

WARPATH

Where the war in
Israel is leading

**What no one
would say about
Hurricane Sandy**

Your memory is
more powerful
than you realize

**America's
new anti-
religion**

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THE NEXT FOUR YEARS

**What is prophesied
to happen**



COVER

1 | FROM THE EDITOR | The Terrifying Darkness Before the Eternal Dawn

WORLD

4 | Lessons From Sandy Nature's fury was bad enough. But then came the ravages of *human* nature.

5 | im gon loot me sum stuff

6 | What No One Would Say About Sandy

16 | WORLDWATCH Guess who's *not* leaving Afghanistan • Reformation in reverse • Tied with North Korea! • A stranglehold on Europe's energy • Linking with Europe • The man to bring Anglicans to Rome?

22 | Israel vs. Hamas: Behind the Scenes Israel's enemy is not primitive—and not alone.

ETC.

8 | LIVING | The Overlooked Case For Marriage

10 | SCIENCE | Your Memory: More Powerful Than You Realize

11 | How Can I Improve My Memory Now?

13 | SOCIETY | Britain's New Drug Scene

15 | Parents: What Can You Do?

24 | RELIGION | America's New Religion: None

28 | BIBLE | The Seven Seals of Revelation Have Been Opened!

31 | PRINCIPLES OF LIVING
The Heart to Obey

32 | INCREASE YOUR BIBLE IQ
Do You Know Who God Is?

34 | DISCUSSION BOARD

35 | COMMENTARY
How to Weather the Storm

36 | TELEVISION LOG



FROM THE EDITOR GERALD FLURRY

The Terrifying Darkness Before the Eternal Dawn

America is rapidly headed into its darkest hour ever. But that black hour leads immediately into an everlasting joy!

WHAT WILL THE NEXT FOUR YEARS BRING AMERICA? A majority of American voters chose to reelect Barack Obama presumably because they believed the United States would have a brighter future with him leading the country.

Many others were convinced the country would have been far better off if the Republican candidate had won. His loss left a lot of people deeply discouraged, even depressed.

People see the terrifying problems facing the U.S. and this world—and see no solutions. They don't have hope. But believe it or not, THIS IS THE GREATEST ERA OF HOPE IN MANKIND'S HISTORY.

There Is Reason to Fear

What can we expect to see happen in America during this next presidential term? I believe that many people who voted for Mr. Obama seriously underestimate the severity of the crises and threats facing this country and the world today. We need to look honestly at the dangers.

Here is how Melanie Phillips, an excellent British commentator, reacted to the president's reelection: "With four more years of Obama in the White House, Iran can now be sure that it will be able to complete its infernal construction of a genocide bomb to use against the Jews and the West. WORLD WAR III HAS NOW COME A LOT CLOSER" (Nov. 7, 2012; emphasis mine throughout).

This is the view of many influential people, both inside and outside the U.S. In her article "America Goes Into the Darkness," Phillips continued, "It is said that, with likely gridlock in Congress over domestic issues, Obama will concentrate on foreign policy. We should all shudder. So far, Obama has empowered Iran to destabilize the region; supported Islamist takeovers in Egypt and Libya; is backing al Qaeda affiliates in Syria; refused to come to the aid of Americans being attacked by al Qaeda in Benghazi as a result of which four American officials were murdered; and hung Israel out to dry against its genocidal Palestinian attackers."

There is a lot of evidence to support Ms. Phillips's statements. The president's first term saw a rise in power for many enemies of the United States, while America's power and influence declined. This president has talked a lot about how he would improve America's reputation in the world. But the facts show this has not happened. More and more, other nations openly work against America's interests with no fear of any repercussions. America's reputation is being ravaged.

America has been going *into the darkness* for many years. President Obama and the radical left are just leading us into the

nation's worst darkness ever, and much faster than at any time in our history.

Would Romney Have Been Better?

America has \$16 trillion in debt—more debt than any nation has ever had—but that's just the beginning. America has promised people tens of trillions more in Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid benefits. Laurence Kotlikoff, professor of economics at Boston University, says America's total liabilities are actually \$222 trillion!

Meanwhile, unemployment is high, productivity is stagnant, and inflation is rising. Yet *all* of the government's efforts to fix the economic crisis have aimed at trying to *soften its effects* rather than *SOLVE ITS CAUSES*. That is only making things *worse*. Even in these crushing conditions, the government just keeps growing and spending more and more money. This administration has grown the national debt A TRILLION DOLLARS A YEAR for all four years. No nation has ever borrowed and printed money the way America has. A study in 2010 by John Kichen of the U.S. Treasury and Menzie Chinn of the University of Wisconsin showed that if trends continue, by 2020, funding America's debt would take 19 percent of the gross domestic product of the *entire world!*

These facts ought to shock Americans to their senses, but most people are too involved in their sports and pleasures to notice. The debt doesn't bother them. In fact, the way people voted in

If you feel anxiety about the direction of the country, that is actually a good thing. It is the beginning of the right kind of change, because you will realize that you need to look for a real solution.

this election shows that they want *more* of it. Already the total price tag for federal and state welfare programs came to almost \$1 trillion in 2011—almost a third of America's yearly budget. A record 47 million Americans—*one in seven*—are on food stamps, and the government is actually encouraging *more* people to join.

I guarantee you, AMERICA'S FINANCIAL PROBLEMS WILL INTENSIFY UNTIL THEY GET OUR FULL ATTENTION!

THE DOLLAR IS GOING TO COLLAPSE. I BELIEVE THE CHANCES ARE HIGH THIS WILL HAPPEN WITHIN THE NEXT FOUR YEARS.

Would America have solved this problem under a Romney presidency? He offered no plan to pay off the debt—and Paul Ryan's plan wouldn't have balanced the budget for another 28 years!

This crisis is FAR BIGGER than just one candidate or political party.

An expert at the German Council on Foreign Relations, Josef Braml, said this before the election: “The weight of the USA’s total debt has become *unsustainable* both economically and politically,” he said. That reality has many crucial consequences; one that Braml mentioned is that the country can no longer maintain its global “strategy of massive military presence to secure energy resources and trade routes.” Couple that weakness with the fact that we won’t drill domestically, and you have a catastrophe for America.

Are we willing to listen to our critics?

This man studies the U.S. and recently published a book called *The American Patient*. The perception of America has changed a lot since our days as a superpower. Now we are looked upon as a sick patient on our deathbed.

The Real Problem

In the past, many nations looked to the U.S. for protection. But that trust is rapidly fading. Nations like China know that Americans are too fearful to fight. We do all we possibly can to avoid any human casualties. We do this to the point where we have become a nation of cowards.

Adolf Hitler preyed on that kind of weakness before World War II. In fact, Winston Churchill believed that weakness CAUSED World War II! So few nations opposed Hitler that he thought he could conquer the world. He almost did! Weakness only encourages strong, dictatorial leaders.

How can we correct this deadly disease of a broken will? America gained its freedom through much bloodshed and courage. And our freedom cannot be sustained by cowards. We can easily deceive ourselves. But our enemies know the truth and will one day soon put us to the test!

The further we get from God, the more cowardly we become. How serious is this problem? The repercussions will be worse than we can imagine.

We learned a lot about America in this last election. For

The perception of America has changed a lot since our days as a superpower. Now we are looked upon as a sick patient on our deathbed.

example, for the first time in American history, people *voted* to legalize same-sex “marriage.” They voted it down 32 previous times, but this time, laws permitting same-sex unions passed in Maryland, Washington and Maine. Minnesota rejected a measure constitutionally defining marriage as the union of a man and a woman. Also, Wisconsin elected a lesbian to the Senate, the country’s first openly homosexual senator.

AMERICA’S MORAL STATE HAS NEVER BEEN MORE BASE.

On abortion, a recent Rasmussen poll found that 54 percent of Americans now call themselves pro-choice, while only 38 percent say they are pro-life. Fornication is accepted; adultery is common. Pornography is mainstream—it is even *studied* academically in our universities!

There *will be* some serious consequences for America that come from this president receiving a second term. But Americans must not make the mistake of thinking that the problem is just with that man, or a small group of radicals, or the Democrat Party, or the liberal left.

America is experiencing problems BECAUSE OF THE SINS OF THE PEOPLE!

The Root Cause

God revealed through Herbert W. Armstrong that the United States and the British peoples are prophetically known as the nations of Israel in the Bible. Others understood that truth, but only in a shallow way compared to Mr. Armstrong. God also revealed to Mr. Armstrong that the modern-day Israelis are prophetically known as Judah in the Bible.

These are God’s own nations, called to set an example for the world. Our nations have failed miserably to live up to God’s standards. Our crime rates are some of the highest in the world—and our *morals* are the LOWEST in the world!

Anciently, Manasseh “seduced” Israel into being more evil than other nations (2 Kings 21:1-3, 9, 16). He destroyed the righteousness that his father Hezekiah had established. In the same way, America today has led the rest of Israel and much of the world into great evil also!

This is what we have done with the enormous blessings God has given us. Now God is sending curses because of our sins.

God always warns people before He punishes them. In Ezekiel 33, God says He sends a watchman to warn the nations of the United States, Great Britain and Israel. (For proof, ask us for a copy of Herbert W. Armstrong’s book *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*. We will send it to you absolutely free of charge.) In verse 11, He says, “Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, *I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; BUT THAT THE WICKED TURN FROM HIS WAY AND LIVE: TURN YE, TURN YE from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?*”

Do you believe that scripture? God wants people to STOP DISOBEYING HIM! He doesn’t want us to suffer the evils of our addiction to drugs and pornography that destroys families. He doesn’t want us to have to live in poverty because of our corrupt economic and political systems. He doesn’t want us to be abused by corrupt religions. He wants us to *turn* from those evils—so we can *really LIVE!*

Many people want to blame the country’s problems on the misguided policies of certain politicians. *But that is not the root cause of our problems! GOD IS SENDING CURSES ON US BECAUSE OF OUR SINS!* He wants us to change our ways and turn to Him. Unfortunately, it is going to take a lot of suffering for many people first.

If you feel anxiety about the direction of the country, *that is actually a good thing.* It is the beginning of the right kind of change, because you will realize that you need to look for a *real* solution. There *is* hope, but most people refuse to see it.

The Next Four Years

“Obama’s agenda has been crystal clear from the get-go: to increase the power of the state over the citizen at home, and to neutralize American power abroad. Four more years of this and he’ll almost certainly have succeeded,” Melanie Phillips wrote. “THE IMPACT UPON WESTERN SECURITY COULD BE CATAclysmic. ... WITH THE REELECTION OF OBAMA, AMERICA NOW THREATENS TO LEAD THE WEST INTO A TERRIFYING DARKNESS.”

I have to emphatically agree with Phillips on this point. Why? Because it is exactly what Bible prophecy says is going to happen!

Our elected leaders are going to help bring about some of the worst violence the world has ever known. The Bible is full of prophecies of what is about to happen to the United States. Most people would ridicule that statement, but the fact is, *we are already seeing these prophecies coming to pass.*

God specifically foretold America’s decline in strong leadership, both nationally and within families (e.g. Isaiah 1:4-6; 3:1-12).

He prophesied that sexual perversions would abound—comparing American and British society to ancient Sodom (Isaiah 3:9). He foretold the loss of military strength and will (Leviticus 26:17-20). Several prophecies speak of the nation being rocked by economic crises, social breakdown, racial hatreds, widespread crime, judicial corruption and other problems. He warned in advance of the increase in floods, droughts, tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes and other nature-related catastrophes. He forecast our descent into materialism, greed, godlessness, rank idolatry, arrogance and self-promotion.

So many of these passages in Scripture—which specifically speak about the end-time nations of Israel—are perfect descriptions of America today. But the prophecies get far worse and even more specific.

Ezekiel prophesied that a *third* of the people in America and the British nations will die by a plague of violence or burning (that's what "pestilence" refers to) and famine (Ezekiel 5). That could result from terrorism, or economic disruptions that spark riots and racial violence. Ezekiel said *cities* are going to be "laid waste" and "desolate" (Ezekiel 6:6). He discusses the great cities of America and Britain becoming "without inhabitant." That means nuclear fire is going to reduce our major cities to ashes! It is hard to imagine God giving us a stronger warning! But the prophecies continue in even more detail.

We are heading into a terrifying darkness in this country, as Melanie Phillips put it. I DO BELIEVE THE NEXT FOUR YEARS MAY WELL SEE THE FULFILLMENT OF THE WORST OF THESE PROPHECIES.

But that is not the end of the story. *In that darkness* is the hope! That darkness is *the very thing* that will ultimately make us *get to know God!* "THEN SHALL THEY KNOW THAT I AM THE LORD, when I have laid the land most desolate because of all their abominations which they have committed" (Ezekiel 33:29).

The recent election showed that millions of Americans are ignorant of the dangers we face—and are complacent or even happy about the downward spiral this nation has entered. It showed that millions more are bitterly opposed to their neighbors. But more than anything, it proved that *neither* ideology has the solutions to our problems.

Maybe you are one of those who are apprehensive about the next four years. You probably see some of the same dangers that

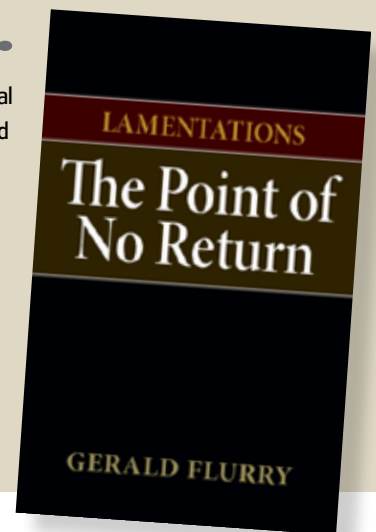


NEW WAVE President Obama's second term will see America enter an unseen and uncharted time.

There's no going back.

Does it seem like the United States is past the point of saving? The biblical book of Lamentations was a warning to ancient Judah that it had reached the point of no return. When that book was revealed, the nation could no longer repent to avoid being taken captive. That disaster was a type of what is prophesied to happen in this end time with three nations of Israel—America, Britain and the Jewish nation. These nations have passed that junction. But individuals can still repent before the Great Tribulation—yet even they have only a short time to do so.

To learn more, request a free copy of our booklet
Lamentations: The Point of No Return.



Phillips sees. Those dangers *are* real—and they're even worse than you think. Yet there is real hope, and it is much *greater* than you think! It's *FAR* greater than Mr. Romney or the Republican Party. It's greater than conservatism. The real hope is *repentance toward God!* Strange as that may sound, the same Bible that precisely prophesied America's decline and its coming collapse *ALSO* prophesies that *THERE IS DAZZLING HOPE AHEAD!*

There is only one answer. It is only by obeying God, by applying His laws and principles of life that we can bring real *hope* and joy into our lives. We do need *real change* to solve our problems. And even though we will go through some dark times, *GOD WILL BRING THAT TO PASS.* He is about to effect a *REVOLUTION* by sending His Son, Jesus Christ, to rule this Earth as King of kings and Lord of lords. The Bible also prophesies about that—and those prophecies are *SURE.*

We are almost there! Take hope in that.



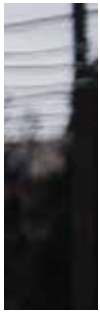
BADLANDS

Hurricane Sandy transformed a wide swath of Queens—and far beyond—into a scene of devastation.

Lessons From **SANDY**

Nature's fury was bad enough. But then came the ravages of *human* nature.

BY ROBERT MORLEY



IN THE HISTORY OF STORMS HITTING America, Hurricane Sandy was unique. Meteorologists said it had no known precedent: Three separate storms collided, producing a megastorm that slammed a 1,000-mile stretch of America's eastern seaboard. It was described as a "perfect storm," a "Frankenstorm," the "storm of the century."

Its timing amplified the damage: The hurricane-force tidal surge coincided with monthly high tides, causing record floods that swamped flood barriers. Water inundated homes and wiped out roads, infrastructure and whole coastal communities. In New York and New Jersey, flooded subway systems were severely damaged. Hospitals became unusable. Schools closed. Airlines cancelled over 13,000 flights. Amtrak stopped all East Coast services. The governor of Connecticut shut down all state highways. Whole states got bombarded with several feet of snow.

In one way or another, 50 million people felt the fury of Sandy. Yet as ugly as the storm was, the *human* aftermath was even uglier. It was this "fourth stormfront" that added a particularly unnerving atmosphere to this "storm of the century."

The Whirlwind After the Storm

After "natural" catastrophes, why do Americans turn on themselves? In Japan, after the massive earthquake and tsunami in 2011, there was hardly a mention of looting. We heard more of survival and a nation coming together to rebuild.

America has those stories too. But they pale in comparison to the egregious breakdown in law and order.

The water was barely starting to recede when looting started. With no lights, cameras or alarms, people just couldn't wait to get out and *get stuff*.

Already-devastated communities became playgrounds for rampaging mobs, stealing whatever they could lay their hands on. Stores along both sides of a two-mile stretch of Mermaid Avenue in Coney Island were completely emptied. Liquor shops, convenience stores, equipment rentals, electronics emporiums, clothing outlets and grocery markets were pillaged.

But people weren't just turning on corporate America. Looters went up and down streets breaking into *homes*—sometimes ones that were still occupied. They stole generators being used to keep people warm. They siphoned gasoline. They stole emergency lights. They stole water-soaked possessions right off front lawns.

'im gon loot me sum stuff'

THE BREAKDOWN of law and order post-Sandy was shocking. It seemed like people were just waiting for the storm to strike so they could take advantage.

Coney Island was especially bad. People went in and out of stores grabbing flat-screen televisions, clothing, booze and other loot. According to witnesses, looters were in no hurry. Some thieves made multiple trips. Looting even took place in broad daylight, with bystanders present. The thieves didn't care. It wasn't about stealing to feed themselves; this was about entrepreneurship. This was about seizing an opportunity.

Thieves hit Joann's Discount Wine and Liquors at 11:30 a.m. Police officers were posted to prevent further looting. While they were out front, innovating thieves emptied the store through the roof.

At a nearby Rite-Aid, people were walking in empty-handed and walking out with full shopping carts. "They didn't even look worried," said one store employee. "They looked like they were casually shopping."

A mob of up to 100 people completely ransacked the Fresh Market Store. Employee Fernando Mendoza said they were "destroying everything. They stole anything they could get their hands on. Someone even ran off with the cash register."

One looter justified stealing merchandise this way: "Look, they've been looting our wallets for too long."

Other people took the opportunity to cash in big. People were selling chocolate bars for \$8 and fuel for \$20 per gallon. Hotels jacked up rates to \$700 per night. On Craigslist, gasoline was offered in exchange for sex.

But people weren't just nonchalant about their looting: They were *proud* of it, declaring their sins for the world to see.

The Twittersphere showed looters going wild. One bragged: "Last night even momma got outa her house to loot me a new shirt..luv u momma." The attached picture showed an older woman taking a mannequin wearing a white shirt out of a broken store window.

Another wrote: "i don't need a degree the lootin business serve me well." Other looters bragged about stealing laptops, TVs, stereo equipment, video game systems, hospital equipment, and even somebody's pet cat right out of their house. One person bragged: "im rakin in da dough ive pocketed \$8500 just in past hour."

Another tweeted: "we not stealin we taking back from da white man."

What a nation. This problem isn't easily fixed. It exposes a mentality more deeply ingrained in our culture than most people care to admit.



COAST TO COAST

Whether Oakland 2010 or New York 2012, looters are at the ready.

They dressed as utility and rescue workers, pretending to help victims—then beating and robbing them.

Citizens attacked actual utility workers who worked to restore electricity. Police had to spend precious manpower protecting electricity workers from people angry that their electricity wasn't restored faster.

Who Is Responsible for You?

Then there was the blaming and complaining.

Those stranded in areas without electricity, water and gas sounded off in front of reporters. They complained that the Red Cross had abandoned them, that FEMA took too long to bring help, that the state was too slow to provide food, water and generators for everyone.

One visibly emotional man told reporters that the conditions of the temporary bathrooms the government had set up were disgusting. Another man complained that the temporary housing provided by the government was too crowded. There were no showers, the bunk beds were too small, and the rooms felt like cattle cars, he said. A woman said the wait to get rationed gasoline was terrible. Another complained the government didn't provide enough charging stations for cell phones.

Don't look for gratitude among this rabble—you won't find much.

It seemed like half the complaining was about things the government *did* supply!

There was plenty of real suffering in the wake of Sandy. But how much of it could have been avoided had complainers taken even a modicum of personal responsibility for their lives—and not simply expected the government to take care of them?

People had *more than a week* to prepare for Hurricane Sandy. And many of the loudest critics were in areas that had mandatory evacuation orders a full day

supplies set aside in case of a catastrophe. *More than half* of people surveyed said they did not have even a three-day supply of food and water in their homes.

No wonder post-Sandy New York and New Jersey were such a mess. And Sandy was only a Category 1 storm.

New York, especially, should have been prepared. Hurricane Irene struck only two years ago. But back then, the Feds picked

Fifty-five percent of Americans believe that if a disaster strikes, the government will come to their rescue.

before the storm hit. They chose to live on a beach, and one of the biggest storms in history was headed straight toward them. What did they think would happen?

In July, a study conducted by the Adelphi University Center for Health Innovation found that 55 percent of Americans believe that if a disaster strikes, the government will come to their rescue. Forty-four percent of adults don't own a first-aid kit. Almost 50 percent have no emergency

up most of the bill too—75 percent of the reconstruction costs. Perhaps people became complacent, assuming that since the government would take care of things, they didn't need to take any preparatory measures themselves.

At one time, America was well known for its culture of hard work, self-sufficiency, and taking personal responsibility. Disasters such as these show just how far from that ideal the nation has fallen.

And that is going to be a big problem.

Take a look at the number of billion-dollar disasters we've been facing. In 2000, there were two. In 2005, there were five. In 2011 there were 14. In 2012, there were 11 as of November, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The trend is definitely heading up—and fast. New Orleans, New York and New Jersey are only the beginning.

But as superstorm Sandy proved, Americans are not prepared.

After looking at Sandy—and remembering Katrina—one wonders how quickly America would revert into something out of the Congo or Rwanda if there weren't police and National Guard on the streets.

What will happen if one day there are no police? What if our society really does break down like the self-sufficiency survivalist types and rogue economic analysts say it will?

There's something you need to know: That is exactly what is about to happen. The *Trumpet* can tell you that dogmatically, not because we can predict weather patterns or economic forces or even societal trends,



MAXIMUM DIAMETER
1,100 MILES

PROPERTY DAMAGE
\$20 BILLION

LOSS OF BUSINESS
\$30 BILLION

DEATH TOLL (110 IN U.S. AND 69 IN CARIBBEAN)
179 FATALITIES

POWER OUTAGES
8.5 MILLION

What No One Would

METEOROLOGISTS SAID THERE WERE NO KNOWN PRECEDENTS for Hurricane Sandy. Connecticut Gov. Dan Malloy called it “the most catastrophic event we have faced ... in any of our lifetimes.”

America is getting hit by more and more record disasters all the time. Why is that? A lot of people blame global warming. But is it possible that *God* has something to do with the weather? You need to prove whether or not He has a hand in these disasters.

Why are so many people hostile to that concept? A generation or two ago, people who experienced a monster storm like this would have asked themselves if they needed to get closer to God. Many would have asked, *Are we sinning?* But today almost *nobody* is asking those questions. God is not even part of their thinking.

One third of your Bible is prophecy—future news. Ninety percent of prophecy is for today. And those prophecies predict that catastrophes will come on us in this end time. That's in the Bible for the whole world to read. It's there for *you* to prove for yourself.

What does it mean to *you* that America was struck by an unprecedented storm?

The *record-breaking* weather disasters hitting America are not coincidences. They are *fulfilled prophecies* from the Bible. America is facing increasing disasters *for a reason*. God is unleashing these phenomena to get our attention! He wants to use them to turn sinning people back to Him.

Many people claim to believe in God, but they don't believe *what He says in the Bible*. Christ said we need to *live by every word of God* (Matthew 4:4).

In the aftermath of Sandy, mobs looted businesses, and people walked in and casually robbed stores. People fought over gasoline. Store owners were price-gouging and profiteering off of people with acute needs and nowhere else to go.

but because we know that the Bible, which has accurately predicted past events, will accurately predict future ones.

In the Bible, God says that He is the one who blessed our nation (which descended from ancient Israel) with wealth and prominence. But we have obviously turned away from Him. Because of our sins, God is removing the blessings He gave us and is punishing us for hating Him. Your Bible is full of specific prophecies that relate to this. Many of them are specifically about environmental disasters.

Those disasters are about to get worse. A lot worse. And judging by Katrina and Sandy, so will the man-made human nature disasters that come in their wake.

Is There a Solution?

America has a lot of questions that need answers. How do you fix people so devoid of common decency? How do you change people who are out to take all they can? How do you convince people that they—not the government—are responsible for providing for themselves, their families and their community? How do you teach

gratitude? How do you fix a society that should be working together to rebuild from a horrible disaster, but instead attacks itself? How do you convince people to live a way of life based on *give*, not get?

It's not better meteorology or more organized disaster relief or more government aid that we need. What we need is for each of *us* to change. It has to start with you and me. We have to *want* to change.

Do you think that right now Americans are ready to repent?

Sadly, that is the furthest thing from most of our minds. It takes suffering a superstorm for the concept of God to even enter our minds. For us to acknowledge that God exists, that the Bible is His Word, that He gave us our blessings, that we have sinned against Him and that we must repent—that's going to take, unfortunately, a *lot more* suffering.

Yet there's hope in that. This is exactly what God is doing as He allows disasters like Hurricane Sandy to strike. He is speaking to carnal, godless people in the only language they understand: force. Until people make real, permanent

changes in their lives, they are going to have to live through more hurricanes and tornadoes and earthquakes and floods and droughts. They will necessarily have to endure destruction that intensifies *beyond* their breaking points.

That might sound depressing, but if you understand your Bible—and you know God—you know there is *inspiring hope* in the midst of that tragedy. It is more tragic for people to live and die rejecting and hating God than it is to suffer these disasters and then *turn to Him!*

God doesn't want to see us suffer. He doesn't want us preying on each other during adversity. He wants us to live happy lives of purpose, prosperity, fulfillment and happy families, happy communities and happy nations. This bright future is what America has to look forward to. It'll take superstorms like you've never seen before. But once He finally breaks our pride, humbles us and brings us to His wonderful way of life, our nation will experience peace, prosperity—beautiful weather—like you wouldn't believe even if it were told you. That's in the Bible too. ■

Say About Sandy

BY GERALD FLURRY

What other nation would turn on itself at a time like this? What is wrong with Americans? We are compounding our suffering from great natural disasters by committing crimes against ourselves. But do you know why?

Our politicians speak as though they have the answers to these problems. Leading up to the recent presidential election, we heard endless talk about what a catastrophe for the nation it would be if the *other* party was elected. After President Obama won the election, Republicans talked a lot about what a great catastrophe that was for the nation—as if a different outcome would have made all the difference.

The truth is, regardless of election outcomes, THERE ALREADY IS A GREAT CATASTROPHE IN THIS LAND, AND WE MUST SEE THAT OR PERISH!

God promises in His Word that if we respond to Him, individually, He will protect us. But this nation's problems will NEVER be solved by a political party.

The book of Hosea was written primarily for the end time—the time we live in. In it, God says to His people Israel—which includes the United States, “[Y]E ARE NOT MY PEOPLE, AND I WILL NOT BE YOUR GOD” (Hosea 1:9). Those are strong words from God.

“For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, which they prepared for Baal” (Hosea 2:8). This is another serious charge from our *Creator*.

Where did all our wealth come from? Did it come from the great capitalist system? Was it our Yankee ingenuity? Positive election outcomes? If you believe that, then you don't believe your

Bible. America's prosperity came from *God*. He gave us birthright blessings because of godly men who *obeyed* Him.

No wonder God gets upset. He gave us all these blessings, and we turn around and worship another god!

God says that, because of that, “will I return, and TAKE AWAY MY CORN in the time thereof, and my wine in the season thereof, and will recover my wool and my flax given to cover her nakedness. And now will I discover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers, and NONE SHALL DELIVER HER OUT OF MINE HAND.”

Hurricane Sandy was actually another proof among many that God is not happy with how America is behaving. God is full of wrath because of our depravity and sins. We should take this very seriously—even more seriously than a monster storm!

But there is a happy ending. Verse 23 says God *will* call people His people, and people will finally repent and *know their God*. These troubles are going to get worse, but they are leading to a beautiful ending: the return of Jesus Christ to this Earth, and a time when everyone will finally know and worship the God who gave them their blessings. ■



For thorough historical and biblical proof of the identity of modern Israel, request our free booklet **The United States & Britain in Prophecy**, written by Herbert W. Armstrong.



The Overlooked Case for Marriage

There is something to be said for saying 'I do.' **BY DENNIS LEAP**

FOR NEARLY FOUR DECADES, MARRIAGE has been cast into considerable controversy. Psychologists, sociologists and marriage “experts” have viciously—and successfully—attacked the most valuable institution given to mankind. As a result, marriage has come to be considered an injurious undertaking, especially for women. The marriage institution is in near fatal decline: Divorce is common, and more and more people are choosing not to marry at all.

In 2011, a study by the National Marriage Project at the University of Virginia revealed Americans’ disenchantment with marriage. From 1970 to 2010 there was a 50 percent decline in the annual number of marriages per 1,000 unmarried adults. Current statistics indicate that roughly half of American marriages end in divorce.

But there is hope. There exists a renewed effort by many to restore marriage’s good reputation. More and more books and articles are highlighting the benefits and the importance of marriage. Even an avowed supporter of cohabitation-without-marriage stated in the *New York Times* in June 2012, “What I have learned is this: While ‘happily ever after’ may indeed be

a farce, there is something to be said for uttering ‘I do.’”

What is to be said for marriage? Consider what some of the latest research is saying on the subject.

Healthier Finances

Financial strength is often mentioned as the most important benefit to marriage. A Rasmussen poll released in January 2012 showed that marriage offers better financial prospects. Families where the couple is married typically have higher household incomes than those with unmarried couples. This is true even when only one spouse holds a job. Statistics show that married men make 11 percent more than men who have never married. Economists and social scientists call this effect the “marriage premium.”

To what can this male marriage premium be attributed? Married men tend to be more conscientious and productive than their unmarried counterparts. A man who is married is often thinking more responsibly, since he has a family to support, so he is 1) likelier to go after a higher paying job, and 2) a more responsible individual and thus better capable of holding down a higher paying job. In addition, married

men generally have wives who spend more time with household duties, which allows their husbands to devote more time to job responsibilities. Advancement and increased pay are the likely result. This means that even if the wife is not employed outside the home, her work in the home contributes to the overall income of the marriage. Two *are* better than one.

It is also well documented that married couples tend to have a greater accumulation of wealth. In their book *The Case for Marriage*, Linda Waite and Maggie Gallagher show that the longer people remain married, the greater their wealth. Conversely, the longer that divorced people remain unmarried, the fewer their assets. For example, many married couples tend to own their own home, adding to their assets. Studies cited by Waite and Gallagher showed that couples married less than five years had a median net worth of \$96,000. Spouses married 15 to 19 years had a net worth of \$125,000, while couples married 35 years or more had assets totaling nearly \$158,000. In contrast, people who had been divorced less than two years held a net worth of \$41,900. Those divorced for 15 to 19 years had a net worth of \$21,400. Those who remained single more than 20 years or more were worth only \$7,200.

Ample evidence shows that the majority of single-parent families, especially those headed by a single female, struggle financially. The 2010 Census showed that “Of the single-mother families with children under 18, nearly 41 percent were living below the poverty line.” Single-father families do better. The census also found that only 9 percent of the married-couple families with children under 18 fall below the poverty line. So, explain the marriage advocates, if you’re married, you are likelier to be better off financially.

Promotes Good Health

Evidence proves that a happy marriage is good for your health. Medical studies show that married couples who spend a lot of time together and share an emotionally supportive relationship tend to have lower blood pressure. (Couples in negative marriages tend to have high blood pressure and other cardiovascular ailments such as thicker heart walls.) This suggests that loving couples help each other better meet the challenges, stresses and strains of life. In addition, compatible marriages strengthen each partner’s immune system, digestive system and prevent emotional problems like anxiety and depression.

In 2010, the *New York Times*, citing a study from *The Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, reported that “when the married people became single again—either by divorce or because of the death of a spouse—they suffered a decline in physical health from which they never fully recovered. These men and women had 20 percent more chronic health issues, like heart disease and diabetes, than those who were still married to their first husband or wife by middle age.” The *Times* also reported that divorced and widowed people aged less gracefully.

Medical experts believe that marriage is especially good for younger men. Young married men tend to be more cautious of their health, get regular check-ups and greatly improve their diet. Single men are three times more likely to die of cirrhosis of the liver, the California Healthy Marriages Coalition reports. And the U.S. Department of Justice says that male victims of violent crime are nearly four times more likely to be single than married.

Married sex is also better for a young man’s health—and a woman’s too. Monogamous sex eliminates the chances of catching a sexually transmitted disease. The stress, uncertainty and emotional ambiguity that comes from promiscuous sex has been well publicized, but unfortunately, not believed. Married sex is better sex. The mental, emotional and physical satisfaction that is produced by bonded and committed love has no parallel.

On top of all that, marriage tends to have a noticeable dampening effect on risky behavior in young men, decreasing participation in activities like bungee jumping, parachuting and drunk driving.

The Overlooked Benefit

Above all, marriage offers awesome benefits to children. Nurturing, teaching and properly rearing children is the *most important* case for marriage. The 21st-century liberal media have gone over the top in insisting that same-sex “marriage” is better for children. Time is showing that this is a terrible lie foisted on a deer-eyed public. No other form of marriage has the incredible power to bring into being a new human life as does the sexual union between a man and a woman. No other union other

than that of two opposite-gendered parents can produce healthy, emotionally stable, successful children.

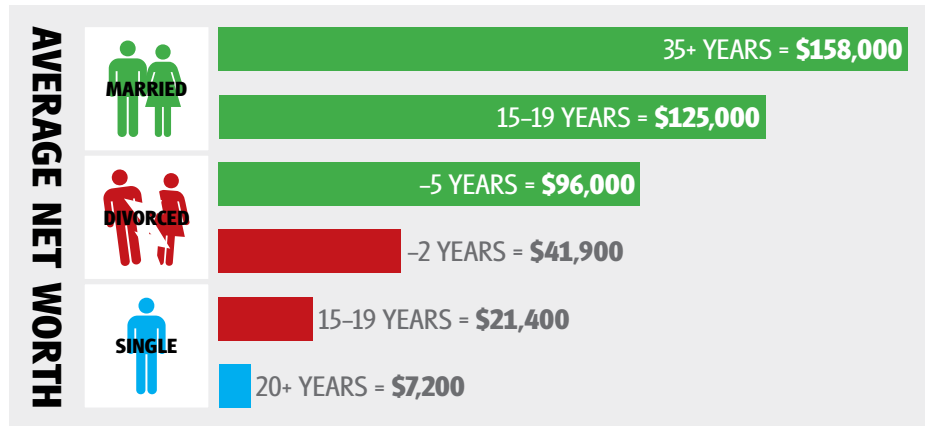


The well-being of children has plunged with the decline of marriage. The rates of child abuse (physical and sexual), neglect, adolescent and teen crime, adolescent and teen depression and suicide have skyrocketed as adults have divorced and forsaken marriage. The problem is growing worse.

In February 2012, the *New York Times* reported that more than half of the births to white, American, middle-class women under 30 occur outside of marriage. These figures represent a shift of unwed pregnancy from poor women and minorities to white women with some college education. “The shift is affecting children’s lives,” the article stated. “Researchers have

and crucial emotional stability. It is support from Dad and Mom that gives children the emotional strength and physical confidence to meet the challenges of life.

Children’s access to Dad is of prime importance for the development of self-esteem and confidence. *Fathermag.com* reports, “An increased amount of father-child involvement has proven to increase a child’s social stability, educational achievement, and even their potential to have a solid marriage as an adult.” Studies show that children are more likely to enjoy school and participate in extracurricular activities when their fathers are involved in their education. Waite and



consistently found that children born outside marriage face elevated risks of falling into poverty, failing in school or suffering emotional and behavioral problems.” As a nation we must come to see how adults, in full pursuit of private selfish desires, are crippling the future generation.

That is not to say that children who grow up in a single-parent family or divorced family are doomed; many have been successful. Yet, children living with happily married parents have distinct advantages that last long into adulthood. Statistics show that children of married couples are healthier physically and that they maintain their health throughout adulthood. Children of married couples grow up in a stable environment, often living in the same house until ready to move out on their own. A family history of living in one home lays the foundation for children to want to build their own families. Most importantly, children of married couples experience specialized attention from both Dad and Mom. Moms provide the nurturing that all children need. Dads provide practical know-how

Gallagher cite a national study that shows that 81 percent of children in two-parent families said they get help with homework from their dads, while just 56 percent of children from single-parent families made the same claim. Lack of support from Dad could be one of the main reasons why children of single-parent families tend to do less well in school.

The vital importance of marriage can never be overstated. When the love between a man and a woman blooms into a marriage, an incredible power for great good is unleashed. A well-mated couple—the blending of two lives into one—produces a shared personal completeness that cannot be achieved any other way. Marriage stands firm as an honored institution that cannot be tarnished with human misuse.

While married love is incredibly good for men and women, it is critically necessary to raise happy, healthy and successful children. Looking at the lives of children, we see the future of humanity in the making. What will that future be like? Only those who understand the importance of marriage can ensure that future is bright. ■



YOUR MEMORY

More Powerful
Than You
Realize!

Perhaps one day,
these vast storehouses
of information will
be unlocked!

BY JEREMIAH JACQUES

THE LIMITATIONS AND CAPRICES OF our memories can be frustrating. Our memories are often feeble and unreliable; it seems that even when we carefully study a subject, in time it often slips into the crevasses of our minds, fading into obscurity or disappearing completely.

In normal circumstances, we have to labor industriously to keep our storehouses of knowledge from deteriorating, bringing important truths back to light over and over by repeated study. But, every so often, *abnormal circumstances* offer us strange glimpses of hope for what our memories can really accomplish.

Guten Morgen, Papa!

One such glimpse came in April 2010, when a Croatian girl named Sandra Ralic emerged from a one-day coma—and baffled her doctors and parents with her sudden fluency in German. The 13-year-old girl's parents said that she had only just begun to study the German language a few months earlier, and that she had not developed anything even approaching fluency. Her coma had left her no longer able to speak Croatian, so Sandra's bewildered doctors and parents had to hire a German translator to communicate with her.

It's easy to understand how the trauma Sandra sustained could damage the area of her brain that stored her Croatian language skills. But how was she suddenly

able to communicate in German—vastly superior to what she could speak prior to the coma?

News sources said that, before Sandra's coma, she occasionally supplemented her middle school German class by watching German TV shows with Croatian subtitles. On a conscious level, this is the linguistic equivalent of a guitarist deciding to learn Albeniz's fiendishly difficult "Asturias" in his first week playing the instrument. But for Sandra's *subconscious*, watching TV in German was far from fruitless. Some part of her brain had absorbed, compartmentalized and stored vast quantities of German-language knowledge, though she was not aware of it until the coma unlocked all of that information.

Can I Improve My Memory Now?

'Unfound Treasure'

In a separate baffling incident in 2006, a 40-year-old Colorado man named Derek Armeto struck his head on the bottom of a swimming pool. He was with diagnosed a severe concussion, and to this day he suffers from some memory loss and a 35 percent loss of hearing. After his accident, Derek and a friend were sitting at a piano, where he discovered another unexpected consequence of the accident.

"As I shut my eyes, I found these black and white structures moving from left to right, which in fact would represent in my mind, a fluid and continuous stream of musical notation," he said. "My fingers began to scale the piano keys *as if I had played all of my life*. I can't explain the feeling of awe that overcame my entire being, although I can tell you the expression on my friend's face was enough to put us both in tears. I could not only play and compose, but I would later discover that I could recall a prior played piece of music as if it had been etched in my mind's eye."

Four days after his accident, he asked his mother to accompany him to a music store. "We found the nearest piano as I asked her to sit next to me," he said. "I began to play as if I was exploring some unfound treasure that had been locked up all this time in my head." Derek left his corporate job shortly after to pursue a career in music. He now plays eight instruments proficiently, which he had no previous experience with, and he has sharply improved his skills on the guitar, which he had lightly dabbled with before his accident.

So, how is it that Derek was able to play with such sudden fluidity and mastery? He had actively listened to music for all of his life. All the time he spent listening to music and tinkering away on his guitar, his brain was absorbing and filing musical understanding away in his subconscious. He didn't have ready access to this understanding until the blow to his cranium unlocked the vault in his subconscious where it was stored.

The Real Rain Man

Then there was the case of Kim Peek, a "mega-savant" born in Salt Lake City in 1951. By the time of Peek's death in 2009, he was considered a genius in 15 different subjects, from music to history, and from literature to dates. He could read two pages at a time—one with his right eye and one with his left eye. He would

WHY IS IT that, in an ordinary human brain, some memories last just a few minutes and then vanish, while others persist for days or months, even a lifetime? A big part of the answer lies in the way the memory is *encoded*, or converted into the kind of data the brain understands. The more elaborately we encode information at the time of learning, the sturdier and more robust the resulting memory will be, especially if we personalize it.

Many of us struggle to remember names. If, at a social event, you need help remembering the name Theresa, it helps to repeat the name internally, with additional information added. "Theresa is wearing a green dress. My second favorite color is green." At first glance, this notion seems counterintuitive. Making information more elaborate means it becomes more complicated, which sounds like it would be more taxing for the memory system. But study after study shows that the complexity equates to greater learning. If the impact of the initial stimulus is deep and elaborate, the quality of the memories will be high, and their lifespan long.

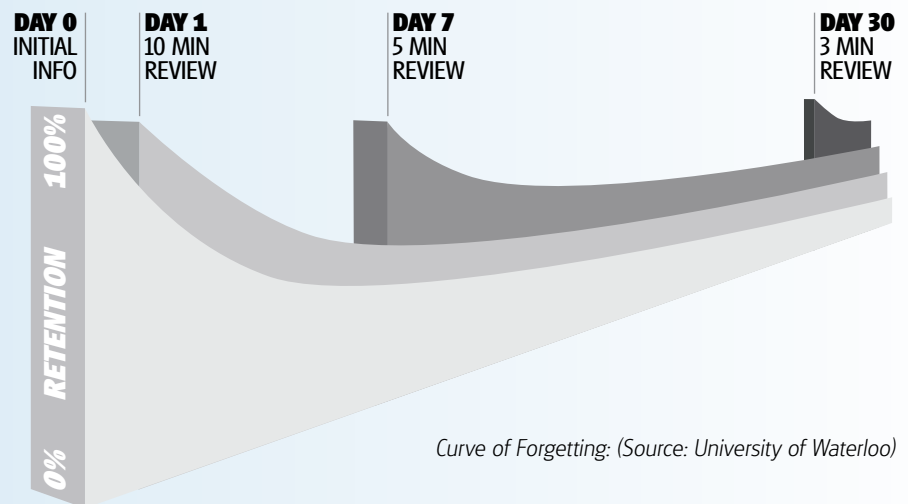
This notion of elaborate and rich encoding is critical for making new information stick in the short-term memory. But how do you go beyond that, and intentionally congeal memories into long-term storage? In his book *Brain Rules*, scientist John Medina says the key to this is repetition at precisely timed intervals: "Memory may not be fixed at the moment of learning, but repetition, doled out in specifically timed intervals, is the fixative."

The lion's share of memories disappear within minutes, but reexposing oneself to information a few minutes, or even an hour or two after the initial encounter with it, will help to keep the information in the working memory. The more repetition cycles we give to a certain memory experience, the more likely it is to persist in our accessible mind.

A large body of research also shows that thinking about or discussing an event *immediately after it occurs* greatly enhances retrieval ability. This practice can also convert short-term memories into a long-term, more permanent form.

If we really dig into studying a new activity or subject—and strive to synthesize the new information into a big-picture context that we have previously learned—then the physical brain actually changes, and the memories can become vivid and durable. But memories are so capricious and volatile that, from there, *we have to repeat to remember*. If we repeat and revisit them often, discuss them with others, and meditate on their significance, then we can make them a part of us that we can carry on for many years.

Effect of Review on Information Retention



Curve of Forgetting: (Source: University of Waterloo)

Within one day of initially receiving information, we should spend at least 10 minutes reviewing it to boost our memories back to around 95 percent of what we originally knew. If we review again one week later—even if only for 5 minutes—it will further congeal our memories. We should conduct another review about a month after the initial stimulus. This formula will fortify our memories considerably.

devour an entire book in about an hour, and comprehend and remember virtually everything recorded in its pages. Forever.

One article in the *Times* newspaper said Peek could accurately recall the contents of no less than 12,000 books, and he had 9,000 complete books completely

Hebrews needed to “give the more earnest heed” to the truths God was revealing to them. Why? “Lest at any time we should let them slip” (Hebrews 2:1).

Elsewhere, Paul wrote, “[Y]ou are saved, if you keep in memory what I preached unto you ...” (1 Corinthians 15:2).

A Christian’s salvation depends on his laboring to “keep in memory” the truth. These admonitions would not be necessary if we could hear or read a truth only once and have it permanently etched into our memory.

committed to memory. When quizzed on what he read, Kim could pull a fact from his mental archives as quickly as any search engine can mine the Internet.

But there was a problem. Even though Peek knew a staggering amount, he could not function socially or take care of himself. He never leaned to button his shirt, and he could only walk in a sidelong fashion. The fascinating story on Kim’s uneven brain was the inspiration for the Oscar-winning film *Rain Man*.

What explains Kim’s astounding memory capacity? He was born without the bundle of nerves that links the two hemispheres of the brain together, and scientists believe his brain forged unusual neural pathways to compensate for the absence of this nerve-bundle.

So, the question is this: Are all of our brains capable of the astounding abilities Kim’s had? If so, how can we tap into this potential? Could we enjoy the advantages of his condition without suffering the crippling limitations that came along with it? These kinds of questions baffle scientists.

For possible answers, let’s look instead to the Being who created the human mind.

Earnest Heed

The Creator designed our minds and brains so that, in normal circumstances, we can’t easily access the information we encounter *unless we have repeatedly and fastidiously studied it*. Apparently, God wants to see which kinds of information we are willing to labor for diligently in order to keep it at our fingertips.

The Apostle Paul acknowledged this reality, saying that he and his fellow

That’s an enormous “if.” It says a Christian’s salvation depends on his laboring to “keep in memory” the truth. These admonitions would not be necessary if we could hear or read a truth only once and have it permanently etched into our memory.

God desire is for people to work to develop holy, righteous character. One way we can do that is through consistent and disciplined study. Some people—even fairly ordinary ones—are blessed with impressive intellectual abilities. But a willingness to labor at learning God’s Word is far more important to Him and His purpose for us. Character trumps intellect any day of the week.

Rare cases like those of Sandra, Derek and Kim suggest that the human mind is far more impressive than most understand. The late Herbert W. Armstrong wrote extensively on the potential of the human mind and memory, explaining that its staggering capacity is made possible by a spirit component the Creator God built into it. A person “sees, hears and thinks

through his physical brain and the five senses,” he wrote in *The Incredible Human Potential*. But it is “the spirit in man” that “imparts the power of physical intellect to the physical brain, thus forming human mind,” he wrote. Based on thorough study of Ecclesiastes 12:7, Job 32:8 and other biblical passages, Mr. Armstrong came to see that this “spirit in man” records every shred of information perceived by the senses throughout a person’s lifetime: “[T] his spirit records every thought—every bit of knowledge received *through* the five senses. ... All memory is stored in this spirit computer. ... [M]emory is recorded in the human spirit, whether or not it also is recorded in the gray matter of brain.”

It is because God gave people this “spirit in man” that our brains have such a staggering capacity to absorb, compartmentalize and store the information our senses perceive. The majority of what our minds store, we don’t have ready access to right now—but every word we’ve ever read or heard is warehoused there. Every syllable we’ve ever uttered, and every note we’ve ever heard is on file behind our quiet eyes.

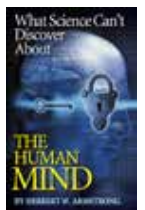
And a time is on the horizon, potentially for each one of us, when real life will begin (see 1 Corinthians 15:35-58). At this time, it is likely that we’ll be handed the keys to unlock our memories, and be able to swim freely through the oceans of knowledge within them. When this resource is tapped, we will have the benefits that cases like Sandra, Derek and Kim give us a glimpse into, with none of the limitations they suffered.

We should educate ourselves carefully, read voraciously, and keep from succumbing to frustration about our presently feeble memories. Because one day, the vault doors may well swing wide open. ■



There’s something they can’t see.

In studying the intricacies of the human mind, psychologists and scientists have learned a lot. But there is a component they will never be able to perceive or measure with their tools. That component is what separates man from the animals and makes us special. To learn about this inspiring truth, request a free copy of our booklet ***What Science Can’t Discover About the Human Mind***.





Britain's New DRUG Scene

Where are young people buying drugs today?
The truth will shock you. **BY RICHARD PALMER**

The drug deal. If you envision a dodgy backstreet with kids handing over cash to a shadowy stranger, you're behind the times. Instead, picture someone walking into a shop, grabbing some packets, paying at the till, and leaving. No sneaking around the back, no brown paper bags under the counter. Or picture someone sitting in front of his computer, paying by credit card. A few days later, the postman delivers discreetly packaged drugs right to his door.

This is the new, "safe" drug trade booming in Britain.

THE WEBSITES SHOCKED me. They're not hidden in some shady corner of the Internet. I'm hardly familiar with the drug scene, but it took me just two Google searches to find hundreds of sites offering dangerous drugs delivered right to my door. I don't even have to find out what shop stocks the drugs, or what the drugs are called. Online, I can find it, buy it and get it without leaving my home.

It's just like shopping on Amazon. I've bought office stationery from worse-looking websites. You can read descriptions of the products and even check reviews left by other users. These drug dealers certainly aren't hiding—in fact, they encourage you to follow them on Twitter or like them on Facebook. And you can use your credit card safely; many of the sites use PayPal.

With just a couple of clicks, I found a site where I could buy a drug called "Annihilation" in complete safety.

Except it's only the shopping that's safe. Nine people have been admitted to Glasgow's hospital for taking Annihilation in the last three months. Others have died from taking these types of easily available drugs.

'Legal Highs'

Welcome to the world of "legal highs"—drugs with all the harmful effects of illegal drugs but without the purchasing hassles. "Legal highs" is the name given to a whole range of different chemicals that are often very similar to illegal drugs, but are not technically covered by existing laws. Shops sell them with impunity—until they are banned. Then, they're quickly replaced with something else that skirts the law.

Because these drugs are legal, they can be bought at much cheaper prices and in a much purer form than illegal drugs.

There's a lot of talk in both Britain and America about legalizing cannabis; in America's recent elections, two states took high-profile steps in that direction. But more dangerous and more powerful drugs are already easily and legally available.

Over the past few years, "legal highs" have done for drug use what the Internet had already done for pornography. There are no more shady backroom deals. The

risk and shame are gone. But lives are being destroyed.

None of the websites give any indication that you are buying something dangerous. Drugs are described as "herbal incense." One way companies get away with selling them is by adding the label "not for human consumption." Some even find ways to avoid doing this. One website displays this disclaimer next to its drugs: "They consume you. You don't consume them." That sounds more like a slogan than a warning that you could end up in a hospital.

The rest of the page is full of people posting reviews about how great a high the drug gave them. No one mentions any danger. The few negative reviews complain that the drug isn't powerful enough.

These drugs are drawing in a huge number of young people.

"We thought it was good news when demand for cocaine and heroin began to fall," said Dr. Owen Bowden-Jones, founder of the Club Drug Clinic in London. But it wasn't good news. "What has happened is that they have been replaced by other drugs that we are trying to understand."

Since the late '90s, cannabis and Ecstasy use in the UK has halved. In that time, the rate of illegal drug use by people ages 16 to 24 has fallen from 30 percent to 19 percent. That looks like progress. But the Ange-

lus Foundation, which aims to educate young people about the dangers of "legal highs," estimates that one in three people ages 16 to 24 are likely to try legal highs. "We might be reaching a situation where legal highs are as attractive as tobacco these days for youngsters," said Bryan Dent, the drugs coordinator for West Yorkshire Police, in the *Yorkshire Post*.

Ignorance Isn't Bliss

Many of those taking these drugs don't know how dangerous they are. They're being killed so someone else can make a killing.

Maryon Stewart set up the Angelus Foundation after her daughter Hester died from taking what was then a legal high. Stewart says she knows "parents from all over the country who have lost kids" to these drugs. Yet when children in schools learn what is really in the drugs, "They feel that they've been duped and they feel that they've been cheated," she told Sky News.

Perhaps more worryingly, parents are also ignorant of the dangers. "New

research has found most (86 percent) parents are lacking the vital knowledge needed to warn their children about the dangers of "legal highs," wrote the Angelus Foundation on its website.

Many of these drugs are chemically very similar to illegal drugs. The main active ingredient in Annihilation, for example, is a synthetic form of cannabis. Often, these highs are far stronger than the illegal form of the drug.

Detective Inspector Jim Bradley of the Glasgow City Center Police warned that those who have taken Annihilation "have experienced adverse health effects, including increased heart rate, unconsciousness, numbness in legs causing collapse, paranoia, aggression and self harming."

Because many of these drugs are new, the long-term effects are unknown. Often, there are no studies into their side effects. "These kids are playing Russian roulette," Vice President of Caron Treatment Centers Dr. Harris Stratyner told *The Fix*, a website on drugs and recovery. "It's absolutely ludicrous that anyone would put this into your body. It's like trying to get high off arsenic or rat poison."

Ketamine is an early "legal high" that was outlawed in 2006. Heavy use of Ketamine is now known to cause permanent damage to the bladder. Users can be left with pain whenever they urinate. Some had to have their bladders removed. GBL (Gammabutyrolactone) is another former "legal high" that was outlawed in 2009. Several died after falling into a coma from taking it. "Users of GBL suffered high levels of dependence and harrowing withdrawal symptoms," wrote the *London Times*.

"When these patients arrive we can only treat the symptoms, because we don't know what they have taken—and neither do they," said a specialist at the Glasgow Royal Infirmary, Dr. Richard Stevenson, last July. "None of the cases admitted this year have died, but no one should be under any misapprehension that legal highs are potential killers," he warned. "If this steep rise in admissions continue, it is only a matter of time until we see deaths."

Whack-a-Mole

If these drugs are so dangerous, why are they still legal? Mainly because the British government is stuck playing whack-a-mole with small, virtually anonymous, barely legal drug manufacturers. As soon as officials outlaw one chemical compound, several new ones arrive.

The government passed a law in 2011 so it could outlaw new drugs in a matter

"We might be reaching a situation where legal highs are as attractive as tobacco these days for youngsters."

BRYAN DENT
DRUGS COORDINATOR
WEST YORKSHIRE POLICE

of weeks, not months. But 28 new “legal highs” arrived on the market in the first five months of 2012 alone. The government can’t keep up. The drugs are only banned after they’ve come to the government’s attention—which means they’ve already caused serious harm. Once they’re banned, users either continue to use the drug illegally or move on to the next big thing.

Although “legal highs” are hitting the headlines mostly in Britain, they are a problem in America and elsewhere too. America’s poison control centers received 6,138 calls about “bath salts” in 2011, up from just 304 the year before. This “legal high” is now illegal, but there will be more—if they’re not available already.

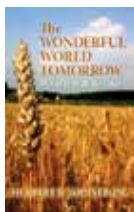
The arrival of legal highs shows the flaw in the West’s drug policies. Stopping people from getting drugs isn’t working. Man cannot solve the drug problem using law enforcement alone. Stopping people from *wanting* them is the only solution. But this is *much* harder. It would require a complete change in society.

A Real Solution

The problems associated with these drugs demonstrate a fundamental spiritual truth. The only genuine hope of eliminating the production and consumption of destructive drugs would be a worldwide revolution in family, education and legislation. It would mean having a society where there is no one willing to sell potentially lethal products for a profit. Where no one would market something labeled “not for human consumption” to people that they know will smoke or swallow it.

It would mean that children must be brought up in a world with real purpose, where their greatest goal is something more than temporary pleasure. It would mean an end to the relentless, oppressive, self-destructive messages promoted by movies and popular music. It would mean widespread strong family life, in which parents protect and nurture their children. It would mean that teens and other young people spend their free time not out clubbing, but engaged in wholesome, family pursuits. It would mean creating a whole society of people full of hope, who were focused and enthusiastic about what they could accomplish.

Does all this sound impossible? It is with man. But this drug-free world is coming! For more information about it, request a free copy of our free booklet *The Wonderful World Tomorrow—What It Will Be Like*.



Parents: What Can You Do?



Parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles and even friends have a role to play in protecting youths from drug misuse—whether it’s alcohol, tobacco, legal or illegal highs. In today’s world, you can’t perpetually prevent your child from having access to dangerous drugs. You must help him develop into someone who will choose *not* to do wrong things, even though he *can*. Some thoughts to consider:

EDUCATE Don’t let your child be ignorant. Teach him how dangerous these different types of drugs are and what can happen if he takes them. According to the Angelus Foundation, only a third of 16-to-24-year-olds say they’re at least “fairly well informed” about illegal highs. Don’t run the risk of your son being one of those who thinks that “legal” drugs are safe. Your son needs to be very well informed.

LIVE RIGHT Make sure that your example is “squeaky clean.” Your children are learning from everything they see you do. If you need alcohol to have a good time, that’s sending a message to your daughter. She needs you to be an awesome example of balance and control.

EXPECT OBEDIENCE Parents who *really* love their children want to save them from abusing their own minds. Whether it’s fashionable or not, they expect obedience—not out of convenience, but out of love. Yes, this means discipline and even confrontation at times when your son breaks a “small” rule. But if you teach him to be obedient then, it may be that very lesson that gives him the strength to walk away when a friend offers him Annihilation.

SPEND TIME Enjoy wholesome, uplifting pursuits with your child. Develop a close relationship with each of your children as early as possible. Go beyond stressing the negative (*don’t do this or that; stay away from drugs*), and emphasize the positive, exciting, enjoyable things you can do together: sports, music, academics, crafts and trades.

PLANT AMBITION Young people who abuse drugs and alcohol are living for the moment. They have little hope for their future. But if your son is focused on what he can *accomplish*, he won’t want to risk losing such a bright future to dangerous drugs. Help your child set goals and be ambitious about what he can accomplish as he grows up—he may amaze even you!

STAY INVOLVED Your daughter needs guidance. Help her choose her friends thoughtfully—and what she does with those friends. Ask her how her day at school went. Know how her test scores are coming. Talk about her social life with her, even if it’s hard to get her to open up at first. Negative peer pressure, drug parties and clubbing are going to be available—you must fight for your child by staying involved in her life and steering her toward a better future.

TEACH SPIRITUALLY If you follow all these guidelines, you’ll already be showing your children the spirit of *give*—by your example. Teach them to also focus on serving other people. If they learn God’s way of give, and if they have a relationship with Him, their futures will be drug-proof!

You don’t have to remember all seven points all the time. Just remember the one word that sums it all up: *love*. A young person taking drugs is often a cry for attention. If your children see that you love them and that you will even make sacrifices to help them, they will turn to you—and away from dangerous drugs.



German troops patrol in Kunduz Province. Berlin is the third-largest supplier of soldiers in Afghanistan.

1 | GERMANY Guess who's not leaving Afghanistan

MUCH PUBLICITY IS BEING GIVEN TO the drawdown of U.S. troops in Afghanistan. Yet we ought to remember that there are other nations that have also committed troops there out of strategic interests of their own. Take Germany, for instance, the third-largest contributor of troops to the Afghanistan war.

Germany has been busy for some time building an alliance with the less militant Arab states on Iran's western flank. From the Mediterranean to the Gulf, it is cementing an alliance to counteract the further spread of Iran's influence over key oil states.

This is a powerfully prophetic development, a fulfillment of the alliance between Germany and certain Arab states that is prophesied in Psalm 83.

With this bastion of resistance to Iran's westward spread of its influence now consolidating, those who seek to contain Iran just need to shore up its eastern flank. This is where the outcome of the Afghanistan war becomes crucial.

U.S. withdrawal from Iraq has left that benighted nation at the mercy of Iran. In essence, Iraq is speedily becoming a vassal state to Iran. This leaves Afghanistan as the only outpost remaining between Iran's eastward expansion and its linkage with Islamic states to its east and south. Thus it is crucial for those nations dependent on Middle Eastern and Caucasus oil supplies

to stop Iran's eastward expansionist goals at its eastern flank. And America's withdrawal from Afghanistan risks creating a repeat of the Iraqi episode, with that Eurasian nation falling under Iranian imperialist dominance.

This is why Germany is so concerned. It has a vital interest in securing vital oil supplies on which the EU nations depend, including diversifying away from the risky source of Russia. Restraining Iran is central to this effort.

It is for this reason that the *Trumpet* has consistently maintained that Germany cannot afford to leave Afghanistan in the wake of American drawdown.

A quick review of Germany's strategic commitments in the region reveals that it has positioned itself to fill the gap created by U.S. withdrawal from this region. In fact, the militarily strategic deployment of the Bundeswehr to the Middle East and the Eurasian periphery indicates just how vital such deployment is to Germany's imperialist goals.

Germany has quietly encircled the oil golden triangle in the Middle East. Its navy is deployed in the Mediterranean, thus securing Suez, and patrolling off the coast of Lebanon, securing the Levant. Its navy sits off the Somali and Yemeni coastlines, securing the Persian Gulf. Add to that the German military's presence in Sudan and its active role in Afghanistan, and Germany is well stationed to present itself in the role of an in-area peacekeeper in this hottest spot on the planet.

Thanks to its strategic deployment in these localities, Germany also retains a prime bargaining position for access to Mideast oil as an offset to dependence on Russia. It maintains an actively deployed strategic readiness to secure future Middle East oil assets and guarantee safe passage to Europe via the Suez (protected by German naval deployment securing the Mediterranean) and the Adriatic Sea (by virtue of an implicit alliance with Albania, one of Germany's Balkan proxies).

Soon to be most important of all, Germany's deployment in Afghanistan gives it a prime strategic location from which to press the inevitable attack on the one nation that threatens the overall stability of the Middle East and, through its terror-sponsoring activities, the rest of the world—Iran.

Germany's ambivalence to any moral standard in its conduct in Afghanistan—or any other theater vital to its national interest—is apparent in the strategy it has adopted in the Hindu Kush. In this situation, as in the Balkan Peninsula wars of the 1990s, it is not the moral argument so much as the strategic imperialist/military reason that dominates.

German-Foreign-Policy.com wrote about this on November 1: "To vanquish its enemy, Germany has regularly cooperated with forces which were powerful enough to win wars, but whose social qualities are diametrically opposed to a humane development in the region targeted by German interventions. This had been the case in Afghanistan in the 1980s when, within the framework of the Western alliance, the Federal Republic of Germany helped support the Afghan Mujahedeen fighting pro-Soviet forces in Kabul and the Soviet Army. The consequences are well known. ... A similar outcome can be expected from Berlin's current cooperation with Afghan warlords to maintain control at the Hindu Kush This brutalization of social relations corresponds to the logic of warfare, in as much as, not the most humane, but the most barbaric forces are the more promising allies, who, in the long run, become the most influential forces shaping the future."

Request a free copy of our booklet *History and Prophecy of the Middle East* for deeper insight into Germany and the Middle East and the final dramatic outcome to current events surrounding this region. And keep watching for Germany to strengthen its encirclement of Iran, the biblical king of the south, and to close in on Jerusalem, surrounding it with armies (Luke 21:20). This is a most powerful sign of the imminence of Jesus Christ's return.



Draghi supports German plans for super-commissioner

German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble's radical plan for a financial super-commissioner has won another powerful ally: European Central Bank President Mario Draghi. Schäuble's plan, supported by Chancellor Angela Merkel, calls for a European currency commissioner who would possess the power to veto national budgets. He would be one of two EU commissioners authorized to act without the agreement of his colleagues. When asked about the proposal during his interview with *Spiegel*, Draghi announced, "I am fully in favor of it. ... Governments would be wise to seriously consider it. I firmly believe that, in order to restore confidence in the euro area, countries need to transfer part of their sovereignty to the European level." This endorsement comes from the man *Spiegel* asked: "Would it be wrong to call you the most powerful man in Europe?" As a Jesuit-educated son of Rome, Draghi represents the view of the Catholic Church in Europe. If both Germany and the Vatican support this new super-commissioner, there's a good chance that the rest of Europe will in fact surrender that sovereignty, and this radical, "unlikely" proposal will become law. Schäuble's description of the super-commissioner would indeed be fitting: "feared around the world."



Mario Draghi, "the most powerful man in Europe"—for now.

GETTY IMAGES/LEONHARD FÖGGER, ALEKSANDAR GEORGIEV/ISTOCKPHOTO



A statue in Dresden of Martin Luther, whose 95 Theses are being pulled back down from the Lutheran church door.

Reformation in reverse

AFTER ABOUT HALF A MILLENNIUM APART, LUTHERANS could be re-joining the Catholic Church soon. Since 2009, Anglicans have been able to re-join the church through groups called ordinariates, which allow them to keep many of their traditions, such as married bishops, while being absorbed into the Roman Catholic Church. Cardinal Kurt Koch, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, said on October 29, "If similar desires are expressed by the Lutherans, then we will have to reflect on them. However, the initiative is up to the Lutherans." In other words, if the Catholic Church thinks it can convince enough Lutherans to sign up, it will proceed.



Cardinal Kurt Koch

"One of the most under-reported religious stories of the past decade has been the movement of Lutherans across the Tiber," the *National Catholic Register* said in March 2011. The Anglo-Lutheran Catholic Church, a small group of conservative Lutheran-like churches, has already begun negotiations with the Catholic Church about joining as part of the Anglican ordinariate.

The larger Lutheran community has also been moving toward Rome. Back in Oct. 31, 1999, the Lutheran World Federation signed a Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification, with the Vatican saying that the two groups "are now able to articulate a common understanding of our justification by God's grace through faith in Christ." The doctrine of justification was at the heart of Luther's disagreement with the Catholic Church that led to his excommunication. The signing of this document means that the greatest obstacle between Lutherans and Catholics has already been overcome. Although some Lutherans disagree with the declaration, the Lutheran World Federation represents over 70 million of the world's 73.8 million Lutherans.

Two years ago, the president of the Lutheran World Federation said he wanted to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation in 2017 by signing an agreement with the Vatican that allows Lutherans to receive communion at Roman Catholic Mass, and vice versa. Although the re-absorption may come in stages, watch for the Vatican to bring a significant number of Lutherans back under its authority. Biblical prophecy tells us to watch for this to happen as the Catholic Church rises in power.

1 | GERMANY

Merkel: EU will be a superstate

German Chancellor Angela Merkel outlined her vision for Europe in a speech to the European Parliament on November 7. But her most revealing statement about Europe's future came when she stepped away from her prepared notes. As she responded to a statement by parliamentary leaders, Merkel revealed her vision for the European Union: a superstate. "I'm sure the Commission will become a government one day. I'm sure that the Council will become a second chamber one day," Merkel said. "And I'm sure the European Parliament will take European responsibilities, otherwise it won't work in the long term. But today we must save the euro and create the basis properly. And we must give people a little bit of time so that they can come with us." This is probably the clearest, most prominent example of any European leader admitting the grand scheme for the European Union. A European superstate with its own administration and legislature is precisely what the *Trumpet* has forecast for decades.

1 | ISRAEL

Tied with North Korea!

A POLL MEASURING public opinion of several different countries released by the BBC ranked Israel's popularity lower than ever. The lowest ranked nation was Iran, followed by Pakistan. After that, it was a tie between North Korea and Israel.



Children in Chicago denounce Israel during its conflict with Hamas.

The Country Ratings Poll, which has been conducted annually since 2005, has shown a continued decrease in Israel's popularity. Of all nations surveyed in 2012, only three had a majority that viewed Israel positively: the United States, Kenya and Nigeria.

While the world's overall negative view of Israel is a bad sign for the small nation, even more concerning is the trend in its neighbor to the south. Egypt's recent radicalization has drastically affected its opinion of Israel. Eighty-five percent of Egyptians polled viewed Israel negatively. This should sound alarm bells throughout Western nations. Egyptian positive opinion of Israel has fallen a significant 7 percent since 2011—a clear indication that its longtime peaceful relationship with Israel is in jeopardy.

The 2012 poll also revealed that Israel's popularity took a big hit among European nations. Negative views of Israel in Spain and France were up 8 and 9 percent respectively since last year. Negative views in Britain and Germany remained steady, but high, coming in at around 70 percent.

Post-World War II Europe has been tolerant of the small Jewish nation until recently. Increased anti-Semitic rhetoric and demonstrations in Europe show a dangerous new trend among European nations.

1 | ISRAEL 2 | SUDAN

Weapons factory reveals connection with Iran

Israel allegedly bombed a weapons factory in Khartoum on October 24. Its Mossad intelligence agency reportedly found that Sudan had allowed Iran to build and operate a weapons factory there. Israel has not officially confirmed or denied that it was behind the attack. The bombing, more than 1,000 miles away from Israel, represents its air force's deepest strike ever. It may have also been intended as a warning to Iran, whose nuclear facilities are roughly the same distance from Israel.

However, the attack also risks accelerating Sudan's shift toward Iran. Five days afterward, a group of Iranian Navy ships docked in Sudan. Sudan's military said the ships' presence represented the strong ties between the two countries.

Egyptian President Mohammed Morsi also spoke out in vehement support for Sudan against Israel. Other reports suggest that Egypt is maintaining a close alliance with Sudan so that it can keep maximum pressure on Ethiopia. Bible prophecy says Sudan-Iranian and Sudan-Egyptian ties will evolve into a regional alliance between North African nations and Iran. This alliance will ultimately, and perhaps violently, draw in Ethiopia.

3 | IRAN
4 | EGYPT

Seeking greater trade

Sanctions against Iran are causing hyperinflation, but that has not stopped the nation's nuclear program. Meanwhile, Tehran is countering its isolation by increasing trade with Egypt. Egypt is shipping foodstuffs to Iran, while the Iranians are looking to sell it crude oil. This will offset the loss of crude sales to the European Union, which banned such deals in July. The *Tehran Times* said in late October that trade between Egypt and Iran is estimated to increase four-fold by 2013. While America is trying to weaken Iran through sanctions, it is actually helping to tighten an extremist Middle-Eastern axis.



American soldiers patrol near Baraki Barak base in Logar Province.

5 | AFGHANISTAN

America's defeat deadline

After 11 years of war against radical Islam, American losses are now piling high. With Saddam Hussein and U.S. forces long gone in Iraq, that nation has now fallen to Iran, as the *Trumpet* predicted as early as 1994. The United States is following a similar path in Afghanistan. Since its troop surge in 2009, the U.S. military has suffered a dramatic rise in U.S. casualties. Of the more than 2,100 U.S. service members who have been killed in Afghanistan, about 70 percent have died under the current administration's watch.

Despite many setbacks, President Obama has actively peddled a "mission accomplished" theme for Afghanistan. But according to CBS reporter Lara Logan, the administration is misleading the American people with this "major lie" in order to justify its exit strategy. During a *60 Minutes* episode on September 30, Logan interviewed Gen. John Allen, the commanding officer of U.S. forces in Afghanistan, Afghan President Hamid Karzai and a Taliban commander who had been trained by al Qaeda. All said al Qaeda and other terrorist organizations are now returning to the country. They are not the ones on the path to defeat in Afghanistan.

"They are trying to separate people here from the government, to create some kind of internal uprising, but it's going to backfire. The more they push, the more it will lead to a rise in anti-Americanism."

MARZIYEH
IRANIAN
STUDENT



A protester in Okinawa.

6 | JAPAN Military-related rapes spark outrage

Japanese in Okinawa, Tokyo and elsewhere marched in protest in early November after recent sexual assaults by American soldiers against civilians. A U.S. airman was accused of assaulting a young boy on November 4 in Okinawa. Two weeks earlier, two sailors were arrested for allegedly raping a local woman. All 52,000 U.S. troops in Japan are under a curfew due to the rapes. Similar attacks have occurred in the past, and now many protesters are demanding that the United States remove all 23 of its military bases in Japan. Since the end of World War II, the U.S. has maintained a strong military presence in Japan and has even counted on Tokyo as a major Asian ally. If the U.S.-Japanese military alliance comes to an end, watch for Japan to turn to China and Russia, forming a massive bloc that Bible prophecy says will ultimately confront Europe.

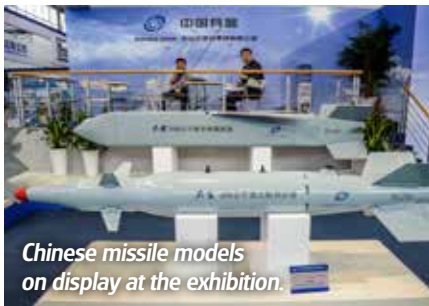
7 | CHINA Military modernizing

China's rising military capabilities made recent headlines in two notable areas. First, photos and video of its new stealth fighter became available on the Internet on November 1. Developing a stealth intercept fighter was a milestone, and it appears that Beijing was eager to show off the technology. "The technical barriers and development costs for such aircraft are enormous," the Associated Press said. *Wired* reported the development as "a huge leap forward for China's ambitious stealth warplane program." China remains largely reliant on Russia for engines for its latest J-10, J-11 and J-15 models, but Moscow is happy to supply Beijing with this technology.



A stealth model at an aviation exhibition in China.

In addition, Beijing is less than two years away from equipping its subs with nuclear weapons, according to a draft report released on November 8 by a congressionally mandated U.S. commission. The report said China is "on the cusp of attaining a credible nuclear triad of land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles, submarine-launched ballistic mis-



Chinese missile models on display at the exhibition.

siles, and air-dropped nuclear bombs." China has possessed ballistic missile submarine capability for years, but it has been largely symbolic. Now it is poised to establish a "near-continuous at-sea strategic deterrent," the paper said. The Chinese have already deployed two out of an estimated five new nuclear-powered ballistic missile subs, which give Beijing its "first credible sea-based nuclear capability," according to a separate report by the U.S. Defense Department.

Expect Beijing to concentrate even harder on building military muscle—with continued cooperation from Russia—as it grows to dominate East Asia.

A Rosneft plaque in Moscow mirrors the Kremlin.



8 | RUSSIA

A stranglehold on Europe's energy

ROSNEFT, RUSSIA'S THIRD-LARGEST OIL CONGLOMERATE, IS working to buy out oil company TNK-BP. This strategic move will not only propel Rosneft to the top of Russia's oil industry, but will also make both of the nation's largest oil and gas companies state-owned. Rosneft is purchasing BP's 50 percent stake in TNK-BP for about \$27 billion in cash and stock, and trying to buy the other 50 percent stake from AAR, a group of billionaire Russian investors. In the end, the whole deal will be worth \$55 billion. If it succeeds, it will be the largest purchase since Exxon bought out Mobil over a decade ago.

Though the terms of the agreement say BP will retain a 19.75 percent share in Rosneft, it is clear that Russian President Vladimir Putin is seeking to nationalize Russia's oil production. A consummated deal would mean that state-owned Rosneft would account for nearly half the nation's oil production.

This merger would give Putin increased influence over Europe's energy needs. Russia, the top oil producer in the world, currently supplies 34 percent of Europe's gas needs through its other state-owned gas giant, Gazprom. With Putin at the helm of both Gazprom and Rosneft, it is easy to see how Russia could soon wield its power and withhold its supplies of oil and gas at will. Europe's reliance on Russia for oil and gas may prove to boost Russia's influence in the near future.

Watch for Putin to continue to work behind the scenes to build up his nation into an energy-rich superpower through the privatization of its major exports and industries.

7 | CHINA 8 | RUSSIA Grab gold, dump dollars

Central banks in China and Russia are building up their gold reserves and dumping their holdings of U.S. dollars and dollar-denominated debt, according to a Global Research report published November 11. Beijing and Moscow's official gold acquisition figures omit secret deals undertaken through third-party companies, so the exodus from the dollar into gold is substantially larger than it appears. China and Russia are both boosting domestic production of gold, and their central banks are snatching up a large share of the yields, often surreptitiously. The report said many central banks in the Middle East are also boosting gold reserves while reducing dollar forex holdings. Expect this dollar-dumping trend to accelerate.



Linking with Europe

ON NOVEMBER 16, LATIN AMERICAN LEADERS MET WITH their Spanish and Portuguese counterparts in Cadiz, Spain, for the annual Ibero-American summit. The main topic on the agenda was Europe's desire to enlist Latin American nations in helping Europe overcome its economic maladies.

The economic downturn in both the eurozone and the U.S. has decreased demand for goods from Latin American countries, but European states are determined to reverse course—not only by soliciting help from Latin American nations, but also by making strides toward unification among themselves.

Decades ago, educator Herbert W. Armstrong predicted both of these trends. As early as May 1962, the *Plain Truth* magazine issued this warning: "Germany's plans in South America were temporarily halted by its defeat in World War II. ... 'South America will be conquered by business agents, not by guns!'" (quoting T.H. Teten's *Germany Plots With the Kremlin*; emphasis added). Herbert Armstrong knew far in advance that communism would fail to entice the Latinos and that British and American influence would dwindle. He knew it was Europe that would ultimately achieve its long-term goal of economic and religious domination of Latin America. Today, *Europe is making strides toward that goal.*

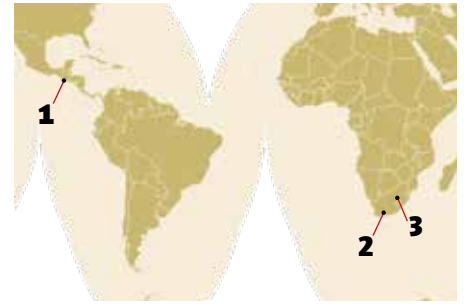
At the summit in November, Spanish Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Garca-Margallo explained the other facet of the solution to Europe's problems: "The European crisis is not an economic crisis but a political one. If we compare our public debts to those of the U.S., ours are better. But the investors prefer to invest in the U.S. and not in the eurozone, because they don't trust our will to stay together (in Europe)."

The foreign minister's assessment is eerily similar to a forecast Mr. Armstrong made in a July 22, 1984, co-worker letter. He wrote that a *massive banking crisis in America* "could suddenly result in triggering European nations to unite as a new world power larger than either the Soviet Union or the U.S." The U.S. has already suffered a banking crisis to some extent, and the EU sees that political union among its members is the remedy for Europe's economic trouble, as evidenced by Garca-Margallo's statement.

Expect Europe to continue making inroads into its former Latin American colonies, and to maintain its quest for unification.

1 | **GUATEMALA** Earthquake!

After a powerful 7.4-magnitude earthquake hit Guatemala in November, at least 52 people were left dead, and thousands more without power. The Guatemalan president visited the affected area to declare three days of mourning. Earthquakes are increasing in both frequency and severity across the globe. Christ told His disciples in Matthew 24 that earthquakes in diverse places would be one of the signs of the last days.



3 | **ZIMBABWE** Banks forced to buy debt?

Zimbabwe plans to force banks operating within the country to buy treasury bills after it failed to sell central bank securities. In October, the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe offered its first treasury bills since the country abandoned its currency and adopted the dollar in a bid to curb 500 billion percent inflation. However, the treasury auction failed. Details of the planned coercion of the banks are unclear, but Zimbabwe continues to serve as a prime example of what happens when a nation uses "quantitative easing" to deal with its financial problems.



2 | **SOUTH AFRICA** Grapes of wrath

One person died in clashes between farm workers and police in South Africa's vineyard region in November. The clashes started when agricultural workers started protesting in demand of more pay. Police then started firing rubber bullets as protesters blocked roads, set fields alight, overturned vehicles and destroyed equipment. This violence is but the latest episode of civil disruption in South Africa. Back in August 2012, 34 people died when police fired at a violent crowd of striking miners. Expect a deteriorating economy and escalating racial tensions to make episodes like this more common.

NUMBERS

20

52 People dead in Guatemala after 7.4-magnitude quake

80.8 Percentage of South Americans who are Catholic

36.6 Youth murder rate in Latin America per 100,000



How to celebrate election win: Raise debt limit

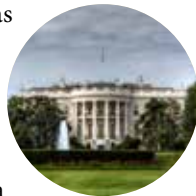
November 7, the day after Barack Obama was reelected U.S. president, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid said that if the government needs to borrow more money, Congress will raise the federal debt limit from \$16.394 trillion to \$18.794 trillion. Congress and President Obama reached a deal to raise the debt ceiling by \$2.4 trillion in August 2011, but that additional borrowing authority has been almost exhausted after only 15 months. The next increase in the notional "debt ceiling" is planned for early in 2013. Reid said his party would find a way to bypass any opposition by the Republican Party, which holds a majority in the lower house but is a minority in the Senate. It is becoming increasingly clear that the American government has passed the point of no return and will plummet over the fiscal cliff immediately ahead of it.

NYPD officer plots cannibalism

A shocking case appeared in court in October when a New York City police officer was arrested and charged for plotting to kidnap, rape, torture, then cook and eat female victims. Twenty-eight-year-old Gilberto Valle reportedly used his access to police files to gather detailed information on potential victims. Valle's wife alerted the FBI after she discovered chats and e-mails about Valle's plans. FBI officials found more than 100 profiles of female targets on his computer. Valle, who has been an officer in the New York Police Department for six years and has a 1-year-old daughter, was allegedly commissioned to kidnap a woman for someone else last February. He responded: "\$5,000 and she's all yours." This story is only the tip of the iceberg. In an increasingly sexualized society rife with pornography, drug usage and the glorifying of evil, we can expect such unbelievably barbaric acts to multiply.

Roll out red carpet for Islamists

The Obama administration has played host to "scores of known radical Islamists" who "made hundreds of visits" to meet with top administration officials, according to a year-long investigation publicized by Arutz Sheva in October 2012. After combing through millions of visitor logs, investigators from the Investigative Project on Terrorism "identified many of these visitors as belonging to groups serving as fronts for the Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas and other terrorist organizations," Arutz Sheva wrote. The report detailed dozens of specific personalities and representatives from extremist groups who have graced the White House steps over the past few years, and clearly outlined their radical connections. The list includes individuals representing groups like Hamas and Hezbollah, members of groups that have obstructed terrorist investigations, and other persons connected to money-laundering scandals involving terrorists. Since the start of his presidency, President Obama has worked hard to reach out to the Muslim community. This open-door policy to known extremists is one of the uglier aspects of that effort.



Justin Welby has taken over the reins of the Anglican Church. Will he be the one to ride it right back into the Vatican?

The man to bring Anglicans to Rome?

THE BISHOP OF DURHAM, JUSTIN WELBY, WILL BE THE next archbishop of Canterbury, it was announced November 9. The archbishop has strong links with the Catholic Church, and as leader of the Anglican Communion, he could bring that church closer to Rome.

All Church of England clergy have a spiritual director. But Welby's director is Catholic. A person will usually stick with the same spiritual director for years, meaning Welby's religious thinking will have been heavily shaped by the Catholic Church. During his press conference after the announcement of his appointment, Welby singled out the Catholic Church, mentioning no other groups. Welby has said the greatest influence over his moral thinking was *Rerum Novarum*—a letter by Pope Leo XIII.

Underscoring the close ties already in place between the Church of England and the Church of Rome, the announcement of Welby's appointment was delayed so both the Queen and the pope could be notified.

But Welby isn't completely Rome's man. He supports the ordination of women bishops and is reexamining his thinking on homosexuality. Whether Welby's strong links to the Catholic Church will mean that the bulk of the Anglican Church is returned to Rome peacefully, or if Rome will need to apply force, remains to be seen. But prophecy indicates that eventually the Anglican Church will return to Rome.



Gen. Petraeus before the scandal broke.

General under fire for adultery

Only two months after the CIA was drawn into the limelight concerning its response to the September 11 terrorist attack in Benghazi, CIA Director David Petraeus resigned due to marital infidelity. Petraeus's affair with his biographer, Paula Broadwell, was discovered by the FBI back in May, but only became public after the U.S. presidential election. As this situation plays out, it is becoming increasingly evident that America lacks the moral leadership necessary to provide its citizens with true security.



WAR ZONE

A residence in Kiryat Malachi was hit by rocketfire from terrorists. (Right, clockwise from top left) First responders carry a victim murdered by a Hamas rocket; an Iron Dome missile aims at Hamas rockets over Ashdod; IDF soldiers and armor stage near the Gaza Strip.

Israel vs. Hamas: BEHIND THE SCENES

Israel's enemy is not primitive—
and not alone. **BY STEPHEN FLURRY**

JERUSALEM

DURING THE “ARAB SPRING” THAT seized nations throughout the Middle East, conditions were relatively quiet for Israel. But analysts knew that wouldn't last: It was only a matter of time before the radical Islamists would turn their wrath on the Jewish state.

Now, it has happened. Back in 2010, before the Arab Spring swept through the Middle East, Hamas fired 231 rockets into the Jewish nation from its home base in the Gaza Strip. Last year, that number nearly tripled to 627. This year, before Israel launched “Operation Pillar of Defense” on November 14, Hamas had fired about 800 rockets into Israel. And during the week-long Israeli offensive, Hamas countered by launching another 900 missiles into Israel.

Smoke in Sudan

To understand the latest escalation of violence between Israel and Gaza, we need to go back to the night of October 23 in the city of Khartoum, Sudan. In the middle of that night, four military jets flying in from the east attacked the Yarmouk weapons factory in the Sudanese capital. The Sudanese government said the high-tech operation—which jammed Sudan's radar and virtually destroyed the factory—could only have been completed by Israel.

After the attack, hundreds of protesters in Khartoum took

to the streets, shouting and waving signs with anti-Israel slogans. In Gaza, the day after the weapons factory exploded, Hamas militants fired 79 rockets at Israel. The day before that, Hamas had launched only three rockets into Israel.

So why would GAZA respond to the bombing of a weapons factory *in Sudan* by escalating its own rocket campaign against Israel?

Because that Sudanese factory was SUPPLYING GAZA with weapons that significantly upgraded Hamas's arsenals. And guess who owned and operated that factory in Sudan? A Stratfor analysis says: “There were indications that *Iran* had been using this facility to stockpile and possibly assemble weapons, including anti-aircraft missiles, guided anti-tank missiles and long-range Fajr-5 rockets capable of reaching Tel Aviv and Jerusalem from Gaza” (Nov. 16, 2012; emphasis added throughout).

If you remember, five days after the Khartoum factory blew up, two Iranian Navy vessels docked at a port in Sudan for a three-day visit. The official line was that Iran paid Sudan a visit to “convey a message of peace and friendship.” But this was much more than a friendly visit, as noted in the *Wall Street Journal*: “Israel views Sudan, a longtime ally of Iran, as a conduit for arms through Egypt to the militant group Hamas in Gaza Strip, according to several international and regional analysts. Iran, meanwhile, remains a *major*

supplier of weapons to Sudan, according to Small Arms Survey, a Swiss-based publication” (Oct. 30, 2012).

Now fast forward to November 14, when Israel launched Pillar of Defense. It began with the assassination of Hamas's top military chief, Ahmed Jaabari. On November 17, the *New York Times* wrote, “When Israel assassinated the top Hamas military commander in Gaza on Wednesday, setting off the current round of fierce fighting, it was aiming not just at a Palestinian leader but at a *supply line of rockets from Iran* that have for the first time given Hamas the ability to strike as far as Tel Aviv and Jerusalem.”

Not surprisingly, the *Times* blamed *Israel* for “setting off” the latest round of fighting. But leaving aside the anti-Israel bias, the story is dead right about the regional powerhouse that *supplies* the terrorist camp in Gaza: the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The supply line worked like this: Fajr-5 rockets were shipped from Iran to the Sudan factory, trucked across the desert through Egypt, disassembled into parts that could be squeezed through the Sinai tunnels, and then reassembled by Hamas operatives in Gaza. Before Israel began Pillar of Defense, Hamas was believed to have had about 100 of these Fajr-5 missiles.

The sophisticated weaponry gave Hamas capabilities that, as far as Israel is concerned, crossed a red line. The attacks aimed at Jerusalem and the Tel Aviv area

were *never* possible for Hamas before because its own rockets couldn't reach that far. But as the *Times* piece revealed, Iran has significantly enhanced the firepower of its proxy in Gaza.

"The smuggling route involves salaried employees from Hamas along the way, *Iranian technical experts* traveling on forged passports and government approval in Sudan, Israeli officials said" (*ibid*).

It's a sophisticated operation, which is why Israel had been working for weeks to break it up.

Evidence has also emerged proving that Hamas commanders have gone to Syria and Iran to be trained by the Revolutionary Guards. Hamas is building an

on November 14, Morsi recalled Egypt's ambassador to Israel to protest the Jewish state's military operations. A statement by Morsi's spokesman explained the move: "President Morsi has followed the Israeli brutal assault in which a number of martyrs and sons of the Palestinian people were killed. On this basis he has recalled the Egyptian ambassador from Israel; has ordered the Egyptian representative at the United Nations to call for an emergency meeting at the Security Council ... and summoned the Israeli ambassador in Egypt in protest over the assault."

Added to this, Egypt's Freedom and Justice Party—the political wing of the Muslim Brotherhood—threatened to get

that lead to Gaza. Hamas has struck back, clearly revealing Iran's heavy involvement in strengthening its proxy.

Iran's footprints—and those of radicalizing Egypt and Libya—are all over this conflict.

Who Will Mediate?

Bible prophecy says the rapid spread of radical Islam will continue until it finally collides with a superior enemy: a German-led European Union. Daniel 11:40 shows that a German-led "king of the north" will soon enter into the glorious land—or Jerusalem. The Hebrew word for "enter" in this passage indicates a peaceful entry.

On November 19, German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle met with both Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the Palestinian president in an effort to calm the recent violence. After meeting with Netanyahu, Westerwelle said brokering a ceasefire is a top priority for Berlin.

Netanyahu's response reveals Israel's eagerness to invite Germany into a key role in the negotiations: "Israel can't long tolerate this kind of situation where our cities are under constant rocket attacks. I prefer diplomatic solutions, I hope that we can get one, but if not we have every right to defend ourselves with other means and we shall use them. *I believe that Germany can have a constructive role in seeking an end to this conflict* and a long-term arrangement, such that these terror weapons are not introduced into the Gaza Strip."

As more Israelis acknowledge that the U.S.'s broken-willed leaders are too fatigued by America's military involvement in other conflicts, and as pressure on Israel intensifies, the Jews will turn to Germany for defense assistance. Netanyahu's statement is one of several signs in recent months that Israel is already looking keenly in Berlin's direction. It is only a matter of time before Israel invites the German-led EU into the Holy Land.

This decision will not end well for Israel. The prophecy in Daniel shows that Germany will commit a violent double cross against Israel, and establish its headquarters in Jerusalem.

This is a sobering reality. But it is intricately tied to the most hope-filled event this war-torn planet has ever experienced: the return of Jesus Christ to usher in an age of peace for Israelis, Palestinians, Iranians, Germans, Egyptians, Libyans and all other men!



army, upgrading its weapons capabilities and receiving training from Iran—all because it wants to wipe Israel off the map.

That is the necessary context to the latest escalation in violence between Israel and Hamas.

Cairo and Tripoli

Iran is the head of the Middle East's anti-Israel movement, and is working arduously behind the scenes to bring the Jewish nation down. But Iran has rallied other key players to its cause—namely Egypt and Libya—and is working to morph these nations into bastions of radical Islamism. The conflict between Israel and Gaza shows the success Iran has had toward this end.

Back in October, Egyptian President Mohammed Morsi gave Hamas a hearty endorsement, saying, "The Palestinian people will not be abandoned. We stand with them against any aggression." Then,

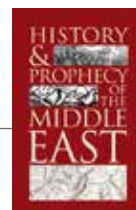
involved in the conflict. According to a statement released by the Brotherhood on November 14, Egypt "will not allow the Palestinians to be subjected to Israeli aggression, *as in the past*."

Then there is Libya. Tripoli's rapidly shifting political landscape has taken on great significance for militants in Gaza because the collapse of Muammar Qadhafi's government created other supply options for Hamas. Shortly after Qadhafi's ouster, many Libyan military storehouses were raided and the equipment was sold off. Most of these munitions were driven across Egypt and brought into Gaza.

It is amazing how many doors the Arab Spring has opened for Iran and its proxies.

The Israelis well know what is going on in Sudan, Libya, Egypt and Gaza. And since they have little support from the international community, they have struck hard at these supply lines

To understand the details of the astounding prophecies that are marching rapidly toward fulfillment, request our free booklet ***History and Prophecy of the Middle East***.



AMERICA'S NEW RELIGION



Why is religion losing its grip? **BY DENNIS LEAP**

MORE AND MORE AMERICANS, especially young Americans, have developed a deep aversion to institutionalized religion. One fifth of the U.S. public and one third of adults under 30 no longer claim a religious affiliation.

America's traditional religious landscape has rapidly changed in the last five years. For the first time in its history, America no longer has a Protestant majority. In 2007, 53 percent of the U.S. population reported themselves as Protestant; now that number is 48 percent, according to an October 2012 study by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life.

This is a huge change. America was founded by devoted Protestants. Most American presidents have been Protestant—only one has been Catholic. Today, there are no Protestants on the Supreme Court. And for the first time, there were no Protestant nominees on the Republican presidential ticket.

Among the reasons suggested for this dramatic shift is the growth in nondenominational Christian groups that cannot be categorized as Protestant and the sharp spike—20 percent of American adults—in those who say they have no religion. This number

has risen rapidly from 15 percent just five years ago. These are the highest percentages of non-affiliated respondents ever in Pew Research Center polling. These Americans are not called Catholic, Jewish, or Protestant—they call themselves *Nones*.

Why is religion losing its grip on Americans? How is religion failing us?

Dubious History With Religion

One of the truly great things about America has been the constitutional protection of religious freedom. The First and Fourteenth Amendments guarantee individuals the right to believe and worship as they choose without fear of persecution or threat of civil discrimination.

The roots of religious freedom in the U.S. Constitution formed early in American history with the arrival of the Pilgrims in 1620. They came to America to escape persecution by the Church of England. Over the ensuing centuries, many from different religious traditions such as the Jews, Puritans and Quakers have done the same.

However, over the centuries, America was transformed from a mere safe haven from persecution to the world's religious

marketplace. Our land is filled with a multitude of Christian churches both denominational and home-grown nondenominational. Buddhist and Hindu temples along with other similar centers of American-improvised communal societies dot the landscape. The number of Islamic mosques is growing on American soil. Also, it is American religious freedom that has allowed the work of the Philadelphia Church of God to grow and prosper.

The American ideal of religious freedom has an incredibly positive value—but at the same time, the seeds of religious deceit, division and rebellion lie hidden within this constitutionally mandated freedom.

Americans, for various reasons, regularly exercise their right to shop around for another religion more to their liking, or some just invent a new one. Unfortunately, religious freedom does not prevent religious failure. Some bad American religion has seriously hurt people.

Although America has always been viewed as a deeply religious nation, as the decades have passed, interest and participation in religion has waxed and waned. Like a wild roller-coaster ride, American religion has reached glorious heights and

 **20%**
Non-religious Americans

shameful dips. Americans are proven to be fickle in their relationship with God.

For example, in the early 20th century, the flapper generation led by young women rebelled against traditional rules, roles and conventions established for generations. Traditional religious values topped the list. Young women drank, smoked, danced and attended sex parties. Because of the senseless slaughter of World War I trench warfare, young men developed a spirit of “eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we may die.” This was a time of great social change in America and the Western world. Many historians view the period around World War I as one of sharp moral decline. An American obsession with sex and pornography took root. Interest in science pushed religion off center stage. The theory of evolution rocked American religion to its core.

However, several decades later, we saw a renewed interest in religion. Robert D. Putnam in his book *American Grace* states, “Virtually all experts agree, however, that the period from the late 1940s to the early 1960s was one of exceptional religious observance in America.” He goes on to show that this upsurge was “heavily concentrated among 20-somethings.” It was basically the young GIs who had experienced the horrors of World War II that led America back to the pews. Interestingly enough, these young GIs were the children of the flapper generation. It was in the 1950s that “under God” was added to the Pledge of Allegiance and “In God We Trust” was declared by Congress to be the national motto.

The Turbulent '60s

In the 1960s, however, nearly all American institutions were brought into question and shaken to their foundations. The sons and daughters of the pious GIs came of age and turned the world upside down. Exploding on the scene was the youth-inspired counterculture that embraced liberal views on premarital sex and the use of drugs. Rock 'n' roll music advanced the movement that soon engulfed the entire globe. The underlying theme of the '60s counterculture movement was, “Question authority.”

While it has taken books to cover the details of this social upheaval, it is safe to say that there was a rapid decline in confidence in all institutions. Religious institutions did not escape. Religion's roller-coaster ride was about to take its scariest plunge.

Liberal clerics—Catholic, Jewish and mainstream Protestant—joined and supported the counterculture movement. By the mid-'60s, radical theologians even declared that God was dead. Liberal views

on Bible authority, God, sin, premarital sex and marriage took root in many mainstream Protestant churches and have remained firmly planted there to this day. The Catholic Church was radically changed by the innovations instituted by Vatican II. Putnam tells us, “In pop culture, this was the Age of Aquarius and Jesus freaks, Scientology and *Jesus Christ Superstar*, Zen Buddhism and EST [Erhard Seminars Training], Transcendental Meditation and the Unification Church (or ‘Moonies’).”

As the youth of the '60s sought new spiritual awakenings, religious observance fell into *rapid* decline. Catholic, Protestant and Jewish lambs left the pews for greener pastures. It was also at this time that secularism sank its roots deeper into the American soil.

The shock of the '60s—especially the acceptance of liberal views on premarital sex—led to a conservative backlash against the sweeping tide of liberalism. Many Americans of all ages and different religious traditions were appalled by the “new morality,” which was essentially *immorality*. A return to conservative religious tradition was the natural result.

In the '70s and '80s, America's well-entrenched freedom to choose one's religion helped many disenfranchised Americans of different faiths to begin sitting in the pews of *evangelical* churches. Why? During the '60s social turmoil, evangelical churches had held fast to their non-liberal values, which included a strong stance that marriage and family were sacred and premarital sex was sin. Those deeply wounded by liberalism's immorality found comfort within their ranks.

Rise of the Religious Right

This led to a climbing comeback for religion in America. The late '70s and early '80s saw the rapid growth of evangelical megachurches, many of which still exist today. Religious observance—church attendance, daily prayer and Bible study and reading—began to rise rapidly. Christian-oriented books and magazines flooded the publishing industry. Religious programming filled radio and television airwaves. In addition, this period saw the development of a partnership between religious and political conservatives that became known as the Religious Right. The Religious Right, also called the Christian Right, has been associated with several institutions such as the Moral Majority, the Christian Coalition, Focus on the Family and the Family Research Council.

Beginning in the late '70s, conservative Christian clerics urged members to involve themselves in the political process in response to the rising tide of liberalism that began in the '60s. They believed that a strong and organized voice in politics could prevent more social disintegration.

Socially conservative candidates were promoted, financially supported and backed up by the voting power of conservative Christians. The Religious Right became identified

with the Republican Party, and flexed its muscle during the 1980 presidential election, ensuring that Ronald Reagan became president.

Initially this partnership was seen as a good thing. However, by the 1990s many other Americans grew skeptical of the relationship between politics and religion. As Putnam states it, “The terms ‘Religious Right’ and ‘Christian Right’ were becoming pejoratives in most Americans' view, representing a noxious mixture of religion and political ideology.” Gallup polling in the mid-'80s showed that most Americans opposed the idea of religious groups campaigning against specific candidates. However, most agreed that religious leaders should speak out on the moral implications of public issues—something that has always been an honored tradition in American history.

The view that organized religion should have less influence on government decisions and how people vote has continued to rise. A Gallup poll in 2008 showed that 45 percent of Americans strongly agree that religious leaders should not influence how people vote.

 **45%**

Believe religious leaders shouldn't influence voting

Enter the Nones

As the politicized Religious Right pointed its fingers at American social ills, young Americans began pointing back. Putnam tells us that beginning in the early 1990s, “Young Americans came to view religion, according to one survey, as judgmental, homophobic, hypocritical and too political.” Is there a correlation between these young Americans and the rise of the Nones? Surveys show that during the social and religious turmoil of the '60s, the number of Nones increased slightly, from 5 to 7 percent, and that number remained static for years. In the 1990s, it spiked sharply at the same time young adult Americans perceived there to be glaring faults in organized religion. Today the number of Nones

stands at 20 percent. However, all indications are that number will continue to rise.

Who are the Nones? They represent a typical cross-section of the American population in terms of education, social standing, race and gender. However, men, whites and non-Southerners are more likely to be Nones. These Americans are not necessarily non-believers. In fact, few Nones claim to be agnostic or atheist; most still maintain some belief in God and an afterlife. Many feel that religion is important in their lives.

A 2008 General Social Survey points out that as the numbers of Nones increased, there was also a parallel decline in the number of young evangelicals. This does not mean that the total number of Nones is made up only of former young evangelicals, but that there is a common change happening in American religion. Remember, one third of all adults under 30 claim no religion. So, a large number of the Nones must be young adults from different religious backgrounds.

Surveys show that the majority of Nones come from the center to left of the political spectrum. They tend to be liberal in their views on gender roles, homosexuality and marijuana. “For many, their aversion to religion is rooted in unease with the association between religion and conservative politics,” Putnam postulates. “If religion equals Republican, then they have decided that religion is not for them.”

The Nones’ defection from organized religion appears to be, in part, a backlash to the aggressive political activism of the Religious Right. Surveys show that few Nones refer to themselves as conservative, or being on the right of the political spectrum. However, this is not the entire reason for their growing numbers.

Steeped in Religious Hypocrisy

The Pew Forum asked a large sample of Nones why they rejected religious identification. The Nones said that “they became unaffiliated, at least in part, because they think of religious people as hypocritical, judgmental or insincere. Large numbers also say they became unaffiliated because they think that religious organizations focus too much on rules and not enough on spirituality.” This survey tells us that the Nones are thinking, analyzing people. Their gripe with religion is not unfounded.

Religious failure in leaders has shaken the faith of millions for decades. Shocking, well-publicized scandals have cut across all American faiths. Evangelical leaders who preached fidelity in marriage engaged in

extra-marital affairs. Some who taught fervently against homosexuality were practicing homosexuals. Ministers and priests sexually abused children. Popular televangelists bilked millions of dollars from their faithful. Anyone willing to take an honest look at the scandal side of American religion would agree that the Nones have some valid points. Hypocrisy, self-righteous judgment and insincerity have plagued and continue to plague American religious leadership. It only makes sense that truly thinking people would step back and say: “What is going on here?” In fact, it is surprising that more people have not done so. Why haven’t more people questioned American religion?

There appear to be real flaws within the ranks of American believers. Wouldn’t faithful people on top of their spiritual game question why religious leaders are failing? Bad fruits in religious leaders are an indication of flaws in a religious system.

In 2010, 80 percent of Americans said they belonged to a religion, and the same percentage said they were absolutely sure there is a God. However, Gallup polling has regularly surveyed Americans about their belief on Bible inerrancy. Do people who believe in God and are affiliated with a religious tradition believe the Bible to be the literal Word of God? Analyzing Gallup data, Putnam tells us, “[B]elief in the literal truth of Scripture is on the decline in all Christian traditions in America.” In fact, he says that “biblical literalism has steadily slumped for almost half a century.”

This is the reason why religion is losing its grip on Americans—why religion is failing us.

Without the firm belief that the Holy Bible is the sole, literal Word of a living God, there can be no true religious leadership that guides people into a way of life that truly nourishes and satisfies the spirit. Any spiritual-sounding talk not taken from the Bible is mere human fable. The Bible must be the authoritative guide for all religious doctrine and practice. Without the Bible, there is simply no true religion.

No Guiding Authority

America has churches like an ice cream parlor has flavors. The reason there is so much diversity—and frankly, so much religious confusion and contradiction—is that there is so much departure from biblical religion! Having many church choices doesn’t make all of them the right choice! This is where American religious freedom has deceived people the most.

One of the most important doctrines in the Bible is that of church government. The Bible shows that the Church of God began with Moses and the nation of Israel after the Exodus (Acts 7:38). God gave His Church *His* government (Exodus 18). God maintained authority over His Church by working through one man—Moses. God revealed to Moses what He wanted the people taught. To assist Moses with the administration of church government, God organized a system of helpers for Moses, calling them judges. Authority flowed from God through Moses down through the judges. It is important to realize that Moses and the judges were not *voted* into office. God chose Moses and, with God’s inspiration, Moses appointed the judges.

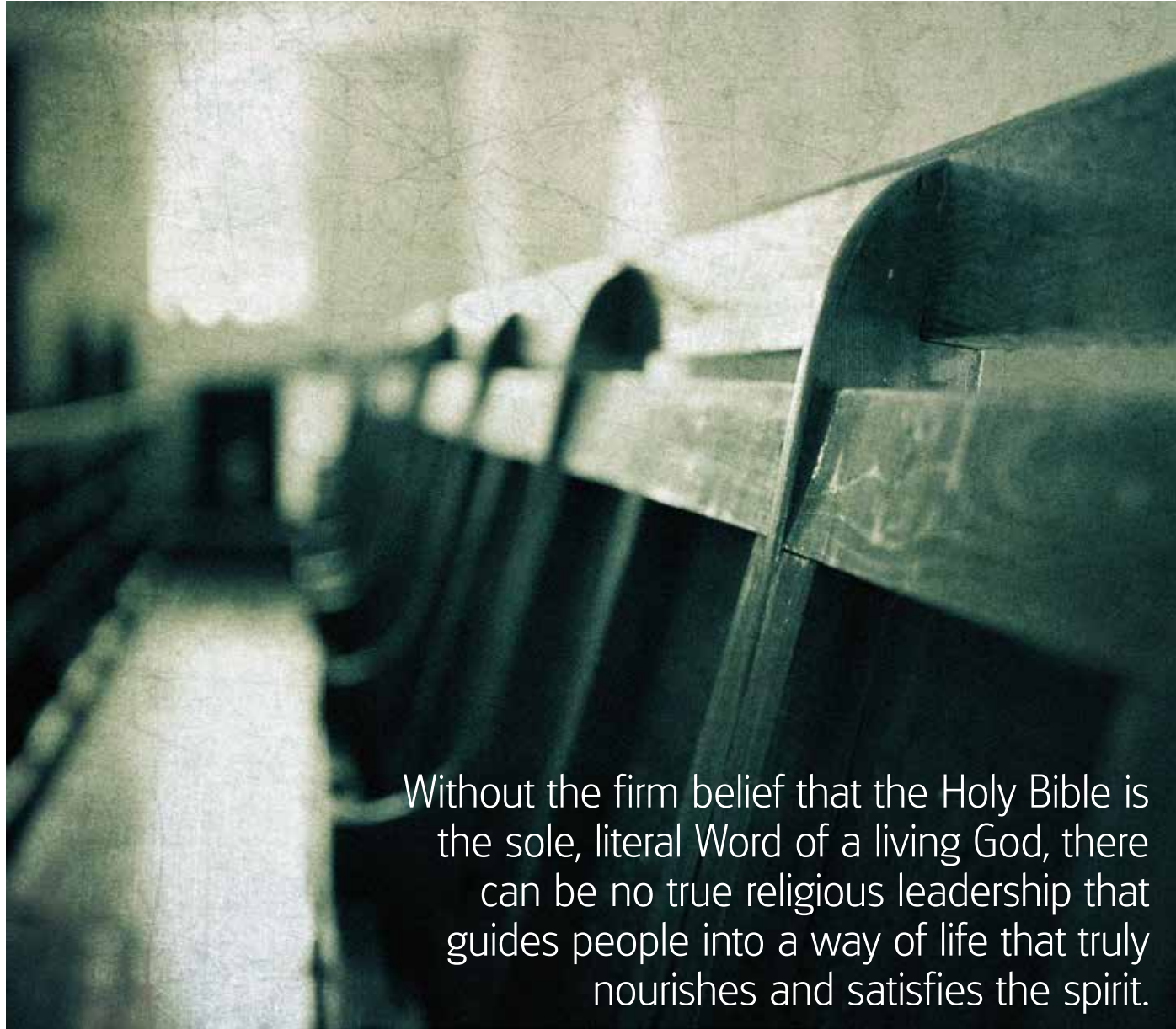
Jesus Christ governed the disciples in the same manner when He walked this Earth. And the living Jesus Christ still governs His Church in the same way today (Hebrews 13:8).

Proper church government—with Jesus Christ as the Head and the Bible-sanctioned human organization underneath Him—is what is missing in American religion today. Few religious people living today see the need for it. What religion today claims Jesus Christ as its head?

Herbert W. Armstrong taught members of the Worldwide Church of God, “The Roman Catholic Church does not call Christ the present living Head of their church. That title they give to their pope. So theirs is NOT the government of God... it is a counterfeit HUMAN government swayed by Satan.”

Martin Luther saw many problems within the Catholic leadership of his day. He rejected their authority and started his own brand of Catholicism—today called Lutheranism—yet he didn’t truly correct the problem. In fact, Luther promoted the idea that everyone should do what is right in his own eyes. (Read Judges 17:6 to see what God thinks of that.) What was the tragic result? Mr. Armstrong continued, “John and Charles Wesley came along and disagreed with Luther on certain points of doctrine. There was NO CENTRAL AUTHORITY in the Protestant Church as God’s instrument to define true Bible doctrines. The Wesleys were strong leaders. Hundreds, then thousands, followed them like sheep, and a new denomination appeared. ... So in addition to the Lutheran Church following the human Luther, and the Methodists following the Wesleys, the world soon had the Presbyterian and Congregational churches. ... [T]hey split and re-split, and today we have hundreds of Protestant denominations.” American religion has repeated this same history

 **33%**
Americans under 30
who claim no religion



Without the firm belief that the Holy Bible is the sole, literal Word of a living God, there can be no true religious leadership that guides people into a way of life that truly nourishes and satisfies the spirit.

since our very beginning. Current trends indicate that American religion will continue to fracture with the result that even more people will become Nones.

You can be different.

Flee Deceit

Jesus Christ warned the original 12 apostles that just prior to His Second Coming, the Earth would be filled with religious deceit. He said, “Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many” (Matthew 24:4-5). If you are an honest observer of American religion, isn’t that precisely what you see today? There are many voices out there saying, “I represent Jesus Christ—follow me!”

Jesus Christ also taught that His Church would be firmly united. Paul declared, “There is one body ... One Lord,

one faith...” (Ephesians 4:4-5). Just the opposite exists in American religion. The American Christian world is hopelessly divided over doctrine and matters of faith. Who is right? Jesus Christ promised that His Church would never die out (Matthew 16:18). Jesus Christ’s one true Church is alive and well on the Earth today.

You can find that Church. How? Get to know the Bible well. Use the Bible to measure your doctrinal beliefs and religious observances. If what you believe and do is not supported by the Bible, flee from it! Then, use the Bible as your compass to search out and guide you to Jesus Christ’s Church.

Jesus Christ prophesied that prior to His Second Coming there would be one voice shouting out the truth of God (Matthew 24:14). The Philadelphia Church of God and its publications broadcast that voice. If you would like to know more,

request to become a student of the *Herbert W. Armstrong College Bible Correspondence Course*. This 36-lesson course will help you gain a full understanding of the Bible and its vital relevance to your life. This course is provided to you free of charge.

Also, request a free copy of *Mystery of the Ages*. This book will guide you through the Bible, helping you to understand it. It will show you why our world is the way it is today. Most importantly, this book will also tell you about the happy, peaceful and successful world soon to replace this war-torn, tragic world we live in.

America has too much of the wrong religion and not enough of the true. You can help us make up the difference. Don’t become a None. ■



The Seven Seals of Revelation Have Been Opened!

God meant for this mysterious book to be understood! Here is how. **BY GERALD FLURRY**

THE BOOK OF REVELATION WAS given as a mysterious, closed and sealed book. It was SEALED WITH SEVEN SEALS. It is similar to the book of Daniel, which God told Daniel was sealed *until the time of the end*.

But if God wanted to hide this knowledge completely, He never would have revealed it in the first place. He meant for those seals to be *opened*. In fact, God intended this important prophetic book to be UNDERSTOOD *in our time today!*

The question is, *when* would those seals be opened, and what would the book reveal?

Revelation tells us that *Jesus Christ* would be able to open those seals. “And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, *the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David*, HATH PREVAILED to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof” (Revelation 5:4-5).

CHRIST is the one who can show us all this revelation that has been sealed. He alone can do so. But what does it mean that He “PREVAILED to open the book”? It shows that loosing these mighty seals was not a simple matter. In order to reveal this prophecy, Christ had a titanic battle with Satan the devil, and He won. He qualified to replace Satan on his throne, and now He—and only He—is qualified to open those seals.

Christ *has* loosed those seals—but He didn’t do so in the

book of Revelation itself.

I want to show you something Christ said that most people do not understand. We will look at one chapter of the Bible to see how *that chapter alone* UNSEALS THOSE SEVEN SEALS.

Jesus delivered a pivotal prophecy—the longest single prophecy in the Bible and the *most important* prophecy Christ revealed when He was on this Earth. He spoke this prophecy *after* He had prevailed in that battle with Satan and qualified to reveal it. It is called the Olivet prophecy. It is recorded in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. I will just focus on the account in Matthew 24, and show how it looses the seals on the prophecies of Revelation. *All prophecy*, in a sense, revolves around Matthew 24.

In this chapter, Christ prophesied about a volcanic eruption of crises on Earth that has never been experienced—and about the birth of a *new age* that will come from it. Jesus Christ has prevailed and has revealed this, and we are now seeing these prophecies being fulfilled.

The seven seals form the story flow of the book of Revelation. Here is the overview: The first seal reveals false prophets; the second, war; the third, famine; the fourth, pestilence; the fifth, tribulation; the sixth, heavenly signs; and the seventh, seven trumpets.

If you understand those seals, they lead you step by step to the return of Jesus Christ: He returns at the *last* of those seven final trumpet blasts. So the Second

Coming *concludes* those seven seals.

That makes this prophecy—even though it has a lot of bad news—the most exciting, wonderful news imaginable!

The First Seal

The first seal Christ opens reveals the first horseman of the apocalypse. The first four seals reveal a total of *four* horsemen.

“And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see. And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer” (Revelation 6:1-2).

Christians usually assume this horseman is Jesus Christ because Christ also comes on a white horse. But Christ comes with a *sword*, not with a *bow* (Revelation 19:11-15). And when you see what this white horseman actually does, you realize that even though he looks like Christ, it isn’t Christ at all! This is a *false* Christ who has DECEIVED THE WORLD—the Christian world *and* the non-religious—about the prophecies of Revelation!

Christ unseals and explains this to us in Matthew 24. “And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world [or age]?” (verse 3). If you read through the chapter, you see that the *main* sign is the

gospel being preached around the world (verse 14). Christ was saying that His *true* gospel message would *not* be preached—but then, right before the end, it would be. That commission being completed would mark the world’s entering into the very last end.

That was the *main sign* Christ gave, but there are others here. The very *first* thing Christ said was this: “TAKE HEED THAT NO MAN DECEIVE YOU. For *many* shall come *in my name*, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many” (verses 4-5).

Here, then, is the *meaning* of the first seal in Revelation, the first horseman of the apocalypse. This is what Christ revealed: It is the white horseman of RELIGIOUS DECEPTION. This horseman proclaims a *lying message about Christ*. This false religion proclaims that Christ was the Messiah, but it is *deceiving* people about what He said!

This horseman comes first because he causes the most suffering by far. He is a *false* teacher of Christ’s message, one who “went forth conquering, and to conquer.” This deceitful ministry CONQUERS BY DECEIVING, and it has deceived *the whole world* (Revelation 12:9). This is the deadliest of all the horsemen.

Second, Third and Fourth Seals

Here is what Revelation says about the second seal: “And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword” (Revelation 6:4). The second seal reveals the horseman of *war*.

What did Christ say about this in the Olivet prophecy? “And ye shall hear of WARS and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet” (Matthew 24:6). There will be all kinds of wars from the first coming of Christ to the Second Coming—but those *right at the very end* before His Second Coming will be about 100 times worse than any ever on this planet! That is what Christ is telling us.

This is the same period that the Prophet Daniel called “the time of the end”—or as the Moffatt Bible translates it, “the CRISIS AT THE CLOSE.” It is the *worst crisis* ever on this Earth! We ought to take note because it is already beginning to unfold before our eyes. Look at all the

countries that have nuclear bombs and are ready to detonate them. Once you start a nuclear war, you can’t really stop it.

The third seal is described in verses 5-6: “And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.” Seal number three reveals the horseman of *famine*.

“And I looked, and behold a pale horse:

These are the conditions and events Jesus Christ said to look for right before His return!

and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell,” or the grave, “followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth” (verse 7). The fourth of these seven seals is the horseman of *death*.

Christ’s prophecy in Matthew 24 goes on to explain these next two seals. “For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places” (Matthew 24:7). There are the third and fourth seals: famine and pestilence, and all the death that will result worldwide.

“All these are the *beginning of sorrows*,” Christ warned (verse 8).

THESE ARE THE CONDITIONS AND EVENTS JESUS CHRIST SAID TO LOOK FOR RIGHT BEFORE HIS RETURN!

The Fifth Seal

Verses 9-11 of Revelation 6 describe the next of these seven seals. This passage begins, “And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them, that were slain for the word of God...” (Revelation 6:9). This is discussing *God’s own people*—people who knew God and the true gospel—being *killed*.

Notice how Christ describes this same prophetic event in Matthew 24:9: “Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated

of all nations for my name’s sake.” Christ aimed this directly at “you”—His own disciples. This is a world-shaking event!

This seal is describing the Great Tribulation, a 2½-year period of Satan’s great wrath (Revelation 12:12). This isn’t the time of the wrath of God—that one-year “Day of the Lord” comes *right after* the Tribulation, making a total of 3½ years of unprecedented suffering before Jesus Christ returns (Revelation 11:2-3; 13:5; Daniel 12:7).

Why were these saints killed during the Tribulation? Several times in Scripture God promises to *protect* His people

during that period (e.g. Revelation 12:6). Why didn’t these saints receive God’s protection?

Other scriptures reveal the answer. The last era of God’s Church before Christ returns is described in Revelation 3:14-22. Christ chastens it for being *lukewarm* and spiritually wretched. The large majority of God’s people today have fallen into that condition. That is a shameful truth. These people who have known God but turned away are not going to be protected by Him! God will allow them to experience the nightmares of the Tribulation because they were lukewarm and not excited about the Second Coming of Jesus Christ to *stop* all these crises forever! God says that this is what it will take for them to turn back to Him so that He can get them into the Kingdom of God, into His Family. You can read more about this in our free book *Malachi’s Message*.

Those lukewarm saints are going to be killed during the Great Tribulation. But those who have known God and clung to Him—the very elect—*will* be protected.

“And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and SHALL DECEIVE MANY” (verses 10-11). The Greek word translated *many* means that MOST of God’s own people will *be deceived!* That is what Christ

prophesied—and that is *exactly* what has happened in this end time. Ninety-five percent of God’s Church has been *deceived*. That proves we have to work very hard not to be deceived. We can be deceived so easily.

“And because iniquity [lawlessness] shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold” (verse 12). This “love” is the *agape* love of God, which comes from His Holy

of in Daniel 8:19.

Christ has unsealed this for us. WE SHOULD UNDERSTAND IT!

What did He say would happen next? “When ye therefore shall see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:;)” (Matthew 24:15). What is this? Luke 21:20 describes this “abomina-

The verses that follow are about the faithful people of God fleeing destruction—fleeing to a place of protection that God will provide.

Spirit (e.g. Romans 5:5; Galatians 5:22). Only the people of God, who possess the Holy Spirit, have that love, and here Christ prophesied that this love would “wax cold” in MANY of these people! They had it but they are losing it. Why? Because of *lawlessness*. This is still in that fifth seal, the Great Tribulation.

The Main Sign

Now we come to the MAIN SIGN Christ gave of His Second Coming. “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come” (verse 14). The true gospel, which has not been preached, will finally be preached, Christ said; then comes “the end.”

This prophecy has been *fulfilled!* Do you know that the true gospel of God, after being suppressed for centuries, was in fact preached around the world for a witness to all nations? Do you know *who* did that job? These questions are also answered in *Malachi’s Message*.

But which “end” comes after that commission is finished? It is *different* from the “END of the world” in verse 3, from the Greek *synteleia*. This is the Greek word *telos*. *Thayer’s Lexicon* explains that the *context* has to tell you what “end” it is. This is speaking of the END of the *gospel being preached around the world*—AFTER WHICH we will enter into the time when all of these terrible events of Matthew 24 will unfold. This is the “last end” spoken

tion” as “JERUSALEM COMPASSED WITH ARMIES.” Other prophecies show that these armies belong to a reconstituted Holy Roman Empire in Europe! They also reveal that this “abomination that maketh desolate” (Daniel 12:11) will rise up just before the modern-day nations of Israel—which include the United States and Britain—COLLAPSE!

That might have seemed far off when Herbert W. Armstrong first prophesied about Matthew 24, but now we can *see it* happening!

The verses that follow are about the faithful people of God *fleeing destruction*—fleeing to a place of protection that God will provide. This is more proof that God *will* in fact protect some.

And here is what He will protect them from: “For then shall be GREAT TRIBULATION, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should NO FLESH BE SAVED: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened” (Matthew 24:21-22).

This is Christ’s prophecy of HORRORS UNPRECEDENTED IN HUMAN HISTORY—besieging the world *right at the end*. He said that *unless He intervened*, mankind would *wipe itself completely off the face of the Earth!*

After World War I, Winston Churchill said, “Mankind has never been in this position before. ... Without having improved appreciably in virtue or

enjoying wiser guidance, it has got into its hands for the first time the tools by which it can unfaithfully accomplish its own extermination.”

Since that time, we have developed chemical and biological weapons. We can *exterminate* ourselves MANY TIMES OVER! The number one problem we face is human extermination! That has never been possible in history until very recent times.

WE ARE NOW IN EXACTLY THE POSITION JESUS CHRIST PROPHESIED ABOUT IN REVELATION AND MATTHEW 24! *This* is the crisis at the close! More people should see that. More ministers should be talking about that. There is no excuse: There are prophecies throughout the Bible that tell us that—over a hundred of them!

The end of all things is “AT THE DOORS” (verses 32-33).

In verse 41 we again see God’s Church divided between those who cling to Him and do His work, and those who are lukewarm. Both churches are in the field, working away, but only *one* of them is going to be taken and protected—and the other is going to be left. Ninety-five percent of God’s people are *not* going to be protected. But because they don’t look to Christ’s prophecies, they won’t realize it. All these horrors are going to spring on them like a steel trap!

In Luke 21:34-36, Jesus warned that you had better watch for these prophecies. Watch world news, but also *watch your own spiritual life* so you don’t fail to see what is happening.

The Sixth and Seventh Seals

The sixth seal reveals mighty heavenly signs: “And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind” (Revelation 6:12-13). These signs are an indication of the fearsome things about to come next.

Christ explains this sixth seal in Matthew 24:29:

See **SEALS** page 36 ➤



Samuel conveyed God's message to Saul: Because he disobeyed, God rent the kingdom from him.



The Heart to Obey

Had Saul obeyed, what a difference it would have made.

WHEN THE PEOPLE OF ANCIENT ISRAEL DEMANDED A human king to rule over them like other nations, God gave them Saul—a man the people desired. He was a wealthy, good-looking, powerful man from the tribe of Benjamin. When he began his reign, he was actually a humble servant who was deeply submissive to God's authority.

By God's power, Saul became a different man—he became a man of God! After his anointing, God gave him “another heart” (1 Samuel 10:9)—*His* heart! God gave Saul His Holy Spirit so that the new king could develop a heart after His own heart. King Saul, in other words, became converted to God's way of life.

Israel was fragmented, weak and oppressed, and had been for about four centuries. Early in Saul's kingship, the nation faced an imminent attack from Nahash and the Ammonites. Saul courageously rallied the Israelites to fight for God (1 Samuel 11). He inspired the nation to look to him and the Prophet Samuel, and he credited God for the subsequent victory.

But Saul began to make a grave mistake. He didn't *remain* humble and submissive before God. He began to rely more on his own army than on God (1 Samuel 13:1-2). His faith started to weaken; the other heart he had at the start of his conversion started to disappear.

Despite that initial awe-inspiring victory against the Ammonites, two years later, we find the Israelite soldiers scattering before the Philistines. The Philistines *were* a formidable foe. The Bible says they advanced against Israel with 30,000 chariots (verse 5). But that factor was nowhere near as important as the way King Saul confronted this threat compared to that of the Ammonites.

As the Philistines approached, Saul grew impatient. Samuel was supposed to arrive and officiate sacrifices to God on behalf of the nation. Samuel had told Saul he would arrive on the seventh day. Amazingly, the Philistine army, its soldiers and chariots arrayed for battle, remained still, encamped directly across from the Israelite soldiers. Neither army made the first move—for seven days. But as the seventh day wore on, Saul could wait no longer and decided to take matters into his own hands. He offered the sacrifices in place of the prophet.

Saul should have known he had no right to take charge of Samuel's duties. He made a snap judgment. He saw it as an emergency. God, however, saw it as rank rebellion. In one hasty moment of panicked reasoning, Saul usurped the authority of God.

He should have *waited*. Sometimes the best decision we can make—the biggest step forward we can take—is to wait patiently on God and His government to solve the problem.

Just after Saul finished sacrificing, Samuel arrived. When Samuel confronted Saul about his grave mistake, the king justified his actions by blaming the people, the Philistines and even Samuel, rather than simply confessing his sin and repenting toward God (verses 11-12).



“And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God, which he commanded thee: *for now would the Lord have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever*” (verse 13).

What an INCREDIBLE verse. Had Saul obeyed, God would have established his kingdom—*Saul's* kingdom—forever!

God had placed Saul at the top of His chosen nation and given him His Holy Spirit. He gave him a prophet to look to for spiritual guidance. He gave him *everything* he needed to go the right way. But when Saul refused to obey God's commands and then tried to justify his rebellion, Samuel knew this would be the end of Saul.

What a sad and tragic demise.

Early on in his conversion, Saul showed signs of being totally committed to God's way of life. But in just a couple years, he became a big man in his own eyes, vain and self-righteous. When his mistakes were pointed out, he tried to justify his actions by blaming others. But his actions showed he was unwilling to wait on God. He stopped going to God for wisdom and discernment and instead made hasty, snap judgments. He was still zealous. He even made sacrifices to God. But it was all *Saul's* effort, with no submission to *God's* will.

Notice what Samuel said to Saul: “Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hear-ken than the fat of rams” (1 Samuel 15:22). *To obey God is better than sacrifice*. What good is it if we sacrifice everything—but do it according to our own will and not God's? First and foremost, God desires *obedience* from all of us.

When Saul heard that he had been rejected from being king, he seemed repentant at first (verses 24-25). But the rest of his story proves that he wasn't willing to make the necessary *changes* that he needed to in order to develop that “other heart”—a heart like God's. 1 Samuel 15 shows another stark example of Saul disobeying God, sounding contrite, but never actually *repenting*. Because Saul rebelled, God cut off his kingdom soon after he died.

God raised up another man who would develop a heart like His own (Acts 13:22)—one who would turn out to also make mistakes, but who would turn to Him in repentance and faith—one in whom God would establish an *ever-lasting* kingdom.



Do You Know Who God Is?

The Philadelphia Trumpet, in conjunction with the Herbert W. Armstrong College Bible Correspondence Course, presents this brief excursion into the fascinating study of the Bible. Simply turn to and read in your Bible each verse given in answer to the questions. You will be amazed at the new understanding gained from this short study!

EDUCATOR HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG WAS traveling in India years ago when he noticed cows and oxen wandering through Delhi's streets. Mr. Armstrong asked his driver, "Don't these cattle stray quite a distance from home?" "Oh, yes."

"But, when they wander all over the streets so far away, how do their owners find them, to drive them back home for the night?"

The driver smiled. "The owners don't. But the cattle and the oxen know their owners and where they live. They find their own way home in the evening."

God Not Known Today

Mr. Armstrong said that incident illustrated Isaiah 1:2-4: "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but *Israel doth not know*, my people doth not consider. Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have *forsaken* the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward." Even *cattle* know their master, yet humans don't!

These words were originally directed to ancient Israel, a nation to which God had revealed Himself by many infallible proofs and miracles. But the Israelites rebelled against Him and *forgot* who and what He is. How much *less* do the nations today know about *who* and *what* God is!

Israel's descendants do not know who God is. Modern science does not know whether God even exists—much less who and what He is. Higher education does not know or teach the amazing truth about God's identity. Instead, it has universally accepted the fable of evolution, the atheist's attempt to explain the existence of a creation without the preexistence of a Creator. Thousands of years after Isaiah wrote those words, we *still* don't know our Master!

A World in Religious Confusion

It seems utterly unbelievable, but even *religion* does not know who or what God is! That's one reason why there are so many wildly different, conflicting versions.

You live in a world of religious confusion! Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Judaism, the Baha'i Faith, Confucianism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism, Shintoism, Taoism—the world is full of conflicting

ideas about spiritual truth. The Christian religion, with its thousands of denominations and sects, has the largest in number of adherents, but it is filled with various contradictory ideas about God. Not even traditional Christianity really knows *who* and *what* God is!

So much of the cause for this confusion is simply that human beings try to figure out and reason for themselves what God's nature is like. But the way to learn the *truth* about God is to consult the source of revelation that God Himself provided us! With an open Bible and an open mind, you can *prove* God's identity.

Let's look into the Scriptures and begin to examine this question, then, of *who* and *what* God is.

God in Prehistory

Where in the Bible is the earliest account of God's existence? You might think, *In the very first verse, Genesis 1:1. "In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth."*

But that's actually *not* the earliest mention.

1. Where, in chronological order, is the earliest revelation of WHO and WHAT God is? John 1:1-3.

This verse talks about a time *before* heaven and Earth, before the material universe. The Greek word translated into English as "Word" in John 1:1 is *Logos*. It means *word, revelatory thought, spokesman, or one who speaks*. It is the *name* there used for an individual Personage.

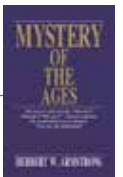
2. What did the Word become? Verse 14. Is He the *only* begotten Son of God the Father? Same verse. Did He live on Earth? Same verse, and also Matthew 1:23.

The Word is a Personage who was made flesh and blood over 2,000 years ago. He became the human Jesus Christ! He was begotten by God (who then became His Father) and was born of the virgin Mary as a human being.

Jesus's begetting by God the Father was unique in the history of the world. Mary, His mother, was the only virgin who has ever conceived a child whose father was God! In this sense, Jesus is the "only begotten" Son of the Father.

But at the prehistoric time described in John 1:1-3, the Word was not yet the Son of God, and God was not yet His Father. There existed only *two* Personages. One was God. And with God was another Personage who was *also* God. How could the Word be *with* God and also *be* God?

There might be a man named John. And John might be with the man





GOD? GOD? GOD?
 How can billions of people be wrong about who God is? Or wait; how can they all be right?

named Smith, and John might also be Smith because John is the son of Smith, and Smith is the family name. Yet they are two separate persons. The only point of difference in that analogy is that the Word, at the time of John 1:1, was not the Son of God yet. But He was with God, and He also was God. It was He who was later begotten and born as Jesus Christ.

Both members of the God Family have existed eternally (Psalm 90:2; Hebrews 1:8, 10-12; 1 Timothy 1:17). It is impossible for our finite human minds to understand how these two immortal supreme beings could have always existed, but neither can we really understand *what* electricity is. Yet we know electricity exists and is very real.

3. Exactly why did the Word—the second member of the God Family—become a flesh-and-blood human being? John 3:16; Romans 5:6-10; Hebrews 2:9-10.

Jesus was both human and divine. God was His Father, and the virgin Mary was His mother. He was both the “Son of God” and the “Son of man.” As the Creator of the universe and mankind (John 1:3; Ephesians 3:9), His life was worth more than all other human lives combined, and as a human, He could die. This great God sacrificed Himself for the sins of all mankind so that others could come to *know who God is*, receive His Spirit, and ultimately be born into His Family (Romans 8:29; Hebrews 2:11).

What Does God Look Like?

1. What physical creation did God make whose *image* and *likeness* was patterned after Himself? Genesis 1:26. Can we therefore conclude that both members of the God Family look like a man? Same verse.

We know what form and shape a man has. Since

Adam was created in the “image” of God, after His “likeness,” God therefore has the form and shape of a man. In various parts of the Bible, it is revealed that God has a face, eyes, a nose, a mouth, ears, hair, arms and legs, hands and fingers, feet and toes. God has a mind. In all those respects, *you* are very much like God!

2. The Word became flesh and blood and lived on Earth. Did Jesus have a special appearance, or did He look like any other average man in His community? Matthew 26:47-49.

The multitude that came looking for Jesus had to have Him specially pointed out. He had no particularly distinguishing features.

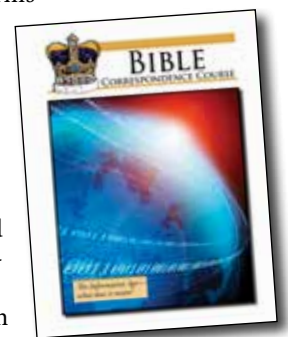
3. Whom did Jesus tell Philip that the Father in heaven looked like? John 14:9.

4. Even though God the Father looks like a man, what is He composed of? John 4:24. Is He therefore invisible to human eyes? 1 Timothy 1:17.

5. Are the Father and Christ’s appearances described as glorious? John 17:5. What does Jesus, after His resurrection and restoration to former glory, now look like? Revelation 1:13-18.

If we could see both God the Father and Christ the Son as they appear today in their glorified state in heaven, their faces, though formed and shaped like human faces, would be as bright as the sun *in full strength!* Their eyes would be like flames of fire, their feet like burnished brass and their hair as white as snow!

God does reveal Himself to us in the Bible, if we will just understand it.



This short study is a sample of the method employed in each lesson of the free **Herbert W. Armstrong College Bible Correspondence Course**. Over 50,000 people have enrolled in this exciting, dynamic course. Ordering information is on the back cover of this magazine.



You can read previous articles in this series online at trmpt.co/bcc

LETTERS from last issue

Mum's the word

In the U.S. we praise our freedom of the press and the fact that we are not blanketed with propaganda as other nations are ("The Deadliest Mystery in the Middle East," December). If that was ever true, it certainly isn't true today. Shame! Shame on our politicians and our media. There is no concern for truth. *John Mooney—MASSACHUSETTS*

Many thanks for laying bare the truth about the saga of the WMD. I remember the article on theTrumpet.com about the 20 tons of chemical warfare material captured by the Jordanians coming across their border with Syria. It was an electrifying development at the time, but not a murmur from the press or the politicians, even the conservative ones. The whole spectrum of political thought is rapidly shifting away from the truth and principles of sound government contained in God's Word. The world is oblivious to this mystery of which you write and will remain willingly ignorant of it until it is too late. *Graham Beck—AUSTRALIA*

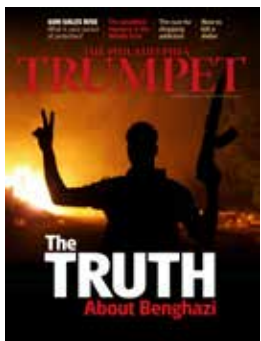
Nature abhors a power vacuum

There is so much in this article to "watch and pray" about ("Next in Line, Please," December). The world can somewhat see that nobody likes a power vacuum. They can somewhat see that the Mediterranean is Europe's backyard and North Africa its underbelly, the strength of Iran and that Israel looks to Europe. However the world does not see how the dominoes are all set up ready to fall! *Brendan Radlett*

Don't take it for granted

The article makes me think of "the Jungle Book" where Baloo sings about the bare necessities of life is all we need, but the problem starts with all the things we want ("The Cure for Shopping Addiction," December). Your neighbor paints his house and all of a sudden your house looks dull. *Francois*

Absolutely, we all tend to take everything for granted every day. Compared to the old days, we live in luxury and feel we deserve it. We deserve nothing. It's a



privilege to possess what we even have. May God bless those who are truly thankful and who don't take everything for granted and show those who do how they got those things they do have. *Levon Garrard—TENNESSEE*

RIP: the dollar

My husband and I just purchased a home ("The Dollar Killer," December). My husband has excellent credit, and had a good down payment. He was approved for a low-interest loan very quickly by a local bank. We went to closing and had an issue with money being transferred to the people he bought the home from. It took three hours for the problem to be resolved. Come to find out, his loan was sold. It is now owned by Freddie-Mac. His loan was sold before he even signed the papers for the new home. Just like any other government agency, it is ill managed and unorganized. Even worse will be the management once the dollar crashes. Our government does not have the capability. It can't even deal with a simple transfer of money at closing. The whole system is broken. *Christina Godfrey—MARYLAND*

An education in prophecy

I read an article by Mr. Armstrong in the *Plain Truth* in the early 1960s. It was titled, "Coming—A United States of Europe" ("The Spirit Behind the Beast," December). In that article, Mr. Armstrong said a European super state was coming. A lot of "experts" scoffed at Mr. Armstrong back then. I doubt very many would be scoffing today, because he was so right! Of course, Mr. Armstrong based it all on the sure word of Bible prophecy. It's been a real education for me, over the years, watching one prophecy after another being fulfilled. *David E. Hallett—WASHINGTON*

Wholly good for you

Glad to hear you make mention of the natural source of our necessary nutrients, especially your example of flax seed as a natural source of omega-3 ("Eat Whole," December). Men will always try to process our food for profit. We know the need for omega-3, refuse to take it from the source given by our Creator and are prey to the processing industry. Every step in the process is a step toward profit. For example, omega-3 eggs—chickens are fed a special diet, not what they would regularly eat,

but a diet with very high levels of fish oil to produce eggs high in omega-3. Ditto for omega-3 pork, an unclean meat labeled as a health food, or milk. It should be plain to see even from an economic point of view that eating healthy is good for us. *Rein Westerbaan—CANADA*

ONLINE HIGHLIGHTS

Irrelevant America

What we learned from the presidential debate



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Right on time, just one year before Germany's federal elections, calls are going out for Karl Theodor zu Guttenberg to return to frontline German politics. thetrumpet.com/go/9976



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How to Weather the Storm

IN SHEER SIZE AND SCOPE, A HURRICANE IS THE most devastating storm man can face. The combination of rain, wind and flooding over an extended period of time leaves a wake of large-scale destruction. Hurricane Sandy is a catastrophic example. Several million lost power, water and heat. With fuel shortages, transportation delays, destroyed homes, interruptions in work and battered cities, an estimated 50 million people over 24 states felt the effect of just this one storm.

Where was God in all of this? Couldn't He have stopped the storm?

Violent storms aren't a coincidence or an effect of man-made causes. God *allows* these storms. These so-called natural disasters are biblical. God prophesied these catastrophes in the Bible; He even warns us that they will increase. And He tells us *why* He is allowing them.

America has rejected God. You can read Hosea 1:9 and 4:6 to see what happens as a result. Because we have turned away from Him, God is removing the blessings and the protection that He once gave us (Hosea 2:8-9). He has revealed that the nation is so anti-God that it has passed the point of no return. You can read about this sobering judgment in our free booklet *Lamentations: The Point of No Return*.

But God does show us how we—individually—can weather the coming storms.

As He concluded His famous “sermon on the mount,” Jesus Christ talked about a violent, hurricane-like storm. He said anyone who heard His sayings and *did them* was like a wise man who built his house on a rock and could thus withstand a violent storm. But anyone who heard but didn't *do* what Christ said was like a fool who built on sand, and whose house would be destroyed in the violent weather (Matthew 7:24-27).

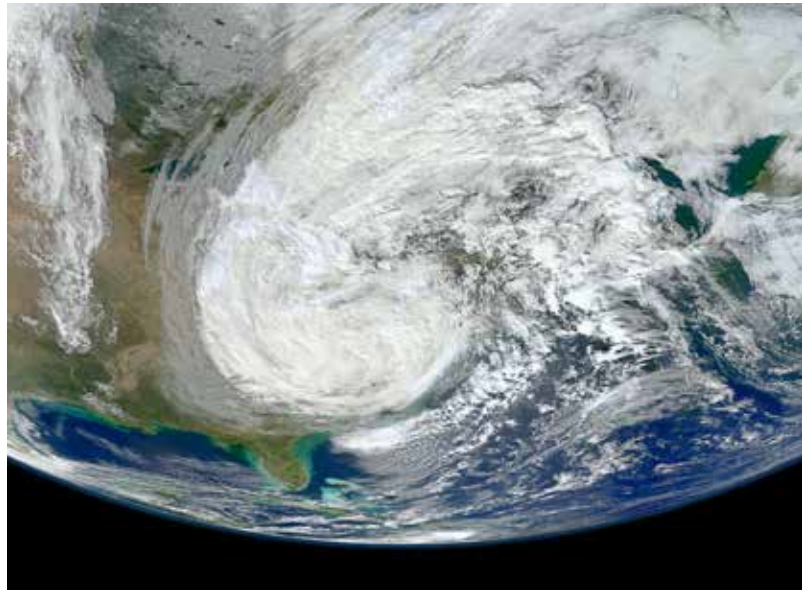
No one escapes the storm, but those who hear Christ's sayings and *do them* endure the devastation. The *doers* of God's Word have their homes—their lives—built on a rock! (James 1:22-25).

How can we build our lives on that rock? Jesus showed us in that same sermon. “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: *but whosoever shall do and teach them*, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:17-19).

How do we weather the coming storms? By *obeying God's law!*

God's law is a law of love (Romans 13:10). It consists of love toward God and love toward our fellow man (Matthew 22:35-40).

During His sermon, Jesus went into detail about the relationship we *need* with God. This is the relationship we were meant to have with our Creator. Christ taught that God is our Father and



we are His children. He taught us to love and worship God, to exercise living faith, and to trust God for our needs no matter the physical conditions. He taught us that there can't be anyone or anything more important than God in our lives. Doing so breaks God's law of love, and we suffer when we allow that. When we sin, God can't be near us, so when the rain and wind and flooding comes, we can't hold up.

In that same message, Christ also taught us to love our neighbor. He taught that God's law of love governs the human relationships we share. He explained how God's law *should* govern not just our deeds and our words, but even our *thoughts*. What is the attitude and intent in our relationships? Do we want to help others or hurt them? Do we want to give or take? Are we treating others the way we would want to be treated? Do we see their

God's laws are unchangeable and eternal, and they lead to a happy, prosperous life even in a world of turmoil and devastation.

needs and seek to fulfill those needs? (Matthew 25:32-45). Are we willing to sacrifice to help others?

These are God's laws of love, and these are the words God expects us to live by (Matthew 4:4). When we choose to *do these words*—to love God and to love our neighbor—then the structure of our lives is strengthened, and our footing is secure.

God's laws are *unchangeable* and *eternal*, and they lead to a happy, prosperous life even in a world of turmoil and devastation. Hurricane Sandy and the continued suffering shows us how much we need God, and how much we need His law of love to guide us (Psalm 119:105).

“As the whirlwind passeth, so is the wicked no more: but the righteous is an everlasting foundation” (Proverbs 10:25). Those who reject God's laws can't endure the storm. But the righteous, those who build their lives on God's law, don't just have an everlasting foundation: *They are* an everlasting foundation! By being *doers of the word*, the righteous become a foundation that God will build on forever!

Greater storms are coming. Not all will be literal storms. But the rains, the winds and the floods *will* come. How important it is that we build our lives on God's law and *be an everlasting foundation*.

“Immediately after the tribulation of those days [which was the fifth seal] shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken.” Those are the same heavenly signs. You can also read them prophesied in Joel 2:31: “The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, *before* the great and the terrible day of the Lord come.” This confirms that these signs mark the *end* of the Tribulation—the 2½ years of Satan’s wrath—and signal the beginning of the Day of the Lord—the year of God’s wrath.

These are world-shaking events. And just as Jesus’s other prophecies have come to pass, so too will these!

Revelation 6:17 introduces the seventh seal: “For *the great day of his wrath* is come; and who shall be able to stand?” That seventh seal is spoken of in Revelation 8 and 9. It consists of those seven trumpets.

Here is where Christ explained the seventh seal: “And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other” (Matthew 24:31). That seventh seal includes seven trumpet plagues that God pours out on mankind.

There are only a handful of scriptures about the Great Tribulation in Matthew 24 and Revelation, but there are over 30 about the Day of the Lord, which is the day of God’s wrath on this Earth. Joel says the Day of the Lord is at hand, *as destruction from the Almighty*. God is sick of mankind’s *sin* and *lawlessness*, which plunges us into the greatest crisis ever. The world has never seen anything like the wrath of God that it is about to see!

Yet sadly, throughout these plagues, mankind will refuse to repent.

How does all this end? At the *last trumpet*, Jesus Christ Himself is going to return to this Earth! “The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord...” (Revelation 11:15). Jesus Christ is about to take over this world in crisis, *rule* it with a rod of iron and bring *peace, joy, happiness* and *success* to *everybody* on Earth. That is the kind of prosperity mankind really wants, but has never been able to achieve.

If you are willing to look into God’s Word with an open mind, you will see that all Christ talked about 2,000 years ago is coming to pass—the bad news *and* the good!

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Michigan, Alpena WBAE 9:30, Sun

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Traverse City-Cadillac WGTU-DT/WGTQ-DT 9:30, Sun

Minnesota, Duluth-Superior WDLH 8:30, Sun

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North Platte KWPL 8:30, Sun
Scottsbluff KCHW 10:30, Sun
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New Bern WNCT-DT 9:30, Sun
Raleigh WRPX 6:00, Fri; 9:00 am, Sun
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Wilmington WBW 9:30, Sun
North Dakota, Bismarck KWMK 10:30, Sun
Dickinson KWMK 10:30, Sun
Fargo WDAY-DT 8:30, Sun
Minot KWMK 10:30, Sun
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Klamath Falls KMFD 9:30, Sun
Medford KMFD 9:30, Sun
Portland KPXG 6:00, Fri
Pennsylvania, Erie WBEP 9:30, Sun
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South Carolina, Charleston WCBD-DT 9:30, Sun
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Seattle KCPO 7:00, Sun
Spokane KGXP 6:00, Fri; KAYU 7:30, Sun
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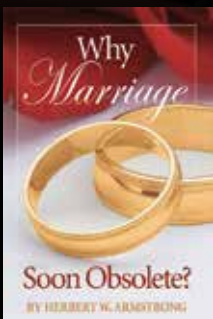
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