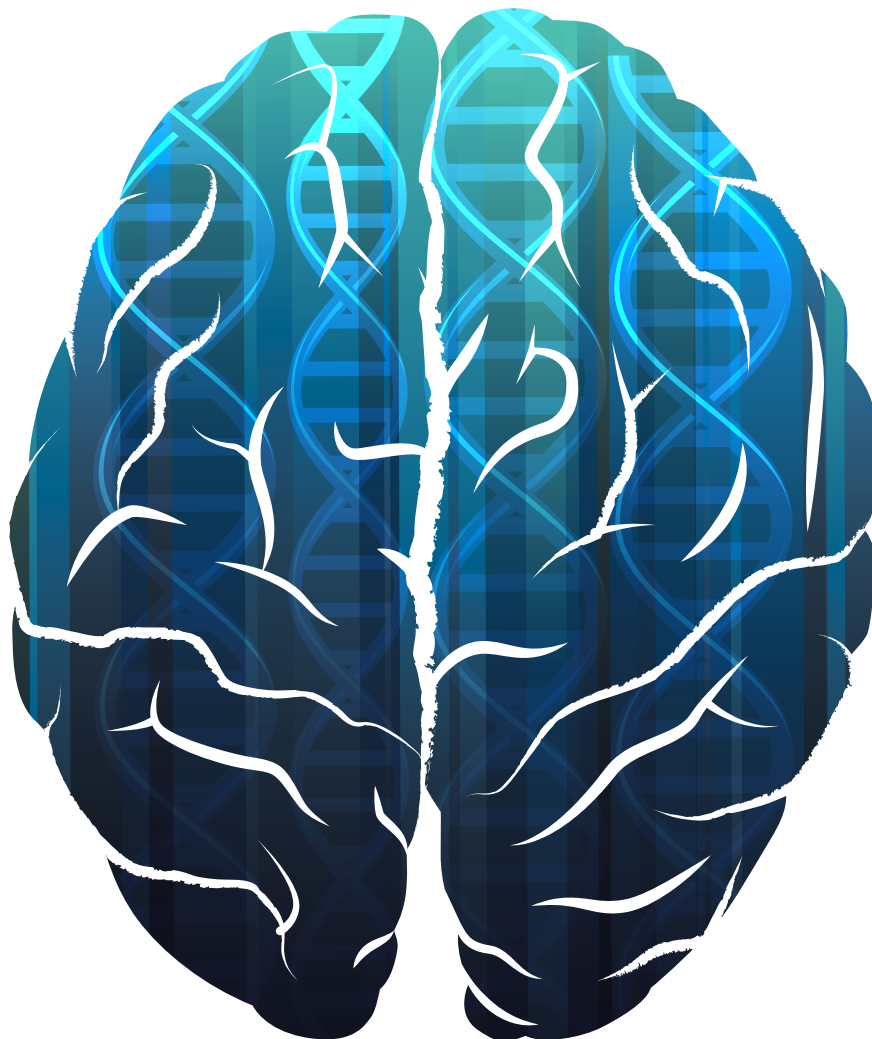
An incorruptible King, Jesus Christ, will direct His government—the

Kingdom of God—to teach true family values, place educational institutions upon the right foundation, empower true religion to provide guidance and purpose to empty lives, maintain a global economy that will never see a recession, ensure that government on all levels will be free of bureaucracy, and convert all weapons to a greater purpose (Isa. 2:4).

And this world-ruling Kingdom will *never* fall! □



Order a Free Copy!
rcg.org/tww



What Makes Us HUMAN

Is It 'Overlooked' DNA?

Scientists stumbled upon an unlikely answer hidden in the part of our DNA that has previously been considered useless. This discovery is just the start of what makes our minds unique.

BY DAVID J. LITAVSKY

GENETICALLY, chimpanzees do not look much different from humans. Our DNA sequence is nearly 99 percent identical.

Yet in terms of mental capacity, chimps and people are vastly different. Trying to explain the reason for these differences has long perplexed researchers.

“How did it come about that humans can use their brain in such a way that they can build societies, educate their children and develop advanced technology?” Dr. Johan Jakobsson, professor of neuroscience at Lund University in Sweden, asked in the journal *Cell Stem Cell*.

Most studies point to the fact human brains are three times larger than those of chimps. Also, the cerebral cortex—which allows for memory, attention and awareness—contains twice as many cells in a human than the animal. Scientists have even found that the outer layer of our brains are looser than in apes—allowing more adaptability in learning.

But the extra gray matter cannot be enough to give mankind vastly greater capabilities than any monkey. This is where Dr. Jakobsson and a team of stem cell researchers decided to look deeper—into the part of DNA that has previously been overlooked, so-called “junk DNA.” This non-coded protein constitutes 98 percent of our DNA, yet was thought to carry no function.

Now, Dr. Jakobsson and researchers believe it can explain why our brains work differently from animals.

Using stem cells, the researchers grew brain cells from humans and chimpanzees and compared the two cell types. The researchers then found that humans and chimpanzees use a part of their DNA in different ways, which appears to play a considerable role in the development of our brains.

“Previously, researchers have looked for answers in the part of the DNA where the protein-producing genes are—which only makes up about two percent of our entire DNA—and

examined the proteins themselves to find examples of differences,” Dr. Jakobsson said.

This suggests the human brain’s development stemmed from “genetic mechanisms that are probably a lot more complex than previously thought,” he said.

The study’s lead author believes that in the future the new findings may also yield answers to questions about psychiatric disorders such as schizophrenia, a disorder that appears to be unique to humans.

“But there is a long way to go before we reach that point, as instead of carrying out further research on the two percent of coded DNA, we may now be forced to delve deeper into all 100 percent—a considerably more complicated task for research,” he concludes.

Every study attempting to answer the great question of why man’s brain is unique ends similarly. *More research is needed before drawing conclusions... It will take years before these findings result in treatments for...and on it goes.*

While these cliffhangers leave us yearning for more, it does underscore a unique quality of the human mind that science is only *beginning* to see.

Advanced Animals?

Consider again the qualities man possesses that are unique among all living creatures. Ask yourself: *Why does man have so many distinctive characteristics?*

Meaning of life: The simple act of asking about life’s meaning and purpose makes man unique. Only humans have sought through science and religion to try to understand their origin. No animal contemplates its reason for living—nor would it be willing to live or die for specific values and ideals.

Self-consciousness: Beyond a simple recognition of self (as seen in a few animals), man can step back and become a spectator, critic or admirer of the world around him.

Awareness of death: While animals have a survival instinct, man is aware he will one day die. He can

also have a deep fear of losing his life. Nearly every culture performs a funeral ritual. This does not happen in the animal world.

Understanding time: Animals are only able to relate time to themselves; they have no ability of relating time to third parties. Humans can wonder, speculate and search the annals of history for lessons, and apply those lessons to goals far into the future.

Connections between words: While animals can understand simple words or tones, they do not comprehend syntax or communicate in complex sentences. Human beings have developed hundreds of languages (and thousands of dialects), even though they are born without the ability to speak.

Malleability: Humanity is able to adapt to its surroundings. We wear clothes, build shelters and modify our environment to suit our needs.

Humor: No other creature is able to appreciate, create and express humor. Not only does it require creativity, but humor also requires the ability to detach oneself from one’s surroundings to see the odd, surreal or ironic.

Appreciation of beauty: Man puts value in things that do not sustain him, so that he can enjoy observing a sunset, a work of art, jewelry or the intricate design of a flower.

For example, take a person to New York’s Metropolitan Museum of Art, and he will be moved by the seemingly limitless number of paintings and sculptures on display, dating hundreds of years. Take a dog to the same museum, and it will be more excited to sniff around for food and fire hydrants.

Lack of harmony with nature: When left to its own, nature will reach balance and harmony. Only man disrupts that natural balance through deforestation, changing the course of rivers, polluting the air, water and soil, mining for resources, and so forth.

A sense of morality: Animals always take the path of least resistance. They do not have a conscience or sense of right and wrong. On the other hand, people will go so far as to control their thoughts based on what they consider right or wrong.

Desire to worship: No matter what part of the world or his culture, man exhibits a desire to seek, follow and worship a higher power. Animals do not.

Psychiatric disorders: It appears humans are most susceptible to complex mental and behavioral issues such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, depression and anxiety. There is no proven evolutionary reason for this.

Love: While some animals form lifelong relationships for the purpose of reproduction, none exhibit the same human characteristics of love, in which a couple shares experiences, goals, dreams, hopes and aspirations.

Some of these qualities can be explained by the unique traits of the human brain itself. However, this does not tell us why human beings would have developed an evolutionary need for *all* of them (as is supposed humans and chimpanzees began separate evolution paths five to six million years ago). Ultimately, the mystery of the human mind transcends what scientists have found so far.

Beyond the Brain

Where scientists fail to fully explain the reason for mankind's unique qualities, philosophers and religionists step in. Those in these two studies also look into *why* the human mind works as it does.

There are two main camps on why the human mind possesses such astonishing capabilities. Philosophers, scientists and religionists typically support these two theories above the rest. One argument is that man's mind is entirely physical—merely more complex than other mammals; the other is that man has an immortal soul.

One side relies entirely on the physical realm of science, what can be learned from the five main senses of sight, taste, hearing, smell and touch. The other side opens the door to a spiritual realm, where man is more intelligent because of an immortal soul, which, according to the argument, animals do not have.

If you take the completely physical side, one would have to conclude that

man could never solve his problems. He never has even remotely come close in the past, and, after many thousands of years of trying, why should he believe he suddenly will? If this is the answer, then these problems are merely distinctly human traits, and humanity will have to continue to work around them as long as he can sustain his existence.

The opposing party purports that each human has an immortal soul, setting him apart from the animal. Can this side be proven?

As this theory is generally brought forward by Christian denominations, the most logical place to look for the answer is the Bible.

Even though many have a copy of God's Word in their homes, however, the answer is not what most think!

Start reading in the book of Job: "*There is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty gives them understanding*" (Job 32:8).

Many jump on this scripture as a proof text for belief in an immortal soul. Yet this is simply not the case. Man is a "soul," which means living, breathing flesh (Gen. 2:7). The idea that each human has an immortal component is not supported by the Bible.

If neither of the most popular ideas can be proven, what is the answer? Something is setting apart man and beast—but what? And why do problems remain unsolved, despite the best minds being solely focused on solving them?

The beginnings of an answer come from the same passage in Job: the "spirit in man."

The Missing Element

The New Testament also reveals more about this spirit in man, "For what man knows the things of a man save the spirit of man which is in him?" (I Cor. 2:11).

The human brain is capable of higher thought because of the "spirit of man which is in him." It could also be said that this spirit of man, working with the human brain, enables man to function on the plain of higher thought.

The same passage in I Corinthians concludes, "Even so the things of God knows no man, but the Spirit of God."

An animal cannot amass a wealth of *physical* knowledge because it does not have the spirit of man. Likewise, man cannot accrue *spiritual* knowledge without an additional element—God's Spirit.

This verse introduces two types of knowledge, physical and spiritual. And mankind cannot know spiritual knowledge unless it is given him through the Spirit of God. He is able to know "the things of man," and can accrue physical knowledge—what can be learned through the five senses. But he CANNOT obtain spiritual knowledge.

This second element introduced reveals another conundrum man cannot solve. Though mankind is capable of great technological progress and scientific understanding, it cannot rid itself of its greatest woes—famine, disease, poverty, illiteracy, war...

World peace is elusive because it cannot be found by man's spirit alone. Notice: "The way of peace they know not; and there is no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goes therein shall not know peace" (Isa. 59:8).

This verse explains the paradox of the mind of man. While there can be stunning achievements—AWESOME ADVANCEMENT—mankind's problems only grow worse.

As long as humanity looks to government ideals, think-tanks, philosophers and the religions of men, it cannot break free from its problems.

The reason man cannot solve his most pressing problems is because they are *spiritual* problems, meaning they need *spiritual* solutions.

This spiritual knowledge is found solely through the Bible. The knowledge is unlocked only when a person has the Spirit of God—which gives understanding—working alongside or in the mind of someone whose mind God has opened (John 6:44).

Each article produced by *The Real Truth* brings the answers to the spiritual problems of man. If you wish to continue to learn more about the only *lasting* solutions to man's problems, read more at rcg.org/realtruth. □



France, Belgium and the Netherlands

Identities Foretold Millennia Ago

Their ancient origins are unknown to most—yet are key to understanding what lies in their future!

THIS MAGAZINE often writes of the sons of the biblical patriarch Joseph—Ephraim and Manasseh—and the nations that descended from them. The Bible also says a great deal about the modern “house of Joseph,” foretelling—thousands of years

in advance!—today’s conditions, trends and problems plaguing the British and American peoples. Scripture also explains what they will soon experience: a time of great trouble, immediately followed by an awesome future.

The book *America and Britain in Prophecy*, written by David C. Pack,

reveals with great detail from the Bible and history the modern identity of these two peoples. Genesis 48:19 foretold the United States “shall be great” and Britain with its commonwealth would

Left, detail on the ceiling of the Opera Garnier’s grand foyer in Paris. Middle, the town hall in Brussels, Belgium. Right, a windmill in Holland.

RAWPIXEL.COM/CCO 1.0

be “a multitude of nations.” The facts reveal that these two nations received the birthright promises and unprecedented material blessings. Recent history, however, also shows that these blessings are slowly being removed.

These are the Bible identities of America and Britain. But what about the modern nations of France, Belgium and the Netherlands?

The answer lies in astonishing promises God made thousands of years ago to His servant and friend, Abraham (at the time called Abram):

■ “I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless you, and curse him that curse you: and in you shall all families of the earth be blessed” (Gen. 12:2-3).

■ “And I will make your seed [descendants] as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall your seed also be numbered” (13:16).

■ “I will multiply you exceedingly,” and “you shall be a father of many nations” (17:2, 4).

■ “And I will make you exceeding fruitful, and I will *make nations of you*, and kings shall come out of you” (vs. 6).

God’s promise was part of a covenant—an agreement or contract—between two parties. The dividends for Abraham were obvious: His descendants would receive much. To remove all doubt that this promise of national prosperity was intended for thousands of years to come, the exchange also included, “And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your seed [descendants] after you in their generations for an *everlasting* covenant...” (vs. 7).

The Being who promised Abraham these things was the Creator of all things—God! Go read the full accounts of these exchanges in Genesis 12, 13 and 17 to learn more.

Imagine if you were promised the same things. Could you comprehend them? What promise, given early in man’s history, would have a greater impact on our world today if it were fulfilled?

Did the God of the Bible promise something that did not come to pass? Did the tribes of Israel, which descended from Abraham, just fall into obscurity and are now lost to antiquity, as most believe? Would the God that more than a billion people profess to follow be incapable of keeping His word?

Most are ignorant of the identity of the peoples descended from Abraham, who received the promises quoted above.

But you do not have to be in the dark!

The Birthright Nations

God’s expansive promise of national, material blessings was passed down through generations. Abraham had a son named Isaac, who had a son named Jacob. God later changed Jacob’s name to Israel, and Israel had 12 sons: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph, Benjamin, Dan, Naphtali, Gad and Asher. Their descendants became the 12 tribes of Israel.

Of these 12 sons, one would receive the birthright, and the blessings along with it. As was custom, this would have been given to the eldest son, Reuben. But since he sinned against his father in an appalling and shameful manner, the birthright was given to Joseph (I Chron. 5:1).

At the end of his life, Israel had Joseph bring his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, before him. Israel explained to Joseph that he was given a promise by God and that he was now going to pass along the birthright promise and blessings to Joseph’s sons.

Referring to the elder son, Israel explained that Manasseh “shall become a people, and he also shall be great: but truly his younger brother [Ephraim] shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations” (Gen. 48:19).

But what about the other tribes—what happened to them? Are they simply lost to history? Some professing Christians, and the world at large, refer to the “ten lost tribes of Israel.” But why *ten*?

After the death of King Solomon, Israel split into two kingdoms: the house of Judah (which included Judah, Benjamin and Levi) and the house of Israel.

Judah was never considered lost, and is understood to be the Jewish peoples of today. The Jews never lost sight of their biblical identity—because they generally continued to observe the seventh-day Sabbath, a sign that identifies God’s people. Notice: “Verily My Sabbaths you shall keep: for it is a sign between Me and you *throughout your generations*; that you may *know* that I am the LORD that does sanctify [set apart] you” (Ex. 31:13). Observing God’s weekly Sabbath and annual Holy Days *automatically* sets apart God’s people from all others, and identifies the true God of the Bible and those who faithfully obey Him—“a sign between Me and you.”

Again, Judah (for the most part) never lost sight of this. Yet the first thing the house of Israel did when it split from Judah was set up its own holy days, laws and other religious observances. In effect, Israel rejected the identifying sign that would have, over the centuries, reminded them of their ancient origin. Today, those descended from Israel—the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh (Joseph), Reuben, Simeon, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, Naphtali and Issachar—believe they are gentiles! The overwhelming majority have no idea that the vast material blessings their nations have enjoyed are the result of God fulfilling His promise to Abraham.

Let’s now examine the identity and condition of three of these tribes, represented by the following countries: Reuben (France), Zebulun (the Netherlands) and Asher (a significant part of Belgium).

“Dignity” and “Power”— But “Unstable”

As well as passing down blessings to Ephraim and Manasseh, Israel also passed along some things to his sons and their modern descendants: “And



Left, the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, France, located in the Place du Carrousel. Right top, the courtyards of the Palace of Versailles. Right bottom, the Hall of Mirrors in the Palace of Versailles.

GETTY IMAGES (LEFT); RAWPIXEL.COM/CCO 1.0 (RIGHT TOP); BETTMANN/GETTY IMAGES (RIGHT BOTTOM)

Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you *in the last days*—our time now (Gen. 49:1).

Note: Jacob was telling his sons what would happen far in the future. What the patriarch said reveals exactly what would befall *all* the modern nations descended from ancient Israel. He detailed prophetic trends and events that would “befall” them!

Anyone who has traveled to Europe knows each nation has a distinct character. Think of these great cities of the world: Paris, Brussels and Amsterdam. Each has a unique atmosphere.

In Genesis 49:3, here is what Israel outlined about France: “Reuben, you are my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power.”

This “excellency of dignity and power” is clearly evident in Paris.

Each building, each palace and street, revealed an excellency of dignity and power found nowhere else.

Take the Palace of Versailles, for example. Considered one of the grandest palaces in the world, it truly shows the power and dignity that Reuben would be known for “in the last days.” Walking through the hall of mirrors, with its beautifully detailed painted ceilings, marble-lined walls, and gold-leafed ornate trim, causes visitors to stop and think of the power and global influence this nation once possessed. Each room of Louis the XIV’s living and working area is just as impressive as the next. Then there

are the expansive gardens, with statue after statue, fountain after fountain, including a manmade lake for boating parties, tree-lined walkways, beautiful terracing, and much more.

But Versailles is just one example. Throughout Paris, one cannot doubt that France, once called the “queen of culture,” represents a national dignity and class that remains unsurpassed. Whether it is the Palais Garnier opera house, the Arc de Triomphe or the Louvre, these all tell the same story.

However, Israel also explained that Reuben would be “unstable as water,” and therefore, “you shall not excel” (vs. 4). The *Encyclopedia Americana*



Top left, a container terminal in the port of Rotterdam in the Netherlands with ships being loaded and unloaded, by cranes. Top right, an antique photograph of Rotterdam, Holland (1893). Middle left, two Belgian women look at chocolates at the Galleries de la Reine shopping district in Brussels, Belgium. Middle right, wind turbines in an offshore wind farm in Urk, Netherlands. Bottom left, a woman looks in a show window of a diamond shop in Antwerp, Belgium. Bottom right, workers produce chocolate at factory in Awans, Belgium (Dec. 11, 2015).

SJO/ (TOP LEFT); BAUHAUS1000/ (TOP RIGHT); IN PICTURES LTD./CORBIS/ (MIDDLE LEFT); GEORGE PACHANTOURIS/ (MIDDLE RIGHT); YURIKO NAKAO/ (BOTTOM LEFT); EMMANUEL DUNAND/AFP/ (BOTTOM RIGHT); GETTY IMAGES

notes that “during the 70 years of the third republic [1875-1945]...more than a hundred cabinets succeeded one another, in France, with an average tenure in office of less than eight months. The main cause of this ministerial instability was the lack of disciplined parties...”

How “unstable”? The French political system has produced 11 constitutions since 1791.

“Haven of the Sea”

Another nation, the Netherlands, has also fulfilled descriptions foretold thousands of years ago. Israel stated, “Zebulun shall dwell at the haven of the sea; and he shall be for a haven of ships” (Gen. 49:13).

The Dutch people are famous for reclaiming land from the sea. In fact, 27 percent of the Netherlands is under sea level! For centuries, the Dutch have been building dikes and draining the terrain dry to create fertile farmland, called polders. (Many of the picturesque windmills found in certain areas of Holland were built to pump water out of low areas.) A large bay in Holland, called the South Sea, was reclaimed last century, and within it a relatively large province, Flevoland, was created. Driving through this area today—which was entirely underwater just a hundred years ago—and seeing developed forests, cities and roads, causes one to consider that these peoples truly had settled in a “haven of the sea.”

Deuteronomy 33:19 explains that Zebulun shall “suck of the abundance of the seas and of treasures hid in the sand.”

The Netherlands has done this in several ways such as through international commerce through the nation’s shipping fleet and through reclaiming land from the sea. The rich, green fertile ground that seemingly goes forever is a clear example of the “abundance of the seas and of treasures hid in the sand.” Only the Dutch have been able to reclaim on such a large scale.

The Netherlands has also been a “haven of ships.” In fact, for decades Rotterdam was the busiest port in the

entire world. Because of the giant rivers that flow through it, the nation serves as an important artery into the heart of Western Europe. (The latest statistics reveal that Rotterdam remains 10th in total volume, behind ports in Asia.)

“Royal Dainties”

Finally, there is Belgium. A group of peoples within this nation can be identified as descended from Asher, of which Israel stated, “Out of Asher his bread shall be fat, and he shall yield royal dainties” (Gen. 49:20).

Belgium is world-renowned for its chocolate (as well as its waffles). Along the streets of Brussels, scores of shops offer these high quality chocolate “royal dainties”—visited by countless patrons from nearly all parts of the Earth.

But these dainties are more than just edibles. The Belgian city of Antwerp is considered the diamond capital of the world. For hundreds of years, it was the center of gem-making for European royals. Today it processes about 84 percent of the world’s rough diamonds, and half of the world’s cut diamonds pass through the city for cutting and polishing. (Notably, the famous diamond-making company Royal Asscher, based in Amsterdam, Netherlands, could have roots in Asher. It has cut some of the most famous diamonds presented to British royalty and others, including two of the three largest ever found.)

While this description of Asher is brief, it should be no coincidence to those who believe the Bible that even such a small description specifically matches this modern nation—millennia after the description was given. Consider: What other nation is so internationally celebrated for such “royal dainties”?

Much More to Know

This article contains just the briefest descriptions of contemporary Reuben, Zebulun and Asher. Much more could be said.

Examining France, Belgium and the Netherlands, it is clear each has received tremendous material blessings. Their wealth, prosperity and advanced infrastructure make this clear.

But something else—something far less glamorous—is also evident. Now think again about Amsterdam, a city infamous for its drugs and prostitution. It is painfully obvious that the peoples of these prosperous nations are not obeying God. While only one city, it is still representative of all nations of the West, many of them Israelite.

In *America and Britain in Prophecy*, Mr. Pack writes: “But understand this. God does not and has never *owed* blessings to anyone. He may *choose* to bless individuals or nations, for His own purposes, but no one automatically *deserves* prosperity, wealth, abundance and a generous portion of God’s bounty.

“The Bible says that all have sinned (Rom. 3:23), which means all have qualified themselves for *death* (Rom. 6:23)—and nothing more!”

All the beauty, splendor and prosperity on display throughout the modern nations of Israel cannot continue without end. Having forgotten their ancient identity—as well as the laws, statutes and judgments that would have ensured lasting success (Deut. 4:5-9)—the future of modern-day Reuben, Zebulun and Asher grows ever dim.

These nations have prospered *materially*—yet they now are besieged by *spiritual* problems, the result of straying away from being the model nation God expected His people to become. Difficult times are in the future.

The Bible reveals what lies ahead for France, the Netherlands, Belgium, and their brother nations. Learn the whole story by reading *America and Britain in Prophecy*. □



Order a Free Copy!
rcg.org/aabibp

The 21st Century QUEEN

Queen Elizabeth II marked 70 years on the throne this year, celebrating an unprecedented reign that helped the United Kingdom navigate through an age of uncertainty. The British monarchy's longevity reveals a prophetic reason for the throne in London.

ELIZABETH Alexandra Mary Windsor was not born to wear the crown. But the woman who became Queen Elizabeth II marked 70 years on the throne this year, an unprecedented reign that has made her a symbol of stability as the United Kingdom navigated an age of uncertainty.

From her early days as a glamorous young royal in glittering tiaras to her more recent incarnation as the nation's grandmother, the queen has witnessed the end of the British Empire, the advent of multiculturalism, the rise of international terrorism, and the challenges posed by Brexit and the COVID-19 pandemic. In a world of relentless change, she has been a constant—representing the UK's interests abroad, applauding the nation's successes and commiserating in its failures, and always remaining above the fray of politics.

As the elder daughter of King George V's second son, Elizabeth, now 95, was expected to live the life of a minor royal when she was born on April 21, 1926. Dogs and horses,

a country house, a suitable match—a comfortable but uneventful life—seemed her future.

But everything changed a decade later when her uncle, King Edward VIII, abdicated so he could marry the American divorcee Wallis Simpson. Elizabeth's father became King George VI, making the young princess heir apparent.

George VI died in 1952, and Elizabeth began her life as queen. She has reigned ever since, with crown and scepter on big occasions, but more commonly wearing a broad-brimmed hat and carrying a simple handbag.

In the intervening seven decades, the queen has shared confidences with 14 prime ministers and met 13 U.S. presidents.

Britain's longest-serving monarch, the only sovereign most Britons have ever known, has been a constant presence from the Suez Crisis of 1956, when Egypt's seizure of the Suez Canal underscored Britain's declining might, through the labor strife of the 1980s and the 2005 terror attacks in London.

When Prince Philip died during the pandemic, she donned a black face mask and sat alone during his socially distanced funeral, silently demonstrating that the rules applied to everyone—particularly her.

"She's not beholden to the electorate. She's not dependent on her latest hit or her latest movie," said Emily Nash, royal editor of *HELLO!* magazine. "She's just there. She does what she does. She carries out her duties without ever complaining or making any personal drama. And people respect her for that."

Not that there haven't been controversies.

In the early 1990s, criticism of the monarchy increased amid reports of the queen's private wealth and concerns about the expense of the monarchy. In 1992, the queen agreed to pay the expenses of most of her family and become the first monarch to pay income taxes since the 1930s.

Tensions flared again in 1997 when the royal family's silence after the death of Princess Diana, the ex-wife of Prince Charles, fueled the resentment of Diana's many fans.

Even now, the monarchy is struggling to distance itself from the scandal caused by a sex abuse lawsuit filed against Prince Andrew, the queen's second son, and the fallout after two of the royal family's most popular members, Prince Harry and his wife Meghan, ditched their royal duties and departed for California.

But the queen has transcended scandal and remained popular throughout it



A portrait by Darren Baker of Britain's Queen Elizabeth II wearing a spray of five poppies to commemorate the 90th anniversary of the Royal British Legion, is seen on display at Clarence House in London (Oct. 26, 2021).

VICTORIA JONES/POOL/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

all, said Kelly Beaver, the CEO of polling firm Ipsos UK, which has tracked her popularity for decades.

"Part of this because she is so synonymous with...the monarchy, which is something the British people are proud of," Ms. Beaver said.

The queen has helped maintain the popularity of the British crown even well into the crownless 21st century. Yet as she ages, an old rift reopened between people who believe the monarchy is an outdated bastion of inherited privilege and those who see it as a cherished national institution. Some Members of Parliament made calls to "not another 70 years" of a royal sitting on London's throne. "The prospect of King Charles is not a happy one, and there is a good, democratic alternative to offer," Graham Smith of the anti-monarchy group Republic said.

The concern has arisen many times before. Despite decades of controversy over whether the British crown should even have a place in today's world, the persistent fascination over the monarchy continues. The British Empire has long ago faded into history, and the royal family's political role has been so reduced that it has essentially become symbolic. So *why* does the British monarchy continue to endure?

The reason lies in the roots of the monarchy itself.

Unbroken Line

For centuries, British kings and queens have played a crucial part in world events. Yet to truly comprehend the incredible legacy of England's monarchy, one must trace it back to well before Victorian times, even prior to the period of English and Scottish monarchs, who reigned from AD 400 to 1603.

The New York Genealogical and Biographical Society brings a differ-

ent perspective regarding the fascinating history behind Britain's royal family, and details the royal lineage, using the Bible to support its findings. In 1921, the organization wrote in its quarterly publication: "...admitting that the covenants of the Old Testament are to be accepted as utterances upon divine authority, we have the covenant as uttered in Genesis [49:10]—'The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a law giver from between his feet until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.'"

"With this covenant as a basis of argument, supported by the accepted genealogies of the Old Testament, we

have it proven that the sceptre did remain in the house of Judah in unbroken line until the reign of Zedekiah."

The promise of Genesis 49 is often called the scepter promise. It refers to an unbroken royal line that began with King David, who came from Judah.

King Zedekiah's daughter Tea Tephi was taken to Ireland, where she married Eochaidh, thus continuing the line of King David.

The New York Genealogical and Biographical Society continued: "By this union of two strains of the blood of Judah in the marriage of Tea Tephi and Eochaidh, the covenant that the sceptre should not depart from the

house of Judah was perpetuated; and by the evidence of the Annals of the Irish Kings and those of the Kings of Scotland we are furnished a substantial argument...that the sceptre continued in the house of Judah by the way of the Irish Kings and thence by intermarriage, by way of the Scottish Kings, and again by direct descent, by the way of the English Kings, to the present representative of British Sovereignty, King George V of England, in whose person is perpetuated the covenant to the house of Judah."

The link between the British monarchy and Davidic line does not end there. At each coronation of a British monarch, the Stone of Destiny, a rectangular sandstone block reported to have traveled from Israel, was present.

Encyclopaedia Britannica states: "According to one Celtic legend the stone was once the pillow upon which the patriarch Jacob [a direct ancestor of David] rested at Bethel when he beheld the visions of angels. From the Holy Land it purportedly traveled to Egypt, Sicily, and Spain and reached Ireland about 700 BC to be set upon the hills of Tara, where the ancient kings of Ireland were crowned."

The stone was then moved to Scotland, where it was used in the coronation of Scottish kings. Since 1307, the stone has been used at the crowning of British monarchs.

Unbroken Promise

During King David's reign over ancient Israel, God expanded the scepter promise: "And when your [David's] days be fulfilled, and you shall sleep with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you...and I will establish the throne of his kingdom *forever*...And your house and your kingdom shall be established *forever* before you: your throne shall be established forever" (II Sam. 7:12-13, 16).

God promised that He would *never* allow the Davidic line to end. And God never breaks His word. He

Please see **QUEEN**, page 27

The REAL TRUTH



ILLUSTRATION BY PAULA C. RONDEAU



The Problem with PROTESTING

BY EDWARD L. WINKFIELD

Demonstrators may mean well, but they often fail to see a fatal flaw in their tactics that keeps them from bringing lasting change.

BEGINNING IN January 2022, protesters driving semitrailer trucks and other vehicles jammed the streets of Ottawa, Canada's capital, and obstructed border crossings. The so-called Freedom Convoy was opposed to the Canadian government's COVID-19 restrictions, which were stricter than in the United States. The hostility was eventually directed to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, who was seen as abusing his power.

For weeks, demonstrators blocked downtown streets and choked off some of the busiest border crossings into the U.S. Media outlets across the world took sides, some praising the protesters' right to voice their opinions and others backing the government's responsibility to restore order. After three weeks of chaos, authorities intervened.

In scenes rare for a country long known for its civility, hundreds of police, some in riot gear and some carrying automatic weapons, entered the protest zone. Scuffles broke out as police went nose-to-nose with the protesters amid cries of "freedom!" and the singing of the national anthem, "O Canada." Horse-mounted officers pushed back crowds and protesters were removed in handcuffs. Trucks blockading the capital's streets were towed.

As order was restored, activists were left to ask, "Was it all worth it? Did we achieve what we set out to accomplish?"

Canadian police hold back protesters occupying the area surrounding Parliament Hill in Ottawa (Feb. 18, 2022).

ALEX KENT/GETTY IMAGES



A similar sentiment carried across major uprisings of the past few years: the violent protest at the U.S. Capitol on January 6 led by those who believed the 2020 presidential election was rigged; race riots following the death of George Floyd; Yellow Vest gatherings against economic inequality in France. Were all these efforts for nothing?

From Hong Kong to Khartoum, Baghdad to Beirut, Afghanistan to South Korea, and Sri Lanka to the United Kingdom, people around the world gathered in masses in pursuit of freedom, sovereignty or simply a life less shackled by hardship. According to the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, more than 110 countries have experienced significant protests since 2017. Over 25 of the more recent of these protests were directly related to the coronavirus pandemic.

The very nature of a protest suggests a fervent desire for change, the need to right an injustice, perceived or otherwise. Protests are a means to an end. But to what end? Depending on who or what the activists are demanding change from, the results can be varied.

Here is a look at some of the key protests of recent decades that occurred long enough ago to better reveal what they achieved or, more often, failed to achieve.

American Civil Rights

Martin Luther King Jr., who led the 250,000 strong March on Washington in 1963, and Malcolm X, who represented black empowerment, were colossal 20th century figures. These men represented two different means to a similar end: mass non-violent protest and achieving equality “by any means necessary.” The Civil Rights Act and Voting Rights Act were passed by the Johnson administration, which was sympathetic to tackling endemic racism in the nation. These were key inflection points. But social injustice and the Vietnam War ultimately dominated the decade, reaching a crescendo of civil unrest

Top, members of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) protesting against the disappearance of three civil rights activists from Mississippi, in Washington, D.C. (June 24, 1964). Bottom, hundreds march in cold weather during a rally in protest of the killing of Amir Locke, outside the Hennepin County Government Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota (Feb. 5, 2022).

ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES (TOP); KEREM YUCEL/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES (BOTTOM)

in 1968. Racial progress was slowed, and some believe halted altogether. Protests 50 years later such as demonstrations in Charlottesville, Virginia, and Kenosha, Wisconsin, were a result of continued racial strife. Many of today's protests and demonstrations still revolve around race.

The Iron Curtain Falls

Revolution was in the air in Eastern Europe in 1989, powered by civil resistance meant to overthrow communist rule. One by one, countries fell in a reverse-domino effect—away from the Soviet Union and toward the West. The final Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, laid the groundwork for this tectonic shift. The Berlin Wall eventually fell and one-party rule was swept aside in East Germany, Poland and other states once cast as being behind the Iron Curtain. This all occurred mostly bloodlessly—the exception being in Romania where the tyranny of Nicolae Ceausescu and his family was ended by a firing squad on Christmas Day. The protests that led to the crumbling of the Berlin Wall were seen as a success.

Today, however, Europe remains under threat by unrest from Russia (formerly the Soviet Union) as the nuclear power violently seeks to annex Ukraine. This move reignited geopolitical tensions in a more fractured world and threatens to lead to even more bloodshed.

The Arab Spring to Today

Two decades after tensions subsided in the Cold War, the world witnessed another wave of protests consume an entire region. This one was the first to be captured on the digital platform of social media. After decades of dictatorship and kleptocracy, the Arab World wanted freedom. A Tunisian protester lit himself and eventually the world on fire and by 2011, autocratic rulers in Egypt, Yemen, Libya and Tunisia fell as a result. Tunisia, where it all began, transitioned to a democracy.

But what about today?

Egypt now lives under even more authoritarian rule, where all dissent



1969



2021

Top, an English actress joins a group of anti-war protesters campaigning to end the killing of civilians in Biafra and the Nigerian civil war, in London (Dec. 24, 1969). Bottom, demonstrators hold signs calling for “no more foreign wars” during a protest following the pullout of Western forces from Afghanistan, at Parliament Square in London (Aug. 18, 2021).

EVENING STANDARD/HULTON ARCHIVE/ (TOP); DAN KITWOOD/ (BOTTOM); GETTY IMAGES

is crushed and thousands languish in prison. Yemen and Libya have been torn to shreds by conflict and humanitarian catastrophe. Syria exploded quickly from an uprising against the Assad dynasty to ruinous civil war that left half a million dead and millions displaced. As of 2022, the conflict in Syria is stalemated with no official cease-fire and the progress initially seen in Tunisia was upended by inflation, declining living standards and political infighting.

These mixed results beg the question, do protests really work?

Yes, public demonstrations allow citizens to express their dissatisfaction and make their opinions known. But, as history shows, they rarely bring the lasting change they intended. The nature of protesting has also changed. To call crowds throwing

bottles and stones, yelling, cursing, spray painting vile messages, breaking windows and burning buildings and vehicles “peaceful protesters” is disingenuous at best. A “peaceful” protest now may simply mean that actual bullets did not fly. In many cases these demonstrations are riots, plain and simple.

Acts of violence and aggression may get the attention of the opposing side and those in the middle, but not necessarily to a good end. Incivility often overshadows what could otherwise be a worthwhile message.

While God wants human equality and governmental fairness, He has never condoned protesting and rioting to get there. He says in Exodus 23:2: “You shall not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shall you speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest

judgment.” When angry crowds get together, usually bad things result. The phrase “angry mob” is well known for a reason. Crowds of people coming together can draw out the worst in people. The herd or mob mentality leads people to do things they would never do if they were by themselves.

Protests are the result of fighting for a cause. However, most importantly, they remind us of the raw human nature we are all capable of. While protesting can seem to be the solution, it never brings the lasting change participants may have genuinely intended. And worse, they can lead to life- and world-changing negative effects.

No cause, righteous or otherwise, seems to allow us to shake this reality.

For more on the nature of man, read *Did God Create Human Nature?* (rcg.org/dcghn). It explains the reason people act the way they do in protests. □

Tunisians shout slogans as they protest against President Kais Saied in the capital Tunis, on the 11th anniversary of the start of the 2011 revolution (Dec. 17, 2021).

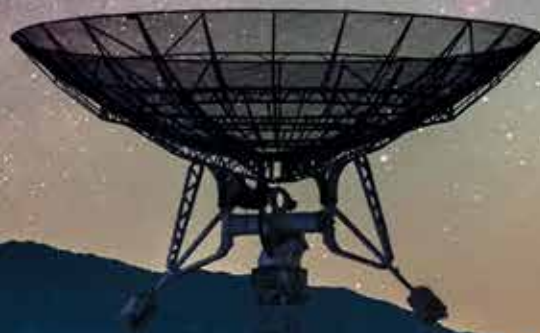
FETHI BELAID/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



Earth's Galactic Position Investigated!

Our planet's location within our solar system and galaxy is more unique than you could imagine.

BY BRADFORD G. SCHLEIFER



WHEN HELPING potential clients search for a new home, real estate agents will say, “Location is everything.” It determines one’s school district, the value of nearby homes, the proximity of stores, parks and many other factors that will affect the value of a house.

One’s address is even more important in commercial real estate. Success or failure is directly tied to a store’s location. The three most important things in business are often trumpeted as, “Location! Location! Location!”

Location in our solar system, galaxy and the universe can mean the difference between the lush, vibrant planet

on which we live, and a barren wasteland, devoid of life. Though our solar system is remarkably stable compared to others, only a tiny few exist in which life might possibly survive.

The formation of galaxies is said to be a violent and volatile occurrence. Collisions, explosions, combining of planets and the interplay of gravitational pulls come into play. With each

budding galaxy, certain characteristics must appear within its solar systems to support terrestrial (rock) planets. Never mind the endless array of characteristics required for life.

A deeper understanding of our universe can open our minds to something greater. Each fact we learn should elicit questions. Could the Big Bang, sheer coincidence or blind chance align to create Earth's extremely favorable conditions for life of which you are about to learn? Can random processes *create* anything? What is the more logical answer?

Our Celestial Neighborhood

The universe is estimated to have ten trillion, trillion stars, most having their own solar system. The differences between these systems are great. Some stars are so enormous that their diameter would engulf Mars if they replaced the sun at the center of our solar system. Others are so small that planets with an orbit as close as Mercury would be solid blocks of ice. Some of the more exotic solar systems consist of clusters of stars intertwined in a gravitational dance that allows nothing larger than dust to form in their wake.

Among all this diversity is an uncommon group, known as type G stars. Only an estimated 8 percent of the stars in the known universe are of this type and fall within the ideal age spectrum. When stars are the correct age, they are neither too hot nor too cold, and create the foundation of a solar system able to support life.

However, the star type is only *one* factor. Stars must also form in metal-rich nebulae, which in turn produce metal-rich stars, creating the building blocks for the formation of terrestrial planets. Without complex metals, only gas giants such as Jupiter and Saturn would orbit a star. (Metals are also required for complex chemical reactions needed for life, but that is outside the scope of this article.)

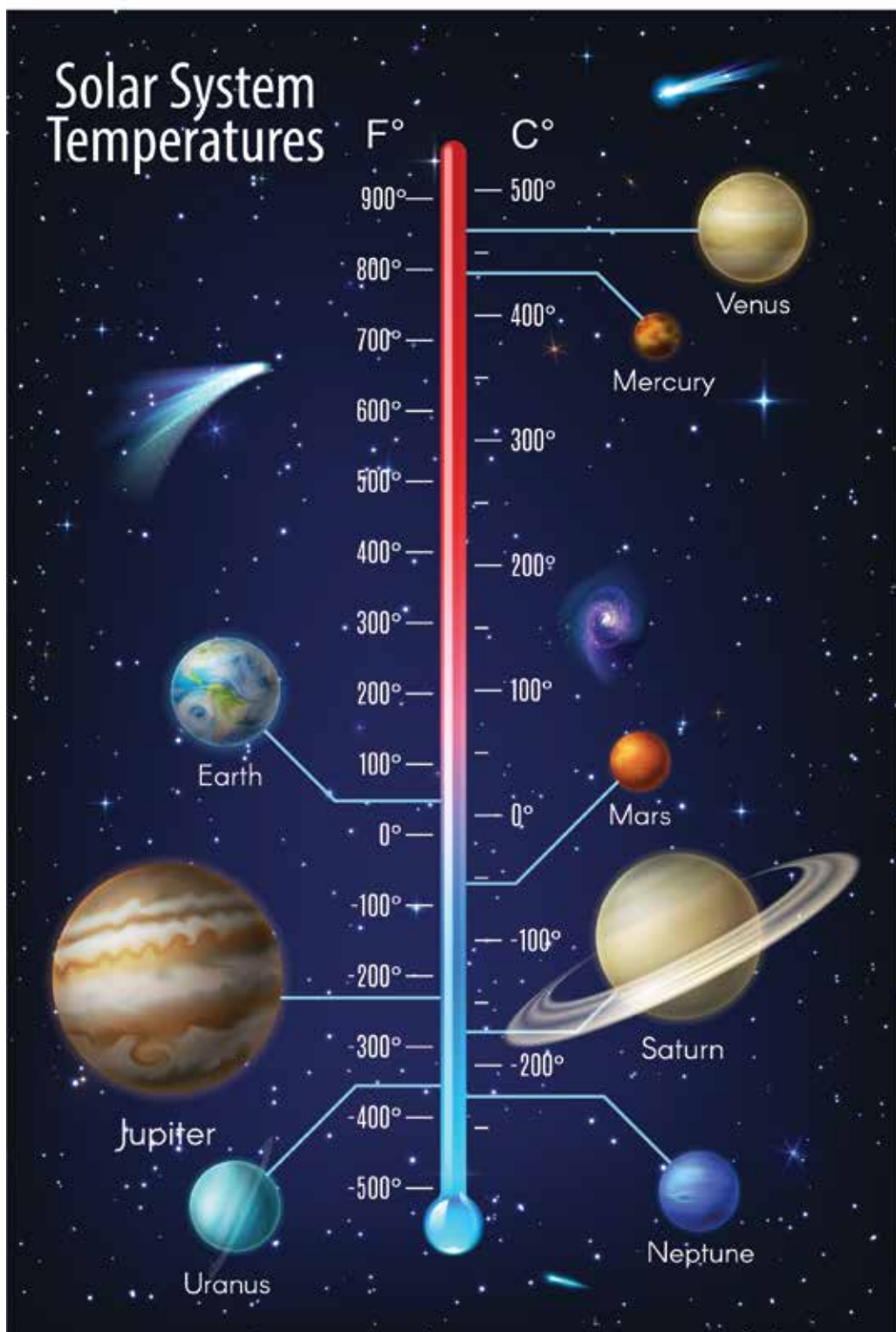
Even with all of the factors described above, there exists only a small distance from the star, known as the *habitable zone*, in which life has *any* chance of survival. If a planet is too close to its

star, it is doused with solar radiation. It becomes superheated like Venus, which has a surface temperature of approximately 700 degrees Fahrenheit. There are many other reasons why close proximity to a star would make life impossible, but such intense temperatures prove the point.

Just outside the other end of the habitable zone is Mars. This interesting planet is as close to Earth in characteristics as we have found in the entire uni-

verse. However, it is completely unable to support complex life. Its distance from the sun means that a Martian year is 687 Earth days. This distance also makes it impossible to sustain liquid water—a fundamental component of life. The temperature range of liquid water largely defines a star's habitable zone.

In our entire solar system, there is only one planet in the habitable zone: Earth!



Yet there are other elements of the Earth's position that make it unique.

Planetary Security

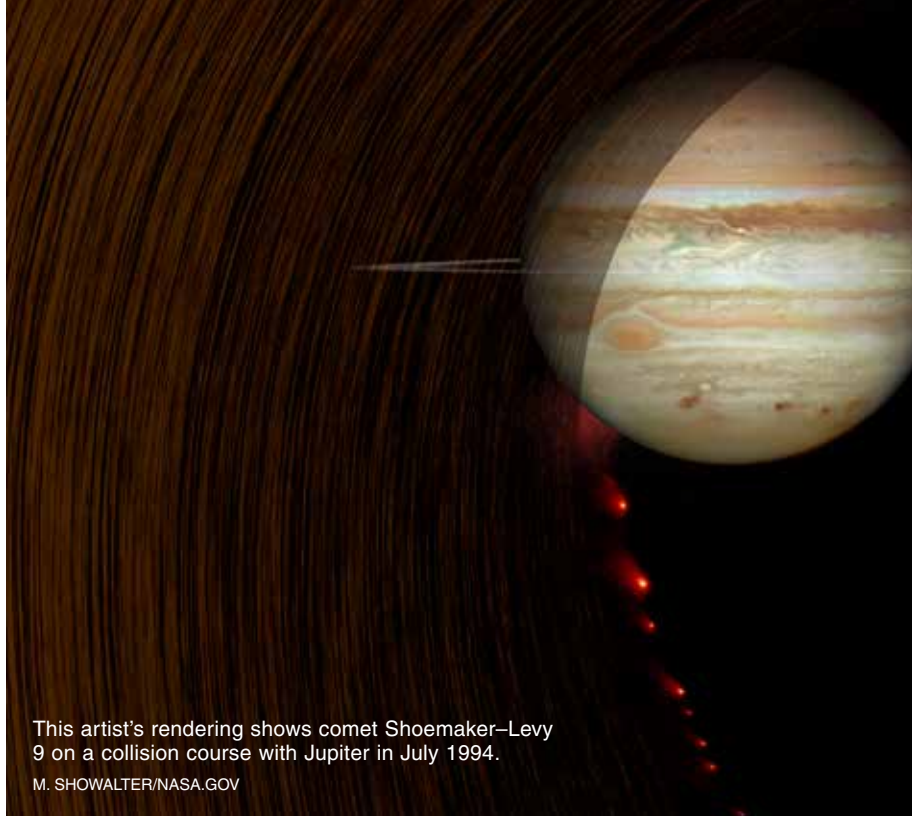
There is much more to a stable solar system than a planet orbiting inside the habitable zone. The gas giants, or Jovian planets—Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune—serve a critical purpose as well. Their massive gravitational fields attract nearby comets, asteroids and debris, keeping the inner solar system safe. The most dramatic example of this protection occurred in 1994, when the Shoemaker-Levy 9 comet collided with Jupiter. Despite the colossal explosions on impact, all evidence of the strike had disappeared within a few months.

If this same comet had struck Earth, little more than bacteria would have survived. Analysis of the Shoemaker-Levy 9 impact and the moons around Jupiter and Saturn reveal these gas giants have long protected the inner solar system from comets and asteroids that would have annihilated our planet. Their ability to “vacuum” the solar system also removes some of the dust that would make observing our solar system and beyond more difficult.

Calm Among Chaos

Another interesting characteristic of our unique solar system is its relative stability. Much of the universe is far from stable. Supernovas (dying stars), nebulas (star nurseries), black holes, violent collisions and other phenomena make the universe an exciting place, to say the least.

It has been suggested that a solar system would have to be a near-perfect match to Earth's to have any chance whatsoever at facilitating life. Each planet in our system has a near circular orbit around the sun. Such an orbit is critical! It means the distance between each planet is steady, and interaction is kept to a minimum. Interaction would be particularly problematic if any of the inner planets “brushed” the gravitational fields of the gas giants. Such an encounter could tear Earth from its orbit and



This artist's rendering shows comet Shoemaker-Levy 9 on a collision course with Jupiter in July 1994.

M. SHOWALTER/NASA.GOV

send it hurtling into the sun or thrust it into deep space.

Our sun's age also accounts for Earth's stability. As mentioned above, a star's age is crucial for life. This is mainly due to the relatively short period in which a star is stable—its middle life. The beginning of a star's existence is marked by expansion and violent eruptions; the end, by cooling that would not generate enough heat to encourage simple or advanced life.

The Milky Way

Most are familiar with the shape of the Milky Way galaxy, a disc about 1,000 light-years thick and up to 100,000 light years in diameter. Its spiral arms appear as bands streaming off a spinning center and contain between 200 and 400 billion stars. It is nearly impossible to convey the immense size of our galaxy.

If the Earth were shrunk to the size of a peppercorn, the sun would be slightly smaller than a volleyball. The distance between the peppercorn Earth and volleyball sun would be 78 feet. Jupiter would be the size of a chestnut and be 405 feet from the sun. The farthest point would be Pluto. It would be smaller than a pinhead and be over 3,000 feet—over half a mile—from the sun! If you were standing at Pluto, you

would not be able to see the sun without binoculars.

Let's go further. If our entire solar system were scaled down to fit inside the volleyball, it would take 1.26 million volleyballs stacked on top of each other just to equal the thickness of the Milky Way! The diameter, or length, of our galaxy is 1,000 times larger than that.

Put another way, it takes light approximately seven hours to travel from the sun to the edge of our solar system. This means it would take light 876 million hours—100,000 years!—to traverse the Milky Way.

Our galaxy's nearly unimaginable size is not the only interesting aspect. Like our solar system, the Milky Way also has a habitable zone. It is located in a relatively “quiet” area nestled between two spiral arms. This region is primarily defined by the distance from the galaxy's center. The closer you are to the center, the nearer you are to the massive black hole found there. Extreme levels of X-ray and gamma radiation spew from it, completely eradicating any chance for life. On the other hand, the farther a solar system is from the galaxy's center, the less metallic its star will be. As we have seen, metals are crucial to the formation of terrestrial planets.

Perfect Viewing Station

Our location in the solar system and galaxy allows for another fascinating related phenomenon: We can observe, measure, analyze and define our galactic neighborhood. Many would not even consider this, but it is extremely rare.

Much of the universe is pitch black. Other locations are densely packed with clusters of stars, making the sky far too bright to observe the vast array of celestial bodies. Is it mere coincidence that we are located in the *perfect* spot?

It is hard to call it mere coincidence that all the factors to produce conditions for advanced life are directly aligned with the conditions that make it possible to observe the universe. It would take a species as advanced as man to understand and measure the universe—and a galaxy, solar system and planet that is perfectly designed for mankind to develop!

Consider the points covered:

(1) The size of our sun keeps Earth's temperature in the range necessary for life. The size of our star also does not flood our planet with radiation, which

would make it impossible to observe and measure distant galaxies.

(2) Our metal-rich solar system allows for terrestrial planets and advanced life. This rich array of metals allows for technological advancement and the creation of tools to observe our world, solar system and universe.

(3) The location of the habitable zone means that life can flourish under an atmosphere perfect for viewing the night sky.

(4) The gas giants in our solar system are far enough away to shield the inner planets from asteroids and comets. This distance also means they do not block our view or distort observations with their gravitational effects.

(5) Planets in our solar system exhibit rare, nearly circular orbits, allowing the stability required for life. This also means extremely precise relational measurements can be made of our universe.

(6) Distance from other stars in the Milky Way keeps us from being bombarded with deadly radiation. This also means our night sky is dark, making viewing possible. If we were too close to the black hole in the galaxy's center, X-ray and gamma radiation would

not only destroy life but make precise observations impossible!

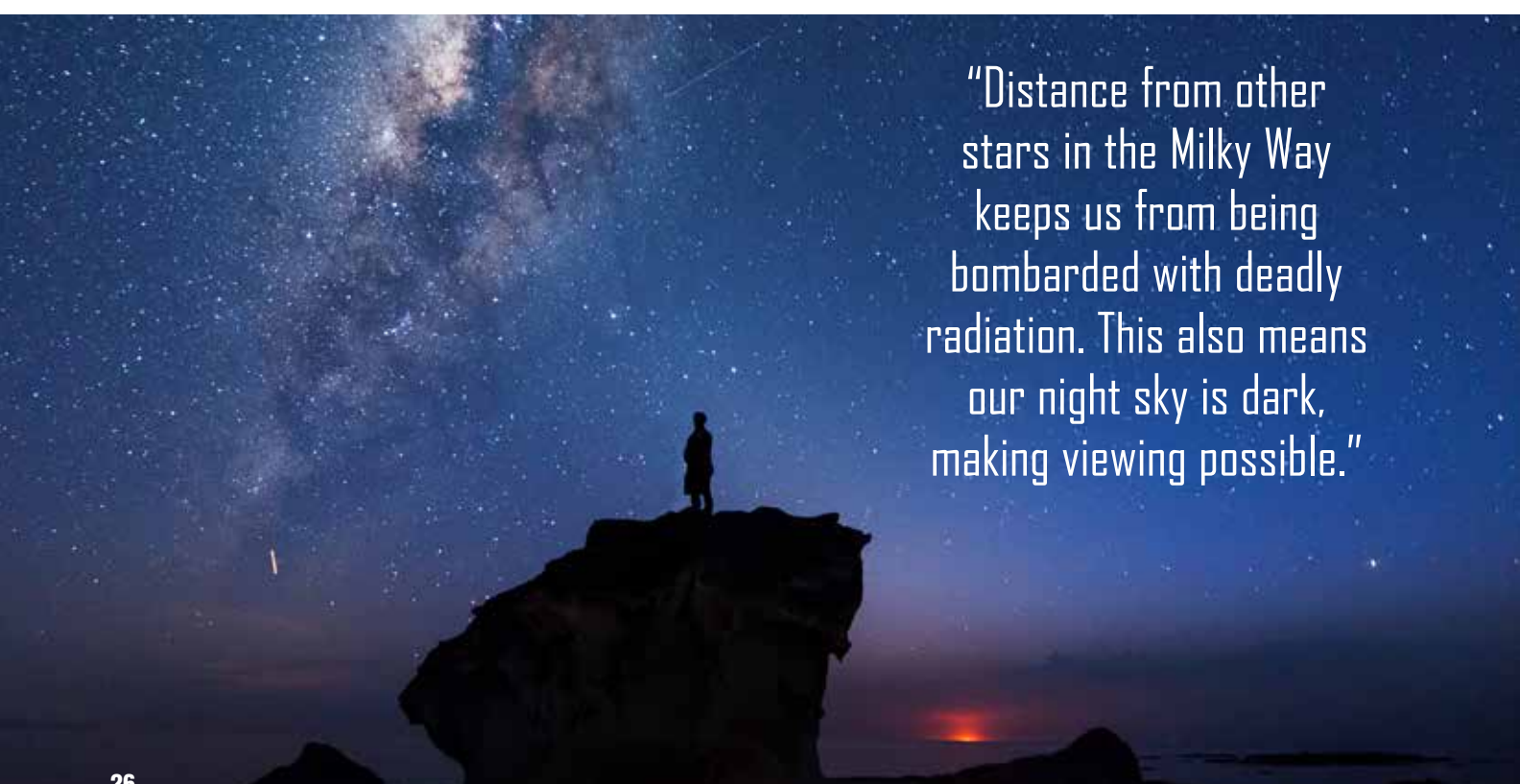
Each characteristic allows for both life *and* discoverability! Could this just be an amazing coincidence?

The Source Becomes Clear

Discovering the true source of our galaxy can be determined by looking for telltale signs and fingerprints. The precision and intricacy of our universe point to an overarching design—and a Magnificent Designer. God's Instruction Book to man—the Holy Bible—indicates that the Creator of the universe left His fingerprints: "For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are *clearly seen*, being *understood by the things that are made*, even His eternal power and Godhead" (Rom. 1:20).

All that is "seen" bears the fingerprints—shows evidence—of our Master Designer. He is not only able to create the entire universe and life within it, but design it to be observable, measurable and definable.

By His Creation, we can understand our Creator. If you search for God's fingerprints, you will be amazed by how often they appear and what you will discover! □



"Distance from other stars in the Milky Way keeps us from being bombarded with deadly radiation. This also means our night sky is dark, making viewing possible."

declares: “I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it” (Isa. 46:11). When God says a throne will be established *forever*, He means it!

Therefore, David’s throne must exist *somewhere* on Earth today. And it must be a long-held line. What other unbroken monarchy has historical ties to ancient Israel? What other lineage of kings and queens are coronated on Jacob’s pillow stone?

After David died, his son Solomon reigned in his place: “Then Solomon sat on the *throne of the Lord* as king instead of David his father, and prospered” (1 Chron. 29:23).

Notice that it is “the throne of the Lord”—not of David!

In the New Testament, the same promise is confirmed. In Luke 1, an angel told the mother of Jesus, “... you shall conceive in your womb, and bring forth a son, and shall call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the *throne of His father David*: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob *forever*; and of His kingdom there shall be *no end*” (vs. 31-33).

While men and women—now in the form of the British monarchy—have been occupying David’s throne for thousands of years, it is ultimately *Christ’s* throne—which He will claim.

Some use this to promote the racist idea of “British Israelism,” which equates the nation’s former empire with God’s Kingdom. However, Christ’s reign on the throne now held by England’s monarchy does not make Britons superior.

Identifying Britain in Prophecy

Keeping a monarch on the throne is not the only thing God promised regarding Britain. He also foretold a blessing that the descendants of Jacob would receive. He stated, “be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of you” (Gen. 35:11).

David C. Pack’s book *America and Britain in Prophecy* describes how God has delivered what He promised here.

“This is translated by Ferrar Fenton as ‘A Nation and an *Assembly* of Nations.’ Moffatt’s translation states, ‘a nation, [and] a *group* of nations.’ Thus, the earlier reference to ‘many nations’ is now revealed to mean, when put with Genesis 27:28-29, one powerful, wealthy nation—and another wealthy group, assembly or company of nations—or commonwealth of nations.”

“David’s throne must exist somewhere on Earth today. And it must be a long-held line. What other unbroken monarchy has historical ties to ancient Israel?”

Genesis 35:18-20 shows this promise would go to two of Jacob’s grandsons—Ephraim and Manasseh. The latter was told he would become “a great people,” but the first was foretold to be “greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations.”

Also, Deuteronomy 33:13-17 further reveals the identity of the recipients of these blessings: “Blessed of the LORD be [Ephraim and Manasseh’s] land, for the precious things of heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that couches beneath, and for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, and for the precious things put forth by the moon, and for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the lasting hills, and for the precious things of the earth and fullness thereof...let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph [Ephraim—Britain; Manasseh—America]...His glory is like the firstling [the birthright holder]

of his bullock, and his horns are like the horns of *unicorns* [the national seal of Britain]: with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth: and they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh.”

Further in his book, Mr. Pack described how Britain began to receive this promise. “In the second half of the nineteenth century, the rapid advancement of technology and economics, beginning in Britain, changed the lives of most of the population. Technical achievements, such as the invention of the steamboat, assured Great Britain total and complete authority over the sea. It allowed them to colonize new lands, to the point that the ‘sun never set’ on her holdings.

“America has a greater concentration of natural resources than any other geographic location. Utilization of new, rich resources kept raw material costs down and allowed for unprecedented growth.

“From 1800 to 1950, both nations came to control nearly every important resource on the planet!”

(Continue reading *America and Britain in Prophecy* to see the full picture of how all of God’s Word was fulfilled in these nations. You can find or order it at rcg.org/aabibp.)

Though the British Empire has since splintered into the Commonwealth it is today, God has kept His Word in maintaining King David’s line and throne in London.

Just as surely as God fulfilled this promise, He will perform another promise in His Word in the near future—the establishment of His Kingdom on Earth.

The Kingdom of God will grow into a global supergovernment that will bring peace and prosperity to *all* nations: “And there was given [to Christ] dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all *people, nations, and languages*, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed” (Dan. 7:14).

To learn more, read *How God’s Kingdom Will Come – The Untold Story!* (rcg.org/hgkwc). □

PERSONAL

Continued from page 2

wonderful, joyful marriage. There are basic principles unknown to all but a very few who are willing to truly study and believe God's Word to see what He instructs.

God's Instructions from the Beginning

The first reference to marriage describes Adam and Eve being brought together by God, forming the first marital union of a man and woman in history. Genesis 2 states, "The LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet [suitable] for him" (vs. 18).

God explains that men and women were not designed to be alone. People never work as well—are not as productive—when they are alone. Men were created—in fact, designed—to need an assistant, a help, a wife to stand beside them. Of course, wives are also aided by husbands in a variety of ways.

Studies show that the average person becomes happier after marriage. This increase has actually been measured, with studies revealing that, no matter the person's prior level of happiness, he or she receives at least a small boost.

Genesis describes Adam inspecting all the animals God had created and finding none suitable for him. So God put him to sleep, took a rib from his side, and created the woman: "And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made [the Hebrew means built] He a woman, and brought her unto the man" (Gen. 2:22).

Adam realized the woman was literally part of him—that she had come *from* him: "And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man" (vs. 23).

Next, God tells Adam and Eve what to do once married—in His first recorded instruction about the marriage institution: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be

one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed" (vs. 24-25).

Married couples are to live together, forming a new household, apart from their parents. The phrase "and they shall be one flesh" is speaking of sexual relations. The verse is defining where sex belongs—within marriage!

This account establishes marriage as God-ordained! This institution was created, designed and presented to the first human couple as the way that God intended the two sexes to live together.

Now notice this passage in Ecclesiastes describing the advantages of marriage: "Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labor" (4:9). And, "For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falls; for he has not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone?" (vs. 10-11). This is in addition to, "If one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken" (vs. 12).

Notice the phrase "a threefold cord." This establishes the minimum number to be a family. One child makes any couple "threefold." To be a rope—a "cord"—a minimum of three strands is required, making it possible to weave them together. Each additional child then further strengthens the marriage, makes the rope stronger, and binds the family more, making it harder for a couple to break up. God explains that producing a family is central to marriage. Adam and Eve were told, "Be fruitful, and multiply" (Gen. 1:28).

Husband's Responsibility

The most crucial New Testament passage about marriage and the specific roles of husbands and wives is Ephesians 5:22-33. These 12 verses introduce the most fundamental understanding that each partner *must* bring to the marriage.

"Husbands, *love your wives*, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it" (vs. 25). This emphasizes the importance of hus-

bands showing real, sincere, deep love for their wives!

The husband's first and greatest responsibility is to unfailingly love his wife! Initially, many husbands try to do this, but their effort wanes over time. Men often begin to take their wives for granted, not realizing they are to love them "as Christ loved the church." This is the extremely high standard that God sets—an unending, boundless love, paralleling the way Christ cares about His bride, the Church. Christ never gives up on the Church, but rather forgives, understands, is patient with, and works with His wife-to-be.

Wife's Responsibility

What about wives? Let's read their most crucial obligation—understood by so few: "Wives, *submit yourselves* unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord" (Eph. 5:22). Society has completely reversed, and denigrated, the Bible. Yet, this is what God requires of the woman. Remember, the Author of marriage knows what works.

Most women are taught today that they are equal in authority to their husbands. Certainly women *are* equal before God as human beings. Men are not more important or better than women. But God places the man in charge of the marriage.

The Bible is plain.

The typical marriage counselor laughs at this, seeing it as archaic and out-of-step. Few brides-to-be enter marriage having been taught anything about being subject to their husband's loving authority. Most would ridicule and outright *reject* this idea!

How It Works

Today, many men are unwilling to take the lead in marriage. Of course, many get married only to find their wives have no intention of letting them lead. These are separate problems, and both are very *real*.

Society has seen the near disappearance of strong leadership, with most men no longer knowing how to lead. This creates a crucial void in the marriage—and it frustrates women, who were designed by God to most



“Studies show that the average person becomes happier after marriage. This increase has actually been measured, with studies revealing that, no matter the person’s prior level of happiness, he or she receives at least a small boost.”

naturally follow the strong but loving lead of a wise man. Women were designed to need to know their husbands love them, and will provide for and take care of them. A woman should feel that, if necessary, her husband will defend her with his life! (Reread Ephesians 5:25.)

Understanding these things leaves a woman much more secure and comfortable in the role of follower.

A woman married to a man who will not lead will spend her marriage frustrated, unable to know when to passively accept indecision or to speak up and take action because her husband will not. Many women are forced to step into a leadership void in their homes, because the man will not fill it—and somebody has to. Someone must take the lead whenever any two or more people do *anything!*

On the other hand, some husbands view their role like a drill sergeant over raw recruits. They try to *drive* their wives, bossing them around, frustrating and squelching them.

No woman wants to feel her opinions do not count—that her views do not matter, because the man “knows everything.” This is no better, and is even in some ways worse, than a marriage in which a man will not lead. For a marriage to achieve the peace and happiness that God intends, both extremes must be avoided.

Husbands should gently and lovingly lead their wives, drawing them out, asking their advice—and using it when appropriate. A wise husband knows that his wife is his *best advisor*—that she knows him best and knows how to compensate for his areas of weakness.

This verse repeats and adds to the husband/wife instruction: “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them” (Col. 3:18-19).

The wife’s role is given first because family government must be established before anything productive can be accomplished. Again, the husband must *lovingly* lead the wife—and

that is why God inspired Paul to record this twice. But if the wife does not submit, the marriage will not last. All the love in the world from the husband will not keep a marriage together if the wife is determined to be in charge. Also, all the family government in the world will not keep it together if the husband does not truly love his wife.

No successful marriage can have one—*either* one—without the other!

Another vital point. Since obviously the wife must also love her husband, the husband must also periodically be willing to yield to the wife’s wiser position or view on any given matter. He must be humble enough to take her advice when her plan is better than his own. Incidentally, feeling appreciated, understood and valued, the woman’s love for her husband then *grows!*

Husbands, be wise enough and willing to seek your wife’s counsel. Train yourself to *want* her ideas. Realize that two partially good ideas can become either one good, very good, or even wonderful idea! Your wife has much to offer, but you must be willing to receive it.

The Fine Art of Right Communication

Miscommunication, bad communication, or lack of communication is one of the leading causes of divorce. The role of the husband is to take the lead in proper communication with his wife.

Husbands must understand that the wife has often been home all day with the children. She may be frustrated, and in desperate need of conversation with someone above the age of 12—or maybe even 3. The husband who comes home from work not wanting to talk, but rather to just sit down, have a beer, read the paper, and watch the news, has effectively cut off his wife from communication with another adult.

Do not forget about her needs. Talk to her. Find out about her day. Allow her to open up. Show interest in what she has accomplished and what may have happened with the children.

Wives, be sure you do open up to your husband. You may be by nature

“more verbal” or “less verbal” than he is. Depending on which is the case, strive to do a little more listening, or a little more talking. The couple should strive to find a balance in communication, with each expressing an opinion about the things on their minds.

Husbands and wives should both always remember to discuss their problems with each other, while relying on God for ultimate spiritual understanding. All problems should always be discussed with God. Wives, in particular, should discuss their spiritual problems with their husbands, while never neglecting to remember that God is the One ultimately guiding and helping them spiritually. Your husband cannot grant you salvation.

Also, avoid arguing *at all costs*. NOTHING productive *ever* comes from heated exchanges. The devastating effect of this kind of “communication” lasts longer, and bites deeper, than the couple doing it even begins to realize.

If you are wrong, always apologize. Defending the indefensible is silly—and unproductive. Never store up feelings, and then dump them in a heated moment of release. The Golden Rule—“Do unto others as you would have them do unto you”—is also the greatest rule of communication within marriage!

Manage Your Finances Together

Another point: all wage earners are paid a specific amount of money. Whether large or small, this is the amount they must live on. Financial problems—usually caused by couples living beyond their means—along with poor communication and sexual problems—form the “big three” causes for marital break-up.

A few helpful points:

First, develop the habit of systematic, monthly saving early in your marriage.

Next, avoid credit-buying. It is a trap far deeper than it appears. If you do use credit cards, pay them off immediately every month.

Finally, plan your purchases. Develop *priorities* so that you do not

try to buy everything at once. Then, determine to buy quality as much as possible. Practice patience. Be willing to wait. You will be glad you did!

The Truly Happy Marriage

God tells husbands: “*Live joyfully with the wife whom you love all the days of [your] life*” (Ecc. 9:9). For this to be possible, the wife must be doing the same—and this should be the daily goal of every married couple. None of the principles in this article will bring true, complete happiness unless *both* mates are diligently applying them. Successful marriages are always the product of *two* people working *together* toward the same purpose in the same way—with the same understanding.

If you have a wonderful husband or a wonderful wife, you are truly blessed—and are much more unusual than you may think. But if you do not have a good husband or a good wife, then strive to grow as much as you possibly can, understanding that your mate may follow your example.

God says this to husbands who have been blessed to have found a wonderful wife: “Whoso finds a wife finds a good thing, and obtains favor of the LORD” (Prov. 18:22).

A virtuous wife *is* wonderful—“a good thing”—and wise husbands-to-be will diligently search for such a woman before getting married. Special favor from God is just one benefit that comes from marrying a woman of great character.

Wives, strive to be special in every way that you possibly can. Husbands, strive to be worthy of such a woman. You may discover that God has sent you one.

The couple that *works* at their marriage will find that their marriage *works!*—and far better than they had ever dreamed!

On your wedding day, you promised—probably vowed!—before God to spend the rest of your life married to the same person. Do not let this commitment wane or blur in your mind. It was “for better or for worse.” It is easy for a couple to remain com-

mitted when times are “better,” but not so easy during a “worse” phase. A close relationship with God, based on a deep recognition that He knows how to produce all the best and most wonderful things in both marriage and life, has no substitute. No matter what difficulty your marriage is facing, bring God into it. He has all the true and lasting solutions.

Commitment is the bedrock foundation of every strong marriage. Remember, “When the going gets tough, the tough get going.” The rewards that flow from dedication to your wedding vows will bring joy beyond words.

Happiness depends far more on what *you* do than on what your mate or anyone else does. No matter the current state of your marriage, you *can* improve it. Take responsibility. You can grow—and it can get better. Remember, GOD instituted the marriage covenant—and the *principles* governing its success. Without them, *real* happiness is impossible! With them, *you* can experience a boundless *joy* you have never known!

The Restored Church of God, the publisher of this magazine, offers more helpful material—and truth—ALL FREE!—on marriage and the family than any other church on Earth. And this would have to be the case with wherever is the one Church that Jesus Christ built.

The place to start is our essential booklet *You Can Build a Happy Marriage* (reg.org/ycbahm), we also have material regarding keys to childrearing, proper dating and courtship, the God-ordained purpose of sex, the family unit—and divorce and remarriage. Also examine our extraordinary magazine for teenagers, and another for families, plus seven Bible story books—and lessons in seven levels—ALL vital for teaching the truth of God’s Word to children and teenagers of all ages.

The family is under assault as *never* before. Take time to explore the vast cornucopia of truth we have available on every conceivable question you could ask about these subjects—but also many, many others. You will be so very glad that you did. □

ASIA

Fearing Junta, Hundreds of Myanmar Parents Disown Dissident Children



A poster with pictures of people killed by Myanmar's junta troops is seen at the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners office in Mae Sot, Thailand (Jan. 26, 2022).

REUTERS/SOE ZEYA TUN

Every day for the last three months, an average of six or seven families in Myanmar have posted notices in the country's state-owned newspapers cutting ties with sons, daughters, nieces, nephews and grandchildren who have publicly opposed the ruling military junta.

The notices started to appear in such numbers in November after the army, which seized power from Myanmar's democratically elected government a year ago, announced it would take over properties of its opponents and arrest people giving shelter to protesters. Scores of raids on homes followed.

Lin Lin Bo Bo, a former car salesman who joined an armed group resisting military rule, was one of those disowned by his parents in about 570 notices reviewed by *Reuters*.

"We declare we have disowned Lin Lin Bo Bo because he never lis-

tened to his parents' will," said the notice posted by his parents, San Win and Tin Tin Soe, in state-owned newspaper *The Mirror* in November.

Speaking to *Reuters* from a Thai border town where he is living after fleeing Myanmar, the 26-year-old said his mother had told him she was disowning him after soldiers came to their family home searching for him. A few days later, he said he cried as he read the notice in the paper.

"My comrades tried to reassure me that it was inevitable for families to do that under pressure," he told *Reuters*. "But I was so heartbroken."

Targeting families of opposition activists was a tactic used by Myanmar's military during unrest in 2007 and the late 1980s but has been used far more frequently since the February 1, 2021, coup, according to Wai Hnin Pwint Thon, senior advocacy officer at rights group Burma Campaign UK.

Publicly disowning family members, which has a long history in Myanmar's culture, is one way to respond, said Wai Hnin Pwint Thon, who said she was seeing more such notices in the press than in the past.

"Family members are scared to be implicated in crimes," she said. "They don't want to be arrested, and they don't want to be in trouble."

Commenting on the notices in a news conference in November, military spokesperson Zaw Min Tun said that people who made such declarations in newspapers could still be charged if found to be supporting opposition to the junta.

Hundreds of thousands of people in Myanmar, many of them young, took to the streets to protest the coup a year ago. After a violent crackdown on demonstrations by the army, some protesters fled overseas or joined armed groups in remote parts of the country. Known as People's Defense Forces, these groups are broadly aligned with the deposed civilian government.

Over the past year, security forces have killed about 1,500 people, many of them demonstrators, and arrested nearly 12,000 people, according to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners.

Lin Lin Bo Bo said he hopes to one day go home and support his family. "I want this revolution to be over as soon as possible," he told *Reuters*.

Such a reunification may be possible for some families torn apart in this way, according to Wai Hnin Pwint Thon, the rights activist.

"Unless they do it properly with lawyers and a will, then these things don't really count legally," she said of the disowning notices. "After a couple of years, they can go back to being family." □

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

DNA Analysis of Elephant Ivory Reveals Trafficking Networks



Elephant tusks are stacked in one of around a dozen pyres of ivory, in Nairobi National Park, Kenya (April 28, 2016).

AP/BEN CURTIS

As few as three major criminal groups are responsible for smuggling the vast majority of elephant ivory tusks out of Africa, according to a new study.

Researchers used analysis of DNA from seized elephant tusks and evidence such as phone records, license plates, financial records and shipping documents to map trafficking operations across the continent and better understand who was behind the crimes.

“When you have the genetic analysis and other data, you can finally begin to understand the illicit supply chain—that’s absolutely key to countering these networks,” said Louise Shelley, who researches illegal trade at George Mason University.

Conservation biologist Samuel Wasser, a study co-author, hopes the

findings will help law enforcement officials target the leaders of these networks instead of low-level poachers who are easily replaced by criminal organizations.

“If you can stop the trade where the ivory is being consolidated and exported out of the country, those are really the key players,” said Dr. Wasser, who co-directs the Center for Environmental Forensic Science at the University of Washington.

Africa’s elephant population is fast dwindling. From around 5 million elephants a century ago to 1.3 million in 1979, the total number of elephants in Africa is now estimated to be around 415,000.

A 1989 ban on international commercial ivory trade has not stopped the decline. Each year, an estimated 1.1 million pounds of poached ele-

phant tusks are shipped from Africa, mostly to Asia.

For the past two decades, Dr. Wasser has fixated on key questions: “Where is most of the ivory being poached, who is moving it, and how many people are they?”

He works with wildlife authorities in Kenya, Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaysia and elsewhere, who contact him after they intercept ivory shipments. He flies to the countries to take samples of tusks to analyze the DNA. He has now amassed samples from more than 4,300 elephants trafficked out of Africa between 1995 and today.

“That’s an amazing, remarkable data set,” said Princeton University biologist Robert Pringle. With such data, “it becomes possible to spot connections and make strong inferences,” he said.

In 2004, Dr. Wasser demonstrated that DNA from elephant tusks and dung could be used to pinpoint their home location to within a few hundred miles. In 2018, he recognized that finding identical DNA in tusks from two different ivory seizures meant they were harvested from the same animal—and likely trafficked by the same poaching network.

The new research expands that approach to identify DNA belonging to elephant parents and offspring, as well as siblings—and led to the discovery that only a very few criminal groups are behind most of the ivory trafficking in Africa.

Traffickers that smuggle ivory also often move other contraband, the researchers found. A quarter of large seizures of pangolin scales are co-mingled with ivory, for instance.

“Confronting these networks is a great example of how genetics can be used for conservation purposes,” said Brian Arnold, a Princeton University evolutionary biologist who was not involved in the research. □

'Nobody Is Ready': Many U.S. Cities Lack Resources to Chase \$1 Trillion Infrastructure Windfall



Workers finish the day at the site of new mixed-use construction in downtown Erie, Pennsylvania, where city leaders are hoping to get a piece of the \$500 billion promised through President Biden's infrastructure bill to continue their vision to revitalize their downtown and waterfront areas, moving the city forward from its industrial past (Feb. 8, 2022).

REUTERS/STEPHANIE STRASBURG

Erie, Pennsylvania, could use a facelift. The lakefront city of 100,000 has been adding jobs and businesses downtown, but it remains saddled with vestiges of its industrial past: abandoned factories, concrete buildings, decaying houses.

Leaders have written a stack of development plans, but lack the money needed to turn them into reality.

Now their dreams seem possible. Congress last year passed President Joe Biden's \$1 trillion infrastructure law, which provides \$550 billion in new funding for bridge repair, environmental cleanup and other projects that could transform places like Erie.

It amounts to the largest U.S. public-works surge since the 1960s, but there is no guarantee those dollars will make it to Erie. Roughly half of the funds will

flow through state governments, while the rest will be doled out on a competitive basis.

To win the money, local governments will have to apply for it—and after decades of belt tightening, many lack the bureaucratic muscle to do so.

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic two years ago, local governments have shed 3.7 percent of their administrative jobs, according to the U.S. Labor Department.

Some have had trouble handling the \$500 billion in COVID-19 aid that Washington has sent to local governments. One out of five communities in Michigan missed out on the initial round of federal coronavirus aid because they did not know how to fill out the paperwork, said Shanna Draheim of the Michigan Municipal League.

Many turn to outside experts. The city of Mason, Michigan, has set aside up to \$40,000 to hire a consultant to apply for funding to upgrade its sewer system—a substantial expense for a community of 8,300 people.

“It makes it very challenging for smaller communities to position themselves to be competitive,” city manager Deborah Stewart said.

Academic studies have found that federal homeless grants are more likely to go to communities that can show they will use the money effectively, rather than those that need it most.

That can favor cities which have the resources to navigate federal bureaucracy. In the past fiscal year, just 11 counties received 50 percent of the competitive grants awarded by the agencies that will handle most infrastructure spending, according to a *Reuters* review of federal data.

Experts say smaller cities might get boxed out in the scramble for infrastructure dollars. “It's going to be overwhelming in many cases and could actually favor large, prosperous metropolitan areas,” said Bruce Katz, a Drexel University professor who is helping Erie seek infrastructure grants.

Many federal programs also require local governments to provide matching funds—a hurdle that has kept Erie from participating in recent years.

The Biden administration says it is working to reduce those barriers.

Many of the new competitive grant programs include carve-outs for “disadvantaged” communities that have suffered from poverty, pollution or racial discrimination. The administration also requires that at least 40 percent of its spending on clean energy and climate change benefit those areas. Matching-fund requirements can be waived in many cases, officials say. □



**17,670,000,000,000
miles**

The night sky has a way of making us ponder our existence. The stupendous grandeur of stars, planets and galaxies—or the Bright Pillar in the Carina nebula pictured here—can make us feel tiny and insignificant. This feeling is nothing new. Millennia ago, ancient Israel's King David wrote this in Psalm 8:3-4: "When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained; WHAT IS MAN THAT YOU ARE MINDFUL OF HIM?"

What is your purpose? While most never find a concrete answer to this question, you CAN know! To learn about your incredible human potential, read the eye-opening book *The Awesome Potential of Man*.

RCG.ORG/TAPOM