

OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2016

THE

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REAL TRUTH™

A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING

A photograph of the Oval Office, showing the large wooden desk, the American flag, and the Presidential Seal. The room is brightly lit by large windows with gold curtains. The Presidential Seal is visible on the floor in the foreground.

Five Challenges the Next President Must Face

The New Space Race
Who Will Take the Lead?

Should Faith Be a
Mystery?

Never Again? 80 Years
After the Rome-Berlin Axis

The Scourge of Illiteracy
Soon to Be Erased!

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A R T I C L E S

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■ **STRIVING FOR LITERACY:** Two girls study together while attending a school in Bangalore, India (Sept. 7, 2011).

PHOTO: MANJUNATH KIRAN/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

The Scourge of Illiteracy Soon to Be Erased!

Throughout the world, 757 million people ages 15 and above are unable to complete a job application, comprehend a bus schedule, or read a magazine article. Global illiteracy remains a reality—but not for long.
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FRONT COVER: The Oval Office of the White House is pictured in Washington, D.C. (Aug. 31, 2010). The room is the president's primary place of work, and each new president decorates the office according to personal taste.

PHOTO: JEWEL SAMAD/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

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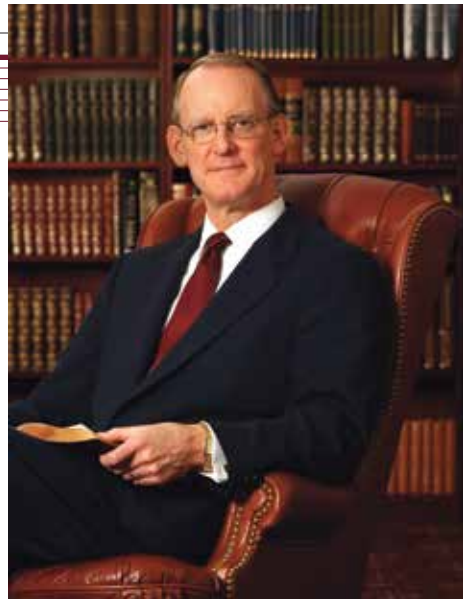
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PERSONAL FROM

David C. Fack



How to Avoid Ingratitude

INGRATITUDE IS AN integral part of society. If you ask most people if they are ungrateful, they will probably reply, “Of course not!” However, this attitude is so ingrained in their lives, they cannot openly admit—or even realize—that they are ungrateful.

But how can you tell if *you* are ungrateful? Are there things that identify ingratitude? And if so, what can you do about it?

Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines “ingratitude” as: “Forgetfulness of or poor return for kindness received.” It can also be defined as not appreciating or valuing what you have, or have been given. *Unexpressed* gratitude is also ingratitude!

In today’s fast-paced world, most people seem to not have time for thankfulness. Work, traffic, family, soccer practice, doctor appointments, and countless other things are their main priorities. They seem to have no time to thank others.

But consider the following. Have you ever given someone a gift and not received thanks for it? Have you ever been in a grocery store or restaurant and were not

thanked for your business? Have you ever felt unappreciated by family or friends or at your workplace? If so, how did it make you feel? Probably not very good.

Have you ever thought about *where* this mindset of ingratitude comes from? This is vital to understand before one can *overcome* this problem.

Past to Present: One Nation—Ungrateful

If you live in America or any other nation descended from ancient Israel, you live in one of the most abundantly blessed lands in the world. This country enjoys plentiful food, shelter, electricity, running water, wealth, air conditioning, heating, transportation, sanitation and many other blessings. If you live in one of these countries, take a moment to look around and fully take in all of the many blessings.

However, these lands are filled with chronic grumblers and complainers. Although there are *countless blessings*, there seem to always be countless things to *gripe* about—be it traffic, the economy, food prices, problems at work, difficulties with family, desire for additional material possessions, ill health, etc. Never before in the history of man has the world shown this horrible characteristic as it does today!

The Bible records the experiences of another nation—the ancient nation of Israel—whose people also constantly complained and murmured. No matter what God did for them, it was *never* enough.

After many years of slavery to the Egyptians, the Israelites, through God’s miraculous intervention, were released from bondage. As they left Egypt, God allowed them to collect riches, cattle, food, gold, jewels and supplies. God performed many miracles as they traveled through the wilderness. He selected them as His people, promising to take them to a land “filled with milk and honey.”

Notice God’s plain words to the Israelites: “And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a *good land* and a *large*, unto a land flowing with milk and honey” (Ex. 3:8).

But this was not *enough* for them!

Upon approaching the Promised Land, the Israelites were instructed by God to send spies to survey the land. It was located between other nations that were enemies of Israel.

After 40 days of spying the land, they returned and presented to Moses, Aaron and the congregation of Israel the fruit from the land, saying, “We came unto the land whither you sent us, and surely it flows with milk and honey...Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great” (Num. 13:27-28).

Caleb, one of the spies, asked Moses for permission to take the land. But the other spies—except for Joshua—lied to the people, claiming that it was infested with strong, powerful giants.

Notice the reaction of the crowd: “And all the children of Israel *murmured* against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt!

“And wherefore has the LORD brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? Were it not better for

us to return into Egypt? And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt” (Num. 14:2-4).

Israel was so blatantly ungrateful that they wanted to go back to Egypt—where they had undergone many years of brutal slavery. They did not appreciate the astounding blessings that God provided or the many powerful miracles He performed for them.

Notice God’s response to their attitude: “And the LORD said unto Moses, How long will this people *PROVOKE* Me? And how long will it be ere they believe Me, for all the signs which I have showed among them? I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them...” (vs. 11-12).

However, Moses reasoned with God, prompting Him to change His mind.

Numbers 14 continues: “And the LORD said, I have pardoned according to your word...Because all those men which have seen My glory, and My miracles...have not hearkened to My voice; surely they shall not see the land which I swore unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that *provoked* Me see it.”

“How long shall I bear with this *EVIL CONGREGATION*, which *murmur* against Me? I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur against Me.

“Say unto them, As truly as I live, says the LORD, as you have spoken in Mine ears, so will I do to you: your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness...you shall not come into the land, concerning which I swore to make you dwell therein... But your little ones, which you said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which you have despised...and the people mourned greatly...saying, Lo, we be here, and will go up unto the place which the LORD has promised: for we *have sinned*” (vs. 20, 22-23, 27, 29, 31, 39-40).

God called the Israelites an “evil congregation” for their sinful ingrati-

tude. To God, an ungrateful attitude is sin—evil—which provokes Him to anger! Although God did not strike Israel with pestilence at that time or disinherit them, He did cause them to wander in the wilderness for 40 additional years, until those that demonstrated this attitude died! Their murmurings and unthankful attitude condemned them from ever seeing the Promised Land!

Recall the common phrase, “Those that do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it.” This applies to the modern-day descendants of Israel—the United States, Britain, Australia and other democratic, primarily English-speaking people scattered throughout the world. These nations are foretold to relive history—and experience many soon-coming horrific events for much the same reasons as ancient Israel!

Ingratitude in Christ’s Day

Most are familiar with the many Bible accounts of Christ’s miracles. He walked on water, turned water into wine, fed thousands of people from a small amount of food, cast out demons, and healed many people. But, although He healed many, how many do you think actually came back to thank Him? You will be surprised.

Luke’s gospel records one such miraculous healing. In this account, Christ healed 10 lepers. Verse 12 records, “And as He entered into a certain village, there met Him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off: and they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.

“And when He saw them, He said unto them, Go show yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice *glorified God*, and fell down on his face at His feet, *giving Him thanks*: and he was a Samaritan.

“And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? But where

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Should You Celebrate Thanksgiving?

For many in North America, the yearly celebration of giving thanks is reduced to gorging on a big meal, excessive drinking the night before, or snoozing in front of a football game. For others, Black Friday—a day of frenzied shopping to capture the best market deals of the year—overshadows the holiday altogether.

Given all of the media hype, excess and sensational commercialism surrounding it, the original meaning of Thanksgiving can easily be

lost for Americans and Canadians. Yet citizens of these prosperous nations should have every reason to keep the day as it was intended.

Although the national holiday was not instituted in the Bible, the scriptures have much to say about thankfulness. The article “Should You Celebrate Thanksgiving Day?” provides historical and biblical insight into this holiday that can help you better appreciate everything that you have.

Read the article today at rcg.org/syctd.



FIVE CHALLENGES THE NEXT PRESIDENT MUST FACE

Contenders for the highest office in the land are bringing powerful promises and plans to resolve the nation's problems. Yet the solutions to these issues already exist in a source most do not think to search.

AFTER MONTHS of political handwringing, volatile debates, sound-bite attacks, and sensationalistic accusations, election day *finally* arrives. Americans pick the next leader of the free world.

Yet what happens next?

Each time a presidential candidate is elected into office, he usually brings a measure of self-assurance and bravado. But very soon the weight—the sheer magnitude—of the domestic and

foreign problems that demand attention and immediate responses becomes crystal clear. Election-trail promises meet the crushing reality of the political system.

Generations of people have grappled with troubles and difficulties, which is its own testament to the fact that they cannot be solved overnight. Yet mankind continues to search for answers.

Examining the issues America faces today and those the next president will confront reveals their complexity. No matter who is chosen to sit in the Oval

Office for the next four years, there are five major policy areas he or she will have to handle.

While other publications and news outlets address these and similar issues, *The Real Truth* does by examining them in the light of PROVEN Bible principles. Along with each issue are biblically based solutions—God's answers—to the problems America faces.

(1) Economic Woes

When Barack Obama, a senator from Illinois, was elected eight years ago,

he inherited a global recession that financially crippled households and banks across the United States. It even severely affected lives far beyond America's shores.

While the economy has significantly recovered since then, it has yet to return to the full strength it had under the Reagan-Bush-Clinton presidencies. Jobs today pay less and the number of openings are limited. Formerly thriving industries are still foundering, desperately gasping for air.

The future leader will likely rely on one of two options for fixing the economy: pumping money into society by creating jobs, as Franklin Roosevelt did with his public works program during the Great Depression, or providing tax incentives and legislation to help businesses grow, which would allow them to add more employees.

Yet pouring money or providing tax breaks would further accelerate the national government's already dangerously high debt levels. The debt is expected to swell to over 20 trillion dollars in 2017. And this financial burden will rest mostly on the shoulders of taxpayers.

Forbes explained: "With the debt per taxpayer as high as it is, if the government continues to raise taxes on middle income earners and above, it will become increasingly difficult for many of these individuals to preserve their standard of living. This will result in a reduction of wealth that spans the entire income spectrum, excluding perhaps the super-rich. The difficulty will begin in the middle class and eventually creep toward the higher income earners if the debt problem persists."

Middle class Americans, who make up the majority of households, are already suffering from their own financial challenges—be it from credit cards, student loans, or otherwise. And

the funds required to cover expenses far surpass the actual funds that come in monthly.

A *Bloomberg* report stated that one in seven U.S. households, including those with high-paying jobs, has a negative net worth. Of those with budgets "in the red," nearly half had a college degree.

Yet the nation could come out of these problems if it wanted to. There are principles and habits, both of which involve God, that would help individuals—and ultimately the nation—take control of their finances.

The Real Truth presented these foundational principles in the article, "Drowning in Debt – Cause Behind the Debt Crisis."

"The Bible, God's Instruction Manual for mankind, contains many practical, helpful points about finances. God created laws to govern every aspect of His Creation, but most do not understand that these laws therefore govern every action in life. The law of cause and effect—where actions always bring reactions—applies to finances. There is a way—a direct path—to financial freedom.

"Jesus explained in John 10:10, 'I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.'

"But how can you receive this abundant life? It requires a decision.

"God laid out this same decision to ancient Israel: 'I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both you and your seed may live' (Deut. 30:19).

"Realize that God will not force anyone to follow His ways. Yet obeying Him leads to blessings and happiness—disobedience leads to misery and unhappiness.

"Like the Israelites, many dismiss God's warnings. They ignore the fact that by not following His commandments—including His financial laws—bad effects will come. Impulsive spending is the byproduct of a generation lacking in strength and character and is the cause behind why so many are now buried under a mountain of debt.

"You do not have to become another statistic in the global financial meltdown. Choose to follow God's fiscal laws and take the first steps to living an abundant, debt-free life!"

To learn more, read the booklets *Taking Charge of Your Finances* (available at rcg.org/tcoyf) and *End All Your Financial Worries* (rcg.org/eayfw). They offer instruction from God's Word, as well as practical, common-sense advice you can use.

(2) Illegal Immigration

Which term should define those without citizenship in the country—"illegal immigrants" or "undocumented workers"? Fall on one side of the argument and you are in danger of being branded a racist or bigot. Fall on the other side and you are seen as unrealistic and a "bleeding heart."

Over 11 million people are living in the United States illegally. They make up about 3 percent of the nation's population.

Many illegals hold steady jobs because they are often more willing to work low-skill jobs for lower pay. Also, they help share the tax burden, providing an estimated \$7 billion per year to Social Security (they pay into fake or expired accounts).

While this is a boon to the nation's economy, it is a drain on other areas. Anyone found living illegally within the U.S. border can be imprisoned or deported. In any given day, 31,000 people are detained until immigration

■ **SHAKY OUTLOOK:** Top left, supporters of the Affordable Care Act gather in front of the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington, D.C. (March 4, 2015). Top middle, immigrants from Central America wait to board a bus to the United States after being released by the U.S. Border Patrol (Aug. 15, 2016). Top right, traders work on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange after the market dropped due to the outcome of the United Kingdom's Brexit vote (July 5, 2016). Middle left, a K-9 unit patrols Union Station in Washington, D.C., following a bombing in Brussels, Belgium (March 22, 2016). Bottom left, a man stands in front of police in an alley after a second night of clashes between protesters and police in Milwaukee, Wisconsin (Aug. 15, 2016). Bottom right, the main conference area of the White House Situation Room allows the president to maintain command and control of U.S. forces across the globe (May 18, 2007).

PHOTOS: ALEX WONG/ (TOP LEFT); JOHN MOORE/ (TOP MIDDLE); SPENCER PLATT/ (TOP RIGHT); WIN MCNAMEE/ (MIDDLE LEFT); DARREN HAUCK/ (BOTTOM LEFT); CHIP SOMODEVILLA/ (BOTTOM RIGHT); GETTY IMAGES



■ **IN MOURNING:** Police officers attend an interfaith memorial service honoring five slain police officers at the Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center in Dallas, Texas (July 12, 2016). PHOTO: TOM PENNINGTON/GETTY IMAGES

officials decide whether they should be deported. The cost: \$90 per day per detainee.

In addition, illegal immigration increases the likelihood of tensions within communities, gang violence, and competition for jobs.

All eyes are closely watching to see how the next president will address the ongoing crisis. Will the federal laws America has established be enforced or will all immigrants be welcomed without question—legal or undocumented? Will the next president deport them? Allow a means for them to stay? Vet them to determine if they pose a risk to national security? Or build a wall to deter immigrants from illegally entering in the future?

The bigger question, however, is how GOD would handle the situation. Surprisingly, He does explain how He would deal with this current issue—once again in the pages of the Bible.

Consider the following excerpt from *The Real Truth* article “Why America Cannot Solve Its Illegal Immigration Crisis”: “God is not a ‘respector of persons’ (Acts 10:34; Rom. 2:11). He rescued the Israelites from their meager existence and gave them His commandments, statutes and judgments so they would become a *model* nation...”

“Among these laws were statutes and precepts that governed the welfare and conduct of foreigners who were

allowed to live among the Israelites (Ex. 12:37-38). God declares that He loves the ‘stranger’ (Deut. 10:17-18) and expected Israel to do the same: ‘And if a stranger [foreigner] sojourn with you in your land, you shall not vex him. But the stranger that dwells with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God’ (Lev. 19:33-34).

“‘Strangers’ (or foreigners) were protected from oppression: ‘You shall neither vex a stranger, nor oppress him: for you were strangers in the land of Egypt’ (Ex. 22:21). ‘Also you shall not oppress a stranger: for you know the heart of a stranger, seeing you were strangers in the land of Egypt’ (23:9).

“‘Foreigners were to receive the same standard of judgment and fairness that was rendered to the Israelites (Lev. 24:19-22, 19:34-35; Deut. 24:17-18, 27:19).

“But to live among the Israelites, immigrants had to keep the same commandments, statutes and judgments that God’s people were commanded to keep. This included observing God’s weekly Sabbath (Ex. 20:8-10, 23:12) and annual Holy Days (12:18-19; Lev. 16:29-31). They were required to abstain from pagan sexual practices described in Leviticus 18: ‘You shall therefore keep My statutes and My

judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations; neither any of your own nation, nor any stranger that sojourns among you: (For all these abominations have the men of the land done, which were before you, and the land is defiled)’ (vs. 26-27).”

“Yes, Israel’s Deliverer looked out for the immigrants among His people. However, He also set a difference between the ‘stranger’ and the Israelite. There were certain things that only His people were allowed to do. For instance, foreigners were forbidden to eat the Passover meal (Ex. 12:43-47)—that is, unless they became full citizens (vs. 48-49).”

This system of dealing with foreigners may seem antiquated—and only found in the pages of the Bible. Yet soon the entire Earth will benefit from it.

God plans to set up a world-ruling SUPERGOVERNMENT in the coming years. In this government, which will be under the perfect rule of Jesus Christ, all areas of the world will have plenty of resources and space for their citizens. Nations will be at peace with each other. There will be no war, financial crises, political persecution, or any other circumstances that will pressure people to seek to live in another nation.

In this perfect system, the complications that result from immigration will be a thing of the past.

(3) Healthcare Reform

The average age of Americans is increasing. Meanwhile, health is declining—with the number of those who have everything from physical maladies to psychological issues rising fast. Without coverage, more and more people who need medicine or medical attention are simply not going to be able to afford it.

In response to this, America’s healthcare policy shifted drastically when the government ruled that citizens would be required to sign up for government-mandated health insurance. Those who opt out face tax penalties.

Some admire the government-run healthcare of Britain and Canada, where people can see a doctor without fear of racking up hefty medical bills.

But federally mandated healthcare—socialized medicine—is far from free. Someone pays for it—in fact, *everyone* pays for it in taxes. Under Britain’s National Health Service (NHS), “patients wait an average of about eight weeks for treatments that require admission to a hospital, four weeks for outpatient treatments and two weeks for diagnostic tests. While NHS patients have a choice of hospitals, they cannot always choose their specialist” (*Time*).

Many feel disgruntled that the U.S. government has more control in allocating their money toward things such as healthcare. They consider it a breach of freedom and a move toward socialism—a government-run “welfare state.”

There are many paths the new president could take toward fixing the issue. The most commonly stated solutions however involve spending the majority of resources on the healthcare system and not why people get sick in the first place. This is a form of treating the “effects” instead of focusing on the “causes” of the nation’s healthcare crisis.

Clearly, the healthcare system is broken and will remain that way as long as people believe poor health is something that cannot be avoided.

Yet as a *Real Truth* cover story “America the Medicated” stated, “God never intended it to be this way. He inspired the apostle John to write, ‘Beloved, I wish above all things that you may prosper and be in health, even as your soul prospers’ (III John 1:2).”

The article continues: “One of the definitions of the Greek word translated ‘be in health’ is ‘to have sound health, that is, be well (in body),’ according to *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. This reveals that one of God’s greatest priorities is for man to have physical well-being.

“A deeper look throughout the Bible’s pages reveals some of the physical benefits God intended for us to have.”

These benefits—and how to access them—can be known. To learn more about them, order free copies of the booklet *God’s Principles of Healthful Living* (rcg.org/glohl) and the arti-

cle “You Can Live the Abundant Life!” (rcg.org/yclal).

(4) Worsening Terrorism

In recent decades, Americans have experienced several major attacks from extremists. Despite drastic events in the past, however, such as the bombing of the World Trade Center in 1993, the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995, and events on September 11, 2001, U.S. citizens are now increasingly fearing the threat of attack in their own neighborhoods.

A spate of terror attacks over the past year, most from individuals claiming allegiance to the Islamic State terror group, reveals ordinary, “anonymous” citizens are the new primary targets. The battleground has changed. Instead of high-profile politicians in government buildings or large financial centers, terrorists target night clubs, disability centers, and even passers-by on streets. Think of the mass shootings in Orlando, Florida, and San Bernardino, California.

Citizens are increasingly wondering: Am I safe in this country? Polling data from the Chicago Council on Global Affairs reveals that more and more do not feel that they are.

In the survey, individuals were asked if their country feels safe. Approximately 42 percent said no, compared with 27 percent in 2014.

More alarming, 89 percent of those polled believe that terrorism will be a fact of life in their futures.

No doubt, this will heavily weigh into the next president’s agenda, especially regarding foreign policy.

Should money and military manpower be poured into defeating the Islamic State terror group, which has been influencing indiscriminate attacks worldwide? Or can instability and extremism in the Middle East be solved by spreading and supporting democracy?

For a person living in accordance to God’s Word, terrorism is not something to be feared. The following excerpt from *The Real Truth* article “One Nation Under Terror – Three Realities America Can Learn from Life in Israel” reveals why.

“Many...optimistically believe they can minimize the terror problem through increased security. Much of American life still feels normal. Yet conditions such as terrorism are meant to be a screaming warning that something is wrong—and to jolt the U.S. from its slumber. Indeed, threats from extremist groups are only one way of helping America see its true condition.”

“For individuals who sense something is terribly wrong, God declares: ‘Stand you in the ways, and see, and *ask for the old paths*’—detailed throughout the Bible—‘where is the good way,



■ **DISCONTENT:** Low-wage workers and supporters protest for a \$15 per hour minimum wage in New York City (Nov. 10, 2015).

PHOTO: SPENCER PLATT/GETTY IMAGES

and walk therein, and you shall find rest...’ (Jer. 6:16).

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

The book *The Ten Commandments – “Nailed to the Cross” or Required for Salvation?* (rcg.org/syotte) will show you just how to live God’s Way so that you can be assured *true safety*.

(5) Crime Spike

Murders and violent crimes by domestic perpetrators are also exploding in the United States. By midyear, a violent crime survey by the Major Cities Chiefs Association found that the number of homicides, attempted murders, rapes, assaults and robberies was up in major cities from 2015 to 2016.

The Chicago Police Department reported a near-50 percent increase in the number of homicides over last year, while in San Jose the homicide rate doubled.

An *Associated Press* article stated: “Americans have grown accustomed to low crime rates since a peak in the 1990s. But law enforcement started seeing a spike last year that has continued unabated.”

“Some say the splintering of gangs has created deadly rivalries, others say the disbanding of specialized police units has helped embolden gangs.”

The latter reason calls to mind the awakening of racism discussions after a series of high-profile police killings of black men. Is increasing violence truly the result of poor race relations? Or are police shrinking back from duty in the face of increasing public scrutiny?

Whatever the case, there are differences in how different races view the prevalence of racism in the United States. A Pew Research Center poll reported the following statistics:

■ 4 in 10 black Americans think the nation will never experience equality.

■ 4 in 10 white Americans believe there is already equality.

■ 4 in 10 whites say there is too much focus on race.

■ 6 in 10 blacks say there is too little focus on race.

■ 57 percent of Latinos claim race relations are bad.

In addition to poor race relations, access to guns is blamed for the increasing violence. To stem the tide of gun-related crimes and to prevent future scenarios in which disgruntled people unleash murderous wrath upon the unsuspecting, politicians and lawmakers have taken action. They have sought to impose laws meant to severely restrict who can legally purchase firearms. Yet this remains a highly controversial subject.

The next president will have to address these issues, else solutions to increasing violence and crimes will remain elusive.

The Bible’s method to stopping violence is summed up in one phrase: eliminate human nature. God’s Word defines our inner nature: “The heart [mind] is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” (Jer. 17:9).

Man’s natural state of mind is to think better of himself than he actually is. It takes minds led and influenced by the Holy Spirit to see themselves from God’s point of view. It is God’s Spirit that enables a person to faithfully keep His Law, both in letter (actions) and in spirit (attitude).

God’s Law is summarized in Romans 13: “You shall not commit adultery, You shall not kill, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness, You shall not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. Love works no ill to his neighbor...” (vs. 9-10).

Contrast this to the current spirit that permeates the world—that of selfishness, pettiness, jealousy, wanton lust, greed, competitiveness to the extreme, disrespect toward authority... the list is endless.

The Real Truth article “Gangs in America – A Deadly Game” discusses how God will eventually eradicate violence worldwide: “For now, the Creator is allowing mankind to try its

own ways, so it can understand that without the proper knowledge of God’s Law, it is incapable of finding peace. Notice: ‘There is a way which seems right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death’ (Prov. 14:12).

“The soon-coming supergovernment ruled by the Family of God will usher in peace and replace all ‘ways of death’—such as gang life.”

Today we could add violent crimes, racial tension, and disrespect toward authority.

Without addressing human nature, crime will not go away. God must be involved to eradicate this scourge!

What About You?

Policies shift from one president to the next. America will soon witness this again starting next February, when the 45th president gives an inaugural speech.

At that time, numerous idealistic plans for the next four years will be laid out. Some few directives will eventually trickle through the system and make their way through the democratic process: a bill will be drafted, pass through Congress, pass through the president, be established as a law, and then be executed.

Change through this process often takes years, while the problems that necessitated the law in the first place change.

Yet there are solutions in God’s Word—some of which can be applied today and others that will come to bear once Jesus Christ establishes His government on Earth. And unlike those implemented by the governments of man, the Bible’s solutions to problems do not shift.

Indeed, Scripture is a source of valid information for today’s problems! While most think of it as antiquated writings of desert-wanderers, or nice-sounding phrases for preachers to soothe their listeners, it actually contains clear answers to the current political confusion.

Whatever changes the next president chooses to bring to America, be sure you are equipped with real understanding from God’s Word. □



THE NEW SPACE RACE

Who Will Take the Lead?

The race is on for who can become the most prominent space power.

BY JEFFREY R. AMBROSE

OVER A HALF-CENTURY ago, the world was stunned and Americans shaken. In a remote region of today's Kazakhstan, the Soviet Union launched Sputnik, the first artificial satellite to orbit the Earth. It was little more than a few pieces of metal with a transmitter and a battery strapped to the top of a missile. Yet it put the Soviets in the lead for the race to space.

Pressured to catch up, United States President Eisenhower signed legislation to create NASA and to invest in science and math education for grade school students. This paved the path to President Kennedy's bold statement in 1961—the U.S. would send a man to the moon and back before the decade was

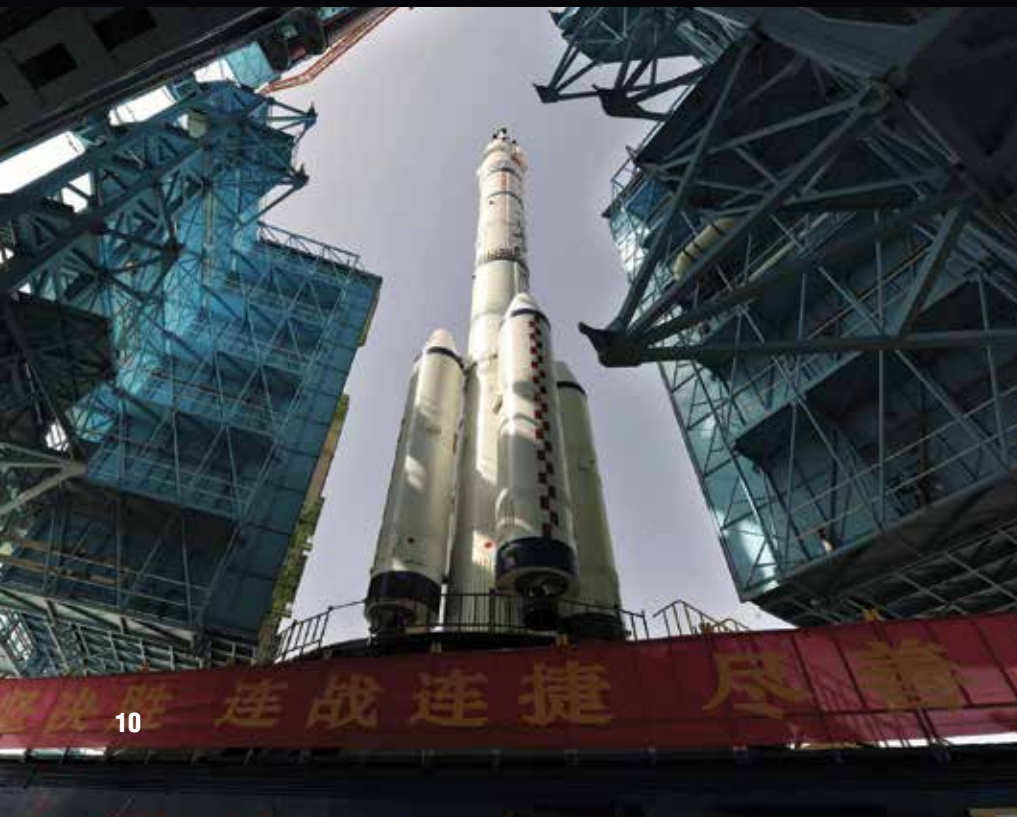
■ **LAUNCH:** A Soyuz 2.1a rocket carrying satellites lifts off from the launch pad at the new Vostochny Cosmodrome outside the city of Ulgorsk, Russia (April 28, 2016).

PHOTO: KIRILL KUDRYAVTSEV/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



■ **OPEN RACE:** Top, a crew with members from Russia, the United States, and the European Union wave farewell prior to boarding the Soyuz TMA-19M rocket in Baikonur, Kazakhstan. The team embarked on a six-month mission on the International Space Station (Dec. 15, 2015). Bottom, a Long March 2F carrier rocket containing the Shenzhou X spacecraft stands at a launch pad in Jiuquan, China (June 3, 2013).

PHOTOS: NASA/JOEL KOWSKY/ (TOP); STR/AFP/ (BOTTOM); GETTY IMAGES



over. As daunting as this sounded at the time, the nation met that goal when Apollo 11 landed American astronauts Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin on the lunar surface in July 1969.

So began the original space race: a Cold War showdown between Washington and Moscow, the two largest powers left standing in the wake of World War II. Eyeing each other with suspicion, the two nations viewed the expanse of space beyond Earth's atmosphere as the next front on which to assert global dominance.

The collapse of the Soviet Union ended the Cold War and changed U.S. relations with Gorbachev-era Russia. But the space race did not end. While the United States dominated the Soviet Union in the race for over four decades, today it relies on its former archrival to get there. And while America's ambition to explore is losing steam, today, more competitors than ever are setting their sights skyward.

New Direction

During his State of the Union Address on January 12, 2016, President Barack Obama spoke before a joint session of Congress: "Sixty years ago, when the Russians beat us into space, we didn't deny Sputnik was up there. We didn't argue about the science, or shrink our research and development budget.

"We built a space program almost overnight, and 12 years later, we were walking on the moon."

He also posed the question, "How do we reignite that spirit of innovation to meet our biggest challenges?" Mr. Obama remarked that the same spirit of discovery that led to the moon landings is "in our DNA."

Although he used the principle to represent and reinvigorate the race to find a cure to cancer, this was not the first time the American president referred to the moon landings as America's crowning achievement.

During a speech at the John F. Kennedy Space Center in 2010, the president remarked that "leading the world to space helped America achieve new heights of prosperity here on Earth,

while demonstrating the power of a free and open society to harness the ingenuity of its people.”

Nevertheless, the United States remains on the cutting edge. To date, it is the only nation to have landed human beings on the moon. It is the only nation to have sent land rovers to Mars—one of which is *still* navigating the Martian surface 13 years after its landing.

Currently, NASA is constructing a deep-space crew capsule that it purports will “usher in a new era of space exploration.” Dubbed the Orion, it will be capable of carrying humans to Mars. The spacecraft is on track for completion in the early 2020s.

Despite these advancements, America’s space program no longer rates high on its list of priorities. This has resulted in several tell-tale signs of a waning space program: the cancellation of the shuttle in 2011 and funding cuts in 2017 to certain NASA projects.

Buzz Aldrin, the second man to set foot on the moon, fears America’s waning interest and investment in space exploration could hurt the country’s morale and position of leadership. Mr. Aldrin juxtaposed today’s space race with the program of the 60s: “...I learned...that John F. Kennedy wanted us to go to Mars. But his engineers told him that going to Mars was a bit too hard and that going to the moon was a more realistic goal. Can you imagine? We can’t even get to the moon within the next decade at the current state we’re in” (*Spear’s*).

The 86-year-old Aldrin also fears that “if we don’t start taking space more seriously we will fall far behind. We’re already getting behind. We don’t even have the capability to get our own astronauts into space—we have to rent rides from the Russians at \$77 million per astronaut to get them to our space station. China is the only other country capable of getting humans into space right now” (*ibid.*).

Politics of Space

Why is staying ahead in the space race so important? The main reasons put forward are the advancement of science and opportunity to better under-

stand the universe. Space experiments have yielded technology used in a wide variety of fields, from food safety to art restoration, surgery to hurricane forecasting. The telecommunications industry has also benefited greatly from the development of satellite technology.

In addition, access to space provides key support to a nation’s military. For decades, the concept of “militarizing” space (sometimes called “weaponizing”) has gone hand-in-hand with its exploration.

This is most commonly done through so-called spy satellites, equipped with very powerful cameras that can provide snapshots of the ground below. Some, called Keyhole Class satellites, have been in orbit for over three decades and can detect objects as small as six inches across. A number of these may be scanning any point on Earth’s surface at any given time.

However, the political impact of a successful space program, if not equal to or more important than the scientific impact, must be counted as a close second. The 1969 moon landing helped firmly establish the United States as the preeminent superpower. By the beginning of the 1990s, the nation held this position undeniably. Regular space shuttle missions, in spite of periodic tragedy, bolstered American pride.

At the same time, Russia struggled to complete its version of the shuttle, the Buran, which made only one unmanned flight before the entire effort was mothballed in 1993. This disappointing episode symbolized, and largely resulted from, the financially troubled times then facing the Russians.

America’s fading interest in space exploration represents a similar decline, while it is also a clear signal for other countries to step into the void.

Newcomers

Before 2003, only the United States and the USSR/Russia had completed manned space flights. In October of that year, China became the third to do so with the launch of the Shenzhou 5.

A number of other countries have followed the lead of these pioneers in exploring space. France, India, China and Israel have employed satellite surveillance, and many other countries have a space agency of some sort, from the United Kingdom to Brazil to Germany to the Ukraine to Spain.

China’s space program has continued making strides since 2003. Its plans for the near future include sending a man to the unexplored “dark side” of the moon by the 2020s, a mission to send a rover to Mars, and creating its own system of satellites for GPS.

The Asian nation has already made a giant leap toward its moon goal by landing an unmanned probe on Earth’s satellite. The Chang’e 3, as it is called, touched down in June and released a rover that conducted geological surveys.

China also plans on replacing its space station, Tiangong-1, meaning “heavenly palace,” with a new, larger space lab—Tiangong-2—in 2016. The Tiangong-1 has been in orbit since 2011 and hosted several manned missions with Chinese astronauts, however, it has since expired. Tiangong-2 will replace it until the much larger Tiangong-3, which is planned for completion by the early 2020s, is constructed.

Eric Hagt, China program director at the World Security Institute in Washington, D.C., stated: “Building a permanent presence in space has been a longstanding goal of China and is more than just another step in its program. It has the important symbolic value of staking a claim in low-earth orbit and illustrates China’s permanent interests and claims to develop and exploit space along with other space-faring powers” (*Asia Times*). The ascendant nation sees a space program as one hallmark of a superpower—and it is well on its way.

The United Kingdom wants to put its own craft into space. This year, the queen unveiled the government’s plan to back the creation of a British space station. The rationale for such a development is to “secure low-cost access to space for our world-leading

small and micro satellite industry,” the legislation for the spaceport stated. It has been 50 years since the UK attempted to reach space.

The 21st century has seen a new phenomenon in the space race altogether—private companies developing their own space crafts—proving that anyone with ingenuity and enough cash can compete.

Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen “played an early role in stimulating what has come to be called the new space industry, partnering with [aerospace company Scaled Composites’] founder Burt Rutan to pay for development of SpaceShipOne, the first and so far only privately funded spaceship to fly people beyond the atmosphere,” *Reuters* reported. SpaceShipOne conducted commercial flights after its release in 2003 on the 100th anniversary of the Wright brothers’ first powered flight of an aircraft.

Now, Mr. Allen is funding company Stratolaunch Systems to develop the “Roc,” planned to be the world’s largest plane that will launch satellites into orbit. *Daily Mail* reported: “With a gargantuan wingspan of 385 feet (117 m) and six engines, the plane is taking a new approach in the private space race, by launching satellites and spacecraft into orbit from high altitude.

“The craft will be larger than Howard Hughes’ 1947 H-4 Hercules, known as the ‘Spruce Goose,’ and the enormous Antonov An-225, a Soviet-era cargo plane originally built to transport the Buran space shuttle that is currently the world’s largest aircraft.”

Mr. Allen’s company is competing with other entrepreneurs such as Elon Musk, who commissioned SpaceX that is developing Falcon Heavy—slated to be the world’s most powerful rocket—and companies such as Virgin Galactic—part of Virgin Group—which crafted a spaceplane that could take passengers to the higher reaches of the atmosphere for \$250,000 per flight.

For some, America’s increasing reliance on entrepreneurial space pro-

grams represents a demise of national pride. Americans no longer care to see their tax dollars—or even their futures—go toward their nation’s place as the leader in space.

The race is no longer exclusive to superpowers and the mega wealthy. India, a developing country, “successfully launched a mini shuttle [in May 2016],” *Inquisitor* reported, “solidifying the Indian Space Research Organization’s position as a fierce competitor in the new space race. With the United States no longer in the reusable spacecraft business, the successful launch of India’s mini shuttle could eventually pit the country’s space program against private sector competitors like Elon Musk and Jeff Bezos [founder and CEO of online retailer Amazon].

“The mini shuttle launched from India’s Sriharikota base, according to a release from ISRO. The successful launch sent the prototype to an altitude of about 40 miles before gliding back to earth. The mini shuttle splashed down into the Bay of Bengal about 13 minutes after the initial launch.”

While the shuttle technically did not enter space, and would require years of development before it is capable of doing so, aerospace scientists marvel at the relatively low cost of the achievement.

“The combination of lower costs and the successful launch of their mini shuttle shows how India could eventually make inroads into the \$5.9 billion satellite launching industry.”

Such developments were unheard of just decades ago. Some see it as a clear sign of America’s declining superiority.

America...Still a Superpower?

Despite waning U.S. involvement in the space race, the nation continues to reap the benefits of decades of space exploration and technological advancement.

Indeed, the United States government still allots an enormous amount of money for NASA’s budget—\$19.3 billion for fiscal 2016, which by itself exceeds the individual GDPs of near-

ly half the nations on Earth. Yet most do not consider that it takes more than funding for a nation to achieve success. America is looking less and less like a lone superpower, and the increasingly crowded space race is one more way this is evident.

Those who believe that the universe, Earth and humankind are a cosmic freak accident would look no further than purely physical reasons for America’s remarkable achievements. Others, believing in a Creator that is distant and uninterested in His Creation, may take a similar view.

However, those who have proven that the Bible is the inspired Word of God can read the following bold declarations:

■ “Come near, you nations, to hear; and hearken, you people: let the earth hear, and all that is therein; the world, and all things that come forth of it” (Isa. 34:1).

■ “The most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomsoever He will” (Dan. 4:17).

■ “For promotion comes neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the Judge: He *puts down* one, and *sets up* another” (Psa. 75:6-7).

■ “Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God forever and ever: for wisdom and might are His...He *removes kings*, and *sets up kings*: He gives wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding” (Dan. 2:20-21).

Yes, the God of the Bible is involved in the flow of history. There is a reason that nations such as the United States rose to such dizzying heights of power and are now sliding downward. And you may be surprised to learn that it ultimately has *nothing* to do with American ingenuity, racial superiority, or anything for which the American people can take credit.

For more on this, request the free book *America and Britain in Prophecy* at rcg.org/aabibp. It combines the facts of history and plain verses in Scripture to reveal the amazing origins of these nations—and what the future will bring. □



The Scourge of Illiteracy *Soon to Be Erased!*

Throughout the world, 757 million people ages 15 and above are unable to complete a job application, comprehend a bus schedule, or read a magazine article. Global illiteracy remains a reality—but not for long.

TAKE A GLIMPSE into a school of the future: Class sizes are small, enabling teachers to work more closely with students. Every school uses the same quality of books, manuals and other scholastic material, due to equitable funding.

Educators and staff are friendly and approachable, diligent to set the

right examples, and free of “progressive” sociopolitical agendas. Teachers are well-educated, highly qualified, and earn comfortable salaries. All desire their students to succeed. They use the most effective teaching methods, which leave no place for confusion in the scholastic curriculum.

Students peaceably stroll through hallways without fear of intimidation or assault from fellow classmates.

The school grounds are clean and free of graffiti and other markings. They are safe, uplifting environments where students can retain their innocence. Where educators are highly motivated. Where young minds are willing and ready to learn, and encouraged daily to excel. Where illiteracy is extinct.

An impossible scenario? An elusive dream of utopia? No, this is a reality that can and will come to

■ **IN SCHOOL:** A woman stands at a blackboard during a literacy class in Ougadougou, Burkina Faso (Oct. 12, 2009).

PHOTO: ISSOUF SANOGO/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



■ **EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGES:** Students participate in a literacy class in Kabul, Afghanistan. The nation has one of the lowest rates of literacy in the world (Sept. 6, 2007).

PHOTO: MASSOUD HOSSAINI/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

pass—though not by the governments and institutions of men.

A Look into the Past

The United Nations defines illiteracy as the inability to read and write a simple message in one's language. This also includes not being able to comprehend text.

For millennia, the ability to read and write was generally limited to rulers and the wealthy, as well as scholars and religious leaders. Under the Greek and Roman empires, literacy among the masses became more prevalent.

In Europe, major catalysts of literacy were the printing press and the Protestant Reformation, which stressed the importance of reading the Bible.

In the past 100 years or so, Western nations have made schooling compulsory, which has served to reduce man's illiteracy rate even further. Coinciding with this, the Industrial Revolution, which brought an ability to inexpensively mass produce goods, allowed the widespread dis-

tribution of books, pens and other scholastic material.

Revolutionary political movements during the past 200 years targeted illiteracy as an enemy. Even totalitarian communist regimes sought to bring reading and writing to the people—though with the intent of conditioning and controlling their populations.

Nonetheless, oppressive societies throughout history have suppressed education from being given to common people. The thought of regular people and those at the bottom rung of society understanding how to read and write was viewed as a threat to the balance of power. Illiteracy made it easier to control them.

The modern world has made great gains in reducing illiteracy: From 1970 to 2015, the adult literacy rate rose from 75 percent to 85 percent.

But it still remains an issue for certain areas and demographics. A few more statistics provide a global snapshot of current illiteracy rates:

■ Illiteracy rates are the highest in Sub-Saharan Africa and Arab states,

where they are 64 percent and 81 percent, respectively.

■ In nations where severe poverty is widespread, so is illiteracy.

■ Two-thirds of illiterate adults are women.

On top of those who are illiterate, there are also the “functionally illiterate,” who can read and write simple messages in their own language, but whose reading and writing skills are inadequate for daily living or employment tasks. The functionally illiterate cannot fill out employment applications, read news articles, interpret bus or subway schedules, or consult a dictionary.

In addition, studies indicate illiteracy is tied to poverty and crime, all of which is perpetuated from generation to generation.

Awesome Future Just Ahead!

Generally, worldwide literacy rates are progressing, even for many living in the poorest nations. However, illiteracy and substandard education will continue to exist as long as young minds remain prisoners in a scholastic environment of inept or powerless educators, sociopolitical agendas, negligent parents, poor funding, illegal drugs, and on-campus violence.

Yet the future scenario described at the beginning of this article will one day become reality for all. It will be established by a new, world-ruling system—a supergovernment—led by the greatest Educator, foretold millennia ago in Scripture.

Take note: “For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this” (Isa. 9:6-7).

This is a prophecy of Jesus Christ returning to establish the kingdom

of God on Earth. Quoting this might seem laughable to secular minds. Yet 6,000 years of history—monarchies, dictatorships, communist systems, republics, democracies—prove that human beings are incapable of ruling themselves. Man does not know how to bring about the universal peace, prosperity and personal security for which all long. Governments of men, even those that start with noble intentions, eventually degenerate into corruption, nepotism, hypocrisy and moral compromise.

But the kingdom of God is different. It is the divine government of God administered by the Family of God—whose members have rejected the pulls and temptations of this world and replaced carnal nature with holy, righteous, godly character over the course of a lifetime. In addition to being judges under Christ's rule, they will also be teachers.

Notice: "For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem: you shall weep no more: He will be very gracious unto you at the voice of your cry; when He shall hear it, He will answer you. And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not your teachers be removed into a corner any more, but your eyes shall see your teachers: And your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, This is the way, walk you in it, when you turn to the right hand, and when you turn to the left" (Isa. 30:19-21).

Human beings do not understand that "the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walks to direct his steps" (Jer. 10:23). Every person has his own idea of right and wrong, good and evil—and no two people totally agree.

Even worse, the laws, ethics, morals and rules of conduct people generally agree upon degenerate from generation to generation. What was liberal 40 or 50 years ago is now viewed as over-the-top right-wing.

Man needs guidance from his Maker, or else civilization devolves into a society in which every man does that which is "right in his own eyes" (Judg. 21:25).

Like the world today.

"But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains [large governments], and it shall be exalted above the hills [small governments]; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem" (Micah 4:1-2).

One of the many things the returning Christ will teach is the way to peace: "And He shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (vs. 3).

Notice verse 2 again: "for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem." God's Word—the Bible—is an "instruction manual" for learning how to live, how to successfully interact with God and neighbor. This can only happen if people can read the Bible. Obviously, God will make certain that all peoples will know how to read and write so that they can do this.

The book *Tomorrow's Wonderful World – An Inside View!* (rcg.org/tww) offers a glimpse into man's future:

"Life is a process of education—learning to develop character by obedience to God's laws, which in turn yields every good, fulfilling and favorable result. Education in the world tomorrow will explain how to live—and how to learn a productive trade. Of course, all academic subjects, including wholesome art and music, will produce well-rounded people. Life will become invigorating, exciting and fulfilling."

"Re-educating the world will be a truly monumental task. The difficult job of teaching people to learn can

only be done if teachers are un-handcuffed and allowed to bring proper discipline and order to schools and classrooms, now so out of control."

"Perhaps the greatest single barrier to being sure all nations are taught the exact same thing, with no room for misunderstanding, are man's hundreds of different languages. All peoples must be given a pure language so that God's knowledge is not subject to the error of translators working in and out of hundreds of languages and dialects. The fulfillment of Isaiah 11:9 has to involve a simultaneous worldwide education program.

"In fact, the Bible directly prophesies the coming of this new, pure language to be spoken by all nations. Notice: 'For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve Him with one consent' (Zeph. 3:9).

"Try to imagine a world with absolutely no communication barriers. It is a very different picture [from] today's world.

"Only with one perfect language will every international barrier to peace truly disappear. The plague of mis-education and illiteracy will also vanish. Recognize that a leading cause of illiteracy is that great areas of the world do not even have language in written form. Among those that do, there are a variety of differing alphabets, such as Hebrew, Russian, Arabic, Greek and Sanskrit. Also gone will be the multiple ways that people pronounce the same words differently."

"Education and literacy will be universal in the world tomorrow, restoring dignity to all humanity, created in the image of God."

"With proper education and no language barriers, 'the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea!'"

Incorruptible teachers. A pure, easy to understand, universal language. A world-ruling government dedicated to educating all people. Only then will the scourge of illiteracy be erased. □

NEVER



80 Years ROME-BER

Eight decades after the formation of the alliance between Germany and Italy, few would say the rise of an expansionist European dictator is imminent. Yet history and the Bible reveal otherwise.

BY SAMUEL C. BAXTER

BERLIN, 1936: The world gathered for the Olympic Games. It was Nazi leader Adolf Hitler's chance to show off a resurgent Germany and his vision for the nation. Propaganda mastermind Joseph Goebbels hatched a plan for a pomp-and-circumstance spectacle for the opening ceremony.

The event seems utterly bizarre in hindsight, like some sort of sci-fi alternate universe.

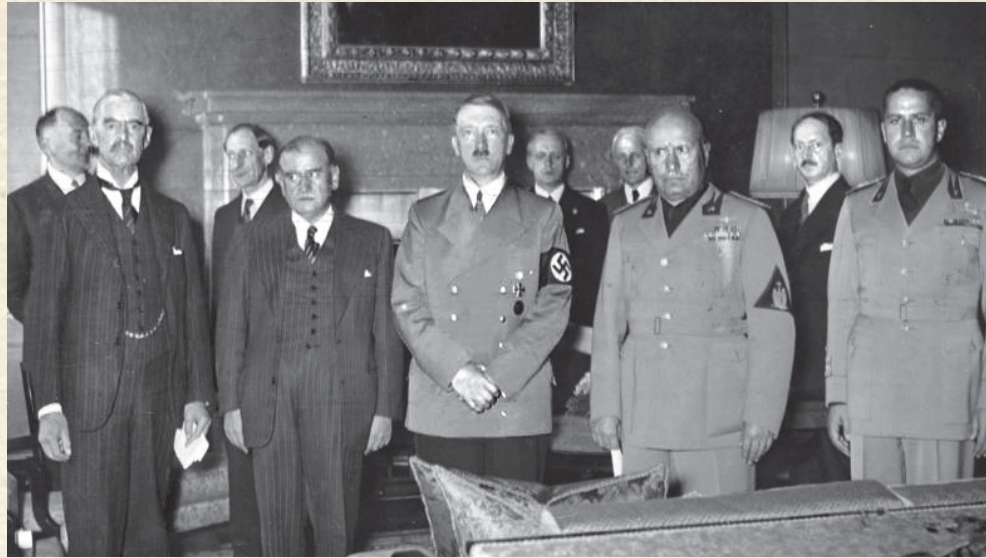
Flags lined the streets, with Olympic rings aside swastikas. The first-ever torch relay (now a staple of the games) ended with a lone runner entering a stadium with Nazi banners dominating the backdrop. When Hitler arrived to open the games, the crowd erupted into a thundering chant of "Sieg, heil! Sieg, heil!"

with the perfunctory outstretched-arm salute.

The opening ceremony that year raised the bar so high that every host nation since has followed suit with dramatic displays of national pride. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum wrote: "For two weeks in August 1936, Adolf Hitler's Nazi dictatorship camouflaged its racist, militaristic character while hosting the Summer Olympics. Softpedaling its antisemitic agenda and plans for territorial expansion, the regime exploited the Games to bedazzle many foreign spectators and journalists with an image of a peaceful, tolerant Germany."

For the most part, it worked. Although the world knew of the Nazis' master race ideology, most left

AGAIN?



After the BERLIN AXIS



the Olympics thinking that Germany could not be all that bad.

Similarly, not many took note on October 25, 1936, when the fascist governments of Italy and Germany agreed to become allies.

A few days later, Italian leader Benito Mussolini publicly announced the move: “This Berlin-Rome vertical line is not an obstacle but rather an axis around which can revolve all those European states with a will to collaboration and peace.”

In other words, Mussolini felt Europe would now revolve around Italy and Germany. Given his and Hitler’s

expansionist desires, they likely wanted the *entire globe* to turn on the axis of Rome and Berlin.

The Axis powers were born, with Japan joining soon after.

There was a strong reason for nations to have rose-colored glasses in regards to the growing fascist empire. It happened less than 20 years after World War I, which was thought of as “the war to end all war.” The globe still clung to the idea that military conflict on that scale would never be repeated. The League of Nations had even been established to promote the use of diplomacy over guns.

Few expected what fully was to come. And even with the benefit of hindsight, it seems unbelievable.

How did a Rome-Berlin Axis coerce two entire nations into complying with atrocities that have not since been paralleled? In Germany, how did an ultra-radical political party—consisting of just 850,000 members—bamboozle the *whole* 66-million-strong nation?

Two years later, in 1938, British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain met with Hitler. The men signed the Munich Pact, which ceded Czechoslovakia’s resource-rich

■ **EMERGING ALLIANCE:** Left, Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini walk by a saluting military during Hitler’s visit to Venice, Italy (June 1934). Center, Mussolini and Hitler tour a street in Berlin, Germany (Sept. 1937). Right, British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain and French Prime Minister Edouard Daladier pose with Hitler and Mussolini in Munich, Germany, during a meeting to sign the Munich Agreement (Sept. 29, 1938). The agreement authorized Nazi Germany to annex portions of Czechoslovakia.

PHOTOS: PUBLIC DOMAIN (LEFT); CC BY-SA 3.0 (CENTER AND RIGHT)

Sudetenland to Germany. The agreement, which was intended to appease the Nazis, caused Chamberlain to declare, “Peace for our time.”

The West still did not get it. Germany invaded Poland a year later. By the end of 1940, the Axis powers captured Denmark, Norway, Belgium, the Netherlands, France and parts of North Africa.

A few short years later, six million Jews were dead as a result of the Holocaust. Add to that total 5.7 million Soviet civilians, 2.95 million Soviet prisoners of war, 1.8 million Polish civilians...the list sadly goes on.

Here we are 80 years after the formation of the Axis powers. As was the case leading up to WWII, most are utterly unaware that history is about to repeat itself.

Historical Ties

Some politicians and journalists did see the writing on the wall regarding the Axis threat—especially the danger of the Nazis. Edgar Mowrer of the *Chicago Daily News* warned this about Hitler: “What he’s saying about the Jews is serious. Don’t underestimate him” (*The Atlantic*).

In addition, Hitler outlined his agenda in his book *Mein Kampf*. It contained clear language about expanding Germany’s borders so the Aryan race could have *lebensraum*, or “living space.” It is littered with anti-Semitic rhetoric. It stated that if Hitler were elected, he would break the Treaty of Versailles and rearm the nation.

Hitler did every one of these things.

The fact that the world did not stop the 1930s rise of the Nazis is telling.

Germany had just gone to war with the world a few decades earlier, and Hitler was not secretive about his motives.

How quickly mankind forgets the lessons of the past! Yet WWI was not the only reason Europe should have seen this coming. Something similar happened many times before. In fact, the continent has a penchant for getting steamrolled by dynamic strongmen.

Before Hitler and Mussolini, there was Napoleon. Before him was Charles V and Otto the Great. What linked all of these men? The Holy Roman Empire.

While the Nazi regime was labeled the Third Reich, the First Reich was the Holy Roman Empire, which lasted from AD 962-1806.

All of the men listed looked up to the likes of Charlemagne and Justinian who also ruled Europe. Take note: This entire list of rulers has more in common than first meets the eye.

One of the uniting characteristics of these historical figures was their power of persuasion. They had the incredible ability to inspire blind loyalty.

Regarding Hitler—whose speeches were known to be mesmerizing—the former secretary of Joseph Goebbels stated: “Those people nowadays who say they would have stood up against the Nazis—I believe they are sincere in meaning that, but believe me, most of them wouldn’t have” (*The Guardian*).

She stated that during the reign of the Nazi party “the whole country was as if under a kind of a spell.”

Napoleon was known to be similar. Personally, he stated that he had “the gift of electrifying men” (*Napoleon: For and Against*).

One of his generals put it this way: “That devil of a man [Napoleon] exercises a fascination on me that I cannot explain even to myself, and in such a degree that, though I fear neither God nor devil, when I am in his presence I am ready to tremble like a child, and he could make me go through the eye of a needle to throw myself into the fire” (*The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind*).

The lesson from all this? When men with such compelling charisma arise in Europe, war is close behind.

Guidebook?

There is no *Mein Kampf* today for us to see if another Hitler is on the horizon. Yet there is another book that details both the rise of the Axis powers AND a coming European dictator.

Any regular reader of *The Real Truth* knows that the publication uniquely examines history and world events through the lens of Bible prophecy. Yet we do not want you to take our word for it regarding what God’s Word says. You need to prove it for yourself—and you can. The Restored Church of God, which publishes this magazine, freely offers many books, videos and articles at rcg.org to help you do this.

One powerful proof of the validity of prophecy actually involves Hitler and Mussolini. In the 1930s, the 20th-century leader of the Church that produces this magazine was studying the book of Revelation, chapter 17. He came to verse 10, which states “five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come...”

For context, this verse is speaking of a symbolic beast that has seven

1934

Hitler becomes fuhrer (dictator) of Germany, after being named chancellor the year prior



1936

Axis declared between Italy and Germany; Mussolini’s forces take Ethiopia

1938

British Prime Minister Chamberlain appeases Hitler; Germany takes Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia

heads. The five that were fallen were the governments of Justinian, Charlemagne, Otto the Great, Charles V, and Napoleon. (*Real Truth* Editor-in-Chief David C. Pack's booklet *Who or What Is the Beast of Revelation?* explains all of this using both the Bible and history. Read it at rcg.org/wowitbor.)

Notice the language of verse 10: "five are fallen, *one is*, and the other is not yet come." This verse could only be revealed at one time: during the reign of the head labeled "one is," which is stated in present tense.

Amazingly, the phrasing "one is" was first understood when Hitler and Mussolini were on the scene! God kept the meaning of this verse sealed until the time He chose. Revelation 1:1 shows that He only reveals such knowledge to His servants.

With six heads now "fallen," there is a *future* head—a seventh—that is yet to come.

Another Proof

The beast in Revelation 13 has a PARALLEL in Daniel 7. Putting the details of these symbolic creatures next to the record of history further proves the Bible—as well as additional details to how the *seventh head* will arise.

Read carefully: "And I [the apostle John] stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and *ten horns*, and upon his horns *ten crowns*..." (Rev. 13:1).

This beast is the Roman Empire. In both Daniel 7 and Revelation 13, the beasts have 10 horns. The Bible defines these: "And the ten horns out

of this kingdom are ten kings [governments] that shall arise" (Dan. 7:24).

In other words, the Roman Empire would have 10 kingdoms throughout the centuries—10 resurrections under different strong-men leaders.

Continue reading in Revelation 13: "And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed; and all the world wondered after the beast" (vs. 3).

Put simply, in this succession of empires, there would be a "deadly wound," which would later be "healed."

Every word of this is backed by history. It proves God *is* the author of the Bible—and that future prophecies will come to pass!

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

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

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

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

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

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

What does 42 months have to do with 1,260 years? Mr. Pack answers this in his booklet *Who or What Is the Beast of Revelation?*

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

"Forty-two months is three and a half years. God's sacred years contain 360 days. 360 days times 3 1/2 equals 1,260 days—or 1,260 years in prophecy."

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

The next resurrection of the Roman system (the ninth horn and sixth head) began when Giuseppe Garibaldi united Italy in 1870. This culminated with the Axis powers during WWII.

The same governmental system will reappear in Europe for a seventh time, which Revelation 17 describes as one "not yet come" (vs. 10). The examples of Hitler and Mussolini provide a fascinating type of what is to come.

Seventh Head

Summarize in your mind the events of WWII: Italy and Germany band

1939

Italy and Germany sign the "Pact of Steel"; German-Soviet non-aggression pact signed; Germany invades Poland

1940

Germany conquers Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands, Belgium and France; Axis invades Soviet Union and Egypt; Battle of Britain begins

1945

Mussolini killed; Hitler commits suicide; Berlin captured by Soviets; Germany surrenders to Allies

together and conquer much of Europe. Western nations in the continent are largely pitted against the Axis powers. Prejudice against Jewish citizens results in forced labor camps and genocide of the Holocaust.

The events of the sixth head are all *lesser* types of what is to come with the seventh head. It will be a World War III on a scale few can imagine.

The Old Testament book of Isaiah is mainly written to Judah and Jerusalem (1:1)—the modern nation of Israel in the Middle East. Chapter 1 describes the result of this war: “Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers” (vs. 7).

These strangers are a European army. They will be headed by a strongman labeled both the “prince of Tyrus” (Ezek. 28:2) and “king of the north” (Dan. 11:40). Daniel 11 shows that this man will “enter also into the glorious land [modern Israel], and many countries shall be overthrown” (vs. 41).

Isaiah 3:25 simply labels this horrific event “the war.”

Yet this conflict does not focus solely on Jerusalem. Ezekiel 4 reveals that both Judah (vs. 1) and other modern-day descendants of Israel (vs. 3)—including America, Britain and other Western European nations—will be pummeled by the seventh head of the Roman system.

Just as happened in the Holocaust, there will again be enslavement and execution.

Ezekiel 5:7-9 explains why this will occur: “Therefore thus says the Lord GOD; Because you multiplied more than the nations that are round about you, and have not walked in My statutes, neither have kept My judgments, neither have done according to the judgments of the nations that are round about you; therefore thus says the Lord GOD; Behold, I, even I, am against you, and will execute judgments in the midst of you in the sight of the nations. And I will do in you that which I have

not done, and whereunto I will not do any more the like, because of all your abominations.”

Before this time, God will warn all of the modern nations descended from ancient Israel. He will tell them to repent from their sins and serve Him. This message will go out with thundering clarity and power—leaving all without excuse.

But most in stiff-necked Israel will need to learn a bitter lesson through national captivity: “And they that escape of you shall remember Me *among the nations whither they shall be carried captives*, because I am broken with their whorish heart, which has departed from Me, and with their eyes, which go a whoring after their idols: and they shall loathe themselves for the evils which they have committed in all their abominations” (Ezek. 6:9).

The system that God will use to do all of this is the next resurrection of the Roman system. It will again involve Germany and its military prowess.

Assyria—Ancient and Modern

Realize that God uses nations and peoples to work out His master Plan for mankind. All nations have distinct national characteristics, which makes them useful for different purposes.

God describes the character of the Assyrian peoples—whose descendants now live in Europe—in the book of Isaiah: “For he [the Assyrian nation] says, By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom; for I am prudent...” (10:13).

This group has a long list of successes and accomplishments, which has led to an ingrained nationalistic pride.

The account in Isaiah 10 reveals the nation’s love for war and tendency to conquer surrounding lands: “...I have removed the bounds of the people, and have robbed their treasures, and I have put

down the inhabitants like a valiant man: and my hand has found as a nest the riches of the people: and as one gathers eggs that are left, have I gathered all the earth...” (vs. 13-14).

However, this definition is far from what these people think of themselves. Notice verse 7: “Howbeit he means not so, neither does his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few.” Despite a lengthy historical track record written in blood, this nation “means not so, neither does [its] heart think so.”

There is an incredible purpose for all of this. It is found in verse 5: “O Assyrian, the rod of My anger, and the staff in their hand is My indignation.”

The Assyrian people have long been used by God as a means of punishment for rebellious nations such as the ancient Israelites. They will be used similarly again. This is why there will be a coming seventh head as mentioned in Revelation.

God will not do any of this without warning all the nations involved first. Those of Jewish descent and those in America, Britain and Western Europe will know what is coming and why. The same can be said for those in Germany, Italy and surrounding nations. Individuals will have every chance to seek God and avoid the horrible times ahead.

Yet the stubbornness of man will mean he must learn the hard way.

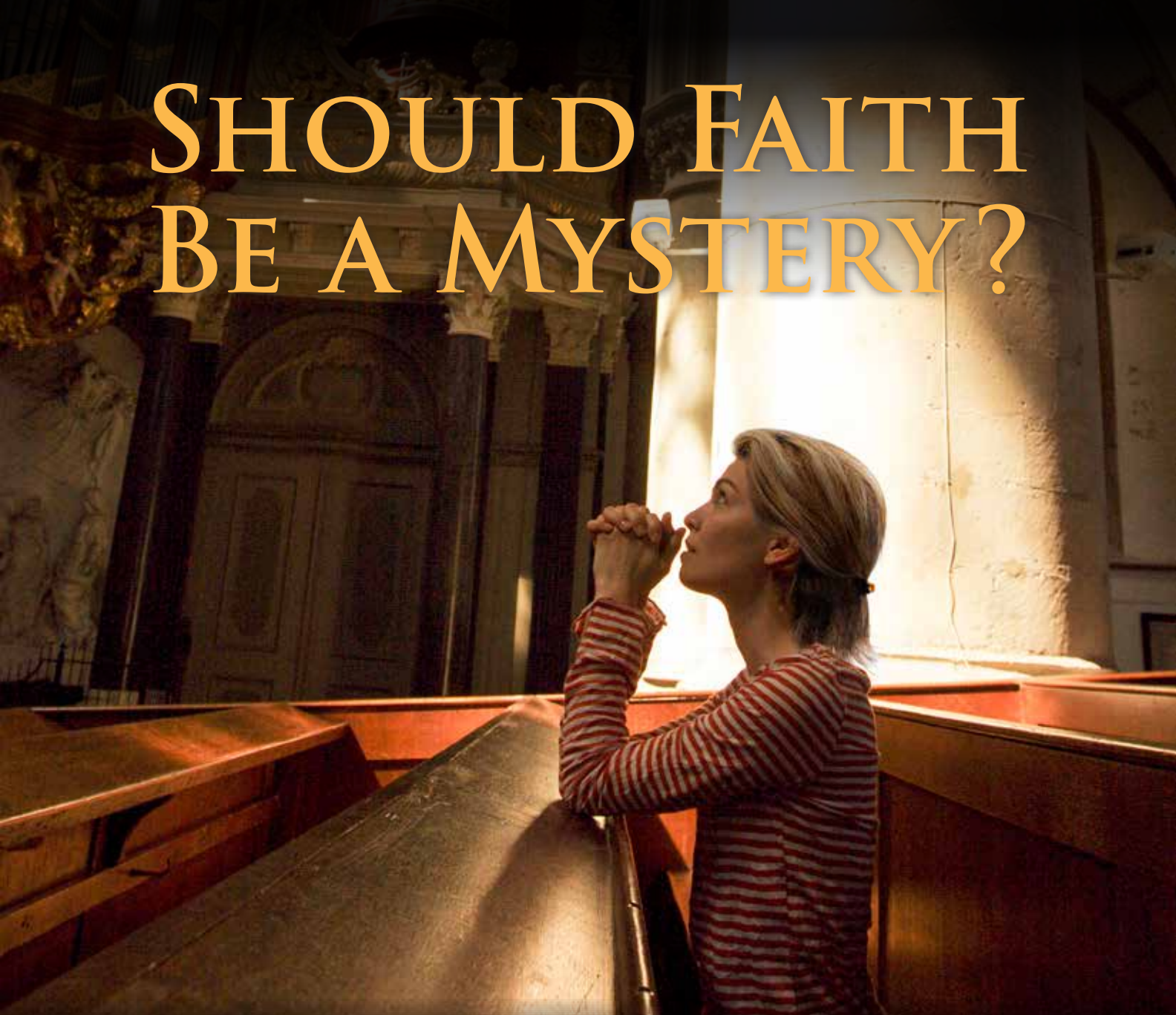
The ultimate purpose for the coming World War III is the same for everyone involved: that all nations may come to know God and keep His commandments. His way of life is the only path to true peace, happiness and prosperity.

To learn more about all the beasts mentioned in Bible prophecy and to identify the exact signs that signal the seventh head is rising, read the booklet *Who or What Is the Beast of Revelation?* at rcg.org/wowitbor. □



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SHOULD FAITH BE A MYSTERY?



Contrary to popular belief, true faith was meant to be understood!

BY EDWARD L. WINKFIELD

RELIGIOUS FAITH is on life support. Doves are dumping belief in God and miracles.

The defectors are fed up. They no longer believe in a supposed “magical being with superpowers who reads minds and grants wishes,” as atheists brazenly mock.

A Pew Research poll released in August 2016 revealed a trend away from belief in the supernatural. People who identify as atheists, agnostics or who have no religious affiliation—known as “nones”—make up nearly a quarter of the U.S. population. Most “nones” (78 percent) were actually

raised with a religious affiliation. Despite being exposed to religion during their formative years, half this group cited non-belief as the reason they left.

When asked to elaborate on why they moved on from religion, the responses were sobering: “Too many Christians doing un-Christian things.” “Religion is the opiate of the people.” “Lack of any sort of scientific or specific evidence of a creator.” “Rational thought makes religion go out the window.” “I just realized somewhere along the line that I didn’t really believe it.”

Their answers reflect a mix of pessimism, rationalization and defeat.

Faith is dying, leaving religionists wringing their hands for solutions.

The Catholic Church, which has exercised religious governance spanning two millennia, is considered by its adherents an authority on faith. Knowing few understand the subject, Pope Francis attempted to explain its meaning in his 2013 encyclical titled *Lumen Fidei* (*The Light of Faith*). In the document, he compared faith to a “guiding light.”

Building on the analogy, he wrote: “...in the absence of light everything becomes confused; it is impossible to tell good from evil, or the goad of our destination from other roads which take us in endless circles, going nowhere...The light of faith is unique, since it is capable of illuminating every aspect of human existence.”

This is FAR from a concrete definition of faith!

Encyclicals are written to Catholic bishops. They interpret these and other doctrinal “mysteries” for followers. The word mystery and other terms closely related to it are found nearly 400 times in the Catechism, a summary of Catholic beliefs. The pope’s enigmatic explanation on faith continues this theme.

Protestants, attempting to clarify and simplify the meaning of faith, established the tenet of *sola fide* (Latin for “faith alone”). Their goal was to remove the necessity of doing works to achieve salvation, a belief prevalent in the Catholic Church. This eventually led many in the Protestant movement to reject the role of outward acts in Christianity entirely, claiming faith or belief alone is all that is required.

Then there are those who reject organized religion. They claim faith is all about spirituality and reduce it to a series of mushy-sounding proclamations based on feelings.

Others believe faith is all about confidence and being strong-minded. Yet another group sees having faith as maintaining optimism in a bad situation and keeping a positive attitude.

No one seems able to pin down a single coherent meaning of faith. It is no wonder people are abandoning religion.

The Bible *does* call faith a “mystery” (I Tim. 3:9). This explains why most find it so difficult to explain.

Yet God’s Word *also* says that “without faith it is impossible to please Him” (Heb. 11:6).

This means faith is a mystery that God wants you to understand!

What Is True Faith?

Scripture says that faith is beyond having hope or confidence. The Bible separates all three necessary qualities. Notice: “And now abides *faith*, *hope*, *charity* [love], these three; but the greatest of these is charity [love]” (I Cor. 13:13). Hope is clearly separate from faith. Christians are told in Hebrews 10:35 to “cast not

away therefore your confidence,” just before being told only three verses later that “the just live by faith.” Confidence and faith are different as well.

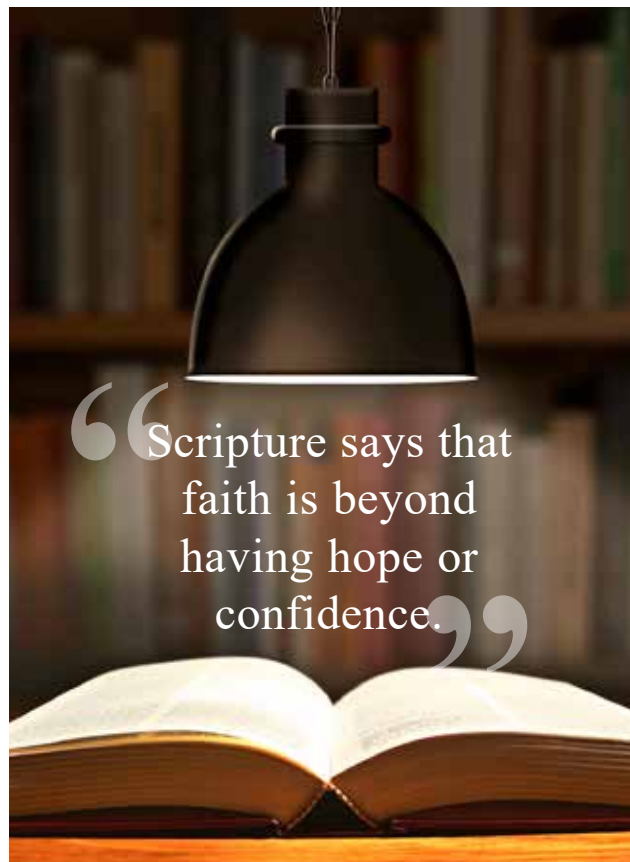
After proper guidance, some yearning to know the true meaning of faith are surprised to learn that the Bible gives a very straightforward definition. You can join them in understanding.

First some context. Immediately after a promise of Jesus Christ’s Return to Earth, the reader is told “Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man *draw back*, My soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who *draw back* unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul” (Heb. 10:38-39). God is saying that He is not pleased with those who “cower” or “shrink” from following Him. Despite what may seem like intimidating or unbelievable circumstances, we are to believe Him and save our lives in the process.

The natural questions coming off this would be, “How can I do this? How can I resist the urge to doubt—and believe God instead?”

God immediately tells us that it takes faith and goes on to define it. Notice: “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Heb. 11:1). We should examine each key term. (Definitions are based on *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. The serious reader will want to examine these for himself.)

The word “Now,” meaning *but*, *and* or *moreover*, connects the definition of faith to the end of the previous chapter. (Understand that there were no chapter breaks in the original text.) “Faith” means *persuasion* or *conviction*. From here, God, through Paul, speci-



fies what this faith or conviction is. He describes it as both a “substance” and “evidence.”

Substance means *a setting under* or *a support*. This indicates that faith is the support or foundation upon which hope is built. (This offers more proof that faith is different than hope). It is the support upon which an expectation is based. You fully expect something to transpire because it is resting on faith.

God also calls faith evidence, meaning *proof*. People know what evidence is. For instance, evidence in a court of law is proof used to determine guilt or innocence. Yet God uniquely differentiates this proof from that shown in a courtroom. He says it is evidence of “things not seen.” This is vital to understand.

Human beings depend on their five senses to observe the world around them. If evidence cannot be seen, heard, smelled, tasted or felt, it is usually discounted as non-existent. On the contrary, true faith, by definition, cannot be observed. It goes beyond the senses. Faith *itself* is the evidence that everything will work out as God promises. This is why we are required to “walk by faith, not by sight” (II Cor. 5:7).

Related to “things not seen,” one can only hope for something that has not occurred. Once an expectation is seen or comes to pass, there is no further need to hope for it. This ties the first and second parts of Hebrews 11:1 together.

Technically, a person can base their faith on anything that meets the criteria of “things hoped for” or “things not seen.” Consider. A plummeting skydiver can hope that a colleague properly prepared his parachute equipment the day before. A young mother leaving the mechanic’s shop with her children in tow can rely upon a signed work order as “evidence” that they reattached the brake line on her vehicle. However, in both cases, there is no surety that everything will work out as hoped for—and in the off chance something goes wrong, the results could be catastrophic.

What makes the life-changing faith of Hebrews 11 different is that it rests on something fail-safe—something guaranteed. The only things in the universe that are fully guaranteed are God’s promises.

God cannot lie (Heb. 6:18). He does what He says He will do (Num. 23:19). When He says He will do something, it happens, else He ceases to be God.

Importance of Faith

Are you beginning to see faith more clearly? It is not a label for a certain religion or denomination. It is not a character trait used to describe someone who seems religious. It is more than having blind hope that everything will work out. It also goes beyond just believing Jesus died for the sins of mankind. Faith is much bigger than all this. It is a basic “doctrine of Christ” that should be understood early on by a Christian (Heb. 6:1).

Faith is unique in Scripture in that it is on two short lists. It is both a *fruit* of God’s Spirit as well as a *gift* of God’s Spirit. In describing God’s character, Galatians 5 says: “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, *faith*, meekness, temperance...” (vs. 22-23). Faith also joins wisdom, knowledge, working of miracles, prophecy, healing and speaking and understanding different languages as gifts given and manifested by the power of the Spirit (I Cor. 12:4-11). Appearing on both lists elevates faith in importance.

Being named as a fruit of the Spirit makes faith one of God’s character traits. Are you surprised by this? Most would assume God simply wants His followers to have faith. Yet this is not the case. God Himself has faith. This is why Christ, who was God manifest in flesh (John 1:1, 14), displayed it so well.

Jesus demonstrated faith perfectly during His earthly ministry. He was willing to die for what He believed. He knew His Father’s plan and stuck to it through the excruciating pain and suffering of a corrupt trial, gruesome

beating, and eventual crucifixion. His faith was obviously much more than having a positive outlook on life or remaining optimistic or upbeat.

Because it is also a gift, godly faith is not something we can work up on our own. While we can and should have a certain “human faith” according to the Hebrews 11:1 definition, we are justified, or made righteous, by the faith of Jesus Christ (Gal. 2:16). Did you catch that? Notice it did not say faith *in* Jesus Christ, but instead said we must have the faith *of* Jesus Christ. This is important to understand. We must have Christ’s faith in us—which comes through the indwelling of God’s Holy Spirit.

Sometimes we must grow in faith. Remember “doubting Thomas”? It was reported to him that the resurrected Jesus had been sighted. Christ said all along He would be brought back from the dead, yet somehow Thomas doubted the reports. Perhaps he believed for a time but lost sight once he *observed* Christ’s brutal torture and murder by the Roman government—in effect his senses took over. It eventually took Christ telling Thomas to *plunge* his hand into His side before he believed.

Jesus went on to differentiate those who believe based on His words alone from those who need tangible proof to believe (John 20:27-29). These are just a few of the many verses that explain the subject of faith.

What about the belief that faith alone is required to receive salvation? This scenario is impossible. Full-fledged belief and trust in God always leads to action. This is the reason James said that “faith, if it has not works, is dead...” (Jms. 2:17).

Faith in Action

For a person to have true faith in God, they obviously must know who He is. With this in mind, read the following powerful verse in I John 2: “He that says, I know Him [God], and keeps not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him” (vs. 4).

Evidently, it is not a matter of just believing in God. Demons do

that (Jms. 2:19). Belief must manifest itself in action, namely obedience to what God requires. This was James' point in the previous verse, in which he inextricably tied actions or "works" to faith. It is by our actions that our faith is demonstrated to others—including God (vs. 18).

True faith compelled servants of God to do extraordinary things. Paul practically boasted of their exploits throughout Hebrews 11.

Abel demonstrated his faith by sacrificing the very best of the "firstlings of his flock." Literally burning something of value for the sake of his Creator took faith. His offering was deemed "more excellent" than his brother Cain's offering of firstfruits from the ground (vs. 4). There is no indication that Cain took the time to select the very best (Gen. 4:2-4). Cain's offering was ultimately rejected, leading him to kill Abel in anger and jealousy. This shows that a demonstration of true faith can lead to physical death.

Enoch also pleased God through his faith (Heb. 11:5) and walked with Him during his life (Gen. 5:22-24). After referencing Enoch, the book of Hebrews states that God is a "rewarder of them that *diligently* seek Him" (11:6). Enoch demonstrated sustained faith over an extended period of time, which will lead to a reward. This is another primary example for us.

Even those with little Bible knowledge have heard the story of Noah and the ark. He built the large boat to save his family and the animals from a coming flood (vs. 7). Though Noah had no proof that a rainstorm of a magnitude never seen or recorded before would occur, he dutifully heeded God's warning. By his actions, he "condemned" his neighbors who chose not to take God at His word. By faith, Noah believed God and saved his life and the lives of his family. We can do the same.

Abraham, often called the "father of faith," is revered for taking God at His word.

For instance, after 75 years of building a life for himself and his

family, he immediately departed his homeland upon request by God (Gen. 12:4). To show his gratitude after victory over four kings in a military effort to rescue his nephew Lot (Gen. 14:14-16), Abraham faithfully obeyed God and gave part of his wealth to pay tithes to Melchizedek, King of Salem (vs. 18-20). Melchizedek was the pre-incarnate Jesus Christ (Heb. 7:1-4). Parting with hard-earned funds in obedience to God takes faith. Abraham knew his action would result in God blessing him (Mal. 3:10).

Abraham also believed God when He promised that his wife Sarah, faithful in her own right, would give birth to a son even in her old age. Later, Abraham was willing to sacrifice this same son without argument. He knew Isaac was a part of a promise that Abraham would father many nations (Gen. 12:2) and thus God could bring him back from the dead if necessary (Heb. 11:19). This is despite there being no "evidence" of any resurrections until that point.

While Abraham had faith his descendants would grow into "many nations," this did not happen during his lifetime. God spared Isaac and he went on to father Jacob, whose sons gave birth to the 12 tribes of Israel.

Abraham's faith ultimately led to some of the most powerful nations today, as explained in David C. Pack's book *America and Britain in Prophecy* found at reg.org/aabibp.

God was true to His word!

The list of faithful servants and their actions goes on. Joseph's faith led him, against insurmountable odds, to become co-ruler in the most powerful nation in the world at the time. Moses, in faith, chose a meager existence over power and prestige. Though mighty in words and deeds (Acts 7:22) he decided "rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season" (Heb. 11:25).

Rahab (Joshua 2:1-22), Gideon (Judg. 6-8), Barak (Judg. 4-5), Sampson (Judg. 13-16), Jephthah (Judg. 11-12), David (I Sam. 17-18),

and Hannah (I Sam. 1:1-20), whose stories are detailed in Scripture, all displayed remarkable faith. They could obviously "see" something that others could not (Heb. 11:27).

Mystery Solved!

Jesus wonders whether He will find faith on the Earth when He returns (Luke 18:8). He knows what He will be looking for, and now—so do you.

True faith does not waver. It is a complete and total belief in God, whether you fully understand His ways or not. If your faith in God depends on whether He does things the way you think He should, then it is misguided. God recorded promises He will perform for His people. These promises are sure. However, God does not always say *when* or *how* these promises will be fulfilled. This is where faith comes in. We must simply believe that God will do what He says in His own time. Sometimes the response comes immediately and sometimes it comes after a while.

Though we may not know the method or the timing of God's intervention in our lives, we can know His will for His people. The Bible contains these promises. In order to claim them, we need to know what they are. Our requests must line up with His will. To know what is and is not His will, we must study His words to "prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, *will of God*" (Rom. 12:2).

Studying His Word will also cause our faith to increase, since faith "comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17).

Faith does not have to remain a mystery. God says there is "one faith" (Eph. 4:4-5). It is not the counterfeits offered by the world. It is a gift that, if accepted, leads to eternal life. Faith is an unwavering belief that God will perform the promises contained in His Word. This belief must be followed by action.

For more understanding of faith, read the booklet *What Is Real Faith?* at reg.org/wirf. Study it with an open Bible and prove it for yourself. □

Why the Diabetes Epidemic!

EACH YEAR, the president of the United States delivers an address to Congress that assesses the state of the nation. The speech discusses conditions across the country as well as outlines his legislative agenda. It is televised live so that everyone nationwide can hear what he has to say.

If a similar address was given to discuss the health and wellness of people in the U.S., however, the news would not be good.

One of the most alarming statistics that would be discussed would be that almost 30 million American adults—almost 10 percent of the nation—suffer from the life-threatening disease of diabetes.

More alarming is that over 95 percent of these suffer from a “self-inflicted” form known as Type 2, or adult onset diabetes.

Realizing the Problem

To better appreciate this epidemic, one must first understand the hormone insulin. According to *EndocrineWeb*: “Insulin is a hormone made by the

pancreas that allows your body to use sugar (glucose) from carbohydrates in the food that you eat for energy or to store glucose for future use. Insulin helps [keep] your blood sugar level from getting too high (hyperglycemia) or too low (hypoglycemia).

“The cells in your body need sugar for energy. However, sugar cannot go into most of your cells directly. After you eat food and your blood sugar level rises, cells in your pancreas (known as beta cells) are signaled to release insulin into your bloodstream. Insulin then attaches to and signals cells to absorb sugar from the bloodstream. Insulin is often described as a ‘key,’ which unlocks the cell to allow sugar to enter the cell and be used for energy.”

Insulin production is involved in the two types of diabetes, yet there is a difference between them.

■ **Type 1:** Also known as insulin-dependent diabetes, this condition is almost always hereditary and afflicts most before the age of 20. Even those with the best habits and health are not safe from this genetic condition.

Almost all of us have seen or known someone who had to take daily shots of insulin or, in more recent years, has

worn an insulin pump to periodically administer it. This is necessary because Type 1 diabetics do not produce sufficient amounts of insulin (or potentially any at all) in the pancreas.

■ **Type 2:** Again, this is known as adult onset diabetes. Those who have it actually continue to produce insulin. In many cases, a person’s pancreas may even produce too much. Yet the body is unable to recognize the insulin and use it properly.

This is known as insulin resistance. Some insulin resistance is natural over the course of a lifetime for the average person, however, Type 2 diabetes greatly accelerates insulin resistance.

Why are both forms of diabetes so problematic? Simple. When your body either fails to produce or recognize insulin, sugar cannot get into your cells and instead *builds up in your blood*.

This is dangerous for two reasons.

First, since sugar cannot get into the cells, the cells cannot use the sugar to produce energy.

Second, excessive blood sugar damages and eventually destroys blood vessels, which can result in lower leg amputations, blindness and kidney failure, the latter forcing a person onto dialysis for the remainder of his life.

Caused by Sugar

To understand the *real* epidemic, revisit the fact that 95 percent of diabetics have Type 2 diabetes—which is a self-inflicted kind!

There are multiple contributing factors to developing this disease such as inactivity, overconsumption of food, and obesity. But it is almost universally accepted that the overconsumption of sugar, specifically, is one of the primary causes.

Yet sugar is in healthy foods such as honey and fruit. So, it cannot be all bad, right? Yes and no.

Consider the following from *Everyday Health*: “The sugars in food are known as simple carbohydrates and are a natural component of many fresh foods, such as the lactose in milk and the fructose in fruits. A healthy, well-balanced diet will always have these sugars in it.

“However, the problem with sugar is the sheer amount of it that’s in the typical American diet. Added sugars—the sucrose in table sugar as well as the sugars in foods such as sodas, cereals, packaged foods, and snacks—when consumed in excess, cause weight gain, heart disease, mood swings, and more.

“Research has found that a high-sugar diet certainly increases diabetes risk—adding just one serving of a sweetened beverage each day to your diet ups risk by 15 percent, a study at the Harvard School of Public Health found...”

So just how much sugar and foods with sugar are Americans consuming? According to the United States Department of Agriculture, the average American consumes 130 pounds of refined sugars per year. This comes out to 160 grams—about a third of a pound of sugar—per day.

While it may seem as though there is no way a person could consume that much, keep in mind that this is an average! This

means that there are some people who only consume 20-30 pounds of sugar and some who consume 300 or more pounds of sugar per year—almost a POUND PER DAY!

Solution: Modern vs. Traditional Diet

With such an epidemic level of sugar consumption, it seems the best solution would be to say, “Stop eating sugar.” This would certainly be a HUGE step in the right direction, especially considering that less than 100 years ago, the average intake of sugar was only about four pounds per year and levels of Type 2 diabetes were almost non-existent.

But a slightly more in-depth explanation may provide a better understanding of what you can do and how different our diet is today compared to generations past.

There are two factors in which the diet of the past 6,000 years differs from that of today.

Historically, people did eat large amounts of carbohydrates and some sugar, but these were in the form

of complex (slow-burning) carbohydrates such as sweet potatoes and whole grains including oatmeal, millet and flax.

Second, life in general was an exercise in stamina. Most people worked in agriculture or had jobs that required large amounts of physical labor. The carbohydrates people consumed not only entered their bloodstreams more slowly, but they burned them quickly due to high levels of activity.

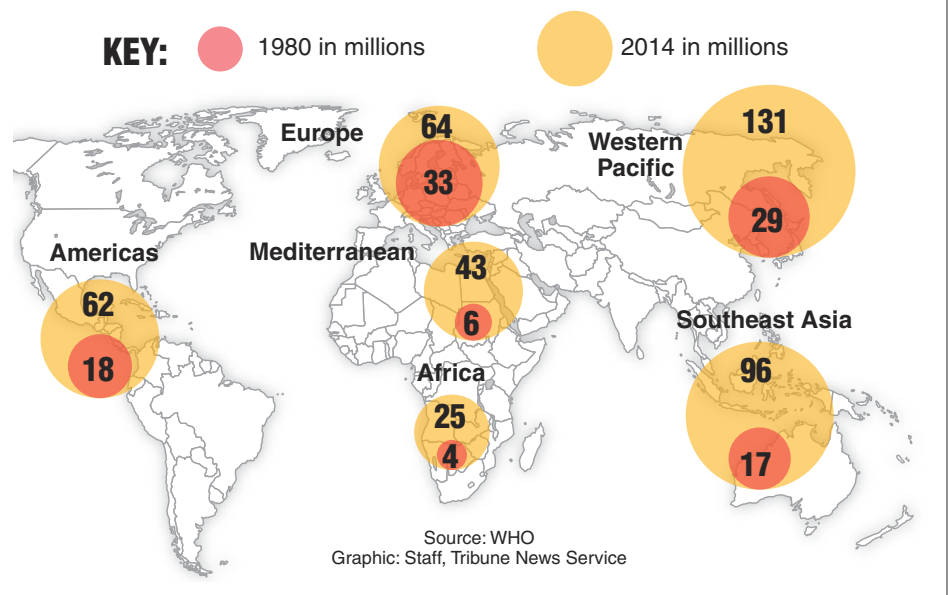
Since this was the case, people generally never experienced a blood sugar spike, which would have resulted in the need for large amounts of insulin.

With that in mind, the solution is simple: If you want to avoid falling prey to Type 2 diabetes, stay active. Eat simple foods from the food pyramid—lean meats, whole grains, lots of vegetables, and a few fruits in the absence of soda, sugary treats, and snack foods.

Just making these small changes goes a long way in preventing this self-inflicted and preventable disease! □

World Diabetes Quadrupled

A report from the World Health Organization shows cases of diabetes around the world nearly quadrupled from 1980 to 2014.



PERSONAL

Continued from page 2

are the nine? There are not found that returned to give *glory* to God, save this stranger. And He said unto him, Arise, go your way: your faith has made you whole” (Luke 17:12-19).

Of the 10 lepers, only *one* returned to thank Christ. Think of that statement. Only *one* of the 10 thanked God for healing them of an awful disease!

Notice Christ’s rhetorical question. Understanding the characteristics of human nature, He perfectly understood why the others had not returned to thank Him.

But *why* is mankind so intrinsically ungrateful?

The Most Common Sin

From television commercials, programs, movies, shopping malls, and homes, a widespread attitude of SELFISHNESS is sweeping the nations of this world. Adults, children and teens are becoming more ungrateful each day.

A main accelerator of this ingratitude is *commercialism*. Society has been caught up in the “you-work-hard-so-you-deserve-a-new-car-and-a-vacation-in-Barbados” mentality. This, in turn, has caused many to believe the ideology that, if they do not *acquire* these extravagant luxuries, life is somehow treating them unfairly.

Before calling for a national day of fasting, U.S. President Abraham Lincoln stated (emphasis added): “We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of Heaven. We have been preserved, these many years, in peace and prosperity. We have grown in numbers, wealth, and power as no other nation has ever grown; BUT WE HAVE FORGOTTEN GOD. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace, and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us; and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own” (*Abraham Lincoln: Complete Works Comprising*

His Speeches, Letters, State Papers, and Miscellaneous Writings).

This is a tremendously powerful statement! Since the time President Lincoln issued this proclamation, the wealth, prosperity and peace experienced by the United States is far greater—along with the attitude of pride, selfishness and ingratitude.

But if this were said today, there would be quite an uproar!

In contrast to Lincoln’s day, or even to 50 years ago, today’s ungrateful attitude is worse by far. If that generation *forgot* God, and the many blessings He provided for America, then this *de-generation does not even know God exists!*

In this world of being obsessed with what’s “in”—from the newest fashions, to the latest songs, and to absurd political correctness—GRATITUDE HAS BEEN ALL BUT DECLARED UNCONSTITUTIONAL!

To find the source of this attitude, one must look in the pages of the Bible. It reveals the most selfish, proud, arrogant, self-centered and ungrateful being that ever existed—Satan the devil.

Before his rebellion against God, Satan (first named Lucifer) was a perfectly created archangel. The prophet Isaiah records, “How are you fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How are you cut down to the ground, which did weaken the nations! For you have said in your heart, *I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High*” (Isa. 14:12-14).

Lucifer’s heart was lifted up with arrogance—vanity. He was *ungrateful* to God for giving him life. Neither was he grateful to God for creating him so perfectly. Instead, he rebelled against God, choosing to believe that he was *better* than his Creator—that his way was *greater* than God’s Way.

As the “prince of the power of the air” (Eph. 2:2), he broadcasts this same attitude into us.

How to Be Grateful

It has been said that ingratitude is the most common sin. Although it is a part of our nature, there are ways that you can avoid being one of the many that commit the sin of ingratitude.

Below are just a few simple ways to show your gratitude toward God and fellowman.

Thank God daily: God commands us to go to Him in prayer with praise and thanksgiving. Do you thank Him daily?

The Bible is filled with examples of God’s servants showing their gratitude toward Him.

I Chronicles 29 records King David being deeply moved at the people’s generosity in preparing God’s Temple. David was inspired and expressed his earnest and sincere gratitude in honor of the great God. He exclaimed: “Blessed be You, LORD God of Israel our father, forever and ever. Yours, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is Yours; Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, and You are exalted as head above all. Both riches and honor come of You, and You reign over all; and in Your hand is power and might; and in Your hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. Now therefore, our God, we thank You, and praise Your glorious name. But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? For all things come of You, and of Your own have we given You” (vs. 10-14).

Paul writes: “Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks” (I Thes. 5:16-18).

Psalms 92 records a special Sabbath psalm used to praise God: “It is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praises unto Your name, O most High: to show forth Your lovingkindness in the morning, and Your faithfulness every night... For You, LORD, have made me glad through Your work: I will triumph in the works of Your hands. O LORD, how great are Your works! And Your

thoughts are very deep...You, LORD, are most High forevermore. For, lo, Your enemies, O LORD, for, lo, Your enemies shall perish; all the workers of iniquity shall be scattered” (vs. 1-2, 4-5, 8-9).

You should never run out of things to thank God for! Go to Him in prayer and continually thank Him for all the blessings He has provided you!

The Bible records God’s faithful servants continuously doing so. We also find that the Bible commands us to always give thanks and praise to God.

Why? Why does God command that we praise Him with thanksgiving? Does He require this because He needs our praises?

No!

This command is repeated throughout the Bible because WE need it! In order for us, as Christians, to be more like God—the most thankful Being in the universe—WE need to learn to be thankful and give praises every day!

Another vital way to demonstrate gratitude toward the great God is through tithes and offerings. The prophet Malachi records God’s words: “Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me. But you say, Wherein have we robbed You? In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse: for you have robbed Me, even this whole nation. Bring you all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in Mine house, and prove Me now herewith, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it” (Mal. 3:8-10).

Although God provides absolutely everything that we have, He promises to provide more—through pouring out blessings from heaven—if we merely do our part by paying tithes and offerings! Through our heartfelt dedication in supporting His end-time Work, He promises us much more than we can possibly desire!

Say “thank you” often: Many people fear thanking others. They often fall into the mentality that, by thanking, they are somehow in debt or owe

something to that person. But the truth is far from this!

Throughout history, great men have been known for specifically thanking others. It is not a sign of weakness—it is a sign of MEEKNESS!

Think of the things that people do for you—from opening a door for you, to giving you a ride to the store, or providing a kind and reassuring word. We live in an age when common courtesy and politeness are all but extinct!

Say “thank you” and “please” often. You should never run out of people to thank. You would be surprised how happy those little words can make others feel!

“Although it is difficult to do, when you are experiencing trials, look for the good that God wants you to learn from them.”

Count your blessings, not your worries: Look around you. When was the last time you lost a loved one to starvation or rampant disease? When was the last time you gave up eating to make sure your children had food? When was the last time you had to sell your children because you did not have the money to survive or even provide for them? Chances are you have never experienced these things. Unfortunately, these are grim realities that many around the world face each day. Thank God each day for not having to endure all these terrible things!

It is common to fall into the routine of constant “grumbling” and complaining about problems and worries. When you find yourself complaining about finances, traffic, problems at work, family issues, car troubles, or whatever other difficulty or trial you

may be experiencing, remember that everything God does and allows is for a reason. Although difficult, it is for a greater good—if you overcome them!

Consider the following analogy: Each ingredient used in making a cake is not always sweet or good to the taste. By themselves, their tastes can range from bitter, to salty, to sweet, to chalky. But the end result—the cake—is delicious and sweet!

King Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, recorded, “To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven” (Ecc. 3:1).

Although it is difficult to do, when you are experiencing trials, look for the good that God wants you to learn from them. For example, if you are having car problems, and will need an expensive repair, perhaps you are mishandling, or wasting money on other things, and God wants you to re-examine your budget. Many of the difficulties that you encounter can help you realize whether or not you are living properly. You can learn from these experiences!

When people grumble, they are complaining about a situation that God has allowed—and sometimes even caused—them to be in!

Paul admonishes us to “Do all things without murmurings and disputings: that you may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom you shine as lights in the world” (Phil. 2:14-15).

Finally, consider Paul’s example of dealing with trials and afflictions: “Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me. Notwithstanding you have well done, that you did communicate with my affliction” (4:11-14). We must learn from experiences—both good and bad!

Things to Be Grateful For

The following lists just a few things for which we should show gratitude. Upon reading them, picture how your life would be without them:

■ **Loving family and friends:** After creating man, God declared, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him” (Gen. 2:18).

God created humans with the need for family. If you are married, appreciate your husband or wife. If you have children, appreciate all the fond memories that you are building *together*. Problems and arguments will occur from time to time, but at those moments, imagine your life without your loved ones. Realize how different it would be.

■ **Employment:** Without employment, how would you earn a living? How would you eat or feed your family? How would your rent or mortgage be paid? Every day, it seems headlines report some type of corporation laying off hundreds, even thousands of employees. Be thankful to God for the job He has provided for you. Although you may experience hardships with co-workers or employers, acknowledge that without your job, you would not have a means to support your family or yourself.

■ **Food, clothing, shelter:** Although man has systematically pillaged, destroyed and raped the land that provides the materials needed for food, clothing and shelter, the United States and the other modern-day descendants of Israel have an *abundance* of these great blessings. Other nations, however, do not. Appreciate these things!

God understands that, as physical humans, we need physical substances for survival. Notice: “And why take you thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?

Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? Or, What shall we drink? Or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?... For your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things” (Matt. 6:28-32).

If God cares for and clothes even the flowers, how much more will He provide for those that obey Him? This is what His Word declares.

Are you grateful for this promise? Or do you take it for granted?

■ **God’s truth:** How much do you appreciate God’s Word—the Holy Bible? God has provided a way for us to know and understand His laws through this great Book of Instruction. Notice President Lincoln’s statement concerning it: “...I believe the Bible is the best gift God has given to man. All the good Saviour gave to the world was communicated through this Book...All things most desirable for man’s welfare, here and hereafter, are to be found portrayed in it” (*America’s God and Country Encyclopedia of Quotations*).

The apostle Peter stated to Christ: “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life” (John 6:68).

Do *you* feel the same way?

■ **God’s Sabbath and Holy Days:** How much do you appreciate, and thank God for, His Sabbath and Holy Days? By observing these, you are separate—different—from the world. They help you understand the great Plan of God, and how He has made it available to us.

Keeping God’s purpose for these days in mind will allow you to better see the “big picture,” and be thankful toward God for allowing you to be a part of it!

■ **Christ’s sacrifice:** Suppose that you just received news that you only had 30 minutes left to live. How much more would you appreciate your life—and everything in it? You would appreciate *these things*, as the saying goes, “like there’s no tomorrow.”

But you may have not realized that you are currently on **DEATH ROW!**

Unless you are baptized, and have been redeemed from under the death penalty—sin—you are condemned to *death* (Rom. 6:23).

Christ—who is perfect and sinless—shed His blood in our stead, dying for *our* sins. He became the Savior for this world and all humanity.

Do you fully comprehend this knowledge? Do you appreciate this great sacrifice? Like an inmate being pardoned seconds before the switch on the electric chair is thrown, you must be grateful—*truly thankful*—for this redemption!

Without these things, your life would be empty, shallow, miserable—and completely *non-existent!*

The Choice is Yours

Always remember that ingratitude is a *deadly* sin. God directly calls it *evil!* An ungrateful attitude is something that most are unaware that they have, but everyone else sees! It is a deep character flaw. Although few will tell you about it, ingratitude sticks out like a sore thumb.

Often, it goes unchanged and untreated, because of people’s ignorance of it. It is something that, after many years of “perfecting,” needs to be *completely* removed!

Remember Israel’s example. They grumbled, complained and showed ingratitude because they were afraid of being unable to overcome the “giants” that might have kept them from the Promised Land. But in reality, the only “giant” that held them back from enjoying this great blessing from God was their *ingratitude!* An entire generation—except for two men—died without seeing this land!

Learn from this example. An ungrateful attitude exists in our human nature. But simple steps can be taken to overcome it. By honestly analyzing yourself, and applying biblical rules and principles of etiquette, you can **ENSURE** that you are not committing this most common—and **DEADLY**—sin.

Remember Paul’s three commands for true Christians:

- (1) “Rejoice evermore.”
- (2) “Pray without ceasing.”
- (3) “In *everything* give thanks.”

Do not let this sin keep *you* from God’s many promises! Do not let it steal your happiness. The choice is yours! □

LIBYA

FIVE YEARS AFTER GADHAFI

LIBYANS CONTINUE to suffer numerous humanitarian problems as a result of ongoing political instability since Moammar Gadhafi's October 2011 ouster.

Martin Kobler, a Libya special representative for the United Nations secretary-general, stated that Libyans "lack medicines, vaccinations and suffer from poor hospitalization services. Almost 300,000 children are out of schools and almost 350,000 Libyans are displaced within the country."

He also said that 2.4 million people in Libya, including foreign migrants stranded in the territory, are in need of humanitarian assistance.

In addition, the World Bank reported that citizens face skyrocketing food prices and "chronic shortages in basic commodities."

"Prices of flour and bread quintupled" throughout the nation and funding has become "insufficient for sustaining adequate public provision for health, education, electricity, water and sanitation services," the organization stated.

The Islamic State terror group (ISIS), as well as several independent tribal forces, have taken advantage of

the power vacuum by capturing several Libyan cities.

Although ISIS has been defeated in some cities by national security forces, U.S. officials estimate as many as 6,000 ISIS militants remain in the country. Most of these forces exist in key areas and "will fight until the last bullet," Colonel Ismail Shukri, head of intelligence for the Tripoli government in Misrata, told *CNN*.

Before Gadhafi was violently removed from power in 2011, Libya's varying religious and cultural factions were united under his regime, which came into control in 1969 through a coup. In addition to the former leader's military power, economic prosperity brought on by the discovery of oil reserves during his tenure helped unify the nation under a strong central government.

"The National Transitional Council...a rebel leadership council which had fought to oust the Gaddafi government, declared Libya 'liberated' in October 2011 and took over the running of the country," *BBC* stated.



"However, it struggled to impose order on the many armed militia that had become active in the months leading up to the ouster of Gaddafi."

These armed groups refused to cooperate with the revolutionary government in the following years.

In 2014, "an armed alliance took control of institutions in Tripoli and the then newly elected, internationally recognized parliament relocated to the east," *Reuters* reported. These effectively divided Libya into half under an east-

■ **CONFLICT:** Top, a member of a brigade loyal to Libya's western government aims a machine gun during a military parade following battles against ISIS in Sabratha, Libya (Feb. 28, 2016). Bottom, fighters loyal to Libya's Government of National Accord survey damage after an ISIS suicide bomber detonated explosives in Sirte, Libya (Aug. 16, 2016).

PHOTOS: MAHMUD TURKIA/ (TOP); STR/ (BOTTOM); AFP/GETTY IMAGES



in an opinion-piece for *The New York Times*: “Libya is of crucial strategic importance to the United States. Geographically, it is a gateway to and from Africa... Libya can either be a helpful, stable ally to the United States or a failed state, awash with displaced persons and a base of operations for terrorists.”

He further stated: “A majority of Libyans still yearn for stability and democracy... Yet Libya needs outside help to institute the reforms necessary to make a new government a success. Most important, the United States must coordinate assistance from the international community and ensure that regional players in the Middle East are not supporting militias and other forces that destabilize the country.”

On the contrary, defense analyst Ludovico Carlino told *The Guardian* that more interventions “will probably cause more anarchy and chaos.”

As political gridlock continues within Libya and global powers grapple for solutions, conditions for Libyans deteriorate.

Several of those involved in toppling Gadhafi’s regime during the Arab Spring have even become disillusioned with the turn out.

The Guardian described one revolutionary’s experience: “Five years ago he picked up a gun and joined Libya’s rebels to depose Muammar Gaddafi in a blaze of patriotic vigour. Half a decade later the Tripoli medical student will mark [the] anniversary of the Arab spring revolution treating militia fighters wounded in battles with Islamic State.

“Libya marks the fifth anniversary of its revolution with the country torn by civil war and Isis expanding quickly into the chaos. ‘Back then it was simple, we fought for freedom,’ says the medical student, who asked to remain anonymous. ‘But a lot of time, you wonder was it worth it?’” □

ern government based in Tobruk and a western government based in Tripoli.

In late 2015, the United Nations put pressure on the eastern and western governments to unite under the newly formed Government of National Accord (GNA).

Western powers had vouched for the GNA to “tackle Libya’s security vacuum—including the presence of Islamic State—revive oil production, and stem the flow of migrants crossing the Mediterranean to Europe,” *Reuters* continued.

While both the eastern and western governments agreed to join the GNA, *Reuters* stated that some “power-brokers in the east say [the GNA] is trying

to undermine the military” and refuse to attend unification votes.

Although both governments have, in theory, joined the GNA, they continue to act as separate governments—each with its own parliament, territory and armies.

As a result, “Trust in the nation’s weak government institutions has fallen to an all-time low as political elites, unable to agree on even a governmental structure, deploy armed militias to control territory and economic assets,” the United States Institute of Peace reported.

The declining stability of the nation could threaten global security. David Tafuri, an international lawyer, wrote

HEALTH ISSUES

New Findings Heighten Zika Concerns

In the first study of its kind, researchers from The Rockefeller University and La Jolla Institute for Allergy and Immunology discovered that the mosquito-borne Zika virus can cause permanent brain damage in adults. The study, which was published in the journal *Cell Stem Cell*, has reinforced fears that the virus could have long-term effects.

“Based on our findings, getting infected with Zika as an adult may not be as innocuous as people think,” Joseph Gleeson, a co-author of the study, said.

According to the research, the infection may affect neurons that are responsible for replacing lost and damaged brain cells. Although the symptoms of such damage are subtle, “the virus could theoretically impact long-term memory or risk of depression.”

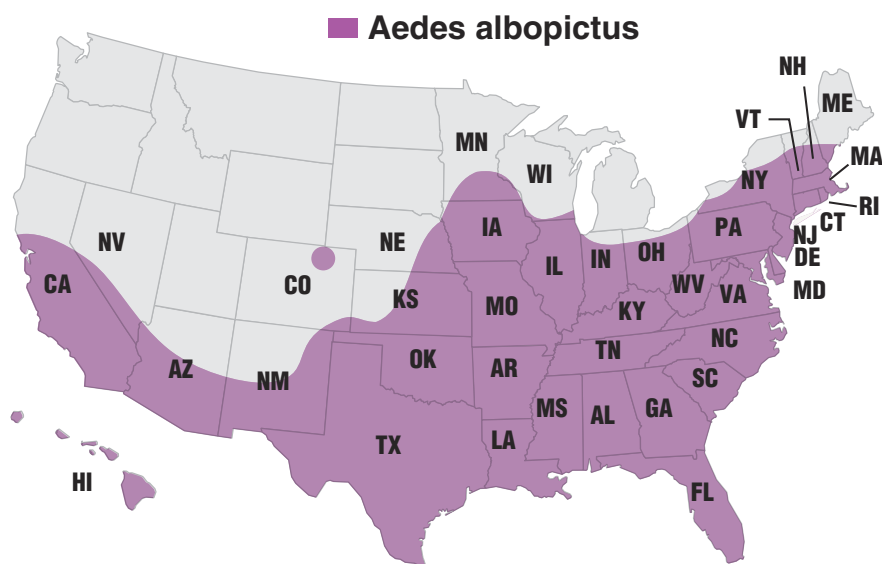
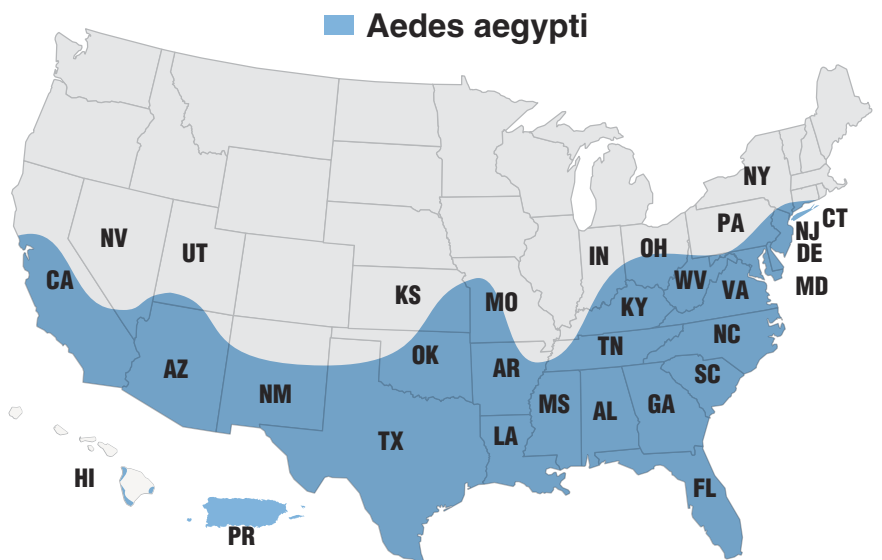
The United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that there have been more than 11,350 confirmed cases of Zika in the United States and its territories. The true number of cases, however, is unknown, since many that carry the disease only evidence mild symptoms, if any.

As a result, it is difficult to track or control the spread of the disease. *The Fiscal Times* reported: “If a man is infected, he can pass on the virus through semen, a blood transfusion or other bodily fluids. Unfortunately, researchers are unsure how long Zika remains in a man’s body.”

“The virus seems to be traveling quite a bit as people move around the world,” Dr. Gleeson concluded. “Given this study, I think the public health enterprise should consider monitoring for Zika infections in all groups, not just pregnant women.” □

Spread of Zika-carrying Mosquitoes in the U.S.

Two types of mosquitoes, *Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus*, are capable of spreading the Zika virus in the U.S. These maps show the CDC’s estimate of the potential range of the mosquitoes in 2016.



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Graphic: Garland Potts, Seattle Times/TNS

AMERICAS

Mexico's Murder Rate Hits Highest Level Since 2011

Mexico's homicide rate struck a five-year high in the first half of 2016, with the daily average reaching 57 murders. There were 2,073 in July alone.

The surge in violence—the largest since the nation authorized a militarized crackdown on drug cartels in 2011—has been attributed to a rise in the number of smaller crime organizations.

Mexican security analyst Alejandro Hope stated that the downfall of Mexico's large cartels, which have been broken up by law enforcement and infighting, "has created a vacuum that has been occupied by a large array of smaller, more local, more predatory gangs."

Authorities are spreading their resources thin to keep up. *Business Insider* reported that "the heavily fractured and opaque nature of the country's criminal landscape make analyzing and combatting that activity hard.



■ **HEIGHTENED VIOLENCE:** Mourners gather during a funeral in Tierra Blanca, Mexico, for a victim who died after being shot in front of his home (July 22, 2016).

PHOTO: KARLO REYES/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

"The fact that violence has gone up in so many parts of Mexico—coupled with missteps and bad prac-

tices by authorities—makes it harder for the government to respond effectively." □

ASIA

South China Sea Economies Threatened by Overfishing

Excessive fishing and competition for resources in the South China Sea threatens to hurt the surrounding cultures and economies relying on them.

National Geographic reported: "This is one of the world's most important fisheries, employing more than 3.7

million people and bringing in billions of dollars every year. But after decades of free-for-all fishing, dwindling stocks now threaten both the food security and economic growth of the rapidly developing nations that draw on them."

The sea, which encompasses 1.4 million square miles and supports \$5.3

trillion of international trade annually, helps supply jobs and livelihoods to those in 10 countries and territories surrounding it, including Vietnam, Malaysia and the Philippines.

Yet China controversially claims control over its waters, arguing that it historically possessed them. Beijing has encouraged Chinese fishermen to work in highly contested areas, which has spurred greater competition among local fishermen. This "extra pressure has sped up the depletion of fish stocks," *National Geographic* continued.

Marine biologist John McManus, a professor at the Rosenstiel School of the University of Miami, stated: "What we're looking at is potentially one of the world's worst fisheries collapses ever. We're talking hundreds and hundreds of species that will collapse, and they'll collapse relatively quickly, one after another." □



■ **TERRITORIAL DISPUTE:** Newly built fishing boats are stationed at the Thuan Phuoc port in Danang, Vietnam, in the South China Sea (Aug. 30, 2016). The nation has strengthened its fishing fleet in the area amid a dispute with China over ownership of the waters.

PHOTO: LINH PHAM/GETTY IMAGES

God's
kingdom
won't come
the way you
think...



Christ stated that His kingdom will begin “like a grain of mustard seed,” which “is less than all the seeds that be in the earth...” (Mark 4:31). Elsewhere, He described it as “treasure *hid* in a field” (Matt. 13:44). This is in contrast to the common belief that Christ will immediately set up a global kingdom at His Return.

To learn the incredible reasons Jesus said His kingdom would begin like a tiny mustard seed and be hidden, watch the life-changing *World to Come with David C. Pack* broadcast “How God’s Kingdom Will Come—Not What You Think!”

worldtocome.org