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REAL TRUTH™

A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING



WHAT IS
HUMAN
NATURE?



THE
REAL TRUTH

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A R T I C L E S

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Star-crossed!
Astrology's Persistent Influence

Human lives are defined by decisions, large and small. Are the choices you make guided by the stars?
Page 13

FRONT COVER: Thinkstock (Left, Right Middle and Right Bottom); STRDEL/AFP/Getty Images (Right Top)

Personal from the Editor-in-Chief
What Is Human Nature?
Page 1

Mounting Worldwide Crisis in Agriculture
Part 2

Too often, agriculturists see only the *effects*, while the actual *causes* of the crisis grow worse and more complicated. Yet we must *recognize* our agricultural problems—their *causes*—and CORRECT THEM.
Page 5

One Nation Under Terror
Three Realities America Can Learn from Life in Israel
The constant threat of terrorism continues to change lifestyles in the United States.
Page 16

What's So Wrong with Sex Before Marriage?
Something vital is missing from the prevailing mindset toward sexual relations outside of marriage.
Page 22

Can Christians Believe in Evolution?
Creation or evolution? Or both? The Bible clearly shows the truth of mankind's origin.
Page 24

World News Desk
Page 32

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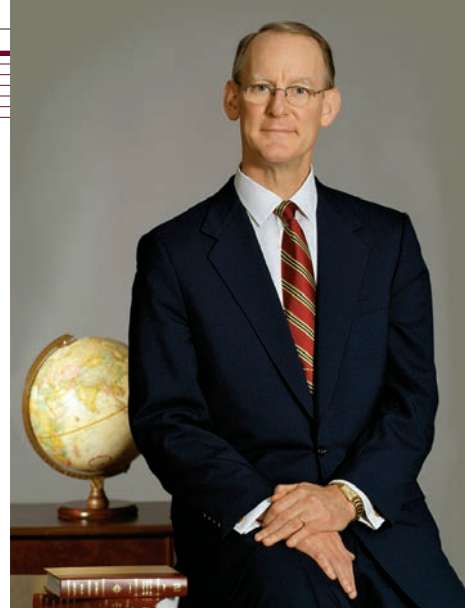
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PERSONAL FROM

David C. Fack



What Is Human Nature?

WHAT IS HUMAN NATURE? *Why* does it exist? *Where* did it come from? Did God create it? *Why* is it so selfish and evil? Few have understood this subject. This Personal presents the truth.

Human troubles and evils are foretold to grow far worse in this age. Appalling violence, terrorism and war are escalating as human nature hurtles further out of control. After a school shooting where many lay slaughtered, a parent remarked, “I don’t understand this world anymore.”

You *can* understand both this world and the *cause* of its troubles. Understanding human nature is the key.

All human beings possess human nature. The selfishness, rottenness, violence and terrible evils that spring from human nature have plagued the world for thousands of years. The Bible states, “...the *whole world* lies in *wickedness*” (I John 5:19). The cause of this lies directly at the feet of evil human nature.

Differing Opinions

Every “expert” has a different opinion about *what* human nature is and *where* it comes from. Yet none know *why* human nature exists. This is because they reject the SOURCE to understanding the answers to *all* of life’s greatest questions.

Consider the paradox! Think of all the wonderful things the human MIND is capable of producing. Its ingenuity and inventiveness are practically limitless. Yet it cannot solve the most basic of life’s greatest problems—poverty, ignorance, immorality, crime, war and misery. All these—and many more—are by-products of unbridled human nature!

Many theologians and religionists teach that all humans are endowed with a “better nature” inside, waiting to be tapped and channeled. The Bible says no such thing! Yet millions subscribe to this idea.

This teaching comes from the long-held pagan doctrine of the *duality* of body and soul—that all people have a pure, pristine soul locked in an evil body that serves as a prison house until death, when it is freed. This is an attempt to explain the root of human nature without examining the truth of what God says.

Millions more believe the unbiblical doctrine of “original sin.” While Adam and Eve certainly *did* sin, the Bible teaches nothing about any “*original sin*” passed on, generation by generation, to every person. This term is a fiction of men.

Romans 3:23 states, “For *all* have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” Every human being has sinned on his own account! All are responsible for and guilty of their *own* sins—not those of Adam and Eve or anyone else!



■ **DESTRUCTIVE:** Top, officers work on a street damaged by a car bomb explosion that went off in Hatay, Turkey, near a main border crossing into Syria (May 12, 2013). Bottom, rioting garment workers vandalize a bus following the collapse of an eight-story building in Dhaka, Bangladesh (April 26, 2013).

PHOTOS: BULENT KILIC/AFP/ (TOP); STRDEL/AFP/ (BOTTOM) GETTY IMAGES

Adam’s sin brought two consequences: (1) It cut mankind off from the Tree of Life and (2) brought the death penalty on all human beings.

What Jesus Taught

Jesus explained what comes out of the human heart: “...that which *comes out* of the man, that defiles the man. For

from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil things *come from within*, and defile the man” (Mark 7:20-23).

This is a staggering revelation. Jesus said it—so it has to be true!

And the prophet Jeremiah added, “The HEART is *deceitful* above all things, and *desperately wicked*: who can know it?” (17:9). Of course, most do *not* know this about themselves, though they often readily see it in others. Further, the apostle Paul wrote, “...the *carnal* [natural] mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, *neither indeed can be*” (Rom. 8:7).

These are incredible statements about the minds of *all* human beings. But how did the torrent of evil thoughts, which pour from people, come to exist in them in the first place? How did it get there?

Does God infuse human nature into tiny babies at birth? Does an all-wise, all-powerful, loving God take innocent children and turn them toward terrible evil from birth? And, if God does not put this nature there, then where *does* it come from?

Satan’s Influence

Ephesians 2:2 references the devil’s power and influence upon the world: “Wherein in time past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the *prince of the POWER of the air*, the *spirit* that now works in the *children of disobedience*.”

Notice Satan’s “*spirit...works* in the children of disobedience.” Do you see this? Did you grasp it? Satan has the *power* to use the “air” to broadcast, through his *spirit*, an attitude of disobedience! His spirit sends moods, feelings and attitudes of hostility into people’s minds. These “work” to bring disobedience. This “air power” gives the devil tremendous INFLUENCE, allowing him to send thoughts of deceit, anger, pride, hatred, vanity, jealousy, lust, greed, envy and confusion directly into people!

Think of it this way. The devil owns the world’s most powerful radio station, broadcasting 24 hours a day. Revelation 12:9 states that he “deceives the whole world.” And his cunning has been so seductive that he has even been able to convince most that he *does not exist!*

The devil is immensely more powerful than most realize. The Bible

identifies him as this world's god: "In whom the *god of this world* has blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ...should shine unto them" (II Cor. 4:4).

As this world's god, Satan blinds and deceives on a staggering scale. The result is a world *filled* with disobedience—lawlessness!

On the other hand, Christians follow God and obey His spiritual Law, which is *holy, just and good* (Rom. 7:12, 14)! But how do they do this?

The apostle Peter referred to "...the Holy Spirit, [which] *God has given to them that obey Him*" (Acts 5:32). God's Spirit is given upon repentance and baptism (Acts 2:38). *This Spirit helps Christians obey the Ten Commandments!*

Human Nature Is Satan's Nature

Before the invention of radio, Satan's power could not be as easily understood. We can now better understand the "children of *disobedience*." Like Christians with the Holy Spirit, these people are also inspired and guided by the spirit of this world's god. Satan broadcasts a *spirit* of rebellion against—and *disobedience to*—God's Law.

A deceived world knows nothing of this understanding!

If you listen to the radio, you usually pick a station that plays what you want to hear. Today, people "surf" radio or television stations, and of course the Internet. Eventually, something interests them, and they stop and listen by choice. People have control over what they hear or watch.

It is not the same with Satan's station. The world—and you—do not *decide* to tune into the devil's broadcast. No one sets out to be deceived. But every person on Earth is automatically tuned to Satan's wavelength! His wickedness, hostility, rebellion, deceit and selfishness are continually "on the air."

Therefore, it is really SATAN'S NATURE that is being labeled as HUMAN NATURE. In fact, once it is injected into people, Satan's nature becomes *natu-*

ral to them. It becomes *their* nature—now, *human* nature.

Though you cannot see it any more than you can see radio waves or television signals, the air around you is literally charged and "crackles" with the energy of Satan's broadcast.

It is critical to see *how* this spirit works. It is the single most important key to understanding how Satan can deceive and manipulate over *seven billion people*.

How the Devil Works

Consider an illustration. It demonstrates how Satan can influence and sway humanity through his broadcast.

The setting involves King Cyrus of Persia. God wanted him to allow captive Jews to return to Jerusalem and build a second temple to replace Solomon's, which had been destroyed. Here is how God communicated to Cyrus: "Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia...the LORD *stirred up the spirit* of Cyrus...that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom..." (Ezra 1:1).

God communicated with Cyrus through his *spirit*—by "stirring it up."

Satan does the same thing. Just as God can lead a human being toward a right purpose, Satan's spirit influences people toward hate, anger, selfishness, violence, competition, murder and deceit.

Of course, Satan injects his attitudes into an unsuspecting mankind—it has no idea what he is doing. The devil does not announce his intentions in an audible voice.

Murder, Lies and Destruction

Just as God the Father has children, Satan is also a father with his own children! Consider this. On one occasion, Paul labeled a man: "...*you child of the devil*, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease to pervert the right ways of the LORD?" (Acts 13:10).

Notice that "children of the devil" are enemies of "*righteousness*" and "the ways of God." This is what being Satan's children means!

But what is righteousness? The Psalms record: "...all Your [God's]

COMMANDMENTS ARE RIGHTEOUSNESS" (119:172).

Satan's children hate, and are enemies of, the laws of God—His commandments! Remember, they are "children of *disobedience*."

Revelation 9:11 describes Satan as a destroyer. This understanding sets the stage for the next scripture.

Certain people professed to "believe on [Jesus]" in John 8:30-31. These same people sought to kill Him moments later! He said, "...you seek to KILL Me, because My *word* has no place in you" (vs. 37), and added, "...you seek to kill Me, a Man that has told you the truth..." (vs. 40). Many *say* they want to hear the truth—but not if it means being told they are wrong, particularly about cherished ideas.

This story comes to a remarkable climax, with Jesus asking, "Why do you not understand My speech?" He answers His own question with, "...because you *cannot* hear My word" (vs. 43). What could cause people standing right beside Jesus to "not hear His word"?

He answers, "You are of *your father the devil*, and the lusts of *your father* you will do. He was a *murderer* from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own [meaning, what he is]: for he is a *liar*, and the *father* of it" (vs. 44). Jesus plainly said to them, "...you are not of God" (vs. 47), and these devil-inspired religious leaders immediately accused *Him* of having a demon (vs. 48)! Many today who *profess* to "believe on Christ" are no different.

This is instructive. The devil is a *father* who murders, lies and destroys. As the author of killing, deceit and destruction, *he broadcasts these attitudes to his children around the world!*

"The God of This World"

Make no mistake! The world is *filled* with the children of the devil. Children are basically much like their parents. Therefore, Satan's children lie, hate, murder and destroy. Look at the world. It should now be most clear *WHY* so much confusion, war, ignorance, pover-

ty, disease and misery are everywhere. The fruits of human nature—*Satan's* nature—are evident wherever there are human beings.

The Bible describes the “last days” before Jesus’ Return this way: “This know also, that in the *last days* perilous [dangerous] times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a *form of godliness*, but denying the POWER thereof: *from such turn away*” (II Tim. 3:1-5).

While the world is filled with religion—“a *form of godliness*”—it neither teaches the truth nor has the religion of God! It denies the POWER of the true God, and unwittingly worships a being who palms himself off as the God of the Bible. The devil is called the “god of this world” (II Cor. 4:4), the “prince of this world” (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11), “prince of the power of the air” (Eph. 2:2), and one who “weakens the nations” (Isa. 14:12) and “deceives the whole world” (Rev. 12:9).

But *how* did Satan come to be as he is?

Human Nature Not Inherited

Prior to the re-creation of Earth and creation of Adam, Satan rebelled against God’s government, and led one-third of all angels into rebellion. Isaiah 14:12-15 reveals he had once ruled Earth, and Ezekiel 28:15 shows he was a created being—Lucifer, a powerful, perfect archangel.

But how did the devil gain access to mankind? What opened the door to his influence—his “broadcast”?

Grasp this! Human nature did not come from God, but rather from Satan.

Yet human nature is not *inherited*—it is *acquired*! Adam’s children and all succeeding generations did not “pass it on” at conception. A parent who loses an eye, hand or leg does not produce children with one eye, hand or leg. The Bible refers to Adam’s son Abel as

“righteous Abel.” His parents’ disobedience did not prevent his obedience.

Adam and Eve were adult “babies.” Just like babies today, they were pure at their creation but were quickly exposed to a “broadcast” they could not resist.

Like most children today, they chose not to listen to their Parent—God. Instead, they believed Satan’s lie in the garden that they would not “surely die.” In so doing, they rejected the rule of God’s government in their lives. If Adam had obeyed God’s instruction, he could have qualified to replace Satan and *restore* the GOVERNMENT OF GOD on Earth.

New Testament Examples

The New Testament instructs through an example of how human nature is acquired, not inherited. Here is a warning to the Corinthian church: “But I fear, lest by any means, *as the serpent beguiled Eve* through his SUBTLETY, *so your minds should be corrupted* from the simplicity that is in Christ” (II Cor. 11:3).

Four thousand years after Adam and Eve, Paul recognized the devil was still alive and active. He warned the Corinthians to be on guard that they not return to following the ways of human nature. Just as Eve’s nature was not evil and hostile to God before she was deceived, neither was the nature of the converted Corinthians.

Once one is called and converted, having received the Spirit of God, he has put off the old human nature of his past life. Paul reminded the Ephesians, “Among whom also we all had our [conduct] in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were *BY NATURE* the children of wrath, even as others” (2:3). This follows and is part of the scripture identifying Satan as “prince of the power of the air.”

It would be grossly unfair of God to inject newborn babies with human nature, and then place them under His “wrath” for having it. See this point! Human nature is *acquired*, leading to disobedience to God—and THIS puts people under His wrath!

Here is Ephesians 2:3 from *The New Testament in Modern English* translated by J.B. Phillips. It accurately describes how people *acquire* human nature from the devil: “You drifted along on the stream of this world’s ideas of living, and obeyed its UNSEEN RULER [Satan]...We all lived like that in the past, and followed the *impulses* and *imagination*s of our EVIL NATURE...like everyone else.”

How true! Most people simply drift along in life following whatever feelings (“impulses”) and ideas (“imagination”) that strike them from moment to moment. Ephesians 1 is Paul accounting to those brethren their calling into God’s Way. The Ephesians had come out of the course of this world and were no longer “by nature” the children of wrath, and no longer yielding to the “prince of the power of the air.” They were “dis-acquiring” human nature by yielding to God instead of the impulses, pulls, feelings and temptations of Satan’s wavelength.

Converted Christians Not Immune

Understand! You have been practicing Satan’s way your entire life—and have probably become *very good* at it. Believe me, as you strive to overcome and resist the pulls at work within you, you will find that Satan’s influence, in the form of human nature, is truly “second nature” to you, more than you now know! Overcoming will not be easy or happen overnight. It is a lifelong struggle against an attitude and way of life that the truly *repentant* Christian has rejected and turned from.

Remember, the devil seduced Eve *through temptation*. Genesis 3:1 reveals *how* he tempts people into disobedience and sin: “Now the serpent was more *subtle* than any beast of the field...” Satan deceived Eve by tempting her with the beauty of the tree God had forbidden her to eat.

Temptation never comes from God. Notice: “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, *neither*

Please see **PERSONAL**, page 28



MOUNTING WORLDWIDE CRISIS IN AGRICULTURE

Part 2

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

BY DALE L. SCHURTER

This article is excerpted from the book *Mounting Worldwide Crisis in Agriculture* by Dale L. Schurter, the world's foremost authority on biblical agriculture and sustainable husbandry. Subsequent installments will appear in *The Real Truth* over the coming months.

ROBUST HUMAN health demands wholesome food, but wholesome food can only come from fertile and productive soil.

Just what is this miracle we call soil? How does it work? What is its function in the cycle of life? This is basic knowledge we all should possess.

Soil is a complex ecosystem composed of six parts: (1) air, (2) water, (3) rock mineral particles, (4) dissolved minerals, (5) organic matter—dead remains of plants and animals (and animal wastes)—and (6) a vast community of living organisms. These all work together to perform important functions.

One major function is to provide a place in which plants can live and grow to give us food. Another is to act as a “garbage processing plant” that not only rids the landscape of plant, animal and human waste and refuse, but also decomposes the unusable refuse and gives it back to us in a form that is usable and beneficial to producing food.

Realize this towering fact: fertile topsoil is BY FAR man's most valuable and indispensable natural resource.

Agronomically, the *dust* is the best, most mineral-rich part of the soil. The



PHOTO: THINKSTOCK



smallest soil particle is called a colloid, and the dust is made up of both humus and clay colloid particles. These tiny particles hold/carry the vast majority of the minerals that form the structure of the soil—and thus the “structure” of plants, animals and humans.

Unknown to most, agricultural principles found within the Bible’s pages align with scientific laws of nature. The first book of the Bible, Genesis, states that mankind was formed “of the *dust* of the ground” (2:7).

Consider: what is removed by erosion is the *best* part of the rich topsoil—the dust—the surface portion, which also contains health-producing microbes, humus and finished plant food. Each half ton of topsoil lost every year contains enough plant food to provide one person’s sustenance for years. This all means, of course, that soil conservation and proper agricultural methods could make the whole Earth fabulously wealthy.

Rich, well-kept farmland equals life! When man degrades topsoil, however, he is destroying his ability to live healthfully.

This is just one example where science aligns with agricultural principles found in the Bible. *Much more* will be mentioned later.

Amazing Processes

Again, topsoil lies at “an average depth of seven or eight inches over the face of the land” (*Man and the Soil*, Karl B. Mickey). In some few areas, it may be several feet deep, in many other areas, considerably less than seven inches.

In 1994, I was invited to introduce biblical agriculture in Ukraine, and had the opportunity to visit and walk over native pastureland in their National Land Reserve, preserved untilled for over 2,300 years. An elongated excavation had been made, beginning at ground level, sloping downward to more than 12-feet deep. This excavation fully exposed the soil’s profile,

and enabled good access for inspection of the depth of topsoil, and the first two feet of subsoil. The rich topsoil measured an amazing *11.38-feet deep*.

Incredible!

“The soil is not, as many suppose, a dead, inert substance,” Jerome Rodale wrote in his book *Pay Dirt: Farming & Gardening with Composts*. “It is very much alive and dynamic. It teems with bacteria...fungi, molds, yeasts, protozoa, algae and other minute organisms. All are microscopic plants except the protozoa which represent animal life. As a group, these lower plants and animals are referred to as the biologic life of the soil...This microbial population of the soil is concentrated mainly in the upper four or five inches where the bulk of the organic matter, their food, is to be found.”

“This hive of living things in the soil, the eaters and the eaten, adds up to incredible numbers. The bacteria alone may range from a comparative few [to] up to three or four billion in a single gram of dry soil...in good soil the bacterial matter, living and dead, may weigh as much as 5,600 pounds per acre...The fungi may add up to a million [hyphae, microscopic strands of cells in which fungi grow] in a gram of dry soil, weighing over 1,000 pounds to the acre” (*The Web of Life*, John H. Storer).

In his book *The Forest*, Peter Farb estimated that “about 95 per cent of the nearly one million insect species” spend part of their lives in the soil.

And then there are the humble earthworms. They are nature’s plow, chemist and cultivator, maker and distributor of plant food. According to Mr. Farb, rich soil may support millions of earthworms per acre. They are the soil specialists responsible for building and maintaining an ideal fertile environment for good plant growth from inert rock particles and organic debris.

The larger earthworms, night crawlers, are a miracle of engineering in and

of themselves. They burrow sometimes many inches downward into the soil, sometimes *many feet* into the subsoil searching for and gathering small bits of soil and/or rock particles to ingest and move through their series of “stomachs.” As this species of worm tunnels down and around, it instinctively searches out minerals missing in the topsoil above. The earth it ingests and “composts” does not just travel through it. This type of earthworm also serves as a “dump truck,” and carries a processed load to the soil’s surface and deposits it there, where most needed. In addition to minerals, enzymes, bacteria and hormones are also deposited, all adding to the soil’s fertility.

The “red wiggler” earthworm species does much of the digestion and composting in the top few inches of the soil and in compost piles or bins.

All this teeming life plays a vital role in keeping the soil healthy and building it up.

Soil is not solid. It is actually composed of billions of grains, or colloidal particles. These “particles of the soil are classified according to size into three principal groups [known as soil separates], which are called sand, silt, and clay. The particle sizes in each of the groups range between certain limits, which have been arbitrarily fixed at diameters of 2 to 0.05 mm for sand, 0.05 to 0.002 mm for silt, and less than 0.002 mm for clay” (*Soils and Men*, U.S. Department of Agriculture). Each tiny soil particle is covered with a tight-fitting film of oxides, water and bits of organic matter, which provides a supportive environment for the soil life.

The surface area of these particles is staggering. According to A. F. Gustafson in his book *Using and Managing Soils*, “The combined surface area of the colloidal particles in a cubic foot of soil is from 150 to 200 acres.”

Organic cementing agents hold these particles together to form small



structural units called aggregates or peds. They give soil the ideal crumbly granular structure necessary for proper tilling—and prevent compaction. Prime aggregation provides an optimum of large and small pore spaces needed for the soil to “breathe.”

A favorable soil structure is just as important to growing healthy plants as is soil fertility. The organic bonding compounds in soils are continually decomposing and must be replaced to maintain aggregate stability and good soil structure.

The organic matter is obtained from living and dead plants and animals, plant roots, green manure crops, animal manure, crop residues, fungi, bacteria, worms, insects, etc. This organic matter is broken down and decayed through the action of the complex mass of soil microorganisms and earthworms. As soil organisms decompose organic matter, nutrients are released. This digestive action produces organic acids that dissolve insoluble rock minerals and makes them available for plant use.

The most important product of organic matter decomposition is humus.

Humus Is Vital

The importance of humus cannot be overemphasized. Humus is the portion of organic matter that accumulates in soil to give it its most valuable characteristics. Here are a few reasons: humus improves the physical condition of the soil, supports its organisms, increases permeability, improves aeration, stabilizes temperature, and serves as a storehouse of plant nutrients. Essentially, all of a soil’s nitrogen reserves are stored in humus.

When it rains, soil with humus soaks up water. Because it is so porous, it can hold at least its own volume in water. A four-inch rain on humus-rich soil causes little or no runoff, whereas a half-inch rain on humus-poor land can cause erosion.

Originally, the rich virgin soils of the U.S. Midwest contained from 5 percent to more than 10 percent humus in the top 12 inches. Now, worldwide our tillable land (and its soils that feed us) continues to send millions on a “death march by installment plan.” Malnutrition and starvation will result from our increasing neglect—indeed, poisoning—of this vital resource.

This flies in the face of husbandry guidelines found early in the Bible, which were given to bring health and abundance to mankind. Notice: “And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden [personally prepared for him, see verse 8] to dress it and to keep it” (Gen. 2:15).

Digging deeper, we find the Hebrew words translated “dress” and “keep” in *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* include quite an expanded meaning:

Dress: (Hebrew *abad*) “to work,” “serve,” “till.” In the *King James Version*, it is also translated to be a “husbandman.”

Keep: (Hebrew *shamar*) “to hedge about,” “guard,” “keep,” “to protect,” and “attend to.” In the *King James Version*, it is also translated “observe,” “preserve,” “reserve” and “save.”

What specific guidelines! With soil being man’s most precious resource, he MUST guard, keep, protect, preserve and SAVE IT!

Underlying the idea of dressing and keeping the Earth is that we must be in line with God’s natural laws. Breaking these has dire consequences—the record of history vividly and repeatedly proves this statement true.

Why Soil “Wears Out”

When minerals, organic matter, and soil organisms are present and in balance for a particular type of soil, the soil is fertile and healthy. But all too often this balance is upset. How? By the serious depletion of organic matter and humus due to improper cultivation

and fertilization practices, unchecked erosion, continued monoculture (growing a single variety of plant in large tracts of uniform crops)—and *failure to rest the land* and restore what the preceding harvests have taken from it.

Biblical principles established millennia ago help guard against such depletion, but today are being ignored. The most basic of these laws states that all land should rest one year in seven. This provides a “sabbatical”—a rest for the land in which natural cycles are allowed to restore balance to the soil. This guards against topsoil depletion and erosion.

Essentially, a land sabbath is a way the Earth “puts itself in check.” It allows the restoration of minerals and other plant nutrients used and not returned during the previous six years. During this time, organisms that naturally replenish the land can more quickly build up the soil.

This practice is outlined in the book of Leviticus: “Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof; but in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land, a sabbath for the LORD: you shall neither sow your field, nor prune your vineyard” (25:3-4).

The next verses detail what should be done during the rest year and how food will be provided. Read carefully: “That which grows of its own accord of your harvest you shall not reap, neither gather the grapes of your vine undressed: for it is a year of rest unto the land. And the sabbath of the land shall be meat [food] for you; for you, and for your servant, and for your maid, and for your hired servant, and for your stranger that sojourns with you, and for your cattle, and for the beast that are in your land, shall all the increase thereof be meat” (vs. 5-7).

Simply put, this means that during the year that a field rests, a farmer can still pick fruits and vegetables (that



■ **HEALTHY SOIL:** High-humus soil should hold together yet still be friable (crumbly) so that it is better able to retain moisture, air and nutrients.

PHOTO: DALE L. SCHURTER

grew on their own) to sustain his family, workers and animals. This fresh produce is *in addition* to foods that would have been stored during previous years, such as grains.

This sabbatical maintains the health and life of the soil, and *ensures* a continued abundance of food for all. If we followed this and other biblical practices today in the United States and worldwide, we would not be facing the soil depletion and erosion crisis.

In an attempt to get around the necessity of land sabbaths, modern agriculture practices the substitution of synthetic fertilizers for humus that is not allowed to be replenished in the soil. The “replacing” of humus by artificial means does stimulate plant growth, but what happens to soil humus, organic matter, and soil life as a result?

Philosophies of Fertilization

There are essentially two basic philosophies regarding fertilization. One began

with the humus theory, and is based on the concept that fertilizer should be used to feed the soil to maintain its balance and vital functions—thus allowing the soil to feed the plants. The other philosophy, largely promoted by the chemical fertilizer industry, is that fertilizer is a plant food and should be used to feed a plant directly. Such thinking often ignores and bypasses the biological and physical properties and functions of the soil (*The Scientific Monthly*).

This “fertilizer as plant food” philosophy had its beginnings in the 1840s. It was at that time when Justus von Liebig in Germany noticed the regular presence of certain mineral elements—especially nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium—in the ashes of burned plants. Since these elements had to be drawn from the soil, he concluded that soil fertility depended primarily upon the presence of these elements in the soil.

He further suggested that fertility could be maintained or improved

by adding these elements in “suitable forms” to the soil. About the same time an Englishman, Sir John Bennet Lawes, was experimenting along similar lines (*Soil and Civilization*).

These men found that when nitrogen, phosphorus and potash—or potassium carbonate—were added to depleted soil, in the form of water-soluble chemicals, production increased like “magic”!

Soon farmers the world over were adopting this method as a shortcut to soil fertility.

It should be noted that early proponents of chemical fertilizers did not believe that such substances should be used to replace organic matter. But with additional demands on food from the war economy of the 1940s, farming methods dramatically changed.

In his book *An Agricultural Testament*, English botanist Sir Albert Howard addressed the loss in soil fertility at that time. He said, “A wide gap between the humus used up in crop production and the humus added as manure has naturally developed. This has been filled by chemical manures. The principle followed, based on the Liebig tradition, is that any deficiencies in the soil solution can be made up by the addition of suitable chemicals. This is based on a *complete misconception* of plant nutrition. It is superficial and fundamentally unsound. It takes no account of the life of the soil, including the mycorrhizal association—the living fungous bridge which connects soil and sap” (emphasis added).

He continued, “The ease with which crops can be grown with chemicals has made the correct utilization of wastes much more difficult. If a cheap substitute for humus exists why not use it? The answer is twofold. In the first place, *chemicals can never be a substitute for humus* because...the soil must live and the mycorrhizal association must be [one of the essential links] in plant nutrition. In the second place,



the use of such a substitute cannot be cheap because soil fertility—one of the most important assets of any country—is lost; because artificial plants, artificial animals, and artificial men are unhealthy and can only be protected from the parasites, whose duty it is to remove them, by means of poison sprays, vaccines and serums and an expensive system of patent medicines, panel doctors, hospitals, and so forth” (emphasis added).

An increased demand for agricultural products fostered by World War I and government price supports caused intensive and specialized farming methods to become more popular. Also, by this time, the internal combustion engine was gradually replacing the horse. Mass migration to the cities was causing labor problems. The size of farms had to increase to cope with economic pressures against farmers.

And then there was industry. Following World War I and II, nitrate and phosphate factories producing munitions for war no longer had a market. Sensing huge potential profits, industry began developing a new market in agriculture. Through research grants to agricultural colleges and extensive advertising campaigns, it urged and “educated” farmers into believing that with artificial fertilizers they could produce greater yields and make bigger profits (*Journal of the Soil Association*).

Under these conditions, the use of chemical fertilizers skyrocketed!

Between 1949 and 1968, “agricultural production increased by about 45 per cent”—and this was on 16 percent less land. “In that period, the annual use of fertilizer nitrogen increased 648 per cent...Clearly, more crop was being produced on less land (the yield per acre increased by 77 per cent),” Barry Commoner wrote in his book *The Closing Circle*.

Mr. Commoner also stated that “the cost of fertilizer, relative to the resul-

tant gain in crop sales, [was] lower than that of any other economic input” for the farmer.

“In 1949, an average of about 11,000 tons of fertilizer nitrogen were used *per USDA unit of crop production*, while in 1968 about 57,000 tons of nitrogen were used for the *same* crop yield. This means that the efficiency with which nitrogen contributes to the growth of the crop declined fivefold. Obviously, a good deal of the fertilizer nitrogen did not enter the crop and must have ended up elsewhere in the ecosystem.” *Unbelievable!*

“The organic content of the U.S. soil, according to data from Missouri University, [had] gone down 50% since 1940 [by the early 1970s]” (*Land Bulletin Number 133*).

Even after these reports warned of the damages that fertilizers were costing soil fertility, little has been done over the decades to quell their use, and the situation continues to grow dire. (It is also worsening in many other heavily farmed regions of the world.)

A 2011 report released by the USDA found that, over a period of 20 years, cropland lost 27 percent of soil organic matter. This means that even after over four decades the same pattern of decline is prevalent—virtually *nothing* has changed!

In nature, plants and animals live together, and their litter—such as fallen leaves, shed fur, manures, etc.—accumulates on the surface along with plant residues. This then decays and is broken down by microorganisms to become incorporated into the layers underneath, thus making a life-sustaining, humus-rich soil. This repeats, creating a “whole life cycle in the soil [that] becomes a self-regulating system—an organized community, adjusting its numbers to the food supply so long as it is undisturbed by [humanly designed] outside forces,” Mr. Storer wrote in his book *The Web of Life*.

History proves that when man enters the picture, these soil systems are changed. In ignorance or in greed, he plows up virgin land to grow cash crops. Increased aeration caused by plowing stimulates the microorganisms into breaking down the organic matter more rapidly. Then man removes his crops from the soil, thus taking further nutrients from its reserves. When he has mined the soil until it can no longer produce profitably, he moves on—or at least he did. Now there are no new lands to exploit. But man must till and use the soil to survive, and the *way* it is used has a direct relationship to soil, plant, animal and human health.

With a little more effort and a lot less greed, man could return enough organic matter to the soil to build up humus levels. But he seems to be hopelessly greedy from economic pressure and shortsightedness. He would rather borrow from the soil’s capital and ignore repaying this debt until necessity demands it. Well, necessity is now banging on the door!

Average farmers, ranchers, landscapers, horticulturists, lawn keepers, and home flower and vegetable gardeners continue to desperately look to chemical fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides—rather than to good husbandry practices that rebuild, restore and sustain true soil fertility, and crop, animal and human health. The Fertilizer Institute estimates that more than 50 million tons of chemical pesticides are being applied *every year* on food-producing land just in the United States of America, plus over 180 million are used on a combined much greater acreage in the rest of the world. It should be a “no brainer” that 230 million TONS of *poison* (toxic chemicals) are incredibly harmful! (While these figures are lower than in previous years, this is due to a simultaneous rise in the planting of genetically modified crops. More about this later.) This practice truly does support and promote other prac-



tices that kill and destroy. The costs are *much* higher than paying more for health-supporting, mineral-rich *non-toxic* foods.

We would do well to remember the message of the book *Silent Spring* by Rachel Carson, who was one of the first authors to write about the destruction of the environment as a result of pesticides and other chemicals. Unless we as individuals, communities and nations change our ways, are we not headed for the “*Last Silent Spring*”—by choice?

Fertilizer and You

Much research on soil and plant nutrition has been done to the tune of millions of dollars annually, and continues to expand. At the same time, plant disease and insect infestation has increased by leaps and bounds.

More and stronger pesticides are being used to combat old and new “mutant” insects, more chemical fertilizers are being applied per acre in an attempt to produce similar yields as previous years, and new resistant plant strains are being developed to combat “mutant” strains of plant diseases. Yet the problem of disease and insect invasion is escalating.

Why? There *is* a CAUSE!

Research facilities such as the Sanborn Field Agricultural Experiment Station study the results yielded from the various agricultural practices as well as their effects on soil composition. When the results of a 50-year study were published by the University of Missouri in 1942, it showed that large quantities of nitrogen maintained good crop yields. Even after such heavy amounts of fertilizer were applied, however, “it was too small to have an appreciable effect...”—and actually *degraded* the soil.

But the report also showed dramatic changes. “The organic matter content and the physical properties of the soil on the chemically treated plots [had]

declined rapidly. These altered conditions prevented sufficient water from percolating into the soil and being stored for drought periods. Apparently a condition [had] developed in the soil whereby the nutrients applied [were] not delivered to the plant when needed for optimum growth.”

“Evidently most of the nitrogen not used by the immediate crop [was] removed from the soil by leaching or denitrification” (ibid.).

The Sanborn Field study and others elsewhere “were a warning that in humus-depleted soil, nitrate fertilizer tends to break the natural self-containment of the soil system,” Mr. Commoner wrote in an article published by *Scientist and Citizen*. But this warning was ignored. Today, it can be ignored no longer!

Overall nitrogen fertilizer production and use over a 25-year period from 1946 to 1971 showed a 1,050 percent increase (*The Closing Circle*). Roughly half of this fertilizer leaves the soil in some way. Much is leached out and drains into water supplies, as demonstrated today by the dead zone in the Gulf of Mexico.

The United States Geological Survey (USGS) released a study in 2010 illustrating the ineffectiveness of nationwide efforts to prevent fertilizer from running or leaching off the land, with nutrient pollution remaining “one of the top three causes of degradation in U.S. streams and rivers...” The levels of nitrates in drinking water are above U.S. Environmental Protection Agency standards and continue to be a health concern for over 40 million people.

Two other studies by the USGS followed nutrient trends in the Mississippi River and Chesapeake Bay. From the late 1970s to 2008, nitrate concentrations showed dramatic elevations, with a 75 percent increase in two sites along the Mississippi River and a 53 percent increase on the eastern shore of the Chesapeake Bay.

Good fertilization is the addition of materials to the soil that provide minerals (in balance) and increase soil life, organic matter, and humus.

A much-misunderstood aspect of soil fertilization lies in recognizing the detrimental effect that improper fertilization and overfertilization has on the soil, its life, and ours. Just as we humans are different and have different nutritional needs, so does soil.

Soils have been classified into several types. Each of these has a different capacity for holding fertilizer. This is determined by several factors, one of the greatest being the specific composition of the soil’s colloidal particles. Two major classes of colloids are clay and humus. Soluble minerals (fertilizers) attach to these particles until they are needed and used by a plant.

The fertilizer molecules are held there by a type of electronic bond. When fertilizers are applied, they should be applied in proper balance and not exceed the capacity of the soil’s colloidal system. Humus in soil is of vital importance in that it has *10 times* the capacity of an equal amount of clay. Once the colloids are “full,” any excess soluble fertilizer may accumulate in toxic amounts in the soil or may leach downward into the groundwater (especially in sandy soils) or runoff in surface water when it rains or when land is irrigated. In fact, this is the cause of a major portion of agriculture’s contribution to nitrate and phosphate pollution in our streams, rivers and groundwater.

Plants also can be malnourished when soil has been overfed with water-soluble fertilizers. Again, just as humans need nutritionally balanced diets, so do plants, and the only way they can get them is by feeding on nutritionally balanced soil.

Roots of plants take up nutrients by exuding carbon dioxide and hydrogen in exchange for minerals attached to



the soil colloids. They also solubilize mineral particles that are taken up in water solution. When one (or more) water-soluble fertilizers are found in excess in the soil, as the plant takes up water into its circulatory system, it can be choked by an abnormal amount of

duce abundant, healthy crops. Plants need much more than NPK (nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium). They need many other secondary and trace elements—all in proper balance. And they need the teeming microbial life that helps them absorb minerals.

izer companies blend and formulate mixtures to the best of their abilities, but they simply cannot mechanically formulate humus. And plants were not designed to get nutrients by being force-fed.

Decline in Food Value

Crops grown in humus-deprived soil through use of ever-increasing quantities of chemical fertilizers become deficient in proteins, vitamins and minerals. This has been proven repeatedly by comparative analyses of grains, vegetables and other products produced on humus-rich soil and on chemically fertilized soil.

A study by researchers at Washington State University comparing wheat yields from 1842 to 2003 “found declines in mineral concentration for all eight minerals studied, with an 11 percent decline for iron, 16 percent decline for copper, 25 percent decline for zinc, and 50 percent decline for selenium. Put another way, the researchers found that, to get their recommended daily allowance of nutrients, people would have to eat many more slices of bread today than people had to eat in the past” (The Organic Center).

Nutritional content in corn and other feed crops have dropped even more remarkably than in wheat. This is one reason farmers today give larger quantities of feed to livestock than they did in times past to accomplish the same gain.

Plants must depend upon the available supply of minerals in the soil for elements essential to their growth. Man and the animals he eats depend in turn upon the plants for these nutrients.

Remember, we are sustained by the *dust* of the ground. In other words, we are what we eat! Human beings are what they think and eat—what we eat does affect the way we think and the way we think *does* affect what we eat.



■ **HOMEMADE COMPOST:** Two piles of compost made from organic materials—banana peels, coffee grounds, leafy greens, etc.—are used for mulch, fertilizer and humus building. The decomposed organic matter helps provide minerals and nutrients needed for healthy soil.

PHOTO: PAULA C. RONDEAU/THE REAL TRUTH

those minerals. When this happens, the plant is not able to use the excess in its tissue-building process and the normal balance of plant nutrients (minerals) is upset. This extra amount of minerals remains within the plant, sometimes in toxic form. For example, this is how excess applications of water-soluble nitrogenous fertilizers can cause excess nitrate accumulation in crops and in foods.

Manufactured fertilizers alone cannot supply what the soil needs to pro-

The margin between too much and too little is often very slight. Mineral excesses in plants—now common—are often more dangerous than deficiencies. If given too much nitrogen, a plant grows weak and watery. The content and quality of its proteins and minerals suffer, which makes the plant more susceptible to disease.

There is no artificial fertilizer on Earth that can supply a completely balanced diet for plants in the way that humus-rich soil can. Chemical fertil-



If we consume foods that lack nutritional value, our bodies pay the penalty. Plants and animals raised on eroded and depleted soil are inferior producers of foods. And such foods can result in sick, degenerate and disease-prone human beings.

“The most serious loss resulting from...soil exhaustion,” warned *Man and the Soil*, “is not *quantitative*, but *qualitative*. It has to do with the quality of life the soil supports...Soil lacking in calcium and phosphorus lacks the elements of proper bone growth of both animals and humans... Soils lacking in nitrates and other chemicals produce vegetation lacking in the proteins essential to the building and repair of body tissues. It has long been known that animals raised on soils like those around Lexington, Ky., have stronger bones, sounder flesh, greater endurance, and longer lives than animals raised on soils less rich in minerals. That is why breeders of race horses have practically taken over the Kentucky bluegrass region” (emphasis added). This area is also great garden country.

The book continued, “The same thing applies equally to humans... The baby won’t have good bones if its formula is made of milk from a cow whose feed came from a soil deficient in calcium and phosphorus. And the adult won’t build muscle and good red blood [cells] from a steak from a steer fed on grasses and grain from leached and eroded soils devoid of protein-building minerals and iron.

“Much remains to be done in the study of the relationship of the soil to the mineral and vitamin requirements of human diet, but much has been done. And what is known points unequivocally to the fact that deficient soils produce deficient men.”

Can we now better see and understand why the growing problem of soil depletion is so important to you, me and *all* fellow human beings with

whom we share this planet—which had its life systems up and running when we arrived?

What Can Be Done

First of all, we need to acknowledge what actually works *within the laws of nature*. We must stop employing practices that have caused problems and begin replacing them with conscientious methods of cure and prevention. We must have open minds—minds willing to be re-educated, willing to admit error, willing to *change*.

A sad truth I have witnessed in my short 75-year sojourn on this planet, thus far visiting and teaching biblical agriculture in 40 different countries around this “jewel in the sky” we call Earth, is that many—and I mean most—do not yet *do, practice and live* the good practices they already know. *Do you?*

Man needs to change his *attitude* toward the soil. Instead of only taking from it, we need to GIVE BACK to it by replacing and building up the supply of humus.

Basically, this can be done through good management of cropping, tillage, fertilization and resting the land. Growing cover crops and returning other organic material such as crop residues, animal manures, etc., to the soil should be included—and we must STOP *poisoning* it!

We need to put technology to work to help us fertilize soil in a scientific, balanced way. Soil balancing through proper fertilization should be a major goal. Fertilization should not exceed the soil’s capacity to hold added nutrients on its colloidal system. To fertilize beyond this, remember, causes pollution problems, and wastes one’s hard-earned money.

Based on the most recent estimates, every year, 1.37 billion tons of solid animal waste is produced, which “is 130 times greater than the amount of human waste—a total of

[3.75] tons for every human being in the country” (Pew Commission on Industrial Farm Animal Production). “Waste,” however, is not the right word, for these by-products of the life process should not be wasted but carefully used in maintaining soil fertility. Manure used to be carefully collected, composted and put on land. Today its disposal is one of the livestock industry’s biggest headaches. Instead of being a pollutant, as it has become in many instances, it should be considered an asset and returned to the soil.

We need to make efficient use of all organic refuse. Why pollute our rivers and lakes with organic wastes when such material could be used to enrich the land?

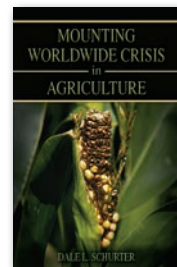
Careful attention also needs to be given to soil ecology.

Tillage practices that invert and totally bury organic residues help destroy soil structure, soil life, and should be ceased. Manures, fertilizers and other organic material should be added to the soil’s surface or mixed into only the top few inches. They should be incorporated into the soil so that mixing, but *not* covering, the material takes place. The depth of mixing will be determined by the amount of residue to be incorporated.

To follow practices that “mine” soil humus decreases soil quality and its productive capacity. On the other hand, following management programs based on revealed understanding and confirmed by scientific knowledge and demonstration *will* maintain and build soil humus and

overall soil fertility to benefit both present and future generations.

Be sure to read the next issue for the continuation of the book. To read it online, visit rcg.org/mwcia. □





STAR-CROSSED!

Astrology's Persistent Influence

Human lives are defined by decisions, large and small.
Are the choices you make guided by the stars?

BY JEFFREY R. AMBROSE

CONSIDER FOR A moment the greatest decisions in life: “What will I do after high school?...Should I go to college?...If so, what should I study?...What approach will I take in maintaining health?... Should I practice a religion?... Should I get married?...Who should I marry?...Should we have children?...Are we ready to buy a house?...Should I change careers?”

Now think of the mundane, routine decisions each day presents: what time to awake—what to eat—

how to spend free time—how to manage the day’s schedule.

Human lives are defined by decisions, large and small. The choices we make have a bearing on our success, happiness, effectiveness, and even our very identity. This is simple common sense.

With this in mind, ask yourself: Would a rational person’s decisions—of any consequence—have anything to do with a ball of gas, or a large chunk of minerals and metals, billions of miles or light years away from Earth? This seems like a silly question with an obvious answer.

Yet millions answer with an enthusiastic “yes”—and sometimes pay for

the services of “professionals” who will help them make decisions on this basis.

A Long History

Astrology is a form of divination—an attempt to foresee the future or discover secrets through omens or contact with the supernatural. Its adherents claim the stars and planets have an influence on earthly events—and that this influence can be understood and then used for one’s advantage.

Astrologers believe the constellations through which the sun’s orbit passes during a solar year, called the zodiac constellations, affect individuals and nations. They attribute particular importance to the alignment of these

heavenly bodies at the time of a person's birth, which they believe determines his or her character traits and destiny. The most well-known form of astrology today is the daily star chart, or horoscope.

Forms of this belief have existed for thousands of years, with its early development largely taking place in the ancient kingdom of Babylon. William Langer's *An Encyclopedia of World History* states: "When Babylon became a great metropolis and the capital of an empire, its god Marduk acquired a new importance and...became the supreme god of the pantheon and was later called Bel [the "Baal" referenced in the Bible]...The most characteristic and influential features of Babylonian religion, aside from its mythology, were the elaborate systems of magical practices (incantations) and the interpretation of omens (divination), particularly the movements and position of the heavenly bodies (astrology), the actions of animals, and the characteristics of the liver of sacrificial victims."

From Babylon, astrology was exported to Egypt, Greece, India, China, Rome and Byzantium, even making inroads for a time in Iran and the Islamic world.

The modern West, which views itself as sophisticated and advanced, scoffs at the idea of finding useful information in a dead animal's liver. But somehow the related practice of astrology lives on—and is thriving!

Popular Throughout Society

Astrology has seen a number of revivals over the centuries. The daily newspaper horoscope became an industry mainstay after London's *Sunday Express* included an astrological profile in a feature on Princess Margaret's birth in 1930. Its popularity surged in the late 1960s, as interest in Eastern mysticism and other forms of spirituality, often accompanied by psychoactive drug use, took hold among the counterculture generation.

The practice appears to be most prevalent among Americans and Britons. A 2009 Pew Research Center survey found that 25 percent of American adults believe in astrology—76 mil-

lion people—with a higher percentage among some segments of the population. A study of female university students conducted in England in 2001 documented "the strong influence of astrology on women's lives," which showed that "72% do not think astrology is just superstition and almost 90% said that they find out the sun signs of people they have relationships with. 78% had read a book concerning their sun sign in love."

Some of the most heavily visited websites dedicated to spirituality are astrology-based. Entire magazines are devoted to astrology, and almost all women's publications such as *Glamour* and *Cosmopolitan* feature an astrology column, with some going so far as to include a horoscope for pets. Most top 20 American newspapers, including the *Los Angeles Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, and *The Washington Post*, feature daily horoscopes. Hundreds of smaller papers run these as well.

Here is a typical horoscope excerpt: "Cancer (June 22-July 22): I must confess to feeling a bit daft suggesting someone born under your sign does what I'm about to suggest. I'm talking about listening to what your gut instinct is telling you. You know how this rarely fails you and when something does and doesn't feel 'right'. You're aware of what doesn't feel 'right' now but are questioning your own judgment. Don't ignore truth you're feeling now" (*Chicago Tribune*). Despite the obvious shallowness of this advice, some will approach their day with these words in mind, leading to real consequences in their personal relationships!

Problems and Contradictions

Astrologers present their practice as a science—yet there is not a shred of scientific evidence that any celestial body affects human beings (apart from well-documented occurrences such as circadian rhythms and sun-related phenomena). Its claim to provide an avenue to improve relationships and foster success is an empty promise. "Though often regarded as a science throughout its history, astrology is widely consid-

ered today to be diametrically opposed to the findings and theories of modern Western science" (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*).

The logical gaps in astrology's theories are large—and many.

Consider the infinitesimal odds that an object light-years away has an influence on an earthbound being. It could be compared to expecting a pebble thrown into the Arctic Ocean to have a noticeable effect on the shore of Antarctica!

Also, according to horoscopes, there are only 12 moods that human beings can experience on a given day: productive, happy, nostalgic, melancholy, romantically charged, etc. So the half a billion-plus people born under the same sign must be having the same kind of day—apparently even if one of them is royalty and another is among the poorest residents of developing nations.

Never mind the fact that charts by various astrologers, supposedly reading the same heavenly signs, contradict one another.

Does any of this make sense?

Additionally, astrologers have misrepresented the path of Earth in relation to the stars for centuries. Over the last two millennia, they have failed to make adjustments based on the precession of our planet (the "wobbling" of its axis, similar to the end of a spinning top as it slows down) that has shifted the position of the stars in relation to Earth. This shift has caused the "zodiac calendar" to be nearly a month out of sync with the stars.

Horoscopes also ignore one constellation classified by astronomy—a legitimate science—as within the zodiac group: Ophiuchus. The Earth now spends more time within the boundaries of this constellation than it does within Scorpio (named Scorpius by astronomers).

Study after study has shown that astrologers' predictions and insights are no more accurate than random guesses. In fact, in some of these studies, a non-astrologer was brought in alongside the "professional" astrologers and asked to do just that—make

guesses regarding a person's life without being given personal information on the subject. The spontaneous assessments from these individuals often had the *same rate of accuracy* as the veteran stargazers who spent hours consulting charts and gathering personal data.

Should a human being base any decision on this pseudoscience?

Harmless Entertainment?

Horoscopes are often presented next to comic strips in newspapers. But is astrology only fun and games—something like the obviously fraudulent tabloids whose headlines scream about Martians and half-man/half-animals roaming the forests?

Astrology ventures into much more dangerous territory. Those who become involved with it are opening their minds to the influence of spiritism. (Read the report “Witches, Wizards and Spirits—Grave and Growing Danger” at rcg.org/trends.) One study, which effectively debunks astrology, states that “some astrologers see the birth chart as a mandala or magical diagram, a means to contact spirit powers that guide and direct a person.” The report noted a correlation with shamanism in which some “practitioners deliberately alter or heighten their conscious awareness to enter the so-called ‘spirit world.’”

“Of nine randomly-selected lecturers at a major American astrology convention in 1988, seven claimed to have spirit guides or were spiritists, and another was involved with spiritistic literature” (*Journal of Consciousness Studies*).

Astrology in the Bible

The countries in which astrology is most popular profess to be Judeo-Christian nations. Is this strange practice mentioned in the Bible?

It is!

God instructed Israel, a nation He intended to be an example for the rest of the world, “Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not *dismayed* at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them” (Jer. 10:2).

Regrettably, millions of human beings are dismayed at the signs of heaven. They routinely consult astrologers and horoscopes—at best a hoax and at worst a gateway to the occult—before making important, life-altering decisions! The potential harm in this is incalculable.

The name of astrology's birthplace, Babylon, means “confusion” in Hebrew, and the city of Babylon is used throughout Scripture as a symbol of a world mired in confusion and separated from the true God. (See Revelation 14:8 and the whole of chapter 18.) Many traditions of the modern world can be traced back to this ancient metropolis.

A story in the book of Daniel reveals a Babylonian king's use of astrology after he witnessed a troubling vision: “The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. And the king spoke, and said to the wise men of Babylon, Whosoever shall read this writing, and show me the interpretation thereof, shall be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom. Then came in all the king's wise men: but they could not read the writing, nor make known to the king the interpretation thereof” (5:7-8).

Then as now, *astrology failed!*

The account goes on to show a dramatic contrast in the ability of Daniel, a true prophet of God, to explain the vision. The queen of Babylon gives her king some advice: “There is a man in your kingdom, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of your father light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him; whom the king Nebuchadnezzar your father, the king, I say, your father, made master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers; forasmuch as an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and understanding, interpreting of dreams, and showing of hard sentences, and dissolving of doubts, were found in the same Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar: now let Daniel be called, and he will show the interpretation” (vs. 11-12).

Daniel repeatedly delivered where astrologers and stargazers could not—however, he did not credit himself, but rather a higher Source of wisdom and power: “There is a God in heaven that reveals secrets...this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living, but for their sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that you might know the thoughts of your heart” (2:28, 30).

Can We Understand the Future?

Everyone would like to know what the future holds for the world at large and for them personally. And the average human being would jump at the chance to have special knowledge that would give him or her an “inside track” to success, achievement and happiness.

But can the future be known? And is there a source of knowledge that reveals the path to success? Is the same wisdom given to Daniel available today?

While we cannot know every detail of events to come, God's Word does reveal the future of the nations and groups of nations that will be dominant players in events ahead. It also reveals a law, and a way of life, that leads to success and strong relationships—for those who are willing to heed.

Predicting the demise of the resurgent false religion to appear at the end of the age, God inspired the prophet Isaiah to write, “You are wearied in the multitude of your counsels. Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up, and save you from these things that shall come upon you. Behold, they shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame...” (47:13-14).

Bible prophecy reveals that, in the years preceding the Second Coming of Christ, most will follow false religion and spirituality on a collision course with disaster. But this need not include you!

Unlike astrology, God's Word does provide valuable insight on life and the future. To learn more, read *Bible Authority...Can It Be Proven?* at rcg.org/bacibp. □



The constant threat of terrorism continues to change lifestyles in the United States.

BY JAMES F. PASTOR, PH.D., J.D., AND SAMUEL C. BAXTER

IMAGINE IF the pair of terrorists that attacked Boston on April 15 stuck to their original plan: July 4, 2013—the city decked in red, white and blue. From an Islamist extremist’s point of view, Independence Day would have been an ideal target for a symbolic strike against American freedoms.

But that is not what happened. The Chechen-born brothers finished their pressure-cooker bombs early and bumped up the date to Patriot’s Day during the city’s famed marathon.

Yet did not the terror attack achieve a similar goal? Will not the tragic scenes of carnage—billowing plumes of smoke, blood-spattered faces, blown-off limbs—haunt Boston’s patriotic celebrations for years to come?

The tragedy also served as an uncomfortable reminder to those across the United States. The first successful home-turf bombing since 2001 made clear that the entire nation still lives under the threat of terrorism.

In this way, the U.S. has a kindred bond with Israel. The Middle Eastern nation has

experienced continuous extremist violence since its inception in the spring of 1948. This fact made an April 17 visit from Israeli Chief Police Commissioner Yochanan Danino all the more significant.

The Wall Street Journal reported that Mr. Danino “arrived in the U.S. two days after the terrorist attack on the Boston Marathon to meet with officials at the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Department of Homeland Security and New York Police Department, where he delivered a sobering message: ‘It’s very hard to deal with this kind of terrorism.’”

The police commissioner was also quoted by *New York Daily News*: “I just hope that what is a reality in Israel won’t be a reality in the U.S.”

Yet America is already heading toward a similar reality. In the decade-plus since 9/11, the U.S. has slowly been relinquishing freedoms to ensure terror attacks do not occur. Air travel will never be the same. Closed-circuit cameras blanket city streets. And police have begun to be armed with military-grade weaponry.

A drastic ramp-up in government infrastructure is another sign of change. Since 2001, domestic security has cost the nation approximately \$1 trillion. This spending has been proposed and authorized by both

■ **NEVER THE SAME:** Top, a man visits a makeshift memorial on Boylston Street near the scene of the Boston Marathon explosions in Boston, Massachusetts (April 20, 2013). Bottom left, emergency personnel assist victims at the scene of the bomb blasts (April 15, 2013). Bottom right, members of a SWAT team search for a bombing suspect in Watertown, Massachusetts (April 19, 2013).

PHOTOS: TIMOTHY A. CLARY/AFP/GETTY IMAGES (TOP); STUART CAHILL/BOSTON HERALD/MCT (BOTTOM LEFT); MARIO TAMA/GETTY IMAGES (BOTTOM RIGHT)

ONE NATION UNDER TERROR

Three Realities America Can Learn from Life in Israel

Republicans *and* Democrats. President George W. Bush and Congress signed a veritable blank check for the CIA, military and Department of Homeland Security to ensure a 9/11-type event would “never happen again.” President Barack Obama has followed a similar path, barring a few differences. He has banned waterboarding and closed secret CIA prisons around the globe—yet the Patriot Act is still in full force, Guantanamo Bay remains open, and drone programs have undergone massive expansion.

Watching planes crash into skyscrapers and the Pentagon immediately changed America forever. But changes to its society have continued throughout the years since. With each subsequent terror plot—whether executed or foiled—the U.S. inches toward an Israel-style response to homeland security.

Setting aside for the moment the controversy surrounding Palestinian statehood, life in Israel reveals three realities America can learn as a nation living under terror.

Reality One: Terrorists Cannot Be Stopped Every Time

During Mr. Danino’s visit, he stated that the Boston law enforcement officers “probably did what they could have done” (*New York Daily News*).

This statement aptly frames the first reality the U.S. can learn. No matter how hard a nation tries or how much money is pumped into domestic security, terror attacks will still occur.

Israel has systematically separated Palestinian and Jewish communities. It has checkpoints everywhere. It employs demographic profiling. Other measures have included changes in laws, counterterrorism methods, and institutional security. Even highly controversial measures such as the security fence around the West Bank and attempts to isolate the Gaza Strip have been put in place. None of these have completely stopped terrorism. Each may have helped, but none has eliminated the threat.

U.S. security officials also understand that terrorism will persist no matter what. The *PBS* television program *Frontline* interviewed a number of military officers and high-level government employees:



■ **ON PATROL:** Two Israeli guards holding machine guns stand near the Jordanian border (July 25, 2011).
PHOTO: STACEY L. PALM/THE REAL TRUTH

■ “We’re never going to bat a thousand in stopping terrorist attacks. And we’re always going to be that hockey goalie that unfortunately lets one puck go by every once in a while,” former White House terrorism adviser (1998-2001) Richard Clarke stated.

■ “Even if we’re at the top of our game, it does not guarantee that bad things won’t happen to America,” said retired U.S. Air Force General Michael Hayden, who was the National Security Agency director from 1999 to 2005.

■ “Sometimes our expectation of being all-knowing is somewhat unrealistic. At the end of the day, there are people out there who mean harm to us, are thinking about doing harm to us and motivated to do it, and we don’t know what that is. And that’s the real-

ity of it,” retired General Jack Keane and former Army vice chief of staff (1999-2003) commented.

This idea may be common knowledge in Israel and among U.S. officials, but it remains a tough sell for the average American. Most citizens still feel Washington can do better.

Case in point: the intense backlash against the FBI after it was revealed that they had ceased investigating one of the Boston bombers. The agency closed the file when it did not turn up evidence of links to extremist or terrorist groups.

Despite a feeling the government should do more, Reality One has begun to set in. A *CBS News/New York Times* poll conducted after the Boston bombing found that nine out of 10 U.S. citizens agree with this statement: “Americans will always have to live with the risk of terrorism.”

Reality Two: Security Becomes a Way of Life

Spend any time in Israel and it is obvious that security is at the forefront of daily life, 24/7.

Laws enforce it: Building codes dictate that every structure must have a *merkhav mugan* (protected space), which is a security room constructed specifically to withstand rocket attacks and chemical weapons.

Schools teach it: Israeli Defense Force soldiers educate children as early as age 4 about what to do if a weapon of mass destruction explodes nearby. At age 8, children receive gas masks personally fitted for their faces. Infants to 7-year-olds all have protective hoods or coverings.

Citizens live it: The director of the Institute of Israel Studies at the University of Maryland, Yoram Peri, described this culture of security to *USA Today*. He stated, “In Israel, avoiding suspicious packages that could be bombs is taught in grade school, surveillance techniques are aggressive, and watching for the typical profile of a bomber is routine...”

In addition, Dr. Peri told the paper, “You grow up internalizing this thought that there might be terrorists and attacks anywhere and everywhere...You walk differently, you look to the sides, you look for people who might be terrorists, you look for packages. You’re more aware, that’s clear.”

Slowly but surely, Americans are moving toward Reality Two.

Consistently, average citizens are the ones who tip off law enforcement, prodded by the slogan, “If you see something, say something.” This was the case during the manhunt after the Boston attack. In addition, New

Security Administration. The “shoe bomber” incident meant removing footwear for the TSA. An uncovered 2006 plot resulted in limiting the amount of liquid in carry-on luggage. Then the “underwear bomber” led to full-body scanners.

While there is grumbling from time to time, most everyone is now dutifully trained: wear easily removable shoes, one-ounce containers of liquids go in a quart-size Ziploc bag, laptops come out of cases, and so on.

The bottom line for security seems to be that Americans will put up with lesser inconveniences and intrusions

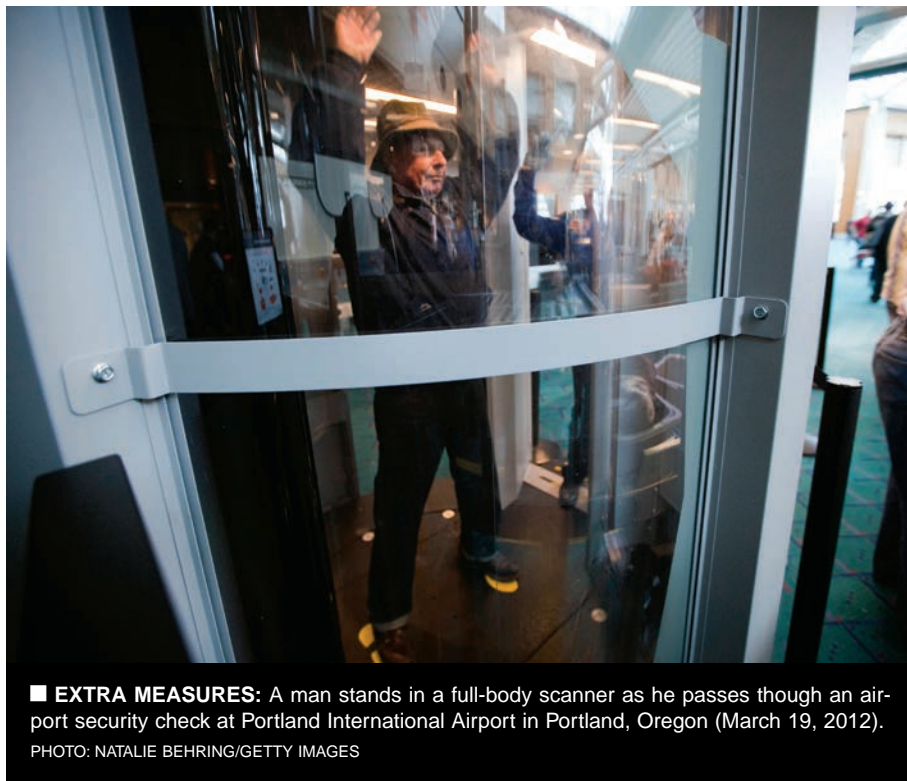
Reality Three: Terrorism Changes the National Psyche

The Israeli government has worked hard to ensure its citizenry feels safe—even with rockets pointed at them from every direction. For example, Dr. Peri told *USA Today*, “Israel developed a protocol that said all bombing locations—even bus bombings with multiple casualties—must be cleared and declared safe within four hours, so ‘life should return to normal in the quickest lapse of time possible.’”

After any terror attack, some things are never the same, especially with the loss of life or limbs. Yet Western civilization always fights hard to ensure the terrorists “do not win.” Their main push-back tactic is to doggedly hold to modern Western standards of living. In America that means ballgames and barbecues, shopping malls and spring break, fast food and freedom—the freedoms to choose, to speak out, and to disagree.

An article in *The Atlantic* titled “The Boston Marathon Bombing: Keep Calm and Carry On” recommended a similar approach: “How well this attack succeeds depends much less on what happened in Boston than by our reactions in the coming weeks and months. Terrorism isn’t primarily a crime against people or property. It’s a crime against our minds, using the deaths of innocents and destruction of property as accomplices. When we react from fear, when we change our laws and policies to make our country less open, the terrorists succeed, even if their attacks fail. But when we refuse to be terrorized, when we’re indomitable in the face of terror, the terrorists fail, even if their attacks succeed.”

Yet something else happens under the constant threat of extremism—especially with each successful attack. Again, Israel demonstrates the end result of over half a century of living on high alert. In Tel Aviv today, many are numb to the constant threat of violence. Citizens are accustomed to seeing military personnel, some in their teens, toting AK-47s while lounging in plazas with their friends



■ **EXTRA MEASURES:** A man stands in a full-body scanner as he passes through an airport security check at Portland International Airport in Portland, Oregon (March 19, 2012). PHOTO: NATALIE BEHRING/GETTY IMAGES

York street vendors in 2010 informed police of a suspicious car parked near Times Square that was “smoking.” Their calls about the vehicle, which was rigged with explosives, helped thwart what could have been a disaster.

Also, Americans seem to be getting used to increased security. This is most evident in airports. September 11 got the ball rolling with new requirements: for starters, arriving two hours early due to heightened security with the newly created Transportation

as long as the measures do not hamper their overall lifestyles.

Even more extreme actions seem to be fine. After the Boston bombings, police SWAT teams and FBI agents went door to door, sometimes forcing people from homes while searching for the suspects.

How many times citizens will allow police to forcibly remove them from their homes remains to be seen, but such drastic measures are being accepted for now as “what needs to be done to protect the public.”

and surrounded by families with young children. Everyone knows it is a rule that both men and women must serve in the Israeli Defense Forces.

This past year, a photo was posted of what was assumed to be a female IDF soldier in a bathing suit at the beach with a gun slung over her shoulder. While the photo generated questions as to why she was not in uniform, Israeli paper *Haaretz* published an editorial that stated that it was not as uncommon a sight as those not used to living under constant threat of attack would believe: “To an Israeli, the photo makes perfectly practical sense,” the paper stated. “When soldiers take their weapon off military premises, they must guard it closely and keep it on their person, at all times. Having one’s weapon stolen is harshly punished with time in military prison a given. I’ve heard male soldiers on leave refer to their gun as their ‘wife,’ so constant is the companionship. We’re used to seeing guns in all kinds of places—propped up next to the guy sitting next to us in a coffeeshop, or in a university classroom, and of course, slung over the shoulders of women soldiers...”

In addition, most in the country refuse to let the situation deter their lifestyles. Ron Huldai, who has been mayor of Tel Aviv for 13 years, told *60 Minutes* that “in life, there are a lot of risks. Always...Iran today, Iraq yesterday. During the first Gulf War, Saddam Hussein rained scuds on the city. Soon after that, the streets of Tel Aviv became killing zones as Palestinian suicide bombers blew up buses and cars and clubs. But the bombings didn’t stop Tel Avivians from going to the beach by day and the bars by night.”

Consciously or not, many Israelis subscribe to the idea of “live it up today, as we may die tomorrow.”

This concept is deeply ingrained in their culture. The origin of the phrase comes from the Jewish Tanakh, which Christians refer to as the Old Testament.

The 22nd chapter of Isaiah describes Jerusalem surrounded by enemies. The

Israelites’ response to these conditions? “Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we shall die” (vs. 13).

A dozen years under terror has begun to change America’s national psyche as well. When you add to this the slew of problems besetting the nation—unemployment, political gridlock, economic woes, a steady stream of weather disasters—understandably many have chosen to ignore such problems and continue living their lives.

Ultimate Desire

While many similarities between the United States and Israel exist, Washington could never fully emulate Jerusalem’s domestic security. For example, America has more than 8,000 miles of border and shoreline—Israel only covers an area about the size of New Jersey. The U.S. has dozens of different cultures, while the Jewish State only has a handful. America has the bureaucratic red tape of federal, state and local governments, while Israel can quickly implement security policies across the entire nation.

Despite these differences, both nations share a stronger bond than at first glance. This is particularly evidenced by the nations’ shared religious heritage. These roots also help demonstrate the ultimate desires for both nations—again found in the Old Testament.

Notice Micah 4: “But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid...” (vs. 4).

Israelis and Americans undoubtedly seek a time when all can freely enjoy a life of peace and safety.

Similarly, Zechariah 2 states, “Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls for the multitude of men and cattle therein” (vs. 4).

This verse speaks of a time when, without fear of attack, Israel can enjoy abundant prosperity.

Think of all the money currently spent on defense and security. What if it was put into farming research, city infrastructure, education, etc.? The results would be immediate and astonishing!

Behind America’s Terror Response

Un-walled cities, however, are not a reality—and most consider them an idealist impossibility. Instead, the U.S. has pumped hundreds of billions into domestic security and \$1.4 trillion for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Yet this ability for Washington to write a blank check to combat terrorism provides great proof of another aspect of the nation.

Take a step back and think. How does America continue to do what it does? How did it support its “War on Terror”—especially when the international community largely did not agree with it? How does the nation pay the defense budget of nearly the entire world? Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia would be drastically different places if Washington did not spend well over \$600 billion per year on defense. How does America continue to shell out cash even with \$16.8 trillion in debt, and during a dour global economic downturn?

While the realities of living under terror become clear when examining *modern* Israel, still deeper realities come from examining *ancient* Israel.

First note that ancient Israel had 12 separate tribes. (The modern-day nation of Israel is mostly comprised of descendants of the tribe of Judah.) In the book of Genesis, a special birthright blessing was put upon the tribe of Joseph, which passed to his sons Ephraim and Manasseh. God promised that both would “grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth” (Gen. 48:16). The older brother, Manasseh, was to “become a people, and he also shall *be great*: but truly his younger brother [Ephraim] shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a *multitude of nations*” (vs. 19).

Only one pair of brother nations has ever become a singular GREAT NATION and a MULTITUDE OF NATIONS—the United States (Manasseh) and Britain with its former colonies (Ephraim). This is just one proof of America’s true

identity. Many more are detailed—with clear historical facts—in David C. Pack's *America and Britain in Prophecy*. (The book, freely available at rcg.org/aabibp, also describes in crystal-clear language what will befall these two nations in coming years.)

Return to the question from before: How does the U.S. do it?

The answer is found earlier in Genesis. The blessings passed to Ephraim and Manasseh were first given to Abraham. God told the patriarch that his descendants would enjoy incredible prosperity “because you have obeyed My voice” (22:18).

Abraham's obedience alone allowed for America's meteoric rise to prominence. Now having fulfilled these promises, however, God's obligations to America and Britain are over.

Realize how truly blessed the United States has been. Even while these birthright blessings are being withdrawn, America still is able to hold its prominence (for a while longer) on the world scene!

National Choice

But Americans are not doomed to suffer the scourge of terrorism forever. God mercifully provides a way of escape. The recipe for prosperity is the same as it was in Abraham's time: obedience.

God gave ancient Israel a choice. The same decision stands before the U.S. today. Leviticus 26 shows the terms of this agreement. The Creator states, “If you walk in My statutes, and keep My commandments, and do them” (vs. 3), then...

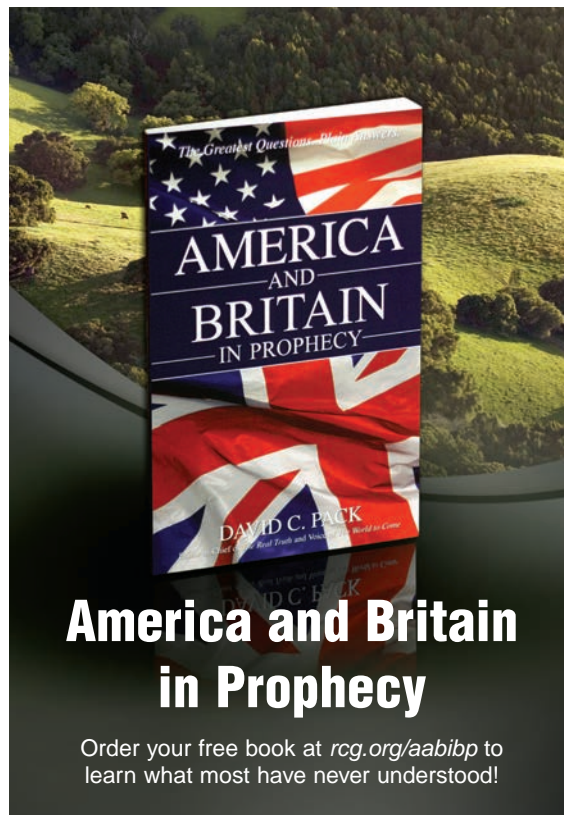
■ “I will give you rain in due season...and you shall eat your bread to the full, and *dwell in your land safely*” (vs. 4-5).

■ “I will give peace in the land... and I will rid evil beasts out of the land, neither shall the sword go through your land” (vs. 6).

■ “I will have respect unto you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you” (vs. 9).

This is a simple formula. *If* the United States lives God's Way, *then* it will dwell safely.

Conversely, if Americans choose to ignore these plain statements, then they *will not* have rain in due season, *will not* dwell safely, and *will not* have peace in the land.



America and Britain in Prophecy

Order your free book at rcg.org/aabibp to learn what most have never understood!

The second half of Leviticus 26 makes this clear. Notice God's blunt language: “But if you will not hearken unto Me, and will not do all these commandments...I will even *appoint over you terror*...and you shall flee when none pursues you” (vs. 14, 16-17).

Realize what this means. Terrorism and the fear of such attacks are APPOINTED OVER the United States. Unless America realizes this, terror attacks *will* continue.

Terror Begets Terror

Think back to Reality Three and the “eat, drink for tomorrow we die” mindset. This thinking naturally produces more terrorism.

Why do Islamic extremists hate America, which they call the “Great Satan”?

Most believe this is due to the freedoms the West enjoys. Yet many Muslims see these freedoms as allowing rampant promiscuity, wanton drunkenness, etc.

Neither side is in the right. Islam goes too far by severely constricting freedoms and using brutal violence to push its agenda. The West goes into the other ditch by fostering an “anything goes” society. In contrast, God's Way is one of moderation and order (Phil. 4:5).

Reality Three means that living under terror will push the West to openly party harder, covet more, and live larger. This will engender more extremism and still further “loose living” for the West—forming a vicious cycle.

Many scoff at this notion and optimistically believe they can minimize the terror problem through increased security. Much of American life still feels normal. Yet conditions such as terrorism are meant to be a screaming warning that something is wrong—and to jolt the U.S. from its slumber. Indeed, threats from extremist groups are only one way of helping America see its true condition. There are many other trends detailed throughout Leviticus 26 and the entire Old

Testament.

For individuals who sense something is terribly wrong, God declares: “Stand you in the ways, and see, and *ask for the old paths*”—detailed throughout the Bible—“where is the good way, and *walk therein*, and you *shall find rest*...” (Jer. 6:16).

God assures those who follow His commands and trust in Him “shall not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flies by day” (Psa. 91:5).

David C. Pack's book *The Ten Commandments – “Nailed to the Cross” or Required for Salvation?* available at rcg.org/syottc details the foundation of God's Way, the only way that leads to happiness and peace. As world conditions—including terrorism—continue to worsen, those trusting in God will be assured *true safety*. □

What's So Wrong with SEX BEFORE MARRIAGE?

Something vital is missing from the prevailing mindset toward sexual relations outside of marriage.

BY NESTOR A. TORO



PHOTO: JUPITERIMAGES

LINING SUPERMARKET check-out lanes, amid candy bars and breath mints, are enticing headlines in bold, eye-catching letters: “101 Sex Secrets,” “43 Ways to Improve Your Love Life,” “15 Ways to Drive Him Wild”...

Sex is everywhere. It permeates television shows, the Internet, and magazines. Even children’s movies often have thinly veiled sexual overtones.

For more than a century, Western nations have shed every hint of

Victorian-era prudery: the “free love” 1960s gave way to the counterculture 70s; standards on sex continued to drop in the 1980s, and even more in the 90s, with a high-profile case involving the President of the United States. In 2012, a similar case involved a top U.S. intelligence leader.

Today, society’s carefree thinking on sex out of wedlock is simply, “Why not?”

Believing that “most are doing it anyway,” school administrators build sexual education programs around this mentality. In fact, the modern adage is true—most *are* doing it. A 2002 study of 40,000 Americans

found that 95 percent had premarital sex. The report by the Guttmacher Institute, a non-profit organization that researches sexual health, stated that 93 percent of them did so before age 30 (*USA Today*). In another study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), almost 50 percent of high-school students in 40 American states were said to be sexually active.

Is this a bad thing? Most say no. To support this position, some cite the well-documented health benefits of being sexually active. According to *WebMD*, sex relieves stress, boosts one’s immune system, burns calories,

improves heart health, and can reduce the risk of certain cancers. It can even improve the quality of sleep.

But does sex belong only inside a marriage relationship? What is wrong with reaping all the physical benefits of sex outside of wedlock so long as one is “smart” about it?

Undoubtedly, there are dangers for the sexually active person: transmission of diseases, unwanted pregnancies, and potential emotional scarring from a promiscuous lifestyle of multiple partners. Nonetheless, supposed experts assert that if you practice “safe sex,” the benefits could outweigh the negatives.

Obviously, people who live with reckless abandon—getting drunk and waking up not knowing what they did with whomever the night before—practice risky sex. But upon superficial examination, it seems that given the health advantages, using contraceptives wisely, and having only one sexual partner at a time means there is little downside to premarital sex.

Yet something vital is missing from this viewpoint—a void in understanding that can lead to wrong conclusions and result in devastating consequences.

Sex for Pleasure

A pamphlet created by the United Kingdom’s National Health Service (NHS) illustrates what Western society generally thinks of sexual activity out of wedlock. The booklet, fittingly titled *Pleasure*, attempts to foster frank discussions between adults and teens about sex, and the enjoyment it can bring.

The publication was an effort in the UK—where teenage pregnancies are rampant—to meet young people “where they are” and talk openly about sex. Educators hope to arm teens with enough information to dispel the mystery of sex so they can “decide when they are ready” to lose their virginity. Accordingly, it glibly espouses the benefits of sex through feel-good slogans.

“One of the things young people say a lot is that the sex education they get is virtually meaningless, it’s too

biological and doesn’t relate to how they are feeling,” said a professor of health psychology in a statement published by the NHS Centre for HIV and Sexual Health in Sheffield, England. He wrote the introduction to *Pleasure* and advised on its content.

Essentially, educators have concluded they are no longer able to stop children from having sex. The best they can hope to do is teach them about it. *We are sexual creatures with an innate sex drive*, the thinking goes. *This is natural, so why not?*

The Downsides

Religious groups have taken offense with what the NHS pamphlet promotes and argue that its approach goes too far.

In general, churches of professing Christianity encourage young people not to be intimate before marriage (in biblical terms, fornication) because it promotes promiscuity, can lead to emotional scarring, may result in unwanted pregnancies—and, most important, tarnishes the sanctity of marriage.

Quoting biblical passages that command to “not commit adultery” (Ex. 20:14) and “flee fornication” (I Cor. 6:18), these groups say “No” to sex before marriage.

Just as with the sex-for-health-and-pleasure crowd, proponents of waiting until you are married can back up their beliefs with scientific evidence. The CDC maintains that the “most reliable ways to avoid transmission of sexually transmitted diseases, including human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), are to abstain from sexual activity or to be in a long-term mutually monogamous relationship with an unaffected partner.”

Indeed, sexually transmitted diseases have reached an unprecedented level. “An antibiotic-resistant strain of gonorrhea—now considered a superbug—has some analysts saying that the bacteria’s effects could match those of AIDS,” *CNBC* reported.

“This might be a lot worse than AIDS in the short run because the bacteria is more aggressive and will

affect more people quickly,” said Alan Christianson, a doctor of naturopathic medicine.”

The negative effects of premarital sex do not stop with couples. Even the “safest” sex can result in unintended pregnancies—birth control works only *most* of the time. This can lead to the tragic decision to end the unborn child’s life through abortion, something a woman will carry for the rest of her life.

If the couple decides to go ahead with the pregnancy, children of unmarried parents are often susceptible to a host of physical and emotional problems. According to research group Child Trends, “...children born to women who did not intend to get pregnant have been found to have lower birthweight, poorer mental and physical health, lower educational attainment, and more behavioral problems than do children whose births were intended.”

Men and women who are products of broken homes often have children out of wedlock as well, which leads to a vicious, multigenerational cycle of unhappiness.

Why Wait?

While there are many documented risks associated with premarital intercourse, research has proven that sex within a marriage has tremendous benefits.

One is a decreased likelihood of divorce. For example, a 2010 study based on 2,035 married individuals by the American Psychological Association’s *Journal of Family Psychology* showed couples who wait experience happier marriages, *The Globe and Mail* reported.

“A statistical analysis of participants showed that couples who wait... enjoy significantly more benefits than those who had sex earlier: relationship stability was rated 22 per cent higher; relationship satisfaction was rated 20 per cent higher; sexual quality of the relationship was rated 15 per cent better and communication was rated 12 per cent better.”

Please see **SEX**, page 29



Can Christians Believe in **EVOLUTION?**

Creation or evolution? Or both?
The Bible clearly shows the truth of mankind's origin.

BY BRADFORD G. SCHLEIFER

MANY CHRISTIANS profess to believe the New Testament was inspired by God. Yet some of these see validity in aspects of the theory of evolution. Are these positions compatible? The *New Testament* actually holds the answer to this question!

When people think of religion, they very seldom link the topic with science. Some even consider these subjects to be polar opposites. Those who profess to be Christian often have no problem believing many of the popular constructs of science. Many theories have been proven—tested—and are considered *laws* of science and physics.

These *proven* disciplines of science have caused many of the world's Christians to assume that evolution is also true. Therefore, many of these same people believe all, or part, of the evolutionary theory. But these concepts are not biblical—nor are they scientific! Seeing this, many are confused.

The result is a wide array of beliefs regarding evolution and religion. Some, unable to integrate the origin of life and the universe into their religious beliefs, accept certain elements of the theory of evolution. Others assume that science and religion can *never* mix. But nearly all are confused or left in error. This does not have to be the case!

Much of the basis of this thinking can be traced to the modern education system. Decades ago, a belief in God was not accompanied by ridicule and scorn. Today, however, even insinuating that a Being had *any* part in designing the universe, and life within it, is met with fiery debate!

People have been indoctrinated with the theory of evolution from a very early age. Notice the official policy of the National Science Teachers Association: “There is no longer a debate among scientists over whether evolution has taken place.” Evolution is assumed to be true and taught as such. (To learn more about the theory of evolution, and the shaky pillars

upon which it stands, read our seven-part article series “Evolution Exposed: Deconstructing False Science” available at realtruth.org. It dismantles this widely believed theory and shows what many disciplines of *science* actually prove! The full topic is too vast for this short article.)

Yet ask: Can one be a Christian and profess to hold to all—or even some—of the theory of evolution? As those who follow Jesus Christ, must Christians believe *all* of His words recorded in the New Testament? And does the New Testament prove the Creation account in the book of Genesis?

It is amazing how much the New Testament—and Christ Himself—records about people and events from the Old Testament. You will never see this subject in the same way again!

Built Upon a Foundation

All buildings have a foundation. This is the base on which the rest of the building stands. Without one, the structure can be easily destroyed. Therefore, the correct foundation ensures stability. Some may be surprised that the New Testament Church is built upon a foundation. The Bible states that the Church is “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone” (Eph. 2:20).

In construction, a cornerstone is the *first* stone laid. This verse indicates that Jesus Christ was established *before* the Old Testament prophets and reflects the many Old Testament prophecies foretelling His First Coming. This verse also has another very interesting aspect to it. The teachings in God's Church come from apostles *and* prophets.

To believe this verse, one must at least believe the teachings and prophecies of the Old Testament. In fact, the New Testament points to the Old Testament much more than most realize. The apostle Paul, in particular, quoted the Old Testament numerous times. In the book of Romans alone, it was quoted 57 times! This is also true of the two epistles to the Corinthians. The first epistle quotes the Old Testament 21

times and the second 10 times. In light of Ephesians 2:20, this should not come as a surprise, since the New Testament is built upon the Old Testament!

But what does this have to do with evolution? How do all the quotes, references and scriptures prove Creation? The link is in *who* the New Testament writers quoted—and the *events* they referenced.

“But Aren't They All Analogies?”

You may have been taught that many of the accounts in the New Testament are simply analogies—stories—upon which to base your conduct. You may have also learned that because Christ spoke in parables, you cannot *ever* know when he was being literal.

But you should have no doubt as to when Christ was speaking literally and when He was using a parable. In nearly every case, something that is meant as a simile, parable or analogy *is stated as such*. This fact is often ignored because a literal interpretation of the New Testament brings many popular “Christian” beliefs—such as the Creation/evolution hybrid—into doubt.

In Matthew 13, Christ spoke a series of parables. Yet, in each instance, they are introduced *as* parables. Jesus Christ was always clear and kept things simple! Notice verse 24: “Another parable put He forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field.” This same pattern is followed in *nearly every* parable in the New Testament.

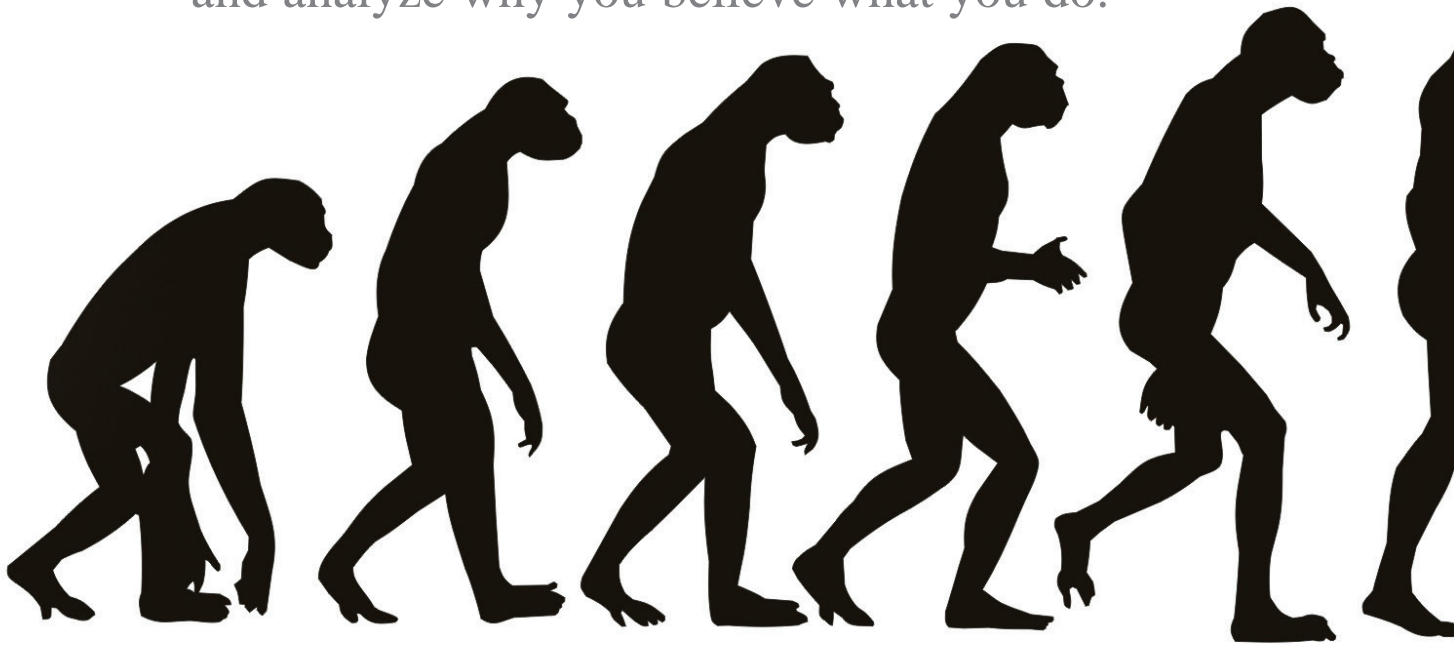
Christ also clearly references analogies and similes. Notice: “...whosoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock” (Matt. 7:24).

You find this pattern repeated over and over in the gospels. Do not let supposed experts confuse a subject that should be very clear.

Parables and analogies *are* used in the New Testament, but for the purpose of making things clear to those whom God has called. They were never meant to be “good prin-

“If you profess to be Christian, examine your beliefs and analyze why you believe what you do.”

PHOTO: THINKSTOCK



ciples” or “nice concepts.” Christ wanted such verses to become “real” by applying them to examples to which the audience could relate. But there was another reason Christ used parables: “The disciples...said unto Him, Why speak You unto them [the masses] in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto *you* to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is *not given*...Because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand” (Matt. 13:10-11, 13). Many blur the literal nature of the Bible because “they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.” Will you believe and understand Christ’s words?

The New Testament—and the entire Bible—was recorded for a purpose. Verse 16 of II Timothy 3 states that *all* Scripture is directly inspired by God. Keep this in mind as we read some verses in the New Testament.

New Testament Record

There are many passages that directly reference Old Testament *people* and *events*—even the Creation event! The scriptures listed below

cover a wide range of topics. Yet they all have one thing in common: each is a statement from Christ or an apostle about events and people of the *Old Testament*.

When you read them, ask yourself if Christ and the apostles were confused—or if they blurred the truth to help make a statement. The only other option is to see these quotes for what they are—the inspired Word of God! These verses will help you understand why it is impossible to espouse evolution while declaring oneself a Christian:

■ “For *Adam* was first formed, then *Eve*” (I Tim. 2:13). This is a direct endorsement of the Creation account!

■ “Nevertheless death reigned from *Adam* to *Moses*...” (Rom. 5:14).

■ “...the *first man Adam* was made a living soul; the *last Adam* [Christ] was made a quickening spirit” (I Cor. 15:45). Christ, as the second Adam, is a type of the first.

■ “For as in *Adam* all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive” (I Cor. 15:22).

■ “And *Enoch* also, the seventh from *Adam*...” (Jude 1:14). Genealogies in the Old Testament

are extensive. When summarized in the New Testament, this validates the detailed renditions in the Old Testament.

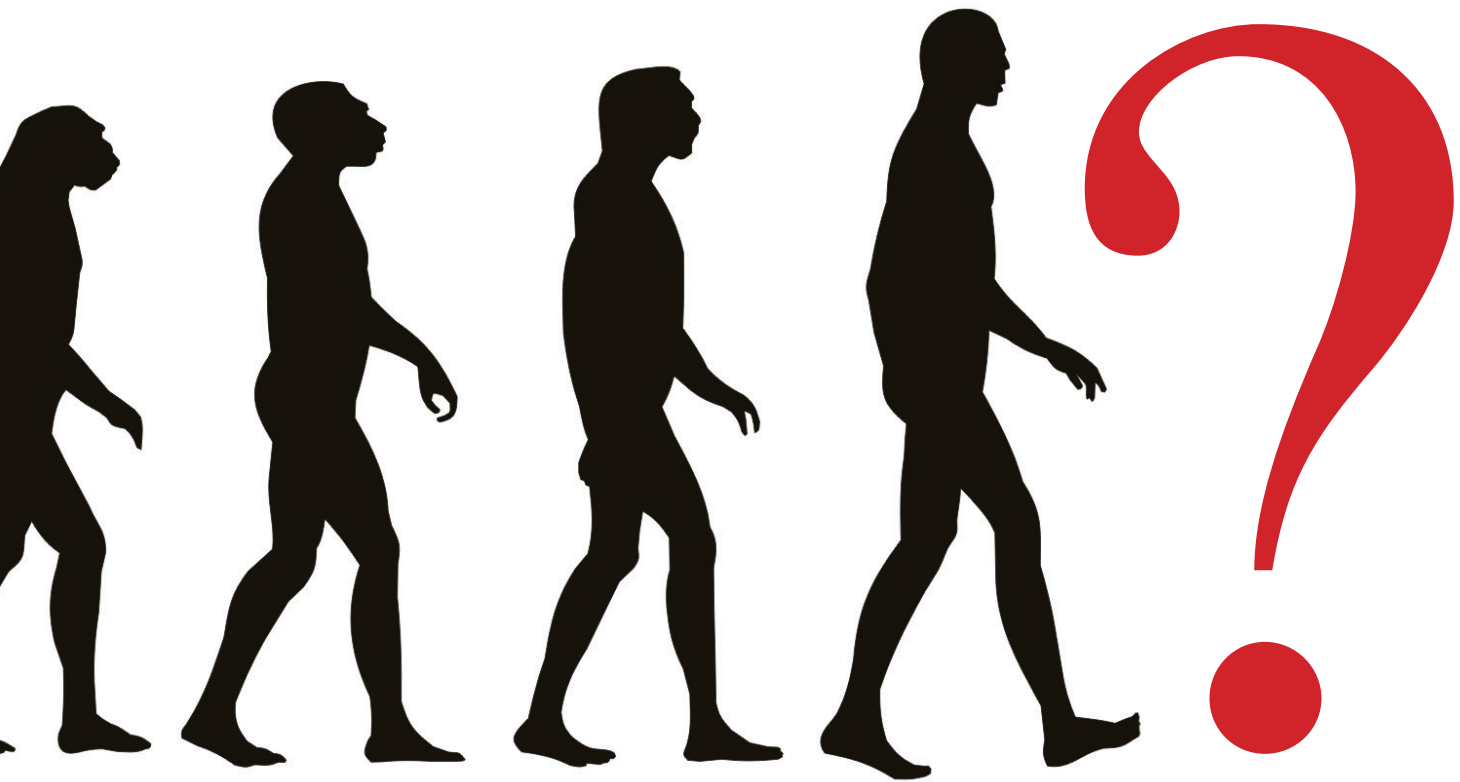
■ “So all the generations from *Abraham* to *David* are fourteen generations; and from *David* until the carrying away into *Babylon* are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into *Babylon* unto Christ are fourteen generations” (Matt. 1:17).

■ “But He [Christ] said unto them, Have you not read what *David* did...” (Matt. 12:3).

■ “Joseph, you *son of David*, fear not to take unto you *Mary* your wife...” (Matt. 1:20).

■ “Take, my brethren, *the prophets*, who have spoken in the name of the Lord...You have heard of the *patience of Job*...” (Jms. 5:10-11).

While the previous list is extensive enough that most would not dismiss it as analogy, metaphor or myth, the most telling account is recorded in the gospels. The Old Testament is clear that Christ would have *direct* lineage from King David. The book of Luke records this in exact detail (3:23-38). In fact, this passage identifies Christ’s lineage all the way back to Adam! While it is



too long to quote here, you may wish to read it. It is ridiculous to believe that Jesus Christ died for our sins and, at the same time, dismiss this passage. Further still, the implications of Christ's lineage to Adam are extremely important. To have been the second Adam and inheritor of David's throne (upon which Christ will sit at His Second Coming), Christ's lineage must be clear! Given the importance of this line, would Luke—inspired by God—make a mistake by incorrectly recording it? Was the Creator of the universe unable to ensure the accuracy of this passage? If so, can we trust *anything* written in the Bible?

While not related to the Creation account, there are many more scriptures pointing to Old Testament figures and events. For instance, Christ compared the end of the modern age to "the days of Noah" (Luke 17:26) and Sodom and Gomorrah (vs. 29). These verses alone prove two often contested Old Testament events. Either these events happened or Jesus Christ is a liar!

The New Testament also refers to the preachers of righteousness. The lives of these men spanned hundreds

of years. Further, Moses is referenced in the New Testament 79 times! Are you beginning to see why the New Testament is built on the prophets—and why evolution is incompatible with true Christianity?

Countless more examples could be given. Each one serves to strengthen the others. However, we have already gone beyond the Creation event. Simply put, the New Testament without the Old Testament would be as useless as a building without a foundation. It would have no support and much of it would simply not make sense!

If you profess to be Christian, examine your beliefs and analyze *why* you believe what you do.

The Second Adam—and You!

Understanding all that has been discussed carries deeper implications beyond whether evolution is true. As we have seen, Christ is referred to as the *second* Adam. In the Garden of Eden, Adam was given a chance to live God's Way. Yet he rejected it.

As a result, man's only hope became Christ's *First Coming*,

an essential part of God's plan of salvation for mankind.

Understand. In order for there to be a *second* Adam, there had to be a *first*!

This is one reason why it is important to understand the events of Creation. It is fundamental to the entire Plan of God! (To learn more about God's ultimate purpose for *you*, read the inspiring book *The Awesome Potential of Man* at rcg.org/tapom.)

The Bible record is clear. Christ and the apostles were not confused! They understood the importance of the Creation event. Christ also understood that it would become blurred today.

But we are left with a record—the Holy Bible. It allows *you* to understand the validity of the Old Testament, the truth of Creation, and the implications that this brings.

You are left with a simple choice. And, as we have seen, neither option is compatible with the other: Will you believe the God, and Creator, of the universe, or will you believe the ideas, theories and opinions of men? □



PERSONAL

Continued from page 4

tempts He any man: but every man is tempted, when he is *drawn away of his own lust*, and enticed. Then when lust has conceived, it brings forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, brings forth death” (Jms. 1:13-15).

Temptation *always* originates from “the tempter” working on the lusts of people. The devil recognizes where people are vulnerable, where they can be “enticed” so that “sin is conceived.”

The Bible warns of the “*wiles of the devil*” (Eph. 6:11), the “*depths of Satan*” (Rev. 2:24), and to not be “ignorant of his *devices*” (II Cor. 2:11). *True* Christians are people on guard for his schemes.

Resisting and overcoming the temptation of the devil was central to Christ’s having overcome sin. Notice: “*Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you*” (Jms. 4:7).

Overcoming Not Easy

Like any muscle of the body, character is built by pushing against resis-

tance. Successfully facing that resistance strengthens the muscle (in this case, the mind). Building character means *choosing* to do what is right instead of *choosing* to do what is wrong. Character does not concern itself with what OTHERS say or do. It only concerns itself with what GOD says to do!

Never forget that the Christian must resist Satan, who is active at every turn. But it is not through human strength or effort alone that this can be achieved. Notice: “...brethren, be strong in the LORD, and in the power of His might. Put on the whole *armor of God*, that you may be able to stand against the *wiles of the devil*. For we *wrestle* not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the *RULERS of the darkness of this world*, against *spiritual wickedness* [Greek translation: wicked spirits] in high places” (Eph. 6:10-12).

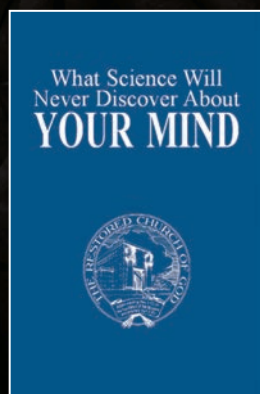
Many scriptures describe how human nature, unchecked by overcoming, has complete dominance over every aspect of people’s lives. Christians must forcefully “wrestle” against the power of the devil and his

demons—“wicked spirits”—on a day-to-day basis. They must constantly struggle against feelings of offense, hostility, envy, anger and many other attitudes.

The fruits of human nature are evident the world over. God states: “Now the works of the flesh are [obvious], which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like...they which do such things shall *not* inherit the kingdom of God” (Gal. 5:19-21).

Overcoming these patterns of conduct and thinking is directly tied to salvation and ruling in the kingdom of God!

Now consider this: “...even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind [void of judgment], to do those things which are not convenient [or right]; being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boast-



Find out what scientists cannot understand about your mind!

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ers, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them” (Rom. 1:28-32).

This powerful list of wrong attitudes and conduct summarizes the condition of all humanity.

Paul wrote of an ENTIRE WORLD under the devil’s influence and sway: “...there is NONE righteous, no, not one: there is NONE that understands, there is NONE that seeks after God. They are ALL gone out of the way, they are *together* become unprofitable; there is NONE that does good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways” (Rom. 3:10-16).

While all who are of this world are primarily devoted to acquiring goods and enjoying pleasures, this is not the goal—and attitude—of the one who seeks God and is a true Christian. He strives to remain in constant harmony with God’s supreme, overarching purpose for his life.

Satan to Be Bound

When Christ returns, Satan, as Earth’s deposed ruler, will be removed. No leader could permit a disqualified leader to *remain* and *co-rule* with him. The old leader would constantly second-guess and undermine the new one. *Human* governments understand this—and so does God. He knows Satan has to be *removed* from his position of influence.

Notice: “And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and *bound him a thousand years*, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and *shut him up*, and set a *seal* upon him, that he *should deceive the nations no more...*” (Rev. 20:1-3).

This verse contains crucial understanding about God’s future plan for all mankind. Soon now, Satan will be bound and rendered unable to deceive Earth’s inhabitants. The temptations of this world and human nature, caused by Satan, will disappear—though there will still be certain pulls of the flesh that all will have to overcome.

When Satan is bound, peace will literally break out all over the world. The saints will be ruling with Jesus

Christ from Jerusalem—having restored the government of God within His kingdom, administered by the Family of God. God’s “perfect spiritual” Law will be enforced among all nations.

Christ Restores God’s Government

Jesus will then open eternal life and salvation to the whole world, now still cut off from God, blinded and led by Satan’s nature.

This world is completely deceived, and drifting along, unaware of God’s purpose to restore His government to Earth. Only the *tiniest few* who have been called by God are to be a part of this restoration.

The GOVERNMENT OF GOD will soon be restored to Earth, and all who have prepared themselves will “inherit the kingdom.” Only the *overcomers*—who submitted to God and successfully resisted Satan throughout their lives—shall take part in this glorious future: “He that OVERCOMES shall *inherit all things*; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son” (Rev. 21:7).

Will you be one who INHERITS ALL THINGS?

To learn more about this subject, read my booklet *Did God Create Human Nature?* available free at rcg.org/books/dgchn. It explains much more than this Personal can cover. □

SEX

Continued from page 23

A healthy, happy marital relationship produces similar relationships in the lives of children that come from them. In short, happy couples produce happy children.

In addition, an attentive parental unit can keep kids from risky sexual behaviors. Reporting on a study of 3,206 teens conducted by Boston College, *MSNBC* said, “The more attentive the dad—and the more he knows about his teenage child’s friends—the bigger the impact on the teen’s sexual behavior, the researchers found. While an involved mother can also help stave

off a teen’s sexual activity, dads have twice the influence.”

This research shows that sex education begins at home. In particular, a loving father’s good example and guidance proves the best way to positively influence a child’s sexual behavior.

It is a parent’s job to proactively teach about sex. Yet parents have to compete with what their children learn from this world’s “sexperts”—the hypersexualized media, permissive sexual education at school, misguided how-to websites—as well as their peers. While these sources may supply *some* correct information about purely physical aspects, the majority of what they teach includes much error. Add to

this the pull on young people to learn by their own experiences, which can be painful.

Because of these factors, many parents, who do not truly understand the purpose of sex, are perfectly happy to outsource the difficult job.

On the other hand, well-meaning parents who seek to discourage premarital sex might simply say: “Because I said so!” or even, “Because God said it’s a sin!” Others, feeling it is inevitable that their child will have sex, may hand their son or daughter a condom and tell them to “be safe.”

In both scenarios, parents merely pass along what they *feel* is right or what others have told them—without

ever proving the truth for themselves. In most cases, this is just easier.

Clearly, what parents themselves are missing is a proven source of sound instruction on sex.

Source of Answers

Despite the many disparate opinions about the Bible, this ultimate Instruction Manual holds the answers

to mankind's greatest questions. This includes questions about sex and marriage. Within its pages are the basic principles that demystify the seemingly complicated subjects of human sexuality and marriage.

The following are a few of many references to both topics:

■ Proverbs 6:32 states, "He who commits adultery [sleeps with another

man's wife] has no sense; he who does it destroys himself" (*Revised Standard Version*).

■ Colossians 3:5 names fornication as part of human nature along with "impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness" (*ibid.*).

■ Proverbs 18:22 says, "Whoso finds a wife finds a good thing..."

In addition to these principles, the Bible reveals the true purpose of sex. The first few chapters of Genesis include a summary of mankind's first sex-education class. After God created human beings—including their ability to engage in sexual activity—He instructed the first couple to "be fruitful, and multiply" (Gen. 1:28). The clear context was *within* marriage: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto HIS WIFE..." (Gen. 2:24).

In effect, God sat down with the first couple and had a thorough "sex talk." He did not say, "Try each other out first." Rather, God's instruction about sex was to a *husband and wife*. He said they would "be *one* flesh" (a reference to sexual union) (vs. 24).

It is worth noting that Adam and Eve were "naked...and were not ashamed" (vs. 25).

The Creation account concludes with, "And Adam *knew* Eve his wife..." (Gen. 4:1). In 1611 King James English, this means they had intercourse.

Even though they had been given this precious knowledge, Adam and Eve soon chose the opposite way. This decision led them to realize their nakedness and become afraid and ashamed.

Yet fear and shame were never part of God's plan for the first couple. Notice in Genesis 3:11, God asked them, "Who told you that you were naked?" This is because God designed for them to feel comfortable being naked around each other!

Romantic?

Many may consider this idea of the Creation account and God "anti-romantic." Yet this could not be further from the truth. Even a cursory look through the biblical book Song of Solomon

SEX'S MISSING DIMENSION

THE world has been ignorant of the TRUE PURPOSES of sex. The result has been untold pain and suffering for the masses. This misery—now epidemic—is measured in disease, new kinds of perversion, unwanted pregnancies yielding abortions, illegitimate children, or unwanted children in marriage, skyrocketing divorce rates, which in turn produce corresponding numbers of jumbled families, bankruptcies, court battles, and even crime.

Sadly, these conditions grow worse and more complicated, with each new generation compounding the problems and evils of the previous one.

Tragedy, unhappiness and confusion about sex and marriage have afflicted every nation of the world for thousands of years, and people have not known where to turn for the ANSWERS—the SOLUTIONS—to so many ill effects, now running rampant.

But there *are* answers—there *are* solutions—and you can know them. What has not been known is that there is a VITAL MISSING DIMENSION to marriage and sex that was not explained until the 20th century.

This book reveals it! Read *Sex – Its Unknown Dimension* at rcg.org/siud.



reveals that the Creator is neither prudish nor anti-sex.

In reality, what *society* generally considers “romantic” deserves closer examination. Consider William Shakespeare’s “Romeo and Juliet.” What is so romantic about two par-amours who kill themselves? They both die miserable, terrible deaths. Regrettably, this is held up as a standard for “true love.”

In stark contrast, God provided mankind with His prescription for healthy, bond-forming sex within a loving marriage relationship. It is an essential way for husbands and wives to express love—outgoing, selfless concern for each other. This intimacy acts as a special bonding agent that holds a marriage together.

Only marriage, if properly founded according to God’s guidelines, provides the grounds for real love to fully flourish. Following His formula of marriage produces a much more romantic experience and is attached to many blessings.

Notice this biblical reference to the benefits of a marriage relationship and starting a family: “Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falls; for he has not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken” (Ecc. 4:9-12).

Yet love—outgoing, selfless concern for others—is not what people naturally have in mind when they think of sex. This is because the key to having such love is only *revealed* through God’s Word.

God, who defines Himself as “love” (I John 4:8, 16), created sex within marriage. Sexual relations *outside* of marriage leave God out of the picture—which breaks the link between sex and true love.

While a majority of unmarried couples may “make love,” as the phrase goes, it does not mean there is any *true* love involved. In reality, outside of marriage, a romantic “I love you”

really means, “I lust after you.” If people called it what it was, though, it would lose its appeal. Can you picture two teenagers whispering to each other, “I *lust* after you so much”? How about a famous musician singing, “When I faaaall in luuuust”? Or friends asking each other, “So, how’s your lust life?”

Lust is nothing but a cheap substitute for true love. Yet for so many today, it is all they know!

Reason for Sex

Sex is a profound and intimate act that holds a place at the pinnacle of the human experience. At the same time, it is widely misunderstood. For its true meaning, one must begin with its Designer—who again defines Himself as “love.”

In the New Testament, the English word love can come from three different Greek words.

One is *eros*. The word “erotic” comes from it. It springs from the biological structure of the human body and it was built in to fuel physical attraction between a man and a woman.

The Greek word *philia* is likewise translated as love in the Bible. *Philia* implies genuine friendship, cooperation and concern. Philadelphia, for example, means the “city of brotherly love.”

A third word translated love in the Bible is *agape*. While *eros* and *philia* are experienced at a physical level, *agape* is a much deeper, *spiritual* love. In the Bible, it is a word used to refer to the love of God. When a man and a woman marry according to God’s guidelines, they can experience all three forms of love: from *eros* to *philia* to *agape*—God’s love.

And how important to God is the subject of sex within marriage? In his book, *Sex – Its Unknown Dimension, Real Truth* Editor-in-Chief David C. Pack explains: “Marriage between a man and woman is also designed to be based on love, as a reflection of Christ’s relationship with His true Church. Let’s read: ‘Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it...So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies...

For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh’ (Eph. 5:25, 28, 31).

“Stated plainly, the ‘cause’ of marriage is love!

“Also, sex itself is set forth as another cause for marriage—directly interconnected with love—in the Genesis account of the creation of Adam and Eve. Christ confirms this in the New Testament: ‘...He which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they two shall be one flesh...’ (Matt. 19:4-5). The phrase ‘one flesh’ is a direct reference to the sex act within marriage.

“These two causes—love and sex—are inseparable within God’s intended design and purpose. Love between spouses is expressed through the means of sex, and God uses marital sex to ingrain the principle of love!”

Premarital sex is not God’s formula for a successful marriage. It affects individuals in that it opens the door to lifelong consequences. It also removes the God-ordained training element of temperance and character building from the early relationship. In a couple who waits, each party has to ask introspectively: “Am I the person God intends for you?” They must be willing to give themselves to each other for life.

In addition, premarital sex does not allow a man to develop the determination to be responsible for his role as head of the household and eventually a father who will responsibly teach his children the proper purpose of sex. It weakens the God-given family unit, which ultimately deteriorates society as a whole.

God’s way of life brings tremendous blessings, yet sex before marriage is not part of this.

Read *Sex – Its Unknown Dimension* at rcg.org/siud for the *complete* biblical picture of what the Creator intends for human sexuality. Those who take God at His word, and wait, can enjoy lasting, happy marriages—and experience sex the way the Creator intended! □

AFRICA

Report: 260,000 Somalians Die During Severe Drought

More than 260,000 Somalians have died—half of them children—during the famine that struck the country between 2010 and 2012, according to a joint study released by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization and the United States-funded Famine Early Warning Systems Network.

“The crisis was caused by a severe drought, worsened by conflict between rival groups fighting for power,” *BBC* reported.

Tens of thousands of Somalians have fled the country to neighboring Kenya and Ethiopia in an effort to find food and water.

“Somalians are walking as far as 50 miles to reach the Dadaab complex in eastern Kenya, the largest refugee camp in the world. The trek can take weeks through punishing terrain, which is desolate except for the carcasses that litter the land,” *ABC News* reported. One mother was forced to leave one of her six children to die on the roadside because the child was too sickly to travel the 30-day journey to Kenya.

Further exacerbating the crisis was the terrorist group al-Shabab, which controls certain central and southern regions of Somalia. The militants blocked much-needed food deliveries and some have argued that if the international community had responded to the crisis sooner, any aid would have been thwarted by the Islamist organization.

Aid or not, “the scale of the disaster is stretching relief workers to their limits,” *news.com.au* reported. Jens Oppermann, the country director of Action Against Hunger, was quoted as saying, “We are no longer talking about a humanitarian crisis or a humanitarian emergency, we are seeing this as a humanitarian catastrophe.” □



■ **OVERCROWDING:** Top, a Somali boy walks in a camp for internally displaced persons in Mogadishu (July 18, 2012). Bottom, Somali refugee families wait for food rations at a feeding center in Mogadishu (Aug. 12, 2012).

PHOTOS: MOHAMED ABDIWAHAB/AFP/ (TOP); ABDURASHID ABIKAR/AFP/ (BOTTOM) GETTY IMAGES



Catholic Church Continues to Advocate Sunday “Sabbath”

Pope Francis has voiced support for the re-emergence of Sunday as an official day of rest. In the book *Pope Francis: His Life in His Own Words*, he advocated the need for working people to “take the time to relax.”

The New York Times quoted Pope Francis: “‘Together with a culture of work, there must be a culture of leisure as gratification. To put it another way: people who work must take the time to relax, to be with their families, to enjoy themselves, read, listen to music, play a sport. But this is being destroyed, in large part, by the elimination of the Sabbath rest day. More and more people work on Sundays as a consequence of the competitiveness imposed by a consumer society.’ In such cases, he concludes, ‘work ends up dehumanizing people.’”

This comment continues a precedent set by Francis’ predecessors.

Pope Benedict XVI often spoke of the importance of resting on Sunday, such as during his 2012 visit to the archdiocese of Milan, Italy. A transcript of the event posted on the Vatican’s website states: “...despite the relentless rhythms of the modern world, do

not lose a sense of the Lord’s Day! It is like an oasis in which to pause, so as to taste the joy of encounter and to quench our thirst for God.”

Pope John Paul II also focused on Sunday worship by issuing an Apostolic Letter in 1998, which stated, “I would strongly urge everyone to rediscover Sunday.”

Secular sources have also recognized the need for a day of rest during the week, a point with which top Vatican officials appear to agree.

Archbishop of Panama City Ulloa Mendieta was quoted by *Catholic News Agency* in 2010: “Not just for Christians, but for all men and women (this day) has great importance and significance, and this recognition should not only be formal but also real, allowing the Sunday rest for all workers.” □



SOCIETY & LIFESTYLES

Deadly Games Becoming More Prevalent Among Teens

Children and teenagers are increasingly becoming involved in harmful—and even deadly—games. Some of these include drinking hand sanitizer, “smoking” crushed Smarties candies, and using body spray as a flamethrower.

One trend that is gaining popularity is “vodka eyeballing.” An article produced by *GreatSchools* reported, “Afraid to be caught with the smell of alcohol on their breath, many kids have taken up the vodka eyeballing trend. Instead of throwing back a shot, teens hold the bottle to their eye and pour the liquid directly into the eye, which is laden with blood vessels.”

The educational organization described how “the alcohol is quickly absorbed through the mucous membrane and enters the bloodstream immediately through the veins at the back of the eye. Eyeballing may yield a quick buzz without the bad breath but there can be extreme consequences: Because most vodkas are between 40 and 50 percent alcohol, it can scar and burn the cornea, and even cause blindness.”

Other popular forms of entertainment such as “the choking game” have grave repercussions.

“This deadly ‘game’ involves cutting off the oxygen supply to the brain through strangulation for a brief

high,” *WebMD* stated. “Some teens have done this using their hands or a noose either alone or in groups.

“‘There’s no room for a learning curve,’ Alfred Sacchetti, chief of emergency medicine at Our Lady of Lourdes Medical Center in Camden, N.J., says, ‘because the very first time, you can die.’”

“Flash mobs” are another dangerous trend.

CBS New York reported: “In New York and across the country, the mobs of kids—20, 30, 40 or more—appear out of nowhere and suddenly charge a newsstand or convenience store...they ransack, steal and wreak havoc with no consideration for customers...who get in their way.”

In Philadelphia, “...these so-called flash mobs have taken a more aggressive and raucous turn...as hundreds of teenagers have been converging downtown for a ritual that is part bullying, part running of the bulls: sprinting down the block, the teenagers sometimes pause to brawl with one another, assault pedestrians or vandalize property,” *The New York Times* stated.

“In the past year, at least four of the flash mobs have broken out in the city, including one...in which roving teenagers broke into fights, several onlookers were injured and at least three people were arrested.” □

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AFRICA

Thaicom 5: The Word Network
– Satellite Free-to-Air
Thursday, 11:30 EAT, 10:30 CAT,
09:30 WAT, 08:30 GMT

ASIA/OCEANIA

Thaicom 5: The Word Network
– Satellite Free-to-Air
Thursday, 08:30 GMT

AUSTRALIA

Optus D2: The Word Network
– Satellite Free-to-Air
Thursday, 6:30 p.m. EST, 6:00 p.m.
CST, 4:30 p.m. WST

Thaicom 5, The Word Network
– Satellite Free-to-Air
Thursday, 6:30 p.m. EST, 6:00 p.m.
CST, 4:30 p.m. WST

CANADA

Bell Satellite TV: Joytv11
Sunday, 12:00 p.m. NT, 11:30 p.m.
AT, 10:30 a.m. ET, 9:30 a.m. CT,
8:30 a.m. MT, 7:30 a.m. PT

CARIBBEAN

Galaxy 25: The Word Network
– Satellite Free-to-Air
Thursday, 4:30 a.m. AT, 3:30 a.m. ET

CENTRAL AMERICA

Galaxy 25: The Word Network
– Satellite Free-to-Air
Thursday, 3:30 a.m. ET, 2:30
a.m. CT

EUROPE

Eutelsat 28A:
Gospel Channel – Satellite
Free-to-Air
Monday, 12:30 EET, 11:30 CET,
10:30 WET

Hot Bird 6: The Word Network
– Satellite Free-to-Air
Thursday, 09:30 CET

ICELAND

Eutelsat 28A:
Gospel Channel – Satellite
Free-to-Air
Monday, 10:30 a.m. WET
Antenna & Cable:
Gospel Channel
Monday, 10:30 a.m. WET

INDIA

Tata Sky: The Word Network
Thursday, 2:00 p.m. IST
Thaicom 5: The Word Network
– Satellite Free-to-Air
Thursday, 2:00 p.m. IST

ITALY

Sky Italia: The Word Network
– Channel 823
Thursday, 09:30 CET

JAMAICA

Flow TV: The Word Network
– Channel 668
Thursday, 3:30 a.m. ET

MIDDLE EAST

Arabsat (Eurobird 2):
The Word Network
– Satellite Free-to-Air
Thursday, 11:30 EAT, 10:30 CAT,
09:30 WAT, 08:30 GMT

NEW ZEALAND

Optus D2: The Word Network
– Satellite Free-to-Air
Thursday, 8:30 p.m. NZT
Sky: Prime
Sunday, 7:00 a.m. NZT

NORTH AFRICA

Arabsat (Eurobird 2):
The Word Network
– Satellite Free-to-Air
Thursday, 11:30 EAT, 10:30 CAT,
09:30 WAT, 08:30 GMT

NORTH AMERICA

Galaxy 25:
Satellite Free-to-Air
Thursday, 5:00 a.m. NT, 4:30 a.m.
AT, 3:30 a.m. ET, 2:30 a.m. CT,
1:30 a.m. MT, 12:30 a.m. PT

NORWAY

Thor 5 – Canal Digital:
Gospel Channel
– Channel 325
Monday, 11:30 a.m. CET

PHILIPPINES

Thaicom 5: The Word Network
– Satellite Free-to-Air
Thursday, 4:30 p.m. PHT

SOUTH AFRICA

M-Net Decoder: CNW Media
– Channel 6 & 8
Sunday, 13:00 SAT
Thaicom 5: The Word Network
– Satellite Free-to-Air
Thursday, 10:30 SAT

UNITED KINGDOM

Sky UK: The Word Network
– Channel 590
Thursday, 8:30 a.m. GMT
Sky UK: Gospel Channel –
Channel 588
Monday, 10:30 a.m. GMT

UNITED STATES

BROADBAND: Sky Angel Faith
& Family TV – Channel 537
Thursday, 3:30 a.m. ET, 2:30 a.m.
CT, 1:30 a.m. MT, 12:30 a.m. PT
DIRECTV: ION Television
– Channel 305
Sunday, 6:30 a.m. ET, 5:30 a.m.
CT, 4:30 a.m. MT, 3:30 a.m. PT
DIRECTV: The Word Network
– Channel 373
Thursday, 3:30 a.m. ET, 2:30 a.m.
CT, 1:30 a.m. MT, 12:30 a.m. PT
DISH Network: ION Television
– Channel 216
Sunday, 6:30 a.m. ET, 5:30 a.m.
CT, 4:30 a.m. MT, 3:30 a.m. PT
SELECT CITIES: The CW Plus
– Antenna & Cable
Sunday 6:30 a.m. ET/PT,
5:30 a.m. CT/MT