

NOVEMBER 2010

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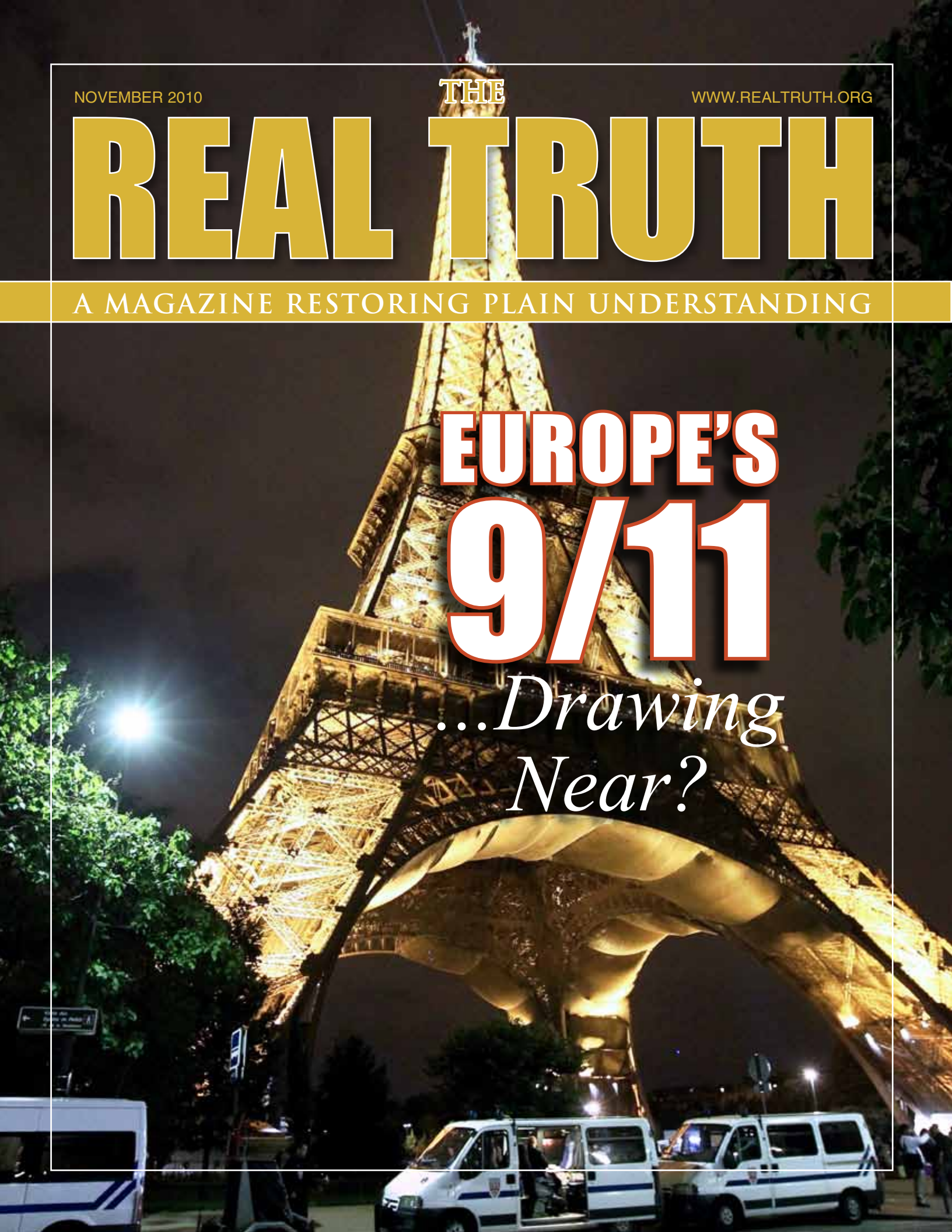
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REAL TRUTH

A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING

EUROPE'S 9/11

*...Drawing
Near?*



THE REAL TRUTH

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VOL. VIII | NO. 9 | NOVEMBER 2010

ARTICLES

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Thanksgiving—What Should It Mean to You?

Thanksgiving Day, as celebrated in North America, is a time to gather with family and friends to give thanks for the many blessings enjoyed by these nations and their citizens. But to many people, its meaning is lost.

Page 9

■ **OFFERING THANKS:** Displaced from their homes, Hurricane Katrina evacuees hold hands in prayer before eating Thanksgiving dinner in a hotel room (Nov. 24, 2005).

PHOTO: ALEX WONG/GETTY IMAGES

FEATURES

Personal from David C. Pack
World News Desk 1
27

■ **FRONT COVER:** French police officers stationed in front of the Eiffel Tower in Paris patrol the area as part of France's national security alert system (Oct. 3, 2010).

PHOTO: LEON NEAL/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

America's Hidden Debt

The official total for the United States federal debt stands at \$13.6 trillion. But this is only a small portion of the nation's debt—the true figures are beyond stunning.

Page 3

Animal Attacks—Why Increased Aggression!

A Rottweiler scalps a five-year-old boy—wild elephants terrorize villagers—sharks invade popular beaches. What is behind the recent surge in unusual wildlife behavior?

Page 6

Computer Chip: The Mark of the Beast?

Is a future computer chip implant the “mark of the Beast” referenced in the book of Revelation?

Page 11

Is There an Ever-burning Hell?

The popular idea of hell as a place of ever-burning torment frightens countless millions. What really happens to the wicked after death?

Page 13

Europe's 9/11...Drawing Near?

How might an undivided, singularly focused Europe react if Islamic extremists unleashed a terror attack on a scale matching—or surpassing—that of September 11, 2001?

Page 14

French Youth Fuel Riots

Behind the Chaos

Page 18

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

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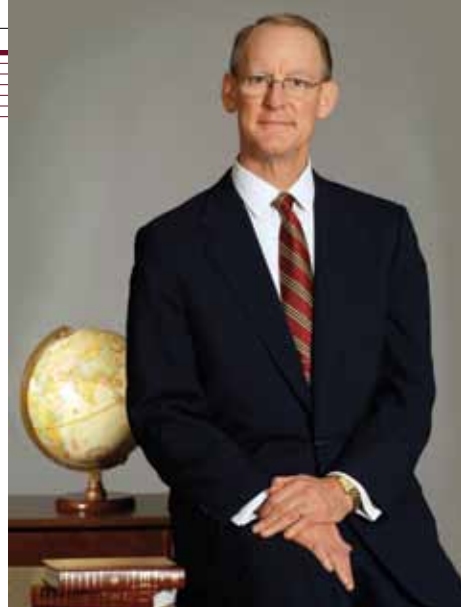
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PERSONAL FROM

David C. Fack



The Human Mind— What None Can Discover

APPALLING EVILS and troubles are increasing around the world. Suffering continues to grow worse. Can humanity survive? More are asking, *What is wrong with people? Where can we go for the answers?*

Theologians, moralists, psychologists and educators have been unable to find the hidden key to the HUMAN MIND. Scientific knowledge expands daily, but it has not, and will *never*, discover the missing dimension of THE MIND. You are about to learn what they cannot!

Modern science is continually bringing new knowledge to civilization. Each important scientific discovery—each new piece of knowledge—is received worldwide with excitement and acclaim.

Reflect on all that science has given to mankind at large. It has put men on the moon and created weapons of mass destruction. It has broken down the genetic codes of DNA and cloned numerous creatures. It has learned much about the immense size and nature of the universe—outer space—and discovered incredible things about the tiny sub-atomic particles in atoms—inner space. It has made numerous medical breakthroughs and accomplished amazing feats of engineering.

The scope and potential of science seem limitless. Most believe that, given time, scientific discoveries will

solve most or all of mankind's problems. Yet science is limited in a vitally important way that involves you. There is a discovery it will never—and can never—make about the nature of the human mind!

Your mind contains a dimension that cannot be understood or discovered by any process or experiment known to science. This world's religions have missed it. Their theologians neither teach nor comprehend it. They have completely overlooked this critical component—this single vital KEY—that unlocks the enormous difference between men and animals. Only by understanding this revealed KEY can you learn your purpose for being!

Look at all the amazing works of nature—both on Earth and throughout the heavens. The kaleidoscope of God's handiwork that can be seen by the human eye is staggering.

Consider the planets, stars and galaxies. Each is its own marvel. Then reflect on all of the species of plants found on Earth. There are millions, diverse in color, shape, size and beauty. The brilliance of their various designs and purposes is incredible! Now think of the 1 million different kinds of animals—and 12 million types of insects. They are as marvelous and fascinating as the world of plants, with their diversity of purpose, appearance and behavior.

But none of these creations rival the complexity and nearly unlimited capability of *your mind*. And as fascinating, marvelous, beautiful and amazing as are all

the things described above, none is more amazing than the HUMAN MIND. It is the absolute pinnacle of all living organisms. Nothing else in God's Creation comes close. What else can plan, think or create to even a fraction of the same degree?

Just think about how many things the mind can design and produce: houses, telephones, trains, automobiles, planes, rockets, computers, fax machines and other sophisticated devices that are practically limitless in complexity and usefulness. The only thing it cannot design and build is ITSELF!

When King David said, "... for I am fearfully and wonderfully made," (Psa. 139:14) this is most true of your brain—the *human mind!* The Creator sent along with it a detailed *Instruction Manual* containing vital information, explaining the nature, design and purpose of this greatest of all creations. He identifies the hidden key—the missing dimension!—to its right and proper use, opening the way to peace, happiness, abundance and prosperity.

But this *Instruction Manual*—the Bible—is almost universally ignored, misrepresented, misunderstood and rejected. As a result, the problems, troubles and evils of civilization mount with no solution in sight, and conditions are only growing worse.

Apply basic logic. Would God create His marvel of engineering—your mind—and send it without an *Instruction Book* explaining how to use it? Of course not!

Most spend their entire lives worried about what *people* think and say. Few concern themselves with what GOD thinks or says. Be honest and examine *yourself*. Do you derive your opinions from people? Or do you regularly search and accept the plain Word of God as the guide for your life?

The following scripture explains why even the most brilliant minds

are completely unable to learn certain understanding, unless it is *revealed* to them. Notice: "Jesus... said, I thank You, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because You have *hid these things from the wise and prudent*, and have revealed them unto BABES" (Matt. 11:25). The greatest thinkers of this world cannot fathom the things God has revealed in His Word! They are literally hidden from them.

We must be willing to examine God's Word for what He reveals about the mind. It will open your thinking to incredible *new* understanding about why you were born—and of your awesome future and potential. We must start at the beginning.

Many suppose that the composition of the human mind is entirely physical. Is this true? Others believe that each person possesses an immortal soul. Is *this* true? What does the Bible say? Does it endorse either of these ideas? Or does God's Word teach something completely different—something completely overlooked by all religions, and unable to be discovered by all methods of science?

First, we must consider the difference between human MINDS and animal BRAINS. There are facts that science tells us about the comparative qualities of both. All understand that in some way animal *brains* are entirely different from human *minds*. But in what way? *How* are they different?

Certain creatures, such as chimpanzees and dolphins, have brains relatively similar in size and weight to that of humans. Some larger animals, like whales and elephants, have larger brains than man. Yet they are far less intelligent, far less creative and incapable of understanding any complex thought.

Science has never been able to explain—to adequately account for—the vast difference between the human brain and the brains of

animals. While man has a brain that may be only slightly more complex than animals of relatively similar brain size, the difference in capability is vast, with simply no comparison.

Animals function almost entirely on INSTINCT. They do what they do automatically, and from birth. Almost immediately after birth, a calf knows exactly what to do—how to stand up and take steps, and where to find milk. Human babies require far longer to even stand up with *support*, and have to be taught how to do virtually everything.

Having minds, human beings have been given hands so they can create. Merely having brains, animals function on instinct and possess paws, claws and hooves. This leaves them incapable of building something complex like a television—never mind a jet or a space-traveling rocket—even if a mind were directing them. Animals are also not capable of acquiring knowledge beyond a very rudimentary ability to react to certain stimuli.

Humans can acquire knowledge, draw conclusions, gather and assess facts, make decisions—and build character. This is the single greatest overarching difference between men and animals. Animals are greatly limited because God has merely programmed into them, through instinct, everything they need to function within their environment.

On the other hand, people do *not* instinctively know everything necessary to function successfully in life. They must continually acquire more knowledge throughout their lives to address new challenges and demands made upon them.

This is made possible by an unseen, unrecognized component of the mind. Without this invisible, non-physical element, mankind would be just another dumb beast!

Let's now establish a basic Bible teaching. The patriarch Job wrote,

Please see PERSONAL, page 24



America's Hidden Debt

The official total for the United States federal debt stands at \$13.6 trillion. But this is only a small portion of the nation's debt—the true figures are beyond stunning.

BY SCOTT A. CLARK

A 35-YEAR-OLD MOTHER of two, Kelly lost her job at a large investment firm in the winter of 2008 and drew unemployment benefits for 99 weeks. When these ran out, she and her husband, who is a city employee, turned to the local housing authority, a federally subsidized social program aimed at helping families with children keep their homes. Unable to continue making the \$1,200 monthly mortgage payments, Kelly and her husband secured assistance for the next five months. In addition, her children take advantage of a free lunch program at a local high school.

Steve, a 42-year-old businessman, is in a different situation. While the recession has severely impacted him and his business, he does not qualify for government help—even though his revenues have declined by 40 percent or more since 2007. Steve is in favor of helping people in need, but says many abuse the system. He firmly opposes extending unemployment benefits, which he feels give some an excuse not to return to work.

Is it wrong for Kelly to maintain her lifestyle by taking advantage of programs the government offers? Should Steve be entitled to the same programs regardless of his financial position?

While fictional, these two accounts are close to reality for many Americans. The current economic climate fuels widespread debate over how the government should administer financial aid to individuals.

Regardless, when one steps back to look at the “big picture,” the stark reality of the nation’s problems becomes painfully clear: America is in debt, still spending, and in big trouble. Worse, there is a staggering amount of debt that most overlook.

Addicted to Spending?

In 2009, the federal government set a deficit record of \$1.4 trillion. For 2010, Washington plans to spend \$3.5 trillion. The White House is predicting an additional \$9 trillion over the next 10 years, meaning a total of more than \$20 trillion in debt by 2020.

Critics from the political party in the minority are quick to point out that this is a Democratic president doing all the spending. But under the previous president, a Republican, there were also substantial deficits and the federal budget



■ **WHICH ONES TO MELT?:** Inspired by a sermon about faith-based financial management, a woman in Kendall, Fla., looks in her wallet for credit cards she wants to melt over a hot plate, in an attempt to dig herself out of credit card debt (March 7, 2009).

PHOTO: JOE RAEDLE/GETTY IMAGES

grew by a record \$700 billion from 2001 to 2008.

The result of years of overspending is a federal debt of \$13.6 trillion. But this number hides the truth.

Not included in the official debt are totals from “off-balance sheet liabilities.” This means the amount of debt from government-funded programs, such as Medicaid and federal employee pension programs, is not included when the debt is tallied.

Using this approach, analysts reach the \$13.6 trillion figure. But again, this is only a small portion of the *actual* national debt. Amazingly, this is the same accounting method Enron Corporation used to conceal massive

debt and appear financially stable before its sudden collapse!

For an accurate picture of the federal debt, one must add up the amount spent on all unfunded programs, such as Medicare and Social Security.

These are “unfunded liabilities,” which in government terms refers to any program or expense that requires it to pay, but either does not bring in any money or enough to cover expenses. In the example of Medicare, the unfunded liability is the difference between the benefits promised to current and future recipients and what will be collected in taxes and Medicare premiums.

A National Center for Policy Analysis article reported that the com-

bined debt of the Social Security and Medicare programs alone are *seven times* the size of the U.S. economy and *10 times* the size of the national debt!

Using numbers from a 2009 Social Security and Medicare Trustees report, the center showed that Medicare and Social Security deficits are on course to cost more annually than the entire federal budget. As it stands, the combined deficits of both programs now require about 14 percent of general income tax revenues. When baby boomers begin to retire, this number will dramatically increase.

Consider. Since the inception of these programs, Social Security has

paid out \$17.5 trillion and Medicare has shelled out \$89.3 trillion more than revenue collected from taxpayers. Together, these two programs add a total of \$106.8 trillion to the published national debt.

That is a grand total of more than \$120 trillion for the federal debt. At a 5 percent rate, the annual interest payment would be more than \$6 trillion!

This figure does not include federal government pension plans, which are also unfunded, as is 97 percent of the military retirement plan.

Add to this the Fannie Mae-Freddie Mac bailout. The government has given these two mortgage finance companies an *unlimited* financial guarantee, which is estimated to cost another \$5 trillion total.

Spending for the three largest entitlement programs, Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security, has increased by 60 percent over the past several decades, according to a 2010 Congressional Budget Office report: "Together the federal outlays for those three programs accounted for an average of 46 percent of the primary spending over the past 10 years, up from 27 percent from 1975."

If this rate of increase continues, the payout for these three programs alone will soon exceed tax revenues. Again, this leaves out pension plans.

State and Local Turmoil

Financial problems do not stop with the federal government. Nearly every state is operating under large deficits and accruing unsustainable debt. Budget problems in 46 states for the 2011 fiscal year total \$121 billion, which is almost 20 percent of their combined budgets. Some estimates total over \$140 billion, depending on federal assistance.

And all this is poised to continue. For the 2012 fiscal year, 39 states have already projected gaps totaling \$102 billion collectively. This is expected to reach \$120 billion when all states are included in projections.

The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities investigated the results from the \$787 billion American Recovery

and Reinvestment Act of 2009, which worked to provide aid for states in fiscal distress and limit tax increases. The report found that while states are still struggling, "...the aid is now mostly gone; only about \$60 billion remains to help with 2011 fiscal problems. By 2012 only \$6 billion will remain."

California is perhaps in the worst shape. The state has begun issuing "registered warrants," better known as IOUs or promissory notes, to "pay" its bills. In 2009, California issued \$2.6 billion in IOUs for schools and bondholder payments. As of July 2010, the state issued IOUs worth over \$3 billion to state vendors, health clinics, community colleges, scholarship recipients, as well as legislative and gubernatorial employees (*The Sacramento Bee*).

Across the nation, long-term borrowing to solve immediate problems has become the norm. States are selling off their assets for "quick cash" in an attempt to address their unfunded liabilities.

Arizona sold its legislative office building, the state supreme court building, governor's office building, state prisons and the Arizona Schools for the Deaf and the Blind to private investors to raise \$735 million. There are also over a dozen more properties being considered for the same program. Once the sales were complete, Arizona leased back the properties from investors!

Many fear these tactics are like trying to use Band-Aids to cure cancer.

"We're in the second full year of huge budget deficits. The typical gimmicks have already been employed. Now this new one has surfaced," Kevin McCarthy, president of the Arizona Tax Research Association told *Stateline.org*, which is funded by Pew Charitable Trusts. "They are masking the budget deficit and creating a one-time infusion of revenue that will go away next year. Then what will you do?"

Indiana leased its toll roads in March 2006 to a group of foreign investors for a lump sum payment of \$2.8 billion. Companies from

Australia and Spain bought the property because they could raise tolls and install electric collection booths to increase profits. This move was an attempt by Indiana to supplement its highway improvement program deficits. But the 75-year lease will only cover the gap for 10 years!

Pennsylvania has sold aging office buildings in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh because moving state workers to leased space was less expensive than paying for repairs. Florida also sold public buildings for similar reasons.

In Michigan, Detroit sold \$250 million worth of bonds, rated at "junk" status, to investors. The city had to cover a \$280 million deficit and has stated that it may need to file for bankruptcy protection.

Washington, D.C., has had to raise nearly a billion dollars. States such as Massachusetts and Connecticut, which are also struggling with shortfalls, are selling more bonds to acquire needed cash.

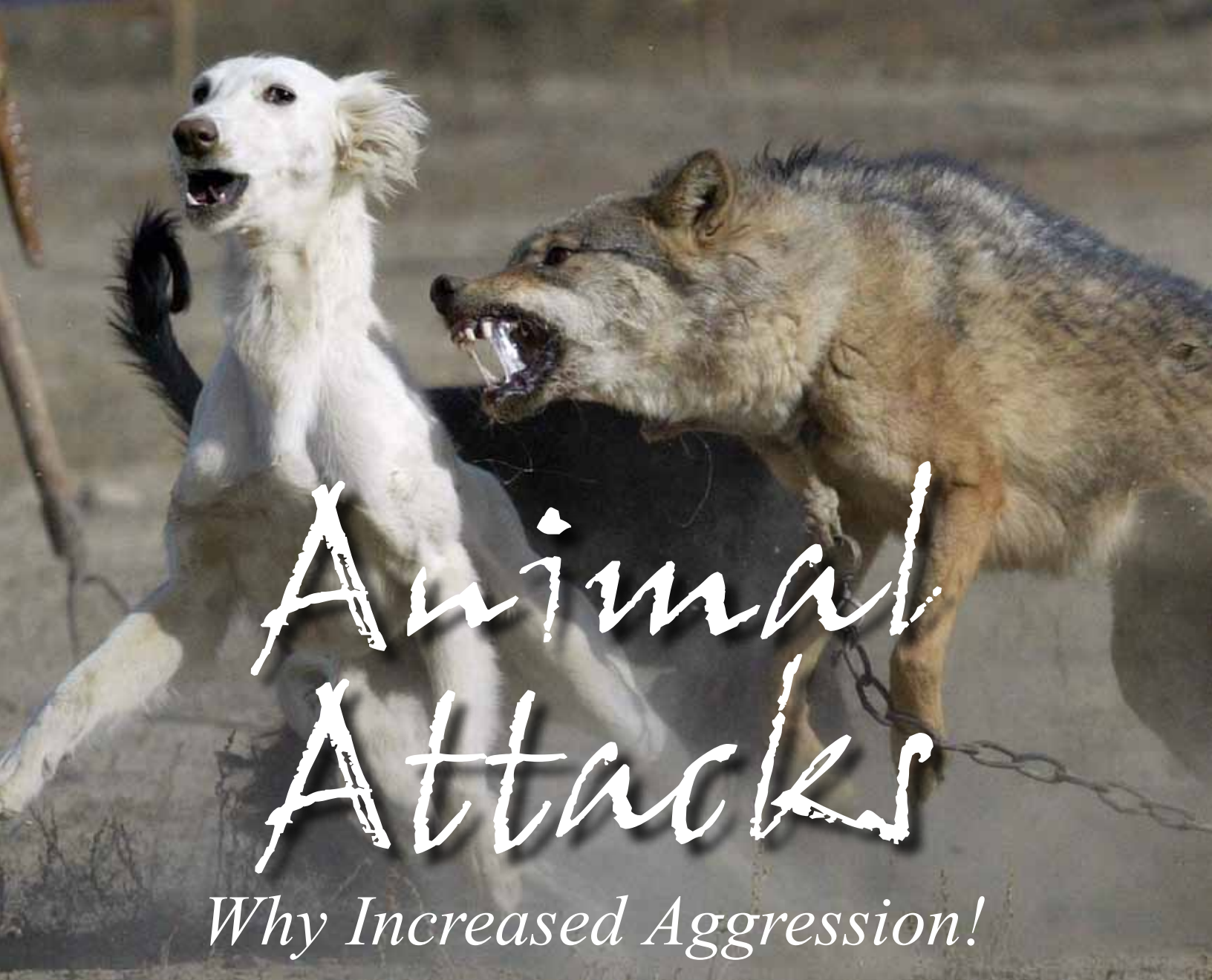
According to a Heritage Foundation report, "This year, the U.S. public debt is projected to reach 62 percent of the economy—up from 40 percent in 2008 and nearly double the historical average, according to recent Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates. The financial crisis and recession drove much of this debt swing, yet larger problems loom in the future."

The report continues, "The unsustainable tsunami of spending on entitlement programs will accelerate as 77 million baby boomers flood into them. We are reaching a budgetary tipping point [where spending for entitlement programs automatically] crowds out other national priorities."

Tax Hikes

With the federal government overwhelmed with debt and states lacking funds, political leaders are in a bind. If they stop paying for Social Security, Medicare and pension plans, voters' lives will be severely impacted. Yet there is no easy way for the government to continue paying for the pro-

Please see **DEBT**, page 29



Animal Attacks

Why Increased Aggression!

BY JACOB C. TOEWS

AFTER TUCKING THEIR nine-month-old twin girls into bed, two parents and their four-year-old son watch television downstairs in their suburban row house in Britain. As they unwind, a fox fearlessly sneaks through an open door and into the twins' bedroom. Oblivious to the peril of their little ones, the parents realize the girls are in danger only upon hearing strange muffled wails from upstairs. As the parents flip on the bedroom light, they are shocked to find a fox viciously attacking one of the babies.

"It's a living nightmare," the twins' mother told *BBC Radio London*. "It's something I would never have expected to happen—let alone to us and my beautiful girls."

A Rottweiler scalps a five-year-old boy—wild elephants terrorize villagers—sharks invade popular beaches. What is behind the recent surge in unusual wildlife behavior?

■ **FIERCE RETALIATION:** A chained wolf retaliates against two dogs during a hunting festival in the village of Bokonbayevo, Kyrgyzstan (Oct. 18, 2008).

PHOTO: VYACHESLAV OSELEDKO/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

The Mammal Research Unit at the University of Bristol estimates that across Britain there are up to 33,000 urban foxes and 225,000 rural foxes. Although they eat nearly anything they can scavenge, officials said the attack was unusual for the normally timid animal.

Yet Britain is not the only country experiencing such strange animal behavior. The number of reported animal attacks is also growing in North America, such as in Rye, an upscale town outside of New York City.

“In this idyllic suburb, dotted with basketball hoops, training wheels and bubbling creeks, life has been upended by many intruders that seem to be on a tear: coyotes,” *The New York Times* reported. “In the past nine days, two young girls playing outside their homes were attacked in separate episodes, officials said. Both girls survived with minor injuries, but the highly unusual attacks have prompted a wide-ranging response that has included helicopter searches, errant gunfire and an endless stream of gossip.”

The article continued, “The police have advised parents not to let small children roam farther than an arm’s length away, and to keep them indoors at night. People walking their dogs at night carry large sticks alongside their leashes.”

In the last two decades, thousands of the carnivores have migrated to metropolitan areas in search of food. Experts maintain there could be several thousand coyotes living in New York, with a similar number in cities such as Washington, Los Angeles and Chicago.

Then there are rabid vampire bats in Peru that have attacked over 3,500 people, killing at least 20—6,000 wild camels that surrounded a northern Australian town of 350 people, destroying infrastructure and homes—an elk that charged out of the woods and trampled a woman as she walked her dog in a Swedish residential area—uncharacteristic, deadly attacks by komodo dragons in Indonesia...the list goes on.

Nearly every day, headlines of attacks surface worldwide. What is

causing this surge in such unusual, aggressive animal behavior?

Behind the Bizarre

Since human beings first began to expand and urbanize their surroundings, they have been at odds with wild animals. Yet experts have warned for years that these creatures are becoming increasingly violent.

“Many wildlife experts agree on the reasons wild-animal attacks are seemingly on the rise,” the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* reported. “One is provocation. The other seems to be the astounding rate at which humans are encroaching on wildlife habitat. Summer homes, subdivisions, heavily trafficked parks, diverse outdoor recreation—these all put people and wild animals into increased, and tense, contact.

“Such contact can cause animals to lose their innate fear of humans. These desensitized animals—including many National Park and campground bears—are widely considered the most dangerous animals of all.”

The presence of housing developments in once-remote wildlife habitats often blurs the boundaries between people and animals, officials say.

“When you have a big dangerous predator living in large numbers in an area where there are large numbers of people, you’re going to have things happen that are not good,” Mike Conover, who studies animal-human conflict at the Berryman Institute in Utah, told *CNN*. He called animals losing their fear of people and people losing their fear of animals “a deadly combination.”

Compounding the problem are open garbage containers, barbecue grills left unclean, and pet food left outside, all of which attract predators.

Animals becoming more familiar with human surroundings means small children and pets are often the first to be attacked, as *The Associated Press* reported when an increase of maulings by cougars was first noted more than 10 years ago: “It emerged from the forest behind the Collins house one evening in May and zeroed in on Sandy,

the family’s 50-pound Labrador mix. As two of Collins’ children watched from the doorway, the cougar chased Sandy around the house and cornered her by the back deck.

“Clamping its jaws around the dog’s neck, the cougar dragged Sandy 50 yards into the woods. There it gnawed on her head and shoulder, buried the rest for later, and stretched out for a long nap.”

A worse attack occurred several months later when two Colorado parents were hiking with their son at Rocky Mountain National Park. As their 10 year old walked on a well-known trail a few minutes ahead of his family, a cougar pounced. According to reports, the shocked parents “arrived to see the cougar dragging him away.”

While this tragic account took place more than a decade ago, the frequency of similar animal attacks is rising today.

In August 2009, an elderly woman was killed by a pack of 11 or more wild dogs while walking in rural Georgia. When her husband went looking for her, he too was attacked and killed by the same pack.

“[Coroner James] Matthews said the dogs, rounded up...by animal control officers from a neighboring county, showed no signs of malnourishment or rabies and said [his county] had never received complaints about the dogs.

“I’ve been [coroner] for 28 years and this is the first time I’ve ever seen anyone killed by dogs,” he said (*The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*).

The following year, a woman in another part of the state was killed by a pack of dogs as she walked in a residential neighborhood.

Clearly, something is not right.

Undernourished and Stressed

Another factor adding to the increase in animal attacks is food shortages. In northern Saskatchewan, Canada, skunks and ravens are often seen scavenging in farmyards, while huge snakes are being discovered in hay bales. Bears are also struggling due to a lack of berries.

The story is similar in Montana, where *The Associated Press* reported

bear attacks have been the most deadly this year since record-keeping began. “Scientists report that a favorite food of many bears, nuts from whitebark pine cones, is scarce. So as grizzlies look to put on some major pounds in preparation for the long winter ahead, scientists say, they will be looking for another source of protein—meat—and running into trouble along the way.”

“Two people have been fatally mauled by grizzlies so far this year in Wyoming and Montana. Experts said that’s the most in one year in at least a century for the Yellowstone region, which also includes parts of Idaho,” the *AP* article stated.

Among other reasons for increasing animal ferocity and aggression is stress, with animal psychologists saying animals are “stressed out” and fighting back.

A 2006 *New York Times* article discussed “elephant crackups” occurring in Africa, India and Southeast Asia.

“For a number of biologists and ethologists who have spent their careers studying elephant behavior, the attacks have become so abnormal in both number and kind that they can no longer be attributed entirely to the customary factors. Typically, elephant researchers have cited, as a cause of aggression, the high levels of testosterone in newly matured male elephants or the competition for land and resources between elephants and humans. But in ‘Elephant Breakdown,’ a 2005 essay in the journal *Nature*...[researchers] argued that today’s elephant populations are suffering from a form of chronic stress, a kind of species-wide trauma. Decades of poaching and culling and habitat loss, they claim, have so disrupted the intricate web of familial and societal relations by which young elephants have traditionally been raised in the wild, and by which established elephant herds are governed, that what we are now witnessing is nothing less than a precipitous collapse of elephant culture.”

Noise pollution may be another animal “stressor.” Technology enables man to invade wildlife domain in nearly every part of the globe. Noisy all-

terrain vehicles tear through forests, across plains and up mountains, disturbing and destroying animal breeding grounds. Power boats and jet skis frequently flood bird nests and often damage beaver dams.

Officials say that since humans are invading animals’ space, an increase in attacks is bound to happen. But then how does that explain an increase in attacks by domesticated animals?

According to various statistics, the number of fatal dog attacks in the U.S. has been rising, with a yearly average of 17 occurring in the 1980s as opposed to 30 in 2009. On top of these numbers, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that dogs bite an estimated 4.7 million people per year, half of which are children.

Yet it is not only dogs attacking people, but also dogs attacking each other, as evidenced in Britain, *BBC News* reported. “Although no figures have been collated, Dogs Trust veterinary director Chris Laurence said: ‘We are getting more and more reports of dogs that are perfectly innocently walking through a park being set upon by an aggressive dog.’”

According to *BBC News*, as neighborhood violence increases, more people are opting to keep aggressive dogs for protection. In Britain, the amount of violent dog attacks on people has doubled in the past four years and attacks on other dogs have increased significantly. This has led to proposed legislation that would require all dogs to be fitted with microchip implants to ensure they and their owners can be identified in case of a problem.

When have such measures ever been necessary?

Missing Element

Given the expected increase in urbanization as the population continues to rise, experts predict animal attacks will worsen. But instead of offering solutions, they can only tell people to avoid the animals and take proper precautions: do not go outside after dark, keep a close eye on children, do not leave food outside. Others advocate that human beings should give the

land back to the animals because they inhabited it first.

Consider. Man built cities thousands of years ago to protect himself from wild animals, but now those animals are beginning to infiltrate urban areas and terrorize citizens. It seems no matter how hard he tries, man is unable to protect himself from nature.

Animal experts, pet psychologists, scientists and canine caregivers seem unable to figure out why the surge in animal attacks. Although they have only begun to document the increase in animal aggression, they could have seen it coming, *if* they had only turned to the one source that foretold it long ago, the source in which the relationship between man and animals was first mentioned—the Bible.

Notice: “And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and everything that creeps upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good” (Gen. 1:25).

After this, God gave man “dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth” (vs. 26).

God created Earth intending that animals and man would dwell together. But if all the animals He created were good, why then would He allow them to turn and attack?

Startling passages in the Bible reveal the answer—and the major reason for the rising surge in animal aggression.

Leviticus 26:22 states: “I will also send wild beasts among you, which shall rob you of your children, and destroy your cattle, and make you few in number; and your high ways shall be desolate.” This means children will be dragged off by wild animals and people will be scared to come out of their houses for fear of being killed.

The scope of this prophetic trend is expanded in Ezekiel: “I cause noisome [harmful] beasts to pass through the land, and they spoil it, so that it

Please see ANIMAL, page 23

Thanksgiving

What Should It Mean to You?

Thanksgiving Day, as celebrated in North America, is a time to gather with family and friends to give thanks for the many blessings enjoyed by these nations and their citizens. But to many people, its meaning is lost.

TURKEY DINNERS, cranberries, candied yams, stuffing, mashed potatoes, pumpkin pie and family gatherings—these are all commonly associated with most Americans’ and Canadians’ yearly celebration of giving thanks—Thanksgiving Day!

In the United States, Thanksgiving is on the fourth Thursday of November. In Canada, it is the second Monday in October. On this holiday, a Thanksgiving meal is prepared with all the trimmings; families gather together and talk, while others watch a game or a parade filled with pilgrims, Indians and other colonial figures. Some families may even have their own yearly Thanksgiving traditions.

What comes to mind when you think of Thanksgiving? Do you picture a time of thankfulness toward God—or is it merely one of eating, partying or watching football?

Sadly, the latter is what Thanksgiving has become to most. They have forgotten *why* the day was established. Its meaning has slowly deteriorated, and is now almost completely lost under a cloud of media hype, sales pitches, marketing tactics and blitz commercialism.

While many are familiar with the traditional *representation* of the original Thanksgiving, it is helpful to examine the purpose for which it was first celebrated. By doing this, the day’s meaning will be firmly established.

The Origin of Thanksgiving Day

In August 1620, the *Mayflower*, a 180-ton ship, set sail from Southampton, England. After difficulties with the vessel, resulting in her return to port, finally the voyage began. Her 102 passengers were to become some of the founding pilgrims of the United States of America, and the initiators of one of this nation’s most popular holidays.

After weeks of plowing through the tumultuous Atlantic waters, battling strong winds, pounding waves and a number of problems with their vessel, the pilgrims spotted Cape Cod, off the coast of Massachusetts. The stormy weather was brewing so strongly that they had arrived there by accident. Their intended location was off the Virginia coast, where other pilgrims had begun colonies.

Before anchoring at Plymouth Rock and disembarking to explore the territory, the pilgrims devised the “*Mayflower Compact*.” This was to serve as the basis for governing their new colony, where all would have the freedom to worship God as they chose.

The compact stated, “We whose names are underwritten, the loyal subjects of our dread sovereign lord King James...Having undertaken, for the glory of God, and advancement of the Christian faith, and honor of our king and country, a voyage to plant the first colony in the northern parts of Virginia, do by these presents solemnly and mutually in the presence of God and one of another, covenant, and combine ourselves together into a civil body politic, for our better ordering and preservation, and furtherance of the ends aforesaid; and by virtue hereof to enact, constitute, and frame such just and equal laws, ordinances, acts, constitutions, offices from time to time, as shall be thought most meet and convenient for the general good of the colony: unto which we promise all due submission and obedience. In witness whereof we have hereunder subscribed our names; Cape Cod, the 11th of November...” (*Mourt’s Relation: A Journal of the Pilgrims at Plymouth*).

The next few months would prove to be difficult and trying. More than half of the original pilgrims did not survive the first, long, bleak New England winter. Often, two or three people would die in one day due to infection and sickness.

But, with the approaching of spring came new hope. The survivors built homes and planted crops. They made friendships with local Indian tribes, and

traded with them. The passing of winter allowed the pilgrims to labor and produce, causing the colony to flourish.

After reaping their first harvest in the fall of 1621, the pilgrims dedicated a day for thanking God for the bounty with which He had blessed them. They had endured the many hardships that came with pioneering a new land. They toiled through building an entire colony from what was simply wilderness. They were at peace with their neighbors. And they were especially grateful for their harvest. This allowed them to gather and store plenteous food and crops for the long and brutal winter ahead.

Their governor, William Bradford, proclaimed a day of *thanksgiving* toward God. They prepared a great feast to enjoy with family and friends—both from within the colony and with neighboring Indian tribes.

The following quotes from *America's God and Country* demonstrate Bradford's and the colony's

thankfulness for God's protection and blessings:

"Being thus arrived in a good harbor, and brought safe to land, they fell upon their knees and blessed the God of Heaven who had brought them over the vast and furious ocean, and delivered them from all the perils and miseries thereof, again to set their feet on the firm and stable earth, their proper element."

In reminiscing upon the colony's success, Bradford continued, "Thus out of small beginnings greater things have been produced by His hand that made all things of nothing, and gives being to all things that are; and, as one small candle may light a thousand, so the light here kindled hath shone unto many, yea in some sort to our whole nation; let the glorious name of [God] have all the praise" (ibid.).

Clearly, pilgrims of the Plymouth colony gave God credit for all that they had. Notice the many references

to God, and their acknowledgement of how He granted them so many blessings. The pilgrim's beliefs were firmly entrenched in the realization of God's presence and intervention in their everyday lives. Thanksgiving Day began because of this belief. It is a day dedicated to giving thanks to God for the many things we often take for granted.

Over the years, many colonies did keep Thanksgiving, but they kept various other days of thanksgiving, at different times of the year. It is a popular misconception that the pilgrims kept Thanksgiving on the same day each year following the first celebration in 1621, and that the other colonies began keeping that same day. In truth, it was a tradition always used to highlight and show gratitude for important events, such as bountiful harvests, victories in battle, etc. Whenever these took place,

Please see **THANKSGIVING**, page 20



■ **COUNTING THEIR BLESSINGS:** Having escaped New Orleans after their homes were flooded, Hurricane Katrina evacuees hold hands as they pray prior to their Thanksgiving dinner in a hotel room in Camp Springs, Md. (Nov. 24, 2005).

PHOTO: ALEX WONG/GETTY IMAGES



Computer chip: The Mark of the Beast?

Is a future computer chip implant the “mark of the Beast” referenced in the book of Revelation?

BY F. JACO VILJOEN

AFTER AN exhausting 18 hours in labor, a mother delivers a healthy baby. The parents are overwhelmed with emotion to see their firstborn come into the world. Nursing staff wheel the child into the newborn ward, with a smiling father following.

But his joyful expression suddenly changes into a distressed frown when a nurse takes a stainless steel syringe and inserts a microchip capsule into the child’s right hand. The healthcare worker quickly reassures the concerned father this is standard procedure...

This scenario depicts the much-discussed, often-feared, possible expanded use of radio-frequency identification (RFID). According to *The Morning Call*, developers claim, “This stuff is going to be everywhere” and “nobody has even thought of where this [technology] is going to be applied.”

RFID is an advanced identification process in which an individual or item is tagged with a specific ID number. Using radio waves, a computerized reader can scan a tag’s unique serial number and access any stored information.

The advantage of this system? Beyond today’s barcode technology, the tagged object need only come within a few feet of a reader to process an identity number.

Picture a society in which a microchip embedded in a person’s hand is crucial to everyday life. Shopping at the

supermarket or buying any other item would be as simple as a flip of the wrist or walking through a pay point. Doors would unlock with a wave of the hand, and carrying a wallet with a driver’s license would be unnecessary.

Proponents of this technology maintain the chip would improve day-to-day life, with almost infinite applications. Consider how it could revolutionize the banking sector or advance the healthcare industry—or the benefits to travel, education and keyless home access.

In 2004, the United States Food and Drug Administration approved the RFID implant, VeriChip, for medical purposes. According to *The Associated Press*, the device is no bigger than a grain of rice and can be inserted under the skin through a procedure that takes less than 20 minutes.

On top of proposed widespread medical uses, the chip is already being used for recreation, as reported by *AP*: “Club hoppers in Barcelona, Spain, now use the microchip to enter a VIP area and, through links to a different database, speed payment much like a smartcard.”

But there are genuine concerns.

“You are walking into potential pitfalls when it comes to privacy,” an American Civil Liberties Union legislative director told *The Morning Call*, adding, “People are amazing with their skill and ability to hack into databases. Any time there is massive amounts of information gathered anywhere or your personal information gathered anywhere, we want to make sure there are barriers in place to protect it.”

Security issues are not the only concern. The thought of RFID implants or similar technology causes anxiety and fear for some. A number of evangelical Christian groups even feel the technology may be the biblical mark of the Beast described in the book of Revelation.

■ **HIGH-TECH INNOVATION:** The VeriChip, which was implanted for the first time in a family in Boca Raton, Fla., contains personal medical information that can be accessed by a specialized digital reader (May 10, 2002).

PHOTO: RHONA WISE/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

The New York Times described a 2007 lawsuit in which a woman sued the police department after being suspended from her employment because she refused “to be fingerprinted or accept [an updated identification] card, insisting that she was guided against doing so because she feared the cards carried ‘the mark of the beast’...She felt that getting the new card could ‘jeopardize [her] salvation.’”

Many prophecy watchers are convinced that RFID will be part of the mark of the Beast. Articles, books and websites offer a cacophony of wildly different ideas on this subject. Self-proclaimed experts merely contribute to the confusion.

Is microchip technology the mark of the Beast?

Unraveling the Confusion

The only place in the Bible the mark is mentioned is in the book of Revelation.

“And he causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name” (Rev. 13:16-17).

A chapter later, the mark is mentioned again: “If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark...the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God” (Rev. 14:9-10).

After reading this account, some conclude the mark is an implanted computer chip or a barcode tattooed on a recipient’s right hand or forehead. Others feel the Nazi swastika is the mark. Then there are those who think the Worldwide Web (or “www”) is the mark, with a few even considering it the H1N1 swine-flu virus.

Yet just *one* mark of the Beast is described in the Bible. Which is correct?

How could anyone be under “the wrath of God” if it is not clear *what* the mark is? Would God leave people clueless regarding this subject and then punish them for not knowing?

No! “For God is *not* the author of confusion.” Rather, He demands that

“all things be done decently and in order” (I Cor. 14:33, 40).

God never leaves His followers in the dark about matters He wants them to understand. Notice the first verse of the book of Revelation: “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to *show* unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass...” (Rev. 1:1).

Simply put, God *SHOWS* His servants what “must shortly come to pass”—including the nature of the mark of the Beast! The answer, therefore, must be simple and crystal clear.

Understanding the Mark

Recall that in Revelation, the mark is placed in the “forehead” or “right hand.” This is where biblical theorists often make a jump in logic that this refers to an RFID chip, as this technology can be implanted in the wrist or brain.

Yet the careful Bible student never forces any conclusions. Instead, he allows the Bible to interpret itself. Simply breaking down these two terms reveals the actual meaning.

Consider. The frontal lobe of the human brain is the area where a person makes decisions. With his hands, he performs actions, deeds or works. Through the “right hand,” a person acts upon choices made in his “forehead”—the mind.

Similarly, a series of verses in Deuteronomy 6 shows the Bible uses symbolic language to discuss the mind and actions: “Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do...these words, which I command you...and you shall bind them for a sign *upon your hand*, and they shall be as frontlets *between your eyes*” (vs. 3, 6, 8). Here, God is commanding obedience to His Law through a “sign” upon the hand and “frontlet” (a decorative band or ribbon worn across the forehead). But this does not mean a literal sign or frontlet, but rather symbolizes *obedience* to God’s commandments in the *mind* and through one’s *actions*. Read Psalm 51:16-17.

Romans 6:16 reveals more on the subject of obedience: “Know you not, that to whom you yield yourselves

servants to obey, his servants you are to whom you obey...” Reread the last portion of this scripture: “his *servants* you are to whom you OBEY.” *Strong’s Exhaustive Bible Concordance* defines the word “servant” as “a slave,” whether “literally or figuratively, involuntarily or voluntarily.” A slave belongs to his master. In short, this verse reveals a person belongs to whom he obeys.

Just as a Christian obeys God—and therefore *belongs* to Him—a person with the mark of Revelation obeys and belongs to the Beast.

Return to Revelation 13: “no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark” (vs. 17). Under the Beast’s rule, if one does not *obey* him, he will be unable to “buy” or “sell”—meaning unable to work or do business with others.

For the Beast to control buying and selling, he must have the political power to implement laws and the military backing to enforce them. Those who do not follow the laws of his government system will be unable to “buy” or “sell.” The consequence of obeying the Beast and taking his mark becomes clear: if one is unable to work or do business, he cannot earn money to support himself.

Realize. No invention by itself could be the mark of the Beast!

Rather than being frightened by new technology, such as the RFID computer chip, a serious Bible student should instead consider his own thoughts and actions. When the political-military leader known as the Beast rises to power, the world will ultimately be divided into two groups: those who obey the Beast and those who refuse. Remember, the mark will be tied to obedience.

The decision to accept or reject the mark will present a great world test. All people will face it. Those who take it will incur God’s wrath; those who refuse it will have God’s favor.

Soon everyone will be confronted with a choice of whom to obey—either God or the Beast. To understand that choice in detail, read David C. Pack’s booklet *Who or What Is the Beast of Revelation?* □

Is There an Ever-burning Hell?

The popular idea of hell as a place of ever-burning torment frightens countless millions. What really happens to the wicked after death?

BY DAVID C. PACK

THE MOST COMMON image of people “roasting in hell” pictures a God willing to burn people for all eternity without ever totally burning them up. Apart from what the scriptures teach, first ask, what kind of God is capable of this?

Modern “human rights activists” recognize the terrible evil of torture—even in its *temporary* forms. Would the loving God of the Bible design an *everlasting* torture chamber? If so, He would have to witness—for the rest of eternity—the suffering of those that He had condemned to such a “hell.”

We might also ask: How enjoyable could salvation be for the saved, if they were forced to watch their children or parents—and other loved ones—screaming in pain and agony for the rest of time?

Almost no one understands that it was primarily *pagan poets* who authored today’s widely believed concept about an underground, ever-burning hell.

Much of the tradition surrounding the subject of hell came from *The Divine Comedy*, a famous work by

Dante Alighieri, who lived from AD 1265 to 1321. In it, he described his view of paradise, purgatory and hell.

Notice this from a book about his life, *Dante and His Influence*: “...of all Poets of modern times, Dante Alighieri was, perhaps, the greatest educator. He possibly had a greater influence on the course of Civilization than any other one man since his day...who wrote, in incomprehensible verse, an *imaginative* and lurid account of a dismal journey through a lurid Hell—a long poem containing certain phrases which have caught the attention of the world, such as, ‘*All hope abandon, Ye, who enter here, ...*’” This had a tremendous influence on popular Christian thought and teaching.

Dante believed the pagan philosophers Plato and Virgil were divinely inspired. This makes obvious where he got his ideas. His fascination with the Greek philosopher Plato caused him to accept Plato’s ideas about the immortality of the soul as described in his famous work, *Phaedo*. Here is what the *Encyclopedia Americana* says about Virgil, a pagan Roman poet who lived from 70 to 12 BC: “... he belongs...to the national school... [of pagan Roman thought, influenced by the Greek writers]...Among the

Christians [of the Middle Ages, including Dante]...he was believed to have received some measure of divine inspiration.”

Consider what the *Encyclopedia Americana* says about hell: “Hell as generally understood is the abode of evil spirits; the infernal regions... whither lost and condemned souls go after death to suffer indescribable torments and eternal punishment...Some have thought of it as the place created by the Deity where He punishes with inconceivable severity, and through all eternity the souls of those who through unbelief or by the worship of false or different gods had angered Him. It is the place of divine revenge, untempered, never ending.”

Another quote from the same source makes this eye-opening admission about the almost universal acceptance of the common belief about hell: “... the main features of hell as conceived by Hindu, Persian, Egyptian, Grecian, Hebrew and Christian theologians are essentially the same.”

Did you realize that the source of the concept of an ever-burning hell comes from *outright paganism*?

To learn *much* more about how the popular version of hell has never had *anything* to do with the true teaching of the Bible, watch *The World to Come* broadcast “Is There an Ever-Burning Hell?” at www.worldtocome.org. □

EUROPE'S 9/11

...Drawing Near?

BY BRUCE A. RITTER

LONDON—BULLETS whiz by, glass shatters and pedestrians scream, ducking for cover as terrorist commandos fire assault weapons into unsuspecting crowds. Paris—bystanders helplessly watch the world-famous Eiffel Tower crumple into shapeless pieces of metal, engulfed by multiple explosions. Berlin—blood and body parts splatter German streets in a brutal, almost surreal, scene of mayhem triggered by Islamic terrorists seeking to create fear, panic and chaos.

Three cities. Three simultaneous attacks. One possible terror scenario. All carefully orchestrated by religious extremists bent on bringing the West to its knees.

While individual European countries have felt the deadly sting of terrorist attacks specifically targeted against their citizens and governments, Europe as a whole has not been singled out for assaults rivaling America's infamous "September 11" attack.

At least not yet.

In early October 2010, the United States government warned Europe of a plot involving a series of potential

■ **TERROR THREAT:** An armed police officer stands guard as the area around Hyde Park Corner is evacuated during a security alert in central London, England (Oct. 6, 2010).

PHOTO: LEON NEAL/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

terrorist attacks, based on information obtained from a naturalized German citizen caught in Pakistan. Though lacking details of when and how, the threat was deemed credible enough to put the United Kingdom, France and Germany on high alert.

This begs the questions: How might Europe react—as an undivided, singularly determined government entity moving in one mind, one purpose, marching toward one goal—if Islamic terrorists were to unleash a nightmarish attack on a scale similar to that of September 11, 2001? Would the speed and ease of execution, number of casualties, and subsequent financial and emotional toll of such a dramatic event galvanize the European Union into action, as it did America?

Plot Uncovered

In July 2010, U.S. forces in the tribal regions of Pakistan captured terror suspect Ahmed Sidiqi, a 36-year-old naturalized German citizen who was about to return to Europe.

During interrogations at Bagram Airfield in Afghanistan, Mr. Sidiqi said he belonged to the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), a terror organization that has gained several recruits from Germany, and that he and his brother frequented the former al-Quds Mosque in Hamburg, Germany—the same religious center where Mohammed Atta and other terrorist conspirators met for prayer before moving to America to carry out the September 11 attacks. (The mosque had to be shut down because it attracted a growing number of followers who were intrigued by its notorious history.)

The German national claimed to know of several terror attacks planned for Germany, Britain and France—plans that were financed by 9/11 mastermind Osama bin Laden. Mr. Sidiqi told U.S. interrogators that teams of passport-carrying European nationals, who had received terrorism training in Waziristan and Pakistan, had already arrived in Britain and Germany to implement their scheme: commando-style jihadist terrorists would attack

“soft targets” (e.g., popular tourist attractions) in Berlin (such as Hotel Adlon near Brandenburg Gate, Central Station, Alexanderplatz television tower), and Paris (the Eiffel Tower, Notre Dame Cathedral). The multicity assault would be styled after the 2008 three-day shooting spree in Mumbai, India, which left 166 people dead.

Credible Information?

While the claims lacked specific details—they could be true, a mixture of facts and falsehoods, or consist of lies of omission—U.S. authorities faced a problem: (1) warn Europe, and be accused of “crying wolf” if the plot turned out to be false—or (2) say nothing, and be blamed for holding back sensitive information that could have saved lives if the plot turned out to be true.

They considered several factors, such as the Central Intelligence Agency having used unmanned drones in the border region between Afghanistan and Pakistan to kill five insurgents (four Germans and one Briton) who were involved in the plot.

EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator Gilles de Kerchove spoke of the rising concern over al-Qaeda-trained Europeans mounting terror attacks in Europe. He said, “They hold passports of member states...they are not known by law enforcement and more difficult to detect” (*Reuters*).

“We know some Somalis in Denmark and Sweden went to Somalia and went back to Denmark to mount attacks,” he continued. “The French arrested several French who went to Afghanistan” (*ibid.*).

Another consideration was the onslaught of bomb threats in France, which received nine in September alone; the Eiffel Tower was evacuated and shut down twice in two weeks. (The threats, however, were thought to be from al-Qaeda in North Africa, not Pakistan.)

On October 3, the U.S. State Department warned the French, British and German governments of the terror plot, adding that it may include simultaneous attacks on five airports

in Europe. The State Department also issued a travel warning to American citizens traveling to the European continent. In Germany, Ramstein Air Base, headquarters for the United States Air Forces in Europe, heightened security and implemented a curfew, telling service members not to wear their uniforms off base.

Reaction to Warning

Leaving its terror alert level at “severe,” the UK government warned its citizens traveling to France and Germany and tightened security for the British royal family. British Home Secretary Theresa May assured the public, “The first and most important duty of this government is the protection and security of the British people and visitors to the UK” (*Telegraph*). She urged citizens to report any suspicious activity.

Scotland Yard and MI5 officials are concerned that terrorists might carry out their plan by acquiring assault weapons from criminal elements.

Reacting to Britain, France issued a warning to French citizens traveling to the United Kingdom. At the moment, however, the government is less concerned with Pakistan-backed terror plots than with AQIM (al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb), which seeks to overthrow Algeria’s government. The group allegedly kidnapped five French citizens and two Africans in a Nigerian mining town, killed five soldiers in a truck bombing, and uses the Internet and rhetoric-driven sermons to draw recruits. So far, at least six AQIM terrorist cells have been shut down across Europe.

The Associated Press summed up the terror organization’s background of violence: “Today, AQIM is believed to have about 400 fighters active from Niger to Mali and Mauritania, conducts dozens of bombings or ambushes each month in Algeria, holds hostages and has increasingly bonded with drug traffickers, intelligence officials say.”

Sweden, though not specifically mentioned as a terror target, raised its threat alert to the highest level for the first time.

Elsewhere, Japan's foreign ministry issued a travel alert for its citizens, urging them to take caution in Europe. "An official at the ministry in Japan said the highly unusual warning was not prompted by any specific intelligence but by the previous British and American alerts" (*Telegraph*).

Meanwhile, security tightened at European airports, train stations and tourist attractions, though neither France nor Germany raised their national threat levels.

In fact, German authorities played down the terror warnings as "alarmist." Still, the chairman of Germany's main police union said that more than 100 dangerous Islamic extremists are in Germany, with about 40 trained in explosives, and some having battle experience in Afghanistan. "This is very dangerous for us," he added (*Reuters*).

The nation's interior ministry urged Europeans to remain realistic about the terror risk and not to go overboard.

German news magazine *Der Spiegel* said the U.S. news media broadcasting "allegedly concrete warnings is negligent," and called the substance of the warnings "ridiculous."

Likewise, left-leaning German newspaper *Die Tageszeitung* stated, "Terror is the same as fear, which can come without any attacks. We shouldn't take part in this."

A center-left German news publication warned, "Terrorism thrives on the spreading of fear, and level-headedness can be a weapon against the scaremongers."

Die Welt addressed the dilemma U.S. officials faced: "Cry wolf one too many times and you are in the wrong. Don't cry wolf enough and you are also in the wrong. The same goes for terrorism and terrorist alarms. Terrorism is a fight by a weaker group against a stronger one and one of the terrorists' intentions is the spread of fear, thereby tearing apart the fabric of everyday life—that is, civilization."

About two weeks after America's warning, Saudi Arabia cautioned that France should expect an impending terrorist attack from al-Qaeda in the

Arabian Peninsula—from the radical Islamic group responsible for sending the "Christmas-day bomber," a young Nigerian man who tried to detonate an explosive while on board a plane from Amsterdam to Detroit on December 25, 2009.

What Islamic Terrorists Want

The United States has long been accused of siding with Israel over Arab and Muslim interests in the Middle East. This (according to politically correct thinking) is reason enough for deadly hostility from radical Islamic believers.

Consider excerpts from a sermon by Muhammad Badi, supreme guide in the Muslim Brotherhood, an extremist organization, as translated by the Middle East Media Research Institute.

First, the sermon chastises Arab and Muslim regimes for not doing enough: "Moreover, they are disregarding Allah's commandment to wage jihad for His sake with [their] money and [their] lives, so that Allah's word will reign supreme and infidels' word will be inferior..."

Next, it broadens the meaning of "jihad" beyond the commonly accepted definition of "internal, individual, spiritual struggle toward self-improvement": "They [Muslims] crucially need to understand that the improvement and change that the [Muslim] nation seeks can only be attained through jihad and sacrifice and *by raising a jihadi generation that pursues death just as the enemies pursue life*" (emphasis added).

The sermon calls for Muslims to unite by centering their lives on one goal and purpose: "Resistance is the only solution against the Zio-American arrogance and tyranny, and all we need is for the Arab Muslim peoples to stand behind it and support it."

Then, perhaps "smelling blood in the water" regarding America's national decline, the sermon continues: "... the factors that will lead to the collapse of the U.S. are much more powerful than those that led to the collapse of the Soviet empire—for a nation that does not champion moral and human values cannot lead humanity...The U.S.

is now experiencing the beginning of its end, and is heading towards its demise..."

But what about Europe? Why would Islamic extremists conspire to launch deadly orchestrated terror attacks in at least three EU member nations?

Consider excerpts from an October 2010 article—"Why Do Radical Muslims Want to Kill Europeans?"—by Khaled Abu Toameh:

■ "The Europeans are being targeted for the same reason the Americans are: for being 'infidels' and enemies of Islam and for the Western values they present. They are being targeted because of their failure to transform into Islamic countries."

■ "Al-Qaeda was established with one goal in mind: to defeat all the non-believers, including the US and its Arab, Muslim and Western allies. Bin Laden and his friends want to kill Europeans not because of settlement construction in the West Bank, or the blockade on the Gaza Strip; they want to kill Europeans because Europeans are not Muslims and have different values."

■ "The only connection between the Muslim terrorists and the Middle East conflict is their dreams of destroying Israel. They want to destroy Israel not because they love the Palestinians, but because they regard Jews as 'infidels.' They want to destroy Israel because they believe that all of Palestine is Muslim-owned land that belongs only to Muslims."

In the mindset of Muslim extremists, Europe is a continent of unbelievers. It's as simple as that. They believe that those who do not bow to Allah have no rights—except the "right" to not exist! In fact, this can be said of virtually *any* group of religious extremists, regardless of the deity they worship.

Again, what might Europe do if—or *when*—it suffers its own "9/11"?

The European Union is currently a collection of 27 member-states, with each country seeking to retain its sovereignty and unique national identity, culture and language. Largely a secular-driven government bureaucracy,



■ **THE DAY AFTER:** Newspapers across the nation marked the day America received a monumental, life-changing wake-up call.

PHOTO: MCT

it is slowly, but surely, striving to become a considerable counterweight to American, Russian and Chinese interests on the world stage.

Yet, as history has shown, just one traumatic event can change the course of a nation overnight. Just look at the United States.

After two hijacked jetliners brought down New York's twin towers, and another jetliner purposely crashed into the Pentagon, and yet another (perhaps bound for the White House) crashed into a remote Pennsylvania field, America changed. For a few short weeks, people stopped and considered. The public's general animosity toward police officers, firefighters and other uniformed authority figures changed for the better.

Sadly, this was temporary.

In the post-September 11 age of today, Washington has waged an

unprecedented "war on terror," sending troops to fight in Afghanistan—toppling a totalitarian government in Iraq and exporting democracy and the concept of equal rights and freedoms to a culture that has known only brutal regimes and secret police—expanding the executive powers of the Oval Office far beyond the limits the Founding Fathers originally intended—all in the name of "keeping America safe."

Why assume that an undivided Europe would not do the same—or even more? Men's governments have a tendency to justify the means if these achieve the desired ends. This is a tendency as old as ancient Rome itself.

After removing the yoke of successive kings, Rome declared itself a republic. Anyone who even appeared to be positioning himself as the next king met a particularly nasty death. Yet in times of crisis—when the republic

seemed to stagger on the brink of destruction—Rome installed certain men into the office of dictator, to swiftly and effectively accomplish what democratic bureaucracy could not. The office was meant to be temporary...but it eventually became permanent.

What happened to the ancient Europeans *then* appears likely to repeat with modern Europe *today*. Could a crisis or perhaps a series of crises of unprecedented peril trigger certain key events into sequence?

Following the historical pattern, a single secular leader, receiving the reins of executive power, will unite Europe into a socio-politico-economic-military power, which will dwarf previous superpowers. This "New Europe" will do whatever it takes to protect itself from religious terrorists—or from anyone else it deems a threat to its interests. □



French Youth Fuel Riots

Behind the Chaos

BY GREG E. K Aidannek

THROWING BOTTLES, toting signs and blocking streets, angry high school students joined more than 1 million trade union workers from 250 towns and cities in protests that have sparked transportation shutdowns across France.

The reason for their rage? French President Nicolas Sarkozy's pension reform bill. The legislation raises the retirement age from 60 to 62 years of age and increases the full state pension age from 65 to 67.

In the Paris suburb of Nanterre, rioters destroyed vehicles, smashed bus stops and hurled rocks. Police retaliated by firing tear gas and rubber bullets.

More than 1,500 people were arrested.

Many high school youth said they are protesting because they believe they will not be able to find employment once the retirement age law goes into effect, *The Globe and Mail* reported.

"All of us want to get good jobs," a boy who skipped school to protest told the paper. "I will have to study for a long time and I don't want to be out of work when I graduate. That would be a big waste of time."

Other youth claim the decision could also have future implications on their ability to take longer vacations and result in the elimination of state subsidized healthcare, with *Daily Mail* reporting that one student even declared he would storm the Senate, if necessary. "The government has pushed us to

the brink and has threatened our entire future," he said.

Student protests are one of the biggest concerns to the French government, said Jean-Francois Cope, a Sarkozy supporter and member of the French National Assembly. In 2006, labor legislation, which allowed youth to be fired more easily, prompted some of the country's most widespread riots by students demanding that then-Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin rescind the law.

"I am very concerned because when students take to the streets, there is always a risk of serious problems," Mr. Cope told a French radio station. "Students should understand the reforms are being made for them" (*ibid.*).

■ **FRANCE UNRAVELS:** French youth in Lyon (above) run away in front of anti-riot police. Youth in Bordeaux (next page, top left), including high school students, demonstrate over the government's plan to raise France's retirement age from 60 to 62. Rioters in Nanterre, a western suburb of Paris, clash with police (top right), destroying vehicles (bottom right).



Nationwide fuel shortages have shut down schools and oil refineries, and virtually paralyzed traffic. Just under 4,000 gas stations of 13,000 countrywide are awaiting supplies. The nation's busiest airport, Roissy-Charles de Gaulle, was forced to cancel 30 percent of its flights, while Paris Orly canceled 50 percent. Airport employees have been told they must walk to work and many travelers have had to transport their own luggage.

According to *Daily Mail*, France has "less than 100 days of oil stocks" and "the government is already drawing the 30-day emergency reserves." Because of the shortages, several planes were forced to take off without enough fuel to reach their destinations.

The unrest has triggered concern that France could face a large-scale revolt against the government, as happened in May 1968 when millions of student protestors threatened to restart

the French Revolution and overthrow President Charles de Gaulle.

French Labor Minister Eric Woerth said the government's plan will save the nation billions and is the only way to assure that citizens—including the students protesting—will receive their pensions in years to come.

"This reform is essential," President Sarkozy said. "France is committed to it. France will carry it out..." (*Agence France-Presse*).

Yet according to a French research poll, up to 70 percent of the population supports the protests. This prompts the questions: Where does this attitude of entitlement come from? How does a country plagued by such a mindset hope to survive?

"...This week's uproar in France symbolizes a financial reality that many advanced nations will have to face," a *Christian Science Monitor* editorial stated. "Economic hard times in the wake of a deep recession are

coinciding with long-run fiscal challenges that require politically difficult choices. Whether the country is America or France, there's more fuel for potential social unrest than there was five years ago."

In 2005, *The Real Truth* magazine reported on the reason behind such an attitude—and the main reason France is experiencing the kind of violence it is.

"Civilization today pictures a humanity that takes to itself whatever it wants—and is willing to hurt others in unimaginable ways just to satisfy lusts. Clearly, human nature—with its selfishness, violence and brutality—plagues mankind. And it particularly rears its ugly head when people are under extreme duress."

France is not the first to experience such violent behavior from its youth—and will certainly not be the last. To learn of the *real* cause behind the riots, read our article "HUMAN NATURE – Exposed!" □

THANKSGIVING

Continued from page 10

the colony called for the celebration of a day of thanksgiving.

In the late 1700s, during the American Revolution, the Continental Congresses suggested the yearly observance of a day of national thanksgiving, in hopes to unite factious states.

In 1817, the state of New York adopted Thanksgiving Day as an annual holiday. By the mid-1800s, other states likewise adopted the practice. In 1863, President Lincoln appointed it as a national holiday, and gave a Thanksgiving proclamation. Each president since then has issued a proclamation, announcing the celebration of this day.

Is Thanksgiving Day Biblical?

In examining the origins of popular holidays, some may wonder if Thanksgiving Day is a biblical holiday, or whether it is rooted in paganism, as some have claimed.

Though not specifically mentioned in the Bible, Thanksgiving is different from most other national holidays. In fact, many nations celebrate their own unique harvest festivals. Deceived by Satan (Rev. 12:9), the world at large is cut off from the true God. Therefore, it should not be surprising that even such harvest festivals occasionally become tainted with the worship of heathen deities. Although such ancient festivals were usually influenced by paganism, history shows Thanksgiving Day as practiced in North America was unique. The originators of this day focused upon giving thanks for an abundant harvest, sorely needed for survival.

Being centered on giving thanks to the Creator is a major distinction in origin that separates Thanksgiving Day from holidays tainted with pagan origins, such as Easter, Valentine's Day, Christmas or Halloween. (Refer to our booklet *God's Holy Days or Pagan Holidays?*)

But does God allow Christians to participate in holidays even if they are not associated with paganism?

To find the answer, we must examine God's Word—the Holy Bible. God has allowed the recording of certain scriptural accounts so that those who diligently search it can find the answers to their questions.

John 10:22 records Jesus Christ being present at a Jewish celebration called the "Feast of Dedication." This day was a yearly anniversary of the purification of the Temple at Jerusalem (in about 165 BC) after it was desecrated by Antiochus Epiphanes. This was not a day of riotous parties or celebrations. It was a national holiday commemorating a respectable and solemn event. This account clearly shows that Christ Himself was with the Jews as they gave thanks to God on this special day.

In the book of Esther, we read that through the inspiration of God, Mordecai and Esther established the "Feast of Purim." This day was a yearly commemoration of the Jews overcoming persecution from Haman, the prime minister of King Ahasuerus.

Notice Mordecai's and Esther's proclamation, confirming the keeping of this day: "And that these days should be remembered and kept throughout every generation, every family, every province, and every city; and that these days of Purim should not fail from among the Jews, nor the memorial of them perish from their seed. Then Esther the queen, the daughter of Abihail, and Mordecai the Jew, wrote with all authority, to confirm this second letter of Purim" (9:28-29).

These days were not to be observed with the same degree of honor and reverence as God's Holy Days, which represent specific parts of His Master Plan of salvation. Rather, these celebrations were simply for remembering important national events.

The examples of Christ, Mordecai and Esther show that God permits that customs commemorating honorable moments in national history be kept—but *only* if they are kept in control, done in a proper manner and kept free of any pagan influence!

Although not *directly* mentioned in Scripture, Thanksgiving Day *is* a

holiday specifically based on *biblical* principles and commands. It was to be a day to spend with family and friends, honoring and *thanking* God for the bountiful blessings He provides.

King David wrote in the Psalms, "Let us come before His presence *with thanksgiving*, and make a joyful noise unto Him with psalms" (95:2). "Enter into His gates with *thanksgiving*, and into His courts with praise: be thankful unto Him, and bless His name" (100:4). And, "O give *thanks* unto the LORD, for He is good: for His mercy endures forever...Oh that men would praise the LORD for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men! For He satisfies the longing soul, and fills the hungry soul with goodness" (107:1, 8-9).

The apostle Paul wrote, "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication *with thanksgiving* let your requests be made known *unto God*" (Phil. 4:6). He also said, "*Giving thanks* always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. 5:20).

These great servants of God gave thanks, and recorded their examples for us to follow today. Thanksgiving should be done regularly. In fact, God even **COMMANDS** that we do so.

Sacrifices of Thanksgiving

In the Old Testament, God's people were required to sacrifice animals (such as lambs, rams, goats, etc.), and offer them as burnt offerings to Him. These sacrifices took place in conjunction with repentance for sins, and asking for God's forgiveness. Sacrifices took place regularly, and served as a constant reminder of obedience toward God.

Yet God did not require sacrifices because it pleased Him. In fact, it was done to picture the *ultimate* sacrifice that was yet to come—Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God (John 1:29). At Christ's death, the ritualistic practices that were part of the Old Covenant were done away. Christ's sacrifice and shed blood truly washed away humanity's penalty for sins—death.

Today, God *still* requires the offering of a certain kind of sacrifice.

Psalms states, “I will offer to You the *sacrifice of thanksgiving*, and will call upon the name of the LORD” (116:17), and, “Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats? Offer unto God *thanksgiving*; and pay your vows unto the most High” (50:13-14).

These verses clearly explain that God has no need of “the flesh of bulls, or the blood of goats” that would be offered in a sacrifice. Instead, He wants us to offer Him sacrifices of thanksgiving and praise!

David understood this, and even appointed certain Levite priests the specific duty of thanking and praising God: “And he appointed certain of the Levites to minister before the ark of the LORD, and to record, and to *thank* and *praise* the LORD God of Israel” (I Chron. 16:4). Chapter 23 of I Chronicles further explains the Levites’ duties. Verse 30 states that they were to “stand every morning to thank and praise the LORD, and likewise at even.”

Today, God wants—and expects—from us these same sacrifices of thanksgiving through our actions and prayers. Recall what Paul wrote: “Giving thanks *always* for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Eph. 5:20). Paul further explains, “Rejoice evermore. *Pray* without ceasing. In everything give *thanks*: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you” (I Thes. 5:16-18).

This is how we can give thanks to God each and every day! To be effective, our thanksgiving must be spontaneous and from the heart, rather than an expression of routine formality. Our article “The Keys to Dynamic Prayer” provides helpful points in how to properly and effectively praise God.

The book of Daniel records a valuable lesson regarding learning to acknowledge God’s power. King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, leader of one of the most powerful Gentile kingdoms ever, believed that he had strength and wealth because of his actions. The king failed to realize that this power came from God—and His mighty hand directing world events and the flow of history. Because of Nebuchadnezzar’s

ingratitude, God caused him to become as a wild animal, roaming the countryside and eating grass. This pagan king lived as a madman for seven years (Dan. 4:27-33).

Finally, at the end of King Nebuchadnezzar’s life, he learned his lesson. Notice this sobering and insightful account: “And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High [God], and I praised and honored Him that lives forever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation: And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and He does according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What do You?” (vs. 34-35).

“Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and His ways judgment: and those that walk in pride He is able to abase” (vs. 37).

Pride, arrogance and ingratitude prevented Nebuchadnezzar from grasping the full scope of God’s power. But through his trial, his pride was broken—and he came to see how puny and weak he and his kingdom actually were in comparison to God. If we do not acknowledge God’s might—as this Gentile king did at the end of his life—and thank Him for it, then this account of Nebuchadnezzar should be taken as a personal warning!

The Ultimate Gift Giver

The pilgrims could never have imagined that America would become the global superpower it is today. The U.S. has continuously been at the forefront of economic prosperity, medical science, technology, food production, sanitation, architecture and space exploration. Its citizens enjoy the freedoms of religion and speech. It allows individuals and families to emigrate from other countries, and enjoy these liberties. It is usually the first country—if not the only one—supporting other nations and peoples in need. And the

income and standard of living for most Americans is still relatively high compared to other industrialized nations, though significantly less than its peak of about five decades ago.

Yet Americans seem to have forgotten *where* these blessings came from!

Consider: “The silver is *Mine*, and the gold is *Mine*, says the LORD of hosts” (Hag. 2:8). Exodus 19 records, “Now therefore, if you will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then you shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people: *for all the earth is Mine*” (vs. 5).

A quick reading of the Bible shows that God owns EVERYTHING! He gives. He also takes away.

James 1:17 further states, “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from *above*, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom is no *variableness*, neither shadow of turning.” There are no variables with God; He does not change.

The apostle James makes his point by comparing God’s promise of blessings to the source of the earth’s physical light—the sun. Depending on the time of day, cloud coverage and other deciding factors, the amount of light reaching the earth’s surface varies. For example, a tree, mountain or building may block light, which creates a shadow; smog and exhaust can cause less sunlight in a city.

However, variables do not apply to God. His goodness and blessings do not change from one day to the next, depending on His mood, cloud coverage or temperature. While there are conditions to receiving blessings, His promise of showering gifts for obedience is forever—*constant*—UNCHANGING!

Look at the world around you. If you live in the U.S., or another Western country, you enjoy many blessings that other nations do not. Although many live relatively comfortable and peaceful lives, many dangers come with this.

Notice Moses’ grave warning: “Then *beware lest you forget the LORD*, which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage”

(Deut. 6:12). Moses understood—and warned—that when people receive much, it is in their nature to become ungrateful and arrogant, and forget the SOURCE of their blessings—God!

Christ's admonition in Luke 12:48 has been ignored: "For unto whomsoever much is *given*, of him shall be much *required*."

But not for long. Society will soon be caught unaware, like "a thief in the night."

America the Strong?

Because of the mighty promises God made to the patriarch Abraham millennia ago, the descendants of ancient Israel have never been part of the "brotherhood of poverty" so many in the Third World are in. (David C. Pack's book *America and Britain in Prophecy* explains this in greater detail.) It has never had to face the grim prospects of continuous famine or pestilences sweeping our countryside, or many hundreds dying on domestic soil.

Nevertheless, this same national power, prestige and wealth have caused many to become blind to *where* these blessings originated. The general national attitude is one of arrogance and pride, no longer feeling the need to show gratitude toward God the Provider. Although Thanksgiving Day is celebrated yearly, the practice of giving thanks—as the pilgrims had originally intended—has all but disappeared!

In 1974, a Senate member proposed a resolution to declare April 30 as a "National Day of Humiliation, Fasting and Prayer." The purpose of this day was to repent for "national sins," modeled after Abraham Lincoln's 1863 "Proclamation Appointing a National Fast Day." (Interestingly enough, President Lincoln believed that the Civil War was punishment for the nation's sins. To receive forgiveness from God, he issued this national day of fasting—much like the king of Nineveh did in the book of Jonah, chapter 3.)

However, the resolution was overturned. Members of the House, and even some of the Senate, did not

approve of using the word "humiliation." Many cynics equated the term "repent for national sins" to Americans feeling sorry or ashamed for the wealth and prosperity of the nation. The purpose of the resolution, as originally introduced by President Lincoln, was ignored—even ridiculed. The cynics concluded that there was no need to repent for *anything*!

If that was the world in 1974, one can only imagine how much worse this nation has become—decades later!

In 1630, John Winthrop, the first governor of Massachusetts, gave a moving speech titled "A Model of Christian Charity" to the passengers of the 350-ton sailing vessel, the *Arbella*. Winthrop believed that through humility toward God, they would prosper.

He said, "We must uphold a familiar commerce together in all meekness, gentleness, patience and liberality. We must delight in each other; make other's conditions our own; rejoice together, mourn together, labor and suffer together, always having before our eyes our commission and community in the work, as members of the same body. So shall we keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. The Lord will be our God...and will command a blessing upon us in all our way. So that we shall see much more of his wisdom, power, goodness and truth, than formerly we have been acquainted with. We shall find that the God of Israel is among us, when ten of us shall be able to resist a thousand of our enemies..."

"For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us. So that if we shall deal falsely with our God in this work we have undertaken, and so cause Him to *withdraw His present help from us*, we shall be made a *story* and a *by-word* through the world..." (*Colonial American History*, emphasis added).

These are strong words. They accurately portray the condition of our nation today!

The Bible foretells that because America has forgotten God—and dealt "falsely with Him"—no longer recognizing that He is the great Provider, He will "withdraw His present help from

us." The very blessings now taken for granted by so many will be stripped away. Millions will go into a time of great suffering because of the dangerous and deadly sin of ingratitude. Only through God's great mercy will this country avoid becoming "a story and a by-word through the world." (Again, to learn more about the prophetic identity of the U.S. and United Kingdom, read *America and Britain in Prophecy*.)

Carefully read and soberly reflect on the many prophecies describing this terrible time of national punishment.

But this need not include you! *You* can avoid being one of the perpetrators of this national shortcoming and *sin*.

Making Thanksgiving Meaningful

To most nations, the concept of celebrating Thanksgiving Day is viewed as a holiday that is meaningful for North Americans, although certain other nations have similar harvest festivals.

However, the act of thanksgiving toward God should be done everywhere—everyday—by everyone! It is not just an American holiday; neither should it be limited to one day a year.

As Thanksgiving Day approaches, ponder and consider the many wonderful blessings you enjoy. Be grateful for these wonderful benefits. (To learn more, read our article "The Sin of Ingratitude.") Realize that these material blessings were not given to us because of anything we have done—we do not deserve them. God has bestowed them on us—simply because of His mercy, and His promise to Abraham, the father of the faithful (Gal. 3:6-9).

Before you and your family enjoy Thanksgiving dinner, or begin watching a parade or football game, be sure to take time to truly thank God in prayer and thought for the national wealth, power and prestige He has given this nation.

While there is still time, make certain that you and your family are not partaking in the nationwide, unthankful attitude. Be sure to give thanks to God in the same heartfelt, sincere manner that the pilgrims did on the first Thanksgiving in North America! □

ANIMAL

Continued from page 8

be desolate, that no man may pass through because of the beasts...” (14:15).

Make this real in your mind! Although man was meant to have dominion, beasts are prophesied to terrorize him. Why would God allow such horrible things to happen?

Through His prophet Jeremiah, God records the answer: “Wherefore a lion out of the forest shall slay them, and a wolf of the evenings shall spoil them, a leopard shall watch over their cities: every one that goes out thence shall be torn in pieces: because their *transgressions are many*, and their backslidings are increased” (5:6).

The word transgression can also be translated “rebellion.” God says that He will send wild beasts to destroy people because they have rebelled against Him. These beasts are meant as punishment.

The Bible predicts that ferocious animal attacks in the near future will be increasingly used as punishment: “...I will also send the teeth of beasts

upon them, with the poison of serpents of the dust” (Deut. 32:24).

For millennia, man has lived destructively. He has abused the land and mistreated the animals over which God gave him dominion. He has disobeyed God’s laws, and instead corrupted himself by becoming involved with every form of perversion imaginable. This is the reason behind rising animal attacks.

What to Learn

But the increase in animal attacks should point to something else. Although terrible, it is just one of many horrific trends ratcheting up. Think of the earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, violent murders and bizarre weather patterns that have been increasing in the past years. Almost every time the Bible mentions an increase in animal attacks, these events are right alongside them.

Note Revelation 6, when the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse are introduced: “And power was given unto them”—the horsemen—“over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the *beasts of the earth*” (vs. 8).

War, famine and disease will also worsen. Read the verse again, realizing that these trends have the power to kill a fourth of all men. That is one in four people alive today—DEAD!

The impact of these events is expanded in the Olivet Prophecy, where Jesus Christ answered what it will be like during the end time: “For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in diverse places” (Matt. 24:7).

When beast attacks are mentioned in Leviticus, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, the context is also the last days.

Later in the Matthew 24 account, Jesus describes yet another purpose for these prophetic events: “Now learn a parable of the fig tree; when his branch is yet tender, and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is nigh” (vs. 32).

Just as one can observe when the seasons are changing by looking at the trees, these end-time trends—including increased animal attacks—signal mankind is fast approaching the time of the end.

To more fully understand the implications of these events, read our booklet *Are These the Last Days?* □

■ **ON THE LOOSE:** A leopard attacks a person in a residential colony in Nashik, India (Jan. 17, 2007). After going on a rampage in the city, the animal was finally caught.

PHOTO: VIVEK BOKIL/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



PERSONAL

Continued from page 2

“There is a SPIRIT IN MAN; and the inspiration of the Almighty gives them understanding” (32:8). This statement is plain. God reveals that men possess a kind of spirit, called the “spirit in man.” Fully understanding this spirit requires examination of other scriptures describing it.

But before looking into the truth of this matter we must understand and accept what the Bible does *not* say. To do this, we must examine the most popular fallacy taught and believed by countless millions.

Many read verses like the one in Job and conclude it is speaking about *immortal souls*. But is it? Is the phrase “spirit in man” synonymous with an “immortal soul” composed of spirit? Most people do not understand the relationship between men and souls. They assume human beings are born with immortal souls. The popular belief is that upon death the souls of sinners go to hell forever, and those of the just go to heaven forever, since all souls are supposedly immortal. Is this what the Bible teaches?

Romans 6:23 states that “the wages of sin is *death*,” not life in hell. So, does God’s Word somehow also teach that people have immortal souls? It does talk about souls, but in what context?

The Bible does teach there is a connection between men and souls. Notice: “The LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man BECAME a living soul” (Gen. 2:7).

This does not say men *have* souls, but that they *are* souls. Adam BECAME a soul—he was not *given* one. Then, almost immediately, God warned him, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat of it: for in the day that you eat thereof YOU [not just your body] shall surely DIE” (vs. 16-17). When placed together, these three verses reveal that men *are* souls and that souls can *die*!

The prophet Ezekiel confirms Genesis. Twice he recorded, “The soul that sins, it shall *die*” (18:4, 20). Death is the *absence* of life. It is the discontinuance—the cessation—of life. Death is not life in another place.

Finally, on whether the soul can die, notice this: “Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him [God] which is able to *destroy* both *soul* and *body in hell*” (Matt. 10:28).

The Bible says souls can be DESTROYED! According to this verse, they can be destroyed as much as *bodies*. All recognize that bodies eventually die and afterward naturally decompose. They are certainly destroyed due to the process of normal corruption. This verse explains God does the *destroying* of souls IN HELL! Bodies can die in many ways. Souls are destroyed in hell by God.

Let’s consider the soul from another angle. We must be certain.

Human minds are differentiated from animal brains by intelligent thought. Presumably, if the dead are not dead, but are really still alive, then they must be capable of intelligent *thought*. They must at least be conscious of their surroundings. Let’s consider a series of scriptures.

First is: “Put not your trust...in the son of man...His breath goes forth, he returns to his earth; in that very day *his thoughts perish*” (Psa. 146:3-4). When people die, their thoughts end immediately—“in that very day.” This verse is not compatible with the souls of the dead consciously suffering in a place of torment—or that souls are conscious in heaven. For instance, if the wicked are suffering in hell, they do not have *knowledge* they are. They are unaware of what is happening to them. We could ask: what kind of suffering is that?

The next verse is more direct: “For the living know that they shall die: *but the dead know not anything...*” (Ecc. 9:5). To the honest reader, there is no possible way to mistake the meaning here!

This is because, as Solomon stated, “That which befalls the sons of men

befalls beasts; even one thing befalls them: *as the one dies, so dies the other*; yes, they have all one breath; so that *a man has no preeminence above a beast...All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again*” (Ecc. 3:19-20).

Now another verse: “The dead praise not the LORD, neither *any* that go down *into silence*” (Psa. 115:17). Death involves “silence.” This does not square with the popular concept of millions of the souls of the dead wailing and screaming in agony. This would hardly be the sound of SILENCE! And, if the souls of some of the dead go to heaven, we could ask, why are these not audibly praising God?

Psalms 6:5 adds that the dead experience no conscious memory: “For in death there is *no remembrance of You*: in the grave who shall give You thanks?” Could anyone seriously suggest that souls in heaven could perhaps experience human memories *but not be aware of God*—not “REMEMBER HIM”? Be honest. Most people never read their bibles.

You are now ready to discover what almost *no one* understands. While man is composed of flesh, he has a *non-physical* component, the spirit in man, which can only be known of by what God has revealed in His Holy Word.

Understand that man is made of physical matter—flesh. John 4:24 reveals that God is Spirit. God had to have a way for Himself (Spirit) to be able to work with and communicate with man (flesh). Later, we will understand more about the vital spirit connection between God and humans, and how it works.

Now this passage: “...the LORD... stretches forth the heavens, and lays the foundation of the earth, *and forms the spirit of man within him*” (Zech. 12:1). It is God who creates, designs and “forms” the spirit of man in each human being. All people possess this spirit. Notice: “The LORD, the God of *the spirits of all flesh*” (Num. 27:16). The One who creates all the spirits in men calls Himself the God of these spirits.

All physical creatures—men and animals—eventually die. Consider

again: “A man has no preeminence above a beast...All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again. Who knows the *spirit of man* that goes upward, and the spirit of the beast that goes downward to the earth?” (Ecc. 3:19-21). Solomon is not saying there is a spirit in beasts, but rather asks rhetorically, “Who knows?” Many verses reveal there is a spirit in man, but men are ignorant of this truth and of whether *animals* also have some kind of spirit. This verse shows that it cannot be talking about mere breath, plainly something different.

Now notice this astonishing verse. The apostle Paul wrote, “For what man knows the things of a man, save [by] the *spirit of man* which is in him? Even so the things of God knows no man, but [by] the *Spirit of God*” (I Cor. 2:11).

Do not try to “interpret” this scripture. Accept it for what it says. It interprets itself. This passage identifies two kinds of spirit—the *Spirit of God* and the *spirit of man*. They are not the same. Each provides a different function in acquiring knowledge, and this verse identifies how.

Human knowledge (“the things of a man”) is acquired because God has given men a *human* spirit. Paul’s inspired statement also makes clear that spiritual knowledge (“the things of God”) can only be acquired by the presence of the *Spirit of God*. This very knowledge—that these two spirits exist and how they work—is in itself amazing knowledge! Think of it this way. Virtually no one has the knowledge about *HOW* either *physical* or *spiritual* knowledge is acquired!

Now recall Job’s statement, “There is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty gives them understanding” (32:8). Job said exactly what Paul said. He identified this spirit, while distinguishing spiritual understanding (or knowledge) as something that comes from God—“the Almighty”—through His “inspiration.” This happens through the indwelling of the Spirit of God in converted minds.

Animals do not have the spirit in man. Animal *brains* are different

from human *minds*. Humans are given this spirit from conception, allowing them, through use of the five senses, to acquire and retain knowledge. Without this unseen spirit element, mankind would be just another dumb beast. But he has been given the power to acquire, retain and use knowledge for all kinds of purposes.

All human beings were created by God to receive two entirely different spirits. One comes at conception, and the other by completely different means—repentance and baptism. Without the Spirit of God, people are *incomplete*. Their existence remains limited to what they can acquire on their own—without God’s help. Vast amounts of *spiritual* knowledge remain beyond reach. Though their ability to acquire physical knowledge is beyond that of brute beasts, they cannot attain any of this other marvelous understanding.

Let’s learn more about how the Spirit of God works with the human spirit in *converted minds*. Proverbs 20:27 offers crucial insight: “The *spirit of man* is the candle of the LORD, searching all the inward parts of the belly.” Think of this verse in the following way: God can work within a physical brain—communicating with and inspiring it—by means of, or through use of, the non-physical component of the spirit in man.

Consider one example of how God can work through the human spirit. It illustrates an important principle. The setting involves King Cyrus of Persia. God wanted him to permit others to return to Jerusalem and build a second temple to replace Solomon’s, which had been destroyed: “...that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD *stirred up the spirit* of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom” (Ezra 1:1).

God communicated with Cyrus through (by “stirring up”) his *spirit*. He does the same today. Now we examine another crucial scripture. It adds a new dimension to the verses we have read about how the spirit in man works.

In the *converted* mind, both the Spirit of God and the spirit in man are present. They work together—with one another: “*The Spirit* itself bears witness *WITH our* spirit, that we are the children of God” (Rom. 8:16). This is fascinating. The converted person is different from animals in two distinct ways.

Recognize that science could *never* learn what you just saw!

Now consider an additional point. From the very moment you are converted, purchased by the blood of Christ, God owns you: “For you are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in *your spirit*, which are God’s” (I Cor. 6:20). God has literal ownership of your spirit—and it is His to work with.

It is critical to understand the character-building process at work in the converted mind and how it involves the human spirit. Notice: “He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that rules *his spirit* than he that takes a city” (Prov. 16:32).

Self-control—temperance—is listed as a fruit of the Spirit of God in Galatians 5:23. When placed together, these verses show that only through the Spirit of God working with the spirit in man is temperance built!

At the end of the converted person’s life, God returns the human spirit to Himself. In it He has preserved a complete, detailed record of all that pertained to the life of that individual. This is the plain statement of Scripture. Notice: “The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God *your whole spirit* and soul and body be *preserved* blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (I Thes. 5:23).

The spirit, soul and body represent all that was the person. The personality, experiences, accumulated knowledge and character of each human being is reflected in the human spirit—the spirit in man.

This is why this spirit returns to God at death: “Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and *the spirit* shall return unto God who gave it” (Ecc. 12:7). At death, the human spirit returns to God, the One who formed

and placed it in the mind. Recall this: “Who knows the *spirit of man* that goes upward, and the spirit of the beast that goes downward to the earth?” (Ecc. 3:21). Now *you* know what few others know—that human spirits *do* return to God—upward.

The deacon Stephen understood. As he was being stoned to death for preaching a powerful sermon that antagonized his listeners, the Bible records, “They stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, *receive my spirit*. And he knelt down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell *asleep*” (Acts 7:59-60). Stephen died (“fell asleep”) knowing God would receive his spirit and it would reunite with him, we will learn, at the Resurrection.

Now we are ready for more key verses. They are the capstone that explains the “preservation” of all human spirits and exactly where God keeps them. Let’s understand: “But you are come unto mount Zion [speaking of those who do this in prayer], and unto the city of the living God, *the heavenly Jerusalem*, and to an innumerable com-

pany of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to *the spirits of just men made perfect*” (Heb. 12:22-23). This is an incredible passage. The “God of all spirits” (of all “just men made perfect”) keeps them with Him, until the Resurrection.

It is in heaven—the heavenly Jerusalem—where the spirits of all God’s saints from the last 6,000 years are held—are *preserved* intact—awaiting the “coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

We need to at least mention one other kind of spirit. Paul wrote to the Ephesian church about the power of the devil and his influence upon the world: “In time past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the *prince of the POWER of the air*, the *spirit* that now works in the *children of disobedience*” (Eph. 2:2).

Besides the Spirit of God and the spirit in man, note that the devil is a spirit. He is part of the angelic realm of spirits, consisting of faithful angels and demons (fallen angels).

Notice verse 2 states Satan’s “SPIRIT...works in the children of disobedience.” The devil is a spirit and he has POWER—through *his spirit*—to influence humanity toward disobedience! His spirit sends moods, feelings and attitudes of hostility into people’s minds, bringing disobedience. The devil has enormous power of INFLUENCE, allowing him to send thoughts of deceit, anger, pride, hatred, greed, envy and more, directly into people’s thinking!

For more on these subjects, read our eye-opening booklets *Did God Create Human Nature?* and *Who Is the Devil?* They present fascinating knowledge known to so few.

Satan, as this world’s god (read II Corinthians 4:4), has seduced the masses of supposed Christianity into rejecting God’s supreme purpose, involving obedience to Him—so that they can follow the permissive *false* christ, so popularly worshipped and believed today, to a *false* salvation.

To learn more, watch the two-part *World to Come* broadcast series “The Human Mind—What None Can Discover” at www.worldtocome.org. □

MISSING DIMENSION?

Your mind contains a dimension that cannot be understood or discovered by any process or experiment known to science.

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HEALTH ISSUES

Whooping Cough Epidemic Worst in 50 Years

Cases of whooping cough in California could reach their highest level in 50 years, according to the California Department of Public Health (CDPH). Ten infants have already died of the bacterial lung infection in 2010.

“This is the most cases reported in 60 years when 6,613 cases were reported in 1950 and the highest incidence in 51 years when a rate of 16.1 cases/100,000 was reported in 1959,” CDPH stated.

“Previously, the peak was in 2005 when there were 3,182 cases reported” (ibid.).

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), outbreaks occur frequently, with epidemics happening every three to five years. But the epidemic in California is quickly becoming one of the worst yet.

“From January to September 28, 2010, more than 4,400 cases of pertussis (including nine infant deaths) were reported throughout California,” the CDC reported. “This is the most cases reported in 55 years when 4,949 cases were reported in 1955 and the highest incidence in 48 years when a rate of 10.9 cases/100,000 was reported in 1962.”

Whooping cough, or pertussis, is a contagious respiratory disease spread through the air by coughs and sneezes. It involves violent coughing and vom-



■ **BOOSTER SHOT:** A Touro University medical student administers a Tdap vaccination for whooping cough during the Solano County health fair in Vallejo, Calif. (Aug. 11, 2010).

PHOTO: JUSTIN SULLIVAN/GETTY IMAGES

iting, and its sufferers often make a “whooping” sound as they gasp for air. The highly contagious bacterial illness is especially fatal for infants or children less than one year old, whose tiny air passages may not be able to take in enough oxygen.

State law requires all public school students to be immunized and health authorities strongly urge the elderly, children and pregnant women to also get vaccinated.

California is not the only state that has been affected by the epidemic.

“While many believe that the disease is relatively rare in the United States, especially after the introduction of the vaccine in the 1940s, cases of whooping cough rose steadily from the 1980s to 2005, especially among teens and babies less than 6 months old... In 2008 there were more than 13,000 cases of whooping cough, 18 of which were fatal, in the United States...” *ABC News* reported.

According to health officials, the number of cases in 2010 so far is 400 percent higher than in 2009. □

New “Superbug” Gene Causing Global Concern

A gene that turns any bacteria into a powerful antibiotic-resistant “superbug” has been detected in patients of various countries including the United States, Australia, Canada, Britain, Sweden and the Netherlands. Scientists fear the gene, New Delhi metallo-beta-lactamase (NDM-1), which is believed to have originated in India, will spread around the world.

NDM occurrence in Western nations is connected to “medical tourism,” or people traveling abroad “to find less

costly medical treatments, particularly for procedures such as cosmetic surgery” (*Reuters*). Common symptoms include urinary tract infections and pneumonia.

“Doctors have tried treating some of these cases with combinations of antibiotics, hoping that will be more effective than individual ones...Some have resorted to using polymyxins—antibiotics used in the 1950s and ‘60s that were unpopular because they can harm the kidneys” (*The Associated Press*).

“What is different about NDM so far is the genetic background is very variable,” a professor of medicine at Case Western Reserve University told *The Washington Post*, adding, “It’s in many different organisms. There seems to be an unpredictable manner in which it’s moving around.”

A *Lancet Infectious Disease* journal study warns, “The potential of NDM-1 to be a worldwide public health problem is great, and co-ordinated international surveillance is needed.” □

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

Canadian Judge Overturns Prostitution Laws

In a landmark decision, an Ontario Superior Court judge overturned three of Canada's anti-prostitution laws, ruling them unconstitutional.

While prostitution between consenting adults in private is legal in the country, three areas—including communicating in public for the purpose of prostitution, operation of brothels, and third parties living off sex trade profits—are criminal offenses by federal law.

The new ruling, however, permits “pimping, soliciting and running brothels,” the *Guardian* reported.

The Canadian Press quoted Justice Susan Himel's ruling that laws criminalizing these aspects of prostitution “are not in accord with the principles of fundamental justice,” and that they “individually and together, force prostitutes to choose between their liberty, interest and their right to security of the person as protected under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.”

The *Guardian* said the ruling calls on the “country's lawmakers and police to regulate [the] sex trade instead of outlawing it.”

According to *CBC News Canada*, Justice Himel was aware of the likely fallout of her ruling.

“...[A] consequence of this decision may be that unlicensed brothels may be operated, and in a way that may not be in the public interest,” she wrote.

After the judgment, the Ontario Attorney General's Office told *CBC News Canada* that “the prostitution provisions of the Criminal Code are constitutional and valid and designed to prevent individuals, and particularly young people, from being drawn into prostitution, to protect our communities from the negative impacts of street prostitution and to ensure that those who control, coerce or abuse prostitutes are held accountable for their actions.”

Even with the ruling, the lawyer who handled the plaintiffs' case did not believe the decision would change the face of prostitution. “...[W]hat's happened is that there's still going to be many people on the streets and many survival sex workers who are motivated by drugs and sometimes exploited by very bad men. That's not going to change,” he said (*ibid.*).

In reaction to the judgment, Department of Justice Minister Rob Nicholson said in a public statement, “We will fight to ensure that the criminal law continues to address the significant harms that flow from prostitution to both communities and the prostitutes themselves, along with other vulnerable persons.” He also indicated that the government was considering appealing the decision.

According to *The Canadian Press*, the court's decision is scheduled to take effect in late October, and then only in the province of Ontario. □

ENVIRONMENT

Florida Trees Dying at Alarming Rate

An infestation of redbay ambrosia beetles—which carry laurel wilt disease, a fungus lethal to laurel family trees—is rapidly spreading through large areas of Florida.

Experts indicate that this symbiotic duo has the capability to kill 95 percent of bay trees in affected zones. “We had a real bad freeze that killed a lot of large trees and hurricane damage, but nothing insect-wise to this extent,” a local resident told *Daytona Beach News-Journal*.

Many consider fungicide treatment expensive and not very effective, and its longevity is yet to be seen. Regarding efforts to track the beetle, the Florida Agriculture and Consumer Services Commissioner publicly stated, “...finding this tiny insect among the high volume of

other insects and debris in these traps, is like finding a needle in a haystack.”

The pest, which is of Asian origin and presumably entered Georgia in 2002 via contaminated wood packing material, presents a serious economic threat to the agricultural industry. Avocado trees are particularly vulnerable to the invasive fungus.

Authorities are concerned that the pests will devastate the \$13 million avocado industry.

“More than 98% of 7,400 acres of commercial avocado orchards are located in southwestern Miami-Dade County. Most growers depend on proceeds from the sale of avocado to supplement their income, while many packing houses depend

almost exclusively on the crop to sustain their operations. Avocado orchards also offer a variety of non-food benefits, including the retention of open space, landscaping, well-field recharge, and wildlife habitats,” *Science Daily* reported.

In an estimate deemed “conservative,” a leading researcher of the regional impacts of laurel wilt, Dr. Jonathan Crane, told *Science Daily*, “The direct loss to the industry in terms of lost sales, property damage, and increased management costs could range from \$356 million in a do-nothing situation to about \$183 million if damage control measure were 50% effective.”

Sassafras and swamp bay trees are also among the list of species affected by the disease. □

DEBT

Continued from page 5

grams without incurring more debt. For now, there appears to be only one solution: tax hikes.

This comes during a time when the average American family has about \$8,000 in credit card debt—consumer bankruptcy filings rose 11 percent over the previous year between January and September 2010, according to the American Bankruptcy Institute—and the 2009 total for consumer debt was \$2.5 trillion, meaning \$8,051 for every man, woman and child. And higher taxes are already on the horizon, with news headlines dubbing 2011 the “Year of the Tax Increases.” These hikes will come in three phases.

The first phase begins January 2011 with the expiration of the tax relief programs enacted in 2001 and 2003. These include a phasing out of personal exemptions and itemized deductions—the child tax credit being cut in half—the standard deduction for married couples reduced—the care for dependents tax credit being reduced—the return of the estate “death tax” (in which estates over \$1 million will be taxed at 55 percent)—and the capital gains tax increasing from 15 percent to 20 percent.

The second phase includes over 20 new and higher taxes in the recently passed healthcare bill, several of which take effect during the coming year: an increase on taxes of over-the-counter drugs—an excise tax on name-brand drug manufacturers—and an already-in-effect tax for tanning salons.

The third phase affects the business sector and includes the alternative minimum tax (AMT), which will affect over 28 million families as opposed to 4 million last year. This law was written to limit income tax deductions of wealthy Americans. In 1970, 155 Americans paid AMT. Due to inflation, it now affects millions more.

In addition, the amount a small business can claim as an exemption for equipment purchases will be reduced

from \$250,000 to \$25,000, tax credits for research and experimentation will be slashed, classroom expenses for teachers will no longer be eligible for deduction—among many others.

In short, America is in debt \$120 trillion—46 states are running deficit budgets—and there is \$8,051 of debt for every person in the U.S. The nation is truly in dire straits!

Yet this overlooks the most troubling part of the national debt.

Hidden Debt Total

It has been said that desperate times require desperate measures. Given this, some political minds suggest a substantial shift away from democracy toward socialism. Others want to reduce the size of government—meaning serious spending cuts.

Still others, unemployed, wracked with debt and facing foreclosure, see no other choice but to turn to religion—with many Americans considering the phrase written on all U.S. currency to be the answer: “In God We Trust.” These persons point out that the nation was founded on Judeo-Christian principles. They realize that some of the country’s civil laws are outlined in the Bible, such as bankruptcy policies that were derived from Old Testament laws in Deuteronomy 15.

While many see religion as a solution, others find the term “In God We Trust” antiquated. Still others go further and want it removed.

Would turning to God really solve the debt problem?

Notice what God promises for obedience: “If you walk in My statutes, and keep My commandments, and do them; then I will give you rain in due season and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit” (Lev. 26:3-4). The meaning of this passage is plain: if one obeys what God says, he will receive abundance.

These are polarizing verses, drawing enthusiastic cheers from some and skeptical jeers from others. Yet Malachi 3:7-10 cuts to the heart of America’s *hidden* debt crisis. God

begins by saying, “Even from the days of your fathers you are gone away from Mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto Me, and I will return unto you.”

In the same passage, He then declares, “You have robbed Me.”

Seemingly confused, the nation that *believes* it follows God, remarks, “Wherein have we robbed You?”

The response from God is telling: “In tithes and in offerings. You are cursed with a curse: for you have **ROBBED** Me, even this *whole nation*.”

This is America’s hidden debt! Worse than all its other financial troubles combined, the nation owes God! Due to picking and choosing which of God’s laws to follow, or even ignoring them altogether, the U.S. has racked up massive debt due to disobedience.

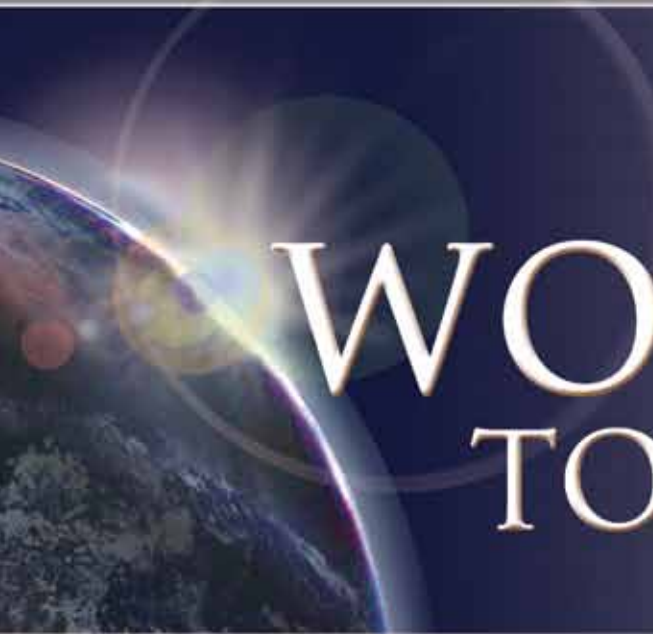
God continues in the Malachi account, “**PROVE ME** now herewith.” He states that if you obey His commands, He will “open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.”

Note two things from this passage: (1) God does not require blind faith—He wants you to *prove* what He says is true; and (2) through obedience comes great blessings!

Sadly, the reality is this: almost everyone in the United States—even regular churchgoers—disregard Almighty God, instead trusting in the “almighty dollar” and a government ruled by the people. While every penny declares “In God We Trust” and people belt out the chorus of “God Bless America”—talk is cheap. The nation has ignored what God truly desires: “Be you *doers* of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves” (Jms. 1:22).

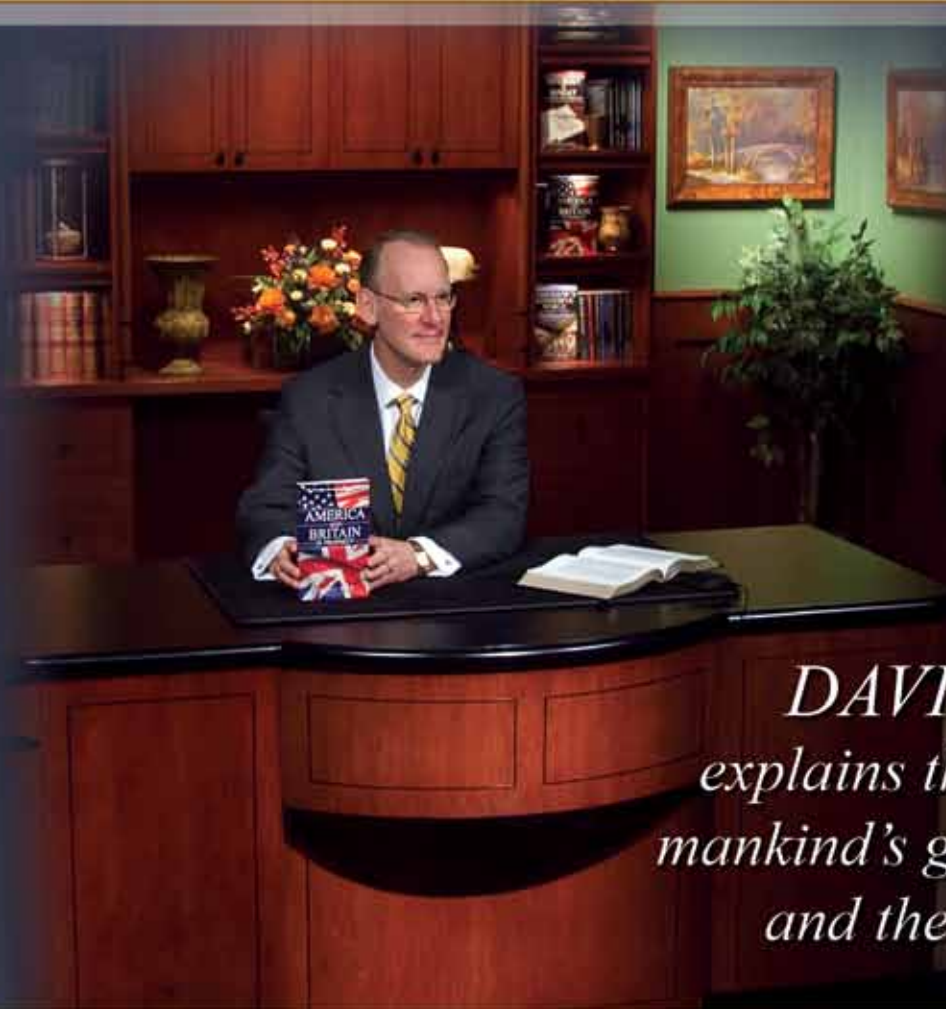
To address the hidden debt problem of disobedience—and in turn end all America’s financial woes—every individual in the nation must look long and hard at his life. Then, he must **CHANGE**.

For a clearer picture on where the United States is headed—and your part in it—read David C. Pack’s book *America and Britain in Prophecy*. □



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