

MARCH-APRIL 2011

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# REAL TRUTH

A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING



## UNREST IN THE MIDDLE EAST

*Where Will It Lead?*

# THE REAL TRUTH

A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING

VOL. IX | NO. 3 | MARCH-APRIL 2011

ARTICLES

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■ **LOOKING BACK:** Visitors view a picture of the atomic bomb's aftermath in a museum in Hiroshima, Japan.

PHOTO: JUNKO KIMURA/GETTY IMAGES

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PHOTO: KHALED DESOUKI/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

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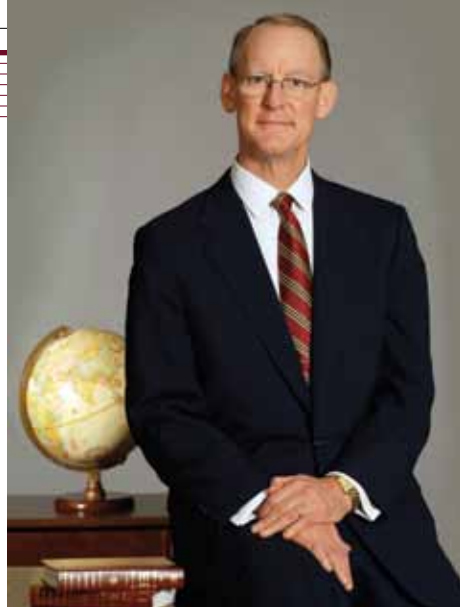
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## PERSONAL FROM

David C. Fack



# *The Middle East in Prophecy—Today's Unrest!*

**T**HE MIDDLE EAST lies in constant turmoil. Disagreement, confusion and violence have defined this region for millennia, making this geographic area a bubbling caldron of unrest, contention, terrorism and failed attempts at peace. Humanly devised solutions *never* work there.

Events are speeding up dramatically in this area of the world. Beginning with Tunisia and Egypt, nation after nation is seeing protests, demonstrations and riots. Things are not getting better, but rather only *worse*. Yet this is but the beginning of the worsening to come.

Few understand the historic roots of the Middle East. There, nations, cultures, religions, history and politics collide with prophecy! How will it be resolved? What does the Bible say? Events in the Middle East carry *far greater significance* than most even begin to understand!

This “Personal” covers conditions in the Mid-East today, including some of the history of the region. It also briefly touches on the *longest single prophecy* in the Bible.

It has been said that every eight years the Middle East suffers another war. Over 60 years of recent history proves this. And this does not count individual terrorist bombings, violent ambushes and other incidents that always seem to yield death. The Middle East’s problems defy a simple solution—but it can be proven that God

has been carefully guiding events there much longer than any can imagine.

The whole world is tied to the Middle East in a remarkable way. The problems there will not go away, nor can the world pretend they will by simply looking the other way!

The Middle East is at the center of a powerful and vitally important prophecy the world knows nothing of. But God’s Plan *can* be known. He is working out a SUPREME PURPOSE on Earth.

Most people are completely unaware that there *is* a purpose for mankind—let alone *what* it is! The present and future of the Middle East play a large role in God’s Master Plan for humanity, and this region is at the center of astounding prophecies that will affect the lives of all peoples on Earth before this age is finished.

Only God can solve the “Middle East problem.”

Over 2,500 years ago, God inspired the prophet Daniel to record a long and detailed prophecy involving many fascinating twists and turns through history. This prophecy will culminate with cataclysmic events to occur in *our time!* These events will impact *all nations*—and yet their meaning has been sealed, closed until the last days!

Some Bible prophecies are general. Others are specific, or even *highly* specific. Some involve single events that occur at specific moments in time. Others are fulfilled slowly over many years—or even many centuries or millennia—and involve many events. Daniel’s proph-

ecy involves many smaller prophecies that can be examined one by one, until the account arrives at the modern age.

This primarily involves examination of one long chapter in the Bible. The fulfillment of each of the 45 separate verses is not subject to human reasoning, opinion or interpretation. Many of these very intricate separate prophecies have already been fulfilled exactly as God foretold, and have taken their place in history. They are now facts that can be studied—and are powerful PROOFS that a Supreme Being foretold them and then *brought them to pass!*

The connection between the periods of the present, past and future of the region is seen in its Mid-East flash point—Egypt. As you read, grasp the importance of tying the present to the past—and then to the future.

First, Egypt's current state.

### **Weakened Strongman**

In January 2011, the government of the tiny African nation of Tunisia collapsed, brought on by riots sparked from a single protester who burned himself to death in public in mid-December. This event went on to cause widespread riots in Egypt, a long-time strong United States ally of over 80 million people.

*Voice of America* reported, “Since Tunisia’s anti-government protests, at least five Egyptians have attempted suicide by self-immolation, imitating the young Tunisian whose burning death in December first galvanized protesters there.”

This shows the determination driving what followed. Protesters stormed the streets of Cairo and elsewhere to challenge the long-standing rule—almost 30 years—of Egyptian strongman Hosni Mubarak. Hundreds of thousands protested. Eighty-two-year-old Mubarak disbanded his cabinet on January 28 and appointed a vice

president for the first time since entering office.

The initial protests escalated to unprecedented levels, prompting decisive actions: “Overnight in Egypt, the government shut down the vast majority of Egypt’s Internet service, only allowing a network used by the stock exchange and most banks to stay live” (*The Christian Science Monitor*).

Former head of the International Atomic Energy Agency and Nobel Peace Prize winner Mohamed El Baradei, who openly supported the protests and is a favorite in the coming presidential election, was put under house arrest.

Video footage from the capital showed utter chaos: injured crying children, a man falling down shot, armored vehicles patrolling the streets and striking people, military helicopters everywhere, authorities firing gas grenades at protesters, mob-fueled street beatings, many fires and explosions. Rioters attempted to seize the foreign ministry and state TV buildings. Other buildings were looted, vandalized and burned. Prisons were abandoned by guards, and hundreds of prisoners escaped. Museums housing millennia-old priceless artifacts were looted. The picture was stark.

Just 18 days after protests began, Mr. Mubarak resigned, turning control over to the military council, which within two days suspended the constitution and disbanded the entire government. Yet this is but a short chapter in a nation of such long history. To look closely at Egypt is in some ways to look closely at the entire Middle East.

The biggest and most populous, and most geographically central nation in the Mid-East, Egypt—and its historical role—is referenced many times in the Bible. Egypt was the world’s first recorded great empire. And it is still the 16th most populous country in the world. History records that Noah

escaped to Egypt when persecutors sought his death before the Flood. The ancient patriarch Joseph was sold into slavery there, which led to his father, Jacob, then named Israel, settling there. Certain historians believe that the patriarch Job—Joseph’s nephew—built some of the pyramids. Moses was largely trained in Egypt. An infant Jesus was taken there for protection. Before the Exodus, it took many miracles to break the will of the stout-hearted Egyptians before God could deliver His people from enslavement. Egyptian arrogance caused Pharaoh to ignore all of this and lose his army in the Red Sea as God’s people fled under His protection. History records Egypt never recovered.

Ancient Israel often went to war with Egypt. The Bible records many accounts involving this country as God’s servants and people came into contact with it.

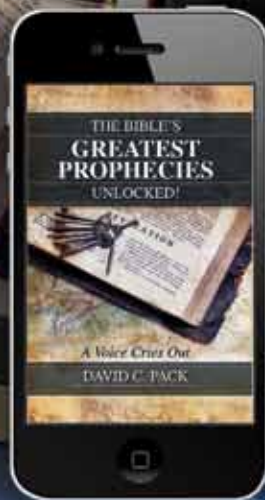
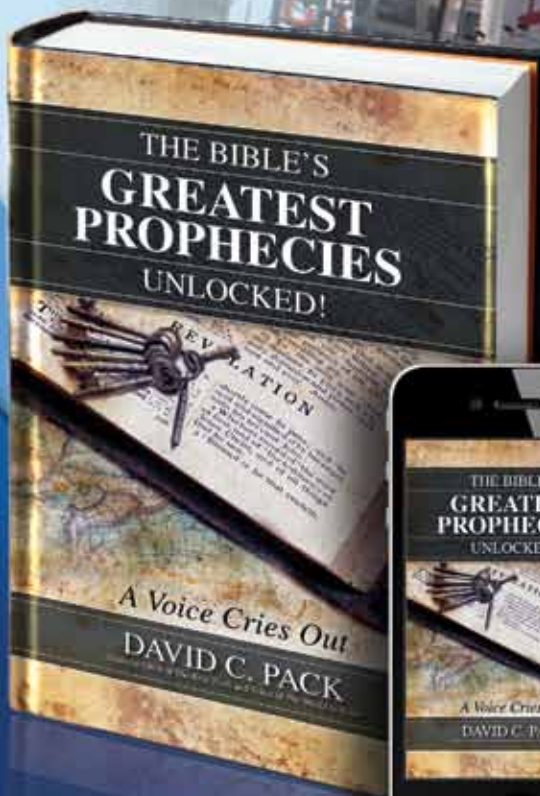
Of course, many dismiss such Bible accounts as Hebrew fables. They do not believe the miracles of Egypt—or any *other* miracles of the Bible—actually occurred. It can be proven with *unmistakable clarity* that Daniel’s prophecy stood the test of history—time and time again. Even the close-minded will be surprised at the stubbornness—and the POWER—of the facts. The authority of the Bible *can be proven*.

The Bible also reveals much about Egypt’s *future*. Multiple prophecies reveal that the modern descendants of Israel will again be enslaved in Egypt, among other places. I am not just referring to the Jews—the modern Israelis—but of all 12 tribes, whose identities can be known. But this is a subject for other articles and booklets.

The Bible shows that Egypt will play a key role in the fulfillment of prophecy surrounding an entity called “the king of the south.”

*Please see PERSONAL, page 27*

# You Can Know...



Horrific prophecies will soon affect every human being on Earth. Tragically, most are blissfully unaware of impending calamity. This need not be you!

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# Ireland's Government Grab

## *What Lies Ahead for the Celtic Tiger?*

A historic upset in Irish politics has left the nation uncertain as to what the new government will bring.

**I**RISH POET William Butler Yeats wrote, “Cast your mind on other days that we in coming days may be still the indomitable Irishry.” In short, the Irish have always overcome because they have persistently looked past their current suffering and remained optimistic that a better future awaits them.

Yeats’ words of encouragement are what Ireland needs to hear. The nation is struggling to comfort itself

from the financial shame of becoming the second eurozone nation after Greece to accept a joint International Monetary Fund/European Union bailout of \$95 billion.

The country, which has fought to establish itself since gaining independence from the British in 1921, has continually faced challenges head on—always with an adventurous spirit—which has set it apart from its British neighbors since early times.

After the devastating 1840s potato famine, which decimated a large per-

cent of its population and caused up to a million people to migrate, Ireland once again rose to become one of the wealthiest nations on Earth.

Yet it appears the proverbial “luck of the Irish” may have run out. The bailout—and fallout from it—caused uproar across the country and led to one of the most extraordinary months in the history of Irish politics. While IMF/EU-advocated austerity measures eventually passed in the parliament, it destroyed the principal governing party.

In response, Irish prime minister Brian Cowen dissolved parliament,

■ **IN OPPOSITION:** (Left to right) John Gormley of the Green Party, Eamon Gilmore of Labour, Enda Kenny of Fine Gael, Micheal Martin of Fianna Fail and Gerry Adams of Sinn Fein during the first televised debate with all five main party leaders in Dublin, Ireland (Feb. 14, 2011).

PHOTO: JULIEN BEHAL - WPA POOL/GETTY IMAGES

stepped down as leader of the ruling coalition, Fianna Fail, and turned the government over to the next most favored party leader, Micheal Martin. Despite guarantees from Mr. Cowen that he would stay until elections in March, pressure from within bumped up the date of the elections to the end of February, and prompted talk of a new coalition government.

The economic collapse and sudden changeover has left even the most optimistic Irishmen downtrodden. One of its most well-known financial forecasters, Morgan Kelly, writing in *The Irish Times*, stated, “From here on, for better or worse, we can only rely on the kindness of strangers.”

The nation, the third-largest island in Europe and home to 4.6 million people, is struggling with its new role as international beggar.

All eyes are on Ireland as to how the new government will bring change to its beleaguered people—and how it will help the professed “indomitable” nation regain its former glory.

### Growing Crisis

In the early 1950s, Ireland embarked on a program of economic realignment. Taxes were lowered and foreign investment sought. The new economic model was largely based on technology and commerce, with less reliance on agriculture. As a member of the European Union, the republic was able to access funding to help with the implementation of the new economic model.

The aggressive changes to the country resulted in it becoming the fastest growing economy in the world, earning it the moniker “Celtic Tiger.”

“Sensible policies and a benign global economy helped [Ireland] catch up with European neighbours that for decades had left it languishing,” *The Economist* reported. “Between 1993 and 2000 average annual GDP growth approached 10%...Over the last decade the boom turned bubbly, as low interest rates and reckless lending, abetted by dozy regulation, pushed up land values and caused Ireland to turn into a nation of property developers.”

“The Irish became, by one measure, the second-richest people in the European Union. ‘The boom is getting boomier,’ said Bertie Ahern, Ireland’s taoiseach (prime minister), in 2006. The government began exporting the Celtic Tiger model, telling other small countries that they, too, could enjoy double-digit growth rates if they followed Ireland’s lead. People splashed out on foreign holidays, new cars and expensive meals. ‘We behaved like a poor person who had won the lottery,’ says Nikki Evans, a businesswoman” (ibid.).

From 1995 to 2007, the economy grew at an average yearly rate of 6 percent GDP. Unemployment also fell sharply and the Irish Republic welcomed immigrants seeking employment, reversing the earlier emigration trend of the country, which saw the loss of thousands of people as a result of a weak economy in the 1980s.

Then the downturn came—and the Emerald Isle experienced one of the worst recessions in the eurozone. The economy declined by an average of 3 percent GDP in 2008, and worsened to 8 percent GDP in 2009. The real-estate market, which was booming at the time, courtesy of cheap loans from banks, took a nose dive as mortgagors defaulted on their loans.

“Property prices started sliding in 2006-07, leaving the banks hopelessly exposed...On September 15th 2008 Lehman Brothers tumbled, sending a giant tremor round the world. Two weeks later, with the share prices of Irish banks in free fall, the government took the fateful decision to guarantee liabilities worth €400 billion (\$572 billion) at six financial institutions.

“The costs of the rescue mounted as the banks’ losses grew, springing a giant hole in the public finances. The banking crisis had become a sovereign-debt crisis. International investors began to target Ireland as a weak link in the euro zone, raising its borrowing costs to unsustainable levels” (ibid.).

Two of the country’s largest banks, Anglo-Irish Bank and Bank of Ireland, required a \$46.4 billion bailout to remain afloat.

Much to the chagrin of the Irish people, the government complied. “The figures shocked the public because over the past two years ordinary people had been told the cost to the state of Anglo-Irish bank would be nothing, then 4bn euro [\$5.5 billion], later 12bn euro [\$16.6 billion], then 18bn euro [\$24.8 billion], later 24bn euro [\$33.1 billion] before finally reaching 35bn euro [\$48.4 billion],” *BBC News* reported.

The British media outlet wrote, “When the truth dawned on Sunday 28 November that there would be an 85bn euro [\$119 billion] bail-out with an annual interest payment average of 5.8% many people felt lied to; others believed the government had negotiated a bad deal.”

### Up and Away

Due to the nation’s financial predicament, the country faces another wave of emigration.

An estimated 280,000 homes across the nation do not currently have people living in them. Of those, 23,000 have never had occupants. In addition, one in 10 Irishmen is said to not be able to keep up with his mortgage payments.

“People are going to extraordinary lengths—not paying other bills and borrowing heavily from their parents—to meet mortgage repayments, both out of fear of losing their homes and to avoid the stigma of admitting that they are broke,” Mr. Kelly wrote in his editorial for *The Irish Times*. “In a society like ours, where a person’s moral worth is judged—by themselves as much as by others—by the car they drive and the house they own, the idea of admitting that you cannot afford your mortgage is unspeakably shameful.”

He later stated, “The gathering mortgage crisis puts Ireland on the cusp of a social conflict on the scale of the Land War [1879], but with one crucial difference. Whereas the Land War faced tenant farmers against a relative handful of mostly foreign landlords, the looming Mortgage War will pit recent house buyers against the majority of families who feel they worked hard and made sacrifices to pay off their mortgages, or



■ **ANGER IN THE STREETS:** Protesters calling for an immediate general election demonstrate outside the Irish Prime Minister's office in Dublin, Ireland (Nov. 26, 2010).

PHOTO: BEN STANSALL/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

else decided not to buy during the bubble, and who think those with mortgages should be made to pay them off. Any relief to struggling mortgage-holders will come not out of bank profits—there is no longer any such thing—but from the pockets of other taxpayers.”

As a result of failing banks and their affect on the market, *The Christian Science Monitor* reported that the country faces double-digit unemployment: “According to government statistics, unemployment is now above 13 percent and 27,700 people left the country in the first four months of this year, more than anytime since 1989. An estimated 5,000 Irish people leave every month, an increase of 81 percent on figures from 2009.”

As seen during previous economic downturns, this wave of emigration is causing even more pain to the already suffering economy.

### Spiraling Situation

Although the Irish are struggling to remain positive about the new government—and the future of the coun-

try now that the bailout has been received—the situation does not leave much room for hope.

The nation's finances are under the control of the IMF, and it remains indebted to larger countries, France and Germany, for years to come. On top of that, it has experienced a kind of government changeover that it has not had for 85 years, with the ouster of Fianna Fail, the party which had garnered the most seats in parliament since 1932. The leader of the newly elected majority party, Enda Kenny of Fine Gael, has repeatedly said he will attempt to renegotiate the terms of the bailout.

The new government also faces a host of possible scenarios in coming months. Several media outlets speculated on the difficulties for the government:

“There is talk in the euro zone of building a stronger social and political counterpart to monetary union, which might include such notions as harmonised tax bases and labour laws,” *The Economist* reported. “The symbolic pinch-point for Ireland is

its 12.5% corporate-tax rate, which France and Germany self-interestedly want to force up. Their argument is that they are bailing out a bust Irish government which is holding taxes artificially low (never mind that Ireland's low corporate-tax rate yields proportionally bigger revenues than in most other countries).”

All major Irish parties have stated they are against such a measure and will fight to protect the corporate tax rate at any cost.

“In Dublin, [there is] the prospect of opposition parties shifting the burden of paying bad bank debts from taxpayers—that is, voters—onto investors, many of them foreign, who hold the banks' bonds,” *The Globe and Mail* stated. “Such a move could not only unravel last year's Irish bailout deal but, perhaps more dangerously, undermine banks in the UK, France and Germany which lent heavily in Ireland and constrict bank lending in general.”

The same *Globe and Mail* article quoted economist Alan McQuaid: “Getting the banks back to some sort of ‘normal’ lending practices should be the key objective of a new government...Until the banking sector crisis is fully resolved and things improve on the labour market front then the supply/demand for credit will remain subdued in our view, severely hampering the recovery prospects for the economy as a whole in the process.”

Likewise, *The Christian Science Monitor* wrote, “Ireland will likely have to raise taxes and cut public services, including the unemployment benefits and, according to some sources, retirement pensions that many are now relying on.”

Other measures the country has already undergone since accepting the bailout include cutting the minimum wage, raising the sales tax to 23 percent, and making citizens pay water bills, which they have never had to do.

While many do not believe the measures will result in the same kind of upheaval as has occurred in Greece,

Please see **IRELAND**, page 24



# AMERICA'S Unknown God

Most today believe in God, and there are many ideas about His nature and personality. Can all these views be correct?

BY GREG E. KAIDANNEK

**F**ROM THE MOMENT the pilgrims fled England because of persecution and settled in what would become the United States, American society has been deeply intertwined with religion.

While drafting the Constitution, Founding Fathers George Washington, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Patrick Henry and James Madison, among others, strove to incorporate the idea that church and state should remain separated, yet God should still be central in a nation's affairs.

During his 1796 farewell address, Washington stated, "Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect, that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle" (*Religion and the American Presidency*).

The thinking was similar 70 years later under the 16th president, Abraham Lincoln, who outlined the concept of "divine providence" in a public speech proclaiming a "National Fast-day" in 1863: "It is the duty of nations as well

as of men to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God... and to recognize the sublime truth, announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history, that those nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord."

While the nation's culture and history are clearly inundated with mementos of a pious past—from its currency stating, "In God We Trust," to the country's constitutional laws, many of which are based on Old Testament laws—religious freedom was always a mainstay, causing the country to become known as a place for those previously persecuted for their beliefs. Think Puritans, Quakers and Jewish settlers.

Fast-forward to the 21st century, when most Americans still classify themselves by their religious beliefs. In fact, over 90 percent of Americans believe in a *form* of God.

Almost all worship in their own way, often with beliefs that run contradictory to each other. A tattooed pastor sporting a Bible in one hand and a cigarette in the other believes God condones his preaching in a bar, while another man believes that God views drinking as sin, worthy of hell-

fire. Rosary beads in hand, an elderly lady listening to the soft sounds of a preacher reciting a Sunday mass in Latin believes that God expects somberness, while another woman believes He wants her to honor Him by jumping, dancing and speaking in unrecognizable languages. Some believe God expects them to don dresses and suits for church services; others maintain God takes a more laid-back, come-as-you-are approach, meaning it is acceptable to wear T-shirts and ripped jeans to worship services.

In the chaos of opposing views of what God expects—and *how* He should be worshipped—is there any way to know which is correct?

## Four "Gods"

According to Baylor University researchers Paul Froese and Christopher Bader, Americans view God in one of four ways: authoritative, benevolent, critical or distant. In their book, *America's Four Gods*, the authors propose that the non-mutually exclusive views that Americans hold of God are based on opinions about His judgment and involvement in society. This, in turn, affects the way in which they rear their children, handle finances, and treat other people.

The book reports that 31 percent of Americans believe an authoritative God is directly involved in many aspects of society and individual lives. Those with this view maintain God helps them in their daily decision-mak-

ing, but also perceive Him as angry, constantly bringing down harsh judgments on those who directly oppose His rules. Some believers even go so far as to say that God hates people, stating, “It is simple: God loves us and hates you” (ibid.).

Another 24 percent of Americans hold the belief that God is benevolent—the kind of Being described by the apostle John in the New Testament: “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

“Their God is a force for good who cares for all people, weeps at all conflicts and will comfort all,” Mr. Froese told *USA Today*.

Similarly, *America’s Four Gods* states that up to 16 percent view God as “highly judgmental but simultaneously disengaged.” This “critical” God is perceived to be keeping some type of spiritual “score” on all human beings, but never directly involves Himself. Americans who hold this assumption believe heaven or hell waits for people after death based on that score.

Then there are the nearly 24 percent who believe in a distant God. They suppose that God is not concerned with human beings and their existence. He simply created the “game pieces,” set the rules, and pressed “play.”

Benjamin Franklin held a similar view, as demonstrated in his book *The Works of Benjamin Franklin*: “...I cannot conceive otherwise, than that he the Infinite Father expects or requires no worship or praise from us, but that he is even infinitely above it.”

### **Biblically Backed?**

All four views of God—authoritative, distant, benevolent and critical—appear to be biblically endorsed.

Consider. The Bible seems to support the idea of a harsh and punishing God: “God *is* jealous, and the LORD revenges; the LORD revenges, and *is* furious; the LORD will take vengeance on His adversaries, and He reserves *wrath* for His enemies” (Nah. 1:2).

On the other hand, the Old Testament records His benevolence:

“...The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin...” (Ex. 34:6-7).

In addition, King David stated that God considers everything a person does, which appears to support the notion that God is critical. “The LORD looks from heaven; He beholds all the sons of men. From the place of His habitation He looks upon all the inhabitants of the earth. He fashions their hearts [minds] alike; He considers all their works” (Psa. 33:13-15).

Yet the prophet Isaiah apparently recorded that God distances Himself from mankind: “Behold, the LORD’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither His ear heavy, that it cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear” (Isa. 59:1-2).

The apostle Paul understood that people develop their own ideas of God. While in Greece, “Paul stood in the midst of Mars’ hill, and said, you men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore you ignorantly worship...” (Acts 17:22-23).

The same is true for many today. While most assume they know Him, many rarely (if ever) consider peering into their bibles for any type of instruction.

A February 2008 Pew Research Center survey revealed that over three quarters of Americans identify themselves as Christian, but only about 20 percent read their bibles at least once a month outside religious services. On average, they could correctly answer only 50 percent of religious-based questions. In addition, roughly 70 percent knew that Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem—and less than half knew the four gospel accounts are Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

While only 16 percent claim to read the Bible daily, a Gallup survey found

that only 31 percent of Americans believe the Bible is God’s Word and should be taken literally. Almost half of those surveyed believe the Bible is God’s inspired Word, but not everything included in it should be taken literally.

Without looking to the correct source for information, an improper foundation of understanding is created. With so little biblical information, Americans are in fact worshipping an “UNKNOWN” God, developing views of what He is like based on their own opinions and ideas.

Notice what Paul recorded concerning such individuals: “Because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools” (Rom. 1:21-22).

Given this, it is not surprising that so many competing and confusing opinions exist. God, however, is not the author of this confusion (I Cor. 14:33). He leaves clues throughout the Bible about how He should be viewed—if one is willing to look.

### **The True God**

For centuries, most have paid more attention to things that have been created by the hand of man, such as lifeless statues, pictures and inanimate stone carvings, while ignoring the true God—the One who is *actually* alive.

To understand the *true* God, it is necessary to examine His characteristics, starting at the beginning of the book He inspired—the Bible. The following section is filled with Bible references to fully paint the correct picture of God.

Genesis 1:1 states, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” Recognize that everything in the entire universe was created by God. This includes even those things that are invisible, such as gravity, magnetism, time and space. Colossians 1:16-17 states, “For by Him were *all things* created, that are in heaven, and

that are in earth, *visible and invisible*, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: *all things* were created by Him...”

Because God is a Spirit (John 4:24), He is not confined to physical boundaries. This does not mean He is a blob that permeates the universe, coequal with His creation. As no human being is amorphous, neither is God. Genesis 1:26 states that humans were created in God’s image and likeness. In fact, God has features just as humans do (Rev. 1:14-16; Ezek. 1:26-28).

As Creator of time and space, God is also eternal. In Exodus 3:14, God revealed Himself to Moses as “I AM,” which means ever-living, existent one. God has no beginning or end of life (Heb. 7:3). He has always existed (Rev. 1:8).

God is the most dynamic of all beings. The Bible reveals God’s true qualities—His character—as holy and perfect (Matt. 5:48). Later in His Word, God is described not only as *having* love, but also as *being* love (I John 4:8, 16).

The Creator ponders each and every situation and decides the absolute best way in which to act. He is wonderful, mighty and fair (Isa. 9:6; 45:21), as well as comforting, merciful, faithful and forgiving (II Cor. 1:3; I John 1:9).

Some people have the misconception that the Old Testament God is harsh and authoritative, while the God of the New Testament is benevolent and merciful. This idea divides professing Christians, leaving most to form their own opinions. According to the Bible, however, this assumption is false. Malachi 3:6 states, “For I am the LORD, I change not...”

In actuality, the One who became Christ *is* the God of the Old Testament, who created all things! “And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that ROCK WAS CHRIST” (I Cor. 10:4; Psa. 18:1-2).

Although there is only one true God, the Bible reveals that God is actually a FAMILY, currently composed of two members: Father and Son.

Notice what God said in Genesis: “Let *Us* make man in *Our* image, after *Our* likeness...” (1:26). In this verse, the pronouns “Us” and “Our” are used in direct reference to the original collective Hebrew noun for God, *Elohim*.

Further, John 1 states, “In the beginning was the Word [meaning “Spokesman” in Greek] and the Word was with God [the Father], and the Word *was* God...And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us...” (vs. 1, 14). The Word, who later became Jesus Christ, was in the God Family with the Father before the creation of time.

This truth is contrary to the common belief that God is a three-in-one being, composed of the Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit—a doctrine the Bible simply does not teach.

In fact, throughout Scripture, no mention is made of a supposed third God-being. Notice: “...there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him” (I Cor. 8:6).

The Godhead currently consists of two *distinct* beings, not some mysterious and strange three-in-one enigma as the trinity doctrine purports. When understood in its entirety, the trinity doctrine *limits* God and His ultimate purpose for mankind!

### Way of Understanding

The Ten Commandments detailed in Exodus define how God wants people to live—and give an inside look into how to view Him. The first four Commandments address how to show God proper respect, while the last six teach how to treat fellow human beings.

The First Commandment, “You shall have no other gods before Me” (Ex. 20:3), leaves no room for personal opinions or ideas. God expects that everyone will not worship other gods. In return, He promises to disclose His true nature.

Traditional Christianity does not understand God or His nature because it does not keep His Commandments (Psa. 111:10). On the other hand, *true* Christians, those with God’s Spirit

(Rom. 8:9), understand His nature and know who and what He is (I John 2:3).

Yet many today believe that the Commandments are done away. Deceitful ministers, who themselves are deceived, have taught many that God’s Law is a “heavy burden” or “Christ kept it for us.”

But God can only be understood by keeping His Commandments, which, in turn, can only be fully internalized through practice. Keeping them, however, requires real effort, which does not come naturally (Rom. 8:7).

King Solomon was inspired to record, “...there is a way that seems right to a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” (Prov. 14:12; 16:25). In addition, the prophet Jeremiah was stirred to write, “It is not in man to direct his steps...” (Jer. 10:23). Taken together, these verses reveal that human beings on their own cannot do what is right.

Without God’s Spirit, the human mind is unable to properly discern between right and wrong—including the concept of God’s true identity.

There will always be those who do not want to obey God and who find ways around His Law. Professing to follow the “Lord,” they do not DO what He says (Luke 6:46). They fail to recognize Christ’s plain words in Matthew 5:17: “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am NOT come to destroy, but to fulfill.” Instead, God describes His Law as a blessing—“holy and just and good” (Rom. 7:12).

Positive effects flow from keeping the Commandments versus negative consequences that occur when they are broken. When the effects are considered, greater understanding, appreciation and reverence are natural byproducts that illuminate the true identity of the One who created these spiritual laws—God.

To learn more about how to be in contact with the true God, read David C. Pack’s books *The Ten Commandments – “Nailed to the Cross” or Required for Salvation?* and *The Trinity – Is God Three-In-One?* □



# Is Marriage outdated?

Nearly half of today's marriages end in divorce. Is the entire marriage institution headed toward oblivion?

BY JACOB C. TOEWS

**S**OME ARE PREDICTING that marriage will soon be a thing of the past—perhaps within a generation. Fundamental shifts in thinking are impacting society's evaluation of this time-honored tradition.

The *Time* magazine article "Who Needs Marriage? A Changing Institution" highlighted this growing phenomenon: "...marriage, whatever its social, spiritual or symbolic appeal, is in purely practical terms just not as necessary as it used to be."

Long-lasting relationships are becoming increasingly elusive. Many struggle to find happiness in their lives—only to watch their visions, goals and expectations evaporate into heartbreak and failure.

Yet happy, healthy marriages have one of the greatest impacts on people's lives. Why then has wedlock, which has existed in various forms in all cultures from earliest times, become so unpopular?

## Stunning Statistics

America leads the world in divorce. Current figures show that 41-50 percent of first marriages fail. Second-marriage failure rates stand at 60-67 percent. Even more staggering is that third marriages face a 73-74 percent failure rate!

While divorce rates are not yet as high in other countries, the number

of broken homes is increasing, with Russia and eastern European countries presently showing the highest spikes in divorce. In Canada, 37.7 percent of all marriages are expected to end before a couple's 30th anniversary.

Divorce rates are also climbing in India. *BBC News* reported that "the chances of this year's newly-weds staying together for the rest of their lives are slimmer than ever.

"There has been a huge change, a drastic change and divorce rates are increasing," Dr Geetanjali Sharma, a marriage counsellor working in Gurgaon, a wealthy Delhi satellite city, told the BBC.

"There's been a 100% increase in divorce rates in the past five years alone."

With such bleak statistics, many are now seeking "alternatives" that seem more attractive than traditional vows. After all, many think, *Who needs a piece of paper stating they are legally married?*

As a result, cohabitation, once illegal and frowned upon as "living in sin," is now socially acceptable.

But does living together produce positive effects? Studies indicate that cohabitation produces even worse results than troubled marriages.

"The CDC's National Center for Health Statistics...found that the probability of a first marriage ending in separation or divorce within five years is 20 percent, compared with the 49

percent probability of a pre-marital cohabitation breaking up within the same time period," *CNN* reported. "After 10 years, the study found, a first marriage has a 33 percent chance of ending compared with a 62 percent chance for cohabitations."

A few model marriages do still exist, but it is becoming increasingly rare to find couples who have been happily married for several decades.

The growing marriage-failure rate around the world has led people to believe that marriage is simply becoming outdated. A closer look reveals why such a change is occurring.

## Increased Urbanization

Over the last 70 to 80 years, an unprecedented migration from rural to urban areas has taken place. With millions relocating to ever-expanding cities, the home-life of many is experiencing previously unheard of complexities.

*CNN* reported that more couples in developing nations are unhappy because of the changing roles brought on by the modern lifestyle. Old and new cultures are clashing.

For example, many men in Asia and Africa want their wives to be "progressive" and "modern." Yet they also want them to be homemakers and wives. Unable to cope with fulfilling both roles, many women are abandoning their marriages and seeking divorces.

The husband's former role as leader, provider and protector is rapidly

diminishing. The wife's responsibility as homemaker, caregiver and mother has also morphed into that of additional breadwinner to shore up the household budget.

Instead of needing one another as in bygone times, urban home life has, in many instances, become a mere cold business relationship. Husbands and wives may share a home, but not their lives. As traditional male and female roles are increasingly abandoned, it has created confusion on the part of both parties.

Urbanization is just one factor that is putting a strain on marriages. There are others.

### **Permissiveness and Immorality**

A changing worldwide social outlook is adding to the demise of marital relationships, and declining religious values continue to break down the walls of wedlock. Prevalent restraints of the past have become so relaxed that even those reared in the most proper circles now openly promote "alternative" lifestyles.

Prior to WWI, the subject of sex was rarely discussed publicly. But since that time, the floodgates of "everything sex" have been flung wide open. Permissive liberalism has marred the concept that traditional marriage relationships no longer fit within today's expectations. Attitudes glamorizing fornication, adultery, and every form of promiscuity permeate society through literature, movies and the arts. Unfaithful celebrities and jokes ridiculing wedlock routinely become news stories—instead of good examples of loyalty and fidelity.

Many of the world's educators and psychiatrists are at the forefront in promoting immorality. Even some theologians advocate "healthy, adulterous relationships" and "trial marriages."

It has become difficult for any marriage not built on a solid foundation to survive this engulfing onslaught!

This increasing immoral explosion is directly linked to the selfishness of society as a whole—where nearly everything is geared toward the idea of

"me first." As attention spans have dwindled to almost zero, so has the idea that a relationship should last beyond a few momentary thrills.

Consequently, marriage, as with so much in society, has become a "throw-away commodity"—even perceived by some as mere household garbage to be used and thrown out. Seemingly, a vow no longer means "till death do us part," but rather "for as long as *I am getting something.*"

Society has come to believe it can "have it all" without accountability, responsibility or consequence for its actions. But with all the focus on self-gratification and self-fulfillment, the lives of those most impacted are frequently overlooked, neglected and forgotten.

### **Vulnerable Victims**

Whether in marriages presently headed for divorce or those already rent asunder, little concern is given to those most affected—children.

Numerous youngsters today occupy homes without one or both of their biological parents, according to a Family Research Council study, "The Child Advocate: Divorce Effects on Children."

"Divorce is an intensely stressful experience for all children, regardless of age or developmental level...The pain experienced by children at the beginning of a divorce is composed of: a sense of vulnerability as the family disintegrates, a grief reaction to the loss of the intact family..."

Toddlers especially suffer from "sleep disturbances and an exacerbated fear of separation from the custodial parent. [Older children] often grieve openly for the departed parent...and harbor feelings of powerlessness and acute depression" (ibid.).

Is it any wonder that these impressionable young people will grow up with unstable and unbalanced views

"A few model marriages do still exist, but it is becoming increasingly rare to find couples who have been happily married for several decades."



toward marriage, sex and home life? These adolescent minds cannot help but become scarred and calloused toward such an institution that brings happiness, stability, peace of mind, and everything good one could desire.

History shows that the family has been a bastion of civilization for centuries. As the marriage institution crumbles, however, so does civilization.

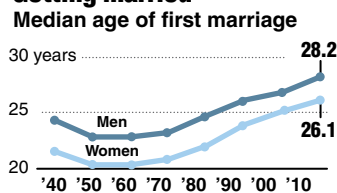
Consider this quote from Dr. Patrick Fagan, who authored a report showing that broken marriages impact half of U.S. teens:

"The decrease of strong families in the United States has major implications for the nation, and by extension, the rest of the world," he stated. "A nation is only as strong as its citizens, and a lack of strong families weakens human, social, and moral capital, which in turn directly affects the financial (and thus indirectly the military

# U.S. Families

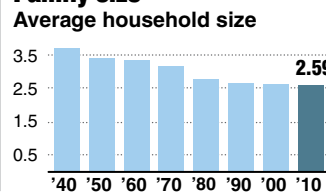
The average household size declined in 2010, partly because of the increase in one-person households.

## Getting married

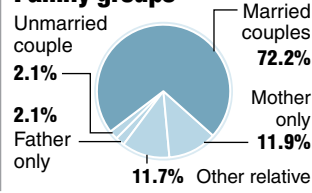


NOTE: Family group is any two or more people residing together related by birth, marriage, adoption  
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

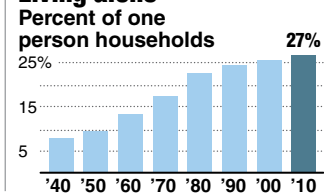
## Family size



## Family groups



## Living alone



Graphic: Melina Yingling

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and foreign policy strength) of the United States. A great nation depends on great families, but weak families will build a weak nation.”

Certainly, this is true not only of the United States, but also of all other countries in which divorce is becoming increasingly common.

### Ultimate Purpose

Many today can plainly see that traditional marriage and the family unit are breaking down. Most stand by and wring their hands in despair at what is occurring. Others offer Band-Aid solutions to this gaping societal wound. Counselors and advisers write endless articles and books in an attempt to help. Yet no one understands or will address the most important question that could lead them to the real solutions: *why marriage in the first place?* The answer is a vital key that will lead to a long-lasting and successful marriage.

Where did marriage begin? Most people believe it evolved over time from various cultural customs. It is this lack of knowledge that has hidden the TRUE PURPOSE for marriage.

To enjoy a wonderful, productive and stable marriage, its true beginning must first be considered. Only one reliable account provides the answers—the world’s best-selling book of all time, the Bible—which gives a record of when marriage was first instituted.

The first marriage is recorded in the book of Genesis, at the creation of the first two human beings, Adam and Eve.

“And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept:

and He [God] took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made He a woman, and brought her unto the man. 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” (Gen. 2:21-23).

Verses 24-25 further reveal that God also created sex: “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his *wife* [not common-law or live-in partner]: and they shall be one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his *wife*, and were not ashamed.”

God saw everything that He had created and said it was “good”—including marriage and sex, which was created for the sole purpose of the marriage relationship between man and woman—to unite them as “one flesh” and to allow them to show love toward one another.

The Bible shows that sex outside of marriage results in terrible penalties. King David’s lust for and adultery with Bathsheba led to much suffering. While he repented of his mistake and was forgiven, this selfish act resulted in the murder of Bathsheba’s husband, Uriah (a great warrior in Israel at that time), and the loss of an illegitimate son—which brought David and Bathsheba great sorrow (II Sam. 11:3-27).

God is no respecter of persons. When man rejects God’s laws and instructions and decides for himself the way to go, he is guaranteed to reap the fruits of his doings.

### Time-tested Solutions

In the end, two philosophies prevail in life. One is the way of selfishness and self-centeredness—a person doing what is right in his own eyes, a way that ends in ruin. The other—sincere *outgoing* concern for the welfare and well-being of others—leads to everything good.

Upon *this* way are based a great number of principles that bring wonderful blessings to any marriage. Some of these include 100 percent commitment—acceptance—appreciation—building on strengths—giving praise—being realistic—forsaking selfishness—remembering the small things—and always being forgiving.

Consider this excerpt from David C. Pack’s booklet *You Can Build a Happy Marriage*: “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. While this may take much work, not coming easily or overnight, the by-product is that much better times lie ahead for all those willing to follow God’s principles for building a truly happy marriage!”

These timeless principles—outlined in the Bible—ensure that individual marriages need never be in danger of failure—or *ever* become outdated.

To learn more, read *You Can Build a Happy Marriage*. □



# The War That *Will* End All Wars

## *Part 2: War Reveals Man's True Nature*

Hoping to prevent future wars, governments form an international league. Despite men's efforts, another world war emerges—unleashing previously untold horrors of human nature.

BY BRUCE A. RITTER

**F**AILING TO HEED the lessons of the Great War, nations engaged in events that would eventually trigger World War II. The second global war was far worse in terms of destruction, number of deaths and injuries, shattered lives, and previously unthinkable atrocities—affecting soldiers and civilians alike.

Despite astounding advancements in physical pursuits, man would continue to grope about in darkness, blind to the causes of global warfare, and unable to govern human nature.

This is the second installment of a three-part series that examines why.

### **League of Nations**

As World War I drew to a close, United States President Woodrow

Wilson promoted the idea of a community of nations working together to prevent another world war. During his “Fourteen Points” speech delivered before Congress in 1918, Wilson said, “A general association of nations must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike.”

■ **DESTRUCTION:** Soviet troops besiege Königsberg, a town in Silesia, now called Kaliningrad (April 1945).

PHOTO: AFP/GETTY IMAGES

This led to the formation of the League of Nations, a collective security organization headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland. Its purpose was to use diplomacy to settle disputes between countries, and thus prevent war from erupting.

League members included Britain, France, Italy, Japan, the Soviet Union and Germany, among others. Despite President Wilson's staunch support for the League of Nations, a fervent tide of isolationism swept Congress and the American public, and the United States never joined.

America had emerged from World War I as a formidable global power. Without Washington's leadership, the league was ultimately a paper tiger—a world authority without teeth. The international organization lacked an army to enforce economic sanctions against governments attempting to wage war.

In 1931, Japan invaded China and seized control of the Chinese province of Manchuria, renaming it Manchukuo. The league officially condemned the invasion—causing Japan to withdraw its membership.

In 1935, Italy invaded Ethiopia. Led by fascist dictator Benito Mussolini, the nation's military—including 400,000-plus troops, tanks, fighter planes, and mustard gas—overwhelmed the African country. Though the League of Nations condemned the invasion and imposed sanctions against Italy, it provided little comfort for the easily conquered Ethiopians.

In 1938, Britain's Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain caved in to Adolf Hitler's demands that Germany be allowed to seize Sudetenland from Czechoslovakia if the Nazi dictator promised not to demand any more territories in Europe. Chamberlain thought this would ensure peace.

The league remained silent about the invasion deal.

### Roaring Twenties

Meanwhile, after years of witnessing war and destruction, a new generation sought to numb its sorrows through fast living, hard drinking, lewd danc-

ing and risque apparel. It was the age of the flapper—the modern “liberated” woman who thumbed her nose at conventional dress and conduct. Promiscuity and social experimentation were the rule of the day.

But soon the chickens came home to roost: a flash depression in 1920 caught most Americans by surprise. It was an early warning sign that national economic disaster was just over the horizon.

That year, prominent statistician Roger Babson warned bankers and business executives that “they were about to enter the worst business depression of their generation. ‘I advise you all to set your houses in order,’ he said” (*Herbert W. Armstrong – His Life in Proper Perspective*).

“Because the demands of World War I had artificially inflated the price of food and supplies, the postwar economy was riding a wave of prosperity. Bank clearings, business activity, stock car loadings and stock market quotes were all booming...”

“Yet, by the end of that same year, Mr. Babson's prediction came true. The economic wave gave way to the flash depression of 1920, which came crashing down, sweeping away many American businesses...”

“Mr. Babson explained that he was able to know a depression was coming by looking at the way people *lived*—how they dealt with one another as a whole.

“He said, ‘I looked to the source which *determines* future conditions. I have found that the *source* may be defined in terms of “righteousness.” When 51 percent or more of the whole people are reasonably “*righteous*” in their dealings with one another, we are heading into increasing prosperity. When 51 percent of the people become “*unrighteous*” in their business dealings with their fellows, then we are headed for bad times economically!’” (ibid.).

This principle echoes a biblical lesson of wisdom: “Righteousness exalts a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people” (Prov. 14:34).

The warning lesson of the 1920 flash depression fell on deaf ears.

Over the decade, dubbed the Roaring Twenties, general prosperity, propped up by greed for get-rich-quick schemes and reckless investing, transformed into widespread monetary woes starting with the 1929 Stock Market Crash. Banks and other financial institutions shut down. Savings accounts were wiped out. Businesses closed. Jobs disappeared. The Great Depression spread across the globe, setting the stage for WWII.

### Rise of the Third Reich

The Treaty of Versailles, signed by participants of the first world war, was designed to reduce Germany's defenses. It restricted its army to 100,000 troops and its naval force to 15,000 sailors, and banned it from manufacturing poisonous gas, tanks, submarines and warplanes—all so the defeated nation would never again become a pivotal military power.

Germany was essentially forced to sign the peace treaty, which burdened the country with the humiliation of paying war reparations and being held responsible for all loss and ruin the Allied forces suffered during the war. Most Germans saw this as unreasonable and unbearable—adding insult to injury.

The German economy experienced hyperinflation: workers had to be paid almost every day because the worth of the national currency spiraled out of control—and citizens experienced food and fuel shortages, as well as political unrest among communists and fascists. During these desperate times, people listened to plans that advocated desperate measures.

From political and economic turmoil, the fascist Nazi movement emerged. Adolf Hitler and his Brownshirts, through a coup d'état, failed to seize power from the fragile Weimar Republic. But this proved to be only a minor setback. Hitler was eventually elected to office, and gained political power through legal means.

After the elderly President Paul von Hindenburg died, Hitler became chancellor of Germany. He used his posi-



tion to mesmerize millions of German citizens with grandiose speeches that promised a return to national glory by the establishment of a Third Reich—1,000 years of prosperity and peace for the Aryan “master race.” Adolf Hitler became “Der Fuhrer”—the leader—of Nazi Germany.

Promoting the idea of racial superiority meant that other peoples were somehow “inferior.” In the Nazi mindset, some races were meant to be enslaved while others had no right to exist. Thus, the Jewish peoples, along with others, suffered merciless and escalating persecution.

The Nazis forced Jews in Germany to publicly identify themselves by wearing the Star of David symbol. They destroyed Jewish businesses, forced the Jews to live in cramped ghettos and confiscated their property. The Nazis deported Jews, along with Gypsies and other “undesirables,” into work camps, where millions were exterminated. This was Hitler’s “Final Solution” for the Jews.

### **Operation Barbarossa**

Hitler’s aggression led to Britain and France declaring war on Germany. To ensure that the Soviet Union would not interfere with Hitler’s goals, Germany entered into a peace treaty with communist Russia.

But Hitler’s hatred for the Russians got the best of him, leading the dictator to repeat Napoleon Bonaparte’s blunder of invading Russia and fighting a war on more than one front, overextending Germany’s army.

In “Operation Barbarossa,” the Germans invaded the Soviet Union, which was caught off guard by Hitler’s assurances of peace. But Germany was unable to take control of key Russian cities before winter arrived.

As with Napoleon’s army in 1812, German troops succumbed to a particularly bitter Russian winter. They underestimated communist Josef Stalin’s resolve to fight by any means necessary. Using their bodies as decoys for machine-gun units, Russian soldiers drew out German troops and caused them to use up

their ammunition—armed women fought to their deaths—bands of men carrying rusty muskets and pitchforks attacked armed Nazi soldiers. Germany had never before experienced anything like it.

Hitler’s betrayal of the peace treaty with Russia would later result in savage acts of revenge upon the German populace.

The 1,000 years of German rule lasted only 12 years, as Allied forces eventually gained the upper hand in Europe. Germany was on its deathbed. But instead of negotiating peace for the sake of his people, Hitler resolved to carry on to the very end. He ended his life in a bunker in April 1945 as Russian forces invaded Berlin, Germany’s capital.

Russian soldiers took out their revenge by raping nearly every female, from little girls to elderly women, resulting in shattered lives, unwanted pregnancies and countless abortions.

### **Internment Camps**

As with WWI, America was late to enter the second world war. It was not until Japan’s 1941 sneak attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, that the U.S. joined the Allied Forces. The infamous battle, which crippled the U.S. naval force, was meant to give America a bloody nose and make it think twice before interfering with Imperial Japan’s goal of bringing the South Pacific to its knees. But the attack resulted in awakening a sleeping giant.

Citizens along the U.S. West Coast worried that Japan would invade America’s homeland. Desperate and outraged, the U.S. government used Census Bureau data to round up people of Japanese descent—including American citizens—and force them into internment camps, where they were “protected for their own safety.”

During the first half of the 20th century, a massive influx of immigrants from Japan largely inhabited California. While tensions and racial animosity between whites and Japanese were already simmering—the attack on Pearl Harbor brought it

to a boil. Also, an incident involving three people of Japanese descent who chose to forcibly rescue a downed Japanese fighter pilot in Hawaii, who had taken part in the Pearl Harbor attack, led Americans to question the loyalty of U.S. citizens of Japanese descent.

Elsewhere, Canada had its own internment camp program that detained Canadian citizens of Japanese ancestry. And Latin American nations, such as Peru, deported people of Japanese origin to the U.S. to be imprisoned.

To a lesser degree, the American government also detained citizens of German and Italian descent during the war. The detainment program was eventually ruled unconstitutional. In January 1945, Japanese Americans started to be released.

Despite the mass roundup, some Japanese Americans voluntarily enlisted in the U.S. military and fought in Europe. Some decades later, President Gerald Ford acknowledged the injustice that a paranoid America had committed, and President Ronald Reagan signed a declaration that formally apologized.

### **Little Boy and Fat Man**

The war in Europe ended with Germany’s surrender in May 1945. America could now focus on ending the war in the Pacific.

Despite massive losses among its naval force, and the fact that Japan was running short of fuel and food, the nation’s leaders determined to never surrender. Desperate, the Japanese resorted to implementing suicide missions.

Washington drew up invasion plans against the Japanese homeland, expecting great loss of life for American soldiers—perhaps even millions.

U.S. President Harry Truman, taking office after Franklin Roosevelt’s unexpected death, learned that American scientists had developed a weapon that could instantly destroy cities and entire populations. This

*Please see **WAR**, page 25*

# Beyond the EU

## *Why the World Must Watch Europe*

The continent's financial crisis gave rise to bailouts, infighting and demands for sweeping financial reform. Could there still be a bright future over the horizon for the European Union?



# EU Debt Crisis

Europe

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BY SAMUEL C. BAXTER

**A**MID THE SHIFT in global superpowers, two names come up as heavyweight world championship opponents: China and the United States.

The constant media exposure and speculation could be likened to a pay-per-view boxing matchup.

In one corner: the world's largest energy consumer—with a 1.3-billion-strong population—endlessly stockpiling natural resources—and holding \$1.16 trillion of U.S. debt.

In the other: longtime champion of the free world—largest economy—and leader in manufacturing.

China is the clear favorite, but the U.S. is still in the running. On its way down from unmatched superpower, it is still a formidable opponent, with its manufacturing sector out-producing China by 40 percent.

Yet America is weighed down by a \$14 trillion federal debt and rampant unemployment. Many of its citizens appear to have already given the victory to China. According to a Gallup poll, 52 percent incorrectly think China is already the world's number one economy.

While there has not yet been a knockout punch, China is certainly the favorite, and America has been slow to recover from each successive blow.

With intense media focus on these two nations, little thought is given to another power in contention for top spot in the global economy: the European Union.

By comparison, the EU is perceived as a washed-up contender, well past its prime, which seems to be sticking to an outdated fighting style. As the continent grapples with persistent financial crises—first in Greece, then Ireland, and now Portugal and Spain—any chance for Europe to quickly rise as a competitor in the world championship ring seems to slip away.

Yet, if the European Union could manage to get its 27 member-states to walk in lockstep, it would immediately boast the world's largest GDP, with \$16.1 trillion to America's \$14.6 trillion, according

to the International Monetary Fund. China comes in at a distant third with only \$5.7 trillion.

The EU does have a mountain of problems to tackle: debt woes, sharp disagreements between member-states, and a 12-year high in unemployment.

When Europe is in crisis mode, however, the continent's full potential shines through. And while no one is looking, the EU is poised to become a serious contender as the world's top economic power.

## Case Against Europe

Talk of a streamlined European Union as the top world leader always brings naysayers.

The global financial downturn uncovered chronic fiscal mismanagement in many EU member-states. And, in a eurozone tied to a single currency, just one nation faltering could be catastrophic. To limit governments from failing, the union conceived the IMF-sponsored \$1 trillion bailout fund, known as the Financial Stabilization Mechanism. A nearly bankrupt Greece was the first to receive assistance in June 2010, and the nation appears stable—for now.

Newspaper *Deutsche Welle* quoted Poul Thomsen, head of the IMF mission in Greece, who gave an update on the nation's progress: "While there have been some delays and shortfalls, it should not undermine the fact that the program is broadly on track." He later added, "We are ready for the second phase of the program, having successfully pulled the economy from an abyss."

After stating this, however, the IMF, European Central Bank, and the European Commission all insisted that Greece move into hurry-up mode and make deeper budget cuts to meet the required goals.

Athens was not pleased. A spokesman for Greece's government responded, "The behaviour of EU, IMF and ECB officials was unacceptable. We asked nobody to interfere in domestic affairs... We have needs but also limits, and we are not negotiating with anybody the limits of our self-respect. We only take orders from the Greek people" (ibid.).

This exchange speaks volumes about the case against the EU model. A nation will realize that it is part of the collective whole of the EU in one sentence—even accepting a large bailout sum—then demand the EU mind its own business in the next!

PHOTO: CANSTOCKPHOTO.COM

Each member-state faces a challenge, making necessary cuts in its nation to help out the eurozone, while somehow keeping the entitlement programs its citizens have grown to expect. Even a hint of cutting pension plans or raising the retirement age means almost certain mass demonstrations and violent protests.

Ireland was the second nation to dip into the Financial Stabilization Mechanism fund, and Portugal and Spain seem close behind. One thing is certain: the EU *must* find a swift solution.

Each EU crisis elicits calls for the continent to work together. In light of the most recent troubles in Portugal, *The Economist* reported European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso claimed that “the markets are sending every day a very clear message that Europe has to work in a more co-ordinated manner when it comes to economic and financial issues.”

### Growing Divide

Working together has never been a strong suit for members of the EU, and having the continent on the brink of potential collapse is no different. Fiscally stable northern nations loathe the thought of shouldering the brunt of a mess they see as made by southern countries. And most nations lining the Mediterranean cannot imagine a scenario in which sweeping budget cuts will not lead to nation-crippling protests.

Ideological standoffs are not limited to financial recovery methods—they crop up over almost every EU decision. All 27 member-states have competing interests, and any country can opt out of measures against its interests. For example, only 17 nations in the union use the euro.

On top of opt-outs, coming to a consensus means finding common ground. This is difficult enough in the United States under a two-party system. In Europe, consensus often means toothless resolutions and legislation that is nearly impossible to enforce.

As their economies are tied to the euro, every EU member-state wants to

stop nations falling like dominoes into bailouts. To do so, however, the union must find common ground about how to tackle the problem.

The north, led by Germany, appears willing to prop up foundering economies, but these “financier” nations want to see real, sustained effort on the part of countries receiving support to balance their budgets.

With Portugal, the next nation that may need assistance, the north-south divide comes into sharper focus. Instead of immediately proposing a bailout sum for “southern” Portugal, “northern” Germany offered up a “competitiveness package,” which proposes raising the retirement age, and set caps on employee salaries and federal spending.

The move has brought criticism from Portugal, which feels Berlin is endangering its economy for German gain. “Portugal will continue to do its job’ to end the crisis, Treasury Secretary Carlos Costa Pina said after an auction of treasury bills and a buy-back of government bonds as part of its debt-refinancing plan. ‘But Europe has been slow in doing its part,’ he added” (*The Wall Street Journal*).

“German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schaeuble rejected the notion

that richer states are dragging their feet, telling reporters that Europe can act with ‘lightning speed’ to strengthen the bailout fund if needed,” *Bloomberg* reported.

Germany is perhaps the only EU nation in the position to make such strong demands, as it has weathered the financial storm well, and is now sitting on a sizable monetary surplus. And Europe appears ready to bend to Berlin’s will, as demonstrated by the *Montreal Gazette* article, “Germany in Driver’s Seat Handling Europe Debt Crisis.”

“Chancellor Angela Merkel is now calling the shots, with France as a distinctly junior partner, setting out demands for economic policy coordination along German lines and using her leverage as Europe’s paymaster to gain acceptance.

“The message from Berlin is: ‘If you want German taxpayers to underwrite the euro zone, you will have to accept German-style fiscal rules in your constitutions, raise your retirement ages and make your economies more competitive.’

“After an initial backlash, European partners seem set to bow to some of Berlin’s demands next month as the price for German agreement to a stron-



■ **CALL TO ACTION:** Portuguese workers shout slogans as they take part in a demonstration in Lisbon to protest against the government’s austerity measures (Jan. 28, 2011).

PHOTO: FRANCISCO LEONG/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

ger, more flexible euro zone rescue fund.

“Greece and Ireland, which have already received IMF/EU bailouts, are in no position to argue. Others such as Spain and Portugal, struggling to fend off bond market pressure over their high budget deficits, have little choice but to comply.”

### **Bankrolling the EU**

Germany was not thrilled to bail out Greece. At the time, *The Associated Press* quoted German Chancellor Angela Merkel as saying the \$1-trillion fund did not “do more than buy time to get the differences in competitiveness and budget deficits of euro zone countries in order.”

Since then, Chancellor Merkel has faced a backlash in Germany for supporting the bailout, as seen in mid-February elections in Hamburg, which ended with substantial losses for her Christian Democratic Party.

This first of seven votes scheduled to take place throughout Germany this year are said to test the popularity of Ms. Merkel and her policies. While analysts warn not to over-emphasize these elections, the German nation seems to be sending a definitive message to the EU via Ms. Merkel: “Adopt German-style budgets, or we will let you fail.”

Other individual member-states and the EU itself are still bucking the demands of Germany and other financially stable nations that are starting to call the shots.

“There are limits to creativity in establishing new governance mechanisms and it must not lead to dysfunctions with existing European Union policies,” Mr. Barroso said, as quoted by the *Montreal Gazette*.

Ms. Merkel rebutted calls from the European Commission and the European Parliament to hold to the “community method”—where all 27 nations have a say—when responding to the eurozone crisis.

“Where there is no community competence, the community method clearly cannot be applied,” she said in a European policy speech last November (ibid.).

EU news analysts have begun to view Germany, with France by its side, as the most important voice in the EU.

**The Associated Press:** “Standing side-by-side, French President Nicolas Sarkozy and German Chancellor Angela Merkel chitchatted briefly with the [European Union] summit’s host, Herman Van Rompuy, the EU president. But they left no doubt about who really owned the meeting, and the European Union itself. They have formed a bond that has increasingly become the de facto voice and policymaker for all, whether the other 25 EU like it or not.”

**The Telegraph:** “The crisis also exposes the growing north/south divide in the eurozone, in particular the imbalances between surplus and deficit nations (which are themselves a reflection of a wider global problem). These will have to be corrected, which will inevitably be a long and complex process.” The paper concluded, “All seem destined to become economic satraps of the north, and in particular Germany.”

**The New York Times:** “And, as Germany’s ability to deliver economically grew compared with that of many neighbors, Mrs. Merkel began talking tougher. At a European Union meeting on economic targets in March 2010 she complained that, if the past were anything to go by, other nations would fall short and the Germans would have to work harder to compensate, a European Union diplomat said.”

If Berlin is bankrolling Europe, it wants to call the shots.

### **German Model**

Germany is not “all talk.” It is one of the few countries that has weathered the financial storm—through belt-tightening and tough-nosed business tactics—and many Germans think the EU must follow suit.

In 2010, Germany’s economy grew at its fastest pace since reunification. Its GDP grew 3.6 percent, well ahead of other wealthy economies. By comparison, America’s GDP grew by only 2.9 percent last year. Of the wealthy

G7 nations, Germany stands alone as the only country with a 2010 GDP per person level above its 2007 level. Also, its unemployment rate is at the lowest levels in 18 years—less than 7.5 percent.

According to *Agence France-Presse*, “German exports grew by 18.5 percent in 2010 to 951.9 billion euros (\$1.3 trillion), the national statistics office said...while Berlin’s trade surplus gained 11.2 percent to 154.3 billion.”

Germany’s secret? In part, the “Mittlestand”—an army of small and medium-sized companies, which are generally family-owned. Many of these companies have carved out an often-obscure niche market and dominate that field, such as building machines that produce envelopes or convert tar from old roads to be reused to pave new ones. These firms, which typically have less than 500 employees and are known for attention to detail and financial caution, are the heart of the German engine.

Big business is also booming in Germany. For example, car-maker BMW continues to take advantage of China’s voracious appetite for luxury cars.

Another plus is that Berlin funds areas of research to encourage innovation and continue export growth.

In addition, at the start of the financial crisis, German businesses gambled by holding on to most of their employees, while companies in other nations laid-off workers. As the market improved, Germany was already poised to begin to meet demands.

Economists note that Germany does have weaknesses: an aging workforce, few children, and an education system ill-equipped to keep up with the demand for highly skilled workers.

Most important, the nation has an export surplus, meaning both the government and the individual consumer are sitting on large reserves. While this sounds positive, it means money that could stimulate the economy lies dormant in bank accounts.

*Please see **EU DEBT CRISIS**, page 26*

# The Coming Global Financial Collapse!

Economic prosperity now seems more elusive than ever—with no simple solution in sight.

BY DAVID C. PACK

**T**HE GLOBAL ECONOMY is in the worst crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930s! In 2008 alone, a staggering \$50 trillion in wealth was erased around the world.

Despite unparalleled affluence in the Western world, personal and corporate bankruptcies are soaring. So is use of credit by consumers. Millions are losing jobs. More millions their homes. The U.S. national debt is measured in *trillions* of dollars! Headlines of credit fraud, identity theft, graft and corruption fill the news. Thinking people know events are spinning out of control. All of this is unnecessary—if you have God's *keys* to financial prosperity.

The sobering statistics that follow are but a snapshot in time and grow worse by the day. As you read, factor in an increased amount to each statistic and trend.

The world's largest economy, the United States, the place to begin review, is now more than *\$14.1 trillion* in debt—and this debt is growing by over \$4 billion daily! This amounts to an over \$45,500 bill for every U.S. citizen—or over \$127,800 per taxpayer. Some expect the debt to be above \$15.4 trillion this fiscal year—which means a growth of additional billions *each day* next year! (In reality, these numbers will almost certainly be higher.)

Such debt can *never* be repaid! In fact, most nations of the West are also now being crushed by *impossible* debt. Catastrophe now looms—and, in the case of America, here is why. The United States received about \$2.16 trillion in federal tax *revenue* during the 2010 fiscal year, but *spending* was over \$3.45 trillion for 2010.

Now suppose that these numbers represented the income and spending pattern of an American family of *median* income. Such a family would take in just over \$50,000 (2009 estimate), but be planning to spend over \$86,000—while already carrying more than \$325,000 in debt! Individual families would *never* do this—or if they tried, would go bankrupt before it could happen.

But governments can print money.

The United States national debt is projected to surpass \$20 trillion in 2014!—and hit almost \$28 trillion in 2019!—double the present. Such deficit spending is unsustainable.

Money is borrowed at existing rates of interest. Understand that just a very small 1 percent rate increase on the debt would raise an interest payment of \$200 billion by several hundred billion each year. But this is only true if the deficit *did not rise!* Many think *all* these projections to be *very* conservative. They will likely be *much* worse.

No thinking person believes such overspending can continue without end. Further, the addition of expensive new government programs and exotic new kinds of taxes will only *greatly* exacerbate the downturn. America will not stop spending because it is conditioned to believe it can have anything it wants. It need never deny itself. A country this big, this great, and one with such a rich history, cannot fail.

This thinking is tragically *wrong*. What world empire—with *half* America's problems—survived?

The economies of America and other nations of the West will in time collapse into full-blown bankruptcy. This *will* happen, although things could temporarily get a little better. Various individual states will in fact likely precede the federal government and country into bankruptcy, and thus, hasten the overall collapse. Of course, nature abhors a vacuum, and a European-based world government will step in to fill America's abdication as global leader. This cannot now be far away.

Most Western nations are staggering under *impossible* debt. There is a reason. So are millions of people. There is a *reason*. Terrible, national punishment now lies just ahead for the world's greatest nations, in part because hundreds of millions of *individuals* in them have stolen from God—every day. This is just one of a long list of these nations' sins.

The world as you know it—including *your life*—will change beyond your wildest imagination. And it will happen sooner than you expect!

To learn more about the coming world financial collapse, watch *The World to Come* broadcast "World Economic Collapse – And You!" at [www.worldtocome.org](http://www.worldtocome.org). □

**A** BOY LEAPS out of bed, filled with excitement. Today will be a special day for him and his family. He bounds down the stairs and discovers a reed basket filled with beautifully painted eggs and chocolate rabbits. He cannot wait to dive into the goodies!

His anticipation grows as he thinks of the fun he will have. Lent, a 40-day period during which worshippers try to emulate Christ's suffering by fasting and abstaining from certain pleasures, is finally over—and Easter Sunday is here!

As he tears the wrapper off an egg-shaped chocolate treat, his mother explains to him the significance of the day: "Son, on Friday we commemorated the crucifixion and death of our Savior, so today—Easter Sunday—we celebrate His Resurrection."

For millions around the globe, this narrative is typical of their own Easter celebrations.

Jerusalem, where the most well-known Easter celebrations take place, is jam-packed with worshippers from all over the world. Along the famous cobbled Via Dolorosa—"Way of Suffering"—thousands of parishioners walk the path Christ is believed to have taken on His way to Golgotha. To them, and millions of like-minded professing Christians, Easter is the principal feast of the liturgical year.

Elsewhere, United States troops in Iraq gather for an Easter sunrise service. In Peshawar, Pakistan, a group of devout women gathers around a picture of "Jesus" to reflect on the significance of the day and give prayers of thanksgiving. Farther east, thousands of South Korean Catholics attend services.

Later that evening, several German Christians in Europe light a customary bonfire to protect them against the cold. Meanwhile, during a traditional ceremony in Bulgaria, priests bless painted red eggs, which symbolize spring. And several time zones away, an Armenian priest in New York City releases doves to illustrate how the original 12 apostles were commissioned to "spread the gospel."

Certainly, long-held traditions such as Ash Wednesday, Lent, Good Friday, sunrise services, hot-cross buns, Easter eggs and rabbits—which form the building blocks upon which Easter is established—must have deep ancient roots. If Easter traditions are all about the Christ of the Bible, then they should be found within the pages of God's Word.

But are they?

While Acts 12:4 is the only time the word "Easter" is mentioned in the King James translation of the Bible, the customs of this holiday appeared much earlier than the event of Christ's Resurrection.

### **Origin of Easter**

American novelist Henry James once wrote the following about traditions: "It takes an endless amount of history to make even a little tradition."

# Is EASTER Biblical?

Millions believe this popular festival is connected to Christ's Resurrection, but do passages within God's Word prove otherwise?

BY F. JACO VILJOEN

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES/STOCKDISC

Throughout the centuries, millions of people have been persuaded into believing that Easter's purpose is to honor Christ's death and Resurrection. Yet this age-old global tradition can be traced back to thousands of years before Jesus was born.

"That God sacrificed his only Son for the salvation of the world... is so mystical, so remote...yet the extraordinary fact is that a similar belief ranges all through the ancient religions, and can be traced back to the earliest times," Edward Carpenter wrote in *Pagan and Christian Creeds*.

Easter customs involving the celebration of death and resurrection originate from pagan rites. In his book *The Two Babylons*, Alexander Hislop explained, "Among the Pagans this Lent seems to have been an indispensable preliminary to the great annual festival in commemoration of the death and resurrection of Tammuz, which was celebrated by alternate weeping and rejoicing."

The Bible records in Genesis that Nimrod, also known as Tammuz or Baal, was the founding father and builder of Babylon. His mother-wife, Semiramis, also called Ishtar, was Babylon's first queen. She was worshipped as a goddess.

Ashtoreth (Easter), Baal's mother and wife according to historians, was considered the "Great Goddess" throughout the ancient world, in Greece, Germany, Babylon and Phoenicia. This generally occurred in conjunction with the worship of Baal (El or Tammuz).

This is made evident in the book *Did God Have a Wife?* by William G. Dever. He wrote, "In earlier Canaan, the Great Goddess may be a cosmic deity who could be known by several names: Asherah; 'Anat; Astarte; or Ba'alat or Elath (the feminine forms of 'Ba'al' and 'El')."

"Her role in the cult is as the consort of El, the principal male

deity of the pantheon, as 'Mother of the Gods,'" Dever further wrote.

Alexander Hislop elaborated on the origin of Easter (or Astarte) in his book *The Two Babylons*: "It bears its Chaldean origin on its very forehead. Easter is nothing else than Astarte, one of the titles of Beltis, the queen

of heaven... That name, as found by Layard on the Assyrian monuments, is Ishtar."

In nearly all Semitic dialects, "Ishtar" is pronounced "Easter." Easter festivities extensively refer to celebrating the personage Ishtar, Ashtoreth and the "queen of heaven," who has many interchangeable names. Each year citizens in pagan nations celebrated her son's death and resurrection during spring.

Plainly, this festival was initiated long before Christ walked the earth.

### Easter and the Bible

Ancient Israel incorporated some of the practices of surrounding nations, and Easter was no exception. It is in this regard that the holiday is mentioned in the Bible.

After the house of Israel was divided into the northern 10 tribes and Judah in the south, King Manasseh of Judah "set a graven image of the grove that he had made in the house [the Temple of God]" (II Kings 21:7).

But to what is "the grove" referring?

The Hebrew word *asherah*, with two exceptions, is always translated as "grove" in the King James Version of the Bible. *Smith's Bible Dictionary* defines *asherah* in the following way: "The name of a Phoenician goddess, or rather of the idol itself (Authorized Version, 'grove')."

"Asherah is closely connected with Ashtoreth and her worship. Ashtoreth being, perhaps, the proper name of the goddess, while Asherah is the name of her image or symbol, which was of wood."

"Thus it seems clear that originally in ancient Israel there was a Goddess named 'Asherah,' who was associated with living trees and hilltop forest sanctuaries, and who could sometimes be symbolized by a wooden pole or an image of a tree," Dever wrote.

He added, "It is noteworthy that in at least a handful of cases,



“Plainly, this festival was initiated long before Christ walked the earth.”



the term asherah must refer to the Goddess Asherah herself, not merely to a 'symbol.'"

Thus, when Israel's ruler erected a figure of "the grove," he may have actually set up an image of Asherah in the most holy place!

Throughout Israel's history, its people attempted to serve false gods alongside the God of the Bible. The book of Jeremiah makes clear that families in Israel also worshipped Easter—the "queen of heaven."

Notice: "The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto other gods" (Jer. 7:18).

Israel's devotion to false deities is also engraved in the annals of secular sources. Archeological evidence indicates that the nation of Israel fell into keeping Easter, thinking they could worship Ishtar alongside the true God. Archaeologists have found tomb inscriptions in Israel that read, "Yahweh and his Asherah," erroneously suggesting God had a goddess as wife!

Early on, when God started to work with Israel, His instructions through Moses were clear: "You shall not plant you a *grove* of any trees near unto the altar of the LORD your God, which you shall make you" (Deut. 16:21).

Moreover, "you shall destroy their altars," referring to the surrounding nations' many idols, "and break down their images, and cut down their *groves*, and burn their graven images with fire" (Deut. 7:5). These directions from God were unmistakably plain.

But, time and time again, "the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and forgot the LORD their God, and served Baalim [plural of Baal] and the groves [Asherah]" (Jdgs. 3:7).

Israel's behavior was clearly *evil* in God's sight!

Even King Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, rejected God's council and was persuaded by his foreign wives to worship Ashtoreth. As

a result, the house of Israel split into north and south—directly because "Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians" (I Kings 11:5).

In biblical times, without any exceptions, God's true servants never celebrated Easter to honor Him, and Israel was directly forbidden to have any part in it.

### Lost in Translation

How did Easter—clearly a festival not sanctioned by God—become "Christian"?

"The idea of Christ's resurrection was injected into the old practice of Easter observance and not the other way around" (*Early Gentile Christianity and its Hellenistic Background*).

The Greek word translated "Easter" in Acts 12:4 is *pascha*, and refers to Passover, which was always kept on the 14th day of the Hebrew month of Nisan (Abib). It was *Passover*, not Easter, that God commanded His people to observe, and they did so throughout early New Testament time.

But slowly, Easter, with all its pagan customs, replaced Passover. Disagreement arose surrounding the correct observance of the feast, and led to the "Quartodeciman Controversy."

The following quote from the 11th edition of *Encyclopaedia Britannica* shows how Easter was "Christianized:" "Polycarp, the disciple of St. John the Evangelist and bishop of Smyrna, visited Rome in 159 to confer with Anicetus, the bishop of that see, on the subject; and urged the tradition, which he had received from the apostle, of observing the fourteenth day...A final settlement of the dispute was one among the other reasons which led Constantine to summon the council of Nicaea in 325...The decision of the council was unanimous that Easter was to be kept on Sunday, and on the same Sunday throughout the world, and 'that none should hereafter follow the blindness of the Jews'..."

In his book, *History of the Christian Church*, Peter Schaff wrote,

"At Nicaea, therefore, the Roman and Alexandrian usage with respect to Easter triumphed, and the Judaizing practice of the Quartodecimanians [those obeying God], who always celebrated Easter [actually Passover] on the fourteenth of Nisan, became thenceforth a heresy."

"There is no indication of the observance of the Easter festival in the New Testament, or in the writings of the apostolic Fathers...The first Christians continued to observe the Jewish festivals [God's festivals of Leviticus 23], though in a new spirit...Thus the Passover, with a new conception added to it of Christ as the true Paschal Lamb...continued to be observed" (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th edition).

The apostle Paul exhorted New Testament brethren to continue to keep these Holy Days: "For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the *feast*, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the *unleavened bread* of sincerity and truth" (I Cor. 5:7-8). Matthew 26:19 states that the "disciples did as Jesus had appointed them" and commanded His disciples to make "ready the Passover."

In Matthew 28:20, Christ also instructed His disciples "to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you..."

Clearly, since Christ commanded the Passover, connected with the Feast of Unleavened Bread, to be kept as a "statute forever" (Lev. 23:31), Easter was a human tradition that was never commanded by the God of the Bible.

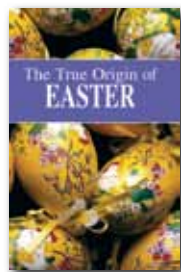
### Mystery Unwrapped

Every child loves to receive a gift, but does not know its contents until the gift paper is unwrapped. Professing Christians similarly hold fast the traditions of men in keeping Easter, but are blind to its real meaning or "content."

Rejecting God's instruction, men concealed a pagan festival in "Christian giftwrap" to make it acceptable to the masses. But when Easter is unwrapped, the true content is unmis-

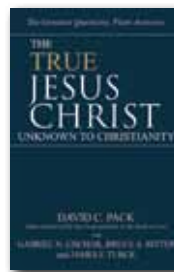
takable. Suddenly, the parallel between the pagan feast kept in ancient times and the present-day Easter celebrations should become painfully obvious.

These festivals are one and the same. Easter has the power to convince people to believe that this day is all about Christ—but when exposed, it shows that it has everything to do with a pagan deity.



Today, the ancient unbiblical Easter tradition is still celebrated worldwide. Millions gather each year

to celebrate the death of their “savior”—on Good Friday, and his resurrection—on Easter Sunday. They sincerely believe that they honor Christ, but little do they know that they are



unwittingly serving “another Jesus”! (See II Corinthians 11:4.)

With the wrappings of Easter removed, it becomes plain that any attempt to Christianize the holiday is in vain.

To more fully understand Easter and its customs—as well as “another Jesus”—read *The True Origin of Easter* and *The True Jesus Christ – Unknown to Christianity*. □

## IRELAND

*Continued from page 6*

various protests since that time have broken out, as detailed in an editorial in *The Jerusalem Post*.

“One day, the Irish government swears that it does not want, nor will it accept, a rescue package from its partners in the EU, the next day it is signing up for just that, and on the third day the mob tries to storm the country’s parliament building.

“The third of those developments is the most extraordinary, because it is so out of place for the Irish public to take such extreme and violent measures. But...the Irish middle-class is now in open revolt against a government and ruling elite that it believes is corrupt to the core and that has, in cahoots with the country’s bankers, destroyed their savings, wealth and pensions and ruined the country.

“Yet, if it was only an Irish problem and if only the Irish people were enraged, the whole sorry tale would attract minor attention on the inside pages. It is because of the growing realization that Ireland, like Greece before it, is merely the tip of the European iceberg-meltdown, that it remains center stage.”

### Historical Connection

The Ireland-Greece connection goes further back than the financial similarities and bailouts the two nations were forced to accept. Historical evidence from one of the world’s oldest books reveals that their respective histories are related in a surprising way.

Ireland is the descendant of Dan, one of the tribes of ancient Israel, identified in the Bible as an adventurous pioneering nation.

Notice the following from *America and Britain in Prophecy* by David C. Pack: “It has been mentioned that the tribe of Dan had populated Ireland centuries before the Israelite tribes from the Assyrian captivity began to arrive...which strongly reinforces not only God’s prophecy about *this* tribe but also the authority and certainty of His prophecies about *all* the modern nations of Israel!

“One of Dan’s key characteristics was the tendency to abruptly migrate to new territories. Notice what Moses foretold about this tribe: ‘And of Dan he said, Dan is a lion’s whelp [an impatient, adventuresome cub]: he shall leap from Bashan’ (Deut. 33:22). As a young lion, Dan would ‘leap from [the region of] Bashan.’ Some of the inland Danites lived in the proximity of Bashan, occupied mainly by the half-tribe of Manasseh. Yet, recognizing the Assyrian invasion was imminent, these Danites migrated to distant territories. About 1285 BC, their Danite coastal relatives had taken to their ships, when God used Deborah and Barak to deliver Israel from Jabin of Hazor (Judg. 5:17). In escaping danger, these adventuresome Danites pounced upon (like a lion cub) newfound opportunities in other lands.”

Historical references confirm that the Danites in Greece eventually moved to Ireland, as shown in Mr. Pack’s book.

“Beginning with exploration, and the develop-



ment of trade among the Greeks and Phoenicians, Dan became the pioneer of Israel, both on land and sea. Dan pushed into the far areas beyond the Black Sea (anciently called the Euxine) and explored many rivers from those points in Asia on into Europe. Dan further pushed throughout the Mediterranean and on into the broad Atlantic. The Baltic Sea and the shores of Denmark became home for many of them, while Ireland became the sanctuary for many others, where they became known as the ‘Tuath di Dannan,’ or ‘Tuatha de Danaans,’ both translated as ‘the Tribe of Dan.’

“Notice this prominent source [*The Annals of Ireland*], helping to establish when Dan first arrived in Ireland: ‘The colony called *Tuath De Danan*... conquered the Firbolgs, and became masters of Ireland...It appears that the Danans were a highly civilized people, far more skilled in arts and sciences than any of the other ancient colonies that settled in Ireland...[and] ruled in Ireland about two centuries, or one hundred and ninety-seven years, according to the Psalter of Cashel, and were highly skilled in architecture and other arts, from their long residence in Greece...”

The roots of this “indomitable” force extend far past what many people realize—and its future will be beyond what any political party will be able to bring to the downtrodden nation.

To learn more about Ireland’s incredible history—and its connection to Greece—read David C. Pack’s book *America and Britain in Prophecy*. □

# WAR

Continued from page 15

would replace the need to send soldiers into harm's way.

Washington warned Japan of this new weapon of mass destruction, which they ignored.

U.S. scientists and military authorities had successfully tested a prototype in the desert of New Mexico in

On August 6, 1945, the U.S. B29 Superfortress *Enola Gay* flew over Hiroshima, Japan, and released the first atomic bomb.

The uranium weapon reached its target at 8:15 a.m., when the city was in the midst of daily commuter traffic. Office and factory workers headed to their places of employment—walking, riding bicycles, and driving cars—when “Little Boy” fell. A white light equivalent to 10,000 suns

The 10-kiloton atomic explosion instantly killed an estimated 70,000 people. In the coming days, weeks, months and even years, many thousands of survivors died from radiation poisoning.

Remarkably, Japanese imperial leaders still would not surrender. In response, the U.S. dropped “Fat Man”—a plutonium bomb—on Nagasaki, Japan, three days later. Within 24 hours, Japan was willing to accept defeat. WWII was finally over.

Physicists later determined that the detonations of the two bombs used only a tenth of 1 percent of what they could have unleashed.

## Post-war World

The United States emerged from the rubble of WWII as the world's superpower, becoming the foremost leader of the democratic West. Meanwhile, the Soviet Union became leader of the communist East. Both power blocs entered into the Cold War, dividing Europe into nations of the democratic West and the communist East.

This would last decades until the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989.

Immediately after the war ended, men resolved to form another international organization, the United Nations, to ensure peace and security, which they hoped would be far more effective than the League of Nations—and prevent another world war.

Yet this organization, as devised by men, will not achieve lasting peace.

Be sure to read part three of this series, which will address the ultimate war mankind will needlessly suffer to finally learn the way to permanent peace. World War III is now just over the horizon. □

## Looking Back at Hiroshima

Over 65 years ago, the U.S. dropped the first atomic bombs on Japan.

### Hiroshima, Aug. 6, 1945

Uranium bomb dubbed “Little Boy” detonates 1,890 ft. (576 m) above the city at 8:15 a.m.

#### Explosion by gun-barrel method

1. Pressure sensors activate detonation device
2. Detonators trigger a conventional explosion
3. Explosion drives uranium wedge into uranium target
4. Chain reaction sets off nuclear blast



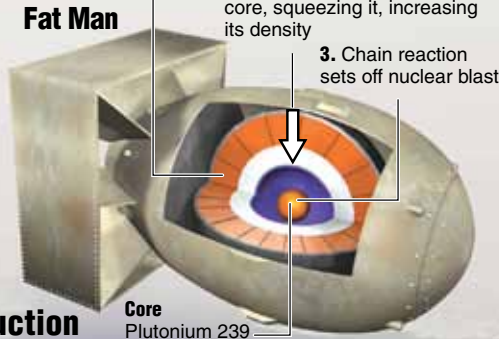
Core  
Uranium 235

### Nagasaki, Aug. 9, 1945

Plutonium bomb dubbed “Fat Man” detonates 1,800 ft. (549 m) above the city at 11:02 a.m.

#### Explosion by implosion

1. Numerous detonators located on conventional explosives fire simultaneously
2. Explosions create powerful inward pressure on plutonium core, squeezing it, increasing its density
3. Chain reaction sets off nuclear blast



Core  
Plutonium 239

## Destruction

### Hiroshima

Deaths 70,000 immediately

Worst affected area  
Within a 1.6 mi.  
(2.5 km) radius



Ground zero

Flat terrain caused more widespread damage

### Nagasaki

Deaths 40,000 immediately

Worst affected area  
Within a 1.25 mi.  
(2 km) radius



Ground zero

Hilly geography limited damage to Urakami Valley and part of downtown

July 1945, creating an atomic fireball that produced a 30,000-foot mushroom cloud of radioactive vapor. The Atomic Age had begun.

Washington then ordered the Japanese army to surrender unconditionally, but Japanese leaders chose to answer with the “silence of contempt.”

flashed, commuters felt intense heat, and then sonic pressure rippled across a three-mile radius, searing exposed skin, vaporizing people or turning them into carbon, burning clothes off bodies, and burying survivors under rubble. All that was left of many were carbon shadows of their incinerated remains etched onto concrete.



■ **CHANGING HANDS:** Traders work on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) in New York City (Feb. 15, 2011). The parent company of the exchange, NYSE Euronext, is expected to merge with Germany's Deutsche Borse in 2011 to form the world's largest exchange for stocks and derivatives.

PHOTO: SPENCER PLATT/GETTY IMAGES

## ***EU DEBT CRISIS***

*Continued from page 19*

*The Economist* article "Germany: Europe's Engine" describes the country's stunning turnaround: "A decade ago Germany was the sick man of Europe, plagued by slow growth and high unemployment, with big manufacturers moving out in a desperate search for lower costs. Now, despite the recession, unemployment is lower than it was five years ago. Although Germany recently ceded its place as the world's biggest exporter to China, its exporting prowess remains undimmed. As a share of GDP, its current-account surplus this year will be bigger than China's.

"This feat gives the lie to the picture, common in America and Asia, of Europe as a washed-up continent incapable of change. And, for the rest of Europe, there is a lot to be said for having a strong economy at the continent's geographical and political centre. Yet Germany's success is paradoxically also causing problems for its neighbours—problems which they, and Germany, need to address."

These problems have already begun to dissipate. Much of Germany's

2010 growth did come from domestic demand instead of exports. In addition, *Bloomberg* reported that business confidence in the nation reached its highest level since records began in 1991. The news is expected to bring an increase in hiring and drive consumer spending.

This is good news for Europe. Future growth in Germany is tied to economic stability in the rest of the EU. To continue economic expansion, Germany must spend to stimulate the EU economy. Also, for the EU to survive, it must accept the help—and a leading voice—from Germany.

### **Writing on the Wall**

*The New York Times* noted that an assertive Germany "raises a more fundamental question, one with important historical overtones, not just for smaller European countries, but for France as well: Is the rest of Europe ready to accept overt German leadership?"

For centuries, Europe was the axis on which the world revolved. It was the leader in science, math, business, art, music, education and technology.

During that time, monumental events of history emanated from Europe: the Renaissance, the French

Revolution, the Industrial Revolution, and two world wars.

The continent had the richest and most powerful nations, and one nation was consistently the heart of Europe's power: Germany. Consider the Frankish-Germanic kingdom—the reign of Charlemagne—Otto the Great creating the Holy Roman Empire of the First Reich—the rule of Charles V—and the long-held Habsburg dynasty.

Europe is poised to return as a driving force in world events. In the coming years, uncooperative, underperforming nations will become increasingly irrelevant and the reins of the eurozone will be handed to one streamlined leader.

While the often disunited European Union has long failed to live up to the high hopes it had at its inception, the historical model for a true United States of Europe is there. Given the right mix of EU crises, Europe *will* be united once again, ready to take on whatever comes its way.

As China rises and the United States continues to take a bow from its role as lone superpower, another powerhouse is emerging on the world economic stage.

Be sure to watch Europe and Germany. □

## PERSONAL

Continued from page 2

At Christ's Return, Egypt's stubborn resistance will repeat itself as a TYPE of certain nations that will not easily accept His rule. As with *ancient* Israel, it will again take plagues and droughts to break the will of the Egyptian people. Read Zechariah 14:18-19.

Finally, in its latter end, prophecy reveals Egypt will have a special highway built connecting it to Assyria—modern Germany—and running through the re-established nation of Israel (Isa. 19:23-25). All three countries are in this prophecy described as God's people. But this has obviously not happened yet, and events today are leading toward other prophecies involving this nation's *future*.

### Growing Crisis

The governments of many other nations are on the brink. Yemen may be the next to crumble. *The New York Times* reported, "Scenes [there] broadcast across the Arab world were reminiscent of demonstrations in Egypt this week and the month of protests that brought down the government in Tunisia."

In Lebanon, the selection of Hezbollah-backed Prime Minister Najib Mikati sparked another "day of rage." All eyes continue to be on this nation, but also on Jordan. King Abdullah II of Jordan fired his entire government because of large street protests all over the country. But serious unrest also involves several North African countries, such as Algeria and Libya. Iran's repressive dictatorial government is again under siege. A

contagion of protest, revolt and riot is now sweeping many nations of the world. Even certain American states are seeing the same, and as a direct result. More will soon follow—both nations and states!

Let's now go back a few years and review the Palestinian-Israeli peace talks on our way to the present. We will also examine Iran more closely. Let's see *why* Mid-East solutions never work, and more about recent events there.

For reasons involving religion, race and natural resources, primarily oil, the Middle East has *long* been filled with tension and conflict. The basis for a modern nation of Israel was laid in 1917, during World War I, when the Balfour Declaration led to setting the very problematic boundaries for modern Iraq, as well as for what would lead to the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. Israel's appearance



■ **ANTI-GOVERNMENT PROTESTERS:** Left, Libyan demonstrators wave their old national flag during a rally in the eastern Libyan city of Benghazi (Feb. 28, 2011). Right, Yemeni regime loyalists and anti-government protesters (foreground) throw stones at each other during clashes in the capital Sanaa (Feb. 22, 2011).

PHOTO: PATRICK BAZ (LEFT), AHMAD GHARABLI (RIGHT)/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

brought a radical shift in the region's power balance, as well as in the attitude of virtually all Arab nations surrounding Israel. But this really extends to every Islamic nation.

Since 1948, endless proposals have been set forth intending to placate the factions in the region and bring lasting peace. The Israelis and Palestinians have sought peace for decades, but it has *never* worked. Nor will it! The region's never-ending unrest weighs heavily on governments across the globe. The world's great powers simply cannot look away.

On September 17, 1978, American President Jimmy Carter negotiated a peace agreement—the Camp David Accords—between longtime enemies Egypt and Israel. This led to the 1979 Israel-Egypt Peace Treaty because Anwar Sadat saw that *any* peace is always better than war. This treaty was to be a harbinger of temporary better times. The dream of peace flourishing in the age-old volatile region—famous for war, terror and destruction—was on the path to becoming reality.

Or so it seemed. First, Anwar Sadat was assassinated in 1981. Mr.

Mubarak replaced him, but upheld the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty.

Each U.S. administration since President Carter, to varying degrees, have tried to establish peace. This has ranged from the strength of words to the delicate dance of diplomacy—from economic incentives to political compromise.

Diplomatic efforts known as the Middle East Peace Process picked up again in the fall of 1991 and were sponsored by Spain, the United States and the Soviet Union. The talks focused on cooperation among Israel and three of its neighbors—Lebanon, Syria and Jordan—and led to a series of agreements between Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization known as the Oslo Accords. By this time, an Israeli-Jordanian peace treaty had been signed. This occurred under King Hussein, King Abdullah's highly respected very moderate father. But virtually all the goals are still eluding diplomats 20 years later.

In April 2003, U.S. President George W. Bush unveiled the Middle East Peace Plan, called “A Performance-based Roadmap to

a Permanent Two-state Solution to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict.” Diplomats and journalists called it “The roadmap to peace.”

Devised by the U.S., the European Union, the United Nations and Russia, the roadmap was a three-phase blueprint designed to reach a peaceful settlement between the Israelis and Palestinians by 2005. It contained a step-by-step process calling for both parties to take action to reach its objective: creating a sovereign, independent Palestinian state, peaceably co-existing with Israel.

Soon after the roadmap was outlined, hostilities flared. The 2006 showdown between Israel and the Lebanon-based group Hezbollah continued the cycle. This war had implications elsewhere in the Mid-East, including Syria, Iran and the Palestinian territories.

A ceasefire came August 14, 2006. Many declared Hezbollah victorious, as did the leaders of Iran and Syria. Syrian President Bashar Assad stated that the outcome of the conflict proved America's plan for the Middle East is “an illusion.”



# The Mid-East in Prophecy

Watch *The World to Come* broadcast series on this topic at [www.worldtocome.org](http://www.worldtocome.org)

In early 2008, three years after the roadmap was to have brought a peaceful resolution, President George W. Bush embarked on an eight-day trip to the Middle East. His trip to Israel and the Palestinian territories was intended to continue pressure for both sides to follow through on their commitments to each other, specifically the first stage on the “roadmap to peace.” The plan called for Israel to stop new settlements, dismantle unauthorized outposts built by settlers after March 2001, and lift more travel restrictions on the Palestinians. It also called for the Palestinians to disband terrorist groups and to build the institutions of a functioning state. Six years after the plan was supposed to be a success, it is *still* failing.

Solutions have simply *never worked* between Israel and Palestine—and they never *will*. Part of the reason is because of other powers in the region—there are over 200 million Arabs—who will not under any circumstance permit tiny Israel to have peace with her neighbors. But the greatest reason lies within how different peoples—Jew and Arab—see so differently their connection to the patriarch Abraham.

### Nuclear Battlefield?

While governments around the world focused on resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, another problem loomed: an Iranian nuclear state. Iran has claimed it is committed to the peaceful use of nuclear technology, while denying enriching uranium for weapons. It maintains that its nuclear work is to generate electricity and produce isotopes for radiation therapy in hospitals. World powers, particularly Western nations, are unconvinced. So is Israel.

In February 2010, on the 31st anniversary of the Islamic Republic, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad announced that Iran was now a nuclear state. He told a huge raucous crowd,

“I want to announce with a loud voice here that the first consignment of 20 percent enriched uranium was produced and was put at the disposal of the scientists” (*Tehran Times*).

Weeks earlier, in his first State of the Union address, U.S. President Barack Obama promised Iran would pay a price if it does not abandon its nuclear program, stating “...as Iran’s leaders continue to ignore their obligations, there should be no doubt: They, too, will face growing consequences”



■ **CAUGHT OFF GUARD:** Egyptian anti-government demonstrators harass a pro-regime opponent during clashes in Cairo’s central Tahrir square (Feb. 03, 2011).

PHOTO: KHALED DESOUKI/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

(*Time* magazine). Of course there has yet come no price, but only more talk.

Tension over Iran’s nuclear ambition rose with the announcement by its president that he would step up enrichment. Iran is prepared to increase uranium enrichment if the United States attempts to halt its nuclear program.

German newspaper *Der Spiegel* claimed in early 2010 to have access to an intelligence dossier showing the existence of a secret military branch

of Iran’s nuclear program. Its aim of producing a bomb has reached an advanced stage. The article stated, “Experts believe that Iran’s scientists could produce a primitive, truck-sized version of the bomb this year, but that it would have to be compressed to a size that would fit into a nuclear warhead to yield the strategic threat potential that has Israel and the West so alarmed—and that they could reach that stage by sometime between 2012 and 2014.”

The explosive Middle East becoming a nuclear battlefield comes ever closer to reality as Iran (1) defies global opinion, (2) feverishly works toward atomic weapons and (3) repeatedly calls for Israel’s annihilation. According to a 2008 report, “Nuclear Programs in the Middle East: In the Shadow of Iran,” by London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies, more than a dozen nations in the Mid-East, just from February 2006 to January 2007, announced intentions for a nuclear program, or had restarted dormant programs.

Experts report that time is running out for Israel to destroy Iran’s nuclear complex before Tehran is able to launch long-range missiles with nuclear warheads at Tel Aviv or other Israeli cities. The prospect of mushroom clouds over this strategic region is terrifying the whole world!

With each new round of fighting in the Middle East, the rest of the world looks for a third party to present a solution.

This provides opportunities for other nations, or groups of nations, to demonstrate leadership on the world stage. The European Union began to intervene some time ago, so far to no avail.

Let’s see more from 2010 to the present. At a January 2010 UN Security Council forum, an EU official statement advocated a two-state solution for Israel and Palestine: “If there is to be a genuine peace, a way must be found through negotiations to

resolve the status of Jerusalem as the future capital of two States. The EU calls for the reopening of Palestinian institutions in Jerusalem in accordance with the Roadmap [to peace]” (“[EU] Council conclusions on the Middle East Peace Process”). It maintained, “The EU stands ready to contribute substantially to post-conflict arrangements, aimed at ensuring the sustainability of peace agreements” (ibid.). Israel will not agree.

Commentator Ghassan Michel Rubeiz, writing for *Common Ground News Service*, a non-profit initiative for a peaceful resolution to the Middle East conflict, proposed a future role for EU security forces in the region: “Over the years, Europe’s role as a mediator receded, giving way to an expanding US role in the region. But in more recent decades, European states have achieved excellence in policing peace in many places: in the Middle East, the Balkans, West Africa and elsewhere. Given the opportunity, Europe could provide the Israelis and Palestinians with the necessary international security that is crucial for enforcing a two-state solution.” This portends absolutely monumental—COLOSSAL—implications.

### Future Foretold

After Israeli troops raided a Gaza flotilla in May 2010, which killed nine and further heightened tensions between Israel and Palestine, the European Parliament “called for a stronger EU role in lifting the Gaza blockade, a day after foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton gave a chilling account of the situation there and suggested an EU naval mission to help with the transfer of goods.” In addition, the EU Parliament proposed “international monitoring of the crossings, including reactivating the European border assistance mission...at the Gaza-Egyptian border” (*Euobserver*).

While the futures of Europe and Israel are intertwined, they will follow very different paths.

After two years of silence, a new round of Middle East peace talks began in September 2010, between Israel and Palestine. The initial meetings were

hosted in Washington by President Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. Also in attendance were Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, Palestinian Authority President Abbas, King Abdullah II of Jordan and President Mubarak. Participants emphasized creating a “framework agreement” to resolve difficult issues such as disputed borders, security, the status of Jerusalem, new Israeli settlements and Palestinian refugee rights. Yet, due to the continuous violence and repeated failed attempts to broker peace, government representatives doubt the process will succeed. Israeli Foreign Minister, Avigdor Lieberman, who lives in the West Bank, said, “I do not believe a comprehensive agreement with the Palestinians is possible within a year, nor even during the next generation” (*BBC*).

All these events have led more to ask, “What does the *future* hold for the Middle East?” Many millions are pursuing a Bible view of the course of events there. A host of terms are now bandied about. These include the antichrist, the abomination of desolation, Armageddon, World War III, a new world order, and the Mark of the Beast. But what does the Bible actually say? And does history reveal a *pattern*? Also, other millions wonder about a possible emerging Islamic caliphate, or the arrival of the mahdi—the Islamic Messiah—or about a final “king of the south” referenced earlier.

We have seen that man cannot find a lasting solution to the Mid-East problem. What does God say *He* will bring about in this region?

Now for just a little of the extensive prophecy in Daniel, found in chapter 11, and concluded in chapter 12. In chapter 10, Daniel is left astonished by the prophecy—shocked and overwhelmed by what God revealed would happen “at the end,” or in the *last days*. He was so upset, it records, he did not eat for three weeks (10:2-3)!

In reviewing the prophecy, bear in mind that men inserted all chapter and verse divisions of the Bible. While these can

be helpful to readers, they can also inadvertently break up longer stories, thoughts or, as in this case, prophecies. The true meaning and scope of the subject matter can be obscured or lost from view by these divisions.

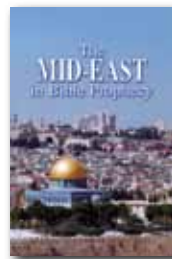
In this case, the entirety of Daniel 11 builds to an unexpected conclusion, yet to be fulfilled.

Some setup. God gives a certain introductory emphasis to those who read the prophecy, and we need to grasp it. First, God gave this prophecy during the third year of the reign of Cyrus, king of the Persian Empire (centered in modern Iran). Notice chapter 10, verse 1: “In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a thing was *revealed unto Daniel*, whose name was called Belteshazzar [his given Babylonian name]; and the thing was TRUE, but the time appointed was long [it involved the distant future]: and he understood the thing, and had understanding of the *vision*.”

Daniel recorded that two powerful kings (actually competing kingdoms tied directionally to “north” and “south”) would play an overarching role in Middle East events, all the way to the time of the end. These two kings set the stage for the unfolding of vitally important future events, which culminate *before Christ returns!*

Two key verses set the stage. In Daniel 10:21, the archangel Gabriel speaks to Daniel: “I will show you that which is noted in the *scripture of truth*.” Chapter 11 introduces the time setting. Verse 2 continues, “Now will I show you the *truth*.” When God foretells events, He speaks the *truth!* They are CERTAIN! *They will happen!* Since no scripture can be broken (John 10:35), neither can any verse of this prophecy! Each must stand the test of close scrutiny.

The remainder of Daniel’s prophecy presents absolutely *fascinating* knowledge. To learn more, read my booklet *The Mid-East in Bible Prophecy*, which examines the Daniel 11 prophecy verse by verse, including events to occur in the very near future. □





AUSTRALIA &amp; SOUTH PACIFIC

# Earthquake Devastates New Zealand



■ **CITY IN RUINS:** Collapsed buildings and debris fill Manchester Street in Christchurch, New Zealand (Feb. 22, 2011).

PHOTO: MARTIN HUNTER/GETTY IMAGES



A 6.3-magnitude earthquake struck the city of Christchurch in New Zealand, collapsing buildings, destroying infrastructure, and trapping people in the debris. The second quake to hit the area in a year left at

least 150 people dead and nearly 100 trapped.

The city's mayor, Bob Parker, described the scene: "...eventually when the shaking stopped, I looked up and looked across the scene of destruction, clouds of dust rising—and that's an ominous sign. That means collapsed buildings. And we could hear the screams from thousands of people, really in shock, in pain, in terror," *CBS News/Associated Press* reported.

The country's worst disaster in decades quickly led to a shortage of ambulances and rescue workers.

"The military has been deployed to help the rescue effort, and the government has accepted an offer of specialist help from Australia," *BBC News* stated. "A series of aftershocks, some as big as magnitude 5, have already

rattled the stricken city, and officials warned residents to brace for more."

"The quake toppled the spire of the city's historic stone cathedral, flattened tall buildings and sent chunks of concrete and bricks hurtling onto cars, buses and pedestrians below," according to *The Associated Press*.

Due to the quake, more than 30 million tons of ice also fell off the country's largest glacier, producing waves more than 10 feet tall.

"It was the latest in a series of large earthquakes to strike the area in recent months," *The New York Times* stated. "In September, a 7.1-magnitude earthquake struck near the city, but caused no casualties because it took place in the early morning when virtually everyone was still at home." □

## AFRICA

## Libyan Upheaval Escalates



■ **GUARDING THE CITY:** Anti-government rebels guard the city of Nalut, western Libya (Feb. 27, 2011).

PHOTO: FRED DUFOUR/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Over 1,000 people are feared dead from government backlash against Libyan demonstrators who have demanded that Moammar Gadhafi step down after 41 years as ruler. Thousands have stormed the streets in cities across the nation, and protests have continued for weeks despite armed retaliation against citizens by security forces.

“Libyan strongman Moammar [Gadhafi] offered no concessions to protesters who have shaken his regime by capturing several major cities, denouncing them as drunkards, terrorists and ‘drug-fueled mice’ who should be executed,” *Los Angeles Times* reported.

Vowing to fight until his “last drop of blood,” Mr. Gadhafi determined to quash the protests, while his son, Saif al-Islam, “warned that civil war could hit the country,” according to *BBC News*.

Quoting Libya’s *Quryna* newspaper, *Reuters* wrote, “A Libyan air force plane crashed near the eastern city of Benghazi after its crew bailed out because they refused to carry out orders to bomb the city...”

The article added Mr. Gadhafi threatened violence against “groups who were defying his rule.”

The havoc has halted up to 50 percent of oil production in Libya, resulting in skyrocketing prices, *The Financial Times* reported.

“The continuing disruption in the country, the world’s 12th largest exporter of crude, drove oil prices to a fresh 2½-year peak...Brent oil futures jumped 3.7 per cent to hit \$110 a barrel...for the first time since before the collapse of Lehman Brothers.”

Other nations are carrying efforts to evacuate people from the turbulent African country.

“The U.S. charted a ferry, the U.K. and China sent rescue flights and the E.U. made other plans as they moved to remove their citizens from Libya,” *The Wall Street Journal* reported.

The paper further stated, “Italian Foreign Minister Franco Frattini warns of an immigrant exodus of biblical proportions from the strife-torn nation if Gadhafi is ousted, with 300,000 Libyans possibly fleeing the nation.”

Following political turmoil in Tunisia and Egypt, the protests in Libya added to the wave of violence spreading across the Arab world. □

## ECONOMY & PERSONAL FINANCE

### Record Freeze Causes Produce Shortage

The worst winter freeze in 60 years in the southwestern United States and Mexico destroyed more than 4.4 million tons of corn and more than 80 percent of exportable produce. The vegetable and fruit shortage is causing food prices to surge.

“Bell peppers, for example, went from \$14.95 a box to \$48. Roma tomatoes from \$8.95 to about \$32,” *Nogales International* reported.

Not able to keep up with the rising prices, some stores have been unable to honor prices previously advertised in local newspapers, news station *KGW* reported.

A food store general manager in Portland, Oregon, said it was the worst produce situation he has experienced in 25 years: “We’ve had to double and triple some prices and consumers come in and it’s quite a shock to them” (*ibid.*).

Experts predict the produce shortage and accompanying rising prices could last until April. □



■ **COLD SNAP:** Bell peppers are seen for sale in a grocery store in New York City. Unseasonably frigid temperatures in Mexico, Florida and Texas this year have caused a shortage in the U.S. supply of vegetables (Feb. 16, 2011).

PHOTO: MARIO TAMA/GETTY IMAGES

## Piracy Plagues Indian Ocean

Attacks by Somali pirates went up by 10 percent last year, with the International Maritime Bureau recording 445 incidents. An Oceans Beyond Piracy study estimated that this resulted in more than \$12 billion in losses.

“While US and European navies continue to patrol shipping lanes off the Somali coast, there has been no letup in pirate attacks, and pirates, if anything, appear to be becoming even more effective at capturing ships,” *The Christian Science Monitor* reported.

According to *United Press International*, anti-piracy efforts have broadened.

“International attention is increasingly turning to attempting to uncover and block the pirates’ international allies, from other East African ports that covertly allow the pirates to use their facilities as staging bases to the shadowy financial middlemen that process the pirates’ ransom proceeds after they are paid through intermediaries.”

Describing the magnitude of a recent attack, the managing director of the International Association of Independent Tanker Owners told *CNN*, “The hijacking by pirates of 2 million barrels of Kuwaiti crude oil destined

for the U.S. in a large Greek tanker in the middle of the main sea lanes coming from the Middle East Gulf marks a significant shift in the impact of the piracy crisis in the Indian Ocean.”

He added, “If piracy in the Indian Ocean is left unabated, it will strangle these crucial shipping lanes with the potential to severely disrupt oil flows to the U.S. and to the rest of the world.”

*CNN* reported that the pirates’ success in stealing \$260 million worth of cargo in two days “has stoked new concern about the world’s inability to halt the threat of Somali piracy in the Indian Ocean.” □

### HEALTH ISSUES

## 25 Million Americans Suffer from Diabetes

Approximately 25.8 million Americans—8.3 percent of the population—have diabetes, according to the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Of this number, 7 million cases are currently undiagnosed.

“Last year, the CDC warned that one in three American adults could be diabetic by 2050 if the current trends persist,” *Agence France-Presse* reported.

About 215,000 people younger than 20 years old have Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes, while 1.9 million people aged 20 years or older were diagnosed with the disease in 2010, the research revealed.

In addition, prediabetes, a condition in which blood sugar levels are higher than normal, was found in 35 percent of people age 20 or older between 2005 and 2008. “Applying this percentage to the entire U.S. pop-

ulation in 2010 yields an estimated 79 million American adults aged 20 years or older with prediabetes,” the report stated.

A rise in diabetes cases will mean higher medical bills for those affected. The CDC estimates that \$174 billion was spent on diabetes-related costs in 2007, with people who have the disease paying an average of 2.3 times more in health-care costs. □

## United States Most Overweight Affluent Nation

Americans are more overweight than people in any other developed nation, research published in the medical journal *The Lancet* revealed.

Researchers examined the Body Mass Index (BMI) for adults 20 years and older in 199 countries and territories between 1980 and 2008. Of these, the United States had the “highest BMI of high-income countries,” the report stated.

A BMI count of 25 means a person is overweight. The American average in the study was 28.

“The findings about Americans and obesity add to evidence that the U.S. has a weight problem,” *Bloomberg* reported.

The study found that about 68 percent of U.S. adults are overweight while close to 34 percent are obese.

Additionally, worldwide obesity figures doubled within the 28-year

period, showing that the problem is reaching epidemic proportions.

“Among the other developed nations, UK, Australia and New Zealand also witnessed significant increase in body mass,” *International Business Times* reported. “The study also warns that obesity is generally a high risk factor for cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, cancer and musculoskeletal disorders, which cause 3 million deaths worldwide each year.” □



The White Horse



The Red Horse



The Black Horse



The Pale Horse



The Four Horsemen

# The FOUR HORSEMEN of REVELATION EXPLAINED AT LAST!

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