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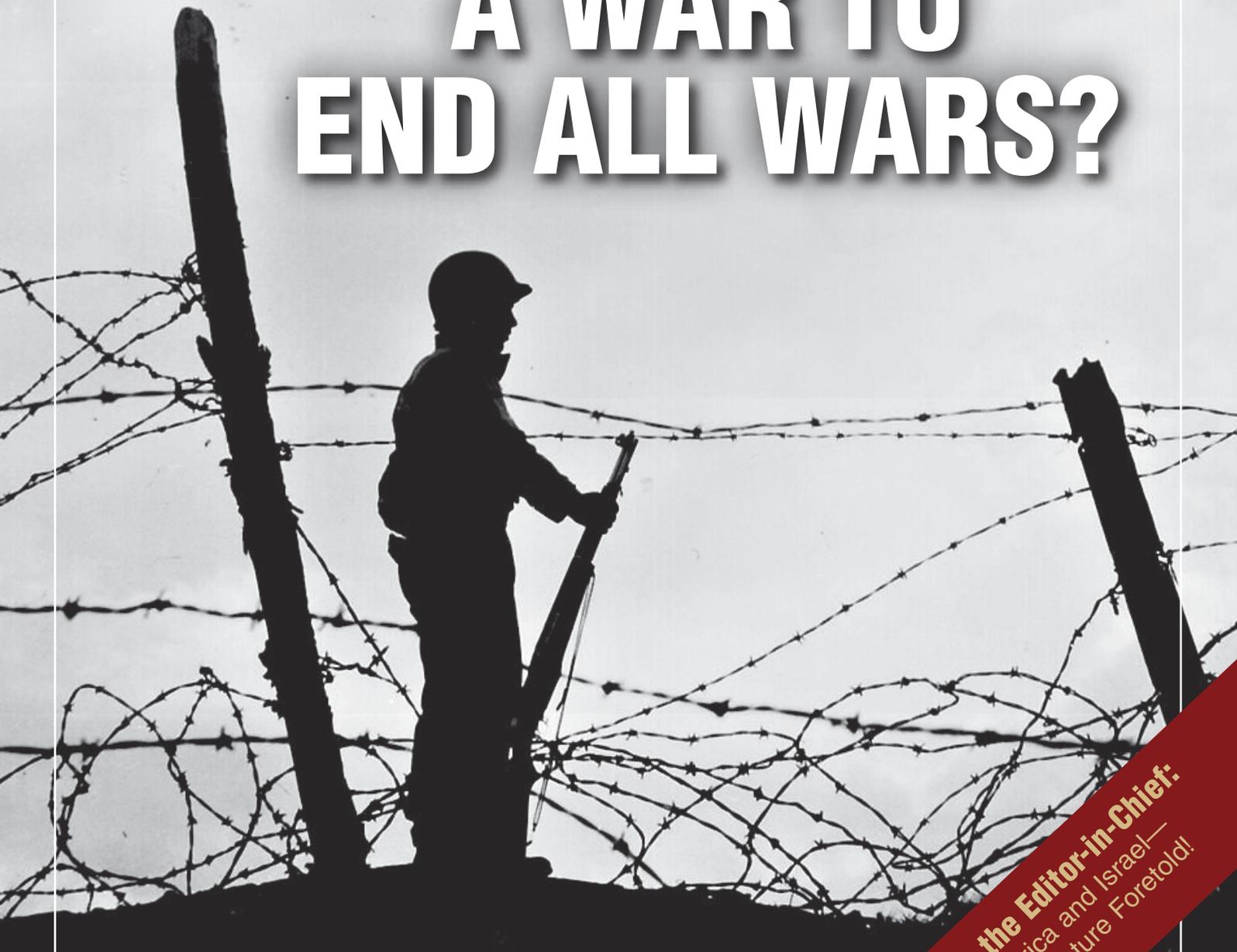
THE

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REAL TRUTH™

A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING

A WAR TO END ALL WARS?



**Train Your Children
in the Old Paths**

**Iran Nuclear Deal Strains
Diplomatic Ties**

**How Was the Bible Canonized?
(Part 2)**

**From the Editor-in-Chief:
America and Israel—
Full Rupture Foretold!**

THE
REAL TRUTH[™]
A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING

VOL. XIII | NO. 6 | SEPTEMBER 2015

A R T I C L E S

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■ **AT THE TABLE:** Representatives from the P5+1, a group of six powers engaged in diplomatic efforts with Iran including China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Germany, wait for a plenary session on the Iran nuclear talks to begin in Lausanne, Switzerland (March 31, 2015).

PHOTO: FABRICE COFFRINI/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Iran Nuclear Deal Strains Diplomatic Ties

The treaty designed to curb Iran's nuclear program is worsening political rifts.

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First believed to be a hoax...then touted as evidence of evolution, the story of the duck-billed platypus is full of twists and turns.

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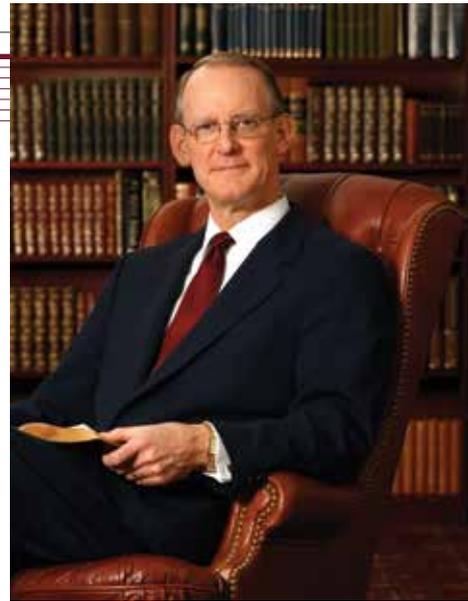
FRONT COVER: A soldier guards a beach in Oahu, Hawaii (March 1945).

PHOTO: NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION/PUBLIC DOMAIN

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PERSONAL FROM

David C. Fack



America and Israel— Full Rupture Foretold!

A SINGLE VERSE in Zechariah contains an extraordinary but little-known prophecy. Foretold over 2,500 years ago, it will be fulfilled very soon. It explains why the now deeply strained relationship exists between the United States and Israel where there was once an unwavering alliance. World leaders, the media, and even supposed prophecy experts do not know this prophecy.

This Personal brings meaning to now faltering relations, along with *why* these two nations have enjoyed such a special and enduring friendship. Opening with bad news, the prophecy ends with the most wonderful good news.

The highest drama is playing out toward break up between America and Israel, with other Western nations involved. This cataclysmic event will soon rock America, Israel and the West. One shocking event will first *galvanize* the whole world's attention. Shortly after will come the full blow-up—a complete rupture that is visible everywhere! You need to know what is coming and **WHY!**

We are not political, nor do we take sides—ever. What follows is about history and prophecy, not poli-

tics. After reading this unique article, you will never see the relationship between America and Israel the same. This will be among the most important time spent of your life.

Rift in the Brotherhood

We open with one verse. In the context of the end-time, God says He will “break the *brotherhood* between Judah and Israel” (Zech. 11:14). Almost everyone believes ancient Israel and Judah (the Jews) are the same. Yet two entities are described here. Brotherhoods require at least *two brothers*. Israel and Judah are in fact separate peoples. Few know that most of the tribes of Israel became lost to themselves and the world. Judah did not. This story involves both recent and ancient history.

First, *recent* history. America and Israel have always stood by each other—for better or worse. This alliance has been especially significant for Israel given its hostile neighbors. Only two of 22 Arab nations have formally recognized it. Through the decades, the pressures of wars, terrorist acts, differing religious ideologies, politics and conflicting personalities have tugged at the ties that have bound America and Israel. However, the relationship has weathered *every* storm.

United States presidents of both political parties have long championed America's special relationship



■ SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP: Left page, top, the first prime minister of Israel, David Ben-Gurion, publicly announces the declaration of Israel as a state (May 14, 1948). Left page, bottom left, U.S. President Jimmy Carter applauds Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin at the concluding ceremony of the Camp David Summit (Sept. 17, 1978). Left page, bottom right, United States President George H. Bush talks with Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin during a meeting in the White House concerning the West Bank and Gaza Strip (May 25, 1989). Right page, top, U.S. President Barack Obama meets with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the United Nations in New York City (Sept. 21, 2011). Right page, bottom left, Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir poses with U.S. President Richard Nixon in Washington, D.C. (Nov. 2, 1973). Right page, middle right, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu speaks about Iran during a joint meeting of the United States Congress at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C. (March 3, 2015). Right page, bottom right, U.S. President Bill Clinton stands between Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) leader Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin as they shake hands in Washington, D.C., after Israel and the PLO signed a historic agreement (Sept. 13, 1993).

PHOTOS: RUDI WEISSENSTEIN/ISRAEL MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS/PUBLIC DOMAIN (LEFT PAGE, TOP); AFP/GETTY IMAGES (LEFT PAGE, BOTTOM LEFT); JAMES COLBURN/AFP/GETTY IMAGES (LEFT PAGE, BOTTOM RIGHT); AARON SHOWALTER-POOL/GETTY IMAGES (RIGHT PAGE, TOP); AFP/GETTY IMAGES (RIGHT PAGE, BOTTOM LEFT); WIN MCNAMEE (RIGHT PAGE, MIDDLE RIGHT); J. DAVID AKE/AFP/GETTY IMAGES (RIGHT PAGE, BOTTOM RIGHT)



Today's Nazis: Iran" (*The Times of Israel*), "The United States Will Not Support Israel in the UN" (*Jerusalem Online*), "With Israel Election Over, Netanyahu Likely to Remain Thorn in Obama's Side" (*The Jerusalem Post*), "The Open Loathing Between Barack Obama and Benjamin Netanyahu Just Got Worse" (*The Independent*), and finally, "Netanyahu 'spat in our face,' White House Officials Said" (*The Times of Israel*).

Points of Contention

Two big points of contention have arisen and festered: (1) the Palestinian people and new settlements within "disputed" areas of a future Palestinian state, and (2) how to deal with Iran's nuclear program.

To Israel, settlement building means providing housing for growing communities. To America and much of the world, these projects are a sign that Israel will not budge in peace negotiations with the Palestinians.

In August 2013, an article in *The Hill* reported, "The [U.S.] State Department...criticized Israel for approving [1,200] new settlement [homes] on disputed lands on the eve of resuming long-stalled peace talks...[saying] 'We do not accept the legitimacy of continued settlement activity.'"

The settlement issue remains unresolved and continues to create problems between America and Israel. In early 2015 *Haaretz* stated this: "The U.S. criticized Israel's publication of tenders for 450 new settlement housing units...with State Department spokeswoman...saying the move was deeply concerning and would further isolate Israel."

Worse is Iran. Its leadership repeatedly vows to "wipe Israel off the map." Israel has contemplated striking Iran's nuclear sites—as a matter of survival for the tiny nation. Israel believes diplomacy has failed and the time for action is approaching.

Meanwhile, America aggressively pursued a diplomatic solution to Iran's nuclear program. In September 2013, President Obama phoned



with the Jewish people. But new challenges are testing the relationship. Distrust has been growing over recent years.

Headlines reveal the now enormous rift: "As White House, Netanyahu Spar Over Speech to Congress, the Gloves Come Off" (*The Christian Science Monitor*), "Netanyahu's

Speech Will 'Poke U.S. President in the Eye' Warn Israeli Diplomats" (*The Telegraph*), "Best Foes Forever: What Really Divides Obama and Netanyahu" (*Haaretz*), "Netanyahu's Iran Speech in Congress Is a Recipe for an Explosive U.S.-Israel Clash" (*Haaretz*), "Netanyahu Says West Is 'Comatose, Delusional' in Face of

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani—a first between leaders of these nations since 1979. This led to extensive negotiations to halt Iran’s nuclear program involving China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and Germany, led by the United States! An agreement was reached July 14. The next day’s headline of *The Wall Street Journal* read, “Iran Deal Ignites Fierce Fight,” with photos of President Obama, President Rouhani, and Prime Minister Netanyahu.

Israelis stand almost *completely united* against the agreement.

Mr. Netanyahu has long been an outspoken critic of the Iran deal, and tensions between Washington and Jerusalem grew *much* worse when he addressed the U.S. Congress about Iran in March.

Just before it took place, an *Associated Press* article outlined how the speech would greatly worsen the rocky relationship: “For six years, President Barack Obama and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu have been on a *collision course* over how to halt Iran’s nuclear ambitions, a high-stakes endeavor both men see as a centerpiece of their legacies.

“The coming weeks will put the relationship between their countries... to one of its toughest tests.

“Netanyahu is bound for Washington for an address...aimed squarely at derailing Obama’s cherished bid for a diplomatic deal with Tehran. At the same time, Secretary of State John Kerry and other international negotiators will be in Switzerland for talks with the Iranians, trying for a framework agreement before a late March deadline” (emphasis added).

The article continued with more recent history: “Stopping Iran from building a nuclear bomb has become a defining challenge for both Obama and Netanyahu, yet one they have approached far differently.”

Later in the article, the outlet explained: “The White House was furious when Netanyahu’s government defied Obama and announced plans to construct new housing units in East Jerusalem while [Vice

President Joe] Biden was visiting Israel in 2010. Additional housing plans that year upended U.S. efforts to restart peace talks between the Israelis and Palestinians.

“The tension between Obama and Netanyahu was laid bare in an unusually public manner during an Oval Office meeting in 2011. In front of a crowd of journalists, the prime minister lectured Obama at length on Israel’s history and dismissed the president’s conditions for restarting peace talks.”

The public disagreements go on and on—including anger from the U.S. administration over statements Mr. Netanyahu made before his reelection that some think cast doubt on his commitment to a two-state solution.

The result is many questioning how long the bond between Israel and the U.S. can hold. How much longer will Israel depend on America’s approval for its decisions? How long will Israel wait before it feels it must act independently for its survival? And how long before America no longer supports Israel in the face of mounting pressure from the United Nations and European Union?

Incredible History

To understand what Bible prophecy says about these brother nations, we must look to their pasts. Most know nothing about the true reason behind the connection these nations share. While both were built on Judeo-Christian values, millions do not realize God’s Word plainly reveals their shared origin. The relationship began *long* before 1948—in fact, thousands of years ago! This is where ancient history enters.

The world’s greatest scholars do not know what happened to the tribes of Israel (one of which became the United States). And they do not know why it happened. The last picture in the Bible is Israel carried away into Assyria, only to disappear into history.

How do historians and theologians explain this mystery? They make

a great wrong assumption that all Israelites are Jews. This is not true.

First, the Jews are only one-twelfth of Israel. They sprang from Jacob’s son Judah. *There were 11 other sons*. This basic understanding has become lost to the world—Jews included.

Israel and Judah—Two Separate Kingdoms

Most think the term “Jews” is synonymous with *all the tribes of Israel*, because they never investigate what the Bible actually says! The very first place the term “Jews” is found describes a war occurring *between* the Jews and Israel! Let’s read it: “Pekah...*king of Israel* came up to Jerusalem to war; and they besieged Ahaz [king of Judah], but could not overcome him. At that time Rezin king of Syria recovered Elath to Syria, and *drove the Jews from Elath...*” (II Kings 16:5-6).

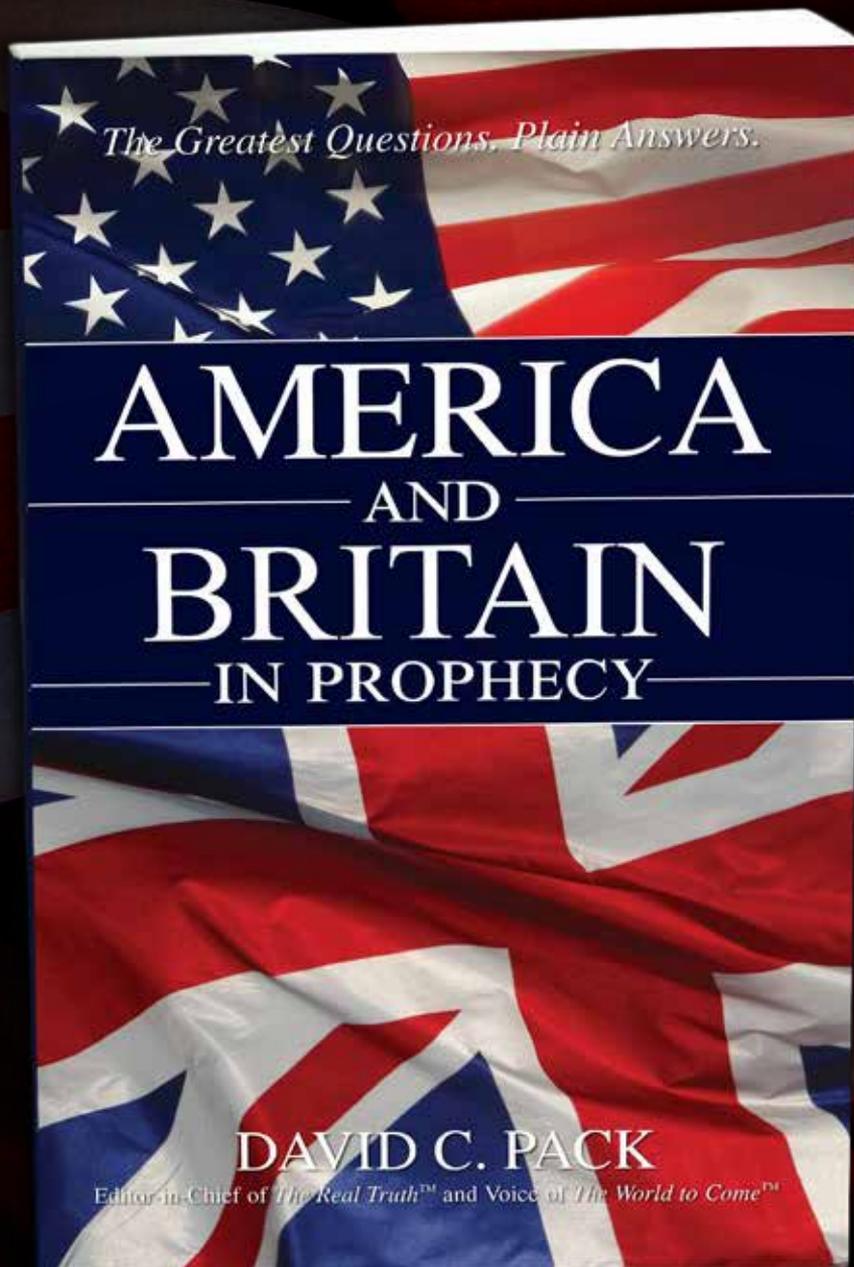
This was not Jews fighting Jews. Most people have no idea Israel had become divided—into different nations—two separate kingdoms. When King Solomon died, Israel rebelled against oppressive taxes he had imposed. His son Rehoboam was advised to reduce taxes to stop a revolt developing under a high-ranking leader named Jeroboam, appointed by Solomon. Instead, Rehoboam listened to younger advisers who told him to raise taxes.

The result? Ten tribes rebelled, leaving only Judah and Benjamin loyal to Rehoboam. These tribes pulled away from Jerusalem, their capital, much like the Old South seceded from the American Union in 1861. Two kingdoms emerged—the *House of Israel* in the north and *House of Judah* in the south—with separate capitals, Samaria (Israel) and Jerusalem (Judah).

I live in Ohio, one of 50 American states. While I am an American, as are *all* Ohioans, not all Americans are Ohioans. Some are Californians, others New Yorkers or Floridians, and so on. The point? All Jews are Israelites,

Please see **PERSONAL**, page 24

What Does the Future Hold?



The most prosperous and influential civilizations have come and gone with no exceptions. Will America and Britain's future be the same? The answer to this question is key to understanding what the world will look like in coming years.

Unknown to most, the Bible speaks volumes about these two nations. Using history and prophecy as a guide, the book *America and Britain in Prophecy* explains exactly what is in store for these two superpowers. Order your free copy at rcg.org/aabibp.

A War to End **All** Wars?



With World War I, mankind hoped to end all future conflict. Then came WWII. Seventy years after Japan's surrender in 1945, conditions from both global battles are pushing us toward WWIII.

BY SAMUEL C. BAXTER

■ **FACETS OF WAR:** Left, U.S. soldiers of the 370th Infantry Regiment move through Prato, Italy (April 9, 1945). Top right, aircraft fly in formation over Norfolk, Virginia (Sept. 1942). Middle right, a United States 240 mm howitzer gun is positioned to fire into German-held territory near Mignano, Italy (Jan. 30, 1944). Bottom right, two English women stand amid the leveled ruins of an almshouse in Newbury, England, after it was bombed by German aircraft (Feb. 11, 1943).

PHOTOS: STILL PICTURE BRANCH (NNSP) NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATIONS

EACH DAY, 492 World War II veterans die in the United States. With them go unique memories of struggle, pain and horror. Of the 16 million American men and women who served in that conflict, only around 850,000 are alive today—just 0.3 percent of the

population—the National WWII Museum reported.

The story is similar in Japan, France, Britain, Italy, Germany and all across Europe.

As the number of eyewitnesses drops seven decades after the official end of WWII, the realities of global combat fade. One is that war on such a massive scale does not truly end with a surrender agreement (like

Japan formally did on September 2, 1945) or raucous victory celebrations (like a passionate kiss between a sailor and stranger in New York City's Times Square). Instead, its effects stubbornly linger.

After Nazi death camps were liberated, the Allies worked to help rehumanize emaciated survivors of Auschwitz, Dachau and the like. For seven years after the war, more than 250,000 Jewish displaced persons lived in German army barracks and repurposed concentration camp locations.

Then there was the firebombing of both Axis and Ally cities such as Hamburg, London, Dresden, Coventry and Tokyo. The relatively new tactic involved bombing civilian areas to demoralize the population. In 1945, survivors had to put their lives back together amid burnt-out hulls of their neighborhoods.

Encyclopaedia Britannica described the aftereffects of firebombing for Germany: "...an estimated one-fourth of the country's housing was destroyed or damaged beyond use, and in many cities the toll exceeded 50 percent."

Imagine *half* of today's San Francisco destroyed and inhabitants having to rebuild from the smoldering ruins.

Perhaps the ultimate case of firebombing occurred when atomic bombs Fat Man and Little Boy exploded over Hiroshima and Nagasaki, killing at least 130,000. About half died on the days the weapons were dropped, and the rest perished in the coming years from burns, injuries and radiation exposure.

Even U.S. veterans returning home grappled with the horrors of war. Many fell into deep depression and rarely discussed what they experienced. Talking meant reliving awful events.

In the years following the war, many thought that when the world saw the results of the Nazi death machine it would learn permanent lessons.

Nobel laureate and Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel shared this feeling. He stated in an interview on *nobel-*

prize.org that "if anyone had told us in 1945 that there are certain battles we'll have to fight again we wouldn't have believed it. Racism, anti-Semitism, starvation of children...who would have believed that?"

Mr. Wiesel recounted his feelings following the conflict: "I was convinced that hatred among nations and among people perished in Auschwitz. It didn't."

WWII was not the first time there was hope that war would bring lasting positive effects. WWI, idealistically dubbed "the war to end all wars," also failed to bring widespread change.

Both of these worldwide alterations have official end dates. Yet WWII was in many ways a continuation of WWI. The effects of both major 20th-century wars linger today—and are pushing us toward another global battle.

Continuous Conflict

Rather than end international hostility, WWII almost immediately gave rise to the Cold War. Most European nations were reeling from years of battle, which meant they were not in a position to help balance global power. The conditions were ripe for two superpowers to rise: the U.S. and the Soviet Union. The second world war also birthed the nuclear age, leading to an arms race.

While it looked like the world had sidestepped a nuclear showdown when the USSR disbanded in 1991, fears of total atomic annihilation are again growing. The biggest potential flashpoint is eastern Europe. Both NATO and Russian forces are building up in that region, and each side blames the other for ratcheting tensions.

The Christian Science Monitor reported that "NATO has been shifting troops and hardware eastward into the neighboring former Soviet Baltic states and Poland...and holding its own massive military maneuvers" near the strategic Russian stronghold of Kaliningrad.

"For NATO," the news organization continued, "the buildup is seen as necessary to counter what it sees

as Russia's newly aggressive posture in Ukraine, and to reassure nervous east European allies who themselves escaped from Moscow's control barely a quarter century ago."

In June of this year, the U.S. officially announced the nation would ramp up its military presence in eastern and central Europe. The buildup will include pre-positioned tanks, artillery and other weaponry.

Russia, on the other hand, views the West as the aggressor. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the power bloc also ended the Warsaw Pact, its version of NATO. Yet NATO still exists today and Moscow thinks it is unfairly the target of the military alliance.

The Washington Post reported: "Russia would swiftly respond to any moves by the United States to build up military resources in Eastern Europe by fortifying its western border with more troops, tanks, planes and missile systems..."

According to the news outlet, the Kremlin would consider military ramp up from the U.S. "the most aggressive step since the Cold War."

In addition, Moscow, Washington and other atomic powers have extensive plans to modernize their nuclear weapons arsenals. Particularly worrisome are missiles that are more precise and have smaller kill zones—which dramatically increase the likelihood of their use.

It is for these and other reasons that the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists put their doomsday clock at "three minutes to midnight." The last time the globe was this close to total annihilation was 1984 at the height of the Cold War.

Such persistent problems prove the futility of war. Despite hopes for positive change during each conflict, armed engagement inevitably has the opposite effect: it creates and *worsens* problems. In fact, much of the economic, social and political woes seen today can be traced back to WWII.

Widespread Effects

At the end of the second world war, no one could have foreseen its wide-



■ **RAMP-UP:** Top left, Polish soldiers participate in NATO exercises in Zagan, Poland (June 18, 2015). Bottom left, Russian troops take part in a military drill in southern Russia (March 19, 2015). Top right, soldiers watch paratroopers participating in a joint Bulgarian and U.S. Air Force military exercise in Plovdiv, Bulgaria (July 16, 2015). Middle right, U.S. servicemen take part in a military drill in Yavoriv, Ukraine (July 24, 2015). Bottom right, a Russian tank in action during a military drill near the Russia-Georgia border (March 19, 2015).
PHOTOS: SEAN GALLUP/GETTY IMAGES (TOP LEFT); SERGEY VENYAVSKY/AFP/GETTY IMAGES (BOTTOM LEFT); NIKOLAY DOYCHINOV/AFP/GETTY IMAGES (TOP RIGHT); YURIY DYACHYSHYN/AFP/GETTY IMAGES (MIDDLE RIGHT); SERGEY VENYAVSKY/AFP/GETTY IMAGES (BOTTOM RIGHT)

reaching effects on the globe. From that conflict came the era of antibiotics, plastic goods, jet engines for commercial air travel, and technology that eventually became computers.

Yet the post-WWII world also made readily apparent a curious characteristic of man: he can have incredible advancement, but it is always coupled with terrible ills. America's example makes this plain.

During the war, manufacturing began on a truly massive scale.

"In industry after industry Americans performed production miracles," The National WWII Museum stated. "One story helps capture the scale of the defense effort. In 1940 President Roosevelt shocked Congress when he proposed building 50,000 aircraft a year. In 1944 the nation made almost double that number. Ford's massive Willow Run bomber factory alone produced nearly one plane an hour by March 1944.

"To achieve increases like this, defense spending jumped from \$1.5 billion in 1940 to \$81.5 billion in 1945. By 1944 America led the world in arms production, making more than enough to fill its military needs. At the same time, the United States was providing its allies in Great Britain and the Soviet Union with critically needed supplies."

This mass production did not end in 1945. Instead, the focus of such manufacturing turned to civilians. *PBS* explained: "After World War II, consumer spending no longer meant just satisfying an indulgent material desire. In fact, the American consumer was praised as a patriotic citizen in the 1950s, contributing to the ultimate success of the American way of life. 'The good purchaser devoted to "more, newer and better" was the good citizen,' historian Lizabeth Cohen explained, 'since economic recovery after a decade and a half of depression and war depended on a dynamic mass consumption economy.'"

"Between 1945 and 1949, Americans purchased 20 million refrigerators, 21.4 million cars, and

5.5 million stoves, a trend that continued well into the 1950s."

Relentless consumerism remains today, with few truly satisfied with what they have. Think of corporations pursuing ever-higher profits by whatever means necessary and individuals always needing the next new thing, even if it means racking up credit card debt to get it.

Government overspending also remains today, with the current U.S. federal debt at \$18.3 trillion.

World War II upended U.S. society in other ways. It planted the seeds of a sexual revolution. A big reason for this was penicillin. While the drug was discovered in 1928, it was first mass-produced for Allied troops. Antibiotic treatments helped break the stigma of sexually transmitted diseases. Also, latex condoms were distributed to soldiers and their use was touted in instructional videos and lectures.

Both antibiotics and advanced contraceptives made it easier to have multiple sexual partners. Adultery among soldiers in the war and those on the home front led to a looseness of sexual activity post-war. Liberal attitudes towards sexual behavior have only worsened since that time and have been passed to each successive generation.

The greatest problem to emerge from WWII, however, was the breakdown of the family.

"World War II subjected the nation's families to severe strain," *Encyclopedia of American Social History* explained. "During the war, one-sixth of the nation's families suffered prolonged separation from sons or fathers. Five million 'war widows' had to cook, clean, launder, and care for children alone. Wartime migration added to familial strain, as more than fifteen million civilians moved in search of new jobs. Wartime families faced a severe shortage of adequate housing and a lack of child-care facilities. These stresses contributed to a dramatic upsurge in the postwar divorce rate and to severe problems of child welfare, including tens of

thousands of unsupervised 'latchkey' children and high rates of juvenile delinquency, venereal disease, and truancy."

Record of History

Similar to WWII, the first world war continues to influence today's events. One effect is the continuous tensions in the Middle East.

A *Wall Street Journal* article explained: "Shortly after the end of World War I, the French and British prime ministers took a break from the hard business of redrawing the map of Europe to discuss the easier matter of where frontiers would run in the newly conquered Middle East."

"The resulting Middle Eastern states were often artificial creations, sometimes with implausibly straight lines for borders. They have kept going since then, by and large, remaining within their colonial-era frontiers despite repeated attempts at pan-Arab unification."

These "artificial creations" include nations with many religious and ethnic groups—often groups that are sworn enemies. For example, Iraq has the Kurds in the north, Sunni Muslims in the west, and Shia Muslims to the east.

Much of the problems in the region stem from the West hastily divvying up the region nearly 100 years ago.

Yet the effects of WWI can also be seen in a more obvious way. France is *still* cleaning up shells from that war.

A journalist described the situation in *Orion Magazine*: "The vast area around the French city of Verdun remains suspended in the year 1916. During the First World War, these hills and gorges were cratered by a continuous ten-month-long artillery bombardment more intense than any before and any since. The mature beech forests that cover the hills were home to some of the Great War's most bitter fighting; as many as 150 shells fell for every square meter of this battlefield. As well as being the longest battle of the Great War, the Battle of Verdun also has the ignominy of being the first test of modern industrialized slaughter."

In 1918, the amount of unexploded shells and grenades in the region spurred the government to fence off nearly 16 million acres—approximately 10 percent of the entire country.

The government actually has a special unit that disposes of these weapons known as *demineurs*. Unexploded ordinances are found everywhere from farm fields to backyards as the shells work their way above ground. A century after the conflict, the largest German shells—which weigh 2,200 pounds—have not even begun to surface. According to *Orion Magazine*, at the current rate of work, demineurs will be clearing away explosives for the next 900 years.

Perhaps most distressed by this would be Arthur Nobel, who created modern gunpowder and dynamite. The book *Aftermath: The Remnants of War* summarized the inventor’s legacy: “The chain of technology Nobel initiated has led to more than 100 million deaths by war since he died, making this—by hundreds of times—the bloodiest century in the history of the world.”

Of course, Nobel did not want this. He wanted his inventions to be used peaceably. If they were used as weapons, he theorized that such an application would be short-lived.

He remarked to a political activist friend: “Perhaps my factories will put

an end to war sooner than your [peace] congresses: on the day that two army corps can mutually annihilate each other in a second, all civilized nation will surely recoil with horror and disband their troops” (*nobelprize.org*).

Later in Nobel’s life (he died before WWI), the inventor began to see that he would be remembered for creating instruments of war. He did everything in his power to change that perception, which gave rise to the Nobel Peace Prize. Yet even now, the prize has still failed to end armed conflict.

In a sense, Nobel was a microcosm of humanity itself. It is capable of ingenious advancement and the best of intentions, yet the ultimate results are always negative.

Why is this? We should have learned our lesson with the horrific shelling of WWI. We should have ensured we would never again have a Holocaust, yet genocide has continued in the years since. Hiroshima and Nagasaki should have halted the advancement of atomic weapons, yet here we are heading toward a scenario where the use of a nuke is not only possible—it is PROBABLE.

Throughout the thousands of years of man’s history, the same lessons should have been learned. We vow

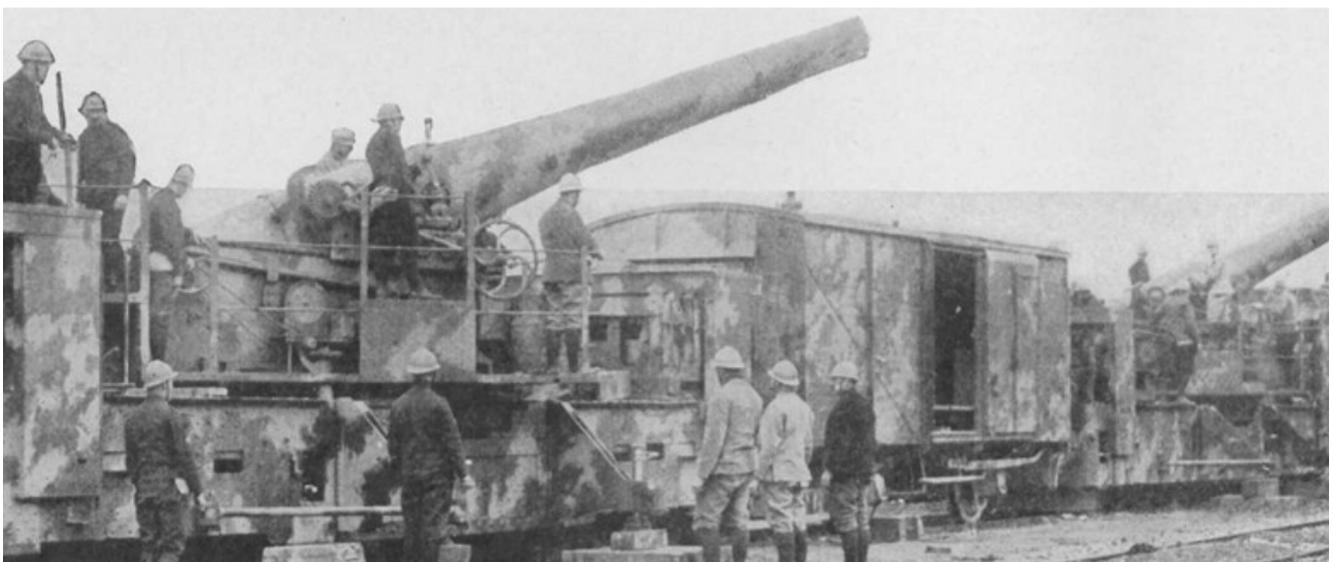
“never again” over and over, and then find ourselves repeating the same mistakes soon after.

There is an even greater lesson here: man is utterly incapable of solving his most vexing problems. The record of history clearly proves this, and a few men throughout history have realized this.

Before WWII, Winston Churchill saw Germany rising again and said this in a 1935 speech before the House of Commons (emphasis added): “There is nothing new in the story...It falls into that long, dismal catalogue of the *fruitlessness of experience* and the *confirmed unteachability of mankind*. Want of foresight, unwillingness to act when action would be simple and effective, lack of clear thinking, confusion of counsel until the emergency comes, until self-preservation strikes its jarring gong—these are the features which constitute the *endless repetition of history*.”

Eighteenth-century philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel similarly stated, “We learn from history that we do not learn from history.”

In the Bible book of Proverbs, King Solomon took this one step further: “There is a way which seems right unto a man, but the *end thereof are the ways of death*” (14:12).



■ **HEAVY ARTILLERY:** French 240 mm cannons are positioned near the front line in the Battle of Verdun in World War I (1917).

PHOTO: WILLY JOHN ABBOT/PUBLIC DOMAIN



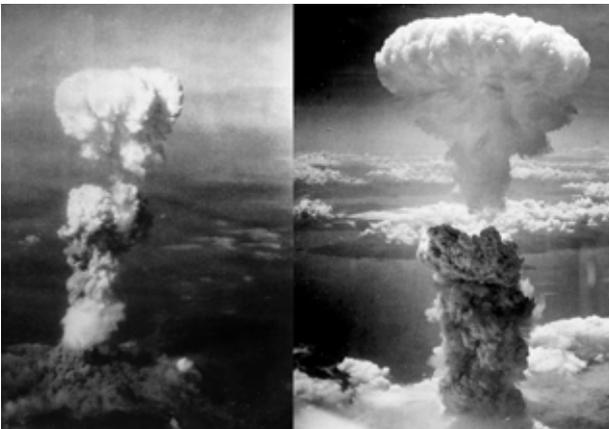
■ **TOTAL DESTRUCTION:** Shelling during the Battle of the Somme in France leaves a desolate landscape (Aug. 1, 1916).

PHOTO: AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL/PUBLIC DOMAIN



■ **HUMAN TOLL:** Child survivors of Auschwitz, wearing adult-size prisoner jackets, stand behind a barbed wire fence after the camp is liberated by Soviet soldiers (Jan. 27, 1945).

PHOTO: UNITED STATES HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM/PUBLIC DOMAIN



■ **EXPLOSIONS:** Left, smoke from the atomic bombing of Hiroshima billows 20,000 feet into the air (Aug. 6, 1945). Right, a mushroom cloud rises from the atomic bombing of Nagasaki, which led to the defeat of Japan and the end of the second world war (Aug. 9, 1945).

PHOTOS: AIR FORCE PERSONNEL/ (LEFT); CHARLES LEVY/ (RIGHT); NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION/ BINKSTERNET, CC BY-SA 3.0

From WWI until today, well over 100 million have died from war. How many more have died from *manmade* starvation and disease?

Death is the legacy of mankind. Even our ingenious solutions turn on us. Antibiotics are a perfect example: they were a medical marvel when introduced, but today they have spawned virtually unstoppable drug-resistant forms of MRSA, *C. difficile*, and other infectious diseases.

Man's Legacy

Step back and take a big-picture view of modern society. Much of it is the product of lightning-fast advancement over the last 100 years, but it is also the culmination of thousands of years of the “way which seems right unto a man.”

Most are unaware that the Bible contains a considerable amount of text explaining the culmination of man's ways. It calls this period variously the “time of the end” and “last days.”

Daniel states that during this time “many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased” (12:4).

Air travel surely makes it possible to “run to and fro” like never before. And, according to one estimate, the total fund of knowledge is currently doubling about every 12 months—and on pace to double *every 12 hours*.

Yet the biblical picture of modern society shows that this incredible advancement comes with a seedy underbelly.

Jesus Christ said of this time: “And you shall hear of wars and rumors of wars...For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences...” (Matt. 24:7).

Chapter 3 of II Timothy describes the breakdown of character seen everywhere today: “This know also, that *in the last days* perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good” (vs. 1-3).

All of this is leading to a terrible time of trouble. Matthew 24:21 states: “For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.”

Ezekiel 6:6 states this about the Great Tribulation: “In *all* your dwelling places *the cities shall be laid waste*, and the high places shall be desolate...”

This is describing nuclear war! Verse 22 of Matthew 24 adds to the picture: “Except those days should be shortened, *there should no flesh be saved* [alive]: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.”

Nuclear weapons are the only technology capable of snuffing out all human life. Yet notice that God will intervene at this time—and save mankind from total annihilation.

While Matthew 24 is a chapter chock-full of bad news, verse 14 describes something incredibly positive to occur in the last days: “And this *gospel* of the kingdom shall be *preached in all the world* for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.”

The message that will reach the entire globe is the very best news of all time.

Ultimate Lesson

The gospel is about the kingdom of God. Put another way, the gospel is about the Family of God. Humanity was created for an awesome purpose: God is expanding His Family (Gen. 1:26; I John 3:1-2). He wants everyone to be happy, joyful and to live in peace and comfort. He wants all to be productive, prolific and successful—ultimately with eternal life.

Humanity must, however, make its own decision. If not, God would have automatons as sons and daughters.

It is for this reason that we have had thousands of years to try out our own systems of government, religions and ways of life. God is allowing man to see that—apart from his Creator—he cannot find true peace.

Obviously, it will take drastic action for man to FINALLY learn this lesson.

Remember that both world wars, the Holocaust, and the horrors of nuclear war have not caused him to do this.

Jeremiah 10 describes the Great Tribulation—which could also be called WWII—that will come on Israel and Judah. Yet the passage shows *why* God is allowing such events to occur, and the response He desires from mankind.

Verse 22 describes an army that will make cities “desolate.” The destruction that follows is aimed at getting the attention of those nations and for them to finally cry out: “I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walks to direct his steps” (vs. 23).

Seeing nuclear destruction—along with the worst war, famine and disease of all time—the inhabitants of the land will finally have to admit that their ways do not work. This is what God desires.

Once this is done, they must turn to God for the right way to live: “O LORD, correct me [show me where I am off course], but with judgment; not in Your anger, lest You bring me to nothing” (vs. 24).

God does not relish such punishment, but there is no other way to get man’s full attention. In Ezekiel 33, the Creator states, “I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live...” (vs. 11).

In addition, God’s Plan to expand His Family includes giving every man and woman a fair chance at eternal life. His earnest desire is to “have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (I Tim. 2:4).

Finally Peace

Yet terrible times *are* coming. Man has not yet learned the overarching lesson of history: HE CANNOT DIRECT HIS STEPS.

When Jesus returns, He knows how hard it will be to finally teach this fact to a stubborn humanity. Matthew 24 states that at the time of His coming “all the tribes of the earth mourn” (vs. 30). When Christ punishes the globe’s inhabitants to show

where they are off course, the typical response will be to blaspheme the God of heaven and refuse to change (Rev. 16:11, 21).

For this reason, Jesus Christ will return in battle mode. Throughout the Old Testament, it says He will come as the “Lord of Hosts,” or the Lord of *Armies*.

Revelation 19 paints this picture: “...and behold a white horse; and He [Christ] that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He does judge *and make war*... And the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses...” (vs. 11, 14).

Daniel 2:44 adds further details showing that in the last days “shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms”—all the ineffective manmade systems of government—“and it shall stand forever” (vs. 44).

In other words, mankind is so stubborn that Jesus Christ has to come and FORCE peace.

With the governments of men out of the way, God will be able to teach the right way to live: “And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more” (Isa. 2:4).

It is at this time that man will *finally* realize his ways do not work.

But you can learn this now. As the number of eyewitnesses of WWII drops and the lessons of that time fade away, you can choose a different path. All those who come to truly understand that man’s ways do not work and humbly ask for God to correct their ways—then act on that course correction!—can enjoy true peace and prosperity at this time.

For a fuller picture of God’s Plan to bring peace to the entire globe, order a free copy of *How World Peace Will Come!* at reg.org/hwpwc. □



TRAIN YOUR CHILDREN IN THE OLD PATHS

While there are many possibilities available for proper childrearing, the most effective comes from the past.

BY EDWARD L. WINKFIELD

SEPTEMBER 2015

FIRST THERE WAS RELIEF. My wife had given birth to a healthy baby boy. When the doctors handed him to us, I remarked at the tiny features—the ears, the nose, the mouth. I was cuddling a newborn human being. It dawned on me that I was holding hope...clutching potential...embracing the future.

This may sound overly dramatic, yet these are the sorts of profound thoughts that go through a brand-new parent's head. Seeing our infant son years ago, we questioned whether we could successfully shape another human being.

Raising children—we have two sons now—has given us the chance to impart our knowledge and experience into active young minds. There are the special moments of teaching them how to count and make their beds. Then there are the times you see their faces light up with satisfaction when they finally learn to tie a shoe or ride a bike without training wheels. Perhaps the most memorable and gratifying are the more challenging lessons they learn about sharing or making friends.

Any father or mother will tell you that parenting is filled with highs and lows that lead to a contrast of feelings and emotions. While there is pure joy when a child finally “gets it,” rarely will a parent's patience be tested more than in making it happen.

No longer can my wife and I simply relax after a hard day of work and spend “me” time. Our children need this time instead. Hours are spent helping with homework, sharing meals, and answering questions. As parents, we become part-time counselors, doctors, maids and even referees! We must be willing to do what it takes to support our little ones.

Rearing my own children has helped me better understand a dichotomy that so often happens: “[Parenting] is, of course, kisses and hugs, laughter and sweet pronouncements,” one mother explained in a

Guardian editorial. “It is tiny feet, little shoes, and a small sticky hand in yours. It is scrawly coloured pencil drawings, funny questions, tousled hair and the loveliness of a sleeping toddler...It is the beauty and wonder of children’s fascination with nature and all living creatures. It is all that and more.

“But it is also having your kid scream in your face in the supermarket for 20 minutes when you won’t buy them an ice cream...It is reading the same story 873 times...It is spending two hours making a meal for them, only for them to decide it is ‘disgusting!’ before tasting it and declining a single mouthful...It is the refusal to get dressed when you’re in a rush, to brush their teeth, to use crayons on paper only, and not on the floor and furniture...It is loving them so much that you feel constant fear: fear that they are going to run out into the road or fall out of a window, fear that you’re not a good enough mother...worry when they’re ill, sorrow when they’re unhappy, and protective fury when another bigger kid knocks them over in the playground.”

This mother’s scenario demonstrates how hard raising children can be. And in an increasingly complex age, it is not getting any easier. Many are the times we could wish children came with an instruction manual!

While the concept of childrearing has been around as long as there have been children, the environment in which sons and daughters are reared has changed dramatically.

Consider that it has only been 100 years or so since the invention of automobiles, even less for airplanes and televisions—and mere decades for personal computers!

Childrearing methods have changed just as fast. An assortment of modern philosophies come with slick, new-age labels all promising to be *the* one that cracks the code to effective parenting. Contemporary concepts include attachment parenting, consensual living, continuum parenting, whole-life unschooling, and equally shared parenting, to name a few.

All are attempts to realize childrearing success. Yet so many new parenting approaches can leave one wondering what we did prior to our current age of “enlightenment.”

In general, most things develop and change for the better. Is modern childrearing any different?

Two Extremes

As a father, I have felt many times as though I have been in a no-win situation. On the one hand, I want to be there for my children. I want to ensure their success in school and protect them from negative influences such as bullying and drug abuse.

On the other hand, I also want them to learn from their mistakes and

give them the freedom to develop the self-sufficiency needed to make it on their own.

I am not the only one who feels this way. This struggle by most parents has led to two styles of modern childrearing: fostering dependence vs. promoting independence. The two approaches are probably most recognized by the popular names “helicopter” parenting (fostering dependence) versus “free-range” parenting (promoting independence).

The two viewpoints form bookends to an array of parental approaches. Depending on their background and experience, most parents probably fall somewhere between the two—with most leaning more toward one.



Helicopter parenting, as the name implies, is a way of parenting in which a father or mother “hovers” over almost every aspect of their child’s life. The name is somewhat uncomplimentary, but parents who adhere to this approach defend the practice by saying they simply want to be part of their child’s life and protect them from harm.

In a world filled with children who are routinely abandoned physically and emotionally, fathers and mothers who want to be more involved with their children seems justifiable. At its extreme, however, this form of parenting can be described as a series of “overs”: over-controlling, over-assisting, over-complimenting, over-

protecting, over-scheduling, over-reacting and overestimating failure.

Domineering parents of young children tend to shadow them, constantly directing their behaviors and allowing them little alone time. As a child gets older, parents may look to select his or her teachers, sports coaches, friends and extracurricular activities, as well as provide excessive assistance with homework and school projects.

Parents who hover over their college-age children even go as far as picking their classes for them, contacting an instructor if they receive a bad grade, or attending job interviews with them. They often do not allow their children to do house chores or have part-time jobs, which stifles their work ethic.

While these fathers and mothers may have their child’s best interests in mind, they ultimately rear young adults who are ill-equipped to handle adversity, and have decreased confidence, underdeveloped life skills, increased anxiety, and a lack of decision-making abilities.

Such concerns have led to a giant swing in the other direction on the parenting spectrum toward what is known as free-range parenting. This is a more recent childrearing approach and is based on the belief that over-parenting has led to sheltered, spoiled children. Under this philosophy, parents allow their children to explore the world with minimal supervision and control. The thinking is that children should be allowed to grow and learn independence “organically” by experiencing life as it comes.

Interestingly, unlike the “helicopter” label, “free-range” has a somewhat positive connotation. The term typically refers to a natural, holistic approach to animal husbandry.

Free-range parenting is believed to be a way to help children build self-confidence and autonomy by allowing them to approach life as they eventually will after leaving the protection of their parents.

Yet opponents of this philosophy say it is not that simple, especially in modern times.

Tragic stories of missing and exploited children fuel some of the concern. In early 2015, a child-neglect case grabbed headlines as officials in Maryland investigated two parents who allowed their 10-year-old son and 6-year-old daughter to walk alone along a one-mile route from a local park to their home. The parents did so believing it to be important for their children’s overall development and to allow them to learn responsibility, experience the world, and gain competency.

Those in the community, however, including local officials, saw it as a failure by the parents to provide proper care and supervision. Under Maryland’s laws, children under age 8 must be watched by someone who



is at least 13 years of age. Eventually, the parents had to sign an agreement confirming they would not leave their children unattended.

Free-range has also simply become a label used by lazy parents who lack the patience and commitment required for successful childrearing. What is called “teaching independence” is really just a form of “outsourcing” parental responsibility to television, mobile devices, or other non-parent options. Some parents also let their children make decisions because they do not know how to tell their children “no” or render proper discipline.

Both these parenting extremes, undoubtedly meant to address real problems, are fraught with negative consequences. Where does this leave parents who are truly seeking to protect their children while at the same time teach them the life skills necessary to succeed as adults?

Old Paths

Before the days of child development videos and computer programs, effective parents would not overwhelm their babies’ brains with stimuli. They would not force them to read as early as possible to gain a competitive edge on other kindergartners. The mother would spend sufficient time bonding with her children, with the father offering needed support.

As a child went off to school, parents would look forward to meeting his or her teacher, yet stop short of demanding that their child be taught a certain way. They would respectfully allow the teacher to instruct their child based on their experience, as well as the dynamic created by other students in the class.

In the past, children would be allowed to select their own activities or sports. At the same time, they were encouraged to try different ones to discover which they excelled at and to fully develop their fine-motor skills. They did not have to worry about choosing one sport at an early age with the goal of becoming a professional athlete.

Good parents did not routinely commandeer a child’s school project,

putting it together themselves and adding the child’s name at the end. They would appropriately assist them with ideas and gathering needed supplies while also encouraging a child to do his or her best throughout the entire process.

Children would routinely be permitted to walk alone or with friends to school as long as they followed the established route and arrived and returned at the proper time. At an appropriate age, they would also ride their bicycles in their communities without the watchful eye of their parents as long as they followed established rules. During the summer, children could go outside and play early in the morning and only come home for a meal or to occasionally check in.

Every waking moment of a child’s schedule was not filled with a structured activity or electronic device or medium. Children were also given unstructured time so they could think, imagine, create and explore their world.

As a result, they learned from their experiences, including occasional failures. They were allowed to become acquainted with disappointment, yet parents remained close enough to help a child avoid discouragement and depression.

There is a common thread in all these examples of traditional parenting—BALANCE.

Yes, we do live in a more dangerous world where there are people out to harm others. But this should not become an excuse to imprison our children from experiencing the variety life has to offer. We must make a decision to do whatever it takes to account for the realities of our modern world—while also allowing our children to fully develop.

Many parents are starting to realize the benefits of avoiding the extremes in parenting. They are seeing the effects and realizing there must be a better way. Instead of adhering to the overbearing method of helicopter parenting or the looseness of the free-range approach, there is a middle road that reaps the benefits of both yet minimizes the disadvantages.

While no parent can walk the path perfectly, following it can lead to childrearing success.

Childrearing Book

When my wife and I began our family, our sources for childrearing instruction included personal experience and looking to others such as family and friends. Mostly, however, it was trial and error. We did not start out with a reliable source we could depend on for sound training.

As with so many other mothers and fathers, we were overwhelmed by the countless parenting books espousing philosophies and tips from every perspective. Many of these authors spent years developing their advice. Some of it was good, some of it misguided.

What would have been ideal would have been a book from an expert that could be relied on in its entirety because it contained no errors or missteps. While a natural reaction would be that a book such as this does not exist, we found that it does, and it follows the pattern of looking to the old paths for guidance and direction.

This Book is the Bible. Its author—God—is the foremost expert on raising children. He is the Being who created mankind and set the pattern for rearing children when He commanded the first married couple to “be fruitful and multiply” (Gen. 1:28). He knows what it takes for parents to raise sensible, balanced children, including in our modern times.

As the ultimate Parent overseeing billions of children, our Creator knows fully what our needs are and how to effectively meet them. The key is that we must believe and trust that this is the case and that He knows what He is doing.

Instructions on childrearing are found throughout the entire Bible, which is written “here a little, and there a little” (Isa. 28:10). Studying it from cover to cover reveals this.

Yet for the benefit of those seeking to learn more about the subject of parenting and hoping to avoid years of intense research or having to learn via the “school of hard knocks,” an extraor-

dinary book based on clear biblical verses and principles has been written. It is a thorough guide to understanding what God has to say on the subject of childrearing.

Written by *Real Truth* Editor-in-Chief David C. Pack, this book is *Train Your Children God's Way*. Thousands have benefited from the instructions contained within its pages, including my wife and me.

Even today, we are able to use the book as a reference when facing specific questions such as helping our children handle their emotions, teaching them the value of a strong work ethic, and choosing entertainment.

In the book, Mr. Pack, a father and grandfather himself, begins with a vivid description of what parents are up against today: "Take a moment to consider the world around you. Reflect on all the different kinds of influences—with seemingly more every day—to which a child is exposed. Rearing children in today's violent, morally permissive, confusing, 'anything goes' world is perhaps the most trying, difficult thing that adults could do.

"The situation could be likened to a ship entering what has been called 'the perfect storm.' The force of the wind and the size of the waves beating on the 'parental ships' of today mean that parents are working seemingly against

all odds, and without a compass, maps, a working rudder, or an engine to power their ship—assuming they even knew where to steer it. However, in reality, the greatest 'perfect storm' is that which their children are suffering. If it could be said that parents are experiencing 30-foot waves and gale force winds in the open ocean, at least they are on a ship. By analogy, their children are experiencing the same conditions, but in a small, leaking row boat, without oars or even a can with which to bail!"

He then goes on to demonstrate that the modern picture was foretold to occur in the pages of the Bible: "Here is a descriptive reference from the prophet Hosea foretelling the condition of today's generation of young people: 'They have dealt treacherously against the LORD: for they have begotten strange children...' (5:7). This is more true than the older generation can even begin to comprehend."

"Children today are cynical, emotionally drained and carrying a kind of world-weary mentality. While many may seem tough and talk tough on the outside, most are morally weak and spiritually vacant inside. They have become a generation of emotionally stunted children. As a result, they lack empathy—they cannot feel for others, and can only barely feel for themselves. They lack the moral fiber or backbone

to do the right thing, even when it is painless. Millions have stumbled into adulthood believing that 'if it feels right, do it.'"

This graphic modern picture points more than ever to the need to go back to the old way of doing things, especially when it comes to raising children. Though it was not perfect during simpler times, people were more principled and well-rounded—and taught their children to be the same way.

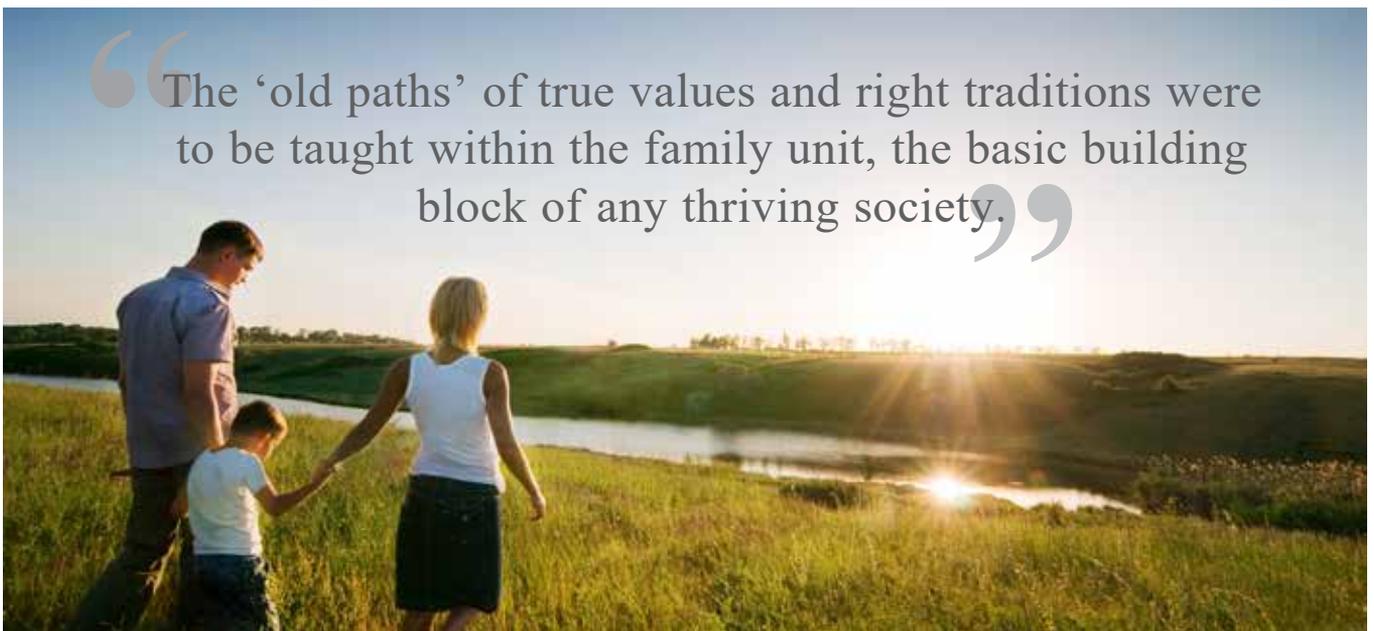
The following quote from Mr. Pack shows how the present generation has erred by abandoning the "old paths"—God's paths.

"God speaks to the citizens of this modern age: 'Stand you in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and you shall find rest for your souls' (Jer. 6:16).

"The 'old paths' of true values and right traditions were to be taught within the family unit, the basic building block of any thriving society. If the traditional family institution crumbles, so does civilization.

"Millennials are reaching adulthood believing that any group of people can be defined as a family, so long as it exists on 'love.' God also states, 'My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge' (Hos. 4:6)—ignorance of the 'old paths' that lead to lasting success.

“The ‘old paths’ of true values and right traditions were to be taught within the family unit, the basic building block of any thriving society.”



“In extreme cases, parents have pampered their children to the point of being rotten! What has been missing is balance: Parents have either babied their children or ignored them so that they essentially reared themselves.”

But the message in Mr. Pack’s book is not simply doom and gloom. Using Scripture, he gives real and practical points to help current and would-be parents face the challenges of raising children.

For my wife and me, the book has become the “instruction manual” we yearned for early in our parenthood. We can simply pull it from the shelf and pour through a veritable treasure trove of information whenever we need it.

Notice specific guidance in the text under a subhead titled, “Encourage Your Children to Respond and to Reflect Thoughts and Feelings”: “Young people in this generation have come to be jaded, cynical and perpetually moody. So many appear to be almost entirely joyless, bored and selfish. Observe a group of typical teenagers, and you will notice that most seem to wear expressionless, emotionless masks, hiding their true feelings. Instead of saying what they really feel, they generally say what adults want to hear. One of the tragedies of our time is that almost an entire generation literally does not know how to talk—how to intelligently express a thought. Of course, not all thoughts are simple. Many are quite complex and require intelligent analysis and a larger reservoir of words through which to convey them than exists in the vocabulary of the average young person today.

“Teach your children to be bright and enthusiastic—to respond to events around them. Do not allow them to be cynical or moody, or to develop and hold wrong attitudes. Make them change their mood and tone. This will lead to a habit of making themselves do this. The universal mantra of youth today is ‘I’m bored.’ What makes this so incredible is that never have children had so many kinds of things to occupy their time. This becomes its own great testimony to the fact that having everything has little to do with having happiness!”

This only begins to scratch the surface of the useful information in this book.

Make the Commitment

Children need guidance. They were made to receive instruction. Lessons can come from many sources, however, it is best when it comes from informed parents.

Decide today to do all you can to train your children. Recognize that despite the current environment, it is possible to raise a balanced, well-rounded young person. Understand that the process will not be easy. It will take a long-term commitment and a tremendous amount of hard work.

But also know that hard work is not enough. It also takes implementing the right information. Parents must put solid, proven methods into action. They must implement techniques shown by the ultimate Parent, God the Father, as being the most effective.

While raising a balanced and capable child in our modern age seems nearly impossible—it can be done. Order Mr. Pack’s free book on childrearing today at rcg.org/tuyc. After you receive it, be sure to read, study and implement its instructions.

Seek the old paths! By doing so you can prove the following verse to be true: “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Prov. 22:6). □





How Was the Bible Canonized? (Part 2)

BY DAVID C. PACK

THIS ARTICLE IS a continuation of last month's Personal that examined the origin and assembly of God's Word, the Bible. We have already learned part of the story of how God carefully guided the compilation of the Old Testament, and did so using the Jews. What about the New Testament—and final canon-

ization? What role did the Greeks play? Should certain apocryphal books have been included? Here is more of the fascinating true story of how we got the Bible!

As with Part 1, this article is more technical in nature. For those who want proof of God's Word, this is necessary. What follows is more powerful narrative of how God built and preserved His Instruction

Manual for man. We now continue learning what so few know—or even care to know.

We left off with the crucial role of Ezra—the priest and scribe God used to gather *all* the books for final Old Testament canonization. The prophet

■ **ANCIENT TEXT:** The Dead Sea Scrolls, a collection of biblical manuscripts, were discovered in the caves at the Qumran archaeological site in Israel.

PHOTO: STACEY L. PALM/THE REAL TRUTH

Samuel also added important parts to the Law. Notice: “Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before the LORD...” (I Sam. 10:25).

“A book” should read “the book.” This shows Samuel wrote in a book that already existed. The only book then “laid up before the LORD” was the law of Moses. Samuel added Deuteronomy 17:14-20 regarding instructions about Israelite kings. Ezra also inserted comments in Deuteronomy 34:5-6 and 10 about the period after Moses’ death. Obviously Moses could not record his own death and burial.

Ezra came to Jerusalem after the Babylonian captivity, where over 40,000 Jews had returned to rebuild it and other cities. The Temple had been rebuilt by about 515 BC. Most returning exiles were not zealous to obey God, having intermarried with surrounding idolatrous gentiles. About 457, God sent Ezra with over 4,000 priests, Levites and Temple servants to restore the worship of God. Let’s read: “Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments” (Ezra 7:10). This process took 13 years.

Nehemiah, sent to be governor over Judea, assisted Ezra. These two men called the Jewish leaders to sign a special covenant that they would obey God’s laws (Neh. 10:28-39). But Eliashib, the high priest, would not attend.

This meeting established the government mechanism in Judea known as the Great Assembly. Headed by Ezra, it included Nehemiah and all principle priests and elders of Judea. Its 120 members also convened to establish which books were to be canonized. For some years, they assisted Ezra in this final canonization, including dividing the Old Testament’s 22 books into three major divisions.

Some more background. The high priest was supposed to preside over the Great Assembly after Ezra’s death. But Eliashib disagreed with Ezra, and, having other loyalties (Neh. 13:4-7), never met with the assembly. The special covenant required those who mar-

ried gentile wives to put them away. Eliashib’s grandson, Manasseh, married to a Samaritan princess, refused to end his religious-political alliance between the top families of Samaria and Judea. Excommunicated from Judea, Manasseh moved to Samaria where his wife’s father made him high priest of the Samaritans. This began the Samaritan religion, and the antagonism that developed between Samaritans and Jews. Manasseh built a temple on Mt. Gerizim to counterfeit God’s Temple on Mt. Zion, and rejected the Hebrew Scriptures except for the Pentateuch—or the five books of the Law.

For Jews to distinguish Samaritan counterfeit writings, Ezra changed the Jewish script to what is called square script. Eventually all copies of the Temple Scriptures took this form.

Isaiah had long before written the Book of Kingdoms (or Samuel/Kings). Written from a priestly perspective, Ezra wrote Chronicles, emphasizing throughout that Jerusalem had always been the headquarters of God’s government. This was to show that the Samaritans were falsely claiming they were the center of God’s Way.

Ezra references at least 15 secular sources to validate his claim, while Samuel and Kings use few outside sources. Ezra and Nehemiah countered the Samaritans’ deceitful tactics, in part by canonizing the Hebrew Scriptures. In fact, it was actually the Samaritans’ descendants, under Simon Magus, who counterfeited the New Testament. There has *always* been a battle to overthrow the accuracy, force and effect of God’s Word. Secular sources today have not let up.

Let’s ask: How do we know today’s Old Testament is exactly what Ezra canonized? After the Temple destruction in AD 70, preservation became the responsibility of Jewish religious leaders instead of the state. Several Jewish sects made sure others did not change the text. Some were trying to introduce illegitimate copies. In the 6th century, to clarify discrepancies and “transmit to future generations the authentic Word of God”

(*Encyclopaedia Britannica*), officials restored the old authoritative manuscripts handed down since pre-Roman days. These were made into the *standard text*—called the Masoretic Text. This is the same one used today, and the same Scriptures Ezra canonized.

The Design and Layout of the New Testament

Now comes the New Testament, written by Christ, the apostles, and other disciples. Certain apostles canonized it. Notice Isaiah’s prophecy: “Sanctify the LORD of hosts Himself; and let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread. And He shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offense to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken. *Bind up the testimony, seal the law among My disciples*” (Isa. 8:13-16).

Isaiah 7:14, 8:8 and 9:6 reveal the context of this passage. It speaks plainly of Jesus’ time. His disciples were to bind up the testimony and seal the Law. They did this. Jesus delivered the New Testament, but required His servants to record, bind and seal this written record. The New Testament was for those “called out” ones (John 6:44, 65), who were to grow in character and qualify for rulership in God’s coming kingdom.

But Christ’s identity and mission, and the concept of anyone ruling in the God Family with Him, was not what the Jews expected to hear. They considered this *blasphemy*. (Read John 10:31-38.)

The apostles, including Paul, initially believed Jesus would return in their lifetimes and that any New Testament canonization would be unnecessary. (Read these verses: I Thessalonians 4:15-16, II Thessalonians 2:1-2, and I Corinthians 15:51-52.) Eventually the surviving apostles realized Jesus would return much later, and certain verses show they understood their responsibility to bind and seal the New Testament.

More About Canonization and Paul's Letters

Here is what Christ read to those who were slow to understand events leading up to His Resurrection: "...O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and *all the prophets*, He expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Luke 24:25-27).

Think how Christ was in effect confirming the Scriptures. If the Jews had collected the wrong books by His time, would not the Christ who inspired those books have corrected them? Of course He would!

The apostle Peter stated, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto you do well that you take heed..." (II Pet. 1:19). Peter knew that he and the other apostles had been personally trained by the same Christ who inspired all the Old Testament prophets. Peter knew Christ was the Source of that "sure word of prophecy."

The Catholics, who claim to have canonized the Bible, have never understood this "sure word." Here is an example I heard some time ago from a Catholic historian showing how this church views Scripture: "For us, divine inspiration does not mean God possesses a man, and simply dictates the inspired text to him. But rather God implants into a man's mind a general concept. And when God does that, He allows the man to write that in the historical context in which he lives—what we call the *Sitz im Leben*—where 'that is the setting in life.' So a man may have historical inaccuracies, but God allows the man to write with those misunderstandings because what is important and what is inerrant is the theological concept God is trying to get across to mankind."

Forgotten are these plain scriptures: "Every word of God is *pure*" (Prov. 30:5) and "the words of the LORD are *pure words*...purified seven times" (Psa. 12:6)!

Now notice the apostle Paul concluding Romans: "To Him that is of power to establish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest [obvious], and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith" (16:25-26).

"Scriptures of the prophets" refers to the Old Testament prophets. But Paul also meant the revelations given to him (II Cor. 12:7). He told the Thessalonians, "...when you received the word of God which you heard of us, you received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually works also in you that believe" (I Thes. 2:13).

Peter stated about Paul's writings: "...our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him has written unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction" (II Pet. 3:15-16). Sadly, so many today still butcher the meaning of Paul's writings.

Now notice his letters were referenced in context to "the *other* scriptures." Since Peter had canonized many of Paul's letters, he knew firsthand that they were now Scripture. Shortly before his martyrdom, Paul told Timothy to bring Mark with him (II Tim. 4:9-11) for a unique mission that included bringing "especially the parchments" (vs. 13)—these were special writing materials for recording crucial documents. Mark was likely sent to Babylon with these parchments for Peter (I Pet. 5:13), the chief apostle who canonized Paul's writings. By that time, Paul had been martyred.

Soon after Peter canonized Paul's letters, he was also martyred, by Emperor Nero's decree. The writings Peter had canonized to that time constituted all New Testament writ-

ings except for what the apostle John would add.

The Gospels, Acts and Writings of John

Now come the four gospels. These are in correct order in the King James and other versions. Matthew, a Levite, wrote first, and primarily addressed the Jews. Mark, Peter's interpreter and companion, came next. He wrote the account as Peter proclaimed events—having been an eyewitness.

Luke, Paul's companion, wrote for Greek readers. Not an eyewitness, Luke based his writing on diligent research, compiling what several apostles and disciples had earlier documented (Luke 1:2). Verse 3 says Luke wrote of events "in order" to establish their chronology.

John, the last gospel written, was unique—as was Luke. It carries a tone reflecting careful forethought and introspection. John had been away from Judea and the Mediterranean region for 50 years. He and other surviving original apostles had been sent to the areas of the 12 tribes of Israel where God had called many into His Church.

By AD 90, John—God having preserved his life for a special mission—was the only surviving apostle of the original 12. Neither Peter, John nor the others originally understood why John would live longer or what his mission would be. (You may want to read John 21:21-24.) John's final mission was multifaceted. First came his gospel. Despite what Eusebius and some other historians report, John most likely wrote it while in France for about 50 years, well before the 90s AD and before John returned to Judea and Asia Minor. (To learn more, read my book *Where Is the True Church? – and Its Incredible History!* at reg.org/thogtc.)

John went to Ephesus, in Asia Minor, after returning to Judea and finding the Temple and Jerusalem long since destroyed. Ephesus became the headquarters church. From there, John wrote his general letters to the churches. Their tone reflected turbulence and urgency because of apostasy and resulting persecution.

Shortly after John settled in Ephesus, Emperor Domitian began

the second imperial persecution. (Nero brought the first.) John was imprisoned on the island of Patmos in the Aegean Sea, where he received the Revelation and command to record it. Living in exile gave him the solitude and time to carefully document what would be the final book of the New Testament—the Revelation of Jesus Christ!

After exile, John returned to Ephesus to work closely with Philip, and to train Polycarp and others who would oversee the next stage of God's Church.

John's last all-important mission was the final canonization of the New Testament—to seal what would be all of God's Word—and the whole Bible! As Ezra canonized the true Old Testament Scriptures to distinguish them from Samaritan counterfeits, John had to protect the true New Testament Scriptures from counterfeit writings by the Samaritans, still active centuries later, now under Simon Magus.

Christ commissioned the New Testament be preserved by an unexpected group because God's Church—systematically hunted down and persecuted over the centuries—would be in no position to preserve it. God used the Greeks to do this. Not under persecution, they were free to remain in their homeland, with their mission being to treasure, preserve and copy the New Testament—word-for-word and letter-by-letter, through the long, dark night of the Middle Ages. It was not essential for these people to believe or even understand the New Testament to preserve it.

Proper Arrangement of the New Testament

Let's examine the order of books, following the gospels. The Greek eastern church insisted that the general epistles appear before Paul's writings. The universal church in the west at Rome demanded Paul's letters—especially Romans—come first after the book of Acts, also written by Luke. They opposed anything labeled Jewish or thought-to-be Jewish. Rome overruled the eastern church, and the general epistles moved to later.

Here are six reasons the general epistles belong before Paul's letters, not after:

(1) They were intended for the general Church of God and not addressed to specific congregations as were Paul's.

(2) They largely contain general information.

(3) All the authors of the general epistles preceded Paul in order of time.

(4) The general epistles give necessary background to better understand, and thus set up, Paul's letters.

(5) God always sent His servants first to the Jews, not the gentiles (Rom. 1:16 and 2:9-10), whom Paul reached.

(6) Paul's letters contain stronger and more specific instructions. The pastoral epistles of Timothy, Titus and Philemon are even stronger. Hebrews, written by Paul—yet stronger—was first rejected by the Catholics because it sounded "too Jewish." Here then is the New Testament in correct order:

The Gospels and Acts: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and Acts

General Epistles: James, I-II Peter, I, II and III John, and Jude

Paul's Letters to Specific Churches: Romans, I-II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and I-II Thessalonians

Paul's General Letter: Hebrews

Paul's Pastoral Letters: I-II Timothy, Titus and Philemon

John's Final Writing: Revelation

Often called the "prison epistles," Paul wrote Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon from prison.

The true Scriptures remain intact even though the order of the Old Testament has been rearranged primarily by the Roman Catholic Church, following the order of the corrupt Septuagint version. Next they rearranged the New Testament, mostly to exalt Rome. But again, this does not mean they decided or established the contents of the Bible!

The Church of God through the ages could maintain purity of doctrine since God promised that all Scripture would be preserved. This is vital for those who would seek God's truth!

The Apocrypha and Other Un canonized Documents

In the first three centuries, the Catholic Church used the oldest available fragments of the New Testament. Full of known corruptions, contradictions, deletions and counterfeit additions, these are called the "Western Text." They vary so much that there is no way to accurately know what would constitute the New Testament. Scholars admit these originated in Rome.

Catholics and Protestants agree that the Bible is the inspired Word of God, but disagree on *which* books belong. The Catholic Old Testament canon includes the books Tobias, Judith, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch and I and II Maccabees, with sections added in Esther and Daniel that are not in the *King James Version*. These added books and portions are called the "Apocrypha" and are not accepted as Scripture by Protestants and most others. Further, it is common knowledge among scholars that there are blatant historical inaccuracies in Tobias and Judith.

The Roman Catholics contend that they are the exclusive preservers of the Bible, with sole authority to determine which books should be in the Old or New Testament, and the order in which they are placed. They also admit to exercising this authority by adding the seven apocryphal books and portions of three others to the Old Testament.

In Daniel, they added a portion in chapter 3, titled "Song of the Three Holy Children," and the entire chapters 13-14, called "Susana and the Elders" and "Bel and the Dragon."

English synonyms for *apocryphal* include words like "unauthentic" and "ungenuine." Ironically, the very name the Catholics chose verifies lack of authenticity! The word apocrypha is Greek and means "hidden" or "secret in origin." These writings do come from a mysterious beginning and secret origin! They are defined by *Encyclopaedia Britannica* as "inconsistent elements existing side by side with the essential truths of Christianity."

There are in fact *hundreds* of apocryphal writings—the “Gospel According to the Egyptians,” “Gospel of the Birth of Mary,” “The Apocalypse of the Virgin,” among so many others. Most of the oldest known titles differ from each other. It is very rare to find any two alike.

Between 200 BC and AD 100, many apocryphal writings appeared among the Essene Jews. Among the most notorious is the book of Enoch. Note that Jude 14 does *not* mention this book, but rather is quoting a prophecy by Enoch handed down by God’s servants from before the time of Noah. The Book of Enoch was an attempt to discredit God’s Sacred Calendar in the first century BC. It was rejected by Jude and all other apostles. In fact, *even the Catholics reject it!*

Since it is well documented that the Essene Jews originated many false writings, it is beneficial to learn something of their beliefs. Notice: “The Essenes were an exclusive society, distinguished from the rest of the Jewish nation in Palestine by an organization peculiar to themselves...They had fixed rules...and regulations for the conduct of their daily life even in its minutest details...Their membership could only be recruited from the outside world, as marriage and...[all association] with women were absolutely renounced... the tenets of the society were kept a profound secret, it is perfectly clear from the concurrent testimony of Philo and Josephus that they cultivated a kind of speculation, which not only accounts for their spiritual asceticism, but indicates a *great deviation from the normal development of Judaism*, and a *profound sympathy with Greek philosophy, and probably also with Oriental ideas* [emphasis mine]” (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th edition).

I Timothy 4:1-3 puts forbidding to marry with doctrines of demons. The Essenes resorted to inventing documents to justify the many *doctrines of demons* they adopted.

Record of History

The Apocrypha is traced from the Vulgate of the Roman Catholic Church after the fifth century. From there, it

traces back to the Septuagint and on to Alexandrian influences—originating from a mixture of sources such as Samaritan and Essene writings.

The more devout Jews—those of the Diaspora—allowed no canon other than the Scriptures accepted by the Jews of Jerusalem and Judea. The next quote illustrates the exalted position of the canonized Scriptures even outside Judea. Philo, the Jewish philosopher of Alexandria, Egypt, explained that he “makes no quotations from the Apocrypha, and he gives not the slightest ground for the supposition that the Jews of Alexandria of his time were disposed to accept any of the books of the Apocrypha in their Canon of ‘Holy Scripture’” (*Philo and Holy Scripture*).

The law portion of the Greek Septuagint version (of Alexandria, Egypt) was translated from the Samaritan Pentateuch instead of the official Jewish version. This can be absolutely proven by the 2,000 places where the Septuagint disagrees with the official Jewish version, but agrees perfectly with the Samaritan Pentateuch.

The Jews who translated the Septuagint were “Samaritan Jews.” As late as the early AD 300s, the Apocrypha was not yet added to the Septuagint. These writings joined later a version that was already corrupt.

The highly respected 11th edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* says that in AD 363 at the Council of Laodicea the Apocrypha was still excluded from Scripture.

In 384, renowned Catholic scholar Jerome began translating the Latin Vulgate directly from the Hebrew. The Apocrypha was excluded because Jerome knew it was false. Soon after, at the Council of Carthage, Augustine, a Canaanite bishop from Hippo, North Africa, led the way to approve the seven apocryphal books. This was the first official “acceptance” of writings that are today still rejected by many Catholic scholars who are members of

a church that cannot agree on what is God’s Word.

It was not until well over 1,000 years after Augustine, at the Council of Trent in 1563, that the Catholics declared the Apocrypha “equal” with any book of the Bible. The goal? Single out Protestants by declaring any who rejected it to be “anathema of Christ.”

Despite such a bad track record, some still wonder whether apocryphal works could be inspired. Ask: Did Christ and the apostles ever recognize or quote from any books of the Apocrypha? Did they ever show any approval of them?

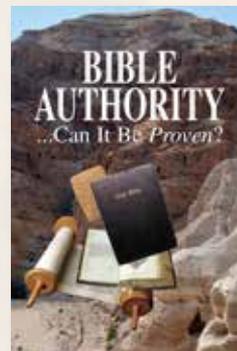
Consider this. There are 263 direct Old Testament quotes in the New Testament. And there are 370 New Testament statements which reference Old Testament passages. In both the Old and New Testament, there are *no quotes* and *no allusions* to any apocryphal writings!

Now ask this: If the Catholics canonized the Bible—as they claim—why were they unable to include the Apocrypha in the traditional Bible? The answer is obvious. It was God who guided the contents of His Word, through people He chose. God engineered and preserved the Hebrew Scriptures and the Greek New Testament. Only those who stand in awe of God’s power to do this will avoid being lost in a sea of doubt about His Word. Be sure to read our booklets *How We Got the Bible – Which Translations Are Best?* at rcg.org/hwgtb and *Bible Authority...Can It Be Proven?* at rcg.org/bacibp.

Paul was inspired to record, “Prove all things” (I Thes. 5:21). This includes God’s ability to preserve the *complete* Bible. If you do this, you can trust God’s promises—any of them! But you can also trust that He means what He says—including all His commands.

Almighty God declares, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away” (Matt. 24:35).

Take God at His word! □



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PERSONAL

Continued from page 4

but not all Israelites are Jews. Jews form a *small* percent of the total Israelites.

After the 12 tribes split, Jeroboam led the northern 10 tribes. He consolidated his kingdom, ensuring it would never reunite with Judah and Benjamin. And he created a new religious system to distance his tribes from worshipping at Jerusalem. Notice: “And [the Israelites] left *all* the commandments of the LORD their God, and made...molten images...*and served Baal*” (II Kings 17:16). Those following Jeroboam worshipped the pagan Baal—the “lord of the sun” or “sun god.”

Jeroboam was the only king in Israel’s history to actually force the people to sin. Notice again: “Jeroboam *drove* Israel from following the LORD, and *made them sin* a great sin. For the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they departed not from them” (II Kings 17:21-22). Their chief sins were Sabbath-breaking and idolatry. It was these that put them into slavery.

The result? “The LORD removed Israel out of His sight...*So was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria...*” (vs. 23). This was 721-718

BC, with Assyria carrying them far from their homeland. (Read II Kings 17:6.)

Some generations later, the Babylonian (Chaldean) Empire came to power under Nebuchadnezzar. They entered Judah and slowly took Jewish captives to what is now Iraq through the period from 604 to 585 BC.

Soon after Israel’s captivity began, the Assyrians migrated to northern Europe and settled in what is now modern Germany. They took most of their Israelite slaves with them, eventually allowing them to migrate further north and west and to regain independence. They settled in northwestern Europe, including the British Isles and Scandinavia.

Lost Identity

A central question arises: How did the House of Israel become lost to *themselves*—and to the world? What happened? There is an all-important reason the 10 tribes *lost* their identity and Judah did not!

God made a special covenant with Israel in Exodus 31 regarding His Sabbath. He explained that His purpose was that the Sabbath “sanctifies” those who keep it, *setting them apart* as belonging to—or being *owned* by—God.

In the briefest terms, those who observe the Sabbath are signified as

God’s people. They are also publicly identified as people who keep the Commandments. Since most nations outlaw stealing, murder, lying (or perjury), etc., obedience to most of the other Commandments does not identify one as God’s servant! The Sabbath does! It is a *sign* that people are of God, since no human would ever think or choose to keep this law without it having been *revealed* by God.

The story behind Israel’s loss of identity is astonishing, and known to almost none for millennia. Yet these modern nations need never have lost sight of their identity. A choice they made caused this. While people denigrate and sneer at the Sabbath as merely “Jewish,” it is binding on far more people than the small number who descended from Judah.

Israel stopped keeping God’s Sabbath—and *lost the national sign that identified them!* While the modern nations of both the West and Judah have fallen into many other national sins that have caused God to pull away and remove His blessings, it was the Sabbath that preserved their identity. Once in captivity, they ceased functioning as a nation with a king and a government. Eventually, many took on the Assyrian language, losing track of their native Hebrew tongue. They were *slaves* who became lost



■ **CONTINUED TRADITION:** Jewish people and tourists gather at the Western Wall in Jerusalem at sunset on Friday night, the beginning of the seventh-day Sabbath.

PHOTO: STACEY L. PALM/THE REAL TRUTH

to history. Even historians no longer recognize them!

But the modern world *does* know who the Jews are. Why? They retained the Sabbath. They do not keep it holy and as God instructed, but they have not switched to Sunday, as have professing Christians. They have *generally* retained the Sabbath. So they know who they are. As scholar Asher Ginsberg put it, “More than the Jews have kept the Sabbath, the Sabbath has kept the Jews” (*The Synagogue in America: A Short History*).

Birthright Blessings

Amazingly, almost no one talks or wonders about the identity of the *other* tribes. Yet today they number between 500-600 million! These nations have been deceived into believing themselves gentiles. They are not! They are Israelitish brothers of the Jews! For instance, America is the tribe of Manasseh, and Britain descended from Ephraim—Joseph’s sons. Notice Genesis 48: “Joseph said unto his father [Jacob], Not so, my father: for this [Manasseh] is the firstborn; put your right hand upon his head [he was blessing them]. And his father refused, and said, I know it, my son, I know it: he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great: but truly his younger brother [Ephraim, modern Britain] shall be greater than he, and

his seed shall become a multitude of nations [the British Empire]. And he blessed them that day, saying, In you shall Israel bless, saying, God make you as Ephraim and as Manasseh: and he set Ephraim before Manasseh” (vs. 18-20).

Israel’s birthright was not just general to both grandsons. Separate blessings came to each. The great, wealthy, dominant single “nation” of Genesis 35:11 would descend and grow from Manasseh (America). The even greater, wealthier, more dominant “company of nations,” called a “multitude of nations,” would spring from Ephraim (Great Britain). The promise of enormous material prosperity, possession of their enemies’ gates, enjoyment of the fatness of the earth, and other physical blessings were to go to Manasseh and Ephraim—America and Britain today! It is America and Britain that embody the blessings to, and name of, Israel more than the other tribes.

Much more than simple “friends” or “allies,” the facts of history reveal the United States and Middle Eastern nation of Israel are brothers! This explains their long, unique relationship. (To learn more about the incredible history of the United States and Britain, and what the Bible reveals about their future, read my book *America and Britain in Prophecy* at rcg.org/aabibp.)

Zechariah’s Prophecy

With this background, we are ready to more closely examine Zechariah’s prophecy. Zechariah is one of the most venerated prophets in Israel today. I have twice been to his tomb in Jerusalem. Incredibly, although he is honored by modern Jews, he was put to death by Jews of his time right in front of the Second Temple. Today almost no one in Israel talks of his many prophecies, never mind understands them. Yet there sits his very prominent tomb.

Chapter 11 of Zechariah is also not discussed today, even among supposed prophecy experts. There have been a few crazy opinions about it, but all of them make no sense and miss the truth of what God plans to do.

The two main elements in Zechariah 11 are summarized in what are staffs that God calls “Beauty” (or more correctly “Grace”) and “Bands.” Let’s read verse 7: “...I took unto Me two staves; the one I called *Beauty* [or Grace], and the other I called *Bands*; and I fed [the Hebrew means shepherded] the flock [His people].”

God describes Himself as lifting two staffs together, one depicting His end-time Church, the other the modern tribes of Israel. He intends to address two great problems at once. His divided flock is to be unified. The nations



■ **HISTORICAL MARKER:** The triangular roof of Zechariah’s tomb, located at the bottom of the Mount of Olives, is seen from behind a viewing platform in Jerusalem.

PHOTO: STACEY L. PALM/THE REAL TRUTH

of Israel are scheduled to be divided. God plans to bring unity where there was division and division where there was unity.

The prophecy actually begins in verse 3. Let's read and learn how: "There is a voice of the howling of the shepherds; for their glory is spoiled: a voice of the roaring of young lions; for the pride of Jordan is spoiled."

The first half of this verse relates to God's people, and involves the staff "Grace," an unrelated subject. The second half speaks to Judah—and "Bands." In Genesis 49:9, God depicts the Israelite tribe of Judah as a "lion's whelp" or "young lion." "Young lions" refers to Israeli officers and other officials in anguish over loss of support, friendship and political connection from the rest of the modern nations of Israel, but chiefly America. *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* defines *roaring* as "a rumbling or *moan*: roaring." A powerful army, belonging to a small but proud nation, will see its pride "spoiled."

All-important verse 14 in Zechariah 11 becomes another proof Israel and Judah are not the same. God says: "Then I *cut asunder* My other staff, even *Bands*, that I might *break the brotherhood* between *Judah* and *Israel*."

Verse 14 is so straightforward it requires little explanation. There is a bond between tiny Judah and the modern Western nations constituting the other Israelite tribes. It is this verse that explains the shocking headlines we saw. But God foretold a time when this relationship would be broken—by Him.

Key terms shed light on what God will do. "Cut asunder" means "to fell a tree or to destroy." Obviously if someone cuts down a tree they have destroyed it.

Think. People use axes to fell trees. It takes many blows depending on the tree's age and size. The brotherhood between the U.S. and Judah is at least 67 years old, tracing to America's 1948 recognition of Israel, or more accurately 4,000 years old. This is an *old tree*! It has taken many blows to have it now near collapse!

The word translated "Bands" means a twisted cord. God describes an unraveling relationship with one strand after another being cut. This sundering did not happen all at once, but gradually—over time. Yet there will come *one moment* when God will very obviously snap His staff "Bands."

Notice it is "*brotherhood*" between Israel and Judah and not a friendship or alliance, although it has been this. This is the only place in the Bible this Hebrew word for "brotherhood" is found. It comes from the root word "brother." A verse in Proverbs expands on this fraternal bond: "A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity" (17:17).

Understand. There is no need to speculate about whether the disintegrating relationship between the U.S. and Israel is the fault of one or both countries or their leaders. God says *He* is doing this! No politician on either side can stop it. Do not take sides! True Christians do not take political positions. Adversity for these brothers means the relationship ends.

Why is God doing this? He is unhappy with His people. He wants their attention. This is only the beginning of trouble for Judah and the nations of the West. My book *America and Britain in Prophecy* shows why both sides will pay a terrible price for their many national sins!

Breach Repaired

Now wonderful news. Prophecy also reveals that God will eventually repair this breach under King David in Christ's millennial reign. The prophet Ezekiel describes how God will rejoin the two broken halves of His staff: "...son of man [Ezekiel], take you *one stick*, and write upon it, *For Judah*, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take *another stick*, and write upon it, *For Joseph*, the stick of Ephraim [including Manasseh, America], and for all the house of Israel his companions: and *join them one to another into one stick*; and *they shall become one* in your hand. And when the children of your people shall speak unto you, saying, Will you not

show us what you mean by these? Say unto them, Thus says the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the [other] tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them...with the stick of Judah, and make them *one stick*, and *they shall be one* in My hand" (Ezek. 37:16-19).

Ezekiel's prophecy continues with, "...I [God] will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone [into one last horrific captivity just ahead], and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: and I will make them *one nation* in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and *one king* shall be king to them all: and *they shall be no more two nations* [Judah and Israel], neither shall they be divided into *two kingdoms* any more at all: neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwelling places, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be My people, and I will be their God. And David My servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in My judgments, and observe My statutes, and do them" (vs. 21-24).

The prophet Jeremiah also wrote of this reunion. He also makes plain that Israel and Judah are not the same people: "In those days [Christ's millennial rule] the *house of Judah* shall walk with the *house of Israel*, and *they shall come together*..." (3:18).

My book *America and Britain in Prophecy* outlines much more of what the future holds for America, Israel and Britain. This *vital* book uses plain facts of history and biblical keys to unlock crucial knowledge of global events soon to smash into an unsuspecting world!

Keep watching world events unfold, and do not stop reading *The Real Truth* magazine. God will soon shatter the historical alliance between the nations of western Europe, America—and Judah. Zechariah's prophecy will be fulfilled very soon! □

Iran Nuclear Deal Strains Diplomatic Ties

The treaty designed to curb Iran's nuclear program is worsening political rifts.



■ **DONE DEAL:** Top, representatives of the P5+1 attend the final plenary session for the Iran nuclear deal at the United Nations building in Vienna, Austria (July 14, 2015). Bottom, a man celebrates in Tehran after Iran's nuclear negotiating team struck a deal with world powers (July 14, 2015).

PHOTOS: JOE KLAMAR/AFP/GETTY IMAGES (TOP); ATTA KENARE/AFP/GETTY IMAGES (BOTTOM)

RELATIONS BETWEEN nations are shifting after the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the deal between Iran and the P5+1—China, Russia, the United States, France, Germany and the United Kingdom—was formalized on July 14, 2015, in Vienna, Austria.

Several world powers hail the deal as a historic diplomatic, as opposed to military, solution toward maintaining stability in the Middle East. Proponents of the deal, including United States President Barack Obama and his administration, contend that it will prevent Iran from having the capacity to produce nuclear weapons. The deal requires Iran to eliminate 97 percent of its

enriched uranium, from a total supply of 10,000 kg to 300 kg, for 15 years. Also, Iran must reduce its plutonium enrichment grade to 3.67 percent for 15 years (comparatively, medical research grade plutonium is enriched to 20 percent, and weapons-grade plutonium is enriched to 90 percent), and reduce the number of centrifuges from 19,000 to 6,000 for 10 years.

Though some fear the time limits would only delay Iran from having the capacity to develop atomic weapons, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry assured the House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee during a Senate hearing, “Iran has agreed to refrain from producing or acquiring highly enriched uranium and weapons-grade plutonium for nuclear weapons forever.”

But the commitment from Iran—which has not had the most trustworthy track record—is yet to be tested. One element of the deal as reported by *U.S. News & World Report* is that “Iran has a total of 24 days to delay any set of inspections.” A great concern with this is that “there is a lot of illicit activity that Iran can hide with 24 days’ notice,” the media outlet stated.

Also, many have noted vague points in the deal. *Business Insider* reported: “The deal actually obligates the US to render various forms of assistance to Iran’s nuclear program, as the signatories also committed to helping Iran construct a fuel fabrication facility that would let Iran convert enriched uranium into fuel assemblies for civilian nuclear reactors.”

“At the same time, it’s unclear what happens to this cooperation if trust between the US and its allies begins to fray as the deal progresses: If Israel ever decided it was necessary to launch cyber attacks on Iran’s nuclear facilities at a time when the US considered Iran to be in compliance with the deal, would America be obligated to side with an enemy state against a longstanding friend? [Mr.] Kerry wasn’t exactly sure—and the

American public might only find out the answer to that question if the deal is ever tested in reality.”

Also worrying opponents of the deal are stipulations to lift an arms embargo on Iran five years from now, and a ballistic missile components embargo in eight years. This signifies that the global community would be allowing the nation access to weapons materials that could ultimately be used against West-friendly nations such as Israel.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu fears that “the deal will do little to curb Tehran’s nuclear ambitions...” (*Reuters*), and the only loss Iran takes is a temporary delay in nuclear activity. He said in an interview on *CBS* that the deal “may block or delay Iran’s path to one or two bombs for the next few years, assuming they don’t cheat, but paves their way to many, many bombs after a decade or so.”

In exchange for giving up elements of their nuclear program, crippling economic, energy, trade and transportation sanctions would be dropped by the EU and U.S. This would mark the end of American economic restrictions that have been in place since 1979 when Iranian students stormed the U.S. embassy in Tehran.

The international community must also contend with the possibility that Tehran could use the assets to fund terrorist activities and support proxy wars against rival nations. Should Iran prove to inspectors that it is abiding by the deal, at least \$55 billion in frozen assets will be released, according to the U.S. treasury secretary. While this is expected to be an economic boost

to Iranian citizens and business, which have suffered under financial restraint for decades, many see it as a threat to world security.

Mr. Netanyahu decried the deal as “a threat to his country’s survival” (*Reuters*). He also fears that that “Iran posed a ‘formidable’ threat to Europe, accusing its proxy Hezbollah of operating cells across the continent,” *Agence France-Presse* reported.

“[In June], a member of the Lebanese Shiite militant group was jailed in Cyprus for plotting attacks on Israeli targets on the Mediterranean island.

“Netanyahu, on an official visit to Nicosia, said ‘Iran and Hezbollah organize a terrorist network that covers over 30 countries on five continents, including just about every country in Europe.’”

The prime minister has actively sought to gain the support of the U.S. Congress to repeal the lifting of most U.S. sanctions.

Reuters reported: “Representative Ed Royce, the committee’s Republican chairman, said the deal gives Iran a ‘cash bonanza,’ while weakening Washington’s ability to pressure Tehran.”

“Others [in Congress] expressed concern about Americans held in Iranian prisons or worried about Iran’s backing militants.

“They support Hamas, Hezbollah and Houthi, and those are just the organizations that begin with the letter ‘H,’” said Democratic Representative Brad Sherman.”

By September 17, Congress will vote whether to drop or keep U.S. sanctions. Even then, President Obama has promised to veto any attempt by Congress to reduce the effects of the deal. The White House is confident that there are no better alternatives. “Obama said Israel, widely assumed to be the Middle East’s only nuclear-armed state, had legitimate security concerns but insisted that danger would be compounded if Iran acquired a nuclear weapon” (*Reuters*).

Serious concerns on both sides continue to cause diplomatic tensions between the White House and the Israeli government. □

Public Skepticism Over Iran Deal

More Americans disapprove than approve of the deal struck by the U.S., Iran and five other nations to limit Iran’s nuclear program.

Views of Those Aware of the Deal



How Much Confidence Do You Have in the Following?

Iran’s leaders will uphold their side of agreement:



U.S. and international agencies’ ability to monitor Iran:



Source: Pew Research Center
Graphic: Staff, Tribune News Service

Evolutionary Marvel



or Amazing Creation?

First believed to be a hoax...then touted as evidence of evolution, the story of the duck-billed platypus is full of twists and turns.

BY BRADFORD G. SCHLEIFER

IT HAS HAPPENED! Evolutionary scientists rejoice!

A creature has been discovered that connects all the pieces and is truly the “missing link.” While similar stories have ended in disappointment many times before, this is finally the one!

No longer will these experts be peppered with constant questions: Why are there so many gaps in the fossil record? Why do we not see transitional animals today? When did birds, reptiles and mammals evolve from a common ancestor? How exactly did it happen?

Day after day, evolutionists are faced with seemingly insurmountable hurdles. But this ground-breaking discovery has solved their woes.

This time the discovery is not just a bone fragment, or partial fossil—as is often the case—it is a living, breathing creature. It has the features of a reptile, bird and mammal—all in one small, furry package.

The search for proof is over!

This likely was the thinking of evolutionists when they first applied the theory to the duck-billed platypus.

But the mammal’s story began much earlier in 1798, when an artist’s sketch and pelt were sent from Australia to Great Britain describing an exceptional new find. The description was so extraordinary that, when the specimen reached Britain, it was immediately dismissed as a fraud.

One scientist actually used scissors to attempt to locate the stitches attaching the supposed duck’s bill to the furry mammalian body.

Much to the embarrassment of the scientists, this remarkable creature was determined to be real. In time, it became a darling of evolutionists.

Yet, as the creature was studied, researchers found it possessed some surprising attributes. With the passing of time, they were continually baffled by this mammal—as are scientists today.

Truly Unique

The platypus looks like no other creature on Earth. Physically, it appears to be a hybrid blend of a bird, beaver, reptile and otter, with additional characteristics not contained in any of these four!

On cursory examination, the platypus has a bill that most resembles that of a waterfowl, not the mouth of any known mammal. Yet it is not an ordinary bill. It is actually a well-designed sensory organ. Not a nose, but a highly sensitive electrolocation sensor, detecting miniscule electrical impulses generated by its food source of small crustaceans and worms. No other mammal has a sensor so highly developed—in fact, only one other mammal has this ability at all.

Then there are the webbed feet, similar to those found on otters. Unlike an otter, however, the webbing is far more pronounced on the *front* feet of the platypus, which it uses like paddles for swimming. While in the water, the back

feet are tucked into its body and hardly used at all.

Another pronounced platypus attribute is its beaver-like tail. As with its other features, upon closer inspection, there are as many differences as similarities. A beaver's tail is covered in scales, is flattened, and propels the rodent through the water when swimming. On the other hand, the tail of the platypus is covered in fur and is used more in the way a rudder might guide a boat. Once again, initial appearances are deceiving.

Additionally, this remarkable creature does something almost unheard of in the mammalian class. It lays eggs! On first inspection the eggs *appear* reptilian, but internally are structured more like those of a bird. However, *unlike* the process in both birds and reptiles, platypus embryos spend a much longer time in the mother. For instance, chickens lay eggs roughly 24 hours after fertilization, while a platypus waits 28 days. Their eggs spend nearly twice as long developing inside the female's body as outside.

If you were pitted against a platypus in a street fight, you would want to avoid two sharp heel spurs found behind its hind feet. Not only could these spurs pierce your skin, but they could also inject a nasty surprise.

Male platypuses carry a toxin strong enough to kill a dog and incapacitate an adult man. When inflicted, the wound rapidly swells with fluid and becomes extremely painful. The victim experiences a heightened sense of pain that can last for days—or even months. The platypus is one of few mammals with venom strong enough to affect a human. The particular toxin contains three proteins unique to the platypus.

Characteristics that initially made evolutionists excited about the platypus are vastly different from what was expected and seemingly unconnected that scientists are left perplexed to this day.

Evolutionary Quandary

The platypus poses some interesting problems for evolutionary scientists. Here is a creature that appears to be right in the middle of a supposed evolutionary transition, yet fossils dated to

millions of years ago look almost identical to the modern animal.

If the platypus is a transitional specimen, why did it seemingly *stop* evolving? Why has it remained virtually unchanged for its entire existence?

Even the minor changes are disappointing to scientists, as they could more aptly be considered *de*-evolution. For instance, the fossilized adult platypus had functioning teeth. Yet modern platypuses *lose* their teeth at an early age, leaving only a horned plate with which to grind and mash their food to a pulp, prior to swallowing.

Hardly advancement at all!

Further, consider the watery environment in which a platypus survives—in fact, thrives. (When a platypus is removed from its natural habitat, its lifespan is greatly abbreviated.)

As with many other mammals, it has eyes, ears and a nose. All three are fully functioning and would serve a platypus well if it spent much time on land. On the other hand, its heavily webbed front feet force it to walk on its knuckles, or risk damaging the somewhat fragile webbing. In the water, the beauty of the animal's design becomes apparent. It maneuvers gracefully with speed and precision while foraging for food.

Though it spends the majority of its time in water, the platypus never evolved an ability to hold its breath for very long, typically no more than 30 seconds. How is it that an animal living primarily in the water for “millions” of years still cannot hold its breath for more than half a minute?

Imagine the hypothetical evolutionary path of this extraordinary creature. Suppose there was a time before all of the animal's features were fully formed. (The fossil record demonstrates no such instance.) These early platypuses would have had no webbed feet or electrolocation system. Instead of gliding skillfully through the water, this poor animal would have flailed about, with no method to navigate or find food. (Yet, somehow, over millions of years, it would have managed to survive drowning, starvation and predators.)

Over time, the platypus would have “decided” that webbed feet were need-

ed, and evolved a version unlike that of any other creature. Then, instead of its eyes, nose and ears adapting to work underwater, it evolved a device that *looks* like a duck's bill, but instead is the most advanced electrolocation system found on any mammal.

Given this unlikely scenario, this must have happened another way. The fossil record indicates that the platypus appeared fully formed, with all of its “adaptations” perfectly balanced.

There is only one explanation for how so many separate, seemingly disparate, component parts of the platypus could come together in a final product that functions so well. It would take a plan *before* the platypus existed, millennia ago.

The same Creator who is responsible for the complexity of the entire universe—and all life therein—also created this marvelous animal.

The thinking person, however, wants proof of a Creator—and understandably so. Often, it is at this point that evolutionists think they have the upper hand. They claim to hold to reason, logic and “just the facts.” When pushed, most people who believe in God will say they can offer no proof, and simply “have faith” that He exists.

The platypus, on its own, does not prove the existence of an all-powerful God, but it adds more evidence to the case. Once compiled and carefully considered, it leads to the only obvious conclusion.

Think. If God created the entire universe, placed mankind on Earth, and then expected all to obey Him—would He not also offer absolute proof that He exists? The duck-billed platypus does not need to be a mystery, nor does the existence of the God who created it. You can know for certain!

Evolutionists and atheists often claim science proves God does not exist, but this is not true! Rock solid evidence for God's existence is found among the varied fields of biology, astronomy, chemistry and mathematics. Watch the five-part series “Does God Exist?—Many Absolute Proofs!” at worldtocome.org or youtube.com/RestoredCOG to learn more! □

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Mission to Pluto— an Incredible Achievement for Mankind

After NASA's New Horizons spacecraft made its nearest approach to Pluto in early July—a trip that lasted *nine years* and *three billion miles*—much information is still arriving about the solar system's most well-known dwarf planet. The craft passed close enough to take the clearest-yet images of the distant planet and its five moons, which have given astronomers a new perspective of its properties.

New Horizons was launched in January 2006 by NASA after over a decade of attempts to construct a craft that could reach Pluto. Members of the Applied Physics Laboratory of John Hopkins University in Maryland, who built the spacecraft and managed the mission, broke out in cheers as the first images from the flyby arrived to Earth.

Contrary to the expectation that Pluto is covered with craters, the images have revealed large areas of flat surface: "...some areas of the planet were as smooth as a billiard ball and others rumped and rippled; some stained the color of dried blood and others gleaming bright white" *Futurity*, a publication which compiles research news from top universities, reported.

According to scientists, this could imply geological activity on the planet since "...craters are the scars of old impacts, and if a planet's face is heavily scarred, it means there is no active geological process to renew and sculpture the planet's surface. Many craters would mean Pluto was dead and, like most dead things, boring."

Astronomers noted that for a planet to have smooth surfaces, it must have an internal heat source.

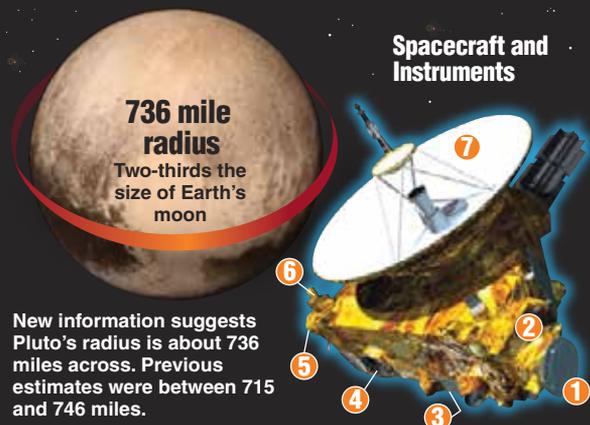
"Where this heat comes from is a mystery," *The Guardian* stated. "Pluto is thought to be too small to generate much radioactive heat, nor is it squeezed by a larger world to generate tidal energy... Yet something is making it geologically active. This is the biggest mystery of the flyby. Resolving it promises to tell us something totally unexpected about planetary geology."

As information pours in from New Horizons, which could take up to 16 months to download, astronomers expect to learn more about the solar system's most mysterious planet.

An opinion piece in *Deseret News* noted, "Of course, this new information will likely do little to affect the day-to-day life of those of us stuck here on Planet Earth. But it will provide a point of inspiration to remind us that we are a small part of a wider universe, and there is still much to discover and explore." □

New Horizons' Close Encounter with Pluto

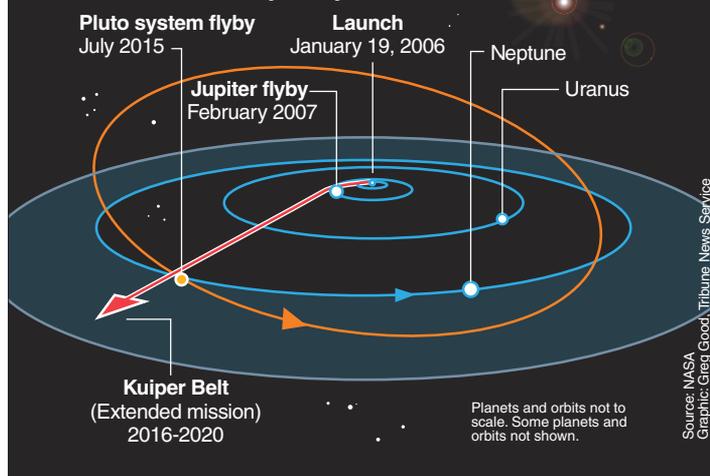
After a decade-long, three-billion mile journey through our solar system, New Horizons made its closest approach to Pluto on July 14, about 7,750 miles above the surface—roughly the same distance from New York to Mumbai, India. The dwarf planet is now the most distant object ever visited by humanity.



New information suggests Pluto's radius is about 736 miles across. Previous estimates were between 715 and 746 miles.

- 1 **Ralph:** Visible and infrared imager/spectrometer; provides color, composition and thermal maps
- 2 **Alice:** Ultraviolet imaging spectrometer; analyzes composition and structure of Pluto's atmosphere and looks for atmospheres around Charon and Kuiper Belt Objects
- 3 **SDC:** (Student Dust Counter) Built and operated by students; measures the space dust peppering New Horizons during its voyage across the solar system (lower deck)
- 4 **LORRI:** (Long Range Reconnaissance Imager) Telescopic camera; obtains encounter data at long distances, maps Pluto's far side and provides high resolution geologic data
- 5 **SWAP:** (Solar Wind Around Pluto) Solar wind and plasma spectrometer; measures atmospheric "escape rate" and observes Pluto's interaction with solar wind
- 6 **PEPSSI:** (Pluto Energetic Particle Spectrometer Science Investigation) Energetic particle spectrometer; measures the composition and density of plasma (ions) escaping from Pluto's atmosphere
- 7 **REX:** (Radio Science Experiment) Measures atmospheric composition and temperature; passive radiometer

Three-billion mile journey



Planets and orbits not to scale. Some planets and orbits not shown.

Source: NASA Graphic: Greg Good, Tribune News Service



Financially Depleted

The Bank for International Settlements (BIS) has warned that the world’s central banks will be unable to avert the next global financial crash. According to its 2015 annual report, BIS claimed that central banks have used the bulk of their reserve to attempt to fix the most recent financial crisis. □



■ **DESPERATE CROSSINGS:** Migrants from northern Africa who were picked up by a rescue crew prepare to disembark an Irish military ship as it arrives in Messina, Italy (July 29, 2015).
PHOTO: GIOVANNI ISOLINO/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

European Migration

European Union leaders have agreed to provide settlements for 40,000 African and Middle Eastern migrants who fled war and poverty in their homelands, *ABC News* reported. Member states such as Italy, Greece and Malta, which have taken in the majority of the migrants, say that EU partners should share the burden. Others, such as Britain and Hungary, are opposed. □



Lyme Disease Surges

The number of counties in the United States experiencing high incidences of Lyme disease has increased by 320 percent since the 1990s, according to a report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The disease is spreading across the nation and reaching states where it has never been recorded prior. □

Boko Haram Advances

Islamist terror group Boko Haram has made land advances in Nigeria despite efforts by Chadian and Nigerian anti-terror forces to push them back. The militant terrorist group continues to employ more sophisticated ambushes and battle tactics, according to *NBC News*. □



Poor Food Quality

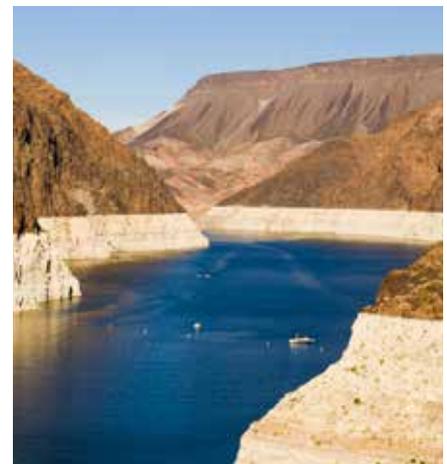
Increased prevalence and decreased prices of high-calorie foods may lead to a global obesity and malnutrition crisis, Dr. Alan Dangour of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine reported. Dr. Dangour, a leading food expert, believes it will become more common to see obese parents raising underweight children as the availability of nutritious food needed for healthy growth declines. □



■ **UNSAFE CONDITIONS:** A woman helps a child ride a bicycle in a favela in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (July 24, 2015).
PHOTO: MARIO TAMA/GETTY IMAGES

Child Murder Rates

Over 10,000 Brazilian children and adolescents were murdered in 2013—a rate of 28 per day—United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund found. This number is two times higher than it was 25 years ago when the nation passed a law to protect minors from violence. □

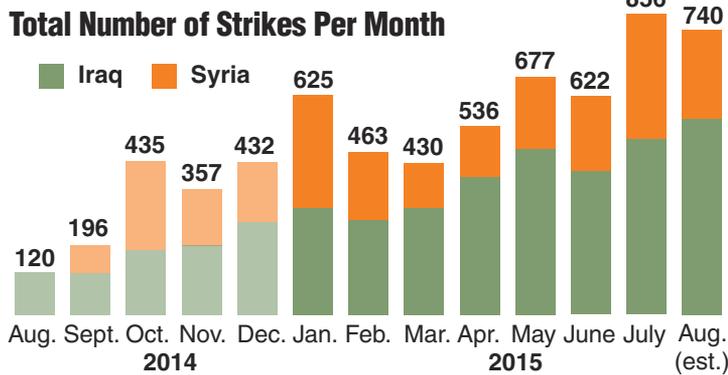


Water Loss

One-third of Earth’s 37 largest natural groundwater reservoirs are becoming overstressed as significantly more water is drained from them than can be resupplied, according to NASA studies. Although the agency cannot determine exactly how much water is left in each of these aquifers, estimates suggest that the “time to depletion” could occur in as few as 10 years, *MSN* reported. □

Coalition Airstrikes in Iraq and Syria

According to a report by the independent monitoring group Airwars, U.S.-led airstrikes targeting Islamic militants in Iraq and Syria have likely killed at least 459 civilians over the past year. The coalition has launched more than 5,800 airstrikes in both countries.



Sources: AP, Airwars
Graphic: Staff, Tribune News Service

Chronic Disease in Australia

One in five Australians have multiple chronic diseases, research from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare revealed. *The Guardian* reported: “The data—which is aimed at informing health policy—covers eight chronic diseases: arthritis, asthma, back problems, cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and mental health conditions.

“About half of all Australians have a chronic disease...the data shows.”

The institute also reported that, among citizens aged 45 and older, almost 40 percent have two or more of the eight diseases, with arthritis and cardiovascular disease occurring together most frequently. □

Political Chaos

Violent protests throughout Burundi, which have occurred since its president, Pierre Nkurunziza, declared in April that he was seeking a third term in office, have intensified and become widespread. While Burundi’s constitution prohibits a president from holding office for more than two terms, attempts to stage a military coup have failed, *Time* reported. □

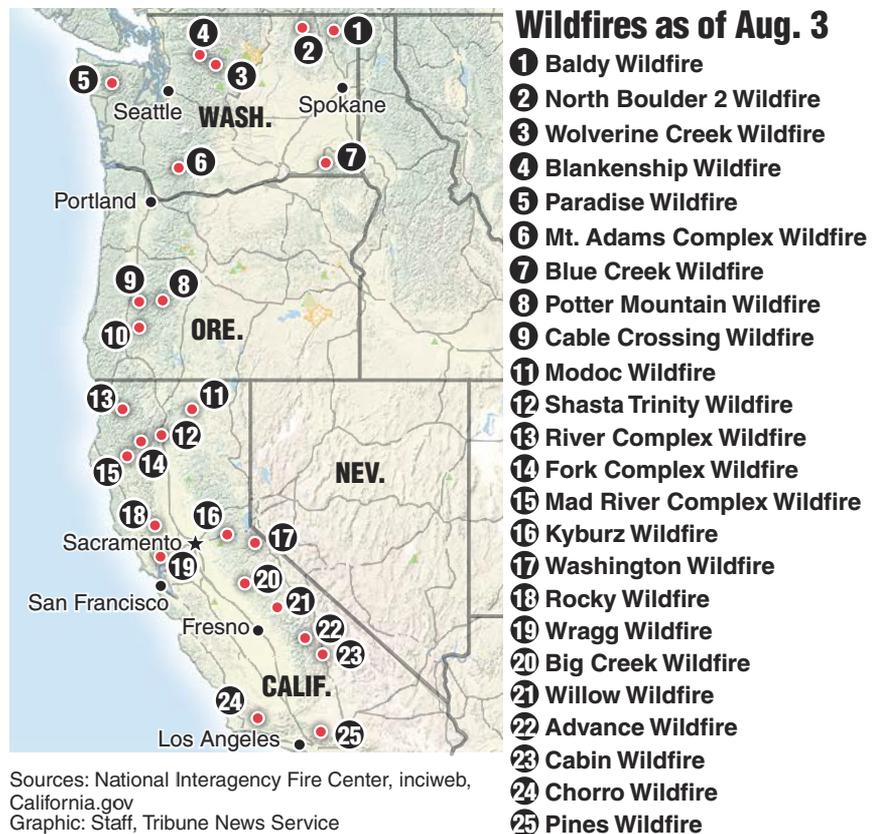


Superbug Death Toll

Antibiotic overuse by doctors has created superbugs that are spreading and growing stronger, according to *Consumer Reports*. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that unrestrained use of antibiotics results in 37,000 deaths and 2.25 million sicknesses in America each year. □

Western Wildfires Rage

Hot, dry weather has fueled wildfires across the West much earlier in the year than expected. Especially hard hit are California, Oregon and Washington.





“WE SHALL BEAT OUR SWORDS INTO PLOWSHARES”

These words, which mark a special sculpture on the grounds of the United Nations headquarters in New York City, come from the biblical book of Isaiah. Yet even more than a lofty ideal or nice-sounding idea, this Bible verse will come to pass—and soon. Read *How World Peace Will Come!* to learn exactly how this will occur.

Visit rcg.org/hwpwc to order your free booklet!

