

AUGUST 2010

THE

WWW.REALTRUTH.ORG

# REAL TRUTH

A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING



**WHO WILL PRESERVE  
EUROPE'S LIFE  
OF LUXURY?**

# THE REAL TRUTH

A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING

VOL. VIII | NO. 7 | AUGUST 2010

A R T I C L E S

WWW.REALTRUTH.ORG



## What's Wrong with the Weather?

The extremes in weather worldwide have prompted many to question if they are mere happenstance—or if there is something else behind them.

**Page 12**

■ **OVERWHELMING RAIN:** Vehicles make their way along a flooded street in Wuhan, in central China's Hubei province (July 21, 2010).

PHOTO: STR/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

F E A T U R E S

**Personal from David C. Pack** 1  
**World News Desk** 23

■ **FRONT COVER:** Pictured from left to right: Justinian, Charlemagne, Otto the Great, Charles V and Napoleon.

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION: DARNITRA D. JACKSON

## Who Will Preserve Europe's Life of Luxury?

Financial analysts, government officials and journalists have no idea where Europe is headed. The voting populace has no idea where to turn. Yet history offers proof of what is to come.

**Page 3**

## North and South Korea On the Brink of War?

Escalating tensions have heightened fears that armed conflict between the two countries is fast approaching.

**Page 7**

## Bullying in the Virtual World

Half of all U.S. children either perpetrate or experience some form of electronic bullying. What effect is this having on an entire generation?

**Page 9**

## Sex – Right Purpose in a Wrong World!

The real meaning behind marriage and sex is beyond the bounds of human imagination.

**Page 14**

## The Truth About Smoking

Does the Bible condemn smoking or any use of tobacco products? Since God does not specifically command, "Thou shall not smoke or chew tobacco," many conclude that it is not a sin. Yet research has proven that it is harmful to one's health. What does the Bible say about this?

**Page 15**

**PUBLISHER/EDITOR-IN-CHIEF**  
DAVID C. PACK

**SENIOR EDITORS**  
JEFFREY R. AMBROSE  
WILLIAM H. BEHRER  
KEVIN D. DENECE  
GABRIEL N. LISCHAK

**MANAGING EDITOR**  
KENNETH M. OREL

**ART/GRAPHICS DIRECTOR**  
MICHAEL H. VENISH

**CONTRIBUTING WRITERS**  
DAVID C. PACK  
JEFFREY R. AMBROSE  
SAMUEL C. BAXTER  
WILLIAM H. BEHRER  
ABDON V. BUENA  
RYAN L. CASWELL  
SCOTT A. CLARK  
GERHARD J. COETZER  
JEFFREY D. DAVIS  
KEVIN D. DENECE  
MARK P. DENECE  
RYAN P. DENECE  
JONATHAN A. DICEN  
ROBERT R. FARRELL  
BRIAN K. JACKSON  
GABRIEL N. LISCHAK  
H. CHRIS LOMAS  
LARRY J. MCELROY  
KENNETH M. OREL  
JUSTIN T. PALM  
JAMES RODRIGUEZ  
BRADFORD G. SCHLEIFER  
MARK A. SHARPE  
JACOB C. TOEWS  
JAMES F. TURCK  
MICHAEL H. VENISH  
F. JACO VILJOEN  
VIDAL N. WACHUKU

**ASSOCIATE EDITORS**  
SAMUEL C. BAXTER  
JOSEPH L. GILLEN  
STACEY L. PALM

**ART/GRAPHICS**  
DARNITRA D. JACKSON  
PAULA C. RONDEAU

**INFORMATION SERVICES**  
BRADFORD G. SCHLEIFER  
ANGELA K. BAXTER  
JEFFREY D. DAVIS  
JUSTIN M. FRAZIER

*The Real Truth* magazine is provided free of charge. This is made possible by the voluntary, freely given tithes and offerings of the members of The Restored Church of God, and by the offerings and donations of co-workers and donors. Contributions are gratefully welcomed and are tax-deductible in the U.S. and Canada. Those who wish to voluntarily aid and support the Work of God in preaching and publishing the gospel to all nations are gladly welcomed as co-workers. Contributions should be sent to the address below.

The preparation and production of this magazine involved the work of editors, proofreaders, graphic artists, illustrators, writers, researchers and those who support the Work of God.

Copyright © 2010, The Restored Church of God. Printed in the USA. All rights reserved.

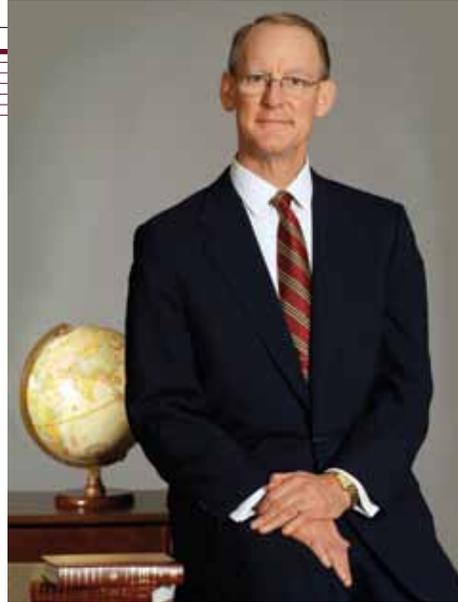
The Restored Church of God is not responsible for the return of unsolicited articles and photos.

Scriptures are quoted from the King James (or Authorized) Version of the Bible, unless otherwise noted.

**Contact *The Real Truth*:**  
P.O. Box 23295  
Wadsworth, OH 44282  
[www.realtruth.org](http://www.realtruth.org)  
[info@realtruth.org](mailto:info@realtruth.org)

## PERSONAL FROM

David C. Fack



# When Is a Christian “Born Again”?

**M**ANY SPEAK of having been “born again.” Millions of Protestants and tens of millions of evangelicals think that after becoming “believers” they have been “born again.” Having no idea what the term actually meant, they had been taught that “professing Jesus” was a kind of “new birth”—that they were in some mysterious way “born a second time.” It next became their Christian *duty* to bring others to this belief.

What does the Bible teach about this subject? And what did Jesus *really* say about it? It is far from what you have been taught. In this article, the truth about being born again will be made absolutely PLAIN! We will be thorough. And it will be impossible to misunderstand.

Almost none take the time to examine—to *prove*—what God’s Word says about being born again. If they did, they would be stunned—astonished—at what they found! In fact, this would apply to almost *any* Bible subject.

Most professing Christians assume the Bible says what they have been told it says. They have been taught that being “born again” occurs in *this* life, upon “receiving Jesus.” But this is NOT what the Bible teaches. “Born

again” has *nothing whatsoever to do* with “professing Jesus”—or “just believing in your heart”—or “giving your heart to the Lord”—or any so-called religious experience. This does not happen at conversion—but rather, the Bible teaches that rebirth comes *long after* this initial step in a new Christian’s life.

The popular concept of “born again” is based largely on ignorance of God’s Word, coupled with outright silly reasoning. Yet the deception that this one misunderstanding presents is even more important when considering how many *other* true doctrines fall like dominoes in its wake. God’s purpose for man, that He is expanding His Family, the true gospel, the kingdom of God, the meaning of being sons of God, character development, the pagan trinity doctrine, who is the antichrist—and many more Bible teachings—become impossible to properly understand.

Jesus taught, “Except a man be BORN AGAIN, he cannot see the *kingdom of God*” (John 3:3). This makes correct understanding of this subject vital. So few grasp Jesus’ words. Consider them carefully. Note what is at stake in just this single scripture. One’s ability to “*see* God’s kingdom” hinges *solely* on whether he is “born again.” Obviously, one had better comprehend the enormous importance of how and when people are *born again!*

When Jesus said “*Except* a man,” He left no room for misunderstanding. Keep this simple. Remaining deceived

about being born again makes salvation impossible. I did not say this—Jesus Christ did! Certainly, *when* this occurs is inseparable from properly understanding *how* it happens or *what* it means. Also, if one believes conversion allows a person to “see the kingdom,” then he must believe the kingdom is here now. Thus it must be spread by individuals. Yet the Bible clearly teaches otherwise!

### First Things First—Basic Scriptures!

Of the 12 rules of Bible study, the most crucial for proper doctrinal understanding is to start with the clearest scriptures on any subject. There are several plain verses about the born again doctrine that introduce everything that follows. Knowing and understanding them is the *only* proper way to approach the subject. The entire doctrine becomes quite easy to learn when you keep these few basic verses straight. Let’s examine three before examining Jesus’ “see the kingdom” statement.

First notice a startling scripture recorded by the apostle Paul. Recognize that the Bible always interprets itself—another great rule of Bible study—and to always accept what it says after it does. Now notice: “[Christ] is the image of the invisible God, the *firstborn of every creature*...and He is the head of the Body, the Church: who is the *beginning*, the *firstborn from the dead*; that in all things He might have the preeminence” (Col. 1:15, 18).

This is a big key to seeing *when* one is born again. Jesus is *firstborn FROM THE DEAD*. Believe God, and fix this phrase in your mind. One’s new birth occurs *after death*—and involves returning *from the dead*. Again, accept what the Bible says, without adding to or subtracting from it. The phrase “firstborn of every creature” adds double emphasis to Paul’s statement—and the meaning.

Some dismiss this verse as merely a *title* given to Christ—“Firstborn from the dead.” This is silly—even foolish—and in fact dishonest. It is also easy to disprove!

Notice the phrase “who is the *beginning*.” This alone proves Jesus’ Resurrection from the dead refers to the order in time sequence that this occurs. He is the “beginning” of those *others* who will receive eternal life at His Return—when the resurrection of the dead occurs. “Beginning” references who is *first*. The next passage builds on and helps explain this one.

Paul also recorded, “For whom [God] did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He [Jesus] might be the *firstborn among many brethren*” (Rom. 8:29). Grasp this! God intends to have *many* sons—Jesus’ brethren, born later in His Plan. If one is designated as *first*, others must follow, or *first* has no meaning. It *must* include more later. In the case of salvation, “many” will follow. This is further proof “firstborn” has nothing to do with any supposed title!

Jesus is not the only Son in God’s Plan. More will follow Him in the Resurrection. We saw He is firstborn of every creature—the other sons. These other brethren are those converted over the last 2,000 years (with a few in the Old Testament). These are called to become younger brothers and sisters *with* Jesus. If Jesus is *firstborn*, all others would be “second-born,” “third-born,” “hundredth-born,” and so forth.

A second verse confirms *when* Jesus was born again. The apostle John recorded, “Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the *firstborn from the dead*, and the ruler over the kings of the earth” (Rev. 1:5 – *Young’s Literal Translation*).

Though the Authorized Version (*King James Version*) translates this as “first begotten,” virtually every

other translation renders it “firstborn from the dead.”

These verses make absolutely plain one is born from the dead *at the Resurrection*. So then, only at that point will—or *can*—anyone “see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3).

### Nicodemus Questions Christ

A series of verses in John 3 is commonly misunderstood by people who believe they can be “born again” in this life, as physical human beings, and, therefore, somehow “see God’s kingdom.” This misconception causes so much unnecessary controversy and confusion.

In this account, Nicodemus questioned Jesus, who answered, “Except a man be *born again*, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3). Confused, Nicodemus replied, “How can a man be *born* when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born? Jesus answered...Except a man be born of *water* [the first physical, human birth, but can also refer to baptism] *and* of the Spirit [later, at the Resurrection], he CANNOT ENTER INTO the kingdom of God” (John 3:4-5). To see and enter God’s kingdom, you must become *spirit*. This will be clear. But people are physical. Entering the kingdom is impossible for them, because scripture states, “flesh and blood CANNOT INHERIT the kingdom of God” (I Cor. 15:50)!

While Nicodemus knew exactly what being born meant, he was confused about how it could happen again—a second time. This is why he asked about re-entering his mother’s womb. But ministers and religious leaders today are deceived and confused in a different way. They claim born again has nothing to do with an actual *birth*—that it is

Please see **PERSONAL**, page 20



# WHO WILL PRESERVE EUROPE'S LIFE OF LUXURY?

Financial analysts, government officials and journalists have no idea where Europe is headed. The voting populace has no idea where to turn. Yet history offers proof of what is to come.

BY MARK P. DENEE

**I**N THE WAKE of the crippling Greek financial crisis that turned into a \$1 trillion bailout, European officials seem to have found only one answer: severe and substantial budget cuts.

News of this solution grates on the ears of European citizens,

with nearly two generations having grown up on sweeping government programs, universal healthcare and low retirement ages, along with much-beloved pension plans.

As the crisis deepens, there is little time to wean the public from the government handouts they have come to expect—and even *demand*. But offi-

cials across Europe increasingly have no choice, despite the public ire each budget cut draws.

**Germany:** Officials unveiled plans for \$104.4 billion in budget cuts and new taxes over the next four years. Only days later, tens of thousands protested against the biggest cutbacks since World War II.

**Greece:** Greek officials presented their third round of austerity measures, including retirement reform, pension reform (with a 30 percent cut to public sector bonuses), new taxes on fuel, electricity, alcohol and gambling, and a freeze on public spending. The declaration renewed continuous general strikes and protests by civil and government service employees. The strikes, many of which are violent, have disrupted or completely halted air and ground transportation and other government services.

**France:** Officials raised the retirement age and reformed pensions, instilling a three-year public spending freeze. In response, labor unions organized widespread strikes that delayed flights, closed schools and disrupted commuters.

**Portugal:** The government announced public spending and pension reforms, cuts in unemployment benefits and increased taxes. Portuguese workers responded with a trade union strike.

**Spain:** Officials reduced state investments, imposed labor market and pension reforms, increased taxes on corporate profits exceeding \$2.6 million (including bankers' bonuses) and plan to raise the retirement age from 65 to 67. In response, the opposition party called for Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero—whose popularity has plummeted to 26 percent—to step down, dissolve Parliament and call an early general election ahead of the one scheduled for 2012. Approximately 300,000 unionized workers are prepared for a countrywide general strike in late September, which would shut down cities.

European politicians are in a bind. They must keep their governments solvent or their nations will flounder. But they also must satisfy the public's desire to keep expensive government programs or lose their jobs come the next election. Violent civil unrest looms.

This seems an impossible feat! Yet Europe has weathered times such as these before, and its history reveals

a repeated pattern during such periods. Following this historical track record, Europeans will soon look to *anyone* able to deliver what they want.

### What the People Desire

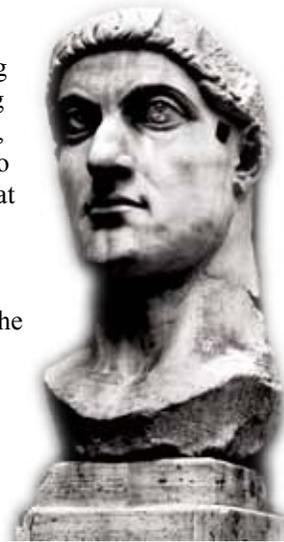
It seems the populace wants the best of all worlds. Someone who can do it all—keep the eurozone together, protect their shorter work weeks, ensure early retirement ages and provide the high standard of living those in the European Union have come to expect. Someone who can secure their social programs and pensions. They want someone who can step in and take charge.

To accomplish this, one leader would have to quickly seize sweeping amounts of centralized power. He would have to control the social, political and military powers of Europe. He would have to unite the continent in a way not seen since the EU's inception.

Does this sound unbelievable? It should not. This is what Europe has *always* done. Throughout the centuries, the continent has surrendered its power to one man—one who can ensure they continue to live comfortably.

One of the first times Europe relied on a dynamic figure to protect their lifestyles was during the Roman Empire. Constantine united the people under one religion and ruled as an unchallenged emperor. By AD 321, Constantine established Sunday as part of the official state religion, thus legitimizing the various traditions attached to that day.

Under his watch, the empire enjoyed continual wealth and abundance. Edward Gibbon's *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* describes the empire at that time, when the capital of Constantinople "enjoyed, within their spacious enclosure, every production which could supply the wants or gratify the luxury of its numerous inhabitants. The sea-coasts of Thrace and Bithynia...still exhibit



a rich prospect of vineyards, of gardens, and of plentiful harvests; and the Propontis has ever been renowned for an inexhaustible store of the most exquisite fish, that are taken in their stated seasons, without skill, and almost without labor."

In short, with Constantine, the people had *anything* they wanted to gratify their desires.

But since then this has happened time and again. Europe emerged from a "transition" period under the Germanic tribes of the Vandals, Heruli and Ostrogoths as a disunited kingdom.

In AD 554, Justinian routed the Ostrogoths and reconstituted the empire as the *Holy Roman Empire*—nearly restoring the size and grandeur of its land holdings to that of the original empire.

The examples do not end there. While some historians paint the life of the common person as harsh under Holy Roman Emperor Charlemagne, others record that he used his expansive power for "increased royal concern for the helpless, continued efforts to strengthen royal administration, active diplomacy, the maintenance of religious reform, and support of cultural renewal" (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*). In the end, because his thinking on a politically unified continent has influenced European ambitions for centuries, Charlemagne has come to be known as the "Father of Europe."

Otto the Great came next, crowned emperor in AD 962. His cultural reforms and use of the Roman Church to achieve peace made a secure empire.

He was followed by the Hapsburg dynasty of Charles V in AD 1520, and Napoleon's reign, which began with his crowning in 1805. Both times, Europe again had emperors.

The most recent resurgence of the Holy Roman Empire began when Giuseppe Garibaldi united Italy in

1870, which culminated in the defeat of Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini in 1945.

In every case, *one man* took the reins of the continent, often backed by the Roman Catholic Church. For varying reasons, that one man took power and unified Europe—sometimes to horrific ends, as with Hitler and Mussolini.

Yet the pattern is undeniable. Time and again, Europe united under one man. Often, the man was a dictator, such as Napoleon, but the continent always turned to these men, who secured freedoms and brought stability to European life.

### History Written in Advance

The word “empire” brings unease to many in the EU—with images of Hitler’s Third Reich still ingrained in the public mind. And most in Europe have little interest in sweeping socio-political-religious unity. They are, after all, a group of many different peoples, with different languages and traditions. They have also become accustomed to great freedoms.

Be careful, however, of dismissing this “emperor” scenario as an impossibility today. History repeats itself, especially if those involved believe such things can never happen again.

Most Europeans are not prepared—and do not want—to live with less. As we have already seen, they will do *whatever* it takes to maintain their standard of living. One only has to look to the riots in response to proposed budget cuts that threaten the programs they have come to view as “rights.”

They want what Constantine gave to Europe—a government that can “supply the wants or gratify the luxury of its numerous inhabitants” with “rich

prospect of vineyards, of gardens, and of plentiful harvests.” They want lives of comfort and normalcy.

The annals of history show where Europe is headed. Yet the Holy Roman Empire came much later than other great, unifying powers. Conditions in these ancient kingdoms mirror the lifestyles desired in Europe today.

Perhaps the first notable example is Babylon under King Nebuchadnezzar II, known for his military might and the splendor of his capital, Babylon—which was home to the fabled hanging gardens, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

This is the same King Nebuchadnezzar of the biblical book of Daniel. In the account, the king dreamed of a statue: “This image’s head was of fine *gold*, his breast and his arms of *silver*, his belly and his thighs of *brass*, his legs of *iron*, his feet part of iron and part of clay” (Dan. 2:32-33).

This ambiguous dream made the king furious, and he was prepared to kill every wise man in the kingdom until he had an answer (Dan. 2:12). Yet this vision, and its interpretation by Daniel, is more important than you might know! It offers absolute proof of where to look to understand Europe’s future.

Place your Bible next to the record of history. Nebuchadnezzar’s dream accurately foretold a number of successive empires. Read Daniel 2:37: “You, O king [Nebuchadnezzar], are a king of kings: for the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory.” Verse 38 adds, “You are this head of gold.”

The Bible has just interpreted itself. Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon represent the first kingdom.

Verses 39-40 go on to describe three successive kingdoms that would follow Babylon. Here is how they are described: “And after you [Nebuchadnezzar] shall arise another kingdom [of silver] inferior to you, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron.”

Each part represents, and foretold of, a major empire. Again, the first, which was the head of *gold*, was Nebuchadnezzar’s own Babylonian or Chaldean Empire (625-539 BC). The *silver* chest and arms represent the second kingdom, the Medo-Persian Empire (558-330 BC). The belly and thighs of *brass* represent the third, the Grecian or Greco-Macedonian Empire (333-31 BC), ruled by Alexander the Great.

Finally, the fourth kingdom, depicted by the lower legs of *iron*, with feet and toes of iron mixed with clay, is the Roman Empire, with its succession of historic resurrections. These were the empires detailed above—from Justinian all the way to Mussolini.

Realize what you just read! Each of these empires were *foretold* centuries in advance of their arrival on the world scene. This makes the account in Daniel history written in advance, or Bible prophecy. These verses are one of the many proofs that validate the truth and accuracy of God’s Word. (To learn more, read *Bible Authority... Can It Be Proven?*)

The validity of the Bible is essential to understanding the exact future of Europe today.

### Lives of Luxury

While each of the successive resurrections of the Holy Roman Empire harkens back to the original empire, the Holy Roman Empire is also likened to Babylon in the Bible. This clue reveals what is to come for Europe.

Revelation 18:16 describes a “great city”—revealed to be Babylon in verse 2—“that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls!”

When Europe unites under one political authority once again, the result will be economic security and lives of comfort and abundance.

Note how Europe is described in the rest of chapter 18:

■ Verse 3: “the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies”—the *entire world* will benefit from this economic powerhouse.



■ Verses 12-13: “The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, and cinnamon, and odors, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots...”

■ Verse 19: “that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness!”

These verses could easily describe the times of Nebuchadnezzar and Constantine—but this is Europe’s future! Under the coming ruler, Europeans will live “deliciously” (vs. 7), which is better translated “*luxuriously*.”

Details in Revelation 18 reveal why Europe will give power to one man: he will bring material riches. The coming resurrection of the Roman Empire will bring peace, stability—LUXURY! The masses will be on board with this new socio-political-military system. In fact, conditions in Europe will be better than at any point in its history.

Yet there is a problem.

This way of life comes with a cost. Think back to Constantine, when he abolished the Sabbath in favor of Sunday. Europe has followed suit ever since.

Living deliciously could be summed up another way—living *covetously*. Just look at the fruits of the lives of many in modern Europe: teenagers riot because they do not want to work past age 55—loose sex leads to unwanted pregnancies, and often abortions—sexual perversions—and out of control drug use.

God sums this up in Revelation 18:5: “For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.” As a result, “Therefore shall her plagues come in one day,

death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judges her” (Rev. 18:8).

Despite the best efforts, Europe—and any man chosen to rule over it—will fail to bring the lasting peace and abundant living so many desire. When Europe crumbles, everyone will bemoan its destruction. Why? Not because the system has crumbled, but because they are no longer able to pursue unbridled lives of luxury.

“The coming resurrection of the Roman Empire will bring peace, stability—LUXURY! The masses will be on board with this new socio-political-military system.”

“[The people] cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city! And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! For in one hour is she made desolate” (Rev. 18:18-19).

“And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters [referencing the fine arts of Europe] shall be heard no more at all in you; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found anymore in you; and the sound of a millstone will be heard no more at all in you; and the light of a candle shall shine no

more at all in you; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride will be heard no more at all in you: for your merchants were the great men of the earth” (vs. 22-23).

However, God is merciful and the punishment will not continue without end: “And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence will that great city Babylon be thrown down, and will be found no more at all” (vs. 21).

This signals the end of the Roman/Babylonish system.

### True Abundance

Who, then, can Europeans rely on to bring true and lasting safety and abundance?

Return once again to the statue of Daniel 2. After Daniel describes the image of gold, silver, bronze and iron, with feet of iron mixed with clay, he mentions “a stone was cut out without hands.”

This stone came down and “smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and broke them to pieces” (Dan. 2:34).

Here is the ultimate end of these systems—and the lifestyles they brought: “Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth” (vs. 35).

The demise of these systems will usher in another, very different kingdom—the kingdom of God!

Led by Jesus Christ—who is the “stone cut out of the mountain without hands”—this kingdom will bring true and everlasting peace and prosperity to the entire world. Notice what Christ said during His earthly ministry—and what He will one day

Please see **LUXURY**, page 19



# North and South Korea

## *On the Brink of War?*

■ **OPEN SEAS:** U.S. Navy and South Korean ships sail in a 13-ship formation led by the Los Angeles-class attack submarine, the USS Tucson, in the East Sea off the Korean peninsula (July 26, 2010).

PHOTO: MASS COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST 3RD CLASS ADAM K. THOMAS/U.S. NAVY VIA GETTY IMAGES

Escalating tensions have heightened fears that armed conflict between the two countries is fast approaching.

BY GERHARD J. COETZER

**S**INCE THE ALLEGED MARCH 2010 sinking of a South Korean warship by a North Korean submarine in disputed waters, tensions between these countries have continued to escalate—with war now a possibility.

Shortly after the incident, a five-nation investigation team examined the recovered wreckage of the corvette-class cruiser, the Cheonan, and concluded that a North Korean torpedo caused its demise.

“South Korea’s president, Lee Myung-bak, issued a sterner-than-expected response to an international

probe which found the North guilty of firing a fatal torpedo that sank one of South Korea’s warships and killed 46 of its sailors,” *The Economist* reported. “He strengthened trade restrictions on the North and closed off South Korea’s sea-lanes to North Korean vessels.”

In the wake of the possibility of war between the two Koreas, the United Nations Security Council stopped short of accusing the North of the attack, instead urging both sides to remain calm.

South Korean officials maintain that evidence of the sinking is based on intact components of a North Korean torpedo recovered near the location of the incident. But

the attack was harshly denounced by North Korea’s United Nations Ambassador Sin Son Ho, who accused the South Korean government of fabricating the results of the multinational investigation, and threatened military action if further accusations or retaliation occurred.

The North Korean government also demanded access to the wreckage site to conduct its own investigation, but South Korea denied permission.

War between North and South Korea would inevitably force their protective allies, China and America, to become involved.

China is North Korea’s most valued trading partner and its largest

supplier of food, arms and fuel. It has been instrumental in buffering the North from harsh economic sanctions to prevent a regime collapse that could send millions of refugees across its own 800-mile border.

The United States, however, identifies more with South Korea. Washington originally allied with the southern nation to fight communist expansion in Asia, but over time, the alliance grew to include a Mutual Security and Free Trade agreement as well as a military deterrent against the North.

To show their solidarity with South Korea, following the torpedo attack, the United States launched the largest four-day joint military exercise since 1976, which included participation from more than 8,000 servicemen, one Nimitz-class aircraft carrier and hundreds of air-

craft. It was the first of a number of military exercises to occur in the area.

North Korean officials consider the exercises proof that the United States and South Korea are planning an invasion, according to an article by *The Associated Press*.

“The U.S. strengthening military moves on and around the Korean Peninsula is nothing but a premeditated maneuver to realize its hostile policy aimed at militarily stifling our republic,” the North Korean newspaper said in a commentary carried by the official Korean Central News Agency.

“Under the current tense situation, the nuclear deterrent force of our republic effectively contributes to guaranteeing peace and safety of our republic...(We) will make every effort to solidify our self-defense force.”

■ **SHOW OF SOLIDARITY:** The U.S. Navy and South Korea conduct combined alliance maritime and air readiness exercises in the seas east of the Korean peninsula (July 26, 2010).

PHOTO: MASS COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST 3RD CLASS ADAM K. THOMAS/U.S. NAVY VIA GETTY IMAGES



### Fragile Relations

Less economically stable than its southern neighbor, North Korea has depended on the South for much of its basic needs, including food. In the past, under what was called the “Sunshine Policy,” South Korea willingly helped the North, hoping that the nation’s attitude and hostility would thaw and the republic would become more willing to cooperate with them.

But that changed after the current government under Mr. Lee took power. Aid to South Korea’s northern neighbor became contingent upon their denuclearization.

“The level of threat is higher than before,” Kim Tae-woo, Korean Institute for Defense Analyses vice president told *The Christian Science Monitor*. “[North Korea is] threatening another provocation by possibly test-firing a short-range missile or attacking South Korean navy ships.”

Tensions between the two countries are not new. The hostile standoff between North and South Korea has continued to worsen in the 40 years since the Korean peninsula split in two. In post-war 1945, the Soviets occupied the northern half of the Korean peninsula, leaving the south occupied by the United States.

Both sides claimed sovereign rule—leading to the Korean War in 1950. The war ended only with an armistice agreement in 1953, with neither side having signed an official treaty—technically leaving both sides still at war.

“If anything, the military provocation by all sides demonstrates the frailty of the Korean armistice agreement, which was signed by North Korea, China and the United States on July 27, 1953,” a *New York Times* article stated. “It shows how much the absence of a peace treaty could trigger another war, not just between the two Koreas, but between the United States and China.” □

Half of all U.S. children either perpetrate or experience some form of electronic bullying. What effect is this having on an entire generation?

BY MARK A. SHARPE

**“T**O THIS DAY, Debra Johnston doesn’t know how her son became a target.

“‘Jeffrey was popular,’ she says. ‘He was admired.’ An honor student at Trafalgar Middle School, in Cape Coral, Florida, Jeffrey worked as an office aide and even led a group of students in designing their own computer game. So maybe it was jealousy that prompted the barrage of malicious e-mail messages and Web site postings about Jeffrey from fellow students.

“Whatever the cause, this online harassment—known as cyberbullying—had a deadly effect. Sometime before dawn on June 29, 2005, the 15-year-old eighth grader hanged himself” (*Consumer Health Interactive*).

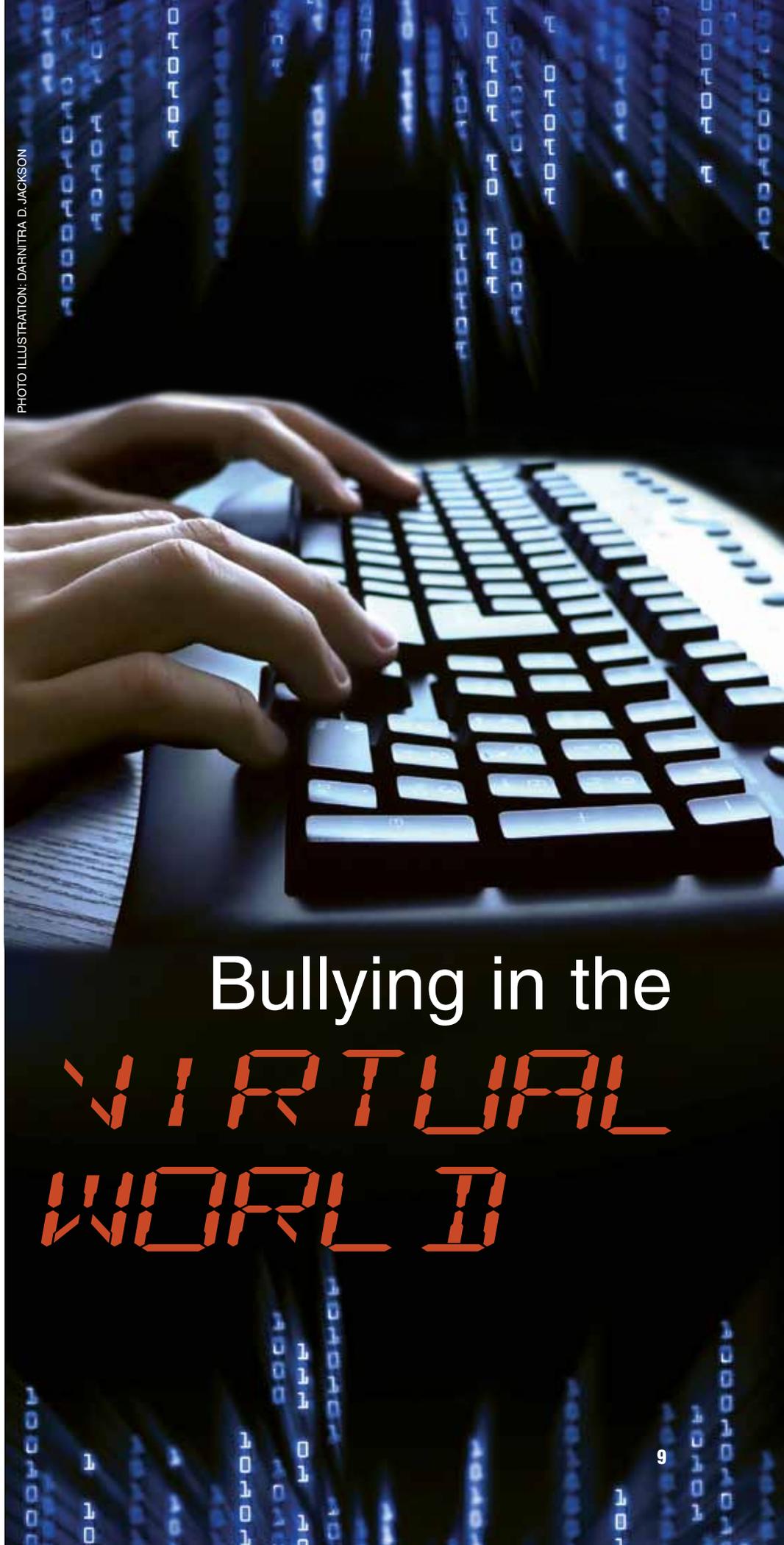
John Halligan’s 13-year-old son, Ryan, suffered the same form of taunting. After being bullied for months at school and ridiculed by a group of girls online, the Vermont native hanged himself while his father was away on a business trip.

In Australia, *The Australian Associated Press* reported that 14-year-old Alex Wildman was beaten up twice at school and bullied online. One of his attackers wrote, “I’m only gonna keep bashing him til he learns.” By the end of that month, he committed suicide.

Even though bullying existed in schools long before the proliferation of the Internet or cellphones, attacks by those bullies were limited to a relatively small group of friends or classmates—and hardly ever went beyond school gates.

AUGUST 2010

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION: DARNITRA D. JACKSON



Bullying in the

VIRTUAL  
WORLD

But bullying in those circumstances would rarely drive someone to the point of suicide. In most every instance, the perpetrator could be easily identified, and corrective measures could be taken by a parent or school administrator.

Not so in the 21st century. Tech-savvy children have resorted to advanced methods of bullying, such as using social networking sites, blogs and text messages to attack their victims—with devastating results.

“Bullying has entered the digital age,” Pew Research Center reported. “The impulses behind it are the same, but the effect is magnified. In the past, the materials of bullying would have been whispered, shouted or passed around. Now, with a few clicks, a photo, video or a conversation can be shared with hundreds via email or millions through a website, online profile or blog posting.”

According to recent statistics, more than half of all U.S. children have either experienced or participated in some form of electronic bullying—with the resulting level of associated suicides becoming shockingly common.

What has created a generation of children capable of such cruelty?

### **Evolving Methods**

The Internet and cellphones allow mass communication to occur almost

instantaneously, and children are masters of these technologies. Yet, instead of using these inventions to have wholesome conversations, many use them to attack, vilify, hurt and isolate others—or to loudly trumpet their peers’ mistakes.

Phil Fogelman, Anti-Defamation League education director, told the *Rutland Herald* that cyberbullying is even more hurtful than face-to-face bullying because it can occur 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

“The impact can be much more devastating socially and emotionally because it stays with the individual wherever he or she goes. It’s everywhere,” said Fogelman. “You can’t just shut the computer off because everyone can access those videos or pictures.”

Along with the nature of bullying, the traditional profile of the bully itself has changed, making it almost impossible to identify a perpetrator. No longer is he an aggressive person at school who carries out physical attacks. It just may be that “sweet little girl” living next door.

Experts say the ability to secretly bully hits at human nature’s tendency toward selfishness, particularly during a child’s early teen years. Even so-called “good” children, who aspire to feel accepted by their peers, will readily single out and gang up on individuals not considered part of their social

group, especially if they feel their own status may be threatened.

Yet the devastating effects of these obviously taken actions can result in deadly consequences.

Such was almost the case of Brittany Jordan, who felt rejected to the point where she contemplated suicide. A 17-year-old cyberbullying victim, the teenager told the hosts of *The Early Show* that she thought suicide was the only option because she had been put down so much.

“I thought that it was just the only thing I could do to get away from all of the hurt and pain,” she said.

### **Absent Values**

Through the Internet and modern transportation, information exchange is taking place at an unprecedented pace. Children without the proper decorum find themselves at the forefront of this environment. And young people who have not been taught a general level of respect for other human beings will misuse these powerful tools.

Parents now provide cellphones to young children with the intention of staying in touch and ensuring their safety. But these parents may be unaware that some cellphones also allow children unsupervised access to the Internet. This enables them to view content that might normally be restricted on a family computer.

PHOTOS: (LEFT, RIGHT) ISTOCKPHOTO.COM; (MIDDLE) CANSTOCKPHOTO.COM



General disrespect for parents has now moved into cyberspace. Children are known to post videos where they lambaste their parents online. Such terrible behavior was unheard of, in fact almost impossible, just a decade ago.

The Web also allows a level of deceit never before possible. Children can lead alternate virtual lives, which are usually shot full of interests and activities of which their parents disapprove without their knowledge. This was reported by the *Frontline* documentary, “Growing Up Online”: “Jessica...was a shy and awkward girl who struggled to make friends at school. Then, at age 14, she reinvented herself online as...a goth artist and model. She posted provocative photos of herself on the Web and fast developed a cult following.”

“I just became this whole different person,” she said. “I didn’t feel like myself, but I liked the fact that I didn’t feel like myself. I felt like someone completely different. I felt like I was famous.”

Children posting nasty electronic messages, biting words and hateful speech prompts the question: *Where are their parents?*

### This Generation Foretold

While many dismiss it as Hebrew literature, the Bible foretold the arriv-

al of this generation. The book of Proverbs states that in the last days, there will be a “generation that curses their father, and does not bless their mother. There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness. There is a generation, O how lofty are their eyes! And their eyelids are lifted up. There is a generation, whose teeth are as swords, and their jaw teeth as knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men” (30:11-14). (To better understand the troubling times we are now living in, read the booklet *Are These the Last Days?*)

According to *Strong’s Concordance*, “poor” in the above passage means “depressed, in mind or circumstances” in the Hebrew.

How true this is of the society we live in—a society in which more than 1,500 online users watched live as a 19-year-old contemplating suicide took his life by overdosing on drugs—in which “trolling” or posting mean-spirited messages about a deceased person to inflict pain on family members left behind is common—and where more than 15 percent of teenagers in grades seven through 12 believe they will not live long, with many now believing the only reason they were put on Earth is to live a short, miserable life—and then die!

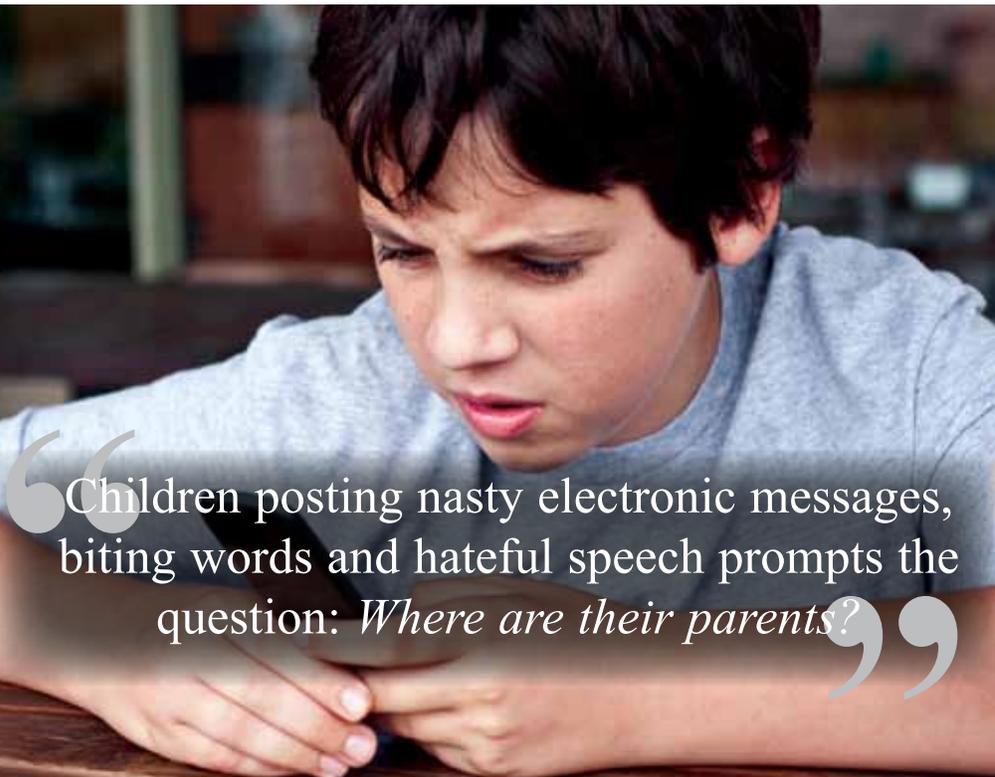
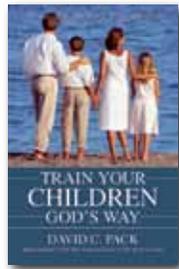
Truly, society has “begotten strange children,” as stated in Hosea 5:7.

In a 2007 *Real Truth* Personal titled “Rearing Children in the Modern Age,” Editor-in-Chief David C. Pack addressed this generation: “So many children and teenagers today have become hopeless, with no hint, inkling or clue of why they are alive, and whether there is a PURPOSE for human existence. Just observing their faces in a crowd reveals this much. They can see that world conditions grow ever worse, with the news of each day seemingly worse than the day before, and the problems each day becoming worse and greater in number than the day before.

“The result of all this is that the vast majority of children and teenagers today simply tune out the confusion and emptiness of religion, the division and ineffectiveness of government, the evils and troubles plaguing schools and education, the complex economic forces at work in the modern world and the breakdown of the family, which increasingly often includes their own. This leads them to select from—more like back into—a variety of different means of escape: drugs, alcohol, sex, gambling, endless parties, and mindless, gratuitous entertainment, among others—to occupy themselves. In turn, this leads to a whole host of problems which are overwhelming society, and parents as well.

“Your children will be—and maybe already are—tempted to turn off, give up and drop out if you are not unceasingly vigilant in your responsibility to keep them in the belief that they can HAVE A FUTURE, and that it can be wonderful beyond belief, *if* they are carefully building it step by step under your guidance!”

Although cyberbullying is becoming common, it need not affect your family. For more about how to rear children in the modern age, read David C. Pack’s book *Train Your Children God’s Way*. □



“Children posting nasty electronic messages, biting words and hateful speech prompts the question: *Where are their parents?*”



# What's Wrong with the W

The extremes in weather worldwide have prompted many to question if they are mere happenstance—or if there is something else behind them.

**R**USSIA DECLARED a state of emergency in 27 drought-stricken regions around Moscow as wildfires burned uncontrollably during what officials consider the hottest season in 130 years. Monsoon rains in Pakistan and Afghanistan caused the worst flooding since 1929, killing more than 1,500 people in Pakistan alone, with many hundreds more missing. (See our World News Desk report in this issue, “Pakistan Flooding Kills Over 1,500.”) China has also seen massive flooding, which killed more than 900 people, collapsed numerous bridges and buildings, and left 30,000 trapped.

Additionally, the United States saw a summer of 100-plus degree temperatures, violent tornadoes and intense flooding, which killed greater numbers than in previous years.

It appears nature is exploding with more violent weather—droughts, floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, storms and forest fires. Indeed, the last two decades have produced a greater amount of severe weather events than any other period since records began in 1880.

What is going on?

## **Worst Ever**

Every week, there are more reports about the “hottest summer ever” or the “most flooding ever,” or the “worst fires ever.” Consider just some of the headlines worldwide: “July Falls Just Short of Setting Heat Record,” “Russia Lowers Grain Forecast Amid Fires,” “Converging Weather Patterns Caused Last Winter’s Huge Snows in U.S.,” “Argentina Colder Than Antarctica Spurs Record Power Imports, Shuts Plants,” “West Australia Wheat Crop Suffers From Little Rain, Farmers Say,” “India Rainfall 38% Above Normal Last Week, Weather Bureau Says.”

Then there were the heavy rains that caused the Maquoketa River and

nine-mile Lake Delhi in Iowa to swell to unprecedented levels. This resulted in a 92-year-old reservoir dam bursting, which drained the entire lake, and caused millions of dollars of damage downstream. More than 900 condo owners, who once owned lakefront property, were left speechless as they watched the entire lake disappear before their eyes—and with it, millions of dollars worth of property value.

“By Sunday afternoon, the shore of the lake was a steep cliff leading down to mud flats, then a thin channel of running river water,” *The Des Moines Register* reported. “The air reeked of rotting fish. Lawns were muddy messes, laden with soaked furniture, carpet, drywall, insulation, mattresses and other household goods.”

Even more unstable weather is expected with the arrival of the Pacific pattern El Nino, which often brings with it wet fall weather that saturates the ground and results in flooding in various places and droughts in others.

“...A strong El Nino plays havoc with weather from Indonesia to the Atlantic, but in different ways. Indonesia gets unusually dry weather,



# WEATHER?

■ **DESTRUCTIVE WEATHER:** Far left, a woman looks at buildings damaged by a flood-triggered landslide in the southwest Sichuan province of China (July 27, 2010). Middle left, grass burns in a woodland some 130 kilometers from Moscow (July 31, 2010). Middle right, a damaged home partially stands after a tornado hit the area around Millbury, Ohio (June 6, 2010). Far right, cars make their way through the flooded Long Beach Freeway in Long Beach, California (Jan. 19, 2010).

PHOTOS: (FAR LEFT) STR/AFP/GETTY IMAGES, (MIDDLE LEFT) ANDREY SMIRNOV/AFP/GETTY IMAGES, (MIDDLE RIGHT) J.D. POOLEY/GETTY IMAGES, (FAR RIGHT) KEVORK DJANSEZIAN/GETTY IMAGES

and in fact fires in parts of Indonesia have been frequent recently. Peru, on the west coast of South America, tends to get what California gets—flooding rains,” *National Public Radio* reported.

Although natural disasters have caused erratic weather patterns throughout history, the exact reason many of them occur still puzzles scientists. Storm-chasers do not understand why certain thunderstorms form twisters while others do not. Forecasters cannot predict where flash flooding will occur until it has already swept away victims. Nor can meteorologists accurately explain why one day will be cloudier than another.

What are they missing?

## No Coincidence

While meteorologists, climatologists and scientists can understand when conditions are ripe for a disaster, they do not understand the *reason* such erratic weather patterns occur. These brilliant scholars fail to recognize

that there is a greater power behind Earth’s unstable weather patterns.

Throughout the centuries, God has used the weather to get man’s attention. He has protected and punished His people by controlling and guiding the weather. When His people please Him, He uses weather to bless, protect and save them. When their ways displease Him, He uses the elements as punishment.

The Bible foretold long ago that natural disasters would intensify just prior to the Return of Jesus Christ: “For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in diverse places” (Matt. 24:7).

We are now under a curse because our cities are filled with hatred, poverty, violence, riots, crime, pornography and pollution. For that, our farmlands are cursed with drought, floods, insects and disease. The soil is losing the ability to produce healthy food due to

harmful chemicals, and has become rock hard, with its nutrients depleted.

God is trying to get the world’s attention! He is a loving, merciful God, who wants us to enjoy the good things of life. But He also demands that humanity obey Him—He will not continue to bless nations that refuse to follow His laws.

Only God Almighty is able to bless nations with rain at the right time of the growing season, and stop damaging weather patterns: “Then I will give you *rain in due season*, and the land shall *yield her increase*, and the trees of the field shall *yield their fruit*” (Lev. 26:4).

Man alone cannot completely understand the weather—nor can he stop erratic patterns. It is only by obeying God that he can understand them, and be protected from them.

To learn more about what is prophesied about weather patterns, and what it means for *you*, read our comprehensive report “What’s Wrong with the Weather?” □

# Sex – Right Purpose in a Wrong World!

The real meaning behind marriage and sex is beyond the bounds of human imagination.

BY DAVID C. PACK

**T**HE WORLD has been ignorant of the true purposes of sex.

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

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

But what has not been known is that there is a vital *missing* dimension to marriage and sex.

The world is now drenched—in fact, drowning—in a deluge of sex,

with much or most of it having no connection to any real meaning or right purpose. More than ever in history, all mankind is awash in every conceivable sexual pleasure, fantasy, perversion and pursuit—in or out of marriage, and with fewer people any longer making a distinction between the two.

Most have no idea there even is a purpose for human existence. Believing himself to be merely the highest of the animals in an evolutionary chain, man has remained in the dark, completely unable to see a reason for sex, or for human beings existing as men and women. Yet there is an awesome purpose for humanity collectively—and you personally!—and, when fully understood, it is inseparable from the purposes of sex and the marriage institution.

Man was created after the God kind—in His image and likeness. Notice: “And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness.” The account continues: “male and female created He them. And God blessed them” (Gen. 1:26, 28).

This passage makes God the AUTHOR of sex, and the sole author-

ity on it. Sex is a product of God’s design and creative forethought, and is not, as some religionists think, a mischievous stunt in which the devil somehow “marred” God’s otherwise perfect Creation. Just as He had done with every other aspect of His Creation, God concluded that male and female—including sex!—were “very good.”

We offer a book unlike any other about this subject. Titled *Sex – Its Unknown Dimension*, it is filled with information about:

- Why sex is necessary
- Important differences between humans and animals
- The amazing male and female biology and function
- Sex in marriage as God intended
- The wedding night
- How to teach children and teens about sex
- Exactly *what* is the unknown dimension in sex
- And much, much more!

To learn about the true meaning of sex, watch *The World to Come* broadcast “Sex – Right Purpose in a Wrong World!” at [www.worldtocome.org](http://www.worldtocome.org). □

---

# The Truth About SMOKING

---



Does the Bible condemn smoking or any use of tobacco products? Since God does not specifically command, “Thou shall not smoke or chew tobacco,” many conclude that it is not a sin. Yet research has proven that it is harmful to one’s health. What does the Bible say about this?

**I**N RECENT YEARS, controversy has raged over the negative effects of tobacco use, especially cigarette smoking. Most are familiar with a court ruling some years ago that resulted in big tobacco companies having to pay billions of dollars in damages. This money went into a fund benefiting smokers who have been diagnosed with lung cancer. Further lawsuits followed.

This would have been a fair and just ruling, *if* the risks associated with cigarette smoking had not been public knowledge for decades. The plaintiffs knew they were subjecting their bodies to something harmful and potentially fatal. However, only when offered the opportunity to capitalize on the results of their irresponsible actions were they motivated to even *appear* to take a stand.

The problem is not only the blatant hypocrisy of the plaintiffs, but also the tobacco industry’s avoidance of harsh realities. These very profitable companies maintain a “smoke screen” of politically correct, user-friendly ad campaigns supporting this or that noble cause, as if to say, “Hey, we’re not the

bad guys. Look what we’re contributing to disaster relief efforts, environmental protection, and disease research.”

Tobacco companies naturally want to draw attention away from the plain facts about cigarette smoking. And, since the whole point is to polish their image, the accuracy and sincerity of such ad campaigns is questionable. If their image is shiny enough, tobacco companies know that most people will not look beyond it and examine the facts.

Here are a few:

■ “Industry scientific reports exposed through litigation show that as early as 1953, the cigarette industry’s researchers were of the opinion that ‘studies of clinical data tend to confirm the relationship between heavy and prolonged tobacco smoking and incidence of cancer of the lung’” (*It’s Legal But It Ain’t Right: Harmful Social Consequences of Legal Industries*).

■ “Scientists have discovered that ammonia lets you absorb more nicotine—keeping you hooked on smoking” (*Breast Cancer: Cause—Prevention—Cure*).

■ “Additives are used to make cigarettes that provide high levels of ‘free’ nicotine which increases the addictive ‘kick’ of the nicotine. Ammonium compounds can fulfill this role by rais-

ing the alkalinity of smoke” (“Tobacco Additives / Cigarette Engineering and Nicotine Addiction”).

■ “Additives are used to enhance the taste of tobacco smoke, to make the product more desirable to consumers. Although seemingly innocuous the addition of flavourings making the cigarette ‘attractive’ and ‘palatable’ is in itself cause for concern” (*ibid.*).

■ “In addition to tobacco, which contains nicotine...599 ingredients have been identified in tobacco industry documents as being added to tobacco in the manufacturing of cigarettes by the five major American cigarette manufacturing companies. While some of these chemicals, such as sugars, vanilla extract, prune juice, and vinegar, are generally recognized as safe when used in food products, all produce numerous additional chemical compounds when burned. None, probably, is more deadly than nicotine, however” (*quitsmokingsupport.com*).

■ “Though 600 additives are authorized for use in tobacco products, only the tobacco manufacturers can say which additives are used and in which brands. Not even the Government... responsible for the regulation of tobacco products [has] this information or the power to demand it” (*www.ash.org.uk*).

Most people are not interested in getting the facts about an issue,

especially when doing so leaves them with a clear choice between right and wrong. Proverbs 21:2 states, “Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the LORD ponders the hearts.”

The world views smoking as socially acceptable—cool—fashionable. This is an especially enticing trap for young people, who are constantly faced with peer pressure and the need to be part of the “in” crowd.

Research has proven that teens become more quickly addicted to cigarettes (within a few days of their first cigarette) than do adults. It also takes teens the same amount of time to experience withdrawal symptoms when trying to quit (usually within hours of their last cigarette).

### Why Do People Smoke?

Many do not stop to examine *why* they do what they do. Most form habits early in life and do nothing to change them. Eventually, these habits seem as natural as breathing, sleeping and eating.

Children pick up habits—good and bad—from their parents. This is why Solomon was inspired to write, “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Prov. 22:6).

In 1992, the *Journal of the American Medical Association* reported that “75% of all teenagers who smoke have parents who smoke.” All too often, parents adopt the child-rearing philosophy of, “Do as I say, not as I do.” They may try to impress upon their children the serious adverse effects of certain behaviors, yet display those behaviors themselves. They may say, “Now kids, don’t smoke because it will kill you,” while supporting a carton-a-week habit. This sends a confusing message to children, one they may translate into license to do whatever feels good or gains them peer acceptance.

Statistics from the World Health Organization show that each day between 80,000 and 100,000 children smoke for the first time. Approximately 50 percent of them will regularly smoke from that point forward. That translates into up to 18.25 million new habitual smokers each year. Many of

these kids look no further than their peers when making decisions between right and wrong.

God’s Word shows the error of this approach. I Kings 12:1-15 records an example from the history of ancient Israel. It shows the disastrous results of a young leader who followed bad advice from his peers instead of wise counsel from his elders. The book of Proverbs has much instruction about heeding the advice of those older and wiser than ourselves, especially our parents (1:8; 3:1-2; 4:1, 20; 6:20; 16:31).

The media plays an enormous role in making cigarette smoking attractive and appealing to kids. It glamorizes smoking on television and in movies. Advertising generally targets young audiences, sometimes in very subtle ways. Consider the following sarcastic quote: “The August 2001 issue of *Rolling Stone* magazine has a 2-page cigarette ad right smack in the middle. But that’s okay, because [on] the cover of that issue there’s just a picture of [a popular music performer]... We’re sure no one under 18’s ever heard of him or his band—they appeal to a much older audience. So a cigarette ad in that magazine will probably never be seen by any young girls or anything. Just like the tobacco companies agreed” (*thetruth.com*).

Tobacco companies use various tactics in their ad campaigns. Certain magazine ads and billboards display images of “macho men” to appeal to vanity. One popular brand even subtly promotes *bestiality*! Some brands specifically target women, taking subtle shots at traditional values and God-ordained roles. Many advertisements emphasize youthful vitality, sex appeal and freedom from restraints, seeking to attract young people facing these issues.

On the surface, all of this may seem glamorous and exciting. But Christ said, in John 7:24, “Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.” Behind all the glitz, glamour, and machismo masking the cigarette industry are ugly, frightening facts.

For instance:

■ “In the USA several tobacco companies have publicly admitted that

smoking is addictive. In 1997 the smallest of the big five US tobacco companies (the Liggett Group) admitted that it had raised the nicotine content in cigarettes to increase their addictiveness” (*Health Psychology: Theory, Research and Practice*).

■ “Many smokers choose ‘low-tar,’ ‘mild,’ ‘light,’ or ‘ultra-light’ cigarettes because they think that these cigarettes may be less harmful to their health than ‘regular’ or ‘full-flavor’ cigarettes. Although smoke from light cigarettes may feel smoother and lighter on the throat and chest, light cigarettes are not healthier than regular cigarettes. The truth is that light cigarettes do not reduce the health risks of smoking. The only way to reduce a smoker’s risk, and the risk to others, is to stop smoking completely” (National Cancer Institute, “The Truth About ‘Light’ Cigarettes: Questions and Answers”).

■ “According to a...report issued by the Office of the Surgeon General, 400,000 adults die every year from smoking-related illnesses, making smoking the number one cause of preventable disease and death in the nation” ([www.sciencefriday.com](http://www.sciencefriday.com)).

Even after examining the facts, some might still argue, “It’s my body. If I want to smoke, it’s my business. Besides, it’s not hurting anybody else.” This shallow reasoning has been used to validate all kinds of wrong behavior and actions: pre-marital and extra-marital sex, alcoholism, drug abuse, prostitution, abortion, etc. Proverbs 14:12 states, “There is a way which seems right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.”

When approached with the moral implications of smoking, some will even argue, “The Bible does not say, ‘Thou shall not smoke.’”

That may be true, but...

### What Does the Bible Say?

The Bible does not *directly state* that smoking is a sin. But it does teach many principles of right human conduct and behavior, clearly showing that habits such as smoking violate God’s supreme laws: *love toward God*

and *love toward fellow man* (Matt. 22:36-40).

Ask yourself, “When I smoke, am I trying to please God, other people or myself?” If you answer honestly, you will realize that you are not doing it to please God, the One who created the heavens, the earth, *and* the human body.

God’s people are led by His Spirit (Rom. 8:9). I Corinthians 6:19-20 states, “What? Know you not that your body is the temple of the Holy [Spirit] which is in you, which you have of God, and you are not your own? For you are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”

What does it mean to “glorify God in your body, and in your spirit”? It means that the fruits of the Holy Spirit should be evident in your life: *love* (outgoing concern), joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and *temperance* (self-control) (Gal. 5:22-23).

Understand that you are not pleasing others by smoking. Do other people enjoy inhaling your secondhand smoke? In Philippians 2:3-4, the apostle Paul exhorts us to “...in lowliness of mind let each esteem other[s] better than themselves. Look not every man on his *own* things, but every man also on the things of *others*.” Paul is not saying that we should covet (desire) the things of others, but rather that we should show concern for their well-being.

In I Corinthians 13:5, he states, “[Charity (love—outgoing concern)] does not behave itself unseemly, seeks not her own...” Someone who is concerned for the well-being of others takes their feelings and needs into consideration.

In Matthew 7:12, Christ said what came to be known as “The Golden Rule”: “Therefore all things whatsoever you would *that men should do to you*, do you even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.”

In Ephesians 5:29, Paul wrote, “For no man ever yet hated his *own* flesh; but nourishes and cherishes it...”

No one enjoys breathing polluted, foul-smelling air. Even the smoker

would admit that he would rather live in an area with fresh air, than where there is prevalent smog.

### **Violates Sixth Commandment**

In Matthew 19:19, Christ repeated the principle of love toward others: “...You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” He was summarizing Commandments five through ten, which provide the basic principles of how we are to treat our fellowman—that includes the Sixth Commandment, which simply states, “You shall not kill” (Ex. 20:13; Deut. 5:17). (To learn more, read our book *The Ten Commandments – “Nailed to the Cross” or Required for Salvation?*)

In addition to all the medical evidence proving that one who smokes is slowly killing *himself* (*prolonged* suicide, or self-murder), there is enough evidence proving that the smoke he exhales is harmful, and potentially fatal, to those inhaling it as secondhand smoke.

Again, some facts demonstrate this:

■ “Exposure to environmental tobacco smoke (ETS) is responsible for approximately 3,000 lung cancer deaths per year among *nonsmokers*” (*Healthy People 2000*, emphasis ours).

■ “Infants of parents who smoke have higher mortality rates throughout the first year of life than do infants of nonsmoking parents, primarily because of the contribution of ETS to SIDS and other respiratory illnesses” (*Pediatrics*, November 2000).

■ “It has been estimated that the total nicotine dose received by children whose parents smoke is equivalent to their actively smoking between 60 and 150 cigarettes per year” (*East Mediterranean Health Journal*, “Effects of Passive Smoking on Children’s Health: A Review”).

■ “Babies exposed to secondhand smoke are almost twice as likely to develop allergies to inhaled allergens such as animal hair as infants who are not exposed to tobacco smoke. Children whose parents smoke are almost 50% more likely to be allergic to certain foods” (*Medical News Today*).

■ “In the U.S., tobacco kills more Americans than AIDS, alcohol, car accidents, murders, suicides, drugs, and fires combined” ([www.thetruth.com](http://www.thetruth.com)).

Ultimately, smoking is a form of *hate*. Many who smoke display a complete disregard for those around them. The very necessity for “No Smoking” signs demonstrates this. Most people do not *naturally* concern themselves with even the *basic* needs of others. Many smokers do not consider that those around them find it uncomfortable to dine, shop, work or enjoy anything while inhaling secondhand smoke.

I John chapters 3 and 4 contain instruction concerning how we are to show love toward others. You may wish to read them to understand how the principle of “love toward man” is violated when one smokes.

### **Violates Tenth Commandment**

Stop and think! Realize that, ultimately, you do not even smoke to *please* yourself. You do it because it tames a psychological craving or appetite, just as someone with an eating disorder seeks to appease an unbalanced mental perception. That motivation is based on covetousness, which violates the Tenth Commandment (Ex. 20:17; Deut. 5:21).

Some may argue, “I am not desiring something that belongs to someone else. I buy my own cigarettes and smoke them!” But another underlying motivation for those chained to addictive habits is the *lust* for certain lifestyles.

As previously mentioned, cigarette manufacturers employ advertising tactics that appeal to vanity. The conveyed message is: “If you want to go *somewhere* in life, amount to *something*, be *somebody*, then you should smoke, because *everybody* who is *anybody* does it.”

This same line of reasoning was the cause of the fall of the archangel Lucifer (transforming him into Satan the devil): “For you have said in your heart, I will *ascend* into heaven, I will *exalt* my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:

I will *ascend* above the heights of the clouds: I will be like the Most High” (Isa. 14:13-14).

Lucifer was not content with the power and responsibility that he had been given. He wanted more.

### Addiction Is Idolatry

You have probably never considered that any addictive habit, including smoking, is a form of idolatry. God forbids it in the First Commandment: “You shall have no other gods before Me” (Ex. 20:3; Deut. 5:7).

How does smoking put “other gods” before the one true God? Paul asked, in Romans 6:16, “Know you not, that to whom you yield yourselves *servants* to obey, his *servants* you are to whom you obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?”

If you have an addictive habit, you are a slave to it, whether it is alcoholism, drug addiction, nicotine dependence, etc. It literally becomes an addict’s *god*, because it drives his thoughts and actions. In Hebrews 12:1, we read, “...let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which does so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.” God expects us to face our problems head-on and to overcome them. Those who do are promised great rewards: “Him that overcomes will I make a pillar in the temple of My God...” (Rev. 3:12). (Read our article “You Can Overcome and Prevent Sin.”)

### What You Do With What You Know

God judges us according to what we do with the knowledge that we have. If a person smokes, unaware of the health hazards, then “...the times of this *ignorance* God winked at; but now commands all men everywhere to *repent* [change]” (Acts 17:30).

In I Peter 1:13-14, we are exhorted to “...gird up the loins of [our] mind... as obedient children, not fashioning [ourselves] according to the *former lusts* in [our] *ignorance*.” The apostle James was inspired to write, “...to him that *knows* to do good, and *does it not*, to him it is *sin*” (Jms. 4:17). If a smoker is aware of the dangers he exposes him-

self to and turns a deaf ear to the warnings, God will hold him accountable for his actions!

### Overcoming Is a Process

Overcoming any bad habit or sin is not easy. It is a lifelong process, because no one is or will be perfect as long as he is a flesh-and-blood human being. All Christians battle three enemies: (1) Satan; (2) the pulls of this world; and (3) our own human nature.

But if you follow the steps below, individual sins *can* be overcome.

**1. Admit to yourself and to God that you have a problem.** This is the first, great step toward eliminating sin from our lives. James 1:23-24 states, “For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholds himself, and goes his way, and straightway forgets what manner of man he was.”

Merely seeing a problem in your life will not make it go away. You have to acknowledge it and determine to do something about it. I John 1:9 states, “If we confess our sins, He [God] is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” Once we do our part, God has promised to do His.

**2. Realize that with God’s help, you can “kick the habit.”** Pray and ask God for His help. As Paul stated in Philippians 4:13, “I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.” There is no trial that you face that Christ does not understand. Hebrews 4:15 gives us encouragement: “For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”

**3. Tell yourself that “quitting is quitting,” not merely cutting back.** Gradually quitting is not quitting! Smokers often think they can quit by placing a limit on the number of cigarettes they smoke—leaving a temptation. But Christ commands us to “...pray, that *you enter not into temptation*: the spirit indeed is willing, but the *flesh is weak*” (Matt. 26:41). In James 1:14, we are instructed to avoid compro-

ming situations: “But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.”

**4. Seek medical advice.** Making a sudden, drastic change in an addictive habit (especially if it has been practiced for years) will carry certain health side effects. But they could be curbed if addressed properly and in a timely fashion.

**5. Do not be discouraged.** When trying to overcome an addiction, you may find that you are tempted to fall right back into it. I Peter 5:8-9 exhorts, “Be sober, be *vigilant*; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.”

Satan does not want you to succeed in overcoming and receive the reward that he knows he can never have—sonship in God’s kingdom (Heb. 2:10; Rev. 21:3). Satan will put every imaginable obstacle in your way. Remember, you are wrestling against “...principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Eph. 6:12).

By *diligently* applying the principles above, you will be able to successfully overcome smoking.

“You will gain many benefits from your decision to quit smoking. Most importantly, it may save your life. Those who quit smoking decrease their risk of lung disease, heart disease, emphysema and cancer. They are proud to be rid of the hacking coughs, the messy ash trays, the smell of stale smoke at home, in their cars and on their clothes and hair, and the nicotine stains on their fingers and teeth. Some people report rejuvenation in their senses of smell and taste as well as increased vitality. But for most, the first noticeable difference is a sense of pride in knowing they have “kicked the habit” ([www.aquitsmoking.com](http://www.aquitsmoking.com)).

God commands us to, “Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth” (Col. 3:2). What will you do? □

## LUXURY

Continued from page 6

tell the whole world: “I am come that they might have *life*, and that they might have it more ABUNDANTLY” (John 10:10).

God wants everyone to live rich, full, abundant lives. He wants all peoples to enjoy His blessings. Savor this next wonderful verse: “And in this mountain [God’s government] shall the LORD of hosts make unto *all people* a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined” (Isa. 25:6).

But God also wants mankind to enjoy the results of living under His Law: abundance, peace and prosperity.

The coming kingdom will bring a new world economic system based on sound financial policies. There will be no more profiteering from risky investments. No longer will financial institutions, insurance companies and loan agencies exist as we know them,

nor will banks take advantage of customers.

Individuals will learn not to overspend. People will be guided to follow sound financial practices and to not buy more than they can afford. There will be no flashy advertisements inducing lust to “buy now,” in order to achieve instant gratification, encouraged by all of today’s media. Rather, the established way will emphasize a strong work ethic, obedience to God’s laws, and the way of give and outgoing concern toward others.

### Before the Good News

As the world learns not to covet, people will also learn that the goal of being rich is destructive (I Tim. 6:9-10). They will learn that giving to others always returns even greater blessings to the giver (Luke 6:38). Lust-driven consumerism will also disappear, along with overwhelming consumer debt and resulting bankruptcy. Without lust, materialism and impulse buying will vanish.

Under the government of God, man will experience prosperity and happiness. Yet, this will not happen immediately. Before Europe can experience this true abundance, it must realize once and for all that its own solutions and governmental systems do not work! After a time of fleeting prosperity, the continent will plunge into the time of great difficulty described in Revelation 18.

Yet whenever God warns of impending punishment, He also offers a way to escape. But this escape means you must take ACTION! Notice what God commands in Revelation 18 verse 4: “*Come out of her, My people, that you be not partakers of her sins, and that you receive not of her plagues.*”

God says that, to escape, one must COME OUT. But in order to leave something, you must first know what it is. To learn more about this—and how Europe’s coming unification will personally affect *you*—read David C. Pack’s booklet *Who or What Is the Beast of Revelation?* □

# IS HELL REAL?



The  
truth about  
**HELL**

Read Our Helpful Booklet *The Truth About Hell* Free Online at [www.thercg.org](http://www.thercg.org)

## PERSONAL

Continued from page 2

a feeling, an experience, conversion, and the like.

Jesus explains what it means to be “born of water and of the Spirit” and why, if this does not happen, one “cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3:5). Yes, the kingdom is something that can be “entered into.” Jesus explains, “That which is *born* of the flesh IS flesh,” but also “that which is born of the Spirit IS spirit” (John 3:6).

Of course it is. Flesh and blood cannot enter God’s kingdom. The point is that *spirit* CAN! Human beings are made of dust, not spirit. Those who are born again are composed of—made of—spirit.

When born as humans, we are delivered from a *physical* mother. When born of spirit, we are delivered from a *spiritual* Mother, the Church. (Carefully read these verses: Galatians 4:26; II John 1:1, 13; Revelation 12:1-5; Hebrews 12:23.)

People are destined to be born as spirit—*like Christ was*—as surely as they are born physically of a human mother—*like Christ was*.

This will become plain.

Because Jesus wanted no room for misunderstanding, He likened spirit to wind. Wind, like spirit, is invisible. It cannot be seen. He told Nicodemus, “The wind blows where it [does], and you hear the sound thereof, but cannot tell from where it comes, and where it goes: *so is everyone that is born of the Spirit*” (John 3:8). Those born of spirit will be like wind—they will be invisible! But human beings are flesh and blood, and can be seen.

See how simple this is?

Another comparison is important. Wind often demonstrates enormous POWER. While invisible, its effects are readily seen. The force of hurricanes, typhoons, tornadoes and straight-line winds can be tremendous. But people possess relatively little power. Windpower vastly exceeds that of the strongest human being—or thousands together!

So, there is a limitation on who can actually *see* and *enter* the kingdom. Anyone can see physical things. Therefore, the kingdom cannot be something physical, or everyone could see it. Understand these critical points Jesus made. You must be spirit to see the invisible kingdom of God!

Grasp this about the John 3 account! Jesus was making an exciting *announcement* about the kingdom of God coming to Earth—and that people can enter it. But His message was received as a threat to religious leaders. They saw themselves losing power to both this kingdom and Jesus because of His influence over the people.

Nicodemus acknowledged, “Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God” (John 3:2). He admitted that he knew who Jesus was and that God had sent Him. Notice Nicodemus was speaking for more than himself. He said, “*we* know.” He was a Pharisee, and was referring to himself and the other Pharisees who understood who and what Jesus was. These religious leaders well understood that Jesus’ authority to teach the truth and perform miracles came from God. They could not deny God’s power evident in the miracles He performed. But they still resented Him, and called Him a blasphemer, drunkard, heretic, seditionist, bastard, ignorant, demon-possessed, false prophet—and crucified Him!

The Romans usually installed the Pharisees into positions of rulership under their occupying authority. This gave the Pharisees important status and made life generally better for them than the admiring multitudes for whom Jesus taught, healed, cast out demons and performed other miracles.

Exactly like the Pharisees, many today see the obvious truth of the Bible, yet *choose* to ignore it in order to hold to their own traditions and ideas—and sometimes religious *status*! Many ministers today are no different. The Pharisees felt threatened by the potential for immediate loss of personal power to this new kingdom. This is why Jesus spoke so bluntly

when He said, “Except a man be born again, he cannot *see* the kingdom of God” (John 3:3).

### When Was Jesus Born Again?

Despite the plainness of these verses, some still dispute them. They reject the obvious meaning, claiming that upon “accepting Jesus,” one sees the kingdom in his *mind’s eye*. In addition to ignoring that the kingdom must be entered, this conclusion brings them another serious dilemma.

If Jesus were not born again when He was “born from the dead,” then when *else* could He have experienced this? Remember, professing Christians believe one is born again upon conversion.

When did *Christ* experience conversion? When did He repent and accept *Himself* as Savior? No one can explain this!

Since Jesus had the Holy Spirit from begetting in Mary’s womb, again, when was He converted? Understand! The Bible clearly teaches the Holy Spirit is given *at conversion*. Yet, Jesus had God’s Spirit from conception. Would any suggest He could see the kingdom from inside His mother’s womb? Did He give His heart to the Lord—meaning to Himself!—as an embryo?

These questions take on greater significance for another reason. True Christians *copy* Christ. The apostle Peter wrote, “Christ...leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps” (I Pet. 2:21).

It is impossible for Christians to follow Jesus’ example of rebirth at conversion because He was never converted in the human sense. He had God’s Spirit from the moment His physical existence began.

We have learned another important point about being born again that applies here. Remember, Jesus said, “that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (John 3:6). This reinforces the earlier verses about Him being born *from the dead*. After His Resurrection and return to heaven, Jesus was *composed of Spirit*—He had become like wind.

You must grasp this! The example that Jesus set—which Christians must follow—is that He was born—again—from the dead, not at conversion. Like Christ, we will *also* be composed of spirit—and be like wind.

### Christ's Advance Announcement

Before we can delve more deeply into *when* one is born again, some background is needed as a foundation for understanding the big picture of this doctrinal teaching.

Like a newscaster ahead of his time, wherever He went, Jesus continually announced the kingdom of God. It was the subject of most of His parables. He came announcing a total change in the way the world would be governed at the establishing of God's kingdom. With this change would come unprecedented world peace, happiness and prosperity.

The prophet Malachi spoke of two messengers. Notice: "Behold, I will send MY messenger [John the Baptist], and he shall prepare the way before Me: and the Lord [Jesus], whom you seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even THE Messenger of the covenant [Jesus], whom you delight in" (Mal. 3:1).

Jesus came as a Messenger. When He commissioned the 12 apostles and sent them to preach, the only instruction He gave was to preach about the kingdom of God. When He later sent 70 more disciples, He also commanded they preach the kingdom.

The terms "kingdom" and "kingdom of God" are found throughout the New Testament. Yet it is astonishing how nearly everyone has lost the knowledge and *meaning* of what they refer to! Like the truth of born again, this understanding has been suppressed for 2,000 years!

### What IS the Gospel?

"Gospel" is an old English word meaning "god spell" or good news. "Kingdom" is also an old English term simply meaning *government*. In other words, Jesus preached "the good news of the GOVERNMENT of God." World peace, happiness and prosperity for all

will be *good news* for a mankind that has not known them for 6,000 years!

Jesus came saying, "Repent you, and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:15). But what *is* the true gospel? The *truth* of the gospel has been hidden from the vast majority of professing Christians. Ever since the first century, there has been a conspiracy to deceive would-be Christians about the meaning of the gospel. However shocking, this is true!

Most believe the gospel is about the Person of Jesus. Certainly Jesus *is* an important subject, but He is *not* the gospel. The Bible shows He is preached in conjunction *with* the gospel.

Now notice: "Now after that John [the Baptist] was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the *kingdom of God*" (Mark 1:14). This is the gospel Jesus preached, saying, "Repent you, and *believe the gospel*" (vs. 15). What gospel?—the kingdom of God. Verse 1 refers to "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ" (Mark 1:1). Jesus' gospel is about the kingdom of God! One must believe *THAT* gospel to be saved. Counterfeits will not do.

No wonder Jesus answered Nicodemus as He did. Everything He said and taught He tied to the kingdom of God! We have seen Christians will be born again so they can see—or *inherit*—God's kingdom. This much should now be obvious.

### The Kingdom of God Explained

But what *is* the kingdom of God? The term has no meaning if it cannot be understood. If Christians inherit it, they should know *what* they are inheriting. Let's make this impossible to misunderstand. In this life, people are born into: (1) a human *family*, and (2) any one of many earthly *kingdoms*. A kingdom is comprised of a nation of people under a government that *rules* the nation.

It is the same with God. At the Resurrection, humans are born into: (1) the God FAMILY, which is also (2) the KINGDOM of God. These are essentially one and the same. The parallel is perfectly clear when compar-

ing the human physical pattern to the divine Spirit pattern.

God has a throne in heaven, from which He rules His kingdom. (Read Isaiah 66:1 and Revelation 3:21, among other verses.) He literally rules the entire universe with Christ. When Christians are born again, they enter *this* kingdom—God's ruling, governing FAMILY!

Are you beginning to see God's awesome purpose for *your* life—what can be *your* inheritance? Our book—*The Awesome Potential of Man*—tells a story that *is* incredible for those who will simply believe God's Word. Read it!

### Daniel Understood

The prophet Daniel understood the kingdom of God involved a *literal* government that would one day rule *real* people and *real* nations on Earth. He held no illusion that this kingdom was merely sentimental fluff or a "warm feeling in the hearts of men." Through a series of dreams and visions, God used him to explain much *special* understanding about how and when His kingdom would come to Earth.

All that Daniel was shown was to be "closed up and sealed till the time of the end" (Dan. 12:9). We are now in that time, and there are many proofs of this. To examine just some, read the booklet *Are These the Last Days?* Daniel's message is for us—today! He reported tremendous news that will affect *you* in your lifetime! Daniel understood and spoke the same gospel Christ preached. It is vital we understand what he said!

Carefully read Daniel 2:28-44. This astonishing, detailed prophecy reveals many things about God's Plan to restore His government to Earth—including the *time sequence* in which this will happen.

It describes a giant man: "This image's head was of fine *gold*, his breast and his arms of *silver*, his belly and his thighs of *brass*, His legs of iron, his feet part of *iron and part of clay*" (Dan. 2:32-33). The construction involves four distinct parts. Next comes a large "stone that smote the

image [and] became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth” (vs. 35). Note that this stone “was cut out *without hands*” (vs. 34) because God, not men, formed it.

The stone shattered the image and replaced it, eventually encompassing the entire Earth. This is obviously the government of God coming to Earth. Daniel is announcing the same gospel—the kingdom of God.

These verses show a succession of *world empires*—kingdoms—depicted by different metals of which the giant statue was made. First, the Chaldean-Babylonian Empire of *gold*—second, the Medo-Persian Empire of *silver*—third, the Greco-Macedonian of *brass*—and fourth, the Roman Empire of *iron* mixed with clay. The message from history is that these four kingdoms once governed vast areas, with the fourth kingdom largely ruling the whole world just before the kingdom of God is established.

### Saints Enter the Kingdom

Daniel wrote much about God’s kingdom—and the saints’ role in it. He offered a direct connection to *when* Christians will be born again.

Chapter 7, verse 13, speaks of Christ’s Return. Just before this, God officially grants Him the authority to rule all nations: “*There was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom,*

that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed” (Dan. 7:14). The apostle John, in Revelation, wrote of this time. Notice: “The *kingdoms* of this world are become the *kingdoms* of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign forever and ever” (Rev. 11:15).

More verses in Daniel 7 are critical. Remember that God’s kingdom is foretold to replace the four world-ruling kingdoms of chapter 2: “These great beasts, which are *four*, are *four* kings, which shall arise out of the earth. But *the saints* of the Most High shall *take the kingdom*, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever” (Dan. 7:17-18).

The ultimate calling of Christians is to join Jesus Christ and share *rulership* in the kingdom of God over all nations and peoples. Truly, Christ is “*King of kings and Lord of lords*” (Rev. 19:16). This includes *anyone* willing to accept God’s *terms* for entering His kingdom.

Verses 19 to 20 shed more light on what happens when the saints return with Christ. Their first responsibility is to replace the “fourth beast,” which rules with the assistance of a “little horn.” This is a small, but powerful, religious kingdom—and it is the Babylonish Whore who rides the Beast

of Revelation 17. This kingdom has ruled all the previous revivals of the Holy Roman Empire. Another vital booklet, *Who or What Is the Beast of Revelation?* is essential. I urge you to read it.

Now notice: “...*the same horn made war with the saints* [the work of the Babylonish woman of Revelation 17:5-6], and prevailed against them; until the Ancient of Days came [Christ], and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom” (Dan. 7:21-22).

Finally, verse 27 confirms what lies ahead for all true Christians: “The *kingdom* and dominion, and the greatness of the *kingdom* under the whole heaven, *shall be given to the people of the saints* of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him” (Dan. 7:27).

This is the kingdom of God! What could be more plain?

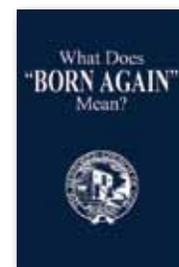
No wonder Jesus taught, “He that overcomes, and keeps My works unto the end, to him [not others!] will I give *power over the nations*: and he shall *RULE* them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of My Father” (Rev. 2:26-27), and also, “To him that overcomes [no one else!] will I grant to sit with Me *in My throne*...” (Rev. 3:21).

“In My throne” is used because Christ knew His throne will be on Earth, unlike the Father’s, which is in heaven. Luke 1:32 shows Jesus Christ will sit in Jerusalem on David’s throne. Many more verses show that the saints will rule with Christ from Jerusalem!

There is still much, *much* more to learn about the truth of when and how one is born again. You do not need

to be lost in confusion and deception as with so many millions today. You *can* understand.

To learn more, read our booklet *What Does “Born Again” Mean?* □



## When Is a Christian “Born Again”?

Broadcast now available on *The World to Come* at [www.worldtocome.org](http://www.worldtocome.org)

## ASIA

## Pakistan Flooding Kills Over 1,500



■ **DESTRUCTION IN THE TOWN OF NOWSHERA:** Top, local residents travel down a flood-affected road (Aug. 1, 2010). Far left, Pakistani men and boys gather to receive food at a camp for the displaced set up inside a college on the outskirts of the town (Aug. 2, 2010). Middle, flood survivors carry their belongings (Aug. 1, 2010). Far right, a woman looks onward as she surveys the damage to her home (Aug. 1, 2010).

PHOTOS: (TOP) DANIEL BEREHULAK/GETTY IMAGES, (FAR LEFT) BEHROUZ MEHRI/AFP/GETTY IMAGES, (MIDDLE) A MAJEED/AFP/GETTY IMAGES, (FAR RIGHT) DANIEL BEREHULAK/GETTY IMAGES



**T**orrential rains in northwestern Pakistan resulted in massive flooding and landslides, which killed more than 1,500 people and left as many as 1.3 million homeless. The water wiped out livestock, crops and even complete villages. Days after the initial downpours, close to 27,000 people still remained trapped, awaiting rescue.

“Relief work for some 3.2 million people has been delayed by swamped

roads, washed-out bridges, and downed communication lines, and survivors have complained about government inaction,” *CBS News* reported.

More than three million people have been affected by the storm, which dumped 12 inches of rain in 36 hours on Pakistani towns, triggering what Army Major General Ashfaq Nadeem described as “the flood of the centuries.”

According to *BBC News*, “The United Nations’ World Food Programme says it has provided emergency food for 42,000 people in Pakistan...and that by the end of the week it expects to have helped 250,000 people.

“However, WFP spokeswoman Emilia Casella said about 1.8 million needed food aid.”

Please see **PAKISTAN**, page 25

HEALTH ISSUES

# Almost 30 Percent of Americans Obese

**A**lmost one-third—73 million—of all adults in the United States are obese, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported.

According to the government agency, from 2007 to 2009, the number of obese adults aged 18 and over rose by 2.4 million—a 1.1 percent increase.

“In every state, more than 15% of adults are obese, and in nine states, over 30% of adults are obese,” the report stated.

These statistics are double the national numbers of 30 years ago.

The report revealed that no state has been able to meet the goal of having an obesity rate less than 15 percent.

“We aren’t near that, and we haven’t moved in that direction,” National Center for Health Statistics epidemiologist and co-author of the study Cynthia L. Ogden told *The New York Times*.

MSN health and fitness writer Maia Szalavitz said the slumping

## Rising Weight, Rising Costs

*Obesity costs the United States about \$147 billion annually, double what it was nearly a decade ago.*

### Spending difference compared to normal weight (percent difference)

2006		\$1,429 (41.5%)
1998*		\$1,145 (36.5%)

\*In 2006 dollars

### Obesity as percent of annual medical expenditures

2006		9.1%
1998		6.5%

- Prevalence of obesity increased 37 percent between 1998 and 2006
- Obesity defined as a body mass index of more than 30

Source: Health Affairs  
Graphic: Melina Yingling

© 2009 MCT

economy is contributing to the epidemic.

“When unemployment rises, obesity can soon follow because cutting back on expenses often means cutting the healthier, more expensive foods and people also turn to junk food to relieve stress,” she said. Serious health complications related to obesity include heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and certain types of cancer.

Obesity accounts for approximately \$147 billion in medical costs each year. A person who is obese averages \$1,429 more in medical expenses annually than one of normal weight.

Health authorities expect these numbers could skyrocket. An earlier study revealed that within the next 10 years, obesity-related expenses could cost the U.S. more than \$344 billion as 43 percent of the population could be obese by that time. □

AFRICA

## Tuberculosis Rates Rise in Africa

**O**ver the past 20 years, tuberculosis rates have dramatically increased in 44 African countries, especially in areas of heavy mining, according to an *American Journal of Public Health* study.

“Rates of the illness have doubled in Africa over the past two decades, and have tripled in South Africa, which even in 1996 had the highest TB rates in the world,” *The New York Times* reported after the study’s publication.

Over 750,000 annual cases of TB can be traced back to mining work conditions.

“We have long known that the conditions on the mines—both above and below ground—are conducive to the spread of TB and HIV,” Brown University assistant professor of

medical science, and researcher of the study, Mark Lurie said in a statement. “But this is the first time we have used statistical techniques to accurately quantify the contribution of mining to TB.”

According to the statement, “TB incidence in some mines is 10 times...higher than in the general population.”

Tuberculosis is caused by an inhaled bacteria, which multiplies in the lungs, causing a lung infection, or pneumonia.

“Miners are also known to spread tuberculosis to their families and communities, the researchers said, since nearly half of workers in large mining countries like South Africa are foreign and routinely travel across large distances,” *Reuters* reported. □

MIDDLE EAST

## Israel-Lebanon Clash Turns Deadly

**A** border clash between Israeli and Lebanese armies claimed the lives of at least five people, including one reporter. It was the first deadly encounter since the 2006 war between Israeli and Lebanese Hezbollah forces.

In response to the clashes, *BBC News* reported that Hezbollah’s Chief, Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah said, “...if the army is attacked in any area where the resistance has a presence or a say, the resistance will not stand by idly.”

While each side blamed the other, “Israeli officials said their soldiers were ambushed by snipers, which they said suggested a planned attack,” *The Los Angeles Times* wrote.

In a United Nations statement, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon urged both sides to “exercise maximum restraint” until further details of the incident are revealed. □

## CRIME & PUNISHMENT

# Police Cutbacks Drive Increase in Violence

**A**cross the United States, record numbers of law enforcement and public safety employees are being laid off due to budget shortfalls, prompting higher levels of violence in certain cities.

In Oakland, California, one of the nation's most violent cities, 25 percent of the police force was cut due to a \$42 million dollar budget gap. Likewise in Miami, over 100 officers were laid off from the force, with many more to follow in the coming months.

In the crime-plagued city of East St. Louis, leaders approved a measure to reduce the number of officers by 30 percent.

"I want our citizens to know we have some of the bravest police officers and firefighters in the country, but we don't have the money to pay

them," the city's Mayor, Alvin Parks told the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*.

In some cities, a reduction in the number of officers means there are certain activities that law enforcement officials will not be able to do. Time-consuming investigations, tedious crime-lab procedures, stakeouts, DWI arrests and quelling mass protests all take time and often many officers. In states such as Michigan, which has only 24 officers per 10,000 people, law enforcement authorities have to prioritize their work, while keeping in mind that they may not have back up officers to assist them should a dangerous situation arise.

Authorities have already witnessed a rise in crime as a result of the cuts and shrinking police force. New York City reduced its force by 4,685 officers so far this year, and

plans to cut an additional 3,150 more by 2011. The reduction spurred an increase in violent crime, with homicides up 22 percent, and shootings up 14 percent.

In Manhattan alone, robberies increased by 14 percent and burglaries by 19.8 percent. There has also been a noticeable rise in nearly all other reported crimes, such as rape, prostitution, drug sales and car thefts.

New York Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg told *The New York Times* the increase in violent crime is "worrisome."

"We have fewer police officers on the streets than we did before," he said.

With federal stimulus and grant money evaporating and limited options, officials expect to see more cuts in government services nationwide. □

## PAKISTAN

*Continued from page 23*

On Sunday, the United States promised to assist with \$10 million in emergency aid.

"Officials say the disaster is escalating as more rain is expected in the next two days and river levels are rising in the south of the country," *ABC News* reported.

Many survivors are unsatisfied with the government's response. A group of approximately 300 Pakistanis blocked a high-traffic road in the town of Nowshera in protest.

"This is our fifth day," a local man told *PBS News*. "Nobody has come from the government. We're staying on the mountain. We lost everything. It's each man for himself, and we have no help."

In addition to the devastation, health authorities are concerned about the spread of waterborne diseases such as cholera and potential for poisonous snakes to attack flood victims.

"We saw destruction during the

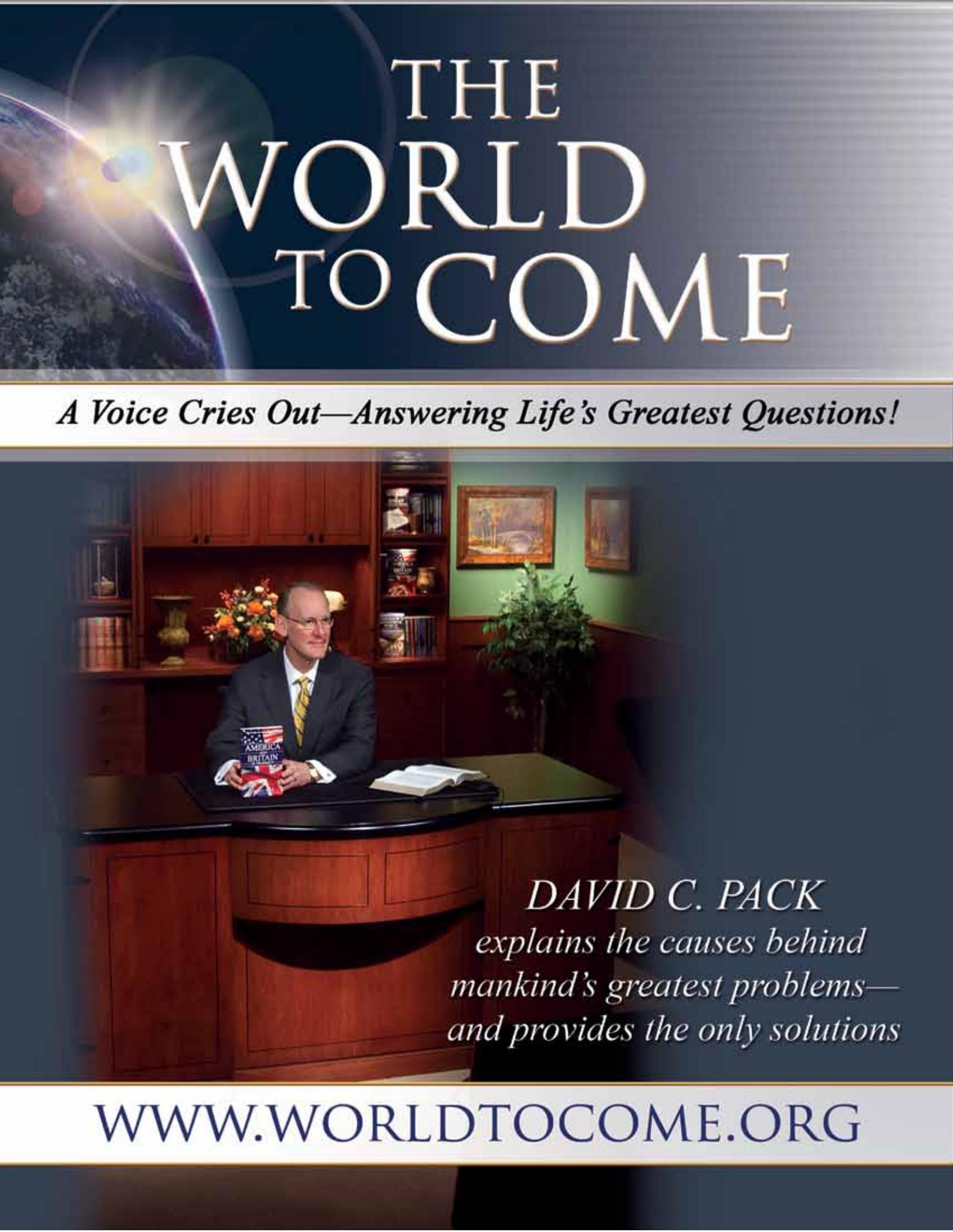


■ **AFTERMATH OF THE FLOOD:** A woman washes a mat as she sifts through salvageable items from her home in Pabi, near Nowshera, Pakistan (Aug. 3, 2010).

PHOTO: DANIEL BEREHULAK/GETTY IMAGES

three years of the Taliban and then during their fight with the army," a flood victim told *The Associated*

*Press*. "But the destruction we have seen in the last three days is much more." □



# THE WORLD TO COME

*A Voice Cries Out—Answering Life's Greatest Questions!*

*DAVID C. PACK*  
*explains the causes behind*  
*mankind's greatest problems—*  
*and provides the only solutions*

[WWW.WORLDTOCOME.ORG](http://WWW.WORLDTOCOME.ORG)