

SEPTEMBER 2016

THE

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A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING



WHY BRITAIN NEVER FIT IN THE EU

**Shake-up: Will World Order
Soon Collapse?**

*Fifteen Years After 9/11
What Should We Remember?*

**How to Spot a
False Prophet**

*Who's Right About
Stem Cell Research?*

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VOL. XIV | NO. 6 | SEPTEMBER 2016

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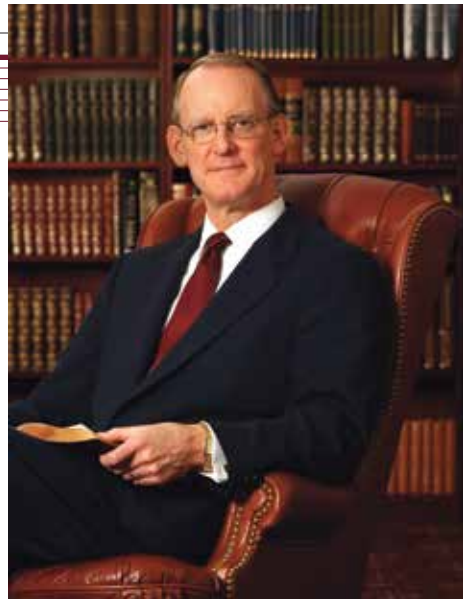
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David C. Fack



Has Your Life Been Predetermined?

I GREW UP in a well-known, mainstream Protestant church. The main difference between this church and other Protestant denominations was its belief in the “predestination” of all human beings. I learned of this central teaching at an early age.

We were generally taught to believe that our entire lives had been laid out in advance by God. Supposedly, this all happened before we were born. But I was later forced to question whether the Bible says this.

This was the church of my mother’s youth. My father grew up in a different denomination. Though my parents required me, my brother, and my sister to attend, neither parent accompanied us very often. When I was about 13 or 14, I decided to ask my mother why. Her answer was direct and revealing.

She explained that she could not accept the doctrine of predestination as taught by her church. She went on to tell me, through an analogy of a man with a heart condition, why she was troubled by this doctrine. She depicted the man as being aware of his

condition and yet choosing to ignore it, as he rushed up and down the stairs of his house carrying boxes of books.

My mother refused to believe that such a man could suffer a heart attack without being responsible for having made the decision to ignore good judgment, thereby *putting himself* at risk. I will never forget this conversation because we were standing at the bottom of our staircase as she described her belief.

She went on to tell me that she believed that everything she decided in her life was, in fact, something that *she decided*. She felt that one who would *deliberately jeopardize* his health, while well aware of his condition, was mocking God with his action. This was a *choice* the person made. On the other hand, if such a man really did not have control over his actions, in the case she described, then God was mocking this man—and all men—because He has left people powerless to take action in the face of apparent danger.

My mother made a point, and I have never forgotten it. However, it was not until four or five years later that I came to understand the Bible truth about the matter of predestination.

Just the “Lost” and the “Saved”?

Think of it. If my mother was *incorrect*, it means that human beings do not really possess free moral agency. They cannot truly make their own choices or decide their own fates. It means that all people are simply playing a *predetermined role* in every matter that they face—even when they think that they are making their own decisions. In effect, the entire world is God’s stage and all human beings are nothing more than actors playing a scripted part!

Is this true? Is this what the Bible actually teaches when it makes reference to predestination? Did God actually pre-plan every sin, every act of immorality, and every crime that has ever been committed? Is God the author of every war—every act of civil disobedience—every divorce—every suicide—every murder? Did God pre-plan every rape—every act of child abuse—every lie ever told—every time one chooses to cheat on his income taxes? Understand. If God has already charted the course, in advance of everything that will ever happen, all acts of sin and unrighteousness cannot be excluded.

Now turn the coin over. Has God predetermined which people *will* obey Him? Has He decided in advance who will be *righteous*—and thus who will become Christians and ultimately be *saved*? If this is true, we must at the same time consider whether He has also decided who will be lost. And can the “lost” not choose to repent and be saved? Can the saved not fall back into, by *choice*, the way of life that will cause them to be lost? These are important questions.

Is anything missing? Yes, a great deal has been completely overlooked from the pages of the Bible. The doctrine of predestination has been shrouded in ignorance, confusion and misunderstanding for far too long.

We must ask some basic questions. What *is* the plan of God? What exactly *is* God doing with mankind? Is He trying to save all men *now*? Are all men in the category of either “lost” or

“saved”? Are there any *other* categories that must be understood to properly grasp God’s Plan? Where, then, does the truth of predestination fit?

These are enormous questions. Not understanding their correct answers has caused millions to grieve needlessly about relatives who may have died in a supposed “lost” state because they never accepted Christ as their Savior.

Do not ever *assume* the accuracy of any purported understanding about a biblical matter unless you can *prove* it from Scripture. On the matter of predestination, people have made two common assumptions—neither of which is correct. They have *assumed* that every human being who has ever lived is predetermined to be either “lost” or “saved”—*or* they have correctly recognized that people have the power to choose their own fate but have *assumed* that all people fall into one of only these two possible categories.

These positions are both wrong. They are based on false assumptions. Most have assumed that God is trying to save the world *now*. Most have assumed that the role—the mission—of the Church is to “get the world saved.” Most have also been led to believe that God and the devil are in a great wrestling match over the fate of the world. It is as though God is desperately trying to save people from the clutches of the devil, and the devil is, just as desperately, striving to thwart God’s plan of salvation at every turn.

Of course, the devil certainly *is* striving to deceive the whole world (Rev. 12:9). He is now the god of this world, seeking to blind people to the wonderful truth of the plan of God and the true gospel (II Cor. 4:4). However, this does not mean that God’s Plan is, on the one hand, out of His control—being lost to the devil—or, on the other hand, that His control means predetermining the fate of every human being.

Is Today the Only Day of Salvation?

Is today the *only* opportunity for all to choose or reject Christianity? Must

all people “decide now” to accept Jesus as Lord and Savior? Is this what the Bible teaches? The answer is an emphatic NO! If it were yes, then God is failing miserably in His struggle with the devil for control over the fate of humanity.

Consider. In 1920, when my father was born, there were about two billion people on Earth. There are now well over seven billion—and more every day. Approximately two billion, or one-third, believe in the name of Jesus Christ. This represents a total that includes every conceivable *brand* of the over 2,000 *different forms* of professing Christianity. Approximately another one-third of mankind has *heard* of Christ but has not accepted Him and does not even claim to follow Him. Finally, the last one-third of all people on Earth know nothing about Christ. Many in India, Africa, Japan, China and parts of South America and Southeast Asia have never even heard of Christ, let alone know who He was, what He did, what He taught, etc. Are they condemned to be lost, having never had an opportunity to understand what they missed or why?

When speaking of Christ’s name, the Bible clearly says, “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). Further, Romans 10:13 states that men must call on *this name* to be saved. Understand! All those who have not yielded to the God of the Bible and accepted Jesus as their Savior are certainly not saved! Countless billions have died in this condition. Most have assumed that the only other option for them is that they were lost to salvation and that God long ago predestined this for the vast majority who have ever lived.

On the other hand, if the war to win souls is as most professing Christian ministers depict it, then the devil is far stronger—and far more effective—in his effort than God. Be honest and admit that this is the only other possibility,

Please see **PERSONAL**, page 30

What Will You Be Doing in the AFTERLIFE?

- Rolling around the clouds of heaven?
- Walking streets of gold?
- Basking in divine light?
- Or something much, much greater?

Salvation and the afterlife are two of the most misconstrued Bible concepts. While the idea of eternity in either heaven or hell permeates professing Christianity, there is a problem: it is NOT what God's Word teaches. In fact, the Bible description of salvation is *much more* exciting than what is usually preached.

Also widely maligned and misunderstood is the idea that a follower of God can gain rewards for the next life. Yet Jesus Christ declared: "Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Rev. 22:12).

To fully understand these topics, read *What Is Your Reward in the Next Life?* at rcg.org/wiyrnl. This booklet by David C. Pack presents verses from God's Word that reveal how to receive salvation—and what is promised for those who qualify.

What Is Your
Reward in the
NEXT LIFE?





Fifteen Years After 9/11

*What Should We
Remember?*

While memories of September 11 elicit a flood of emotions, the lessons of that historic day should never be forgotten.

BY SAMUEL C. BAXTER

WE ALL WATCHED. First, the north tower of the World Trade Center, just after the initial jet ripped into it—a gash spewing black smoke and sending flaming debris spiraling to the street below.

When another plane struck the south tower, the horror deepened. We knew we were under attack.

On that day, a group crowding under the Jumbotron in Times Square exhibited a wide range of emotional responses: New Yorkers trading every bit of news, trying to allay confusion. A woman with her hand to her face in disbelief, tears streaming down her cheeks. A man with his arms folded trying to process what he had just learned. A woman making the sign of the cross and crying out to God. Many just watched in stunned silence.

Then, another plane crashed into the Pentagon, and the hijacked United Airlines Flight 93 went down near Shanksville, Pennsylvania.

Across the nation, we watched, crowding radios and television sets. Confusion turned to panic: *How could this happen?* Then to anger: *Who would dare do this to America?*

As the buildings crumbled into a heap in lower Manhattan and sent a towering plume of ash and pulverized concrete over the island, all most of us could do was keep watching.

What we witnessed that day was immediately seared into our collective consciousness: office workers tumbling hundreds of feet after jumping from a jet-fuel inferno. An endless whirlwind of papers streaming across a cloudless blue sky. Three firemen

somberly raising a flag at Ground Zero with ghostly rubble piled in the background. All air traffic grounded in a matter of hours.

We watched helplessly as symbols of economic and military power burned. Even the United States president, the most powerful man in the world, later stated he felt “powerless” as he watched men and women leaping from burning buildings.

Video footage soon after the towers fell revealed what seemed an alien world. The sun blotted out. Everything covered in dust. An eerie desolate silence.

Indeed, we had entered a strange new world, ushered in by 19 men who hijacked four planes. The event changed everything: how we travel, how wars are fought—how we live.

Though many years have passed, images of September 11, 2001, still stop us cold. No matter the number of times we watch appalling footage of one of the airplanes striking the World Trade Center, our stomachs still churn.

The events of 9/11 caused America to promise, “We will never forget.” This meant to never forget the 3,000 victims of mass murder. To never forget the heroic actions of emergency personnel and average citizens. To never forget how that day felt, to ensure a similar event would never happen again.

President George W. Bush set the tone for “remembering” on the evening of September 11 in a speech from the Oval Office: “This is a day when all Americans from every walk of life unite in our resolve for justice and peace. America has stood down

enemies before, and we will do so this time.

“None of us will ever forget this day, yet we go forward to defend freedom and all that is good and just in our world.”

And in the wake of a collective tragedy, Americans did unite.

One Nation

As workers and inhabitants made their way back to Manhattan after September 11, the smell of rubble and melted plastic mingled with the stench of decaying bodies. The horror of that day lingered, but something else did as well. New Yorkers felt increased camaraderie after surviving the disaster, often asking each other, “Where were you on 9/11?” Strangers would recount their stories to one another.

Hints of a feeling of togetherness began on September 11 itself. In Washington Square Park, a few began holding hands, with passersby quietly joining. People from varied backgrounds soon added to the number, and the circle quickly grew. It was consoling to know they were not alone.

A similar feeling of solidarity swept the country, starting with candlelight vigils and memorial services in states across the union. It was seen in a sea of waving American flags, then in pins, T-shirts and bumper stickers.

The entire nation shared a unified sense of purpose. They backed the president almost unanimously. A Gallup poll showed 90 percent approved of his performance on September 21-22, including 89 percent of Democrats.

In the face of losing the freedoms and prosperity they had long enjoyed, Americans better appreciated them, and were prepared to work hard to ensure their continued existence. Those in New York City volunteered for clean up at Ground Zero.

■ **IN THE RUBBLE:** A New York City firefighter looks up at the structural remains of the World Trade Center's south tower two days after it collapsed (Sept. 13, 2001).

PHOTO: JIM WATSON/U.S. NAVY/GETTY IMAGES

Elsewhere, individuals began volunteering, both for 9/11-related charities and local causes. Thousands returned to the churches of their childhood, trying to make sense of what happened. By some estimates, nearly half of adults attended a religious service the Sunday following 9/11. Charitable donations went up as well, with Americans giving about \$2.8 billion to help those affected by the terror attacks.

Fading Memory

Historically, tragedy and hardship have a great effect on Americans. It is then that they come together as one, ready to tackle any challenge that comes their way. In the wake of September 11, this seemed the greatest lesson. People felt, “We are strong,” and, “We will make it through.”

Without concerted effort, however, as a horrific event fades in the rearview mirror, so can any lessons learned from it.

Some of the changes after September 11 lasted only a few months. By November, church attendance went back to normal. Other changes lasted a few years. Volunteer numbers continued to increase until 2006, and have been waning since.

Patriotism reached its high point in 2003, when a Gallup poll revealed that 70 percent of those polled were “extremely proud to be an American.” Since then, the number has declined. A similar 2015 Gallup poll found that 54 percent are “extremely proud” to be Americans, which is just under pre-9/11 levels when 55 percent answered “extremely” in a January 2001 Gallup poll.

While some scars of that day remain, the lives of most have largely returned to where they were before September 11.

Yet look at problems besetting the nation today: over \$19 trillion in federal debt, more than \$17 trillion in personal debts, rampant unemployment, bickering politicians, bloated government budgets, widespread felonies. The list could go on.

Taken together, these problems cry out for America to again unite, to look back on 9/11 and the country’s history, then seek out and truly apply lessons gleaned.

Most would say that it is this same resilience that has greatly contributed to America’s historical success—that for two centuries *it* has caused the U.S. to hold the greatest army, be the world leader in agriculture, manufacturing, production, technology and trade, and hold crucial strategic sea gates and defensive strongholds around the world. Throughout that time, the nation repeatedly overcame challenges—the Civil War, World War I and World War II, the Great Depression—and almost always emerged even stronger.

Yet America’s patriotism is a double-edged sword. While it contributes to showings of national kindness and heroism, it blinds the nation from what it should truly *remember* from 9/11.

Deeper Meaning

After the terror attacks, people turned to each other for comfort. They turned to the president to make sweeping changes to the nation’s foreign policy. They turned to religion to make sense of it all.

Church attendance surged as people mourned a national loss. Many Americans sought momentary comfort in inspirational Bible passages they were taught from their youth, but such verses failed to provide real meaning and understanding of the tragedy.

In such instances, most simply turn to the Bible because that was how they were raised, or because the nation was founded on certain Judeo-Christian principles. Yet the United States and its people have a deeper connection to the Bible than most realize.

Follow carefully. Amos 9:9 states: “For, lo, I [God] will command, and I will *sift* the house of *Israel among all nations*, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall *not the least grain fall upon the earth.*”

Realize that ancient Israel had 12 tribes. The modern-day nation called Israel is mostly comprised of the tribe of Judah. The other Israelite tribes were lost to history. In Amos 9, God promised protection for these tribes as they “sifted,” or moved, through the nations. While that was happening, these peoples forgot their heritage.

A special promise was given to the patriarch Abraham and was later passed on to Joseph’s sons Ephraim and Manasseh as a birthright blessing. God promised 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 and its former colonies (Ephraim).

Centuries of prosperity and decades of being a lone superpower have blinded Americans to the Source of their blessings. They have believed *their* government system, *their* hard work and ingenuity, *their* resilience have led to widespread prosperity. But this belief is mistaken. The reason for America’s astounding blessings are promises made to patriarchs of ancient Israel for their obedience to God.

Forgotten Lessons

Americans still desire to retain the blessings—the high standard of living, the abundance of food, the unmatched economic might—they have so long enjoyed. God’s blessings, however, require the same action today as in the time of biblical patriarchs: obedience.

This has been God’s desire for Israel—and the modern nations that descended from it—since day one. Notice: “For in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, I did not speak to your fathers or command them concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices. But this command

I gave them, ‘Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be My people; and walk in all the way that I command you, that it may be well with you’” (Jer. 7:22-23, *Revised Standard Version*).

Simply put, God states, “Obey, and you will be blessed.”

The next verse continues, “But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward” (vs. 24).

God has been working with the peoples of Israel for thousands of years. He knows their tendency to *forget* that He is the source of their blessings, and to flag in obedience.

Ancient Israel had a short memory span. Over and over, the Bible recounts how they “remembered not” and forgot that blessings came from God. (Read Judges 8:34 and Psalm 78:42.)

Thus, God stated, “From the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt to *this day*, I have *persistently* sent all My servants the prophets to them, day after day” (vs. 25, *Revised Standard Version*).

Despite these constant reminders, “They hearkened not unto Me, nor inclined their ear, but hardened their neck: they did worse than their fathers” (Jer. 7:26).

The example of ancient Israel is a lesson for their modern-day descendants.

Advance Warning

The United States is not doomed to continue to suffer decline and defeat. The path to restore national prominence is outlined in the Bible—yet it will require national unity as never before.

In Leviticus 26, God explains that disobedience has brought the consequences seen today, notably terror-

ism. Notice what He says: “But if you will *not* hearken unto Me, and will *not* do all these commandments; and if you shall *despise* My statutes... I [God] also will do this unto you; I will even appoint over you *terror*...” (vs. 14-16).

Constant lawlessness has God furious. He sees a people awash in covetousness and greed. He sees a self-absorbed society, in which individuals lie, steal and cheat with impunity. He sees a nation steeped in the miserable condition of sin.

And He will soon render swift punishment: “Now will I shortly pour out My fury upon you, and accomplish My anger upon you: and I will judge you according to your ways, and will recompense you for all your abominations” (Ezek. 7:8).

Before God punishes, He always provides a warning about what will come if there is no change. As with



■ **ETCHED IN MEMORY:** People look across the East River from Brooklyn to watch the World Trade Center towers burning (Sept. 11, 2001).

PHOTO: HENNY RAY ABRAMS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

any loving parent who disciplines a child, He leaves no excuse for anyone to continue in ruinous behavior.

In his book, *America and Britain in Prophecy*, David C. Pack explains how the average person will react to this warning: “Most people will not seek God unless forced to—unless severe trials or other circumstances *drive* them to God. During good times, most are happy to trust in their own strength, crediting themselves for their successes and achievements, when they may have had little to do with blessings that came to them. On the other hand, these same people generally *blame* God when things go wrong in their life.

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

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

“So it is with the peoples of America and Britain. God has bestowed to them astonishing, unparalleled blessings beyond what any nation has ever enjoyed. He has kept His promise to Abraham to make many nations from him and to give the sons of Joseph the promised awesome birthright blessings after two and one-half millennia.

“But our peoples have neither been grateful for these birthright blessings, nor sought God, repenting of our national sins!”

What to Remember

The September 11 memorial that now stands where the towers once did is designed to help visitors never forget that historic day. Entering the site, they must follow a path that leads to a museum pavilion dedicated to the unforgettable day, with the nation’s tallest building towering in front of them.

In addition, waterfalls drop into two square pools set into the footprints of where the twin towers once stood. The pools are ringed with bronze plates carrying the names of

attack victims. Trees line the entire memorial.

With each anniversary of September 11, we call to mind the events of that day. We remember the horror we felt as the towers crashed, the sadness of mourning loved ones, and the renewed appreciation for the freedoms we enjoy.

But just remembering the event is not enough. America must learn lessons. It will take a period of hardship to alert the United States to what is blocking God from blessing it.

September 11 was the front edge of a time of trouble soon to overtake America. This coming period of continuous calamity will be one that future generations will truly never forget.

Those who learn the lessons from what is occurring now, and from that historic and tragic September day, can escape—if they remember God is the only source of blessings and learn to obey Him by living His Way *now*.

For a fuller picture of what is foretold to occur, read *America and Britain in Prophecy* at rcg.org/aabibp. □



■ REMEMBERING A TRAGEDY: A couple reads the names of those killed in the September 11 terror attacks at the 9/11 memorial in New York City (March 18, 2013).

PHOTO: STACEY L. PALM/THE REAL TRUTH



WHY BRITAIN NEVER FIT IN THE EU

Britain's decision to leave the European Union came as a shock, even for many proponents. Yet the outcome should not have been surprising.

HUSBANDS AND WIVES get upset with each other. Sometimes disagreements become heated and words are exchanged that cut to the quick—words each party quickly regrets.

But there comes a point when, no matter how much one regrets what is said, it goes too far. Married couples can, without thinking, cross a personal Rubicon, as did Julius Caesar when he led his troops across that famed river on their march to the capital city of Rome, a wholly illegal and unprecedented action. Once it was crossed, there was no going back. There was no, “Oops, I made a mistake. Let me do it over.”

For marriages, that point of no return is mentioning the “D” word.

When a couple even *flirts* with the idea of divorce, when they seriously contemplate formally ending their relationship, the last brick of the foundation that held up and stabilized their marital bond is weakened. It becomes a matter of *when*, not *if*, the relationship will break apart.

Britain had been flirting with the idea of “divorcing” Europe for quite some time. Therefore, no one, especially citizens in the United Kingdom, should have been surprised.

What still remains to be seen, however, is how it will all play out. Will the divorce be amicable; a clean break up that allows both parties to remain friends? Or will it be a messy, petty, vindictive affair? Consider that immediately after the Brexit outcome was revealed, Germany said, in effect, “If you’re going to leave, make it quick.”



■ **NEW DIRECTION:** Theresa May, the recently appointed prime minister of the United Kingdom, attends a press conference with German Chancellor Angela Merkel in Berlin, Germany, to discuss Britain's withdrawal from the European Union (July 20, 2016).

PHOTO: ADAM BERRY/GETTY IMAGES

(Translation: “If you really want a divorce, don’t waste time packing your bags and gathering your belongings—just leave!”)

As the UK’s government contemplates how to exit the EU, it is also fighting to retain London as Europe’s unofficial financial capital for banks and insurers—a lucrative position that cities such as Paris and Frankfurt are poised to assume.

Britain’s task to implement the Brexit divorce is daunting to say the least.

No team, committee, Fortune 500 company, government or political alliance—let alone any marriage—can achieve true success and prosperity without the unwavering cooperation of all parties involved. Sooner or later, constant arguing, bickering and disagreement will breed dissatisfaction and discontentment, creating irreparable cracks of disunity and disharmony. The facade of a seemingly perfect union will be permanently marred by blemishes and scars that never fade away. The relationship *will* fail.

This is what is occurring with the disintegrating marriage between the governments of Britain and the European Union.

Down to the Wire

Throughout the many months and weeks leading up to the June 23, 2016, referendum, polling data on how the average Briton would vote fluctuated wildly from day to day. Voices advocating that Britain should leave gained strong support—however, so did the voices crying that Britain should stay.

News media accurately claimed it would come down to the wire before anyone knew the final verdict of Britain’s historic decision to abandon its European Union membership and exit the EU (hence the term “Brexit”).

In 2013, British Prime Minister David Cameron had promised that the United Kingdom would hold a referendum on European membership if he won the 2015 general election. Mr. Cameron went on to win and kept his word, making way for the public, for the first time since 1975, to decide whether Britain should stay or leave the EU.

In summary, there were two sides to the issue of Brexit: those who advocated leaving and those who demanded that Britain should stay.

“Stay” voters argued that when it came to trade, 50 percent of British

exports went to EU countries, thus the United Kingdom had more buying power. Roughly three million jobs rely on Britain’s EU membership—jobs that might be lost if Britain opted out of the EU and trade declined. With 1.4 million Brits living abroad and others regularly traveling to EU states, remaining a member state in Europe would make it easier to get away “on holiday” or travel in general.

On the other hand, “leave” advocates pointed to the loss of British sovereignty, with unelected bureaucrats in the European Union imposing laws and regulations that overruled British lawmakers.

The issue of border control was also in question. Because the European Union promotes and maintains the philosophy of free movement between the borders of member states, national immigration laws were pointless. And leaving Europe meant not having to pay hefty EU registration fees.

Another consideration regarding the UK’s decision was that, in the future, it could face possible pressure from Europe to form a multinational EU military force. This would affect the British military’s ability to act independently and ensure Britain’s national interests.

When interviewed by *Fox News*, British Labour Member of Parliament Kate Hoey, an advocate for leaving Europe, explained what was driving the push for Brexit: “What this has been about for many years is some people within the rest of Europe wanting to get a closer union. They want a United States of Europe. Now, the United Kingdom, you know, is a country with a great history and a great past. We don’t want to be part of a United States of Europe. We want to trade with the EU. We want to cooperate on security matters as we work very, very closely with obviously the United States and, of course, NATO. We would still be members of NATO, and we’re part of a lot of international bodies—it’s a win-win really...”

Responding to the comment that exiting Europe would be a financial step backward for Britain, Ms. Hoey

said, “We’re already trading as the United Kingdom far more outside the EU than inside the EU, and there’s absolutely no reason why that won’t continue and why we won’t be able to increase our trade.”

On the other hand, Prime Minister David Cameron reminded voters in a televised statement: “The choice is in your hands. But my recommendation is clear: I believe that Britain will be safer, stronger and better off in a reformed European Union.”

U.S. President Barack Obama weighed in by lending his support to Mr. Cameron. During an official visit to the United Kingdom, Mr. Obama urged the British public in a televised press conference to heed his advice that Britain should vote to remain in the EU. While some appreciated his candor, others viewed it as America meddling in British affairs.

Staunch “leave” supporter UK Independence Party leader Nigel Farage encouraged the public to vote for Britain’s exit: “We have to win this campaign, make people understand that EU membership and uncontrolled immigration are synonymous with each other.”

With the decision to leave, it is only natural to ask: Will other countries in Europe decide to terminate their EU membership? Nations such as France, the Netherlands, and others have already floated the idea of holding their own referendums similar to Brexit. Rumor has it that Austria, Italy, Poland and Denmark may not be far behind.

Buyer’s Remorse?

Britain’s vote sent a message that carried shockwaves across the European continent and even the United States. In fact, citizens throughout the United Kingdom themselves said they were stunned that their fellow countrymen dared to vote for the unimaginable. Even those who voted to leave were pleasantly surprised to learn their side had won.

The vote to leave effectively subverts a European sentiment that had been in place since the end of World War II.

A few generations ago, survivors of a war-torn Europe arose from the rubble, debris and despair of WWII and decided, “Never—we must never again allow Europe to go to war with itself.” European countries entered into mutually beneficial agreements—a sort of economical and sociopolitical “marriage” of convenience, sowing the seeds for a united Europe.

Its “harvest” produced trade agreements between former enemies, military cooperation in which no one state dominated the other, and economic alliances that benefited all. Open borders between nations meant no passports, little or no work restrictions, and free access and movement to other markets within neighboring countries. Thus, what became the European Common Market eventually emerged as the European Union—which has long been on the road to becoming a multinational superstate: the United States of Europe.

Or so is the grand dream of European politicians and citizens alike.

Yet sometimes idyllic dreams can turn into unintentional nightmares...

Why, then, were so many, particularly in the news media, shocked that Britain voted to end its marriage to

Europe? After all, the Brexit vote was featured in news headlines and televised to the general public for weeks, even months, in advance. Until the last few days leading to the vote, polls showed that the “remain” campaign was ahead of the “leave” voters. In fact, on the day of the vote, even the most ardent “leave” supporters were convinced their side would lose.

They were wrong. A 70 percent voter turnout throughout the United Kingdom revealed that roughly 52 percent of voters wanted out of the European Union. British citizens bucked against pressure from the U.S. president, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, and the British prime minister to stay with the EU, declaring, “We want a divorce!”

Yet the universal reaction of “What? We actually won?” was palpable. The referendum outcome was akin to an estranged couple who bicker for months and years on end, but are suddenly surprised when they learn the divorce for which they had been calling was finally granted. They immediately feel the rush of jubilation, quickly followed by a new question: “What do we do now?”

Britain and its people are different from continental Europe. The British



■ **DEBATE CONTINUES:** Pro-Brexit and anti-Brexit demonstrators hold up placards during a demonstration in London calling for a second referendum on Britain’s membership in the European Union (July 9, 2016).

PHOTO: DANIEL LEAL-OLIVAS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

are, of course, European—yet they remain proudly and defiantly British in thinking.

The relatively tiny island nation was once the seat of a world-leading global empire. It spawned a long line of royal leaders, not to mention prime ministers, who helped influence and shape the policies of entire nations. Britain has long been viewed as holding on to an island nation mentality, as the country is physically separated from Europe. It tends to think in terms of its own interests above the concerns of all things European.

In addition, it has long been a major player in shaping and determining the direction of the European Union, its laws, regulations and trade policies. Yet, just as the United Kingdom is geographically disconnected from mainland Europe, it is also disconnected socially, economically, militarily and politically from Europe-at-large. The man- and woman-on-the-street in the UK is British, first and foremost, and *then* European (that is, if it is convenient, practical and does not interfere with being all things British).

A rift between Britain and Europe was inevitable.

Exit Strategy

Britain may have voted to leave the European Union, but it presently remains an EU member. To officially leave, the nation must invoke Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty—something that no EU member state has ever done.

When the prime minister formally declares the nation's intention to leave, it triggers a legal process of two years, a countdown during which Britain must come to an agreement with Europe in determining who gets what. If time runs out without mutual agreements having been met, Britain could walk away with nothing.

UK newspaper *The Guardian* listed the issues that must be worked out:

- The rights of EU migrants and Britons living abroad.

- What sort of border controls will be in place.

- The amount of money Britain owes for the EU budget.

- The relationship British businesses will have with the EU market, and vice versa.

David Cameron resigned from his post as prime minister nearly immediately after the outcome of Brexit was made known, which means that it will be up to his successor to invoke Article 50. (The British Parliament may need to sign off on it as well.) In the meantime, many in the EU insist that Britain should begin the exit process as soon as possible.

If push comes to shove, the European Union could FORCE Britain to leave by invoking Article 7 of the Lisbon Treaty if it finds the nation in breach of the basic principles of freedom and democracy. German Chancellor Angela Merkel, however, has cautioned against this procedure, saying, “There is no reason to be particularly nasty” (*Financial Times*).

While these steps are being initiated, Britain continues its EU membership and is still “able to exercise input power on other EU acts during this limbo period” (*CNBC*).

The news outlet also reported: “Article 50’s language is vague because the EU never envisioned anybody leaving, Chris Bickerton, a lecturer at Cambridge University told the *Independent* last week. It ‘was drafted with the idea that (Article 50) would not be used, and to make it pretty hard to exit in a smooth way,’ he told the London newspaper.”

Marriage of Convenience

Imagine Britain’s marriage to Europe like the scenario of a man and woman stranded on a desert island. They both realize their situation is desperate and, unless things change, their future is dim. They must work together; they have no other choice. Their very survival depends on it.

Now shift to the history of Britain and Europe. Two world wars left the European continent devastated. With Adolf Hitler dead, Nazi Germany smoldering in ruins, and the Soviet Union poised to emerge as a world

superpower, the nations of Europe concluded that they must unite—or else.

Though the marriage seemed to work for a little while, their path into the future was fraught with roadblocks, bumps and chaotic turns that seemed to detour into uncertainty. Nonetheless, the partners knew the bed they had made for each other. For a little while, at least, they were prepared to weather any storm on the horizon.

But as with most rocky marriages, divorce was inevitable. Severing the marriage eventually appeared a better option than continuing on the path of the status quo. There were too many disagreements, too many misunderstandings. The proverb, “The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence,” became all too real when British voters became fed up with Europe’s liberal leaning toward mass immigration and its financial mismanagement when dealing with fiscally irresponsible countries like Greece. To Britain, Europe had all too often crossed a line that had been drawn in the sand.

It is now clear their marriage of convenience will never be the same; there is no going back.

The questions arise: Where did the marriage go wrong? Had Britain grown tired of European technocrats overruling British lawmakers and telling the UK what laws Europe would allow to go unchecked? Was it Europe’s insistence that the UK accept any and all immigrants into its fold, regardless of UK immigration laws or how it would affect Britain economically, socially, politically? Was it the European Union’s growing and unrelenting pressure for Britain to scrap the British pound in favor of the Euro? Was it the famed “isolated island nation” mindset that Britain has long been accused of holding onto, therefore keeping it separate socially, culturally and mentally from the rest of Europe?

Perhaps a better question might be: Why did such radically different and ultimately incompatible partners get married in the first place?

Please see **BRITAIN**, page 29



Advocates declare that embryonic stem cell research is a potential medical savior. Others decry it as the murder of innocent children. Whom should you believe?

IN THE DARKNESS of a fallopian tube, thousands of sperm race toward an egg, swimming over one another to their goal. Many reach the egg, but only one sperm burrows into the egg wall.

Within hours, the fertilized human egg divides into two embryonic stem (ES) cells, which have the ability to become any part of the body.

During the following days, additional divisions take place, with the ES cells retaining their pluripotent properties (the ability to form into nearly any type of human tissue). About the fourth day, the cells, now called a blastocyst, begin to specialize and lose their broad adaptive properties.

Many scientists yearn to harness the power of these cells. They believe doing so will allow them to create any healthy tissue in the human body: grow organs for transplant, mend severed spinal cords, and even cure diabetes, Parkinson's disease, or Lou Gehrig's disease.

Researchers also believe that stem cells could be a lifeline for certain species. There are calls for the creation of a "biobank" that would contain the stem cells of endangered animals to save them from extinction.

Touting its seemingly endless applications, stem cell research advocates push hard for funding. At first glance, it seems they have a point: *Why not use these cells if they can so broadly aid mankind?*

Who's Right About STEM CELL — Research? —

It is not that simple.

Researchers can only obtain human embryonic stem cells from bioethical “gray areas,” namely embryos left from in vitro fertilization (IVF)—the process of fertilizing eggs in a laboratory setting and later implanting some in a woman’s uterus so she can become pregnant. Embryos that are unused are generally destroyed. Although obtaining stem cells from the tissue of aborted fetuses, cells from umbilical cords, or somatic cell nuclear transfer (a technique for creating an ovum using a donor nucleus—the basis of cloning) can be done, there is less scientific flexibility.

The use of these additional IVF embryos is the main battleground for the embryonic stem cell debate, which is prevalent in the United States. While president, George W. Bush signed an executive order restricting federal funding on ES cell research. Upon taking office in 2009, President Barack Obama lifted those restrictions.

The controversy continues to divide the American people. A 2016 Pew Research Center poll found that 60 percent of Americans believe that the use of ES cells is morally acceptable, while 32 percent said it is morally wrong; 5 percent had no opinion and 3 percent said it depends on the circumstance.

The core of the issue can be defined by one just question: *When does an embryo become a human being?*

Religious Disagreement

Although there is some contention among scientists on the ethics of stem cell research, the controversy generally falls to the world’s religions. They each bring surprisingly different beliefs.

■ **Catholicism:** Rome holds a strong position against ES cell research. In documents posted on its website, the Vatican stated that while it “is convinced of the need to support and promote scientific research for the benefit of humanity,” extracting ES “cells from living human embryos raises ethical questions of the highest order.”

For a Catholic, life begins at conception and IVF “involves the destruction of human beings.” Thus, IVF and embryonic stem cell research are “morally illicit” or sin.

■ **Protestantism:** Many Protestant groups follow a line of thinking similar to Catholicism. A report from the Commission on Theology and Church relations for the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod stated, “Human embryos, beginning with conception, are set on a course of development that leads continuously to an unfolding of unique human life.”

The report concluded, “In the absence of decisive arguments, pre-implantation embryonic life should be afforded the benefit of the doubt and the benefit of life.”

In other words, since we cannot know when life begins, it is safest to believe it is at conception.

Yet this is the position of only a small part of one denomination. Pentecostals, Methodists, non-denominational and other professing Christian groups have differing stances.

■ **Judaism:** The general consensus among rabbis is that ES cell research is an important step for science. According to an essay printed in *Jewish Action* magazine, adherents of Judaism are required to, in a sense, “play God” as the “concept of emulating God is implicit in the mandate to heal and provide effective medical relief wherever possible.”

The essay continues: “Normative Jewish law sanctions—nay, encourages—medical intervention to correct both congenital and acquired defects, and makes no distinction between stem and somatic (body) cell tissues.”

But Jewish law does forbid one to tamper with, or attempt to improve, Creation.

Many Jewish rabbis cite the Talmudic tradition that life begins after 40 days of gestation. Before then, it is considered “mere water” and of lesser human status. Therefore, using frozen embryos from IVF is acceptable and nearly obligatory given the mandate to “play God.”

Additionally, some rabbis believe embryos developed in a lab setting cannot develop into fetuses, and are therefore not alive.

■ **Islam:** Muslims do not have a central religious authority that mandates a firm belief on stem cell

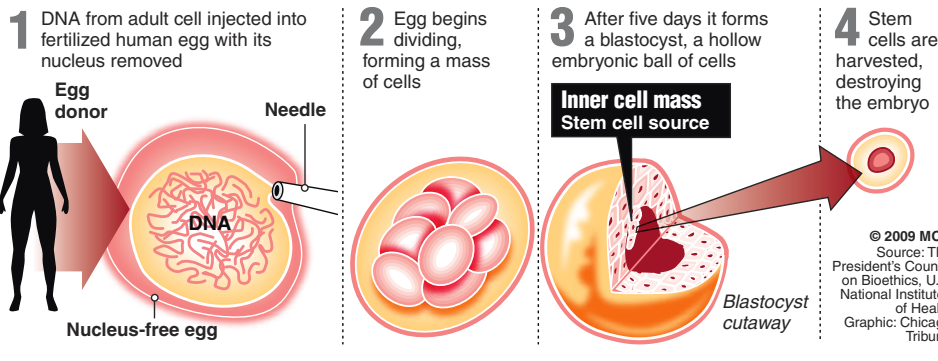
research. Islam does differentiate the first 40 days of a pregnancy from thereafter. Many Muslims agree embryonic stem cell research is within the bounds of their religion, with some stipulations.

An essay by Dr. Muzammil Siddiqi, director of California’s Islamic Society of Orange County, made three recommendations for ES cell research within Sharia:

(1) Because stem cell research “has great potential to relieve human disease and

Extracting Embryonic Stem Cells

Stem cells are derived from eggs fertilized at an in vitro fertilization clinic, then donated for research purposes.



suffering...it is obligatory...to pursue this research.”

(2) Limit the embryonic stem cell use to embryos from “in vitro fertilization and [that which] would otherwise have been destroyed.”

(3) Pursue “further research on the use of adult stem cells, to the point where it will be unnecessary to use embryos” (*Pakistan Link*).

■ **Buddhism:** During a conference at the Mind Life Institute (a transcript of which was reprinted in *Mandala*), the Dalai Lama gave his thoughts on “when an embryo becomes sentient from the Buddhist point of view.”

According to the Abhidharma texts, “consciousness enters the embryo through the meeting of the regenerative substances of the father and mother, and at that point it becomes a sentient being...From the classical Buddhist standpoint, it has become a sentient being and extermination of that would be morally equivalent, almost, to killing a human being.”

However, the Dalai Lama admitted that knowing when an embryo becomes conscious is problematic: “A fetus, which is becoming a human is already a sentient being. But a fertilized egg may actually bifurcate into 8, 16, 32, 64 cells and become an embryo, and yet be naturally aborted and never become a human being. This is why I feel that for the formation of life, for something to actually become a human, something more is needed than simply a fertilized egg.”

Examining various religious viewpoints does not clarify the issue. In fact, it does just the opposite, with each new idea, opinion and theological interpretation fueling the confusion.

Final Authority

The litany of stem cell theology leaves out one voice—a voice that does not dabble in differing and disagreeing opinions of bioethics and religion. Although sacred texts were referenced in the quotes above, each failed to say exactly *why* God opposes or condones embryonic stem cell experimentation. His stance on embryonic

stem cell research reveals His purpose for mankind. This is what is missing in all other belief systems. To understand it properly, one must look to where life began.

God created the first man, Adam, from the dust of the ground. The first book of the Bible, Genesis, recorded that God made man in His “likeness” (1:26). While God is *spirit*, He formed a *physical* Adam after His image.

God often creates in dualities. Man was first created as a *physical being*, with the second step in God’s Plan being that man could later be born as a righteous *spirit being*—a child of God.

Human life begins when a sperm fertilizes an egg—and after gestation, a baby is born. Mankind reproduces himself *physically*, which then supplies minds that God can beget with His Spirit to reproduce Himself *spiritually*.

The Creator’s ultimate purpose is to reproduce Himself—through man! But how?

Man has “dominion over” the animal kingdom (Gen. 1:26). His creative output proves this. While the human brain is only slightly more complex than any animal, each person has an additional element that sets him apart from the beasts of the earth—the human spirit (I Cor. 2:11; Job 32:8).

When God imparts His Spirit into a human mind, it combines with the human spirit, and the person becomes a spirit being in embryo. This fertilization of Spirit and mind is immediate—there is no lag or gray area during which a person is not on his way to being born a child of God.

One must have God’s Spirit to be a son of God (Rom. 8:9, 14). During the rest of his life, that person is to grow—or gestate—spiritually in “grace and knowledge” (II Pet. 3:18), allowing God to develop His holy, righteous and perfect character within him over a lifetime.

God the Father calls all spiritually begotten persons “sons of God” (I John 3:1). However, these individuals do “not yet appear what [they] shall

be,” but upon Christ’s Return—and their spiritual birth—“they will be like Him” (vs. 2).

Physical gestation is a direct type of spiritual gestation. Embryonic stem cell research muddles the physical type of God’s Plan and hinders His Supreme Purpose!

Why the Bible?

“Sure,” the skeptic retorts, “prove it.” And rightfully so. Why believe anything supposedly “from God” if it cannot be proven?

The Bible declares, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God” and is useful for instruction in righteousness (II Tim. 3:16). In other words, *every* word is from God and *every* word can apply to one’s life.

Again, the skeptic replies, “Prove it!”

Truly, if the Bible can be proven, *all* of it should be followed. If not, it should be tossed aside.

Another passage says to, “Prove *all things*; hold fast that which is good” (I Thes. 5:21). We must take this instruction at face value. God says to “prove all things.” Elsewhere, He says to “prove Me now herewith” (Mal. 3:10).

This is a challenge. The booklet *Bible Authority...Can It Be Proven?* (rcg.org/bacibp) proves the validity of the Bible as the Word of God and its relevancy to your life.

Any topic that affects the lives of human beings—embryonic stem cell research or otherwise—must be viewed through the lens of God’s Word. This alone allows you to discern right and wrong, rather than the muddled philosophies and theologies of men. God’s Word is clear—you need not be confused.

Embryonic stem cell research skews the purpose of God’s Plan—to build a spiritual family. It should not be performed. Read the book *The Awesome Potential of Man* at rcg.org/tapom to more fully understand the overarching purpose of human life.

This is God’s view on stem cell research. It is up to you to prove it. □



SHAKE-UP: **Will World Order Soon Collapse?**

Islamic terrorists slaughter hundreds across Europe and America. Violent political factions vie for control after decades-long regimes fall in the Middle East. Citizens pit themselves against governments as civil disarray increases. The established world system—its normal order—is being shaken to its core. The bombardment of bad events leaves many wondering how long it can last.

BY DR. JAMES F. PASTOR, PH.D., J.D.



ON A CRISP winter day, over 10,000 people gathered for a political rally at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Inside a building known as the Pavilion, an emotional and diverse audience waited for the featured speaker: presidential candidate Donald Trump. Some in the increasingly boisterous crowd began shouting and hurling insults at others and the empty lectern.

After a lengthy wait, a man walked onto the stage and announced the rally was canceled.

The crowd erupted. Shouts of “We did it” and “Dump Trump!” competed against refrains of “U-S-A” and “Trump, Trump!”

Pushing and shouting turned into altercations as emotion and energy overwhelmed security personnel. Outside

was even more chaotic, with lines of police officers, some on horses and bicycles, separating angry protesters.

Seeing the chaos reminded me of a time almost 15 years ago when the Pavilion had been filled with a markedly different spirit, a different energy. At that time, I strolled into the building wearing a red, black and blue gown coupled with a similarly colored tasseled cap. Inside, thousands of soon-to-be graduates along with family and friends laughed, smiled, sang and shed a few tears.

After a short ceremony, which included a poignant and emotional keynote speech from the wife of one of my childhood heroes, the late football player Walter Payton, the day ended with me being conferred a doctorate degree in public policy analysis.

Public policy encompasses laws, regulations and programs developed by governments to resolve problems and

maintain stability. It is considered a crucial component of the establishment—otherwise known as the governments, economies, education and other public systems that help maintain world order, peace, stability and productivity.

Thinking about the Pavilion’s divergent scenes—my experience there as compared to the rally—is instructive.

As an attorney and former police officer, I have worked within and helped maintain the established system of government for most of my adult life. My training in public policy has given me a good understanding of the big picture. Practicing law has opened my eyes to the importance of details and the system’s legal framework. In addition, working the streets as a police officer gave me unique insight, including a glimpse into the seediness of human nature and its implications.

The most recent events at the Pavilion provide perspective on our

■ **MOUNTING CHAOS:** From left to right, supporters of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan wave flags on the Bosphorus Bridge in Istanbul, Turkey, after soldiers involved in an attempted military coup surrendered there (July 16, 2016). Syrian refugees in an inflatable boat arrive on the shores of Lesbos, a Greek island (Aug. 23, 2015). Demonstrators burn an American flag outside of the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (July 28, 2016). Iraqi government forces celebrate while holding an ISIS flag after retaking control of once ISIS-held territory northeast of Baghdad, Iraq (Jan. 26, 2015). An explosion caused by a suicide car bomb by ISIS militants rocks the Syrian city of Kobani (Oct. 20, 2014). A woman stops to honor the victims of a series of terror attacks in Paris, France, that left 130 people dead (Nov. 16, 2015). Dallas Police Chief David Brown mourns for the five police officers killed during a protest in Dallas, Texas (July 8, 2016).

PHOTOS: STRINGER/; ACHILLEAS ZAVALLIS/AFP/; JEFF J. MITCHELL/; YOUNIS AL-BAYATI/AFP/; GOKHAN SAHIN/; DAVID RAMOS/; SPENCER PLATT/; GETTY IMAGES

modern world—and portend dangerous times ahead.

This conclusion echoes a *Foreign Policy* article provocatively titled “The Collapse of the Liberal World Order.” In it, the author cited liberal *New York Times* writer, Roger Cohen, who stated that “the forces of disintegration are on the march,” and “the foundations of the post-war world...are trembling.”

Compare this assessment with that of author Peggy Noonan. From her more conservative worldview emerges a snapshot remarkably similar to her liberal counterpart: “Everything feels upended, the old order that has governed things for 70 years since World War II being swept away. Borders have disappeared before our eyes. Terrorism, waves of immigration transforming whole nations, Islam at war with itself and parts of it at war with the world. In the West, the epochal end of public faith in institutions, and a dreadful new tension between the leaders and the led.”

Both sides of the ideological aisle agree that something is wrong. If the established system, by which peoples, nations and the world maintain order, is being challenged—or even shaken—what can we expect?

The short answer...it will get worse before it gets better!

From 9/11 to Hope and Change

My entire experience in public policy has taken place in a post-9/11 world. I defended my doctoral dissertation on the subject of securing American streets on September 10, 2001—just one day before the largest terror attack in the 21st century on U.S. soil. Little could I have imagined that less than 24 hours later this subject would become so relevant.

Looking back 15 years, September 11 was the first domino to fall in a linked sequence of events. The *world order* began to change. Subsequent situations further stressed the status quo.

In pursuit of 9/11 mastermind Osama bin Laden, the U.S. and its allies waged war against the Taliban in Afghanistan. Early successes there led to the establishment of an interim Afghani government.

Soon after this, the U.S. decided to also enter Iraq and toppled the government of dictator Saddam Hussein in a little over a month.

The leader’s ouster planted seeds in the minds of citizens of surrounding nations, but these would not germinate for a number of years. The immediate effect of Hussein’s downfall was a power vacuum that forced U.S. troops to continue there.

The Iraq War quickly became an albatross around the neck of the president and the nation. Five years of headlines—mostly negative—drained the American people. As society coped with the daily spate of terror attacks against American troops, any connection between the Iraq War and 9/11 was gradually rejected. Many disputed *any* connection at all.

In short, 9/11 pushed the West to shake the established systems in both Afghanistan and Iraq. This sent ripple effects across the region.

With the instability of a prolonged war and the start of the Great Recession, America was ready for a change when the 2008 election came around.

The contrast was stark. The Bush “war presidency” coupled with the fiscal crisis withered against Obama’s “Hope and Change” campaign theme. They were perfect political bookends.

After eight troubled years, Americans *hoped* President Obama would stop the bloodshed and funds expended in foreign wars, and bring balance to foreign policy for the world’s most powerful nation.

Yet, instead, a radical shift in public policy took place.

As the Obama administration began to unwind what was done by its predecessor, it made a rigid distinction between the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Iraq War was said to “cause” terrorism. The war in Afghanistan was seen as taking the fight to the enemy by not allowing the country to continue as a safe haven for terrorists.

Shortly into his presidency, Mr. Obama made it clear that the Iraq War would end and, as promised, all American troops exited Iraq by December 2011. (Yet 4,000 soldiers

have since been sent back there and the war in Afghanistan continues to this day.)

Arab Spring to ISIS

In recent years, journalists and pundits have more openly connected Saddam Hussein’s 2003 ouster from Iraq and the phenomenon known as the Arab Spring, which took place in 2011.

In a 2013 *New York Times* opinion piece, Iraqi scholar Kanan Makiya stated that the actions in Iraq eight years earlier “paved the way for young Arabs to imagine” a life of “dignity and respect” without autocratic rule.

Yet the attempt to spread democracy in one nation eventually shattered stability in an entire region.

With all large-scale social movements, many elements are needed for “combustion.” The “spark” that launched the Arab Spring came from one man’s decision to light himself on fire. It quickly resulted in the removal of the Tunisian president—and the overturning of another established government in the Middle East.

The trigger was just one dramatic event, but it led to a major regional shake-up. Like dominoes, leaders throughout the region fell from power. Protests spread to Oman, Bahrain, Yemen, Algeria, Iraq, Jordan, Morocco, Libya and Egypt. Underlying the unrest was widespread disaffection regarding unemployment, economic stagnation, repressive governments, and dictatorial leaders.

In February 2011, 18 days of protests led to the resignation of Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak after nearly 30 years in office. The most populous country in the Arab world had seen the fall of its leader. *Three decades* of leadership were shattered in just under *three weeks*.

In June 2011, Ali Abdullah Saleh, the president of Yemen for over 20 years, was injured in a failed assassination attempt. (He eventually resigned in February 2012.) Two months later, in August 2011, a battle erupted between loyalists of Libyan President Moammar Gadhafi and rebels opposing him. Gadhafi was killed shortly thereafter.

The idea of shaking the system to effect positive change was not limited to the Middle East. America wrestled with Occupy Wall Street protests that swept the country in late 2011—a backlash of the financial crisis.

The Occupy movement was directly inspired by protests in the Middle East. Its de facto website stated: “We are using the revolutionary Arab Spring tactic to achieve our ends and encourage the use of nonviolence to maximize the safety of all participants.”

While not nearly as traumatic as what was occurring halfway around the world, the Occupy movement did reveal one thing: a revolutionist mindset is, in some measure, present in contemporary America and Western countries.

Coming off the momentum created by the Arab Spring, violent protests spread to yet another country—Syria. But the standing government did not immediately fold as in previous cases. The unrest eventually led to armed conflict between the government and protesters. Syrian President Bashar al-Assad blamed foreigners for the dispute.

As these events played out, many outside the region did not fully grasp the Arab Spring’s negative ramifications. Many even cheered these “democratic” movements.

The Wall Street Journal quoted President Obama: “We have the chance to show that America values the dignity of the street vendor in Tunisia more than the raw power of the dictator...America must use all our influence to encourage reform in the region.”

President George Bush reached a surprisingly similar conclusion. He wrote a glowing editorial in *The Wall Street Journal* stating: “America does not get to choose if a freedom revolution should begin or end in the Middle East or elsewhere. It only gets to choose what side it is on...It takes courage to ignite a freedom revolution. But it also takes courage to secure a freedom revolution through structural reform. And both types of bravery deserve our support.”

Inherent in this last quote is the important connection between structural reform and the rule of law—a tenet of public policy. The idea of freedom with no established system of government leads to turmoil.

Thus the political shake-ups that occurred in the Middle East, which resulted in a loss of leaders and systems that had been in place for decades, mostly resulted in chaos and disorder.

In July 2012, the Red Cross officially declared the Syrian uprising a “civil war.” On September 11 of that same year, Islamic militants killed the U.S. ambassador to Libya and three others in Benghazi.

World order was clearly continuing to unravel.

The Arab Spring, initially seen as a symbol of possibility and hope, eventually morphed into what is now called the Arab Winter, characterized

by the return of authoritarianism and religious extremism.

By January 2014, conflict erupted between Syrian rebels and Islamists. A month later, almost the entire Egyptian government resigned. By June 2014, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, commonly called ISIS, declared a caliphate, or Islamic state, in parts of Syria and Iraq.

ISIS shocked the world with brutal, sadistic acts of violence that went well beyond those committed by al-Qaida. As egregious attacks mounted, the United States and some Arab countries were forced to launch air strikes against the terrorist group.

In February 2015, after a video showing the beheading of 21 Egyptian Coptic Christians was met with horror and disgust, Egypt’s air force struck ISIS positions in eastern Libya.

But ISIS struck elsewhere. A few months later, another attack killed 38



■ **TERROR IN EUROPE:** Forensics officers and policemen look for evidence in a truck that was used by a terrorist as a weapon on the Promenade des Anglais in Nice, France (July 15, 2016).

PHOTO: ANNE-CHRISTINE POUJOLAT/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

people, mostly tourists, at a popular resort in Tunisia. It was the worst terror attack on the country's soil.

In the months to follow, the news went from bad to worse. ISIS continued wreaking havoc across the globe.

It orchestrated several attacks in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula. Soon after, Russia carried out its first air strikes in Syria, allegedly targeting ISIS territories. (Western military sources contend the *actual* targets were anti-Assad rebels.) A month later, ISIS claimed responsibility for downing a Russian airliner in Sinai, killing 224 people.

Then in a dramatic, multi-faceted attack, ISIS terrorists killed 130 in Paris in November 2015. The UK and France launched air strikes against ISIS in response.

From there, the terrorist organization's influence continued to grow.

Immigration, Terrorism and Brexit

With the Middle East practically on fire, casualties rose and chaos ruled. A mass exodus from Syria and other hotspots spread across the Middle East, and then north to Europe. The result was the worst immigration crisis since World War II.

According to *BBC*, over a million migrants crossed into Europe in 2015, with an additional 135,000 in the first two months of 2016. The vast majority came from three countries: Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. In addition, ISIS openly declared it had enlisted fighters to pose as migrants to cause problems for Europe.

Large numbers of Muslim immigrants have not easily blended into the European landscape. Differences in language, religion, dress and culture are apparent and have led to division and, in some cases, outright mayhem.

Since the beginning of 2015, terrorism casualties in Paris (twice), Brussels (twice), and Nice resulted in at least 256 killed and 881 injured. On the second-year anniversary of the caliphate, ISIS-sponsored terrorists attacked Istanbul, killing another 44 and injuring at least 230.

A few weeks after the attacks, certain factions of the Turkish military staged a coup. As the only Muslim NATO country, Turkey may tip the delicate balance in Europe and within NATO. As of this writing, the immediate outcome is that the coup failed, but longer-term implications are not yet clear.

Terrorism, along with notorious crimes committed by immigrants such as sexual assaults, is having widespread impact. Nationalistic and right-wing groups are standing up and readying themselves to retaliate. Many worry that their countries will be taken over by "foreign invaders."

Make no mistake. Whether home-grown or foreign, terrorism changes the psyche of a society. It is *intended* to do so. Typically, victims are random, even irrelevant. The sinister goal is to bring fear to those who witness or learn of the acts. The adage that "terrorism is primarily theater" makes this clear.

In America, since the beginning of 2015, 85 have been killed and 99 injured in terrorist attacks that include Orlando, San Bernardino, and several less dramatic incidents.

The political impact of these attacks is significant. What was once largely isolated to Israel, Iraq and other Mideast countries is happening in *Western* countries. Let this reality settle in your mind. It is inevitable—and an integral part of the shake-up occurring everywhere.

The UK voting to exit the European Union (Brexit) is a direct result of this dynamic. A *Wall Street Journal* analysis concluded that it was "the most powerful demonstration yet of a rising populist tide transforming the established order across the West...[and was] perhaps the single largest blow the British populace has delivered to its establishment in modern history."

The implications of Brexit are best summarized in a *Bloomberg* piece:



■ **UPHEAVAL:** Citizens gather at Taksim Square in Istanbul, Turkey, to support the national government following a failed military coup that claimed more than 250 lives (July 16, 2016).

PHOTO: ARIS MESSINIS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

“Brexit’s real importance probably comes not from its direct effects, but from its symbolism. It’s a sign of a much bigger, broader trend—a global political regime change. The shift was happening before Brexit, and it will continue after. It’s something we should be worried about.”

While the exact impact of Brexit is still in the making, the EU will never be the same. The cumulative effect of these dominoes is a revolution within the established world order. This “system” is already trembling!

Looking into the immediate future, one can predict that Afghanistan will fall back into Islamists’ hands after Western troops leave. With Iraq again subject to daily terror attacks, American troops have returned to help fend off ISIS—including some of the very soldiers that they themselves trained to be part of Iraq’s army!

To remove ISIS from Iraq, a larger American troop presence will be needed. ISIS has recently lost some territory, however, this was accomplished because Iraq “partnered” with Iran-backed Shiite militias.

Iran, the world’s greatest sponsor of terrorism, is newly awash in resources from sanction relief. Tehran just announced it had 100,000 missiles aimed at Israel.

These are just *some* of many in the Gordian knot of challenges that lie ahead!

The System and the Campaign

Think back to the Pavilion. Everything explained to this point is a backdrop for the current American presidential campaign.

The canceled Trump rally magnified a deeply divided country. A *Wall Street Journal* article described the 2016 presidential campaign like a “trip from Venus to Mars.” The competing campaigns *must* maneuver around or within prevailing anti-establishment themes. These directly indict—and even target—the system!

Members of both political parties see the problem as “the system,” similar to those who challenged the governments in the Middle East and parts of Europe.

Referring to the elites, the institutions, and the legal and political establishment in America, the system is under scrutiny, even attack.

Even casual spectators of the political scene detect a distrust toward government. Anger prevails—with anti-establishment themes animating both parties. More than any election in recent history, except possibly 1968, which exploded in violence at the Democratic convention in Chicago, this election will *test* the system.

Indeed, for many, the system itself is the **TARGET!** For others, the desire is to *save* the system and address the problems that come as a result of it. Aptly summarized, this campaign is between those wanting to *save* the country versus those wanting to *change* the country.

This is not to say that the system is perfect. Far from it. Having spent 40 years of study and experience within this flawed system, I do not defend it. One is reminded, though, of the words of Winston Churchill, who declared that “democracy is the worst form of government, except for all the others.”

As this historic presidential campaign takes shape, advocates on both sides reflect sincere, yet distinct, worldviews. People would be wise to consider the lessons of history. It is replete with “good intentions,” resulting in unintended consequences.

Political violence has already erupted in San Diego, San Jose, and Albuquerque—to name a few. Violence is seen by some as “required” for political change. Tragic examples include the assassination of five Dallas police officers at a Black Lives Matter protest, and three police officers in Baton Rouge, the site of a police killing that went viral.

For obvious reasons, these killings sent shockwaves throughout law enforcement circles. Police officers, often considered the canaries in the coal mine, are the most visible representatives of the system. Attacks on police are a *leading indicator* of what will occur within the larger society.

Officials braced themselves for chaos during party conventions in Cleveland and Philadelphia. All the ingredients for violence were present:

anger, fear, ideological divide, and anti-establishment sentiment.

Yet these factors transcend politics and will soak into mainstream society—and most likely spill onto the streets within a matter of time.

In short, this presidential campaign, like few others, is ripe for clashing ideologies seeking leverage and ultimately political power. With so much at stake—coupled with a climate of distrust or even disdain for the system—one is hard-pressed to explain why violence would *not* occur.

It now seems that citizens in nations across the globe are seeking a better system. Many appear ready to resort to violence to bring about such change.

Another adage is appropriate: be careful what you ask for!

Better System Coming

Having connected the dots in this collapsing world order, it is time for a *real* answer. It is simple: mankind cannot solve its myriad of problems! While talented—and stubborn—it is not capable of fixing the system.

As many contend, the system is indeed broken. Despite what leaders believe, or what people desire, mankind does not have the answers.

Yet there is a source that has the solutions so many seek. The Holy Bible uniquely explains the answers to *all* of these problems—including the challenge of calming a shaken world. It connects the dots and reveals that not only were our modern circumstances foretold, but also how these times of trembling will play out.

In Haggai 2:6, God declares: “For thus says the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I WILL SHAKE the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land.”

Man thinks he can shake the established system to bring positive change. God disagrees. He says that *He* will shake the Earth!

Verse 7 repeats for emphasis: “And I WILL SHAKE all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come...says the LORD of hosts.”

Please see **SHAKE-UP**, page 28

50 Percent of Those with High Blood Pressure Do Not Know It



THINK BACK TO childhood. Remember filling up a water balloon with a hose or spigot? As water rushed into the balloon, the pressure increased. If you forgot to pay attention—POP! The stressed rubber would break without warning and water would splash everywhere.

This scenario is playing out in the blood vessels of adults across the globe.

A study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* found that over 50 percent of those with high blood pressure worldwide were not even aware of their condition. This statistic was true of poor and wealthy nations—including America.

According to the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), about one in three American adults have high blood pressure. Another one in three are classified as having prehypertension, in which their blood pressure is in a

borderline range. This means that 140 million American adults DO NOT have their blood pressure under control.

When a person has diabetes, cancer, gout or arthritis, there are usually discernable symptoms. With high blood pressure, however, there are often none.

“There’s a common misconception that people with high blood pressure, also called HBP or hypertension, will experience symptoms such as nervousness, sweating, difficulty sleeping or facial flushing,” the American Heart Association reported. “The truth is that HBP is largely a symptomless condition. If you ignore your blood pressure because you think symptoms will alert you to the problem, you are taking a dangerous chance with your life.”

This is why high blood pressure is often called a silent killer.

Since untreated high blood pressure increases the risk of heart disease and stroke—the first and third most common causes of death in the United States—it is important to fully understand this topic.

Underlying Factors

There are numerous causes of hypertension. Aside from a genetic predisposition, there are four primary ones.

Obesity: According to data collected from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, “more than 2 in 3 adults are considered to be overweight or obese. More than 1 in 3 adults are considered to be obese. More than 1 in 20 adults are considered to have extreme obesity. About one-third of children and adolescents ages 6 to 19 are considered to be overweight or obese. More than 1 in 6 children and adolescents ages 6 to 19 are considered to be obese.”

Inactivity: “People who are physically active tend to live longer and have lower risk for heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, depression, and some cancers. Physical activity can also help with weight control...” the CDC reported.

One reason this is significant is that only one in five American adults and three in 10 children and teenagers meet

the minimum recommended requirement for physical activity. This is setting up a society that will be rife with high blood pressure and all the risks that come with it.

High blood sugar: Approximately 30 million American adults suffer from diabetes—a whopping 10 percent of the population! More alarming is that over 95 percent of those with diabetes suffer from the “self-inflicted” form of diabetes known as Type 2, or adult onset diabetes. This is concerning because diabetics are at a higher risk for hypertension.

Stress: The most common and detrimental variable impacting blood pressure is stress. Consider the following statistics collected by a website dedicated to improving office and workplace conditions:

- 77 percent of Americans experience so much stress that it manifests itself with physical symptoms.

- 73 percent report regular emotional and psychological symptoms as a result of stress at work.

- One in three believe they are dealing with EXTREME stress and half believe their stress is getting worse, not better. Approximately half say their stress is so bad they lie awake at night. Another half report their daily stress is so bad they fight often with their close family and friends.

- 87 percent of workers worldwide (seven out of eight) feel emotionally disconnected from their jobs, which causes them to feel stressed.

This is the perfect storm of conditions for people to develop high blood pressure. Knowing this, is it really a surprise that two out of three American adults have high blood pressure or are heading toward having it?

Blood Pressure Explained

To understand how to effectively treat high blood pressure, it is important to understand what blood pressure is and how it is measured. It is typically calculated by using two numbers in a basic ratio, such as 120/80. This ratio is commonly stated as such: “The doc-

tor said my blood pressure was 120 over 80.”

What do these two numbers mean?

Think for a moment about the last time you took your own pulse. If you never have, touch your wrist beneath your thumb and move your finger around until you feel a beat similar to that of your heart. Every time your heart contracts, it creates pressure, which pushes blood through your circulatory system.

The moment your heart contracts is the time when the greatest amount of pressure is exerted on your arteries. The measurement for this is known as the *systolic* pressure and represents the first number in your blood pressure reading.

As your heart relaxes in between heartbeats and refills with blood, the pressure in your arteries drops. This is called *diastolic* pressure and represents the second number in your blood pressure reading.

According to the American Heart Association, resting blood pressure falls into the following categories:

- Normal—anything less than 120/80

- Prehypertension—120-139/80-89

- Stage 1 high blood pressure—140-159/90-99

- Stage 2 high blood pressure—160 or higher/100 or higher

- Hypertensive crisis—higher than 180/higher than 110. In this stage, immediate emergency care is needed!

Your blood pressure reading can change from minute to minute due to immediate factors such as stress, posture, caffeine intake, water intake, or simply falling asleep. Therefore, the best time to retrieve an accurate reading of it is before eating or drinking, and while you are at rest.

Defeating a Silent Killer

The main causes of high blood pressure—obesity, inactivity, high blood sugar, and stress—point directly to the solutions that one should employ to maintain a normal blood pressure level.

But what are some practical things you can do TODAY to reduce your risk?

First, know where you stand. Since the symptoms of high blood pressure are hard to identify, if you think you are at risk, invest \$40-\$100 in a simple blood pressure monitor. These can be found at any local drug store or shopping supercenter.

If you are diabetic, stop burying your head in the sand and begin to limit your intake of sugar and carbohydrates.

Additionally, get active!

“You don’t need to spend hours in the gym every day to benefit from aerobic activity,” *WebMD* reported. “Simply adding moderate physical activities to your daily routine will help. The Department of Health and Human Services recommends getting at least 150 minutes of moderate aerobic activity or 75 minutes of vigorous aerobic activity a week, or a combination of moderate and vigorous activity.”

Many physicians acknowledge that just this moderate amount of activity is as effective as taking a pharmaceutical to fix the problem.

Finally, assess how much weight you need to lose to lower your blood pressure.

According to Dr. Vincent Moloney, whose website *bloodpressure-drs-practical-guide.com* is dedicated to educating others about high blood pressure, “An analysis of controlled studies showed that an 11 lb. weight loss would lower blood pressure by 4.44 mm systolic and 3.57 mm diastolic.”

All in all, maintaining healthy blood pressure levels comes back to leading a healthy lifestyle: “Not only can healthy lifestyle habits prevent high blood pressure from occurring, but they can reverse prehypertension and help control existing high blood pressure or prevent complications and long-term problems associated with this condition, such as coronary heart disease, stroke, or kidney disease.”

By understanding the threat of high blood pressure and taking practical steps, you can avoid the threat of this silent killer. □

How to SPOT A FALSE PROPHET

One-third of the Bible is prophecy, future events God promises He will bring to pass. Many competing and disagreeing ministers proffer ideas on what these scriptures mean. Still others claim to be *actual* prophets. How can you know who is telling the truth?

BY SAMUEL C. BAXTER

“**P**ERHAPS YOUR god is *sleeping!*” Elijah, a lone servant of God, mocked 450 prophets of Baal while they tried to get their deity to start a fire and consume their sacrifice. The story plays out in the Old Testament book of I Kings, chapter 18. It was a test to see whose God was more powerful. Two altars were constructed with a bull placed on each.

Baal’s minions tried first. It was quite a scene: they danced feverishly and chanted themselves hoarse. This went on for hours.

Elijah goaded them: “Perhaps your god is on a journey...or maybe he simply cannot be bothered right now!” The frenzied Baal worshippers began to convulse, contort and cut themselves to elicit *any* response. All to no avail.

When Elijah’s turn came, he instructed that eight barrels of water be poured on the wood—he wanted to clearly prove his point—and said a short prayer to the Eternal God. Fire immediately vaporized the liquid, the bull, the lumber, and *even the stones*.

In this case, discerning a true prophet from a false one was easy. Elijah was a true prophet. Baal’s lackeys were utterly false. The fruits were obvious.

But it is not always so simple to know if someone is a legitimate servant of God. This is why Jesus Christ issued a crucial warning: “BEWARE of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves” (Matt. 7:15).

Jesus was not necessarily referring to *overt* false prophets such as occult-loving Nostradamus (who has heaps of failed prophecies). Nor was He directly talking about doomsday street-corner preachers, crystal ball gazers, palm readers, or fringe internet Bible bloggers. These should all be avoided, but they are pretty easy to pick out.

What Jesus more specifically meant were people who have a fluffy, fleecy exterior—they may be eloquent

preachers, have likable personalities, or have a lot of followers—yet on the inside they are in it for the power, money and attention.

These are the false prophets who Christ warned to “beware.” They may *appear* to be doing God’s will (sheep’s clothing), but really are in it for themselves (ravenous wolves). In a broader definition, this can include anyone who claims to speak for God—with His blessing and authority—but is actually leading people *away* from Him.

How can you uncloak wolves in sheep’s clothing to ensure you are not deceived?

Bible Formula

Keep reading in Matthew 7. Jesus outlines a clear formula for spotting false prophets—or any false servant. He states: “You shall *know them by their fruits*. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree brings forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree brings forth evil fruit” (vs. 16-17).

In simpler terms, true servants bear good results (fruit) and false servants bear evil results.

What does Christ qualify as good fruits? Is it running a soup kitchen? Helping the downtrodden in developing nations? Such gestures are well-meaning, but even atheists can do these things.

So then, is it professing a belief in Christ?

Jesus clearly answers this question in verse 21: “Not every one that says unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that does the will of My Father which is in heaven.”

People can invoke Christ’s name and “believe on Him” yet not do the Father’s will. Jesus directly stated that this is not enough to receive salvation. Many wolves in sheep’s clothing *think* they are doing God’s will, but are completely deceived.

Verse 22 shows how people can firmly believe they are godly, but miss the point: “Many will say to Me... Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name? And in Your name have

cast out devils? And in Your name done many wonderful works?” (vs. 22). (Note that the context of Matthew 7 is speaking of a specific judgment to come, but the principles apply to *any* person claiming to be backed by God’s authority.)

Christ responds to those who thought they were righteous: “And then will I profess unto them, *I never knew you: depart from Me, you that work iniquity*” (vs. 23).

These people may have been sincere, yet they were sincerely wrong!

The apostle Paul adds to this by describing those who look like—and may think they are—God’s servants, but are not. In II Corinthians 11:13, he speaks of “false apostles” and “deceitful workers” who transform “themselves into the apostles of Christ.”

Verses 14-15 continue: “And no marvel; for *Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light*. Therefore it is no great thing if *his ministers* also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.”

Did you know that Satan has ministers? He does! And they are just as good as the devil at palming off evil as good. This makes false prophets and ministers even more dangerous.

Christ calls such people workers of iniquity. He can see through their wooly guises as supposed “ministers of righteousness.” You can do the same, but first you must be absolutely sure what is *iniquity*.

Definition of Sin

“Iniquity” in Matthew 7:23 could also be rendered *lawlessness*. Put another way, it means being against God’s Law. An even simpler definition is *sin*. False prophets and ministers usually define sin in vague, slippery terms—and will quickly tell you that the “law is done away” and “Jesus washes away your iniquity.” Yet is this what the Bible teaches?

In I John 3:4, it states: “Whosoever commits sin transgresses also the law: for *sin is the transgression of the law*.”

You cannot transgress against something that is not in effect!

Jesus did not preach lawlessness. He was emphatic on this point: “Think NOT that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill” (Matt. 5:17).

The next verse is even clearer: “For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.”

Last time you checked, heaven and Earth were still here, right? Therefore, God’s Law is still in place!

While many false ministers will say that Jesus preached love (which He did), they fail to remember how the Bible defines this term. Romans 13:10 is clear, stating that “LOVE IS THE FULFILLING OF THE LAW.”

True prophets and ministers always teach that the commands found in the Bible are “holy, and just, and good” (7:12)—and that the Law is God’s roadmap to a happy, productive life.

In addition, genuine servants preach the exact same message as Jesus: the gospel of the kingdom. This is not a message solely about the personage of Christ. Rather, it is about a coming SUPERGOVERNMENT on Earth—ruled by God and the saints—which is the capstone of His Plan for humanity. (For ironclad proof of the Bible’s core message, read *Which Is the True Gospel?* at rcg.org/witrq.)

Alongside the real gospel, Jesus preached repentance. Look at the first recorded words of His earthly ministry: “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: *repent you, and believe the gospel*” (Mark 1:15).

Repent from sin—turn your life around!—*and* believe the gospel. This is very different from those who preach “come as you are.” Often, when churchgoers hear a minister say they must change and grow, they become angry and think, *You’ve stopped preaching and started meddling!*

This brings up the greatest earmark of a false minister: he will tell you what you *want* to hear. One who is genuine will tell you the opposite: what you *need* to hear, no matter the personal consequences.

For this reason, true ministers and prophets of God are often accused of being false.

True Called False

Examine the lives of the prophets and apostles in the Bible. They condemned sin and promoted commandment keeping. They taught the gospel and repentance. They told people the unvarnished truth of where they were off track.

The results are telling.

Zechariah, a prophet, called out ancient Israel on their sinful ways: “And the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, which stood above the people, and said unto them, Thus says God, *Why transgress you the commandments of the LORD*, that you cannot prosper? Because you have forsaken the LORD, He has also forsaken you” (II Chron. 24:20).

The people’s response: “And they conspired against him, and *stoned him with stones* at the commandment of the king in the court of the house of the LORD” (vs. 21).

Isaiah, another prophet, taught the gospel of the kingdom and about Christ’s coming: “For unto us a child [Jesus Christ] is born, unto us a son is given: *and the government shall be upon His shoulder...*Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end...”

The Jewish Talmud records that Isaiah was sawn in two. Hebrews 11:37 supports this.

Tradition also states that both Ezekiel and Jeremiah were stoned to death for rebuking the Jews for worshipping idols.

Even prophets who were not slain had hard lives. Most faced vitriol from the people and kings. They often lived in isolation. Yet they soldiered on, doing God’s will.

While not prophets, the first-century apostles taught heavily from Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the like.

The pattern continued in the New Testament. Except for John, all of the early apostles suffered execution. Peter—crucified upside down.

Paul—beheaded. Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Simon and Jude—also crucified. James, the son of Zebedee—slaughtered with a sword. Matthew—axed to death. James, the half-brother of Jesus—thrown off a high point of the Temple, then killed with a club.

THIS is how true servants of God are treated. Not all are martyred, but they are called every name under the sun. A favorite accusation is that of *false prophet*.

Yet this should not come as a surprise. Jesus Christ Himself was called a false prophet, a drunkard, demon-possessed and a bastard. Ultimately, He too was killed!

Prophecy 101

It is convenient to call true servants names. Slapping a person with the label “false prophet” is much easier than providing actual proof of wrongdoing—especially when a genuine minister has the Bible on his side.

Another reason the accusation of false prophet gets bandied about is that many people have never been taught the basics of prophecy.

First, notice to whom God says He will reveal prophecy: “Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but He reveals His secret unto His servants the prophets” (Amos 3:7). Before God does anything, He promises to reveal it to His servants—those living His Way—through the prophets.

This is echoed in the first verse of the book of Revelation: “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to *show unto His servants* things which must shortly come to pass...”

To gain understanding about the prophecies of the Bible, one MUST be a servant of God. This is true for the ministers who teach it—and the average person seeking to learn it! You have already seen what serving God entails.

But the process of understanding prophecy does not end there. God describes His Word this way: “But the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon pre-

cept; line upon line, line upon line; *here a little, and there a little*” (Isa. 28:13).

The truths of the Bible are written “here a little, and there a little.” One must comb the Book’s pages to find all of the verses on a specific subject—starting with the clearest and most basic. Only when all of these pieces are put together can you see God’s mind on a particular topic.

All this requires WORK! In II Timothy 2:15, Paul states: “*Study* to show yourself approved unto God, a *workman* that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

Duty of Ministry

God’s ministers are tasked with delving deeply into their Bibles so that they can clearly and succinctly explain the truth found therein.

Yet even the most avid Bible students cannot know everything perfectly. Paul likened prophetic understanding to seeing “through a glass, darkly” and that one can only “know in part” (I Cor. 13:12).

Because of this, true apostles and ministers can sometimes speculate incorrectly on details regarding the puzzle of prophecy. While this is difficult for some to grasp, realize that even the first-century apostles—again, who were *not* prophets—were incorrect on some points, especially the timing of certain events.

Surprised?

Look at the disciples’ last question before Jesus ascended to heaven after His Resurrection: “When they therefore were come together, they asked of Him, saying, Lord, will You at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” (Acts 1:6).

The disciples were ready for Jesus to set up His kingdom right then and there! His answer? “It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father has put in His own power” (vs. 7).

Because these men were not given a definitive “no,” they continued to believe Christ’s Return was IMMINENT through much of the first century.

James wrote, “Be you also patient; stablish your hearts: for the *coming of*

the Lord draws near" (5:8). This man was only off by about 2,000 years!

The lead apostle, Peter, was also incorrect on timing: "Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved..." (II Pet. 3:11-12). According to him, Christians alive when this letter was written were supposed to be looking to and awaiting a day when "the heavens" would be "on fire" and "dissolved."

Without question, this has not yet occurred!

Paul was off as well. He wrote in I Thessalonians 4:17 that "*we* which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

The word "*we*" implies that some of those in the Thessalonian church would live to see Christ return. He stated something similar in I Corinthians 15:51.

While the apostles were at first certain Christ would return in their lifetimes, it did not stay this way. Their understanding and thinking evolved with time.

In II Thessalonians, Paul had come to realize the apostles were off regarding the timing of specific events preceding Christ's Return. He revised his timeline and listed a number of prophetic events that would occur before the end: "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition" (2:3).

Even with this updated timing, however, Paul still seemed to believe that Christ's Return would occur soon after his death.

Acts 20 states this from Paul: "For I know this, that *after my departing* shall grievous wolves enter in *among you*, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (vs. 29-30).

Paul was referencing a prophecy from Zechariah 11, which has still not come to pass.

Verse 31 of Acts 20 continues: "Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not

to warn every one night and day with tears."

Think of it. For three entire years, Paul warned with all his heart about something that *still* has not occurred today.

How could God allow Paul, and all the apostles, to have timing of prophetic fulfillment so far off? Even more, why would God let this thinking be recorded as Scripture?

Prophecy Unlocked

Among true apostles, prophetic understanding grows with time. You saw this with Paul. Yet on all bedrock doctrine—God's Law and what a person must do to secure salvation—true servants never budge.

The reason misunderstanding of timing is found in the scriptures is simple. God wants all Christians to lead their lives with urgency—"pressing toward the mark" (Phil. 3:14).

Can you fault the apostles for writing in a way that spurred the people of their time to action? With the knowledge they had, it appeared that Christ would return soon. God *allowed* this thinking to persist.

With Paul, can you blame him for warning those under him "with tears"? He **DEEPLY** cared for those he shepherded and wanted to protect them.

Revelation is a perfect example of the way the Bible is written to invoke an automatic sense of urgency. Four times, Christ declares that He "comes quickly" (3:11, 22:7, 12, 20). Yet this text was written long ago.

God reveals prophetic knowledge to His servants in His own time. He decides *when* to unlock certain parts of Scripture. For example, Daniel earnestly wanted to know what his book of the Bible meant (12:8).

God's response: "Go your way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end" (vs. 9).

Yet this book has since been unsealed! Read *Bible Authority... Can It Be Proven?* at rcg.org/bacibp. It makes clear that Daniel *can* be understood today—a fact that provides towering proof that we are in "the time of the end."

Growing Importance

Because these are the last days, the warnings of all the original apostles apply *to us now*—a time when *many* false prophets and ministers will soon be upon us.

Peter wrote: "But there were false prophets also among the people"—false prophets have always been around—"even as there *shall be* false teachers among you, who privately shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction" (II Pet. 2:1).

Verse two states that "*many* shall follow their pernicious ways."

Paul gave a similar warning. He said "that in the last days perilous times" would come when "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (II Tim. 3:1, 13).

Jesus Christ prophesied: "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (Matt. 24:24).

In the last days—**OUR TIME NOW**—false teachers, faux ministers, and evil seducers are foretold to grow worse and worse. It is up to you to ensure you are not deceived.

God's Word even tells of specific **ARCH-DECEIVERS** who will soon emerge. Zechariah 11 mentions a "foolish shepherd," who is also called the "man of sin" in II Thessalonians 2. He will come "after the working of Satan with *all power* and signs and lying wonders" (vs. 9).

There is also *the* False Prophet, who works with another man called the Beast, mentioned in Revelation 19:20. Chapter 13 shows that the former will have the power to do "great wonders" and "make fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men" (vs. 14). The next verse reveals he will "deceive them that dwell on the earth"—this is sweeping power!—into worshipping the Beast.

There are numerous *other* prophecies in the Bible that have not yet

come to pass. Many of them will soon! The way to understand them and make certain you are not swayed by false servants is exactly the same. Make sure you DO what God says. Read the book *The Ten Commandments – “Nailed to the Cross” or Required for Salvation?* at rcg.org/syotc to understand the core of the Law.

When you live God’s Way, He allows you to understand Bible prophecy as taught by His faithful ministers. A comprehensive overview of end-time events can be found in *The Bible’s Greatest Prophecies Unlocked! – A Voice Cries Out* at rcg.org/tbgpu.

At the end of Matthew 7, after Jesus warned His followers to beware of false prophets, He made clear how to avoid being swept up in the torrent of deception soon to befall the Earth.

He stated: “Therefore whosoever hears these sayings of Mine, AND DOES THEM, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock” (vs. 24-25).

On the flip side, Jesus likened those who *do not* do what He com-

mands “unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and GREAT WAS THE FALL OF IT” (vs. 26-27).

Make yourself realize the gravity of what this passage means!

In the coming turbulent years, you can either be in a house built upon rock—and stand firm in God’s truth—or one built on sand—and fall into the swirling waters of deception.

It is up to you to decide whether you will stand or fall. □

SHAKE-UP

Continued from page 21

Everyone desires peace and prosperity. Only God can deliver it. As world order continues to unravel and fear reigns, people will seek the “desire of all nations”—Jesus Christ!

Look for two things to happen in the coming years: (1) order throughout the globe will continue to crumble, leading to war, conflict and disarray, and (2) a message about Christ establishing a perfect SUPERGOVERNMENT on Earth will reach all nations.

Both of these trends are discussed in Matthew 24: “And you shall hear of wars and rumors of wars...For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in diverse places” (vs. 6-7).

During this turbulent time, a message of hope will be spread across the Earth: “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come” (vs. 14).

The Bible says that Christ’s kingdom will start small (Matt. 13:31). He will begin it from a small and humble “flock” (Luke 12:32). It will continue to grow in size and strength until Christ directly intervenes in world affairs. This phase of His kingdom will demonstrate the awesome power of God.

Because God’s kingdom is tiny when it begins, most will not answer the gospel message when it first goes out. Yet, after a period of tremendous hardship, all nations will *desire* for Christ to reign.

Leading up to this triumphant moment, the world order will continue to be stressed and shaken. For those in America and other Western countries, the normalcy of life will change. People will live in a constant state of fear.

Indeed, fear will be “the new normal.” Terror will defeat all attempts for peace and security. Life, as we now expect and to which we have grown accustomed, will change.

The dynamic of a terroristic environment is ripe with suspicion toward others, especially those who are “not like you.” This will foster deeper divisions in already fractured societies—which as a consequence will generate even more fear!

As the “guardians” (police, security and military personnel) are targeted, they will become increasingly anxious and stressed. More “bad shootings” will occur because these guardians will be focused on self-protection as opposed to public safety. This will further drive a wedge between them and the

community they are tasked to protect, which will become a vicious cycle.

Fear and distrust create *momentum* that sustains itself. The world is entering the worst time in human history. In other words, things will get very bad.

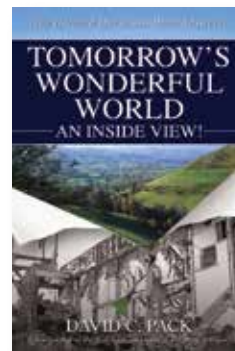
However, the situation will eventually get better—actually better than anyone can imagine. For those who see it coming, take heart. It is all part of God’s Plan.

For those who may be confused or even afraid, there is still time to change your life—and your destiny.

Connecting these dots ought to be a wakeup call that time is short. Seek truth. Ask God to help you understand. Visit the websites of The Restored Church of God—the publisher of this magazine. Read the Church’s literature, watch *The World to Come* videos, and contact us to seek counsel from one of our ministers.

What is forthcoming is not a pretty picture, but God wants everyone to be saved (I Tim. 2:4). Those who understand what God has in mind *know* that good news follows the terrible events that will shake this world.

To learn more about what will occur *after* this world’s system is shaken, read *Tomorrow’s Wonderful World – An Inside View!* □



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BRITAIN

Continued from page 12

The island nation of the British peoples always had a mind of its own. After all, it ruled or directly influenced the better part of the Earth, giving rise to the once-popular saying, “The sun never sets on the British Empire.” And for good reason: At its zenith, the British Empire stretched across the planet, including England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland, Canada, the original 13 colonies of America, Bermuda, Jamaica, South Africa, Egypt, Sudan, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, India, Iraq, Burma (today’s Myanmar), Australia, New Zealand, and Fiji, to name a few.

Britain has grown used to ruling on its own and charting its own course into the future. Quite naturally, it bristles whenever bureaucrats approve EU restrictions over British laws.

The result of the Brexit vote further confirms this.

Greatness Fulfilled

The entire world remains in blissful ignorance of the startling origins of the world’s greatest nations, Britain and the United States—why? Awe-inspiring prophecies regarding history’s great nations have yet to be fulfilled. Roughly one-third of the Bible is prophecy—history written in advance.

But even the most ardent Bible student is ignorant of what comes next. People in Britain and America, along with Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and other English-speaking nations, do not know what is set to occur for their peoples because they do not know how to identify their origins in Scripture.

No wonder God lamented in the book of Isaiah: “The ox knows his owner, and the ass his master’s crib: but Israel does not know, My people do not consider” (1:3).

While this verse certainly can apply to Western nations, God was specifically addressing the modern descendants of Judah, known today as

the Jewish people. Despite suffering great adversity throughout the centuries, taken captive by the Babylonian Empire and then released, and exiled and scattered abroad by the Roman Empire, the Jews never forgot their origins. This is largely because they have kept (for the most part) the seventh-day Sabbath, which identifies and sets apart the God who created it and the people with whom He has worked.

Consider the following excerpt from the book *America and Britain in Prophecy*, written by this magazine’s publisher and editor-in-chief, David C. Pack: “Many have mistakenly thought, ‘The Jews are God’s chosen people.’ This is only partially true, and it denies the tremendous truth about why the United States and Britain rose to such unprecedented prominence and power.

“God’s Holy Word clearly reveals that His entire plan of salvation is inseparable from, and relates to, the nation of Israel. Notice: ‘Who are Israelites; to whom pertains the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises...’ (Rom. 9:4).

“The Jews never fulfilled the national greatness prophesied—and promised—to come on the modern descendants of ancient Israel. Have you wondered why?

“Now ask yourself: Why is it then that the English-speaking peoples most profess to believe in the Bible and the God it describes? Why is it that all peoples of the world professing worship of the God of the Bible, were at one time taught by these English-speaking, Anglo-Saxon people? Why is it that these same people have done more to preserve the Bible than any other? Is it not also strange that *these* nations, and not the Jews, have proliferated the Bible around the world far more than all other nations put together?

“The Jews were prophesied to become scattered, and were *never* foretold to achieve national greatness. It is a far different story for the United States and British Commonwealth! It has been said that ‘Never in history

has any country or commonwealth been so blessed’ and that because of this blessing, ‘Never have so few produced so much to feed so many for so little.’ How true of these nations—but this has never been true of the Jews!

“Yet, this book in no way espouses the racist concept of *British Israelism*, which teaches that Britain is the kingdom of God on Earth. This is impossible, because Britain is declining not increasing. The Bible teaches no such silliness, but rather that the kingdom of God is vastly greater than the British Empire ever was. God’s promises of eternal salvation were never, and never will be, achieved through the horribly decadent and now shattered British Empire.”

Sadly, our modern age largely regards the Bible as antiquated—an archaic collection of “nice ideas” that bear little or no substance to the hectic, chaotic and dramatically changing lifestyles of the 21st century.

Nonetheless, the Bible is so much more than a collection of seemingly unrelated stories and enigmatic parables, listing “dos” and “don’ts” and traumatic, bone-chilling end-time prophecies. The Word of God is man’s Instruction Manual from his Creator, which has been recorded through the ages by divinely inspired servants. As the ultimate Instruction Manual, the Bible explains *who* and *what* we are, *why* we exist, *what* is life’s ultimate purpose—and *how* we can achieve it.

The Bible has much to say about the American and British peoples and their ultimate destiny. God’s Word identifies their forefathers, as well as those of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, France, the Netherlands, and certain other Western European nations.

If you would like to learn more about America and Britain’s biblical origins—and why they were such uniquely blessed and prosperous peoples—read the book *America and Britain in Prophecy* available at rcg.org/aabibp.

The future no longer needs to remain shrouded in mystery and uncertainty. □

PERSONAL

Continued from page 2

unless there is a third category containing the vast majority of people. But it must be a category that has not been recognized!

Is God a monster who would doom the great majority without offering them an opportunity for salvation? This is, however unwittingly believed, what most have concluded. They have assumed that only a relative few have been chosen to receive an opportunity to enter the kingdom of God. (To learn more about God's kingdom, read the booklet *What Is the Kingdom of God?* at rcg.org/witkog.)

Seven Millennial Days

The core of God's Plan encompasses 7,000 years. Few have understood this. Many *have* correctly understood at least some of the verses describing Christ's 1,000-year reign, which will begin at the time of His Return to Earth in great power and glory to rule with the saints (Rev. 20:4-6). And while most know little more than this, they know *nothing* of the fact that God has allotted approximately 6,000 years, or six millennial days of a "seven-day week," to man's rule, prior to the seventh 1,000-year "day." The sixth "day" is about to draw to a close. Satan is soon to be bound (Rev. 20:2).

However, he has *not yet* been bound. When Christ qualified to replace him (Matt. 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13) as the "god of this world," having overcome sin, He assured that Satan will soon no longer be present to deceive and confuse mankind (Rev. 12:9; I Cor. 14:33). But, once again, we must understand that he has not *yet* been bound and he seeks to do everything, within the great power that he does possess, to thwart God's Plan. He has certainly deceived his ministers (II Cor. 11:13-15) into believing that God has failed terribly in His Plan to save the vast majority. But it is only by God's permission that Satan holds sway over this "present evil world" (Gal. 1:4).

God is not losing a wrestling match over which He clearly has full control. He knows exactly what He is doing, and the beauty of His Plan *can* be known. Be assured that no true God would ever choose to condemn the vast majority who have ever lived without giving them a full opportunity for salvation. Such a God would not be worth following—He would be an unjust monster whose primary business is condemnation.

We must understand! The Bible states, "But, beloved, *be not ignorant* of this one thing, that *one day* is with the Lord *as a thousand years*, and a thousand years as one day"

“God is allowing man to learn bitter lessons. The vast majority, who have never known the precious truth of God, are having to learn that their own ways do not work!”

(II Pet. 3:8). Of course, most people *are* "ignorant" of not just this "one thing," but almost everything that the Bible teaches.

Yet this is a fascinating verse.

Man (under the unseen direction of Satan) has been given six days, or 6,000 years, to try his own ways, governments, religions, philosophies, value systems, and forms of education. He has practiced sin—disobedience to God's commands—for nearly 6,000 years, under the sway of Satan. Man has then tried to treat all of the ill *effects* instead of treating the *cause* of having broken God's laws.

God is allowing mankind to learn bitter lessons. The vast majority, who have never known the precious truth

of God, are having to learn that their own ways do not work! (Read the booklet *Why Man Cannot Solve His Problems* at rcg.org/uun.)

As mankind embarks on a path that would erase itself from Earth, Christ will intervene and save mankind from itself!

Now continue with II Peter. Notice verse 9: "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise... but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that *any* should perish, but that *all* should come to repentance." Did you notice that God wants to save *everyone*? Paul, when speaking of God (Christ), stated, "Who will have *all* men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (I Tim. 2:4). That is the plain truth of this verse. God is not, and never has been, in the "mass condemnation" business.

Satan has proliferated many forms of false religion all over the Earth. He counterfeits the truth in endless ways. He is a master deceiver and the fruit of his efforts lies all around us. However, there is coming a 1,000-year "Sabbath rest." Mankind will rest from sin and from the relentless deceit of the devil. His time will soon be up. He is angrier now than ever before.

Mark 2:28 states, "...the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath." Satan will be bound during this millennial Sabbath. It is vitally important to understand this tremendous truth.

II Corinthians 6:2—Terribly Misunderstood!

One verse is often cited to prove that *now* is the only opportunity for all mankind to achieve salvation. Let's read this almost universally misunderstood verse: "He [God] says, I have heard you in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succored you: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (II Cor. 6:2).

It is critical to understand that the word "the" in the *King James Version* is not found in the original Greek or Hebrew text. Translators added it thinking that they amplified the mean-

ing of the verse. Instead, they clouded and confused it.

The apostle Paul is actually quoting Isaiah 49:8: “Thus says the LORD, In *an* acceptable time have I heard you, and in *a* day of salvation have I helped you...” Neither the Greek of II Corinthians 6:2 nor the Hebrew of Isaiah 49:8 contains the definite article “the.”

The Knox Bible most accurately reflects the Greek meaning of the first part of II Corinthians 6:2: “I have answered your prayer, He says, in *a* [not *the* only one] time of pardon, I have brought you help in *a* [not *the*] day of salvation.”

Those who misread this verse have not considered that if salvation was only open during the time of Paul, *then it is not open to anyone now—including you and me!* Just as Paul lived over 19 centuries before our time, do not forget that he also was quoting a verse that was recorded many centuries before his time. To which age should these two references to the verse be assigned?

It is certainly true that today *is* the only day of salvation for all those who have been called, having their minds opened to God’s truth. There is no escaping that all such people are having their opportunity for salvation *now!* Once people understand the truth (Jms. 4:17; Heb. 10:26), there is no turning back. If God is revealing His truth to you at this time—then you must now act on it! This is, then, “*a*” day of salvation for all those being called today. There will be no second opportunity for people who reject God’s truth.

The Gospel Preached as a Witness

Nowhere in the Bible did Christ or anyone else say that the gospel of the kingdom was to be preached by His servants for the purpose of converting the entire world now. Try to find such verses. You will see that there are none.

Notice Matthew 24:14: “This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world *for a witness* unto all nations; and then shall the end come.” This was part of Christ’s answer to a

question in verse 3 of the same chapter. It is actually a prophecy of one of many great events that would precede His Return to begin His kingdom. The reference to “and then shall the end come” means the end of the age of man’s rule under the sway of the devil. But do not miss the phrase “for a witness” in Christ’s words. He did not say the gospel would be preached “for the purpose of converting all mankind” or any similar thing. It is this Church—The Restored Church of God, the publisher of this magazine—that is preaching this gospel today.

Few will heed and respond to God’s wonderful truth, made available to them in this age. You have been blessed to read it now. Most will ignore the opportunity to qualify to rule with Christ over the nations (Rev. 5:10; Matt. 5:5; Luke 19:11-27). Reading the truth contained in this article will prove to be little more than “for a witness” for many because they will not grasp the tremendous significance of God’s Plan and their potential role in it.

Few Now Given Understanding

As stated, very few are being given true understanding in this age. Because most have assumed that they understand God’s purpose, they remain totally *blind* to the great truth of what it is!

I ask you a question. All who know anything about the Bible recognize that Christ spoke many principles, points and truths through the use of parables. Why do you suppose that He did this? Have you not been led to believe that He did it to *illustrate* His purpose? This is what I was taught—and, like most, I swallowed it hook, line and sinker! This theory is false. It is *not* what the Bible says—it is wrong! More importantly, the correct answer reveals a vital truth.

Christ’s disciples asked Him this very question. Notice: “The disciples came, and said unto Him, *Why speak You unto them 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. For whosoever

has, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever has not, from him shall be taken away even that he has. Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand” (Matt. 13:10-13).

This is an amazing verse. The implications are stunning! Christ stated that He actually spoke in parables to *hide the meaning* of what He was saying. He explained that the “mysteries” of God’s kingdom were “given” to some and “not given” to others. This can only mean that some are called now and others remain blind. Yet God is perfect. In many verses, He describes His justice and fairness with all mankind, in every matter. And we have seen that He is “not willing that *any* should perish” and would “have *all* men to be saved.”

Consider Paul’s instruction to the Corinthians: “But unto them *which are called*, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God...For you see *your calling*, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*” (I Cor. 1:24, 26).

Several times Paul speaks of a “calling.” There are those who are called and those who are not. He explains that those called now are generally not the “wise, mighty and noble.” Most of these people will not listen to what God tells them because they do not think they need Him. For now, God is willing to let them have their way and learn bitter lessons that will later help them grow and learn faster, when He *does* call them.

In John 6:44 and 65, Christ stated, “No man can come to Me, except the Father which has sent Me *draw him*: and I will raise him up at the last day” and “no man can come to Me, except it were *given unto him* of My Father.” Only through God’s Spirit can one be drawn into and be given God’s truth. Without this calling, “drawing” or giving of the truth to a person, “no man *can*” come to the truth.

It is that simple. □

INTERNATIONAL

FEMA: Food Price Hikes to Cause Global Unrest

■ **FOOD SHORTAGE:** A 13-year-old Zimbabwean boy packs crops from last year's harvest for storage (Feb. 7, 2015). Many rural areas of Zimbabwe have been hit by severe drought, with more than a quarter of the population facing food shortages.

PHOTO: PATRICK BAZ/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

by 2024, according to a proposed scenario from a Federal Emergency Management Agency contractor.

The prediction is based on a 2015 study published by the Center for Naval Analyses, which went unreported until mid-2016. It simulated a global food crisis within the next decade triggered by “food price and supply swings amidst burgeoning population growth, rapid urbanization, severe weather events, and social unrest.”

The research took into account the current trends of food shortages, severe weather patterns—such as

droughts—oil price spikes, and prolonged crop failures in bread basket regions such as Zimbabwe.

Historically, such circumstances lead to political and economic instability, as a lack of resources causes mass migrations of populations and social unrest. In Venezuela, for example, where food prices may rise up to 720 percent this year according to the International Monetary Fund, crimes such as store looting and murder have skyrocketed.

Individual families would be impacted as well. The World Food Program stated on its website: “In some of the countries where WFP works, there are households that spend as much as 60-80 percent of their income on food. In these situations, higher prices clearly hit hard. Families cut the number of meals they have a day, they buy cheaper, less nutritious food and spend less on things like schooling and medicine.” □

Widespread unrest is likely to occur as food prices spike 395 percent in regions of the world

SOCIETY & LIFESTYLES

Living with Parents Now the Leading Domestic Status for Young Adults

Over 32 percent of American adults ages 18-34 are living with their parents, making this the leading living arrangement for this group, according to a Pew Research Center report.

Since 1880, the earliest date for which statistics are available, the primary living arrangement for young adults had been living with a spouse or partner.

Also among this age group today, 31.6 percent lived with a spouse or partner, 22 percent lived with another family member, non-relative or in group quarters such as dormitories, and 14 percent lived alone or as a single parent.

The number of 25- to 29-year-olds living in their parents' homes rose sharply from 18 percent in 2006 to 25

percent in 2014—among the highest levels on record. Also, 13 percent of 30- to 34-year-olds living with their parents in 2013 and 2014 (up from 9 percent in 2006) was the highest level for that group since 1940, when the nation was still recovering from the Great Depression.

Comparatively, the number of young adults ages 18 to 24 still living at home only slightly increased from 46 percent in 2006 to about half in 2014. This is mostly due to post-secondary schooling normally not finishing until a person's mid-20s.

“A variety of factors contribute to the long-run increase in the share of young adults living with their parents,” Pew study author Richard Fry stated.

“The first is the postponement of, if not retreat from, marriage. The median age of first marriage has risen steadily for decades. In addition, a growing share of young adults may be eschewing marriage altogether.”

In addition, greater unemployment and lower wages have made it more difficult for young adults to afford their own housing. Employment among 18- to 34-year-old men dropped from 84 percent in 1960 to 71 percent in 2014.

In response to the study, Philip Cohen, a sociology professor at the University of Maryland, told *The Washington Post*, “I see this as part of an overall trend in an increase in family diversity and decline in the nuclear-family household.” □

Cyborg Stingray Next Step in Creating Synthetic Life

Scientists at Harvard University developed a stingray-like synthetic creature made of biological material and mechanical parts capable of propelling itself through water—a breakthrough for researchers that could lead to future robotic, biological and medical developments.

No larger than a penny, the cyborg (short for cybernetic organism) is composed of a gold skeleton overlaid with a thin layer of polymer. The body is coated with about 200,000 living rat heart cells, which are genetically modified to contract when exposed to light.

The direction and frequency of light pulses controls the direction and speed of the synthetic creature's movement.

Researchers believe the project will lead to a greater understanding of how a heart pumps blood around the body. The cyborg's developer, bioengineer Kit Parker of Harvard University, plans to use his findings to design a synthetic heart—made of organic and mechanical elements—that could replace weakened or damaged hearts in humans.

In addition, the development “could offer some new leads for roboticists

working with soft tissue structures, and also help marine biologists better understand how rays use their fins to swim,” *ScienceAlert* reported.

Some bioengineers suggest that cyborgs similar to the stingray could be used for jobs that exceed human abilities, such as cleaning toxic waste from lakes.

Mr. Parker stated: “I think we’ve got a biological life form here...A machine, but a biological life form. I wouldn’t call it an organism, because it can’t reproduce, but it certainly is alive.” □

ASIA

Myanmar's New Democracy Struggles to Bring Positive Change

After 100 days in power, Myanmar's National League for Democracy (NLD) party has struggled to bring progress, despite being the first freely elected government after the nation endured 50 years of military rule.

While the NLD's primary objective is to provide peace to a nation that has suffered internal conflict since 1948—one of the world's longest running civil wars—it must do so by resolving disputes between “more than 20 ethnic armed groups, who all have their own agendas, their own interests, and their own positions,” Myanmar expert Robert Taylor told *Deutsche Welle*. “And getting them to agree in a two- or three-day meeting to sign a document is very difficult to do.”

The news outlet stated: “The new civilian administration inherited a country confronting an array of economic challenges. Despite its mineral wealth, Myanmar remains an impoverished nation, with a large segment of the Southeast Asian nation's over 53-million strong population mired in poverty.

“The government also faces tensions with the military which ruled the country for almost half a century,

and continues to control the nation's security policy by holding onto the key defense, home affairs and border affairs ministries.”

The NLD came into office in March 2016 promising to improve

on these conditions and grant citizens greater political freedoms. Yet the nation continues to be plagued by communal violence and frequent power outages, *Channel News Asia* reported. □

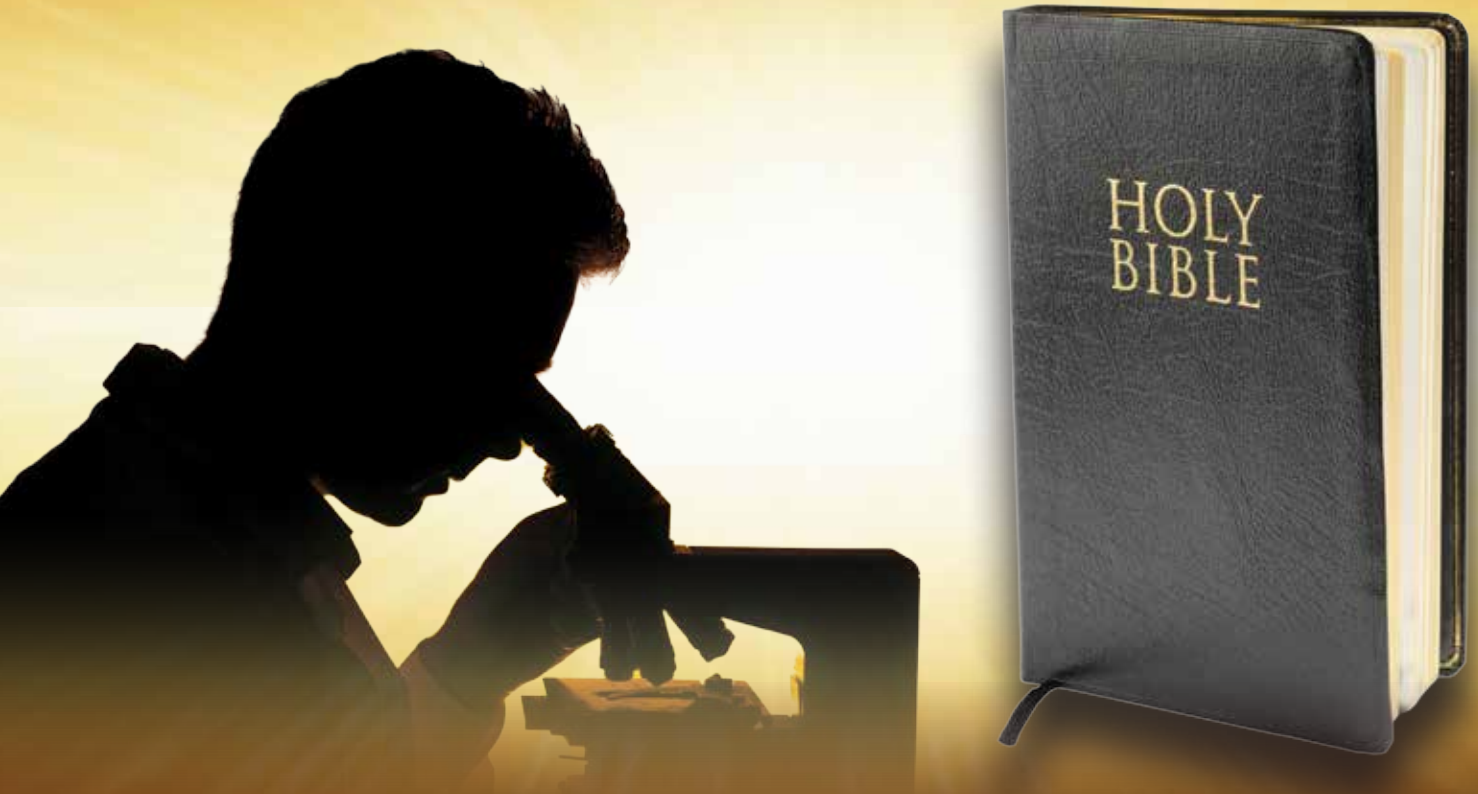


■ **NEW LEADERSHIP:** Myanmar National League for Democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi (second from the left) is welcomed by Myanmar's leaders following her swearing-in as the nation's first state councillor (March 30, 2016).

PHOTO: YE AUNG THU/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Science and the Bible

Can They Ever Agree?



Most people believe that God's Word conflicts with the age of the universe, the origin of species, and other facts about the physical world. In reality, however, the Bible contains many scientific truths—all of which were recorded long before modern biologists, astronomers and physicists officially discovered them.

The Real Truth magazine regularly publishes articles about this topic including:

- Science Confirms the "Give" Way of Life!
- Is the Earth 6,000 Years Old?
- Evolution Exposed: Deconstructing False Science – Part 1
- Designed for Discovery – Part 1: Why the Earth Is Unique
- Archaeology Validates the Bible!
- How Man Will Conquer Space!
- Human Mind vs. Animal Brain – Why So Different?
- Proof of God in the Palm of Your Hand!
- Seeing Clearly – The Story of the Human Eye

Visit realtruth.org for proof that science and the Bible **AGREE!**