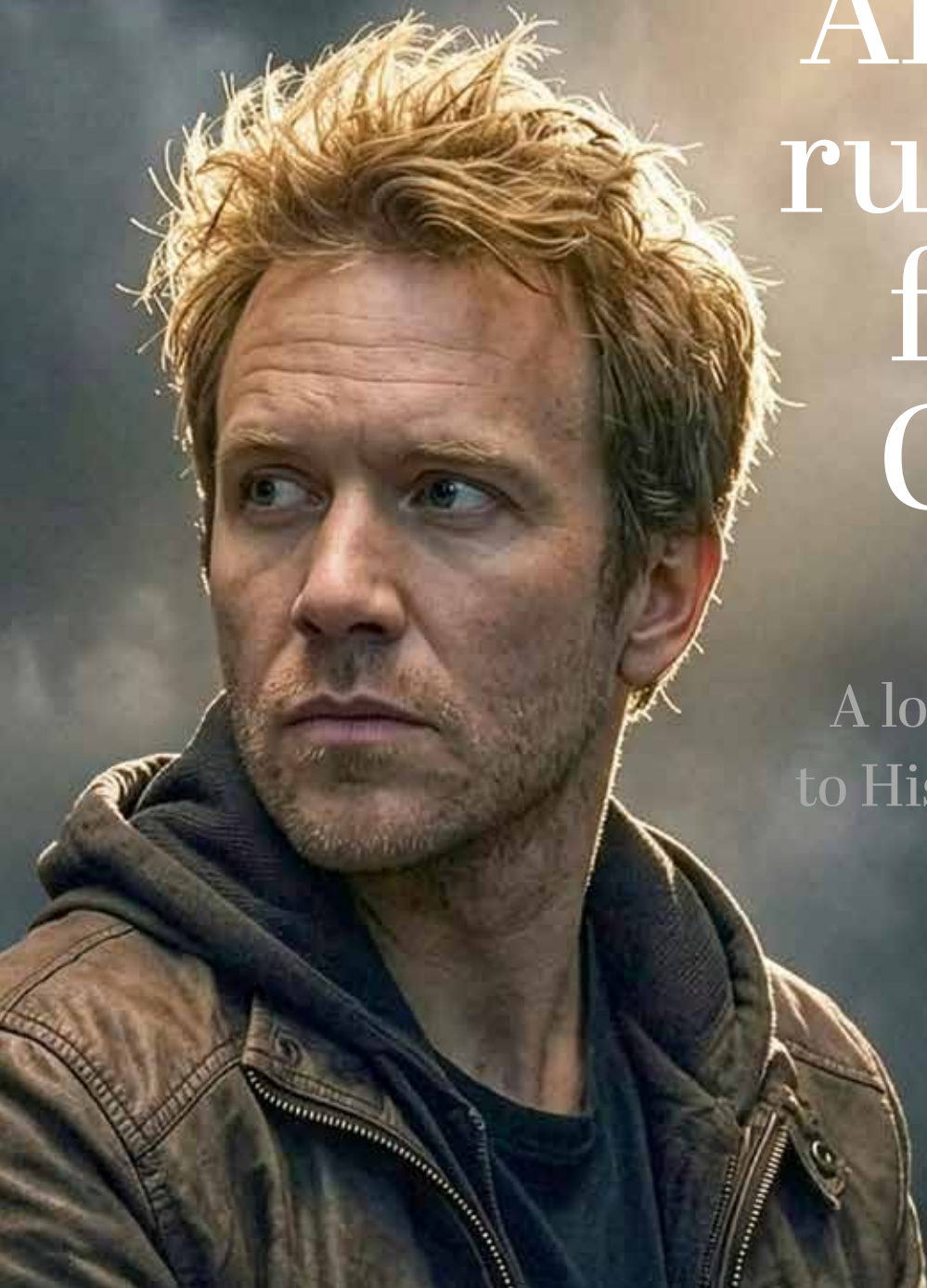


THE PHILADELPHIA Trumpet

SEPTEMBER 2026

Are you
running
from
God?

A loving message
to His prodigal sons



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A Father's a Father's

The following is the Introduction to Gerald Flurry's new book, *The Father's Love*.

JESUS CHRIST'S PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON, RECORDED in Luke 15, is perhaps the most moving parable He uttered.

A man had two sons, and the younger one asked his father for his inheritance. He didn't like it at home with Dad and all his "tough rules." *I have to get out of here. I can't stand the authority and the government*, he thought. *I want to go out and have a good time!* He decided to flee to the world. As any parent can imagine, such rejection and abandonment is devastating.

The heartbroken father in this parable represents God the Father. Throughout history, He has had *many* prodigal sons who have turned away from Him. This parable helps us understand how God feels about such rejection and how He handles such a painful situation.

This father surely tried to persuade his son not to take such a reckless, self-destructive course. Nevertheless, he did not *compel* him to stay. Everyone must make his own decisions—and everyone must live with the consequences of those decisions.

God the Father yearns for a close relationship with every one of His sons—but HE GIVES US THE CHOICE. He offers real, abundant living—a blessed life, filled with purpose, hope and joy. He shows us the way, then encourages us to CHOOSE LIFE. "... I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing," He says, "therefore CHOOSE LIFE, THAT BOTH THOU AND THY SEED MAY LIVE" (Deuteronomy 30:19). God gives us free will, and He leaves that choice to us. He is looking for the same voluntary, heartfelt love and devotion that His Son Jesus Christ shows (John 8:29; 14:31). That is what He wants from EVERY SON! Sadly, despite what a wonderful Father He is, such love and devotion are extremely rare.

The son in the parable traveled far away and squandered his wealth on riotous living. Soon he was broke, forced to do hard labor just to survive. He was miserable and starving. It was in these wretched conditions that "HE CAME TO HIMSELF" (Luke 15:17). He finally realized that his life had become a wreck. He



Heartache, Joy

saw the terrible mistakes he had made, and he recognized, for the first time, just how good he had had it and that there was nobody like his father.

He determined to turn things around. He said to himself, “I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants” (verses 18-19). This is true of all of us! We are NOT WORTHY to be called sons of God!

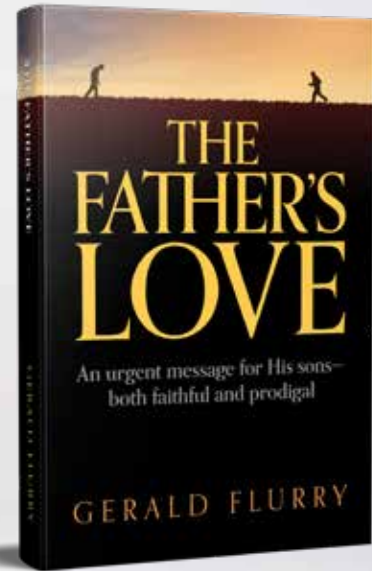
That trial brought this young man to a sincere repentance. There are times when those who leave God find themselves in trial and trouble. God often uses difficult circumstances to help a son “come to himself” and repent.

If you have found yourself in such a state, THE SOONER YOU CHANGE COURSE, THE BETTER OFF YOU WILL BE. As long as you are separated from God’s blessing and protection, your life will only get worse. In fact, Bible prophecy shows that many of God’s sons and daughters are about to be plunged into the GREAT TRIBULATION, a time of the worst suffering in human history! Whether or not you believe it, violence is about to overwhelm our cities. Millions of lives will be snuffed out by nuclear weapons—great numbers of people will be taken into concentration camps and death camps! Many prophecies warn of this horror, and it is coming soon.

It is in those woeful conditions that many people will “come to themselves.” They will recognize their rebellion against their loving Father. How tragic that it will take such extreme trial to get through to them! Nevertheless, it will bring them to sincere repentance, like the prodigal son.

The father in this parable clearly loved his son—and, despite the son’s betrayal, NEVER STOPPED LOVING HIM. He mourned his departure and feared he would never see him again. As he walked his land each day, he regularly scanned the horizon, hopeful for any sign of the young man’s return.

Finally, that day came. The father glimpsed the figure of his lost son “a great way off” (verse 20). His heart began beating faster. Suddenly flooded with emotion, he *ran* to his son! The closer he got, the clearer he could see the young man’s broken, emaciated



HE IS WATCHING THE HORIZON

A father spots his wayward son a great way off and runs to welcome him home. The man in this moving parable from Jesus Christ represents God. *The Father’s Love* is a book for anyone who has drifted from Him, and for all of us who need to see His love more clearly.

This book will help you see God’s perspective and grasp His love—including: the astonishing depth of the covenant God makes with you at your baptism, and why He holds out hope for you even if you have strayed from it ■ how easily you can deceive yourself and thus resist the very correction you need for salvation ■ how deeply God cherishes you, and how eager He is to forgive you when you turn to Him ■ the real purpose for which God called you, and what happens when you forget that purpose ■ the number one question you need to ask yourself to find your Father again ■ the pain of having a father who fails you, and what it means to have one who never will ■ the Father’s urgent warning of the suffering about to befall this world—including His own people—who refuse to repent toward Him ■ how anyone can draw close to God and spiritually thrive, even in this spiritually lukewarm and treacherous age.

The Father’s Love delivers a message every son of God needs to hear: Your Father yearns to be with you. It tells faithful sons how to draw even closer to Him. And it tells prodigal sons: You are not forgotten, you are not too far gone, and the time to come home is now, before it is too late. Your Father is watching the horizon, yearning for your return.

Order your free copy of ***The Father’s Love***.

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state—but *he was alive!* The moment he reached him, the father embraced and kissed his son! He was overwhelmed with joy! The fact that his son had returned indicated his repentant spirit, and the father, filled with compassion, was eager to forgive.

The son said, “Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son” (verse 21). The father didn’t even answer. He simply told his servants, “Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: FOR THIS MY SON WAS DEAD, AND IS ALIVE AGAIN; HE WAS LOST, AND IS FOUND” (verses 22-24).

THIS IS A TYPE OF GOD THE FATHER! This father didn’t act like a worldly father and say, *Didn’t I tell you that you were wrecking your life?* He saw his son returning in repentance, and he ran to him and showered kisses on him! He was so thankful to have him back home with the family! They had a great feast because the father was so happy.

This father responded exactly the way GOD THE FATHER responds to anyone who leaves His Church and then returns to Him in repentance! Our Father is profoundly moved by a son who repents, who has an attitude of, *I’ll be a hired servant—I’ll do anything. I’m just so thankful I can come back to your love and your mercy. I’m so thankful for your kisses and hugs because you are my Father!* The Father is waiting with open arms! That is the way He is; that is the depth of His love. He is a FATHER!

This father responded exactly the way God the Father responds to anyone who leaves His Church and then returns to Him in repentance. The Father is waiting with open arms. That is the depth of His love. He is a Father!

Yes, God is a LOVING FATHER! He is not *like* a father—HE IS THE ULTIMATE FATHER!

The parable of the prodigal son is the third of three parables recorded in Luke 15. In the first, the parable of the lost sheep, Jesus Christ said, “I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance” (verse 7). When you repent, you really fill God with excitement and joy! You can affect God’s feelings and His happiness simply by repenting when you need to repent! Your Father loves you so much.

The book you are now reading is addressed, in large part, to God’s prodigal sons—of whom there are many in this final era of God’s Church in this age of man, called the *Laodicean* era in Revelation 3:14-22.

If you have fallen away from God, KNOW THAT GOD LOVES YOU AND HAS NOT GIVEN UP ON YOU! He is longing for the day when you will *come to yourself*, repent, and make your way back to Him. He is watching the horizon for any sign of your return! Don’t delay. Humble yourself and go to Him so you can be reunited and once again enjoy His blessing and favor.

Christ’s parable continued. The man’s other son became upset at the celebration being held for his once wayward brother. He

angrily stayed away from the festivities (Luke 15:25-28). This part of the parable also teaches us about the love of God the Father.

The attentive father noticed and sought his older son out. He perceived there was a problem and “intreated” him. The Greek word *parakaleo* means to call to one’s side; to speak to in exhortation or comfort; to beg or beseech; to strive to appease by entreaty; to console, encourage and strengthen. This man didn’t demand, “You get in here and welcome your brother!” He said, *Son, what’s wrong? I can tell something is bothering you. Let me help you. This is a joyous time, and I want you to be able to share in it.* He gave him an opportunity to express his frustration.

The son told his father frankly, “Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf” (verses 29-30). This son didn’t react to repentance the way God does.

How did the father respond? He said, “SON, THOU ART EVER WITH ME, AND ALL THAT I HAVE IS THINE” (verse 31). What PROFOUND LOVE the father expressed! This son wasn’t being rebellious; he had simply lost some perspective and needed to change his attitude. His father helped him through, comforting and entreating him.

THIS IS GOD THE FATHER TALKING: *You are ever with me, and all that I have is yours!* THE FATHER GIVES HIS FAITHFUL CHILDREN EVERYTHING! Many scriptures show that the inheritance God has reserved for those who remain faithful during this Laodicean era—and those who repent *before* Christ’s Second Coming—is truly staggering! We will “INHERIT ALL THINGS” (Revelation 21:7)—ALL that the Father has to give! And He keeps us “ever with Him,” in the most intimate relationship, teaching us, comforting and entreating us, helping us overcome and grow.

This book is also for God’s *faithful* sons. We need to open ourselves up completely to our Father and listen and respond to His guidance and correction.

We ALL need to study and appreciate and emulate the wonderful qualities of our heavenly Father. God is love (1 John 4:8). He looks for the best in His children. He bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things (1 Corinthians 13:7). He wants the best for us. He wants to see us prosper and succeed. He wants to give to us; He truly is a GENEROUS GIVER! He wants to be a helper of our joy. God the Father yearns to draw His children into the closest relationship with Him. And He is perfect. He said, *If you, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more do I, in whom there is no evil?* (Matthew 7:11). God gave us the most precious thing possible: His own Son to pay for our sins so that when we repent and accept that sacrifice, He can open up His Family to us!

We must ALL come to think much more like our loving, perfect Father God.

Where we have gone off track, we need to be humble and contrite, repentant and obedient. Where we are selfish and small-minded, we need to grow in compassion and mercy, generosity and love.

It is my sincere prayer that this book helps *many* lost prodigal sons to BE FOUND—and many sons who are spiritually dead to be BROUGHT TO LIFE AGAIN! ■

IN LATE FEBRUARY, DONALD Trump had towering plans. Like a modern-day Alexander the Great, America's president unleashed the most powerful military ever assembled by man to crumble the land of Persia before him. In the very first strike, he and his Israeli ally had claimed the life of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khomeini. Soon, he sent most of Iran's navy, one of the most powerful of the region, to the bottom of the sea. His goals were lofty: ending Iran's sponsorship of its terrorist proxy empire, snuffing out its nuclear program, perhaps even instigating a revolution and confining the Islamic Republic to the ash heap of history.

Come August, the roles have reversed. Little, humbled Iran has held the world's greatest superpower hostage. America came to Iran with bombs, missiles and fighter jets. But none of that could

compare to one Iranian asset: the Strait of Hormuz. Iran didn't have to sink ships or bomb cities. All it had to do was render impassable the single narrow waterway connecting the Persian Gulf and its oil-producing nations to the world's markets. The price of oil shot to the sky like a Patriot missile. America and the West drained their already-low oil reserves to prevent their economies from crashing. Public discontent threatens to wipe out the Republican Party's majorities in the House of Representatives and the Senate this November.

President Trump, mindful of public opinion, now finds himself negotiating with Iran—not about a nuclear program or terror groups, but about opening Hormuz. The prewar status quo was Iran granting unconditional free passage to the world's oil tankers. Now it seems President Trump may not even be able to settle for that. He may

be forced to accept permanent Iranian control over the strait, even to the point of charging tolls.

What started as an ambitious display of American power is ending in humiliating defeat—because of Iran's control over one maritime chokepoint and its effects on the oil trade.

The *Philadelphia Trumpet* has been warning of Iran's control over world trade as a major trend in the Middle East for 15 years—far longer than most. We have been expecting Iran to implement this strategy for years. Why?

Because of Bible prophecy.

Daniel 11:40-43 prophesy of a “king of the north,” a “king of the south” and a clash between the two at “the time of the end.” Biblical prophecy and secular history reveal the king of the north to be a united European power led by Germany, the end-time version of the ancient Roman Empire. Based on

AT IRAN'S MERCY

How did this repressive, impoverished nation acquire enough power to hold world trade hostage?

BY MIHAILOS ZEKIC

prophecy and current events, *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry has pointed to *Iran* fulfilling the role of the king of the south—since 1992! Back then, Iran was an isolated pariah state, nowhere near the greatest power in the Middle East that it is today.

Since then, based on prophecy, Mr. Flurry has made many projections: Iran would gain control of Iraq; Iran would become the face of the Islamic world's war on Israel; Iran would gain control of Palestinian terror groups. Decades later, these have all come to pass. Mr. Flurry elaborates on the Daniel 11 prophecy in his free booklet *The King of the South*.

In 2011, he forecast that Iran would gain control over some major sea gates.

A Clue in Daniel 11

Daniel 11:42-43 reveal which nations the king of the north will conquer: "He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape. But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps." These nations are conquered by the king of the north at the same time as the king of the south. This implies these nations—Egypt, Libya and Ethiopia—are *allied* with the king of the south.

Mr. Flurry's article "[Libya and Ethiopia Reveal Iran's Military Strategy](#)" in the April 2011 *Trumpet* ([theTrumpet.com/8017](#)) explains how all three countries will eventually fall to Iran. Notice what he wrote in that article: "Why would Iran be so interested in getting some measure of control over Libya and Ethiopia? To me, the answer is intriguing.

"All you need to do is get a good map of the Middle East, with the emphasis on the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea. Then you can see why the king of the south, or radical Islam, is so interested in an alliance with or control over these two countries (as well as Egypt and Tunisia). They are on the two seas that comprise the most important trade route in the world!

"Whoever heavily influences or controls Ethiopia will undoubtedly also control the small areas of Eritrea and Djibouti on the Red Sea coastline. These areas only recently became independent of Ethiopia. Also, I believe the Bible view

is that these small areas are included as a part of Ethiopia.

"Controlling the Suez Canal is not enough. Egypt tried that in 1956, when Britain, France and Israel kicked it out in one attack. But what if you have radical Islamic nations along this sea trade route with real air power—including missiles?

"That could give Iran virtual control of the trade through those seas. Radical Islam could stop the flow of essential oil to the [United States] and Europe!"

Although many people were following events in the Middle East when Mr. Flurry wrote his article, it wasn't because they expected Iran to take over the region's maritime choke points. *Yet 15 years later, everyone can now see this has been Iran's strategy.*

How did Iran arrive at this critical point?

Revolution in Iran

Soon after Islamic revolutionaries overthrew Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi in 1979 and established a new Iranian regime, Iraq under Saddam Hussein invaded and launched the 1980–1988 Iran-Iraq War. Both nations were major oil exporters that relied on the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow waterway that connects the Persian Gulf to the Indian Ocean and the wider world. The war bogged down in a stalemate, and Iran's new leadership decided to break it by attacking Iraqi oil platforms and cargo ships. Its most drastic step was to plant mines in the Strait of Hormuz, effectively removing it as a global shipping route. After an American naval vessel hit one of those mines in 1988, President Ronald Reagan ordered U.S. forces to strike Iranian oil platforms and pressure Iran's ships back into harbor.

Iran saw that its navy could never withstand rivals like the U.S. So, as Michael Connell writes in the U.S. Institute of Peace's *Iran Primer*, Iran "developed an asymmetric strategy based on avoiding direct or sustained confrontations at sea. It instead relies on surprise attacks, ambushes and hit-and-run operations. Rather than inflict a decisive defeat, Iran's maritime forces would seek to inflict enough casualties to raise the cost of victory to an unpalatable level."

In its standoffs with the U.S. in the 1990s and 2000s, Iran threatened to close the Strait of Hormuz but could not

follow through. It also lacked the capacity to seriously challenge freedom of navigation through other regional maritime choke points. But this all changed—starting with the 2011 Arab Spring.

Bab el-Mandeb

In 2011, nearly the entire Arab world was rocked by revolutions against their aging, authoritarian systems. The governments of Tunisia, Libya and Egypt fell. Syria became mired in civil war. Yemen's dictator resigned. In early 2015, the Houthis, an Iran-backed terror group, drove the Yemeni government from Sanaa, the capital city. To this day, the Houthis, an Islamist theocracy, govern Yemen's western half, facing the Red Sea.

2015 was the year Iran gained real power to begin disrupting world trade.

In April 2015, Mr. Flurry wrote in "[Iran Gets a Stranglehold on the Middle East](#)" ([theTrumpet.com/12459](#)): "The Houthi takeover in Yemen proves that Iran is implementing a bold strategy to control the vital sea lane from the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea.

"We need to understand the gravity of this new situation in Yemen! ... Now that Iran controls Yemen, it can virtually close or open this spigot on Middle East oil bound for Europe. And Europe is taking notice!"

Since then, the Houthis have consolidated their power, effectively governing their own country in western Yemen for over a decade. They have amassed an arsenal of expensive, sophisticated weaponry, in large part because of Iranian sponsorship.

When the Houthis declared a blockade on Israel in solidarity with Hamas after the Oct. 7, 2023, terror attack, Iran put that military power to the test. The Houthis declared that they would attack all merchant shipping in the Bab el-Mandeb strait heading to Israel. The result: Shipping through the Bab el-Mandeb virtually halted. Few corporations and insurers wanted to risk sending their ships through a zone explicitly threatened by terrorists, even



KHALED ZIAO / AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

if they weren't shipping specifically to Israel. Most ships sailing to Europe opted to sail all the way around Africa, adding roughly two weeks of sailing time and hundreds of thousands of dollars in additional insurance premiums.

Evidence shows Iran was directly helping the Houthis. The *Wall Street Journal* claimed on Dec. 22, 2023, that an Iranian spy ship was supplying the Houthis with the intelligence needed to help target its strikes: "Many ships sailing through [the Bab el-Mandeb] have been trying to avoid the Houthis by turning their radios off. The spy ship's data enabled the Houthis to work around this." One of the *Journal's* sources stated, "The Houthis don't have

doesn't impact oil shipments to Asia; North America has closer, alternate supplies. Making the Red Sea impassable hurts *Europe* most of all.

On February 19, in a small but highly symbolic operation, Europe launched Operation Aspides to keep the Bab el-Mandeb open. Belgian, French, German, Greek and Italian navies all took part in the EUNAVFOR operation, shunning earlier requests from the U.S. and the United Kingdom to join their own mission against the Houthis.

Strait of Hormuz

Israel and the United States began bombing Iran on February 28, with the most active part of the conflict ending on April 8. Iran countered the onslaught with drones and missiles targeting American assets and Israeli civilians, killing scores but failing to deter continued American and Israeli strikes.

Throughout the war's active fighting from February to April, the Strait of Hormuz became impassable due to its location in an active war zone. In March, Iran had reportedly tried to enforce an unofficial toll by charging foreign ships in cryptocurrency. On April 7, Iran announced the strait would open for tran-

sit—*subject to coordination with Iranian authorities*. Before this point, shipping through the strait had been governed by international treaty permitting free passage without Iranian involvement.

On April 7, Iran essentially declared that it owns the Strait of Hormuz and could do whatever it wanted with it—whether the rest of the world liked it or not. On June 11, it made good on that threat, declaring the strait "closed to the passage of all vessels, including oil tankers and commercial ships, and any traffic will be targeted." Using the strait without Iran's permission means risking missile attacks.

Before the war, roughly a quarter of the world's oil exports transited the Strait of Hormuz, along with about a third of the world's fertilizer exports and a fifth of its liquefied natural gas exports. Petrostates like Iraq, Kuwait and Qatar

have almost no other option for shipping their exports. (Others, like Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, have pipelines bypassing the strait.) At the time of this writing, hundreds of ships remain stranded in the Persian Gulf, unwilling to risk leaving. American naval missions to guarantee safe passage have done little to change this.

The cost to the global economy has been immense. After February 28, the price of Brent crude repeatedly spiked above \$100 a barrel—over a 33 percent jump from prewar prices. The global fertilizer trade is also severely hampered, stirring fears of global crop shortages and food price hikes.

The tangible effects are far-reaching. The war is becoming increasingly unpopular with Americans and threatens to hurt President Trump and the Republican Party in the midterm elections in November.

Iran has responded to having its supreme leader assassinated, navy sunk, economy crashed and alliances cut by not only bombing shipping in the strait but insisting that it will exert *more* power over it, not less. That is a remarkable fulfillment of Bible prophecy!

Horn of Africa

At the southern Red Sea, Yemen is not the only country where Iran has influence. It also has influence on the other side of the Bab el-Mandeb, in Africa.

Most of the Horn of Africa coast belongs to Somalia, which has been a failed state since 1991 when its central government collapsed. Rival governments and factions now control their own territories. One of these factions is al-Shabaab, a jihadist terrorist group actively fighting U.S. forces in Somalia.

Al-Shabaab is a proxy of Iran: It reportedly receives funding from Iran as well as access to Iranian ports, in violation of United Nations sanctions. Reports suggest Iran uses al-Shabaab to acquire weapons from the rest of Africa to sell to the Houthis.

Also on the coast is Eritrea. Often dubbed "Africa's North Korea," this nation is one of the world's most secretive and dystopian nations, ruled by President Isaias Afwerki since 1993. Because of his tyranny and oppression, which allegedly includes state-sponsored

A vessel lies wounded in Yemen's Port of Mokha after a Houthi attack on August 9 killed at least 11 people. The Houthis are deeply connected with Iran.



the radar technology to target the ships. They need Iranian assistance. Without it, the missiles would just drop in the water."

Mr. Flurry commented on this in his February 2024 article "[The Battle for the Red Sea](https://theTrumpet.com/28737)" (theTrumpet.com/28737): "The Houthis are sponsored and directed by Iran. They would never be making this confrontational move if Iran didn't tell them to. ... Iran has been preparing for this for years, and they showed just how much power they have at their command. ... Iran is PUSHING. Its foreign policy is aggressive and provocative. This is exactly what Bible prophecy says we should expect from Iran."

Mr. Flurry has identified the "push" by the king of the south against the king of the north (Daniel 11:40), as the aggressive actions by Iran-led radical Islam against German- and Catholic-led Europe. Shutting the Bab el-Mandeb

slavery and torture, most Western governments shun cooperation with Eritrea. What little information that can be discerned suggests Afwerki is turning to Iran for sponsorship.

Eritrea harbored an Iranian spy ship from 2016 to 2024. It has refused to accept an Israeli ambassador since 2020, prompting Israel to close its embassy in 2022. When the Houthis were actively attacking ships in the Red Sea, Afwerki

The Future

Aarathi Krishnan, CEO of RAKSHA Intelligence Futures, told the *Trumpet* that Iran's control of trade routes is "a very, very specific strategy. Iran knows that they cannot win a military fight against the U.S. ... But what they can do is hit the pain points that not just the U.S. but the world rely on. And it's genius."

When Mr. Flurry was speaking in the 1990s of Iran fulfilling the role of the

certainly weakened Iran in some key areas. But its proxy empire remains intact. As Krishnan told the *Trumpet*, "What we're all learning from this journey is we've underestimated this country, and their ability to maintain this stranglehold is not something we should underestimate."

Stranglehold is the term Mr. Flurry used in his 2015 article on the Houthis. Secular analysts can see that is exactly what Iran has accomplished with its proxy network. This stranglehold is about to become even stronger.

Notice Daniel 11:42-43 again: "He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape. But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps."

"This prophecy indicates we are about to see a far-reaching change in Egyptian politics!" Mr. Flurry writes in *The King of the South*. "We have been saying since 1994 that this would occur. Look at Egypt today, and you see the nation's foreign policy and political orientation changing in a way that threatens to transform the entire region! ... So you need to WATCH LIBYA AND ETHIOPIA. They are about to fall under the heavy influence or control of Iran, the king of the south. That is why they are subdued in the king of the north's victory."

Egypt, Libya and Ethiopia are strategic and influential countries. None of them is part of Iran's proxy network—yet. But all three are highly unstable, and Iran is proving resilient, ambitious and aggressive.

Egypt had its own Arab Spring revolution in 2011, after which the Islamist Muslim Brotherhood took over for one year and immediately began working more closely with Iran. The Egyptian military uprooted the Muslim Brotherhood in a 2013 coup, but Islamism remains popular with many Egyptians, as does the Muslim Brotherhood, despite being outlawed as a terror group. And the current government is struggling to stay afloat amid financial crises.

Libya and Ethiopia, meanwhile, are recovering from traumatizing civil wars. The root issues of both conflicts haven't been settled, and the



allowed them to attack shipping in Eritrean waters with apparent impunity. Reports suggest he allowed the Houthis to use his territory for training camps and weapons-smuggling routes.

Afwerki is not an Islamist. His regime has roots in Maoism, and the majority of Eritreans are Orthodox Christian. His cooperation with Iran and the Houthis may be due to expediency or pressure rather than ideological alignment.

Iran's control over the Horn of Africa is not as strong as its control over Yemen or the Strait of Hormuz. But it has a significant presence that it could reinforce in the future. Daniel 11:43 mentions Ethiopia as part of Iran's proxy network. Somalia, meanwhile, is right next door.

king of the south, some analysts and leaders did recognize it as a potentially problematic country. Some thought that Iran could use leverage over the Strait of Hormuz to disrupt world trade, but no one predicted that it would implement a strategy to control *all* of the Middle East's important trade choke points. Even in 2011, when Mr. Flurry wrote his pivotal article "Libya and Ethiopia Reveal Iran's Military Strategy," this analysis was highly unusual. Yet in 2026, it is clear this *has* been Iran's strategy—in the making for years.

Yet there is far more in Daniel 11 to be fulfilled. Iran isn't done yet.

Iran looks degraded right now. The U.S.-Israeli bombing campaign has

countries' internationally recognized governments are weak. One of Ethiopia's main cross-border security threats is al-Shabaab, the same terror group Iran backs in Somalia.

Iran has a "stranglehold" on the global oil trade with the trade corridors it already controls. What happens if these three countries join Iran's bloc?

The rest of Daniel 11 and 12 show that this crisis over Iran and world trade leads to a global "time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time ..." (Daniel 12:1). Jesus Christ refers to this time as "great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. And if those days had not been shortened, no human being

would be saved ..." (Matthew 24:21-22; Revised Standard Version).

THIS IS WHAT IS AT STAKE WITH IRAN'S CONTROL OF SEA GATES AND ITS IMPACT ON WORLD TRADE. This prophecy is well on its way to complete fulfillment.

Bible prophecy doesn't end with this crisis, however. Matthew 24:22 concludes: "but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened" (RSV). Daniel 12:1 continues: "at that time thy people shall be delivered ..." or *rescued*. Verse 2 links their redemption with the resurrection of God's people, which occurs at Christ's Second Coming (see 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17).

Associating Iran's control of the Red Sea with the Second Coming may seem odd. But the Bible records so many

geopolitical maneuvers *because* they are a series of events culminating in Christ's return. When you see Iran fulfill its prophetic role, then you know the Second Coming is near. You know you can trust Bible prophecy. More than that, you can have a part in preparing for Christ's return and be spared from the terrible events that precede it. ■

Modern Iran was prophesied in your Bible

Gerald Flurry's booklet ***The King of the South*** explains in detail. Order your free copy today.



Giving Up the Rock



B RITAIN FOUNDED ITS EMPIRE ON ITS SEA GATES. THIS SUMMER, it yielded one of its last and most important such gates without a shot being fired: the Rock of Gibraltar.

At midnight on July 14, border controls between Gibraltar and Spain ceased. Police and customs posts along the border were demolished. "The last wall in continental Europe has fallen," gushed Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez.

The Strait of Gibraltar is the only western passage out of the Mediterranean Sea. The United States Navy regularly sends its nuclear submarines through the 8-mile-wide strait. One vessel passes through the strait every four minutes, five times the frequency at the Suez Canal and 10 times that at the Panama Canal. Without Gibraltar, access to the entire southern coast of Europe, northern Africa and, by extension, the western coasts of the Middle East is limited or, in the most drastic scenario, shut down.

The Royal Navy still maintains a naval base there, so the Spanish do not yet control Gibraltar militarily. On paper, it's still British territory. But it is guarded by Spanish border guards. British citizens must show their passports to enter, while Spanish citizens are free to come and go. Britain is signaling that its resolve is gone and it is backing down.

Britain's government thinks that such loss of control doesn't matter. But dramatic recent events in the Strait of Hormuz and the Red Sea should wake it up.

Nearly 4,000 years ago, God promised the patriarch Abraham spiritual salvation for the whole world through Jesus

Christ, who would be born of his line. But what even many Christians do not understand is that He also promised Abraham's descendants national greatness. This separate, physical promise included this specific detail: These descendants would "possess the gate of his enemies" and "the gate of those which hate them" (Genesis 22:16-18; 24:60).

"A gate is a narrow passage of entrance or exit," Herbert W. Armstrong explained in his book *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*. "When speaking nationally, a 'gate' would be such a pass as the Panama Canal, the Suez Canal, the Strait of Gibraltar. ... We must look for a people forming more than one nation—yet all one people, children of Abraham—either now or in history who possess the sea gateways of the world, or we must deny the Word of God."

Mr. Armstrong proved that God kept His promise and made Abraham's descendants into a great nation and company of nations (Genesis 35:11). Further, he proved that the Bible shows the most powerful nations among those descendants are America and Britain. One of those proofs is that these two brother nations gained control of every major "gate" on Earth!

He also made a clear, bold prediction: Britain and America would lose control of those sea gates. "[W]e have lost most of them, most recently, the Panama Canal—and it appears that soon Gibraltar, too, will be lost," he wrote (*ibid*).

On what evidence? In Deuteronomy 28:52, God warned these descendants of Israel that, rather than possess the gates of their enemies, their enemies "shall besiege thee in all thy gates."

Britain is in the process of handing the Chagos Islands to Mauritius, which has never owned them and has no history there. It has already surrendered control of Hong Kong, the Suez Canal, the Cape of Good Hope, Malta, Papua New Guinea, Timor, the West Indies, Cyprus, the Gulf of Guinea, the Maldives, Sri Lanka, Singapore and the Gulf of Aden. These gates are politically, culturally, economically and militarily crucial, even in times of peace. In times of war, they make the difference between life and death.

RICHARD PALMER



Total War in



That year may be a turning point far greater than 1939.

BY JOSUÉ MICHELS

GERMANY IS READY TO “FIGHT tonight” against Russia, Inspector of the German Air Force Holger Neumann told the *Telegraph* in an interview published June 15: “‘Fight tonight’ means if someone calls me now and says, ‘We have the following situation here, we have to be ready now’—we are ready. We will go in with everything we have in Germany, the Air Force, but also in NATO, to defend our country, our values, our population, and our alliance.”

To “go in with everything we have” means to wage total war.

Germany’s military leaders have been making preparations with urgency. They are ready to fight at any moment. But the



NEUMANN

Germans aren’t expecting to fight Russia tonight. They are preparing for this conflict with a certain date in mind: 2029.

“We have to be prepared. ... We must be ready to fight,” Lt. Gen. Christian Freuding, Germany’s army chief, told *Politico* at the ILA Aerospace Show in Berlin, held June 10 to 14. “2029 is not a German timeline. It’s NATO-agreed intelligence. All 32 NATO partners agree that Russia might have the capability to invade a NATO partner country in 2029.”

Preparing for 2029

“You should draw a line in the calendar for 2029!” Bundeswehr Inspector General Carsten Breuer advised young soldiers at the Command and Staff



College in 2024. For two years now Germany has been warning about a possible confrontation with Russia in 2029.

At the time, the year seemed random. But Germany’s political and military leaders have been working toward it as a hard deadline.

In 2025, Breuer ordered the Bundeswehr to be fully equipped with weapons and materiel by 2029.

Germany is projected to have a military budget of at least €150 billion (US\$174 billion) by 2029, roughly double France’s projected budget.

The European Union is working on a system of 290 satellites, originally planned to be ready by 2031. But on January 26, European Defense Commissioner Andrius Kubilius said he now wants it ready by 2029.

Germany revealed plans in May to invest \$12 billion in developing its civilian infrastructure for military purposes by 2029.



satellites with jamming capabilities are set to be launched into space as early as 2027. According to confidential documents, they are expected to be “combat-ready in space” by 2029.

We don’t know exactly what Germany is planning for that year, but the preparations and the secrecy suggest something big.

Total War in 2029?

On June 5, 2024, Defense Minister Boris Pistorius said, “We must not believe that [Russian President Vladimir] Putin will stop at Ukraine’s borders if he gets that far. We must be *kriegstüchtig* [ready for war] by 2029.”

The word *kriegstüchtig* is hard to translate, but it is the same word Nazi propaganda chief Joseph Goebbels used in 1944 when he said: “I promise

the German people to leave nothing undone over the next few weeks to make the homeland *kriegstüchtig* in every way.”

Germany had waged intense warfare since 1939, but by 1943 and 1944, the country shifted to what Goebbels called *total war*.

On May 20 of this year, the German federal government adopted the *Key Principles for a Civil Protection Pact*. It reads: “Civil protection today faces its greatest challenges in decades. ... This requires the rigorous implementation of plans and preparations for total defense [*gesamtverteidigung*], which closely integrates military and civil defense.”

Gesamtverteidigung doesn’t have the same Nazi vibes as *kriegstüchtig*. But in practice, preparing for total war, total defense or *gesamtverteidigung* means the same thing. The government is preparing every segment of German society for war for the first time since the Nazi era.

Will Germany really use its military preparations defensively? At the *Trumpet*, we rely on the sure word of Bible prophecy to answer such questions (2 Peter 1:19).

Bible prophecies reveal that Germany and Russia will clash. (You can prove these prophecies in our free booklet *Russia and China in Prophecy*.) But the Bible also clearly shows that Germany and Russia will not clash until *after* Germany has triggered World War III in its quest for global dominance.

Germany claims that Russia could launch an attack on NATO territory by 2029. This might be true. But Germany will not wait until Russia attacks.

“Beware! Germany is a country fertile in military surprises,” Winston Churchill warned before World War II. If the Germans truly expect to fight Russia in 2029, they may seek to accomplish their other military conquests before that clash.

What Prophecy Reveals

In Daniel 2 and 7 and Revelation 13 and 17, the Bible prophesies the rise of four world-ruling empires. You can read about them in *The Proof of the Bible*, by late theologian Herbert W. Armstrong, to whom God revealed these prophecies.

Comparing these prophecies with the corresponding history of world empires, we know that the last one is about to rise and start the prophesied Great Tribulation, nuclear World War III (Matthew 24:21-22). This will be a German-led resurrection of the Holy Roman Empire composed of 10 kings (Revelation 17:12).

The government is preparing every segment of German society for war for the first time since the Nazi era.

A key scripture in Daniel 11:40 reveals the war that will trigger this conflict: a clash between “the king of the north,” which is German-led Europe, and “the king of the south,” radical Islam led by Iran.

Even after it has been decimated militarily by Israel and the U.S., Iran

Germany plans to incorporate unmanned collaborative combat aircraft drones into its air force by 2029, as announced in May.

Germany canceled contracts to build the largest class of German warships since World War II in June, in favor of buying eight cheaper multipurpose frigates from Germany’s ThyssenKrupp, to be ready by 2029.

The “Bundeswehr’s Defense Structure 2029” was presented to the legislature’s Defense Committee in June. Like the overall *Concept for Military Defense*, the document is classified. Only general details are known, such as plans to increase active-duty troops and reservists to 460,000.

Germany’s military will use a \$41 billion budget to launch 1,200 satellites in the next few years, *Handelsblatt* reported in July. According to a July investigation by WDR, NDR and SZ, four German test

continues to hold the Strait of Hormuz captive. The U.S. wants out of this war, and Bible prophecy shows that Europe will move in. This could happen within months.

This coming clash with Iran will provide Germany an open door to gain control of the Middle East. “But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many” (verse 44).

It is this verse that makes Germany’s urgent, large-scale, military-civilian war preparations so prophetically relevant.

“The king of the north is disturbed by the power it sees Russia and China amassing!” *Russia and China in Prophecy* explains. “This could well refer to Europe recognizing that Asian powers are about to conquer America. Rather than allow that—which would leave Europe flanked in both hemispheres by an Asian alliance—Europe makes the first move.”

This reveals Germany’s true military urgency. It recognizes Russia’s and China’s military ambitions to conquer the U.S. But instead of preparing to come to the aid of the U.S., Germany

prepares to strike the U.S. first in an unprecedented betrayal!

Many end-time Bible prophecies are concerned with this military conquest. The year 2029 could be relevant.

Isaiah 23, Ezekiel 5 and 27 reveal that Germany will be working *together* with Russia and China and aligned nations to economically weaken the U.S. This economic siege will take place during the first year of the prophesied “Great Tribulation.” However, Russia and China will not be able to take military advantage of a weakened United States, because Germany, as head of a united Europe, will strike first!

In his May 2025 article “**Germany Is Arming for World War III**” (*theTrumpet.com/32060*), *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry explained the prophecies showing that God will use Germany, not Russia and China, to punish the modern descendants of biblical Israel—primarily the U.S. and Britain—and explains why He does that.

In Isaiah 10:5-6, God says: “O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation. I will send him against an hypocritical nation,

and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets.”

Assyria is modern Germany. The “hypocritical nation” refers mainly to the U.S. and Britain, the modern descendants of the ancient Israelites, who are rebelling against the God of Israel!

“Right now, we are witnessing Germany begin its final preparations to start this war!” Mr. Flurry wrote (*ibid*).

Will the actual military invasion occur in 2029, or even before? We don’t know, but other biblical prophecies indicate that it could happen around 2029. The Bible specifically reveals who will be ruling the U.S. when these prophecies begin to come to pass.

In Amos 7, God is recorded saying: “And the high places of Isaac shall be desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste; and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword” (verse 9). Mr. Flurry has identified who the end-time Jeroboam is in Bible prophecy, and his term ends on Jan. 20, 2029.

We could see some unexpected turns, such as a third term for President

READY TO FIGHT TONIGHT

“Speed is of the essence now,” Lt. Gen. Christian Freuding said. “We must improve our capabilities for the ‘fight tonight’ every day as the German Army.” A few examples highlight Germany’s urgency:



FUNDS: In 2022, Germany created a special fund of over \$100 billion to top up its defense budget. In 2025, it changed its constitution to allow additional hundreds of billions of dollars financed by debt.

USING NATO:

In 2023, Germany organized “Air Defender 23,” the largest air force exercises in the history of NATO. Germany has taken the lead in exercises and in NATO command structures.

“OPERATION PLAN GERMANY”:

Bild broke the news in 2024 of a “secret document” that outlines the path toward “robust, resilient and war-ready defense architecture.” The over 1,000-page strategy paper is

titled “Operation Plan Germany.” Only broad details are known, but the German military has started preparing civilian companies for war. Part of the plan entails moving 800,000 troops and equipment from various allied countries within a short time.

PLOWSHARES INTO SWORDS:

German arms manufacturers are taking over civilian production lines. In February 2025, Franco-German arms manufacturer



Like the German soldiers, we “should draw a line in the calendar for 2029.” But by no means should we wait till then to turn to God.

Donald Trump. But the indications are mounting that 2029 will be a critical year in Bible prophecy.

Mr. Armstrong warned about this prophesied resurrection of the Roman Empire, the beast of Revelation 17, in a 1934 issue of his *Plain Truth* magazine. Nineteen years later, in 1953, he began taking this message around the world along with the proclamation of the good news of the coming Kingdom of God.

God measures time in 19-year cycles. The Hebrew calendar revolves around 19-year time cycles when the solar and lunar calendars sync up with each other.

Mr. Armstrong and now Mr. Flurry have paid particular attention to this

19-year time cycle from 1934, to 1953, to 1972, to 1991, to 2010. In 2001 Mr. Flurry wrote: “Will the Great Tribulation begin in 2010? The Gulf War started on Jan. 16, 1991. Will a much greater war begin when the fourth 19-year time cycle ends? Perhaps. I believe we should be aware of these dates.”

The Great Tribulation did not start in 2010 when the current 19-year time cycle began. But Germany is preparing for a major world war dated for the very first year of the next 19-year time cycle: 2029. That year incidentally will also mark the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Philadelphia Church of God.

We need to be aware of these dates. Like the German soldiers, we “should draw a line in the calendar for 2029.” But by no means should we wait till then to turn to God.

Germany’s military preparations should give us urgency. But at the same

time, we need to realize that God is the one who is bringing about the fulfillment of these prophecies.

Revelation 17:17 reads: “For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will” In Isaiah 10:5, God calls Assyria, modern-day Germany, “the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation.” And in Jeremiah 1:12 God says, “I will hasten my word to perform it.”

God may be putting the year 2029 in Germany’s mind to fulfill His will.

Only God the Father knows the day and the hour of the Great Tribulation and of Jesus Christ’s return (Matthew 24:36), but the time is coming when we can begin the countdown in terms of days (Daniel 12). Germany’s urgency should likewise give us urgency in seeing that God is hastening the fulfillment of His prophecies. ■



Modern Germany’s first conquest

Germany’s military preparations began in 1991 when it began to methodically break up Yugoslavia. To know where this is leading, request our free booklet **Germany’s Conquest of the Balkans**.

KNDS acquired the Alstom train factory in Görlitz. Instead of building trains, the factory will build tank components. Rheinmetall announced repurposing its automotive plants in Berlin and Neuss to produce military equipment. Deutz AG, whose military business previously generated only tens of millions of euros in annual revenue, has rapidly expanded its defense activities. This past July, it announced plans to acquire a military vehicle manufacturer for about \$1.8 billion.



GERMAN MILITARY

START-UPS: Munich-based drone-maker Helsing raised \$1.8 billion in a Series E round on July 13 and is now valued at

\$18 billion. Helsing produces thousands of attack drones for Ukraine and improves them with real battlefield data. It also deploys AI-driven drone swarms underwater. Bavaria’s Quantum Systems, which manufactures reconnaissance drones, raised \$1.2 billion in a Series D round, valuing the company at around \$8 billion.

FIRST FOREIGN BASE SINCE WORLD WAR II: Lithuania collaborated with Germany in

World War II; last year the first permanent military deployment of postwar Germany was set up there. In June, the new German armored brigade in Lithuania held its first combat exercise.

DEVELOPING A NUCLEAR

ARSENAL: Germany already has access to U.S. nuclear weapons stationed in its territory, and now it is pursuing access to French ones as well. In March, French President Emmanuel Macron announced that France will guarantee that if Germany is struck by nuclear weapons, France will strike back with nuclear weapons. An unverified Russian intelligence report claimed that Germany has begun extensive preparations to produce its own bomb, which it has the technical capacity to produce in a matter of months. ■





When Will Germany Explode?

Runaway immigration, economic turmoil, political deadlock, repressed freedoms—how long will Germans put up with it? **BY RICHARD PALMER**

GERMANY MONITORED, ARRESTED, convicted and sentenced Abdul Ballout for the crime of “preparing a serious act of violence endangering the state.” And then decided to let him go—deferring his prison sentence for six months.

On July 25, he drove his van into a crowd at a pride parade in Berlin, killing one and injuring 29.

The decision to set free a convicted terrorist was routine, common and completely moronic. But complain about it, and you could find your house raided by police.

Welcome to modern Germany, where terrorism is rising and the worst political censorship in the Western world attacks dissent, all while the wheels fall off the economy.

“Everyday life in Germany has become a pressure cooker. The question is when that pressure cooker is going to blow up, and what forms that explosion will take.”

This verdict by Dr. Sven R. Larson in the *European Conservative* in June is worth taking seriously.

Open Season

Car ramming has become Germany’s signature atrocity—an easy way to kill a crowd without using a firearm.

This attack made a bigger splash than others because of its target: a homosexual pride parade. Germany’s media generally want to keep quiet about these terrorist attacks. But pride parades are essentially modern religious festivals, and such attacks cannot be tolerated.

The Social Democrats, part of the governing coalition, responded to a jihadist massacre by proposing an amendment to the German constitution—one that bans discrimination against homosexuals. It won’t do anything to prevent the attack, and everyone knows it.

Ballout’s is not a one-off case. Germany’s first high-profile vehicle attack

occurred in 2016, when an Islamist terrorist killed 11 people by driving a truck into a Christmas market. In 2024, a Saudi national drove into a Christmas market in Magdeburg, killing six and injuring more than 200. The last two similar attacks, in March 2025 and May this year, appear to have been carried out by mentally ill Germans with no links to Islamist terror. About 10 other Islamic ramming attacks have occurred in France and the United Kingdom since 2007.

Yet it’s not just vehicular crime that is escalating. Around 16 percent of people in Germany don’t have German citizenship—yet they account for 34 percent of crime suspects and 53 percent of suspects for group rape. Around 900,000 Syrians live in Germany, and 115,000 of them were identified as suspects by police in 2024.

Syrians and Afghans in Germany commit crimes at a rate 16 times and 14 times higher than the average German. In some states, half of all violent crime suspects are non-German.

The impact on a high-trust society is huge. Germany’s rail system, for example, was literally built on the assumption that most would be honest and buy a ticket. There were no checkpoints or turnstiles, just occasional inspections. The influx of people who play by different rules at the station, in business, in welfare and in dealings with German women and girls means that the trusting society many Germans grew up in is gone.

Yet more migrants are poised to pour in. At the end of July, tens of thousands stormed the border fences in Ceuta, Spain’s tiny North African enclave. By the time the surge crested, nearly as many people had crossed in 72 hours as live in the city itself. Italy responded by reintroducing border checks between the two countries, effectively suspending the Schengen Agreement between them. Germany extended its border checks.

Germans are right to be worried about migrant crime. Yet no one in government is taking these concerns seriously.

Manufacturing Crisis

At the same time that Germans see more and more of their tax euros going to benefit a growing migrant population, they are facing major economic headaches.

Volkswagen’s executives want to close

four German factories and eliminate 100,000 jobs, 15 percent of the company's global workforce. Reuters said it would be "the largest restructuring in automotive industry history." It is a significant move for a company that has never closed a factory in Germany.

Worse, leaks from within the company revealed an internal poll of nine members of VW's management and supervisory boards. Six said they do not believe the company has a future. Its shares are down 25 percent so far this year.

Other firms may follow suit. The president of Germany's automotive industry association warned that Europe had around 35 factories too many. The proliferation of cheap Chinese electric vehicles has drastically reduced demand for German cars.

BMW announced on July 29 that it too would cut jobs, eliminating 8,000 positions. Porsche has announced 9,000 job cuts.

Germany's steel federation warned in May that the sector is at a "turning point" due to high energy costs and declining demand. In April, the government was forced to halve its economic growth forecast for the year to just 0.5 percent—compared to 2 percent for the United States.

Germany lost 127,300 industrial jobs (2.3 percent) in the past year, according to a May study by consultancy EY. The EY report also highlighted a 10 percent drop in foreign businesses launching projects in Germany.

"In Germany, the high tax burden, high labor costs, expensive energy and at the same time a paralyzing bureaucracy are slowing down investment events," warned Henrik Ahlers, head of EY Germany. He added that Germany's "inability to reform" gave it a global reputation. "Unfortunately, not much remains of the image as a strong quality location and economical rock in the storm," he said.

This is not just making Germans poorer; it is stripping them of the one thing they are permitted to be proud of. Pre-1945 history is off limits. So national pride rests on the postwar economic miracle and the factories that built it. Those factories are closing.

Silenced Complaints

Germany's migration and economic problems have festered for years.

Germans are furious—and the state has responded by criminalizing the fury.

Section 188 of the German Criminal Code, passed in 2021, makes it a crime to insult a politician on social media. Prosecutors launched almost 4,800 cases under this law last year. Acquittal is no relief: The process itself is the punishment.

Police raided a man's house after he called former Vice Chancellor Robert

Germany's migration and economic problems have festered for years. Germans are furious—and the state has responded by criminalizing the fury.

Habeck a "moron." One man was fined over \$2,300 for calling Chancellor Friedrich Merz a liar. Another had to pay \$115 for calling a politician a "pompous fool." Another was prosecuted for posting a meme showing Merz as Pinocchio; his case was dropped after a public outcry.

The pressure and the censorship have spread into the cultural arena. German filmmaker Uwe Boll's new film, *Citizen Vigilante*, re-stages real migrant attacks in graphic detail. Then it hands the vengeance to a blond-haired, blue-eyed former American soldier who hunts down the killers and the liberal authorities who let them in.

"If you look at what happened in Hamburg, where the rapists walked free without any penalty, the coverage in the media was like, *Oh, the poor perpetrators*," Boll said. "It's as if we're living in a completely insane and absurd political environment, especially in Europe, where people have completely lost track. There is a huge difference between so-called 'hate speech' and stabbing people in the neck. But facts don't matter anymore."

Boll says he is not encouraging people to take matters into their own hands. Instead, in the words of his protagonist to Interpol: "If the politicians who pay you do not fight against

Islamism and the woke left, the population will soon do as I do and carry out a great cleanup themselves."

German authorities continue to try to cover up the discussion about migrant crime. In this case, Germany's film-rating board initially refused to give *Citizen Vigilante* any age classification, which effectively stopped its distribution within Germany. After a backlash, they issued an 18+ (roughly equivalent to an "NC-17") rating.

There's a lot of content in *Citizen Vigilante* that shouldn't be in any movie. But by blocking this one movie while allowing others that are just as violent, the classification board made clear that they were trying to block its political message.

A more savory film project was a documentary and book produced by investigative journalist Liv von Boetticher, based on her interviews with German police officers. Once the cameras weren't rolling and they were off the record, the "pretty much unanimous opinion was: It's getting worse and worse," she said.

One police officer told her, "The Germany we know is disappearing." Another said, "In Germany, it is open season for robbery and rape."

"Even the most serious crimes often have surprisingly few consequences," she was told. "Far too often, perpetrators more or less get away with it." "Some police officers have even told me, quite literally, 'We've already lost this country,' or 'This country is finished.'"

Germany has major problems, and even the police feel they can't talk about it in front of the cameras.

'A Perfect Storm'

It's this lack of any kind of outlet that prompted Dr. Larson's warning: "[I]f anything, increasingly hard-line political persecution will continue to lead Germany into the dark realm of tyranny."

Berlin, he predicts, will ignore the storm and fight its symptoms instead: rising support for the Alternative für Deutschland (AfD), collapsing police morale, permanent budget deficits.

"The German elite's methods of suppression will become harsher and more unforgiving," Larson warns. "A government that transitions from democracy and freedom to totalitarianism and suppression of dissent will sooner or later,

with eerie predictability, try to dictate the nation's economy in the same way it dictates politics and public opinion.

"At that point, Germany's political decline will escalate to an economic implosion."

Only one party will discuss any of this. The AfD wants to cut migration, deregulate the economy, and repeal Section 188—the three grievances the coalition refuses to touch. It is now close to an absolute majority in at least one German state. As every other party flounders, the AfD keeps growing.

It is also a party whose top leaders deliberately use Nazi slogans, demand the right to be proud of the "accomplishments" of Wehrmacht soldiers, and want to end commemoration of the Holocaust. German voters know all this. Enough of them no longer care. That is the true measure of the pressure: A country that spent 80 years building safeguards against exactly this is ready to hand over power to a Nazi-sympathetic party in exchange for a secure border.

Those who know Germany well have warned of a potential explosion for decades. Niklas Frank, son of the Nazi war criminal Hans Frank, told the BBC in 2017: "As long as our economy is great, and as long as we make money, everything is very democratic. But let's wait, and hopefully not see, if we have 5 to 10 years of heavy economic problems."

A Boiling Pot

Trumpet editor in chief Gerald Flurry and his predecessor Herbert W. Armstrong have warned about this change in Germany for even longer. "If a real crisis develops, will the Germans call for a new führer?" Mr. Flurry asked in the December 1991 *Trumpet* issue. "Your Bible says that is going to happen! That crisis will probably be triggered by an economic collapse in the U.S."

We are close to that crisis now. The strongman is almost here. "The rise of this extreme

party [the AfD] is just one sign of a German society in trouble," Mr. Flurry wrote in the August 2024 *Trumpet* (theTrumpet.com/29732).

"It's this strong, charismatic leader that Germans, and many other people across Europe, are desperate for," he continued. "They see their country spinning out of control." Nor is this just a German phenomenon. "People don't trust European bureaucrats," he wrote. "They want a strong leader to rescue them. They are calling for a new 'Charlemagne' to lead the European Union."

All the way back in 1950, Herbert Armstrong described European nations becoming "distrustful of America and thinking more and more about uniting themselves into a United States of Europe" (*Plain Truth*, May 1950). To do that, they needed a "new supreme leader—the successor of Adolf Hitler—to rise up and assert himself and take command."

Larson has been warning of this explosion for three months. Mr. Armstrong warned of it 80 years ago—the strongman, the united Europe, the descent from democracy to dictatorship—before the federal republic held its first election.

They were not reading polls. They were studying Bible prophecy—and prophecy, not political analysis, is why these forecasts keep coming true.

Jeremiah used a similar metaphor thousands of years ago to describe modern Germany: "a pot of boiling water, spilling from the north" (Jeremiah 1:13; New Living Translation). Germany is already that boiling caldron of discontent. It's only a matter of time before it boils over.

When it does, it will transform Europe. In their desperation for change, Germans will empower a strong leader. A group of EU nations will unite under this strongman. They will embrace leadership and direction from the Catholic Church. This is leading to a wholesale transformation of Europe. ■

Who will harness the chaos?

Germans are enraged over the political corruption that has made it "open season for robbery and rape." They are looking for leadership. Bible prophecy says they will get a leader who will change everything. Find out about this coming leader in Gerald Flurry's free **A Strong German Leader Is Imminent**.



Germany's Moral Conundrum

Babylonian perversions mark German society and politics.

BY JOSUÉ MICHELS

PICTURE THE SCENE: A FEW HUNDRED neo-Nazis and far-right extremists, including tattooed skinheads, proudly wave the flags of the late 19th-century German Empire. They have gathered in opposition to a much larger march: a lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer parade that proudly waves the rainbow flag.

The one movement wants to bring Germany back to militaristic authoritarian rule. The other promotes the indoctrination of children, gender mutilation and other perversions.

This standoff has become remarkably common. The neo-Nazis are outnumbered by perverts. In 2024, some 400 far-right demonstrators confronted a "pride" parade of around 19,000 people in Leipzig, Saxony.

The only group that opposes the pride parades more are Islamic extremists. One of them rammed a van into a crowd in Berlin on July 25, killing one and injuring 29. That attack was condemned by both the mainstream media and the far right—albeit for different reasons.

A Neo-Nazi in a Dress

That same month, Sven Liebich was recaptured after escaping to the Czech Republic. After his sentencing last year,



the neo-Nazi changed his legal gender to expose the absurdity of the state. Hence German law enforcement transferred him to a women's prison in Chemnitz, Saxony. However, two days later, *Tagesschau* reported that the women's prison had rejected him, "so she was transferred to a men's prison." "She" is a neo-Nazi with facial hair, high-and-tight haircut, red lipstick and women's clothing.

What would you do if right-wing extremists were the only group standing up against society's moral sickness and absurdity?

The supposedly conservative Christian Democratic Union is a strong supporter of the LGBTQ agenda. The very same week that Liebich made headlines, one of the party's top "conservative" politicians caused a scandal.

"Jens Spahn and his husband have become parents," the German media celebrated on July 16. Of course, a homosexual couple can't produce children, and surrogacy is illegal in Germany. The mother is from the United States, and Spahn's homosexual partner is reportedly the biological father.

"As a gay man and a Christian, I personally find it very difficult to come to terms with the idea of a 'rented womb,'" Spahn wrote in 2015. But now this homosexual "Christian" had "rented" a womb. He was forced to resign—not because he is homosexual and therefore unwelcome in the "Christian" party; not

because they oppose him raising a child in a perverted household—but because his party disapproves of surrogacy.

If you have a problem with this man's lifestyle, you are the problem, in the eyes of Germany's elite.

"Over the past two weeks, we have experienced homophobia in very different forms, but on two occasions in its most repugnant form," former top German politician Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg said on July 27 about the Islamic attack on the homosexual parade and Spahn's resignation. Concerning the latter, he said, "I found the most vile insults online and you really had to wonder what kind of people these were who expressed themselves accordingly" (*Land in Sicht* podcast).

Apparently, if you have strong opinions about a homosexual couple adopting a baby, you are vile and maybe should fear someone coming after you.

Perhaps that is why some Germans turn to the Alternative für Deutschland. Indeed, the far-right party is campaigning in Saxony-Anhalt with the declaration: "Only from the union of a man and a woman do children—and thus future generations—come into being." Well and good—yet party chief Alice Weidel lives with her lesbian partner and two "sons" in Switzerland.

Some Germans who want someone to confront these perversions praise Hitler. But neither Hitler nor his top advisers were moral exemplars.

Widespread Moral Sickness

Some Germans who want someone to confront these insane perversions praise Adolf Hitler. But they ignore the fact that neither Hitler nor his top advisers were moral exemplars. "Murderers, pimps, homosexuals, perverts, drug addicts or just plain rowdies were all the same to [Hitler] if they served his purposes" (*The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*).

The moral sickness of the political elite reflects and then amplifies the moral sickness of the people.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development wrote in 2023 referring to an IPSOS study: "Assuming no overlap between non-heterosexual and non-cisgender people, the share of LGBTI+ individuals in the German population may be as high as 14 percent or 11.6 million people (the equivalent of the population of Belgium)."

This moral sickness can be traced to root causes in German society and history.

Twenty-five years ago, Germany legalized prostitution. It has since become the "brothel of Europe," Bundestag President Julia Klöckner said last year. According to the Federal Statistical Office, there were 32,300 registered prostitutes in Germany at the end of 2024; only 5,600 of them were German citizens. Researchers estimate that the number of unregistered prostitutes could be as high as 1 million.

Prostitution was a major moral sickness that plagued Germany between the world wars. The war left women without husbands and providers, which led them to give themselves over to prostitution. William Manchester described the time well in his biography of Winston Churchill: "Over 2 million young German women were destitute widows. The more desperate (and attractive) of them became prostitutes, seeking prey in the alleys near the Hauptbahnhof. Among them were muscular whores with whips and mothers in their early 30s, teamed with their teenaged daughters to offer Mutter-und-Tochter sex. Tourists were shocked by the more infamous night spots."

One perversion led to the next. Manchester quotes Austrian author Stefan Zweig: "Along the Kurfürstendamm powdered and rouged young men sauntered, and in the dimly lit bars one might see men of the world of finance courting drunken sailors"; while at transvestite balls, "hundreds of men costumed as women and hundreds of women as men danced under the benevolent eye of the police."

"Berlin was, in fact, conspicuous for its lack of any virtue whatever," Manchester concluded. "It had become the new Babylon"

Germany today is once again heading the way of Babylon of old.

Does the Geologic Column Actually Exist?

The single question that could topple the entire edifice of evolution

BY ANDREW MILLER



“HERBERT ARMSTRONG, YOU ARE simply ignorant! One is uneducated and ignorant unless he believes in evolution. All educated people now believe it.”

These words stung. Exactly 100 years ago, in the fall of 1926, Herbert W. Armstrong’s business had collapsed, his wife was saying Christians should keep the Sabbath, and his wife’s sister-in-law, Hertha Dillon, was mocking his fundamental understanding of life, the world, and reality itself.

Hertha was a 19-year-old college freshman, obviously hungry for intellectual sophistication. Mr. Armstrong set aside her motive and her offensive words and accepted the challenge.

With what remained of his business requiring little of his time, he spent day after day, evening after evening, and night after night examining the work of the leading proponents of evolution: Charles Darwin, Ernst Haeckel, Herbert Spencer, Thomas Huxley, Karl Vogt and others. As he studied, real doubts about the existence of God entered his mind. Like most Americans in the early 1900s, he had always assumed God existed simply because he had been taught it from childhood. He had never actually proved it.

For months, he spent up to 12 hours a day in the Portland Public Library, immersing himself in anatomy, embryology, paleontology, radioactivity and related fields. He examined the facts of Darwin’s life—his continual sickness, his preconceived theory and the inductive process of reasoning he used in searching for arguments that would sustain that theory. He quickly determined that “proofs” like comparative anatomy were not actually proofs in themselves; they only made the theory seem more reasonable once evolution had been proved by other means. Since evolution teaches that all life descended from a common ancestor, the only way to truly prove it historically is through the fossil record.

“I came to see that there was only one possible proof of evolution as a fact,” he later wrote in his autobiography. “That

was the assumption that, in the study of paleontology, the most simple fossils were always in the *oldest strata*, laid down first; while, as we progress into strata of later deposition, the fossils found in them become gradually more complex, tending toward advancing intelligence.”

This assumption is the foundation of the “geologic column”—the idea that arranges Earth’s rocks into a chronological sequence in which the simplest fossils always appear in the oldest strata—exactly the orderly progression evolution requires if common descent is to be demonstrated by the fossil record.

But how do you prove this column is real?

The Hypothesis

Most high school and college students have seen a representation of the geologic column: a depiction of about a dozen types of rock, one atop another. Textbooks vary, but most label them, from bottom to top, as Cambrian, Ordovician, Silurian, Devonian, Carboniferous, Permian, Triassic, Jurassic, Cretaceous, Paleogene, Neogene and Quaternary.

The bottom three on this list have been found to contain fossils of only simple marine invertebrates. The Devonian contains an abundance of fish fossils. Carboniferous rock contains many amphibian fossils. Reptiles are found in Permian rock and are much more common in Triassic rock. Jurassic and Cretaceous rock contain numerous fossilized dinosaurs. Paleogene and Neogene rock contain an abundance of mammals and birds. Quaternary rock is the only type to contain human fossils.

Scientists reason that these 12 rock types are best represented not as a grid, table or map but rather as a column, with Cambrian at the bottom. And, crucially, they introduce a time element: Cambrian rock is also the oldest.

Reasoning these rocks into a column and thereby into a timeline produces the notion that marine invertebrates are the *oldest* life-forms on Earth and that they eventually became the *current* life-forms.

But that’s getting ahead of our scientific examination. First, we should understand which locations in Earth’s crust contain these 12 layers atop one another in this order. Curiously, there are none.

There are local rock formations, like the Grand Canyon, that contain so-called Cambrian, Devonian, Carboniferous and Permian rock stacked in rough sequence. Yet even this sequence famously skips the Ordovician and Silurian layers entirely. This absence highlights the fact that the strata of the Grand Canyon represent a local ecological zone rather than a global timescale. The bottom of the Grand Canyon doesn’t represent a global “Cambrian Era.” Rather it represents what prehistoric Arizona was like.

The real fossil record is contained in a jumbled heap of rocks scattered across the globe. Paleontologists have no actual physical geologic column to study: They look for clues that one type of rock with certain fossils in one place should be represented as above or below another type of rock an ocean away.

The names of the rock types remind us of the fact that they have been found not atop one another but hundreds or thousands of miles apart. Cambrian rocks are located in Wales. Ordovician and Silurian rocks are named after Welsh tribes because they are also located in Wales. Devonian rocks are located in England. Carboniferous rocks are also found in England (named for their high coal content). Rocks near Perm, Russia, are Permian. Rocks from three areas of southern Germany are Triassic. Those in France’s Jura Mountains are Jurassic. Chalky rock near Paris is called Cretaceous. The Paleogene, Neogene and Quaternary strata are found in still other places, including the Paris Basin and parts of Italy.

In fact, none of these fossil-containing regions are located above or below each other. Geologists can’t climb down cliff-sides—or even one cliffside—and point to 12 different periods atop one another. The most distinct major eras you can see in a single, continuous vertical sweep constitute about six layers. Yet, since plate tectonics continuously recycles the heavy ocean floor while pushing up mountain ranges and shifting the shapes of the continents, you cannot say with any confidence that Cambrian fossils are always the oldest. Someone had to decide which of these scattered rock piles was older than which other pile.

Following Mr. Armstrong’s example, there remains more for us to do: Sift

through information, seek facts, ask questions, and insist on reality. The geologic column is the supporting pillar of evolutionary theory. But one of the most relevant facts about it is that it does not physically exist anywhere on Earth except in hypotheses in textbooks.

Just as telling, interpretations of the fossil record have shifted dramatically over time.

The ancient Greeks read fossils as the petrified remains of giants and monsters slain in wars between the gods and the Titans. Medieval Christians saw the same remains as evidence of Noah’s Flood. Early paleontologists like Georges Cuvier saw them as evidence that violent catastrophes including floods have occurred throughout Earth’s history and wiped out entire species. Not until the 1800s did anyone propose the idea that the rock layers containing the simplest fossils, scattered here and there across the globe, had to be the *oldest*.

A New Theory

The idea of a creation that came into being without a creator has been taught since the days of the Epicurean philosophers of ancient Greece. But this notion did not take deep root in the Western world for thousands of years—until Charles Darwin.

When 22-year-old Darwin boarded the HMS Beagle in 1831, the captain handed him a book that would reshape his thinking: the first volume of Charles Lyell’s *Principles of Geology*.

Lyell, a Scottish geologist, openly aimed to “free the science from Moses.” He rejected explanations that linked major geological formations to the events recorded in Scripture—especially the global Flood—and insisted instead that they formed gradually over vast ages through ordinary processes.

His approach became known as *uniformitarianism*: the idea that the same slow, natural processes we observe today operated at roughly the same rates in the past, shaping the Earth over immense spans of time. Lyell never disproved the possibility that some ancient formations resulted from catastrophes, yet most modern geologists still interpret the fossil record primarily through a uniformitarian lens.

The law of superposition states that in any undisturbed sequence of rocks,

the oldest layers sit at the bottom and the youngest at the top. Direct evidence of some disturbances does survive—igneous dikes and sills, for instance, show where molten rock intruded into existing layers—but confirming the extent, timing and cumulative effect of such disturbances across a global column is another matter. Some independent method of confirming relative age other than superposition was therefore needed.

Lyell recognized this limitation. He therefore adopted William Smith's principle of "faunal succession." Smith, a canal engineer, had noticed that each rock layer in a canal contained its own distinctive assemblage of fossils and that these fossil groups occurred in the same order from place to place. He proposed that fossil assemblages, not the rock itself, could be used to place isolated outcrops into a shared sequence—even when those outcrops

were never physically connected. Smith's observations, however, were limited to England and Wales, areas of the world that were underwater fairly recently in geological history. The idea that marine invertebrates are the oldest life-forms in the British Isles does not prove that they were the first life on Earth. Nevertheless, Lyell extended this regional pattern to a global scale, using it to support the claim that marine invertebrates always appear first in the global fossil record.

Working with the French shell collector Gérard-Paul Deshayes, Lyell classified geological strata according to how closely their fossil assemblages resembled modern species. Strata in which about 90 percent of the fossils belonged to still-living species he named the Pleistocene; those with around 50 percent, the Pliocene; those with about 20 percent, the Miocene; and those with only about 3 percent, the Eocene.

This became a key foundation for the modern geologic column. But Lyell's approach had a major flaw. He assumed a rock containing many extinct species must be older than one containing mostly still-living species. That is not necessarily true. A rock full of unfamiliar fossils could still be young, and one full of familiar, living species could be ancient. This is evident in the case of the coelacanth, a deep-sea fish once thought to have gone extinct with the dinosaurs about 66 million years ago. It was found alive off South Africa in 1938. While scientists once assumed that a coelacanth fossil indicated a rock millions of years old, they now know roughly 400 coelacanths still swim in the deep waters off the Comoros Islands.

Darwin eagerly embraced the idea of faunal succession, as well as Lyell's geologic column. In his book *On the Origin of Species*, he repeatedly cited the fossil record as strong evidence for biological

Correlation

The geologic column depicts fossil layers as clearly consecutive strata. In reality, however, these layer names simply designate the localities where key fossils were first found—often without any established relative order. It then fell to scientists to determine the ages of the rocks and fossils, yet in the 1800s, when this theory arose, no scientific method existed for dating either the rocks or the fossils.

The geologic column is the supporting pillar of evolutionary theory. But one of the most relevant facts about it is that it does not physically exist anywhere on Earth except in hypotheses in textbooks.



evolution, claiming the geologic column showed a slow progression from simpler to more complex life and that “missing links” would eventually turn up. His argument later helped persuade Lyell to accept evolution.

Both men’s ideas, in short, sprang from the same uniformitarian theory.

If the same slow, natural processes we observe today operated at the same rate in the past, then it seems reasonable to assume that rocks with many unfamiliar species might be older than rocks with few. But if the world’s rock structures were instead shaped largely by ancient catastrophes, the fossil record is likely too jumbled to support the neat progression evolution requires. In other words, evolution is a theory largely devised by Darwin to explain faunal succession, which itself is an unproven hypothesis.

Circular Reasoning

During his intensive study at the Portland Public Library, Mr. Armstrong learned about the theory of faunal succession. Information on how scientists date rock strata proved much harder to come by.

“I began a search to learn how these scientists determined the age of strata,” he wrote in his autobiography. “I was months finding it. None of the texts I searched seemed to explain anything about it. ... Were the oldest strata always on the bottom—the next oldest next to the bottom, the most recent on the top?”

He finally found a recognized text on geology by Thomas Chrowder Chamberlin, emeritus professor of geology at the University of Chicago, explaining that the most recent strata sometimes end up below the most ancient, owing to geologic processes like faulting, folding and overturning. This same text, *A College Textbook of Geology*, explained that geologists relied on “index fossils” to determine a stratum’s age, since stratigraphy alone couldn’t do the job.

The discovery flabbergasted Mr. Armstrong. “The age of strata was not determined by stages of depth,” he wrote. “The depth of strata varied in different parts of the world. How, then, was the age of strata determined? Why, I finally discovered in this very reputable authority, their age was determined by the FOSSILS found in them. Since the geologists ‘knew’ their evolutionary

theory was true, and since they had estimated how many millions of years ago a certain fossil specimen might have lived, that age determined the age of the strata!

“In other words, they ASSUMED the age of the strata by the supposition that their theory of evolution was true. And they ‘PROVED’ their theory was true by the *supposition* of the progressive ages of the strata in which fossil remains had been found! This was arguing in a circle!”

Mr. Armstrong wrote a short paper on the topic and showed it to the head librarian of the science department of a very large library. She agreed he’d gotten “right to the crux of a problem” and had “robbed” her of any proof that evolution was actually true. Yet she said she’d still “go on believing in evolution,” because she’d done graduate work at Columbia, the University of Chicago, and other top-level institutions. She was too steeped in the theory to give it up.

Hertha, his wife’s sister-in-law, wasn’t. Once she learned that geologists were organizing rock strata on the assumption that the simplest life forms were always the oldest—and that biologists were building their theory on that assumption—she had to concede evolution was unproven. The men who cobbled the geologic column together were not, it turned out, unbiased observers. They started with a premise and built a theory to fit it.

Radiometric Dating

Long after the geologic column was largely established in the late 19th century, British geologist Arthur Holmes proposed, in 1913, that radiometric decay rates could assign absolute dates to its layers. Certain elements—parent isotopes—decay into simpler elements, called daughter isotopes, at constant rates. Measure the ratio of one to the other in a rock, Holmes argued, and you could date it. This would finally test whether the rocks in the supposed geologic column were actually stacked in the right order.

Mr. Armstrong studied radiometric dating extensively during his time at the library and once visited the darkroom of an X-ray laboratory to watch the emanations of tiny particles thrown off by radium. The slow decay of uranium into lead convinced him that the universe and

Earth had a definite beginning, and were likely at least millions of years old—far older than traditional young-Earth views.

He was likely unaware of Holmes’s 1913 work tying radiometric dates to the geologic column, since Professor Chamberlin’s 1909 textbook did not mention it. Evolutionists today claim Mr. Armstrong’s circular-reasoning critique is outdated for exactly this reason: Radiometric dating, they say, has since proved the geologic column’s time order to be scientific fact.

Radioactive decay calculations rest on three significant assumptions. Since no geologist was present when most rocks formed, the first is that scientists know the initial ratio of parent-to-daughter isotope present when the rock formed—an assumption that plays out differently across elements, from carbon-14 to potassium-argon to uranium-lead. The second is that the decay rate has stayed constant the whole time. The third is that nothing contaminated the rock with outside parent or daughter isotopes afterward. Get any one of these wrong, and the calculated date is wrong too.

One way to test them is to date rocks whose age is already known. Geologists tried exactly that in 1996, running potassium-argon dating on a lava sample from the Mount St. Helens crater, known to have formed and cooled in 1986. The 10-year-old rock came back with so much daughter isotope (argon-40) that its calculated age ranged from hundreds of thousands of years to over a million years. Scientists explained the discrepancy by arguing there was so little argon-40 present that it couldn’t be measured accurately. Probably true—but that admission itself means the method can’t tell a 10-year-old rock from a million-year-old one.

Something similar happened with potassium-argon dating on lava flows at Mount Ngauruhoe, New Zealand, known to be less than 50 years old: Calculated ages again ranged from hundreds of thousands to several million years, again blamed on excess argon. That’s an enormous margin of error. The oldest known human fossils, according to geologists, are about 2.8 million years old. The technique used to date them carries a multimillion-year margin of error.

Academic Fraud

Geologist J. E. O'Rourke is best known for his 1976 paper "Pragmatism Versus Materialism in Stratigraphy" and his 1978 historical analysis "A Comparison of James Hutton's Principles of Knowledge and Theory of the Earth." Both highlighted the circular reasoning built into using fossils to date rocks and rocks to date fossils. O'Rourke conceded the point directly: "The rocks do date the fossils, but the fossils date the rocks more accurately. Stratigraphy cannot avoid this kind of reasoning if it insists on using only temporal concepts, because circularity is inherent in the derivation of time scales." Rather than reject the geologic timeline as unreliable, he argued the circularity was a pragmatic necessity—philosophically flawed, but a system that ultimately worked for mapping the Earth.

O'Rourke was talking mainly about fossil and stratigraphic dating, but the same pattern shows up with radiometric dates. In "Radiometric Geochronology Reappraised," geologist John Woodmorappe surveyed hundreds of technical papers and cataloged well over 300 cases where a radiometric date conflicted with the age already expected from the fossil record—dates that were then set aside as anomalies rather than treated as evidence against the method itself.

In other words, because scientists assume the "Law of Faunal Succession" is true, they reason that radiometric dates that contradict the "Law of

Faunal Succession" must be erroneous. In most of these cases, they say that the third assumption of radiometric dating has been violated and that the rock has been contaminated with outside parent or daughter isotope after it was formed. In some cases, they may be right, but excluding radiometric dates that contradict the "Law of Faunal Succession" means that radiometric dating is no longer an independent check on the circular reasoning Mr. Armstrong highlighted.

Interestingly, an eight-year research program done by the Institute for Creation Research and the Creation Research Society found that if you leave the so-called contaminated samples in the radiometric analysis, you get 15 percent error bars on all radiometric dates. Such a large margin of error is enough to discredit the "Law of Faunal Succession" by making it impossible to distinguish between geologic eras. This means that what evolutionists call subsequent geological eras may in reality be concurrent ecological zones of the prehistoric world.

A separate case makes the same point vividly. Richard Leakey's team recovered a human-like skull in Kenya in 1972 near a layer of volcanic ash known as the KBS Tuff. Potassium-argon dating first put the tuff's age at about 2.6 million years—squarely in the Neogene Period, far older than expected for the skull and tools found with it, even by evolutionary

reckoning. After a decade of debate, new samples went to different labs, and this time the date came back around 1.9 million years. It fitted the expected time frame better, so scientists accepted it. What they should have admitted instead is that potassium-argon dating couldn't reliably tell relatively young rock from rock supposedly millions of years old.

Findings like this show that radiometric dating isn't really an independent check on the circular reasoning evolutionists use to date rock strata—it's subject to the same after-the-fact adjustment. Scientists routinely reject dates that don't fit their theory.

The problem shows up even more starkly with isotopic discordance: cases where different radiometric methods yield conflicting ages for the same rock. Andrew Snelling, a young-Earth creationist geologist, cataloged many such cases in his paper "Isochron Discordances and the Role of Inheritance and Mixing of Radioisotopes in the Mantle and Crust."

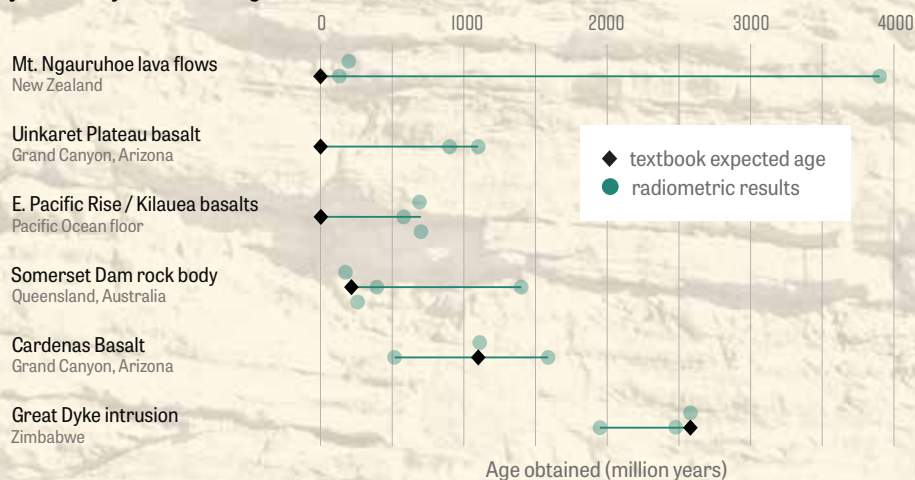
One example: A rock formation in Queensland, Australia, conventionally dated between 216 and 225 million years old, was tested using potassium-argon, samarium-neodymium, and rubidium-strontium methods. The results: 174 million years, about 259 million years, and 393 million years, respectively. A single Late Triassic-Early Jurassic formation, in other words, comes out Jurassic by one method, Permian by another, and Devonian by a third.

That's scientists unable to tell Devonian fossils from Jurassic ones—two layers supposedly separated by 160 million years. The idea that the "Age of Fishes" preceded the "Age of Amphibians" and the "Age of Reptiles" remains, at bottom, an unproven hypothesis.

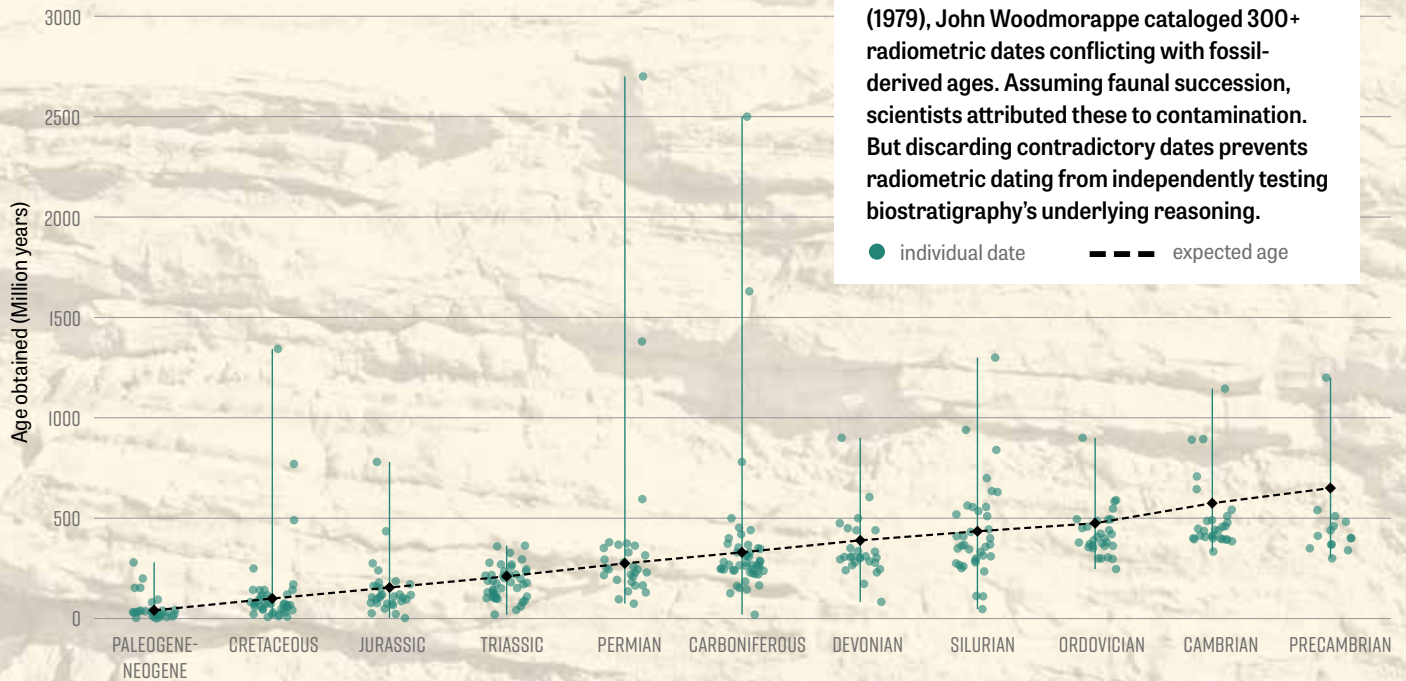
A group of 19th-century geologists set out to "free the science from Moses." They hypothesized that fish evolved before reptiles, then built a geologic column on that assumption. But the radiometric techniques meant to corroborate it sometimes disagree by more than a billion years—on a fossil-bearing column that's supposed to span only about 540 million years in total. Using radiometric dating to distinguish between fossil strata, at that point, is like timing a 100-meter dash with a calendar.

Radiometric Dating Discrepancies

Geologist Andrew Snelling cataloged many radiometric dating discrepancies, including these examples. These show that different radiometric methods applied to the same rock unit can yield widely discordant ages.



Radiometric Age Obtained by Geologic Period



Old Earth

Having concluded that the Earth had a beginning, that it was millions of years old, and that the geologic column rested on circular reasoning, Mr. Armstrong turned to an in-depth study of the Bible. He told his sister-in-law it was important never to study just one side of a two-sided question.

Some 60 years later, he summarized his life's work in *Mystery of the Ages*—a book laying out a truth unrecognized by academia, religion or science alike: The Bible does not say that the Earth is 6,000 years old. Genesis 1:1 says, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,” but the very next verse says, “And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. ...”

God did not create the planet formless. Something must have gone catastrophically wrong—destroying all life on the planet and forcing God to renew the face of the Earth. Scriptures including Isaiah 14:12-15, Ezekiel 28:15-19, 2 Peter 2:4, and Jude 6 point to an angelic rebellion as the cause. As Mr. Armstrong explained, the creation described in Genesis 1:2-31 “could have been millions or trillions of years after the actual creation of the Earth described in verse 1.”

Radiometric dating and the fossil record do show that our present world sits atop the ruins of a far older one, one that existed for millions of years before any human walked the Earth. What they don't show is that the fossil record can be sorted into a branching “tree of life,” proving every species descended from one common ancestor over billions of years. That diagram is a human construction—the fossil record arranged to make it look like life evolved from simple to complex.

So the modern claim that radiometric dating checks the circular reasoning 19th-century evolutionists relied on doesn't hold up under its own weight. At best, it sorts the fossil record into only the vaguest outline. Rocks containing human fossils do, as a general rule, contain less daughter isotope than rocks containing dinosaur fossils, suggesting

the two never coexisted. But between measurement errors and isochron discordances, scientists still can't reliably tell a 10-year-old rock from a million-year-old one, or Devonian strata from Jurassic.

The geological literature is full of examples of dates being rejected because they do not fit the expected age. Modern technology hasn't broken the circle. Evolutionists are still reasoning inside it.

Mr. Armstrong put it this way: “Error generally comes from assuming a false premise, taken carelessly for granted without proof, and building on that premise.” Darwin's false premise—the one everything else was built on—was the “assumption that, in the study of paleontology, the most simple fossils were always in the oldest strata, laid down first.”

Prove that premise false, and the entire structure built on it comes down with it. ■



Start with the right premise.

Proving God exists is the premise that leads to life's biggest questions. Why did God create man? Did God create evil? Why is there suffering? Get the answers in Herbert W. Armstrong's *Mystery of the Ages*.

We are betting like
no other nation in history—
and we cannot afford to lose.

BY RICHARD PALMER



AMERICA GAMBLES ON EVERYTHING

IN 2003, THE NATIONAL FOOTBALL League refused to let Las Vegas buy a tourism ad during the Super Bowl. It felt that just stating the name of the city could be considered endorsing gambling. Congress had banned sports betting in 1992, and most American state and local governments and sports leagues had as well.

By 2024, things had changed: The NFL staged the Super Bowl in Las Vegas. BetMGM, FanDuel and DraftKings were official partners of the league.

The NFL and the local governments that once held the line against gambling had surrendered. Why?

Probably the biggest single reason was that new technology had unlocked new temptations and new profits. The rise of the Internet and especially the smartphone makes gambling possible on a scale never before seen in human history. The unstoppable force of profits collided with what was supposed to be the immovable object of American morality—and the resistance to gambling crumbled overnight.

Americans today spend more than twice as much on sports betting as on movies, music, books and museum

visits combined. It works out to \$647 per adult, per year.

The change has come fast. In 2017, Americans bet \$5 billion legally on sports with companies based in Nevada (the only state where it was permitted), plus untracked illegal and offshore betting. Last calendar year, legal sports betting had exploded to \$166 billion.

Young men in particular are embracing it. Most of them have an online sports betting account. Two thirds of college students bet last year.

Smartphone-enhanced gambling has opened the floodgates of profits for certain companies. It has also unlocked dramatic new dangers.

Anything, Anywhere, Anytime

In 2018, the Supreme Court struck down the federal ban on sports betting.

Before 2018, gambling was already common: Around 1 in 5 Americans polled admitted they had bet on professional sports in 2017; nearly half

of adults under 35 had. But it wasn't necessarily convenient. People made bets with friends, used offshore gambling sites or companies based in Nevada; for other types of betting, they could visit casinos in Indian reservations or buy lottery tickets. They would bet perhaps a few times a year, or for a very enthusiastic gambler, a few times a month.

Now, many people are betting a few times *per game*.

The Supreme Court's ruling would have had little effect, except that companies were already making a lot from online gambling using loopholes in the existing regulations. FanDuel and DraftKings are platforms for fantasy sports betting. The

2006 Unlawful Internet Gambling Enforcement Act declared them a skilled activity and therefore not gambling. When the federal gambling ban fell, they knew they could make billions if full-on sports betting was legal, so they spent millions lobbying state legislators.

The betting companies also dangled the promise

Americans today spend more than twice as much on sports betting than on movies, music, books and museum visits combined. It works out to \$647 per adult, per year.

of massive tax revenues for state governments. Soon after the Supreme Court ruling, COVID-19 hit, leaving states desperate for cash. Most caved in. Since 2018, 39 states have legalized sports betting, with 30 allowing you to do it via smartphone apps. As it turns out, tax revenues are lower and the problems are greater than the betting companies promised.

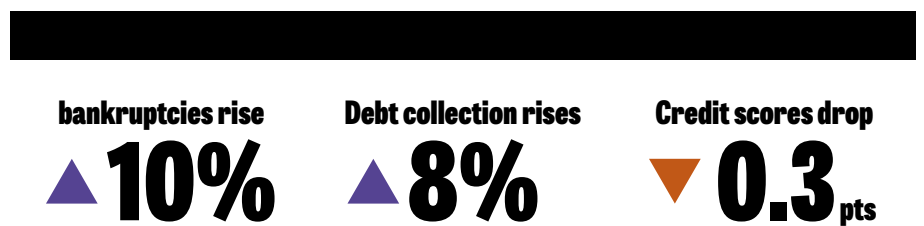
The companies saw that smartphones enabled a new level of gambling. Nearly the entire adult population in America can bet on anything—sports-related or otherwise—at a moment's notice. Only a decade earlier, gambling on a game watched with friends would be cumbersome and inconvenient: Only a dork brings his laptop to a Super Bowl party. Now, everyone in the group can whip out his phone. You can gamble on every game, multiple times a game, without leaving your seat. Every kick or pass, every substitution, every call from the referees, is an opportunity to place a bet. If those bets fail, the apps instantly encourage you to bet again to try to recoup your losses.

As Derek Webb, head of the Campaign for Fairer Gambling, summarized it, "You put the most addictive behavior on the most addictive device. What could go wrong?"

Smartphone apps enable bets that are more complicated and, potentially, more profitable. Parlays, called "sucker bets" by experienced gamblers, hold out the promise of huge payouts, by betting that several things will happen at once. Get the outcome of the game, the total scored by a particular player and the color of Gatorade poured on the coach (yes, that is something you can bet on) correct, and you win big. Get just one of those wrong, and you lose everything.

Parlays are popular: One study of three states found they made up 27 percent of all money wagered. They're even more popular for the gambling companies, accounting for 56 percent of their revenue.

Apps also give the sports books (as sports gambling companies are known) a deep view into the lives of their customers. They have masses more data than they would on anyone who simply walked into a Las Vegas casino. They know how often you generally bet, what time of day or month, and where you are when you bet. They know when you might be



trying to quit gambling and how to lure you back in. They have the data and are heavily invested in the data science.

Gambling hasn't just taken over sports—it is everywhere. The "gamification" of financial investing is quickly blurring the line between gambling and investing. Financial markets are treated as a path to get rich quick, not to store wealth over time. Borrowing money to invest—one of the riskiest investment strategies—reached an all-time high this July.

The lines have become so blurred that you can now bet on the NFL on Robinhood, the share-trading app, and wager on the S&P 500 on FanDuel.

And if gambling on sports, stocks, precious metals or cryptocurrencies isn't enough for you, you can also bet on whether Donald Trump will praise Allah by the end of the month, whether a meteor will strike this planet by 2031, or whether the Earth is, in fact, flat. These are bets available through Kalshi, Polymarket and other prediction markets, which logged around \$50 billion in betting last year worldwide (almost all of that by Americans).

Kalshi was valued at \$2 billion in June 2025. In May of this year, it was \$22 billion. Some say that by the end of the decade, Kalshi and Polymarket will be worth over a trillion dollars.

A New Addiction

The industry is changing so quickly that the effects aren't yet clear—but we can see enough to know that it's not good.

One study by UCLA found that after a state legalizes online sports gambling, bankruptcies rise 10 percent. Debt collection rises 8 percent, and credit scores fall by 0.3 points. Calls to gambling

addiction hotlines have spiked by 55 percent in some areas. The biggest victims are low-income men.

A study by Epic Research found that diagnoses of gambling disorder rose over 60 percent in states that had legalized sports betting. Rates of gambling disorder went up from 3 per 100,000 to 4.8—a 60 percent increase.

The vast majority of people lose money through these platforms. Two thirds of all money won on Polymarket was held by just 740 accounts—out of 2 million.

Millions of people are losing money they can ill afford to lose. Around 1 percent of U.S. adults have a severe gambling problem; 2 to 3 percent, a mild one. That's around 10 million people. For some of those millions, "gambling problem" means eviction from houses, cars repossessed, and families destroyed. Roughly half of gambling addicts will commit a crime.

"Practically overnight, we took an ancient vice—long regarded as soul-rotting and civilizationally ruinous—put it on everyone's phone, and made it as normal and frictionless as checking the weather," McKay Coppins wrote in the *Atlantic*. "What could possibly go wrong?" (March 12).

To learn the answer, Coppins gave sports betting a go—a one-year gambling experiment. He went into it with significant guardrails: betting with only a limited amount of his employer's money and possessing a personality generally immune to these kinds of addictions. Yet he ended up addicted.

A gambling addiction is "easier to hide, at least at first—the addict doesn't have glazed eyes or slurred speech, and no one can smell it on him," wrote Coppins.

The lines have become so blurred that you can now bet on the NFL on Robinhood, the share-trading app, and wager on the S&P 500 on FanDuel.

“Plus, the compounding financial pressure of the habit can quickly turn a private vice into a full-blown crisis. One in five compulsive gamblers will attempt suicide in their life, a higher rate than for any other category of addict.”

Spot the Fix

These gambling apps have helped usher in a new kind of cheating in sports and in wider society. With old-style gambling, a player could theoretically throw the game to cash in on a bet, but it was hard: A player had to be capable enough to throw the game, and corrupt and disloyal enough to accept money for it. But if you can bet on every single aspect of the game, it's much easier to cheat.

The practice has become so common that it has a name: “spot fixing.”

The basketball player Jontay Porter pleaded guilty to federal charges in July 2024 because he had faked injuries so those who had bet on him underperforming could gain huge payouts. In January, the U.S. announced charges against 26 people as part of a crackdown on fixing statistics in Chinese Basketball Association and U.S. college basketball games. Two Major League Baseball pitchers face federal charges for manipulating their performance to win money. Two tennis players were banned for 32 years for spot fixing. The practice is present in every sport.

It's even more present on the prediction markets. A member of America's special forces was arrested for making over \$400,000 betting on Venezuelan strongman Nicolás Maduro's arrest; the final bet was placed just hours before it happened. A flurry of bets were placed that America would bomb Iran just before the bombs dropped. The same thing happened shortly before Iran and the U.S. signed a ceasefire.

An incident involving former Republican Congressman George Santos showed how easy it can be to make money on these markets. “I'm going to be there for the State of the Union in the gallery, guys,” he posted on X the day before President Trump's February 24 speech.

The next day, he wasn't there, claiming to be unexpectedly delayed. Santos later settled a claim that he had placed bets against his own attendance and had used his post on X to get himself better odds.

This new era of gambling comes with another major downside for athletes. For many viewers, it's no longer “just a game.” More people's life savings are on the line than ever before. And the gambling is more personalized: In addition to the result of the game, people are betting on the performance of individual players. Thus, if an athlete makes a mistake that costs someone money, he will often receive hate messages, even death threats, from unhinged “fans.”

This sickening trend transcends sports. With people betting on political events, journalists have become targets. One *Times of Israel* reporter received death threats because millions of dollars in bets hinged on whether he reported that either “missiles” or “missile fragments” had landed in a certain

location in Israel. If people are betting on everything, then everyone is a referee—and anyone can be offered a bribe.

Coppins wrote, “Everything in American life—politics and culture, art and war—becomes a Las Vegas table game, tantalizing in its promise of profit, rigged against regular people, destined to demoralize and crush those who play.”

“[A]s a society, we are making an enormously risky bet,” he wrote, “that we can reap the rewards of a runaway gambling industry without paying any price; that the litany of social ills long associated with this vice—addiction and impoverishment, isolation and abuse, cheating and chasing and corrosive idleness—can, this time, be kept in check; that, unlike every civilization that came before us, we can beat the house.”

Attacking the Addicts

One reason gambling is so dangerous is that the sports books make nearly all their money from addicts: 86 percent of all online gambling profits come from 5 percent of gamblers.

These companies are on your smartphone, they have your contact details, and they are *trying* to get you addicted.

The betting platforms generally refer to their addicts as “VIPs.” These people are assigned “VIP managers” who give them personal attention to keep them spending. The managers will receive a cut, in at least one case 25 percent, of the money the VIP loses. That VIP is showered with free gifts, such as free box tickets at sporting events, incentivizing him to continue betting.

Are these VIPs super wealthy individuals who can afford to lose a few thousand in a game? The United Kingdom forced gambling companies to check customers who were gambling beyond their means. Once enforced, the numbers enrolled in these VIP programs dropped 90 percent. It's likely that 9 in 10 American VIPs are similarly betting more than they can afford.

The tailored experience these apps provide makes it easier to keep the VIPs hooked. If you're one of the rare people who actually makes money at gambling, then they will limit or even cut off your ability to use the app. But lose a lot and quit, and you will receive personalized offers designed to lure you back. Imagine if your local liquor store could mail you a package with a friendly message: *Haven't seen you in a while; here's a free bottle of whiskey to get you going again.* In fact, bartenders are expected to do the opposite—to cut off patrons when they've spent and consumed too much.

“When you don't go to your drug dealer, he doesn't usually show up and knock on the door and say, ‘Hey, psst. Do you need something?’” one problem gambler explained in a CBS interview.

Drug dealers also have a much harder time advertising openly. Sports books sponsor teams and stadiums. They spent nearly half a billion dollars on TV ads last year. But their presence goes beyond the ads themselves: Watch the games, and the commentators will reference gambling platforms and odds, spreading the message that betting on the games is normal. They even bring “betting experts” to comment on the games.

Prediction markets have the same relationship with news networks. Watch



**Around 1 percent
of U.S. adults have
a severe gambling
problem; 2 to 3
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That's around
10 million
people.**

CNN and you may see a ticker from Kalshi advertising the odds if you want to bet on the topics under discussion.

For young people who watch e-sports and Twitch streamers rather than network TV, the problem is even worse. They are not simply seeing celebrities sponsored by DraftKings—oftentimes, their favorite streamer is bombarding them with sales pitches from offshore or unlicensed crypto casinos.

One streamer, Nadeshot, talked publicly about how bad these gambling ads were, getting young people addicted to gambling. But then he was asked what he would do if a gambling company approached him with \$100 million. He replied, “I would sell my soul for \$100 m’s.” A few years later, he signed a partnership with Roobet.

How many others have sold their souls?

Selling Their Souls

State governments have given in to intense lobbying efforts. Floods of money have eroded sports leagues’ once-principled stand against gambling. In 2023, the NFL was paid \$132 million directly in gambling-related deals, according to the *Washington Post*—a sum equivalent to the sponsorship revenue of two or three NFL teams. In addition, the NFL also received around \$120 million from sports-betting companies in exchange for their data. Those two deals alone were worth a quarter of a billion dollars—for one year, for one league.

Betting companies are spending millions in partnerships with universities for college football. One college signed a deal to receive \$30 every time one of its students downloads a gambling app and places a bet.

Laws and regulations exist to prevent certain abuses, but inventive companies keep finding loopholes and technicalities to circumvent them and part fools from their money.

One common ruse is to launch an app that is not a gambling platform. Instead, it runs a “sweepstakes.” People don’t gamble with real money: They use tokens or some other “in game” currency—which they buy using real money, and then swap for real money. That’s enough to sidestep bans on under-21-year-olds gambling and state gambling bans, and for gamblers to avoid paying taxes on their winnings.

Platforms like Kalshi and Polymarket use a different ruse. They insist that they are not gambling platforms but rather futures markets, a type of financial instrument that enables investors to hedge against future risks. What financial risk you’re hedging against by putting money on who will win Season 28 of *Big Brother* is unclear—but regulators are OK with it.

While Kalshi tells regulators that it’s not a betting site, it tells the public something else, advertising that “sports betting is now legal in all 50 states.” Still, it too avoids gambling bans, and is regulated with a light touch by the Commodity Futures Trading Commission.

The CFTC is supposed to be overseen by a five-person commission, but it’s missing a few members; currently it’s just one man: Michael Selig. Rather than constraining Kalshi and Polymarket, he has functioned as an enthusiastic supporter of prediction markets and has actually used the CFTC’s authority to try to shield them from state gambling regulators.

The rise of these prediction markets and their negative effects is a major story. Why hasn’t the Trump administration done more to deal with it? Well, Donald Trump Jr. is an investor, an unpaid adviser to Polymarket and a paid

adviser to Kalshi. Is there a connection between the financial interest President Trump’s son has in these companies and the light touch of their regulator?

The Punters

We can’t put all the blame on betting companies and politicians. Individuals also have their role in the explosion of gambling. And here, too many find their morals compromised by large sums of money.

Some of the ubiquitous gambling ads promise hundreds of dollars for new users who bet just five dollars. That’s hard to resist, even for someone uneasy

about gambling. *What’s the harm in betting \$5 and getting \$300 in free bets? How could you lose money on that?*

Gambling companies gave out \$1 billion this way in just a year. The free bets count as marketing costs, so they are tax deductible. And it draws a lot of new customers.

In what other addiction are businesses allowed to offer free products to reel in customers? *Spend \$5 on cigarettes or painkillers, and we’ll give you \$300 worth free!*

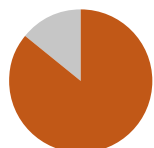
This is a huge part of the problem. Many of us believe gambling isn’t great, but for the right price, we might look the other way—or try it out.

America once had a much greater belief in law, in unchangeable principles of right and wrong. Today our principles have been abandoned. We see trade-offs, cost-benefit analyses, mitigating circumstances. *Gambling is bad, but think of the schools we can fund with the tax revenues. Gambling is wrong, but I can get rich quick from this introductory offer.*

The Apostle Paul got to the heart of the problem when he warned: “For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil ...” (1 Timothy 6:10; New King James Version). That love has led individuals, sports leagues and government officials down the path of compromise. And from this one root, a host of evils has grown.

Better regulations could help restrain this root of evil. Advertising bans, bans on abusing “vips,” better “don’t let me gamble” laws—all have helped other

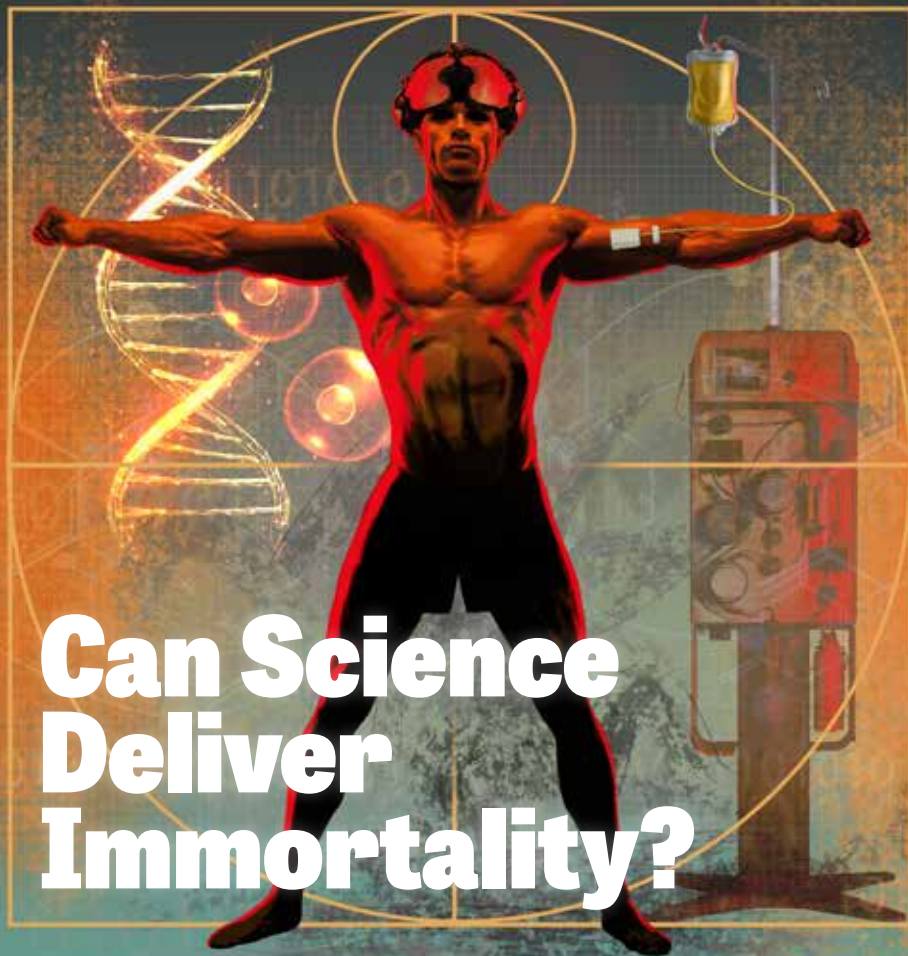
One college signed
a deal to receive
\$30
every time one
of its students
downloads a
gambling app and
places a bet.



**86 percent of all online
gambling profits come from
5 percent of gamblers.**

**One in five
compulsive gamblers
will attempt suicide**





Can Science Deliver Immortality?

Interest in longevity is soaring. The reason why goes deeper than you would think. **BY JOEL HILLIKER AND MIHAÏLO S. ZEKIC**

FROM ANCIENT ALCHEMISTS TRYING to discover the elixir of life to the fantastical legends of conquistadors searching for the fountain of youth, the pursuit of immortality has consumed mankind's ambitions for millennia.

Today, many are consulting a different kind of "magic": science.

Interest in longevity is soaring. Biotech firms like Altos Labs, backed by Jeff Bezos, and Calico, funded by Google, have poured billions of dollars into "cellular reprogramming," attempts to reset aging cells back to a younger state. Scientists are running clinical trials on repurposed drugs like rapamycin and metformin, hoping decades-old medications might double as anti-aging treatments. Wearables and at-home blood tests now promise to calculate your "biological age" down to the year.

Analysts expect the longevity industry to top \$30 billion globally this year alone, and the promises keep getting bolder: not just slower aging, but reversed aging—and some few dream, an end to aging altogether.

Could such scientific work actually yield immortal physical life?

The Pioneers

Bryan Johnson is the millionaire famous for experimenting on himself to reverse aging—strict diets, daily exercise, blood plasma transfused from his teenage son. Most recently, he announced July 21 on social media: "I just cloned myself ... as a newborn." He claims "this baby-Bryan lives in a petri dish for now" and can be used to someday harvest



its cells, blood and organs for his own rejuvenation. (Contrary to his own hype, the "clone" is more accurately described as culturing some of his own cells and experimenting on them to reverse cellular aging.)

While visiting China last year, Russian President Vladimir Putin was caught on a hot mic telling General Secretary Xi Jinping, "In a few decades, as biotechnology continues to develop, human organs will continue to be transplanted, and people will become younger and perhaps even achieve immortality." It wasn't an offhand comment. Putin is very serious about discovering a cure for death. Russia has poured roughly \$26 billion into a state program aimed at defeating aging by the end of the decade. A May 28 *Wall Street Journal* report claims the government is investing heavily in gene therapy meant to slow cellular aging, and is 3D-printing living tissue and growing human-compatible organs inside genetically modified mini-pigs. Researchers claim

to have already printed human cartilage and a mouse thyroid gland and are aiming for organ replacement by 2030.

One controversial figure in the anti-aging movement is Italian surgeon Sergio Canavero. In 2017, he claimed he would perform the world's first attempt at a human head transplant, attaching a healthy head to a body that would reanimate. Valery Spiridonov, a Russian paraplegic, volunteered for the project but later backed out. Thus far, it appears Canavero has yet to find another volunteer to have his or her head lopped off.

Scientist Ray Kurzweil, a pioneer in technologies like machine speech

"I just cloned myself ... as a newborn."

—BRYAN JOHNSON

recognition, has been advocating for advancements based more on machine enhancement. One idea is to upload human consciousnesses into computers. Israeli historian and bestselling author Yuval Noah Harari predicts that current technological trajectory will eventually enable such a scenario. Harari is no fringe scientist: He has sold 50 million copies of his books in 65 languages.

Scientific investigations into longevity and immortality are attracting a lot of attention and money. Yet the “eternal life” some of these figures are promising doesn’t sound so desirable. Harvesting organs from pigs or from your own clone? Sewing your head onto a cadaver? Uploading your mind to the cloud?

Even if you had the money and scientists had the ability, is this a future worth hoping for?

Is Science Missing Something?

Nobody wants to die, but most of us are too cavalier about caring for the bodies God gave us. Inhabiting perishable bodies, living in an ephemeral world, we pretend life is permanent.

Then, rude reality intrudes. Our bodies age and fail. Our families suffer loss. Our friends die. And still we are loath to face it. Even in intensive or hospice care, where the end of life hangs in the air, the words *die*, *dying* and *death* are almost never uttered.

Christ came “that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly” (John 10:10). We should obey God’s health laws by disciplining ourselves to eat nutritiously, exercise, sleep well, avoid injury and obey other cause-and-effect principles that produce good health. The more moderate elements of the longevity industry are promoting these kinds of practices, and rightly so. They encourage us to make choices that prioritize long-term benefits over unhealthy, short-term pleasures. There is definite merit to that.

What far too many of us do instead is live how we please and then, after getting walloped by the consequences, hunt for quick fixes. And science, more and more, is promising to provide those.

Doctors are applying the utmost of their intellectual and creative powers to pursue the fundamentally benevolent goal of giving individuals

a valuable, albeit fleeting gift: more years of precious life. More years to deepen relationships, to create memories, to share wisdom, to dare exploits, to fulfill dreams.

At the same time, most recognize that it is impossible to defy human mortality perpetually. We have no power to truly heal ourselves. And in many cases, our medical treatments, trading one set of symptoms for another, actually harm patients, diminish quality of life, and in tragic irony, hasten death. Thus they, along with patients and their families, confront agonizing choices about how much therapy to administer, treading uncertain ground, guided by probabilities and feelings.

Modern medical advances have clearly given years—of varying degrees of quality—to many people. At the same time, these advances have enabled us to put off the fundamental questions that our mortality raises. With death looming, we become preoccupied with essentially material concerns: options,

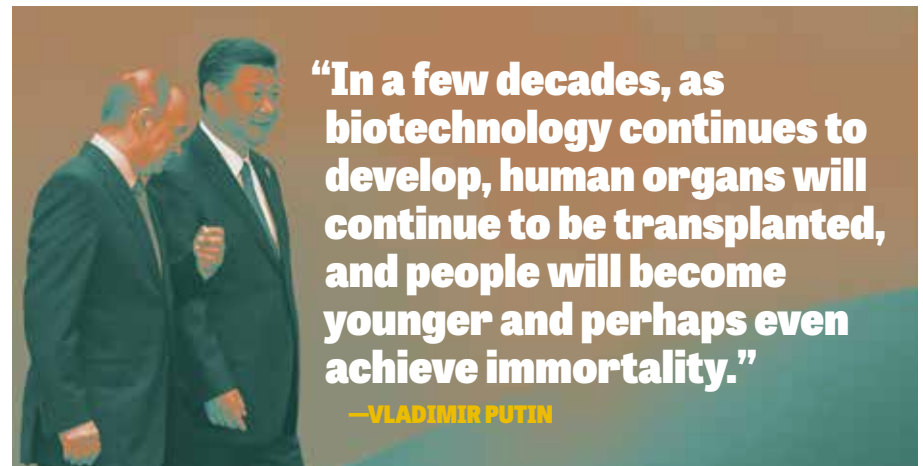
circumstances. And when that becomes a religion itself, we lose the plot.

You Can’t Outrun Biology

In July, Bryan Johnson revealed that he has been diagnosed with autoimmune gastritis, saying, “my stomach is eating itself.” The condition is rare and incurable. Johnson admitted, “[S]tandard medical care concedes defeat, stating that nothing can be done except managing the condition.”

This man has invested a fortune in not dying, about \$2 million a year. He is ruthless with his scientifically optimized nutrition, including 54 pills he takes each morning. A helmet-like device tracks his biomarkers; he gets routine bloodwork on his ferritin, iron and vitamin B12. Still, his own body was quietly destroying itself from the inside, and he doesn’t even know how long it has been happening.

Johnson posted: “Been thinking things over and wonder if I’ve taken this whole longevity thing too far.”



trade-offs, treatments, schedules, odds. For so many, the last days of life are spent not in peace, but in struggle. Ultimately, that “rage against the dying of the light,” as poet Dylan Thomas put it, always ends in defeat.

There is something remarkable, even noble, in this near-universal quality among people and all living things: We want to preserve the spark of life we possess. God intended man to live an abundant life (John 10:10) and He wishes that man take great care of his health (3 John 2). But trying to defy death altogether takes one into a whole new realm of

Now he’s on to something. Here is a man with more resources, information and motivation to defeat aging than virtually anyone alive, and his own stomach won’t cooperate.

The reality is, God built an expiration date into every physical body (Hebrews 9:27). No amount of money or expertise changes that. It can be delayed, sometimes, but never canceled.

While not as extreme as men like Johnson, Putin or Canavero, many of us go to great lengths to preserve our physical existence. When advanced age or serious health trials hit, the temptation

increases to take more radical measures, even if it means a severely degraded standard of living in exchange for a few more months on the respirator, for example. Our lives can be reduced to focusing on just one more session of treatment, just one more surgery.

Modern science promises a kind of immortality. It suggests that our energies, thoughts and money are best put toward employing every means to extend physical existence as long as possible. This is fiction. If we are not careful, this fiction can preempt the important spiritual concerns that should dominate our thinking, even our decision-making, as we contemplate the inescapability of death.

Vladimir Putin claims to be an Orthodox Christian. He encourages church involvement in state affairs, takes part in religious rituals, and brands Russia as the Christian opposition to Western godlessness. But he started his career in the atheistic Soviet Union's secret police, which suggests he is actually an atheist who is using religion as a tool to enforce his rule. He seems to have more faith in pig organs than in the God of the Bible or even his own priests.

Sadly, many people who call themselves Christian make roughly the same decisions, placing their trust in science rather than allowing questions surrounding mortality to drive them to contemplate their relationship with their Maker.

There is tremendous peace in recognizing and understanding the value of the spiritual over and above the physical. What, after all, is the real purpose of life? Using every possible means to stretch it for a few more years does nothing to answer that fundamental question.

A May 2025 Pew poll suggests

70 percent of Americans are certain or near certain about life after death. But just what that might be remains

shrouded in mystery for many people. They simply have never closely examined the subject. Maybe they are afraid to.

Real Abundant Living

"If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable," the Apostle Paul wrote relatively early in his ministry (1 Corinthians 15:19; New King James Version). At the end of his life, he wrote: "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Timothy 4:6-8).

Paul *longed to live*, just as we all do. But what he alluded to was not an empty hope of extending his physical life—but the *true* hope revealed by God in the Bible. It includes understanding God's wonderful purpose for creating man mortal and subjecting us to the trials of the flesh—an experience that He even put the other eternal God Being through (e.g. Hebrews 2:9).

Jesus Christ promised to give living water that "shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14). He was speaking of the Holy Spirit, the power of God, which He makes available to human beings upon repentance and baptism (Acts 2:38).

That Spirit is called "that holy Spirit of promise, [w]hich is the earnest of our inheritance ..." (Ephesians 1:13-14)—that of eternal life. That is God's guarantee in Scripture.

The gift of a joyous afterlife is a central teaching of Christianity. This theme is prominent from the Bible's beginning, when Adam's disobedience led God to cut man off from the tree of life (Genesis 3:22-24), to its end where it speaks of the tree of life being made available to all people (Revelation 22:1-2).

Eternal life is the prerogative and glorious gift of *our Creator!*

God never intended for men to live forever physically because it would

not be *good* for men to live forever physically. The late theologian Herbert W. Armstrong wrote in *Mystery of the Ages*: "At that very foundation of Satan's world it was also decreed (Hebrews 9:27) that God had appointed that all humans should die once, and after that, by resurrection from the dead, would come the judgment. Meanwhile mankind as a whole would not as yet be brought to judgment—neither condemned nor saved. It was at that time decided that as in Adam all humans should die, so in Christ the same 'all' should be brought back to life by a resurrection to judgment (1 Corinthians 15:22)."

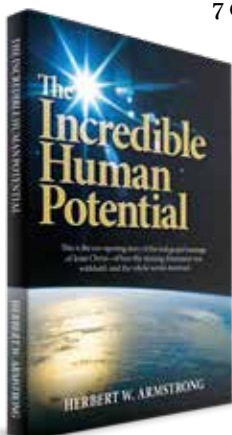
The Bible reveals that God's purpose is to bring humanity into His Family! It's an existence of such joy that the material world could never compare with it. Christ said, "It is the spirit that quickeneth [gives life]; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63).

Mr. Armstrong wrote, "Philosophers think of human worth as of supreme value in itself alone. They speak of 'human dignity.' ... Much to the contrary, the sole value of human life lies in the human spirit and the potential of being begotten of God, later to be born VERY GOD, a child in the GOD FAMILY. ...

"Therefore, man of himself is infinitesimally of less value than the self-professed wise of this world suppose. But, once begotten by the Supreme God through the very LIFE and Spirit of the living God dwelling in him, a human being's potential is of infinitely greater value than the world has understood" (ibid).

None of us can outrun our own biology. The true hope of Scripture is not about the "miracles" of medical intervention. It is the promise of RESURRECTION. It is the promise that, "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall ALL be made alive"—and that ultimately, "[t]he last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (1 Corinthians 15:22, 26). Human death means nothing to God except a *temporary sleep* (verses 51-55), because God can resurrect humans from the grave!

In whom do you put your trust for immortal life? Is it in a mad scientist who offers surgeries and chips in your brain? Or is it in God who created you to have eternal life together with Him? ■



Man can have immortality!

Find out what the Bible says your future can be—request Herbert W. Armstrong's free book ***The Incredible Human Potential***.



Should You Join a Church?

Is there only one true Church of God? Don't answer based on what *seems* right but on what the Bible says. **TRUMPET STAFF**

DOES GOD CARE WHICH church you join, or whether you join any at all?

Does He lead all of them?
Does He lead any of them?

Are there false churches?

Are true Christians dispersed in many different groups? Will God save the “righteous” from disconnected church groups? Or is there *only one* true Church of God?

Beware False Churches

Christians are to follow Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:21; 1 John 2:6), and He warned that *false churches* would arise, claiming to speak in His name. “Take heed that no man deceive you,” He told His disciples. “For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many” (Matthew 24:4-5). Many people today *claim* to be Christian. They *proclaim* Christ. Yet they *deceive* many!

The Apostle Paul also warned against “false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if *his ministers* also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness ...” (2 Corinthians 11:13-15). Did you know that Satan has ministers?

To discern a false minister or a false

church, you must know the teachings of Jesus Christ. If you casually accept a church's teaching because it sounds right, you will be led astray. Follow the example of the Bereans: *Search the Scriptures* to check whether what you're hearing matches the Bible (Acts 17:11). “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (1 Thessalonians 5:21).

Jesus prophesied of false Christian churches. But He also promised that His Church, which He personally founded, would always exist. “... I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH,” He said, “and the gates of hell [the grave] shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18). If you believe Jesus, you know that His true Church exists somewhere on Earth today!

The Purpose of God's Church

To recognize that Church, you need to understand the *purpose* for which Christ founded it.

This may shock you, but the Bible clearly shows that the Church's purpose is NOT to help God “save the world.” Jesus made no attempt to gain converts or to invite people to “give their hearts to Him” or to “accept Him as their personal Savior.” Instead, He “called out” 12 disciples, or students. He gave them special instruction but *HID* the truth from almost everyone else!

He gave much of His teaching to the crowds *in parables*. Why? When His disciples asked Him that very question, He answered, “Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but *to them it is not given*. ... Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand” (Matthew 13:11, 13).

Christ was not trying to make the truth more understandable to the public—He was *hiding* the truth from them! He spoke in symbol and code to the crowds; then He explained the *meaning* of His parables in private to

the 12 disciples, those few “called out” students. He told them, “But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them” (verses 16-17).

Study this whole passage and think about the fact that Jesus gave true spiritual understanding to only a handful of disciples. That alone exposes a lot of common misconceptions regarding the purpose of the Church.

‘All Men’

God yearns to save *ALL MEN*, not just a few (1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9). Jesus was grieved when He saw the spiritual destitution of His day. He *wanted* to help the masses. He did all He could to minister to them and heal them (Matthew 9:35-38). But His purpose at that time was *not* to save them all spiritually. If it were, then you would have to admit that He failed!

Throughout His earthly ministry, Jesus preached to thousands upon thousands. Yet at the end of His human life, how many had committed to following Him? How many true students did He have?

Acts 1:15 reveals the stunning answer: only 120 people!

Jesus referred to those few He was working with as a “little flock” (Luke

12:32). And so God's true Church has remained throughout the centuries.

The *rest of the world* was cut off from God—and still is!

The Bible shows that God has a master plan for saving the world—"all men," including all people who have ever lived. This inspiring truth is revealed in scriptures from Genesis to Revelation. As 2 Peter 3:9 says, God is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." God and Christ have indeed excluded most human beings for most of history from even *knowing* about Jesus Christ, let alone accepting Him as their Savior. They have allowed false churches to deceive many. Yet they have a plan to give ALL mankind the opportunity to come to the knowledge of the truth, to repent and to be saved!

This plan of salvation—the biblical plan of salvation taught by the one true Church of God—is more inclusive than any other church or religion can even imagine!

But this universalist phase of God's plan comes *after* Christ's Second Coming. *Before* that time, God calls out a small number of people to prepare for that phase. That is the purpose of the true Church!

Churches that are ignorant of this fundamental biblical truth are not led by Jesus Christ and will lead you into serious error!

Christ never prophesied that His Church would become a large, impressive, politically powerful church ruling over the nations before His return. In fact, Jesus promised that those in His true Church—far from being more respected in the community, having business opportunities enhanced, gaining more friends, or rising in social status—would be *hated, persecuted* and perhaps even *killed* (John 15:18-19; 16:2).

No wonder the true Church is a "little flock"! It is a small group of sincere, converted people whom God has *called out* of the world, who have repented and forsaken this world. It is a small, generally scorned body of believers who are doing the work of God.

God's Church has "little strength" (Revelation 3:8). It is a group empowered by Christ, united in beliefs, and under God's government on Earth, but it is also scattered. It is largely unnoticed by the world. Yet as this verse shows, God sets

open doors before it—of mass media and other means—to carry His warning message and the gospel of the soon-coming Kingdom of God to the *whole world* as a last witness.

God is not using every professing Christian to spread the gospel; He has a specific government structure in place to do that.

Connected to Christ

In 1 Corinthians 12, an analogy is made between the human BODY and God's Church. "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ" (verse 12). What a clear, perfect explanation: Just as a human body consists of many parts and organs, God's one true Church is comprised of many individual members, "yet but one body" (verse 20).

This "one body" does not consist of many independent, isolated individuals, people who consider themselves Christian or part of God's true Church but who *choose not to affiliate or assemble with the organized Body* of God's Church. They may believe they are united with Jesus, but they are not part of the unified spiritual Body of which Christ is the Head! They are not receiving that spiritual nourishment that comes only through Christ's government via His chosen, faithful ministers.

We cannot be connected to Christ unless we are connected to His government on Earth. One of Christ's parables paints a similar picture.

In John 15, Jesus describes God the Father as the owner of a vineyard, Himself as the one single "true vine," and the individual members of the Church as the branches. This analogy portrays the Body of Christ, the Church of God, as united and organized, not a collection of "loner Christians" and disparate groups. The one true Vine is not several separate vines. And the individual members are all joined to that one Vine.

To be part of Christ's vine, you must be connected to God's government. "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers ..." (1 Corinthians 12:28). God places government in His Church! Unless we follow those whom God puts in charge, we are not connected to His

government and are thus cut off from the Vine, Jesus Christ.

Matthew 16:18 states that God's true Church would be founded on the Rock—Jesus Christ Himself. God's true Church is actively ruled by Christ as the Head. This Rock is the foundation of government in the Church.

Verse 19 shows that Christ did give authority to Peter, who assumed the role of chief apostle at the beginning of the Church (Acts 2:14). But "the head of the body, the church" was and is Christ (Colossians 1:18).

Jesus Christ actively leads His Church, directing a human leader through the Bible, revelation and the power of God's Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ is coming in the flesh through that individual (1 John 4:2-3). That human leader exercises authority not as he sees fit but rather as he is directed by Christ.

Government Creates Unity

Ephesians 4:11-13 also describe this government structure and explicitly say that His chosen and faithful ministers are there "for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the *unity of the faith*"

Without government, there is doctrinal confusion—the opposite of unity. Satan is the author of confusion. God, by contrast, "is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints" (1 Corinthians 14:33).

God's ministers watch over the Church members and "must give account" to God in how they do so. Thus, it is important that the members "[o]bey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves ..." (Hebrews 13:17). We must obey those who rule over us. This means there is government, and that government teaches law-keeping.

Mr. Armstrong wrote of this verse in *Mystery of the Ages*, "The churches of this world of Satan are organized according to humanly devised patterns. But the Bible gives explicit directions in regard to Church government. Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church. God's form of government is, indeed, hierarchical. God the Father—the sole Lawgiver and supreme authority—is Head over Christ.

"God explains in 1 Corinthians 12 functions, offices, administrations and their officers as God set them in His Church."

From God the Father to Jesus Christ, to the man He uses, to the leaders who support that man, to the individual members, to husbands and fathers, to wives and mothers and to children—God’s government is effective, just, constructive and essential.

Many churches today admit that they experiment with church governance. Some churches have “top-down” government structures, with one man having final authority—but they are led by *those men*, not by Christ. This limits division but results in *tyranny*—in the name of Christ. Other churches have government structures that involve “bottom-up” voting, or rule by a small group, or some other form of rule besides “top-down.” This limits tyranny but produces *division*.

Practices like *voting* on what to believe push Jesus Christ aside. He is not the living Head of those churches!

Only the true Church of God has the government of God: top-down, *God Family government* led by Jesus Christ, motivated by God’s love, and empowered by God’s Holy Spirit.

In the early Church, challenges and disputes arose that had to be settled by those in authority in the Church. The most famous such challenge is recorded in Acts 15. Unordained men, affected by their previous erroneous religious teaching, had begun to divide the Body of Christ. It became necessary to bring this matter to the topmost authority at headquarters in Jerusalem (verses 1-2). It was Peter, *the chief apostle*, who made the decision (verses 7-11). James, pastor of the Jerusalem congregation where they were meeting, confirmed Peter’s decision publicly, thus resolving the dispute (verses 13-21). This decision was binding on all. It was inspired by God.

There are “differences of administrations” (1 Corinthians 12:5), but all the apostles submitted to the same government and to the same binding decisions that the chief apostle made. Paul, apostle over the Gentiles, had to make judgments for the churches he oversaw, and so did the other apostles. But never did God’s true apostles teach different doctrines from those that Christ taught, as the churches of this world do! They were united by God’s government, not divided into separate organizations doing their own work.

God gives His ministry authority to serve people and relieve suffering caused by living the wrong way of life. They exercise that authority to back and support the message of God that can bring hope to people’s lives.

God calls each member and places him or her in the Body, within this organizational structure, where it pleases Him (John 6:44; 1 Corinthians 12:18, 28).

Keeping the unity of the faith is an important job of Church government. Through God’s government, God preserves the unity of the Church. It is the *only* way unity *can* be preserved. It helps to overcome obstacles, settle disputes and reach decisions. Without it, there would be confusion. There could be no smoothly functioning Body nor effective work of God. Jesus Christ would not be its Head.

True Christians learn a lot by coming under God’s government today. It *perfects* those who submit to it. God uses it

Churches that are ignorant of this fundamental biblical truth are not led by Christ and will lead you into serious error.

to *serve* His people (Luke 22:25-27). Paul described God’s ministers as “helpers of your joy” (2 Corinthians 1:24). Authority in God’s Church is not to be abused or used to control people’s lives.

God’s people are admonished to esteem the officers of God’s Church highly (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13). This does not mean exalting the physical man, who is a sinner like everyone else, but the office, which is ordained of God.

No other ecclesiastical institution stresses the importance of godly, righteous government like God’s Church does. God’s rule extends into every aspect of our lives. It is how He establishes and preserves order, purity and unity. It enables God’s work on Earth, including the preaching of the good news of God’s soon-coming Kingdom.

Isaiah 9:6-7 is a prophecy of Jesus Christ—and of the government of God: “Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end ...”!

Need You Attend Services?

God instructs true Christians not to forsake the assembling of themselves together (Hebrews 10:25). The New Testament records true Christians meeting together in fellowship with other believers. Yes, for numerous reasons, the Creator of human beings *wants* us “going to church.”

Further, the Bible says clearly and repeatedly that true Christians must “speak the same thing” and have “no divisions among you,” and that they must be “perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” God does *not* have His followers dispersed among various groups with conflicting beliefs. He requires them to be *united*—as unified as God and Jesus Christ are! Read Jesus’s prayer in John 17.

This is a very different picture from the reality of “Christianity” today, which is splintered into tens of thousands of denominations.

These are easily provable truths in your Bible that disprove what a great many people carelessly assume about church attendance. The fact is, most people simply do not study deeply into what the Bible says. What about you?

Jesus Christ said in Matthew 18:20: “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” We do want to have Christ in our midst. But can just anyone gather in His name and claim this promise?

What does Christ mean by gathering together “in my name”? He means we gather *by His authority*. For example, when we baptize “in the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 2:38), we do so by His authority. Jesus doesn’t authorize any group of His converts to hold meetings on their own, outside the government within His Church—doing so would be acting contrary to Christ’s authority.

The Old Testament established not only that people should worship God each week but also that they should do so in a “holy convocation.” Leviticus 23:1-4 show the pattern God uses: He commanded His ministers to convoke assemblies, or order meetings. He tells us on which days to meet, and He tells His ministers to convey when and where those convocations will be held. It is all God’s doing, not man’s.

Only God's true Church can claim to have the authority of Jesus Christ to call weekly assemblies and to have God among them. No other church can make this claim on scriptural grounds. Everyone has the responsibility to prove this for himself (1 Thessalonians 5:21). Our booklet *Can You Prove Which Church Is God's?* (free upon request) points our readers to the many critical scriptures in this study.

Can You Join God's Church?

Perhaps you want to attend God's Church—but where is it? How can you join it?

Believe it or not, the Bible says you cannot simply decide to "join" God's true Church!

Jesus Christ said, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me *draw him ...*" (John 6:44). The Apostle Paul wrote, "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him" (1 Corinthians 12:18). This means it is *impossible* for you to choose to join the true Church of God. God the Father must specifically *call* you—draft you—and *set* you in the Body of Christ!

In fact, the very word the New Testament uses for *church* is the Greek word *ekklesia*, which means a group of *called-out* ones.

These are just a few of the most basic truths you must prove for yourself—straight from your own Bible—*before* you start attending a church!

The questions of whether you should attend a church and which church is the true Church of God are much deeper and *much more important* than the vast majority of Christians assume.

You must prove for yourself the answers to these vital questions. You must use the Bible and the words of Jesus Christ to understand the truth. ■

Don't listen to any man—find what God says.

Which church is God's? Is there only one church? Get the Bible-based answers in *Can You Prove Which Church Is God's?*



► CONUNDRUM FROM PAGE 15

The popular current television series *Babylon Berlin* depicts the capital city during Germany's Weimar Republic in 1929. Producers recognized the biblical and the historical accounts of the ancient city as a perfect description of Weimar Berlin. "This Berlin is a Moloch; sin, corruption and violence lurk around every corner, as in the myth surrounding the biblical city," cultural journalist Jens Balkenborg noted. The Bible calls Babylon a "whore" because of the imperial capital city's gross immorality.

Little do these producers know how accurate their description is. Ancient Babylon was founded by Nimrod (Genesis 10) as "a hotbed of corruption and immorality" (*Good News*, April 1980). Nimrod, in a relationship with his own mother, invented a morally corrupt religion that led to a morally corrupt people. Ever since, Babylon in the Bible has stood for false religion mixed with corrupt politics and immorality.

Asshur worked closely with Nimrod. Asshur's descendants, the warlike Assyrians, adopted Babylon's system. Assyria's German descendants share its qualities (request a free copy of *Germany and the Holy Roman Empire*).

The Bible describes not only the sins of ancient Babylon, but also the immoralities of our modern day that adopted the same system. Revelation 18 prophesies of the fall of this all-engulfing Babylonian system and pleads with the people of our generation: "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (verse 4).

Germany's Babylonian perversion is fertile ground for the fulfillment of a key Bible prophecy. When "the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up," Daniel 8:23 prophesies for the end time. This leader is also called a "vile person" in Daniel 11:21. The sins of our world, of America and Britain and also of Germany, are enabling the rise of this man.

Trumpet editor in chief Gerald Flurry explained in the January 2025 issue: "Moffatt says this 'vile person' is 'a despicable creature.' This terrible man is about to take control!" ■

► GAMBLING FROM PAGE 25

countries like the UK apply brakes to a runaway gambling problem. Some fear that it's already too late for these brakes in America: The gambling companies are now too wealthy, and too few have the principles or integrity to refuse the kind of cash they can throw around.

A return to banning sports gambling and prediction markets would help. But the gambling sites aren't entirely wrong when they point out that with modern technology, Americans would use offshore and illegal sites to gamble anyway—albeit in smaller numbers than they do now, when bombarded with ads and endorsements.

But none of these fully address the root. Nor do they explain why we shifted away from the statewide bans we had in the first place. Once smartphones arrived and new profits were unlocked, our laws and our principles quickly crumbled.

A wider solution gets back to that uncompromising approach to law: maintaining unchanging principles that we will not compromise no matter how much money is on the table.

That is the biggest need this gambling crisis exposes. America needs law. Not just laws, regulations and governing bodies—but unchanging principles that we prize more highly than any amount of cash.

That's a bigger, broader and harder change than going toe-to-toe with Big Gambling and passing stricter laws. Nevertheless, it is a change that can begin with individuals and families—people who will hold the line even when society does not.

The NFL gave in to the allure of Las Vegas cash. Will you? ■

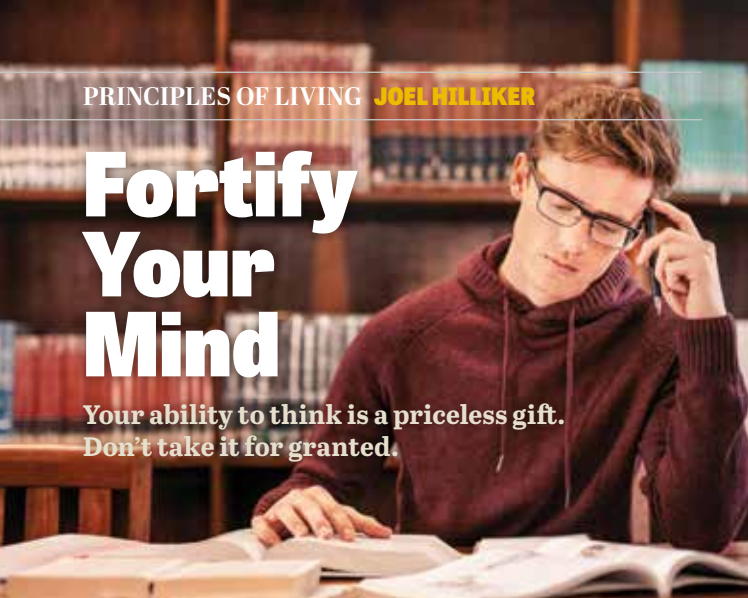
God's law works!

The growing problems associated with gambling prove an invaluable truth: *God's law is still in effect.* Obeying God's eternal spiritual law brings blessings; breaking it inevitably leads to curses for us individually and as a society. Our free booklet *The Ten Commandments* explains why God's law forbids gambling and more and that His law was given entirely for our benefit!



Fortify Your Mind

Your ability to think is a priceless gift.
Don't take it for granted.



GOD IS THE DEEPEST THINKER IN THE UNIVERSE. His thoughts are profound, poetic, purposeful, disciplined, structured, mathematical, full of love and passion. And He created the human mind. Though His thoughts are far above our thoughts (Isaiah 55:8-9), He created us for the very purpose of elevating our thoughts to *think like Him* (e.g. 1 Corinthians 2:7-16).

“Come now, and let us REASON TOGETHER, saith the Lord ...” (Isaiah 1:18). God created you to think and reason, to engage with the creation and the people around you, with the physical, with the spiritual, with your Creator. What a thrilling purpose and potential you have, possessing the gift of the human mind! God created you to experience moments when you can feel your mind being stretched, when you understand something new for the first time, when your heart wells with excitement, when your attitude changes and grows, when you yearn and ache as you awaken to eternal truths.

This is what makes *mindlessness* so tragic and wasteful. In modern society, more and more of us are thoughtlessly giving our minds over to distraction, fragmentation, immediate pleasures and sensations, emotions, vanity and stupidity. We are interacting with our phones and other devices hundreds of times a day, consuming memes, short-form videos and other content that distracts, destroys attention, lowers alertness, impairs memory, makes us shallow and manipulatable.

Your mind is suffering the effects of mental and spiritual weapons of mass distraction. *You must fight back.*

On your side is your Creator, who made you for a life of noticing, perceiving, concentrating, scrutinizing, remembering, analyzing, synthesizing, calculating, processing, digesting, understanding—a life of truth, beauty, love, peace and joy. On the attack, sometimes overt but often subtle, is a force that wants to waste your mind with shallowness, vanity, selfishness, emptiness, superficiality, clutter, fantasy, addiction and evil. This force is more intentional and powerful than you can imagine, and if he succeeds, you will squander your God-like capacity for thinking, for reasoning with God, for achieving your purpose and potential.

Don't be ignorant of Satan's devices (2 Corinthians 2:11). Few realize it, but he is “the god of this world” who has “blinded the

minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them” (2 Corinthians 4:4). The gospel of Christ is glorious, full of light that God wants to shine into our lives. Satan works to blind you to that, to obscure it, to draw you away from it.

Throughout this epistle, the Apostle Paul conveys the *glory* of God's mind and of the life He wants for you. He warns us that sinful thoughts constrict and limit us, and *he tells us to fight.*

One principle Paul gives is to avoid what draws us away from God. Read the plain admonition in 2 Corinthians 6:14-18—to *come out* of the filthiness of this world and build a *clean mind* and *clean life*—along with the beautiful promise that, if you do so, God will dwell with you in spirit and be a Father to you! “Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God,” he writes (2 Corinthians 7:1). That is very practical instruction in fortifying your mind. Eliminate what sabotages you mentally and spiritually to free up space for God.

Here is more, a few chapters later: “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:3-5). Yes, you are in a *war* for your mind—a war God wants you to win.

Satan has *strongholds* in your mind: imaginations, or reasonings; proud, elevated ideas and arguments contrary to the knowledge of God. He has *filled society* with them: lies about what is truly important, what constitutes success, how to attain happiness, what is right and what is wrong. He has drawn people into self-destructive sins and addictions and has dulled and handicapped our ability to use our God-given minds for godly purposes. You must recognize those influences to fight them.

How easily we harbor vain reasonings, wrong ideas, ungodly emotions—or let our minds go without being especially aware of what we are thinking. Do your thoughts ever get away from you? Do you ever have unhealthy, ungodly thoughts or destructive emotions you can't shake?

We need to enlist God's help to cast down those strongholds! He has mighty weapons to topple those wrong thoughts, fortresses and strongholds of sin in our thinking. God wants us to direct our *every thought* to obey Christ. We must be asking Him to empower us with weapons of mental discipline and then make use of them!

God commands us to *come out* of this empty, inattentive and distracted world (Revelation 18:4). *Fight* screen addiction and social media shallowness. Clean out the mental clutter to clear space for the riches of God. Fortify your mind against the ubiquitous devices of the god of this world. Protect it at all costs, and exercise it for good. Your Creator has so much glorious meaning and experience and joy to give you as you reason together with Him! ■

Learn about the human spirit and the Spirit of God in your free copy of **What Science Can't Discover About the Human Mind** at theTrumpet.com/go/wsci.



EUROPE

Germany is increasingly gaining the trust of its World War II enemies.

Britain and Germany are shifting into a new “golden age” of military cooperation, the *Telegraph* reported on July 21: “Sources familiar with Britain’s defense strategy say they have cast aside a Cold War-era view of Germany as passive and ineffectual.” The “crown jewel” of this new golden age is a new long-range missile. The project will “probably draw on a combination of German funding and British expertise,” the *Telegraph* wrote. The cooperation is flourishing: German firearms-maker Heckler & Koch acquired a United Kingdom-based precision-machining firm in February; German AI defense company Helsing opened a factory in the UK to produce autonomous underwater surveillance systems; and Rheinmetall opened a new plant last year to produce the main gun for Britain’s upcoming Challenger 3 main battle tank.

Canada is moving in the same direction, selecting ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems for its largest military procurement contract in history. The Royal Canadian Navy will buy up to 12 attack submarines worth up to \$100 billion from the German-Norwegian consortium, Prime Minister **Mark Carney** announced July 6.

France is preparing to extend its nuclear umbrella over Germany. On July 16, two nuclear-capable French Rafale jets and two German Eurofighter jets participated in the first joint air drill between the two nations. The next day, German Chancellor **Friedrich Merz** and French President

Emmanuel Macron joined the Franco-German Defense and Security Council for a meeting at the Nörvenich military airfield near Cologne, Germany. Macron said the meeting added a “new dynamic” to the creation of a “powerful Europe which unites our strengths.”

The Bible prophesies that Germany will abuse this trust, as explained in **“Aiding the Enemy.”***

While gaining the trust of Western allies, Germany is secretly maintaining ties with **Russia.** Germany’s *Die Zeit* and ARD Kontraste exclusively revealed on July 16 that a **secret meeting between former German and Russian officials took place July 12–14 in Azerbaijan.** At a joint press conference with Merz on July 21, Azerbaijani President **Ilham Aliyev** confirmed: “Our territory was used for such a meeting without our knowledge.” There have been at least four meetings in Baku and Abu Dhabi since Russia’s 2022 invasion of **Ukraine.**

In June, Russian President **Vladimir Putin** also held a private meeting with former German Chancellor **Gerhard Schröder.**



The German government denies involvement in the meetings, but Germany and Russia have a history of secretly working together. *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry has warned that they will plot once more against America and Britain. Read **“Germany’s Secret Deal With Russia—Exposed.”**

Overnight on August 4 and 5, **a drone carrying an explosive device was discovered at Leipzig/Halle Airport in Germany.** Another drone struck a plane as it was aborting its landing. The airport serves as a hub for military logistics

supporting Ukraine and NATO allies. Investigators believe the target was a Ukrainian Antonov cargo aircraft. German officials described the incident as a new and more dangerous category of security threat. Russia appears to be the most likely culprit.

Germany is conducting “active research and development work” with “a nuclear weapons focus,” the press bureau of the Foreign Intelligence Service of Russia warned on July 20. The report claims that “the relevant ministries of one of the key NATO states are expressing concern” as well.

History teaches the drastic, worldwide consequences that result from German and Russian military ambitions.

[THETRUMPET.COM/MORE/EUROPE](http://thetrumpet.com/more/europe)



MIDDLE EAST

United States envoy **Massad Boulos** outlined in a June 17 *Financial Times* article **United States’ mediation efforts to unify Libya’s two rival factions,** which have been governing eastern and western Libya separately since 2020. The current plan would give the factions’ leading families key positions in one central government. A central provision of this plan is opening up Libya to American oil companies. Libya has Africa’s largest proven oil reserves, but its political situation has made the oil difficult to extract. With U.S. encouragement, Conoco-Phillips and Chevron made arrangements with Libya early this year. Boulos said he believes American investment could “put Libya on the global map of major oil producers.” It appears

U.S. President **Donald Trump** is trying to repeat what he did in **Venezuela** and use peace talks to turn Libya into a U.S. ally.

Daniel 11:40–43 prophesy that Libya will ally with **Iran,** the end-time “king of the south.” (Gerald Flurry explains this in his free booklet ***The King of the South***.) Trump believes he can bring peace to Libya and turn it into an American partner. But Bible prophecy states that control of Libya will eventually fall to his main enemy in the Middle East: Iran.

On July 13, the *New York Times* and *Haaretz* reported that **Israel had been grooming former Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad as its puppet to take over Iran.** Ahmadinejad, who ran the government under Supreme Leader Ayatollah **Ali Khamenei** from 2005 to 2013, had apparently split with Iran’s current leadership over corruption issues and had been targeted





for cultivation by Israel since at least 2023. When Israel started its bombing campaign against Iran on February 28 with the U.S., it was reportedly hoping amid the chaos to install Ahmadinejad. Once the plan was exposed, Iranian authorities placed him under house arrest by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

Ahmadinejad is a curious choice for the job. He has said "Zionists are a cancerous tumor" and called for a Middle East where there would be "no trace" of a Jewish state in the Holy Land. There is no indication he has changed his beliefs in Islamic radicalism or end-time theology. The Iranian threat has no easy solution, yet propping up someone like Ahmadinejad to take over is a horrible option. God told the Jews' forefathers in Jeremiah 17:5-8 that trusting in man to solve national and personal problems results in curses, while trusting in Him leads to blessings. This is the

lesson God wants the State of Israel and all mankind to learn.

Israeli Prime Minister **Benjamin Netanyahu** announced on August 9 that "Israel does not accept" the 15-point peace plan for Gaza drawn up by the U.S. The plan requires Israel to



withdraw its forces in exchange for **Hamas** storing its weapons in Gaza under the watch of other Palestinian forces, which Hamas would have no trouble infiltrating. Netanyahu said Israel "will not carry out any withdrawal until Hamas is disarmed." He has tried to maintain good relations with President Trump even as the president has pressured him to accept dangerous peace agreements with the Palestinians who massacred his people on Oct. 7, 2023. The August 9 announcement shows Netanyahu is getting bolder and perhaps immovable in standing up to Trump.

[THETRUMPET.COM/MORE/MIDDLE-EAST](http://thetrumpet.com/more/middle-east)

ASIA

Russia and China conducted joint naval patrols July 13-29 that strengthened their ability to project a combined military force far from their own shores and to challenge control of the world's critical sea lanes. The "Maritime Cooperation 2026" patrol began off the coast of Qingdao in China's Shandong province, with a force consisting of guided-missile destroyers as well as a comprehensive supply vessel and naval corvette. They conducted drills in and around the Miyako, Etorofu and Soya straits and in key littoral areas of the western Pacific, Sea of Okhotsk and the Sea of Japan. These areas contain some of East Asia's most strategically important maritime corridors. Biblical prophecy shows that these emerging capabilities will ultimately be weaponized against the United States and some of its allies. Read "**Preparing to Storm America's Castle.**"

Japan must further strengthen its national defense to counter China's rapidly expanding reach into the Pacific, Japan's Defense Ministry said in a white paper released on August 4. Describing China as "an unprecedented and ... greatest strategic challenge" to Japan's security, the paper said that the Japanese must not only increase military spending but also build a more robust defense industrial base and bolster its military alliances. This is the latest evidence showing that Japan and China's rivalry is intensifying, driving each to further strengthen its military. Yet prophecy reveals that these two nations will ultimately unite



under Russia, as our free booklet **Russia and China in Prophecy** explains.

North Korea is deploying a missile unit to Russia that will soon enter the war against Ukraine, Reuters reported on August 5, citing Ukraine's military intelligence agency. The unit consists of 90 military personnel operating six missile launchers, armed with an initial arsenal of 120 ballistic missiles. The development is particularly ominous for Ukraine, which is critically short of advanced air defenses. Since late 2023, North Korea has supplied Russia with vast quantities of artillery shells and other munitions. Since 2024, it has provided ballistic missiles and troops. At least 14,000 North Korean soldiers have been sent to fight alongside Russian forces. Biblical prophecy warns of a colossal multinational Asian force led by Russia that will include China and several smaller Asian nations, including North Korea.

[THETRUMPET.COM/MORE/ASIA](http://thetrumpet.com/more/asia)



ANGLO-AMERICA

Andy Burnham became Britain's prime minister on July 20, replacing Sir Keir Starmer and becoming the nation's seventh head of government since the Brexit referendum 10 years ago. Britain faces heavy debt, high immigration and record levels of crime. In the 1970s, the nation suffered 25 percent inflation, top tax rates of 83 percent, and a three-day workweek caused by strikes. Margaret Thatcher reversed that decline. Yet Burnham has said he wants to undo many of her policies.

On June 23, three candidates backed by the Democratic Socialists of America won Democratic primaries in New York. All three oppose Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the U.S. provision of military aid to Israel. These results show U.S. voters rejecting what is left of the biblical virtues that helped make

America a free and prosperous nation.

On July 29, Dr.

Anthony Fauci, the former director of the National Institute of

Allergy and Infectious Diseases,

appeared before a Senate committee under subpoena. He repeatedly refused to answer questions about the origins of COVID-19, citing the Fifth Amendment. Sen. **Rand Paul** argued that a preemptive pardon from former President **Joe Biden** meant Fauci should testify rather than invoking his right not to testify against, and possibly incriminate, himself. Nearly 400 pages of documents released by former Director of National Intelligence **Tulsi Gabbard** indicate Fauci helped fund gain-of-function research at a Chinese lab, worked to downplay the lab-leak theory, and denied under oath that he was involved.

On June 30, the Supreme Court struck down President Trump's executive order that would have ended birthright citizenship for children of illegal immigrants and

temporary visitors. In a 6-3 decision in *Trump v. Barbara*, the majority said the 14th Amendment requires citizenship for almost everyone born on U.S. soil. Justices **Clarence Thomas** and **Neil Gorsuch** said

the majority-opinion justices had their history wrong. Justice **Samuel Alito** called the ruling a serious mistake that encourages illegal entry. The decision keeps borders open, matching Bible prophecies about broken border defenses (Deuteronomy 28:52; Isaiah 59:14).

The worst drought in 1,200 years is fueling wildfires across the American West. In late June, 79 fires burned in 10 states. Utah's Cottonwood Fire burned nearly 100,000 acres and destroyed about 150 buildings. A warm, dry winter and long-term drought had turned grass and trees into fuel. Tree-ring studies show the



The water reservoir behind the Glen Canyon Dam in Page, Arizona, is only 27 percent full.

years 2000–2018 were among the driest in the Southwest in a millennium. The Bible links such droughts to curses that come when modern Israel turns away from God (Leviticus 26:19).

[THETRUMPET.COM/MORE/ANGLO-AMERICA](https://theTrumpet.com/more/anglo-america)



I sure have enjoyed this magazine. A lot of what has been put in here has come to life.

Rachel Updegraff MISSOURI

Your magazine is what started our Christian book club! We have a new member who was really interested in “**Why Is God Protecting This Man?**” (September 2024). She does not go to a church, but she comes to the book club to read the magazine. There are 10 of us who meet, all from different backgrounds and nationalities. The messages we hear at church only tell us about how we feel, and not what is actually going on this world.

Carolyn Matlock OHIO

The July issue is especially excellent—research, writing style, and “to the point” articles.

Edward Durr OKLAHOMA



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Our Whole World Is Sick

Bird flu on a remote island is a symptom of a larger epidemic.

H EARD ISLAND IS THE DEFINITION OF THE TERM FAR. SITUATED about 2,500 miles southwest of the Australian mainland, and 1,056 miles north of Antarctica, the windswept volcanic island, encrusted with glaciers amid the foaming, dark and vast ocean, is about as “far” from man’s touch as you can get. Or so you might suppose.

At the beginning of the year, scientists returning to the island made a horrific discovery: 13,000 baby elephant seals were dead—75 percent of the entire population. In some areas, 95 percent had died.

Heard Island is an example of how far-reaching are the consequences of man rejecting God.

Bird flu had arrived on the island. Scientists theorize that a migratory bird carried the H5N1 disease to the remote location in August.

First discovered in China in 1996, H5N1 has spread to all areas of the globe. As highly transmissible as the disease is, it still shocked me that such a pathogen could reach such a remote location.

It reminded me of God’s diagnosis of our world just before the return of His Son: “Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint” (Isaiah 1:5).

This sickness refers primarily to the descendants of Israel and our moral decay, but *every* aspect of humanity is sick. Nothing in our world remains untouched by our rejection of God.

It takes 6 to 10 weeks for an expedition to reach the pinnacle of Mount Everest. What do you find on the top of this planet’s highest mountain? A garbage dump! Go farther. Look to outer space. Fewer than 1,000 people have been there, yet orbital debris is becoming so thick that it is a genuine risk to future space travel.

Look closer to home and you see the same corruption taking place. Our lives are saturated with corruption.

The air we breathe is full of noxious fumes. The food we eat is laced with microplastics and sprayed with insecticides. Our perfumes are carcinogenic. The shirt on your back is interwoven with chemicals.

It is not happenstance. Be it as close as inside your own body or the outer reaches of human space travel, you will find some type of pollution. Why is this corruption so pervasive?

It is the result of our decision to turn our backs on God.

“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” (verse 4). That last statement might be better translated “turned their backs on him” (New Living Translation). And what have we turned to? Our own ways. That is, the way of the *current* ruler of this world: Satan the devil (2 Corinthians 4:4).

God placed man in the Garden of Eden to dress and to keep it, and, by extension, to maintain the world over which he was given dominion. Yet Adam rejected that mandate and opportunity, as have each of his children, and our world and our bodies show the effects of those decisions.

In a May 2022 *Key of David* program, *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry stated: “Adam just succumbed to Satan’s way of choosing. *OK, we kind of like that. We can do our own thing. We can have our own religion, our own government, our own science. And hey, we don’t have to submit to God!* And look what that has done! Just look around at this Earth in this end time and see what has happened! Man cannot rule over man! That’s the lesson He’s teaching us, the hard way, and people don’t understand that! We’re in captivity to the devil! Because we’ve rejected God, throughout the ages, really.”

“From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment” (Isaiah 1:6).

It is little wonder that the Apostle Paul was inspired to write, “For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now” (Romans 8:22). The creation is yearning for a healing, for the intervention of its Creator. Are you?

Run a diagnosis: Our world is sick, morally, socially, economically and spiritually! We are at death’s door! Unless God intervenes, there can be only one outcome.

“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 24:22).

God will halt the destruction for the sake of those who repent and are converted, who prepare for the coming liberation of our world.

Are you groaning and travailing for a world that is different from our sick society? The only way to treat this sickness is to treat the root cause.

That is exactly what God will do, the God who “healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds” (Psalm 147:3). He promises to once more open up to humanity access to the tree of life, whose leaves are “for the healing of the nations” (Revelation 22:1-2). How desperately this world needs the healing that only God can provide! ■

To understand the reason for the beauty of the Earth and the paradoxical corruption of our world, read “**A World Held Captive**,” by Herbert W. Armstrong (theTrumpet.com/go/captive).



THE KEY OF DAVID

The Key of David television program uses end-time Bible prophecy to bring clarity to your world. Every week, Philadelphia Trumpet executive editor Stephen Flurry uses the Bible to show the answers to life's most confusing problems and to explain world events and where they are heading. You will find answers on a variety of topics such as Christian living, world news, Bible prophecy and the purpose of life.

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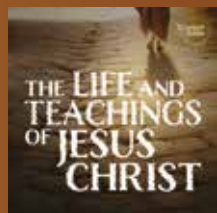
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