

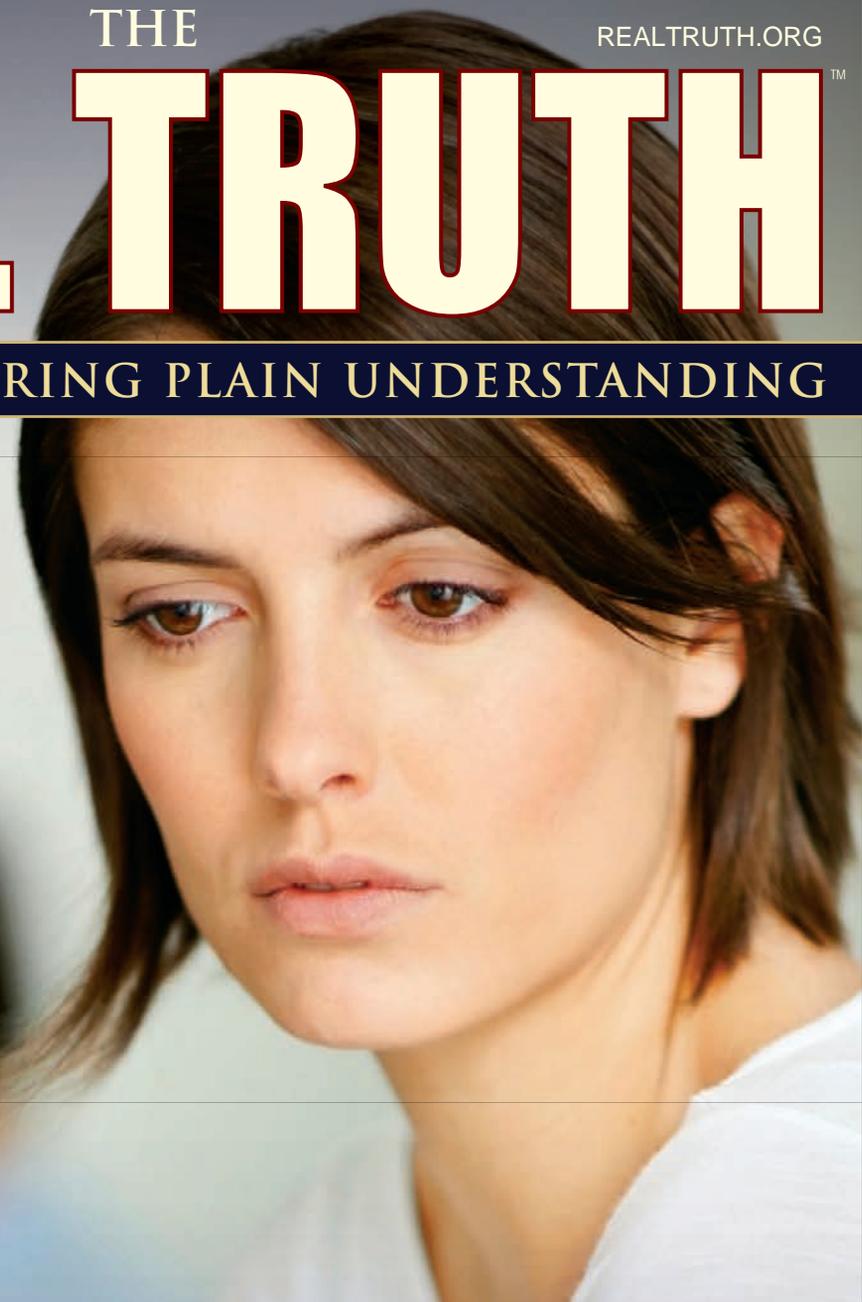
FEBRUARY 2014

THE

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# REAL TRUTH™

A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING



## PORNOGRAPHY'S DEVASTATING IMPACT

*Rewired Relationships*

**MIDEAST in PROPHECY**  
*Today's Unrest!*

A Bright Future for  
South Africa

**NINE WAYS to Eat Healthfully**  
in an Economic Downturn

Vatican Increases Focus  
on the Holy Land

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VOL. XII | NO. 2 | FEBRUARY 2014

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**HOW THIS MAGAZINE IS PAID FOR:**  
*The Real Truth*™ is made possible by the voluntary, freely given tithes and offerings of the members of The Restored Church of God, and by the offerings and donations of co-workers and donors around the world. Contributions are gratefully welcomed and are tax deductible in the U.S. and Canada. Those who wish to voluntarily aid and support the Work of God in preaching and publishing the gospel to all nations are gladly welcomed as co-workers. Contributions may be sent to the following address:

#### **The Real Truth**

1000 Ambassador Drive  
Wadsworth, OH 44281

realtruth.org

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

**EXECUTIVE EDITOR**  
JEFFREY R. AMBROSE

**MANAGING EDITOR**  
EDWARD L. WINKFIELD

**SENIOR EDITORS**  
WILLIAM H. BEHRER  
KEVIN D. DENEE  
GABRIEL N. LISCHAK  
DALE L. SCHURTER

**CONTRIBUTING WRITERS**  
DAVID C. PACK  
JEFFREY R. AMBROSE  
SAMUEL C. BAXTER  
WILLIAM H. BEHRER  
RYAN L. CASWELL  
JEFFREY D. DAVIS  
KEVIN D. DENEE  
ROBERT R. FARRELL  
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GABRIEL N. LISCHAK  
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BRADFORD G. SCHLEIFER  
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JACOB C. TOEWS  
NESTOR A. TORO  
JAMES F. TURCK  
F. JACO VILJOEN  
VIDAL N. WACHUKU  
EDWARD L. WINKFIELD

**ASSOCIATE EDITOR**  
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**COPY EDITOR**  
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**ART/GRAPHICS**  
KYLE M. HOLCOMBE  
PAULA C. RONDEAU  
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JEFFREY D. DAVIS  
JOSHUA M. NOBLE

**INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**  
TIMOTHY C. WILLARD

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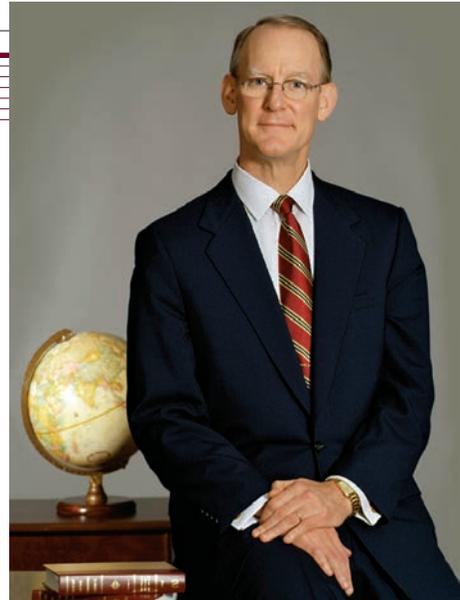
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PERSONAL FROM

David C. Fack



# *The Mideast in Prophecy— Today's Unrest! (Part 1)*

**T**HE MIDDLE EAST lies in constant turmoil. Disagreement, confusion and violence have defined this region for millennia, making this geographic area a bubbling caldron of unrest, contention, terrorism and failed attempts at peace. Humanly devised solutions *never* work there.

Events are speeding up dramatically in this area of the world. Beginning with Tunisia and Egypt, nation after nation has seen protests, demonstrations and riots. Things have not gotten better, but rather only *worse*. Yet this is but the beginning of the worsening to come.

Few understand the historical roots of the Middle East. There, nations, cultures, religions, history and politics collide with prophecy! How will it be resolved? What does the Bible say? Events in the Middle East

carry *far greater significance* than most even begin to understand!

This Personal covers recent conditions in the Mideast, including some of the history of the region. It also briefly touches on the *longest single prophecy* in the Bible.

It has been said that every eight years the Middle East suffers another war. Over 60 years of recent history proves this. And this does not count individual terrorist bombings, violent ambushes, and other incidents that always seem to yield death. The Middle East's problems defy a simple solution—but it can be proven that God has been carefully guiding events there much longer than any can imagine.

The whole world is tied to the Middle East in a remarkable way. The problems there will not go away, nor can the world pretend they will by simply looking the other way!

The Middle East is at the center of a powerful and vitally important prophecy the world knows nothing of. But God's Plan *can* be known. He is working out a SUPREME PURPOSE on Earth.

Most people are completely unaware that there *is* a purpose for mankind—let alone *what* it is! The present and future of the Middle East play a large role in God's Master Plan for humanity, and this region is at the center of astounding prophecies that will affect the lives of all peoples on Earth before this age is finished.

Only God can solve the "Middle East problem."

Over 2,500 years ago, God inspired the prophet Daniel to record a long and detailed prophecy involving many fascinating twists and turns through history. This prophecy will culminate with cataclysmic events to occur in *our time!* These events will impact *all nations*—and yet their meaning has been sealed, closed until the last days!

Some Bible prophecies are general. Others are specific, or even *highly* specific. Some involve single events that occur at specific moments in time. Others are fulfilled slowly over many years—or even centuries or millennia—and involve numerous events. Daniel's prophecy involves many smaller prophecies that can be examined one by one, until the account arrives at the modern age.

This primarily involves examination of one long chapter in the Bible. The fulfillment of each of the 45 separate verses is not subject to human reasoning, opinion or interpretation. Many of these very intricate separate prophecies have already been fulfilled exactly as God foretold, and have taken their place in history. They are now facts that can be studied—and are powerful PROOFS



■ **CONTINUED UNREST:** Supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood and ousted president Mohammed Morsi clash with Egyptian riot police during a demonstration near the presidential palace in Cairo (Dec. 6, 2013).

PHOTO: MAHMOUD KHALED/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

that a Supreme Being foretold them and then *brought them to pass!*

The connection between the periods of the present, past and future of the region is seen in its Mideast flash point—Egypt. As you read, grasp the importance of tying the present to the past—and then to the future.

First, we look at events in Egypt during the beginning of the Arab Spring.

### **Arab Spring Revolutions**

In January 2011, the government of the tiny African nation of Tunisia collapsed, brought on by riots sparked from a single protester who burned himself to death in public the month before. This event went on to cause widespread riots in Egypt, a longtime strong United States ally of over 80 million people.

*Voice of America* reported, "Since Tunisia's anti-government protests, at least five Egyptians have attempted suicide by self-immolation, imitating the young Tunisian whose burning

death in December [2010] first galvanized protesters there."

This shows the determination driving what followed. Protesters stormed the streets of Cairo and elsewhere to challenge the longstanding rule—almost 30 years—of Egyptian strongman Hosni Mubarak. Hundreds of thousands protested. Eighty-two-year-old Mubarak disbanded his cabinet on January 28, 2011, and appointed a vice president for the first time since entering office.

The initial protests escalated to unprecedented levels, prompting decisive actions: "Overnight in Egypt, the government shut down the vast majority of Egypt's Internet service, only allowing a network used by the stock exchange and most banks to stay live" (*Christian Science Monitor*).

Former head of the International Atomic Energy Agency and Nobel Peace Prize winner Mohamed ElBaradei, who openly supported the protests and at the time was a favorite

in the presidential election, was put under house arrest.

Video footage from the capital showed utter chaos: injured crying children, a man falling down shot, armored vehicles patrolling the streets and striking people, military helicopters everywhere, authorities firing gas grenades at protesters, mob-fueled street beatings, many fires and explosions. Rioters attempted to seize the foreign ministry and state TV buildings. Other buildings were looted, vandalized and burned. Prisons were abandoned by guards, and hundreds of prisoners escaped. Museums housing millennia-old priceless artifacts were looted. The picture was stark.

Just 18 days after protests began, Mr. Mubarak resigned, turning control over to the military council, which within two days suspended the constitution and disbanded the entire government. After a democratic election was overturned by a military coup, Egypt is still in turmoil today and has yet to form a stable government. But this is only a short chapter in a nation of such long history. To look closely at Egypt is in some ways to look closely at the entire Middle East.

### **Egypt's Role**

The biggest and most populous, and most geographically central nation in the Mideast, Egypt—and its historical role—is referenced many times in the Bible. Egypt was the world's first recorded great empire. And it is still the 16th most populous country in the world. History records that Noah escaped to Egypt when persecutors sought his death before the Flood. The ancient patriarch Joseph was sold into slavery there, which led to his father, Jacob, then named Israel, settling there. Certain historians believe that the patriarch Job—Joseph's nephew—built some of the pyramids. Moses was largely trained in Egypt. An infant Jesus was taken there for protection. Before the Exodus, it took many miracles to break the will of the stout-hearted Egyptians before God could deliver His people from enslavement. Egyptian arrogance caused Pharaoh to

ignore all of this and lose his army in the Red Sea as God's people fled under His protection. History records Egypt never recovered.

Ancient Israel often went to war with Egypt. The Bible records many accounts involving this country as God's servants and people came into contact with it.

Of course, many dismiss such Bible accounts as Hebrew fables. They do not believe the miracles of Egypt—or any *other* miracles of the Bible—actually occurred. It can be proven with *unmistakable clarity* that Daniel's prophecy stood the test of history—time and time again. Even the close-minded will be surprised at the stubbornness—and the **POWER**—of the facts. The authority of the Bible *can be proven*.

The Bible also reveals much about Egypt's *future*. Multiple prophecies reveal that the modern descendants of Israel will again be enslaved in Egypt, among other places. I am not just referring to the Jews—the modern Israelis—but of all 12 tribes, whose identities can be known. But this is a subject for other articles and booklets.

The Bible shows that Egypt will play a key role in the fulfillment of prophecy surrounding an entity called “the king of the south.”

At Christ's Return, Egypt's stubborn resistance will repeat itself as a **TYPE** of certain nations that will not easily accept His rule. As with *ancient* Israel, it will again take plagues and droughts to break the will of the Egyptian people (Zech. 14:18-19).

Finally, in its latter end, prophecy reveals Egypt will have a special highway built connecting it to Assyria—modern Germany—and running through the re-established nation of Israel (Isa. 19:23-25). All three countries are in this prophecy described as God's people. But this has obviously not happened yet, and events today are leading toward other prophecies involving this nation's *future*.

### **Growing Crisis**

Today, the governments of many nations are on the brink. All eyes continue to be on the Middle East. Serious

unrest has struck Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and several North African countries such as Algeria and Libya. A contagion of protest, revolt and riot has swept many nations of the world. More will soon follow!

Let's now review the history of the Palestinian-Israeli peace talks on our way to the present. We will also examine Iran more closely. Let's see *why* Mideast solutions never work, and more about recent events there.

For reasons involving religion, race and natural resources, primarily oil, the Middle East has *long* been filled with tension and conflict. The basis for a modern nation of Israel was laid in 1917, during World War I, when the Balfour Declaration led to setting the very problematic boundaries for modern Iraq, as well as for what would lead to the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. Israel's appearance brought a radical shift in the region's power balance, as well as in the attitude of virtually all Arab nations surrounding Israel. But this really extends to every Islamic nation.

Since 1948, endless proposals have been set forth intending to placate the factions in the region and bring lasting peace. The Israelis and Palestinians have sought peace for decades, but it has *never* worked. Nor will it! The region's never-ending unrest weighs heavily on governments across the globe. The world's great powers simply cannot look away.

On September 17, 1978, American President Jimmy Carter negotiated a peace agreement—the Camp David Accords—between longtime enemies Egypt and Israel. This led to the 1979 Israel-Egypt Peace Treaty because Egyptian President Anwar Sadat saw that *any* peace is always better than war. This treaty was to be a harbinger of temporary better times. The dream of peace flourishing in the age-old volatile region—famous for war, terror and destruction—was on the path to becoming reality.

Or so it seemed. First, Mr. Sadat was assassinated in 1981. Mr. Mubarak

*Please see PERSONAL, page 29*

A young girl with dark braids stands in a shanty town, wearing a purple t-shirt with a rainbow and orange shorts. She is holding a small object to her mouth. The background shows a makeshift fence made of wooden posts and chain-link fencing, with some debris on the ground.

# A BRIGHT FUTURE

*for*

*South Africa*

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***BUT HOW?***

# Despite persistent problems such as poverty, crime and corruption, a hopeful future for South Africa is certain.

BY JEFFREY R. AMBROSE FROM JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA  
WITH SAMUEL C. BAXTER

“LET A NEW age be born!” Nelson Mandela spoke these words while accepting a Nobel Peace Prize in 1993. He received the award alongside F.W. de Klerk, who was South Africa’s president at the time. Both spoke passionately regarding their home country’s future. The two men, one white and one black, painted a hopeful picture of a nation free from racial tension.

Earlier in his lecture, Mr. Mandela stated, “We live with the hope that as she battles to remake herself, South Africa will be like a microcosm of the new world that is striving to be born.”

He called on his countrymen to devote their lives to the causes of “justice, peace, non-racism, non-sexism, prosperity for everybody, a healthy environment and equality and solidarity among the peoples.”

Mr. de Klerk similarly stated, “What is taking place in South Africa is such a deed—a deed resounding over the earth—a deed of peace. It brings hope to all South Africans. It opens new horizons for Sub-Saharan Africa. It has the capacity to unlock the tremendous potential of our country and our region.”

“The new era which is dawning in our country, beneath the great southern stars, will lift us out of the silent grief of our past and into a future in which there will be opportunity and space for joy and beauty—for real and lasting peace.”

The nation had high aspirations: Unlocked potential. Hope for all. Real

peace. A new world striving to be born.

After Mr. Mandela’s death 20 years later, it was evident that his dream still had captured the minds of South Africans. In the streets of the country’s Gauteng Province, home to both the capital, Pretoria, and its largest city, Johannesburg, Mr. Mandela’s image and name were everywhere: signs, banners, posters, T-shirts, stickers. He smiled from the covers of countless magazines, ranging from the most influential weeklies and monthlies to a local used car listing on a gas station counter in Free State, south of Gauteng.

Billboards and bus stop ads read, “Thank you Tata” (a South African equivalent of “daddy”). Another proclaimed, “It’s now in Your Hands’ – Thank You Madiba” (the name of Mr. Mandela’s clan and an honorary title for clan elders).

Scanning through television stations in the days following his funeral, tribute pieces filled many channels, alternating with the national pastimes of cricket, rugby and golf. Both the memorial service and the funeral drew large audiences and were broadcast repeatedly. Even sports channels ran their own specials on the event, many focusing on Mr. Mandela’s use of rugby to promote racial harmony at the 1995 World Cup. And when the programming was unrelated to Mr. Mandela, the corner of the screen often featured a graphic: “Nelson Mandela, 1918-2013.”

After Mr. Mandela’s funeral, the official 10-day national mourning period ended. Flags were raised from half-staff to top of staff, and officials unveiled a 30-foot bronze statue of Mr.

Mandela in front of the Union (capitol) Buildings, its arms outstretched toward Pretoria’s skyline.

Mr. Mandela’s dream of a bright new age—one for South Africa, the continent, and the entire world—still remains just that, a dream. The nation today is beleaguered by poverty, crime, disease and corruption.

Amid numerous national troubles, will the promised new era ever dawn for South Africa?

## Challenging Reality

After retreating from public life in 2004, Mr. Mandela seldom spoke publicly. It is hard to determine how he viewed the present-day results of the national changes he helped spearhead decades ago.

But now that the eulogies have been archived and the news cycle has moved on, South Africans—black and white—must face the condition of their country as it is, not “as it *can* be” (in the carefully chosen words of an American commentator, speaking of Mr. Mandela’s legacy).

A summary from the Philippines’ *GMA News* paints a picture: “...the future of the country for whom Mandela would have died appears to be unsettled.

“The breakdown of peace and order is the primary concern. Almost everyone that I have spoken to here has been a victim of a violent crime: a consul and his wife whose room at a bed and breakfast in the good part of town was broken into, a UN official robbed at gun-point, an elderly Filipina who was hogtied by robbers who broke into her house.

“Senior diplomats have not been spared, triggering security concerns for [Philippine] Vice-President Jejomar Binay’s security who moves around town with only a handful of security personnel. There was the Thai diplomat

■ **DIFFICULT CONDITIONS:** A child stands in a lot in the Nkaneng shantytown next to a platinum mine in Marikana where police officers opened fire on striking workers. Thirty-four people were killed and 78 were injured during the confrontation (July 9, 2013).

PHOTO: ODD ANDERSEN/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



■ **SEEKING SECURITY:** Razor wire atop a fence frames silver-lined clouds in Johannesburg, South Africa.

PHOTO: JEFFREY R. AMBROSE/THE REAL TRUTH

whose vehicle was hijacked in broad daylight, the Uruguayan Ambassador whose diplomatic residence was broken into. Mrs. Yoko Ramos, our Ambassador's wife, says that the security concern in genteel Pretoria is so bad that her 'four-year-old daughter and her yaya [nanny] do not venture into the secure garden of the Philippine Ambassador's residence' already located in the best part of town."

A typical middle-class dwelling features a metal fence with sharp "devil's fork" tips, often with loops of razor wire at the corners and near any tree on a property's perimeter. Inside, two locking metal gates precede the front door; another swings from the end of a hallway that leads to the bedrooms. All interior doors are metal and include deadbolts. Motion detectors blink from many corners and all windows are covered with metal "burglar bars."

A perfect illustration of why these measures are seen as necessary:

Archbishop Desmond Tutu, another prominent anti-apartheid figure and winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984, had his house burglarized—while attending Mr. Mandela's memorial service.

Statistics back these anecdotes on a number of fronts:

■ The United Nations' Human Development Index 2013 placed South Africa number 121 out of 186 spots, using measures such as poverty, health, education, resources and environment.

■ "Interpol says South Africa is the world's rape capital and less than 1% of rape cases are reported to police. According to a reliable website that compiles rape statistics this has had a detrimental effect on successfully pursuing rape cases in the country... In fact, a woman born in South Africa is more likely to be raped than educated. It's estimated a woman is raped every 17 seconds" (*South African Broadcasting Corporation*).

■ Rates of homicide, manslaughter, drug offenses, theft and some crimes are consistently high when compared to other nations.

■ Over 17 percent of adults are infected with HIV; higher rates are only found in neighboring Swaziland, Botswana and Lesotho.

■ By official counts, about 25 percent of South Africans are unemployed, but since many do not operate within the formally structured economy, this figure is likely low.

■ A 2009 *The World Factbook* estimate placed 31.3 percent of the population below the international poverty line (living on less than \$2 per day).

■ The *Factbook* estimates the country's life expectancy is 49.48 years—only Chad's is lower.

### **Better Times Ahead!**

Obviously, this is not the type of environment that Mr. Mandela envisioned

Please see **SOUTH AFRICA**, page 18



# PORNOGRAPHY'S DEVASTATING IMPACT

## *Rewired Relationships*

Pornography is entering the mainstream. You need to know about its effects!

BY EDWARD L. WINKFIELD

**P**ICTURE A consummate business professional. He can always be counted on by

colleagues to “close the deal.” He is sharp, well-spoken and organized. He has a wife and two children, and works hard to build a solid foundation for them.

Out-of-town trips require him to travel for days at a time. When away, he sincerely misses his family and they miss him. During these trips, he makes a point to call home and talk

to them. He asks his oldest daughter how her day went and “tucks” his youngest daughter in bed. He typically ends the call speaking to his wife. He reminds her of the best time to pick him up from the airport, tells her he loves her, says goodbye, and hangs up.

*What now?*

Glancing at the remote control on the bed, he suddenly feels a rush.

He has experienced this before. Turning on the television, he recalls the immediate access he has to channels filled with make-believe realms that fulfill his fantasies, all of which are easily attainable from the convenience of his hotel suite. The next day, he emerges from his room and no one is aware of what he has watched.

This scenario is a long way from the sleaze and scandal associated with pornography in decades past. Today, many indulge themselves in this form of entertainment, some with little or no guilt before, during or afterward.

In its varying degrees, pornography is everywhere. A study by the organization Concerned Women for America (CWA) revealed, “Hotel chains such as Marriott and Hilton earn about \$190 million per year from in-room pay-per-view porn videos.”

The report continued: “According to *The New Wall Street*, ‘[B]ased on estimates provided by the hotel industry, at least half of all guests buy adult movies’... ‘Estimates by analysts cited in the *Los Angeles Times* suggest that adult features generate approximately half of total hotel pay-per-view revenue in the United States, approximately \$250 million annually.’”

Through the Internet, porn is also readily available on desktop computers, laptops and smartphones. Because of this, the nonprofit organization Family Safe Media reported that every second \$3,075.64 is spent on pornography, 28,258 Internet users view pornography, and 372 Internet users type adult terms into search engines.

The expanded availability of illicit materials means that its audience is also greater. The average age a child is first exposed to Internet pornography is 11 years old. And a staggering 90



■ **CATERING TO DEMAND:** Advertisements for an adult emporium are visible on a street in the Pigalle district of Paris (Jan. 12, 2011).

PHOTO: LOIC VENANCE/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

percent of all 8- to 16-year-olds have viewed porn online—most of them while doing homework!

In fact, viewing pornography actually rewires the brain: “Pornography’s growth has been extraordinary; it accounts for 25 percent of video rentals and is the fourth most common reason people give for going online,” author Norman Doidge wrote in his book *The Brain That Changes Itself*.

He added: “Softcore pornography’s influence is now most profound because, now that it is no longer hidden it influences young people with little sexual experience and especially plastic minds, in the process of forming their sexual tastes and desires. Yet the plastic influence of pornography on adults can also be profound, and those who use it have no sense of the extent to which their brains are reshaped by it.”

The issue extends beyond pictures and videos as pornographic prose routinely finds its way into homes through “romance” novels and other innocent-looking volumes. Upscale shops cater to married couples looking to spice up their love lives. Partners looking for

thrills can easily enter these environments, which are designed to be clean and welcoming.

Socially conservative groups decry the entire industry as an offense to traditional religious and social values. Feminists say the practice demeans and/or harms women. Yet these voices can be likened to a gentle breeze opposite gale force winds.

Although previously seen as taboo, as time goes on and pornography becomes more entrenched into mainstream society, many are asking: “Is it really all that bad?”

### “Sex Sells”

Almost everyone has heard the phrase “sex sells.” Sex in media—ranging from partial nudity in music videos and fashion shows, to soft-core advertisements, to hard-core pornographic movies—is a proven concept that lines the pockets of companies and individuals.

The mindset of some businesses, including many common corporate names, is demonstrated by an underwriting representative from the financial securities sector, as reported by

CWFA, “I’m not a weirdo or a pervert, it’s not my deal. I’ve got kids and a family. But if I can see as an underwriter going out and making bucks on people being weird, hey, dollars are dollars. I’m not selling drugs. It’s Wall Street.”

In describing the porn industry’s quest to find new, efficient media for their products, *USA Today* reported: “Online pornographers have been among the first to exploit new technology for more than a decade—from video-streaming and fee-based subscriptions to pop-up ads and electronic billing. Their bold experimentation has helped make porn one of the most profitable online industries, and their ideas are staples at Fortune 500 companies.”

Watching America’s most popular sport, football, on its biggest stage, the Super Bowl, with family illustrates the extent of the sex-and-advertising connection. From the tightly clad entertainers in the opening segment to the cheerleaders’ seductive movements to the partially clothed half-time entertainment to the sexually suggestive commercials—sex is everywhere.

The average citizen is joining in on the action and cashing in on pornography’s profits as well. Brick-and-mortar outlets are no longer a requirement to turn a profit. Many websites showcase “amateur porn”—home videos of regular people engaging in sex—and charge subscription fees to access such video collections. YouTube and similar social media sites also allow or link directly to explicit material.

Just how big is the pornography business? The following statistics were collected by Family Safe Media from a number of credible sources. Though somewhat dated, the nonprofit organization provides the most comprehensive look at a subject for which it is generally difficult to collect data.

■ Total porn revenue worldwide: \$97 billion.

■ Total porn revenue in the U.S.: \$13.33 billion. This exceeds the combined revenues of *ABC*, *CBS* and *NBC*.

■ Daily pornographic search engine requests: 68 million—25 percent of total search engine requests.

■ Internet users who view porn: 42.7 percent.

■ Pornographic websites: 4.2 million—12 percent of total websites.

■ Pornographic pages: 420 million.

■ Worldwide visitors to pornographic websites: 72 million monthly.

■ U.S. adults who regularly visit Internet pornography websites: 40 million.

■ Men who admit to accessing it at work: 20 percent.

■ Women who admit to accessing it at work: 13 percent.

This overexposure and societal desensitization has resulted in pornographers pushing the envelope through ever-more bizarre content to hold the attention of their audience. This attests to society’s growing obsession and carefree attitude toward the “adult” industry—and its concrete place as a highly profitable venture.

### Historical Context

Viewing such material is far from new. The term pornography combines the Greek words *porne*, meaning prostitute, and *graphein*, meaning to write. Hence, it technically can mean “to write about prostitutes.” The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines it as any depiction of erotic behavior in material intended to cause sexual excitement.

According to *Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia*: “The ancient Greeks used pornographic themes in songs in Dionysian festivals, and ancient Romans painted pornographic pictures on walls in the ancient city of Pompeii. Pornography was also prevalent in some ancient Eastern cultures, such as those of India, Japan, and China...”

The Naples National Archaeological Museum in Italy is famous for its vast collection of sexually explicit objects excavated by archaeologists. The bizarre nature of the items and their elaborate details show the extent to which pornography was part of Roman culture.

The invention of the printing press further helped the spread of pornographic materials. By the 18th century, the “production of written and visual materials to appeal to audiences of all socioeconomic levels and sexual tastes” was common, *Encyclopaedia Britannica* stated.

Because of the intense demand, pornography became a viable business. *Britannica* stated that when “Queen Victoria came to the throne in Great Britain in 1837, there were more than 50 pornographic shops on Holywell Street (known as ‘Booksellers’ Row’) in London” (emphasis added).

While the public’s taste for pornography appeared to wane in the Victorian Era (1837-1901), it really just took another form. Prominent artists created works that turned what was technically pornography into more of an art form. These “culturally refined” nudes were considered classy and tasteful. This trend made sexually explicit material palatable to the upper class and scholars who would have otherwise found such subject matter morally reprehensible.

Despite efforts to redefine and expand the industry, overt pornography soon came under legal scrutiny. The Obscene Publications Act of 1857, considered the world’s first statutory law criminalizing pornography, gave British courts the power to seize and destroy offending material. America followed suit with the Comstock Act of 1873, which also included a provision banning obscene materials from being sent through the mail.

While mainstream society continued to view pornography negatively until the beginning of the 20th century, like alcohol during Prohibition, outlawing it only seemed to encourage interest. As with the printing press, further technological advancements were adapted to allow ease of access to such material.

According to *Encyclopaedia Britannica*: “Pornographic films were widely available no later than the 1920s, and in the 1960s their popularity enjoyed a massive upsurge. The

development of videocassettes in the 1980s and digital videodiscs (DVDs) in the 1990s enabled the wide distribution of pornographic films and further encouraged their use because they could be viewed in private.”

*Britannica* later stated: “Pornographic images and films became even more widely available with the emergence of the Internet in the 1990s. The pornographic industry became one of the most profitable on the Internet. Apart from providing a vast marketplace for commercial pornography appealing to many diverse tastes, the Internet also encouraged many amateurs to post images of themselves...The use of webcams opened the industry even further to amateurs, allowing individuals to post live depictions of themselves, often for fees.”

Coming up with a distinct and concise definition of pornography has generally been difficult due to its somewhat subjective nature. In 1964, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart encapsulated this point well when, while attempting to come up with an adequate description for obscenity for a court case, he wrote, “...I could never succeed in [coming up with a shorthand description of hard-core pornography]. But I know it when I see it...”

While technology and the pursuit of profits have served to greatly increase pornography’s current impact and level of popularity, what about its effects? Is it really a harmless form of entertainment?

### Unintended Effects

There is a saying, “A tree is recognized by its fruit.” Usually an allusion to a person’s character, this phrase is helpful when judging the “fruit” or impact of something, in this case pornography—and ultimately deciding whether it harms its viewers.

Consider. Pornography is meant to increase sexual excitement, leaving people wanting to fulfill what they view. An “I want more” mentality takes hold. This craving for sexu-

al gratification can lead to increased encounters (as well as unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, and even cervical cancer), and sex-related crimes (child molestation, sexual assault and battery, rape, etc.). Pornography is a clear-cut case of feeding the “lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes,” as one of the oldest books that details the purpose of sex, the Bible, states in I John 2:16.

Pornography unnaturally elevates sex in the mind. While some married couples view illicit material as a way of enlivening or enhancing their own sexual relations, it instead creates the opposite effect, causing a viewer to compare his sex life to that of those on screen—where all things appear much more glamorous and arousing. In effect, he becomes disinterested in his spouse, or is driven to further sexual

experimentation to keep up with the scintillations provided by porn.

Viewing such material also leads to sexual addictions and further perversions. For example, porn sites often link to other sites depicting other types of sexual perversion: child porn, homosexuality, bestiality, masochism, sadism, rape and other abominations.

Pornography has also been linked to incest and child molestation. Police often find porn on an offender’s computer or in his home. Data from a study published in the *Journal of Family Violence* showed that 85 percent of men convicted of possessing, receiving or distributing Internet-based child pornography admitted to sexually abusing a child at least once—with the average offender molesting 13.5 victims!

Clearly, the expansion of pornography is creating a more sexually aggres-

## Global Child Pornography Ring

*The arrest of one man led to the apprehension of half a dozen child molesters and as many as 75 child pornography offenders. The trail started in Australia, jumped to England, and then went to Texas and beyond. The following illustrates how some of the cases unfolded:*



**1 Nov. 2010:** A known sex offender is arrested in Queensland, Australia, on suspicion of possessing child pornography; pictures are traced to a man in the United Kingdom.

**2 Dec. 2010:** A man in Hampshire, England, who made the images discovered in Australia, is arrested and convicted of dozens of child sex-related charges; information from his website, which distributed illicit pictures and hosted discussions about abusing children, is used to find other perpetrators.

**3 Dec. 23, 2010:** Hampshire law enforcement officers pass the information to Interpol, which contacts the U.S. Department of Homeland Security; the tip makes its way to agents in Irving, Texas, who then locate a man in Euless, Texas.

**Dec. 27, 2010:** Local agents execute a search warrant; the Texas man confesses and leads authorities to a man he had been trading images with in Michigan.

**4 Dec. 28, 2010:** Agents arrest the Michigan man, who later pleads guilty to production of child pornography.

**5 Jan. 5, 2012:** Another man from Farmers Branch, Texas, contacts the Euless man online seeking to have sex with a young boy the Euless man knows; agents posing as the Euless man arrange a meeting.

**Jan. 6, 2012:** The Farmers Branch man shows up at the Euless man’s apartment and is arrested; he later pleads guilty to enticement.

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Source: Dallas Morning News research



sive society of individuals who have opened themselves up to a new interpretation of what sex should be. These results cannot simply be written off as innocent byproducts of a harmless industry.

### Impact on the Family

As negative as these results are, porn has a further devastating impact on families, as reported by *Deseret News*.

“Dorothy Maryon, a licensed professional counselor with the LifeSTAR Network in Salt Lake City who specializes in counseling the spouses of those who compulsively view pornography, said it is a betrayal for women to discover their partner has been looking outside the marriage for sexual gratification—even on a computer screen.

“I can’t overemphasize the trauma part of it,” said Maryon. “It changes

the way they view their partner. The damage that has been done changes the way they view themselves...It creates a relationship for her that feels very unsafe,” Maryon said. “She wonders what is real. She doubts her own intuition, her own judgment...It throws her faith into crisis. She views her body differently. She asks herself, “How can I compete?””

“Maryon said most women don’t distinguish between an affair, an escort service, and pornography. One client, trying to help Maryon understand the scope of her husband’s betrayal, said she knows of men who have only ‘been with one woman.’ Then she added, ‘My husband has been with thousands.’”

Pornography often leads to divorce. Some married couples who view it go on to adulterous relationships. This

fact should come as little surprise when considering what Jesus Christ said in the gospel of Matthew when defining adultery: “You have heard that it was said by them of old time, You shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, That whosoever *looks* on a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart” (Matt. 5:27-28).

In this passage, Jesus makes it unmistakably clear that indulging in pornography is a form of adultery.

This reality is vital to understand because some make the mistake of seeing pornography as an innocent alternative to engaging in an extramarital affair. Yet studies of the brain have shown that the mind does not readily differentiate such real versus imagined experiences. Therefore, to the brain, there is virtually

no difference between viewing pornographic material and an actual sexual encounter with another person, especially when recalling the experience.

Men tend to make up the largest consumer base for pornography. They account for 72 percent of visitors to pornographic sites compared to 28 percent being women. This is partly because men tend to be more visually stimulated as compared to women.

Pornography, however, is no longer just a problem for men. A growing number of women are also becoming addicted to porn. According to statistics, about one in three who visit pornographic websites are women—bringing the number who viewed pornography online monthly to 9.4 million, according to Family Safe Media.

Please see **PORNOGRAPHY**, page 27

# WHY SHOULD YOU READ THE OLD TESTAMENT?

## PART 2

Was Jesus Christ's gospel a radical new teaching or can it be found throughout the entire Bible?

BY JUSTIN T. PALM

**P**ART 1 OF this series covered vital foundation regarding the relevance of the Old Testament for true Christians. We saw that instead of Jesus casting aside the Old Testament, He constantly quoted from it. We saw concrete PROOF *in the New Testament* that Christ hardly preached about anything else! In addition, the apostle Paul and other disciples used the Old Testament as the basis for their preaching.

Jesus said He came to FULFILL the Law and the prophets (Matt. 5:17), not to *do away with* the Old Testament. He set an example for all true Christians—then and now—to take every element of God's Word seriously. Honest Bible students, including religious scholars educated in this world's seminaries and theology schools, have no excuse for misunderstanding or rejecting the Old Testament. Far from an antiquated historical document irrelevant to modern Christians, the Old Testament should be read and studied by all Christians striving to live God's way of life.

All of what was covered in Part 1 introduced two huge questions: If Christ and His disciples constantly quoted the Old Testament, is there an OVERARCHING THEME discussed throughout the Old Testament? *Why* did they reference it so often?

Part 2 reveals how the central message of the Old Testament—hidden from

“Matthew 9:35: ‘And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom...’”

the masses for thousands of years—is connected to Jesus Christ's true gospel.

### Gospel Defined

We first ask: what *is* Christ's gospel? Everywhere Jesus traveled, He preached it. Notice these New Testament passages:

**Matthew 9:35:** “And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teach-

ing in their synagogues, and *preaching the gospel of the kingdom...*”

**Mark 1:14:** “Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God.”

**Luke 8:1:** “...He went throughout every city and village, *preaching* and showing the *glad tidings of the kingdom of God*: and the twelve were with Him.”

This subject has caused unnecessary confusion for millions of people for over 2,000 years.

Gospel is an Old English word that means “glad tidings” and “good news.” It involves the *best news* ever for mankind: Jesus Christ returning at His Second Coming to establish God's world-ruling SUPERGOVERNMENT, which will bring peace, abundance and prosperity to all nations. When He comes, mankind's ineffective, corrupt governments—dictatorships, theocracies, democracies and all others—will be discarded forever.

How can we know? The preaching of this message was one of the main purposes of Christ's First Coming. The Bible teaches that Jesus' gospel was not about His sacrifice or the forgiveness of sins, but was the message of God's coming kingdom. Contrary to popular belief, it was not a gospel of

healings, grace, salvation or anything else.

Read Mark 1 again about the beginning of Christ's ministry on Earth: "Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the GOSPEL of the *kingdom of God*, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the KINGDOM OF GOD is at hand: repent you, and *believe the gospel*" (vs. 14-15).

Keep this simple. "Kingdom" simply means *government*. Your Bible plainly reveals that Christ's gospel was about one thing—the kingdom of God!

### Singular Topic

Nearly *all* Jesus' parables explained elements of God's kingdom. Mark 4 reveals, "And when He was alone, they that were about Him with the twelve asked of Him the parable. And He said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of *the kingdom of God*: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables" (vs. 10-11).

Jesus continued preaching the gospel of the kingdom until the end of His ministry. On trial for His life, Jesus explained the purpose of His coming to Pontius Pilate: "Jesus answered, My KINGDOM is not of this world: if My KINGDOM were of this world, then would My servants fight...but now is My kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto Him, Are you a king then? Jesus answered, You say that I am a king. To this end was I born, and *for this cause* came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth..." (John 18:36-37).

What truth did Christ "bear witness" to while on Earth? *The truth of the gospel!*

After Jesus' Resurrection, He continued to explain the kingdom of God to His disciples. Luke recorded in Acts 1: "To whom also He showed Himself alive after His passion [crucifixion] by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the *kingdom of God*" (vs. 3).

How plain!

### Additional Proof

We next look at a statement from Christ in Luke 16:16: "The law and the prophets [Old Testament] were until John: since that time *the kingdom of God is preached...*" Jesus was stating that the kingdom of God—the gospel—had been preached through the Law and prophets prior to His First Coming.

Further proof of this is found in the apostle Peter's first sermon, recorded in Acts 3: "Repent you therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing [the establishing of God's kingdom at Christ's Second Coming] shall come from the presence of the Lord. And He shall send Jesus Christ, which *before* was preached unto you [in the Old Testament]: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things [the arrival of God's kingdom], which God has spoken by the mouth of ALL His holy prophets since the world began" (vs. 19-21).

When describing how Samuel preached the kingdom of God, Acts 3:24 states: "Yes, and ALL the prophets from Samuel and *those that follow after, as many as have spoken*, have likewise foretold of these days."

The New Testament reveals that all God's servants through the ages—even those in the Old Testament—preached the gospel of God's coming kingdom!

But are these New Testament claims supported by the Old Testament?

### Old Testament Confirmation

Jesus' central message was carefully woven throughout the tapestry of the Old Testament by those who recorded it. The following are just a few of the many examples that could be cited.

**Isaiah 2:2-4:** "And it shall come to pass in the last days [our time now], that the mountain [a biblical symbol for government] of the LORD's house shall be established in the top of the mountains [governments of men], and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come you, and let us go up to the mountain of

the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And He [Christ] shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people..."

**Isaiah 9:6-7:** "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the GOVERNMENT shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His GOVERNMENT and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon HIS KINGDOM, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this."

**Isaiah 11:2-4:** "And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; and shall make Him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of His ears: but with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and He shall smite the earth: with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked."

**Micah 4:2-4:** "And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And He [Christ] shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid..."

**Zechariah 8:3-5:** "Thus says the LORD; I am returned unto Zion, and

will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the LORD of hosts the holy mountain. Thus says the LORD of hosts; there shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof.”

Zechariah 14 also describes the setting up of God’s kingdom at Christ’s Second Coming: “Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle. And His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south... And the LORD shall be king over *all the earth*: in that day shall there be one LORD, and His name one” (vs. 3-4, 9).

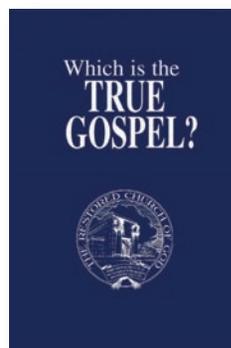
In addition, the apostle Jude recorded that Enoch, Noah’s great-grandfather, preached about God’s kingdom *before the Flood!* Notice: “And Enoch also...prophesied...saying, Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all...” (vs. 14-15).

These passages can only be taken one way: God is going to establish a supernatural, divine kingdom at Christ’s Second Coming. It will usher in a time of peace and prosperity for all nations! Can you now better understand why Christ’s gospel is GOOD NEWS?

### Daniel Foretold Coming Kingdom

Daniel was another Old Testament figure who

preached about the coming kingdom of God. Notice the following passages from the book he recorded, which describe the interpretation of Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar’s dream. His dream involved an image made of different types of metal: “You, O king, saw, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before you; and the form thereof was terrible. This image’s head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. You saw till that a stone was cut out *without hands* [meaning divine intervention], which



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smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and broke them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a *great mountain*, and filled the

*whole earth*” (Dan. 2:31-35). As has been seen, this is obviously a prophecy of the setting up of God’s kingdom—foretold to fill the whole Earth.

Before looking at other verses in Daniel that describe God’s soon-coming kingdom, notice two related parables from Christ: “Then said He, Unto what is the kingdom of God like? And whereunto shall I resemble it? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and cast into his garden; and it *grew*, and waxed [became] a *great tree*; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it.

“And again He said, Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God? It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, *till the whole was leavened*” (Luke 13:18-21).

Through Daniel’s explanation of King Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, Christ’s parable about the kingdom of God filling the whole Earth is made even clearer: “This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king...And in

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

PHOTO: STACEY L. PALM/THE REAL TRUTH



Please see  
**OLD TESTAMENT**, page 20

**The REAL TRUTH**



# VATICAN INCREASES FOCUS ON THE HOLY LAND

More than ever, the Catholic church is taking an intense interest in the Middle East.

**T**HE CATHOLIC church has taken an increasingly active role in the Middle East—especially the Holy Land.

The pope met with Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in early December at the Vatican. According to the church's press office, the two leaders discussed the "complex political and social situation in the Middle East, with particular reference to the reinstatement of negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians, expressing hope that a just and lasting solution respecting the rights of both parties may be reached as soon as possible."

Such a direct interest in Mideast politics is new for the Catholic church, which has generally practiced a policy of non-involvement. A United States diplomatic cable from 2001 said that "the Holy See denies wanting to become involved in the political" issues of the Middle East.

According to *The Los Angeles Times*, "Diplomatic relations between Israel and the Holy See were established in 1993. Since 1999, the two sides have been negotiating a long list of outstanding issues, including the status of the Roman Catholic Church in Israel, requested sovereignty over certain sites, and taxation and expropriation of church assets in the country. Last year [2012], Israeli officials involved in talks said resolving these matters would bring a 'historic upgrade of relations.'"

*The Jerusalem Post* stated, "Israel and the Vatican have a convergence of interests on a number of matters, and 'some of the same forces that threaten Israel are threatening Christian minorities across the region,' [an Israeli diplomatic] official said."

Since Israel became a nation in 1948, there have been only three papal visits to the Holy Land.

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■ **PRIVATE AUDIENCE:** Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu speaks with Pope Francis at the Vatican (Dec. 2, 2013).

PHOTO: ALESSANDRA TARANTINO/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



**Paul VI, 1964:** “Pope Paul VI spent only 11 hours in Israel. He mainly avoided Israeli-controlled West Jerusalem, refusing to meet with the chief rabbi, Yitzhak Nissim, and forcing Israeli President Zalman Shazar and Prime Minister Levi Eshkol to travel to the northern town of Meggido to greet him in a 20-minute ceremony,” *The Chicago Tribune* reported.

**John Paul II, 2000:** Notably 36 years after Paul VI’s visit, one of the high points of John Paul’s trip was that he left a note at the Western Wall. He also delivered a speech that acknowledged the tragedy of the Holocaust and prayed for the forgiveness of those involved.

**Benedict XVI, 2009:** Pope Benedict’s focus was mainly a pastoral one, the Vatican representative to the Holy Land said. Prior to the visit, the papal envoy in Jerusalem stated at a press conference, reported on by *The Jerusalem Post*, that the pontiff “comes as the head of the Catholic Church. He does not come as the head of the Vatican state to make a political visit.”

He later stated in the article, “You will be wrong if you read this pilgrimage with political glasses.”

Pope Francis is expected to visit Israel in May 2014. His trip, much like his papacy—which has been marked with unorthodoxy, broad popularity, and intense media attention—is expected to be much different.

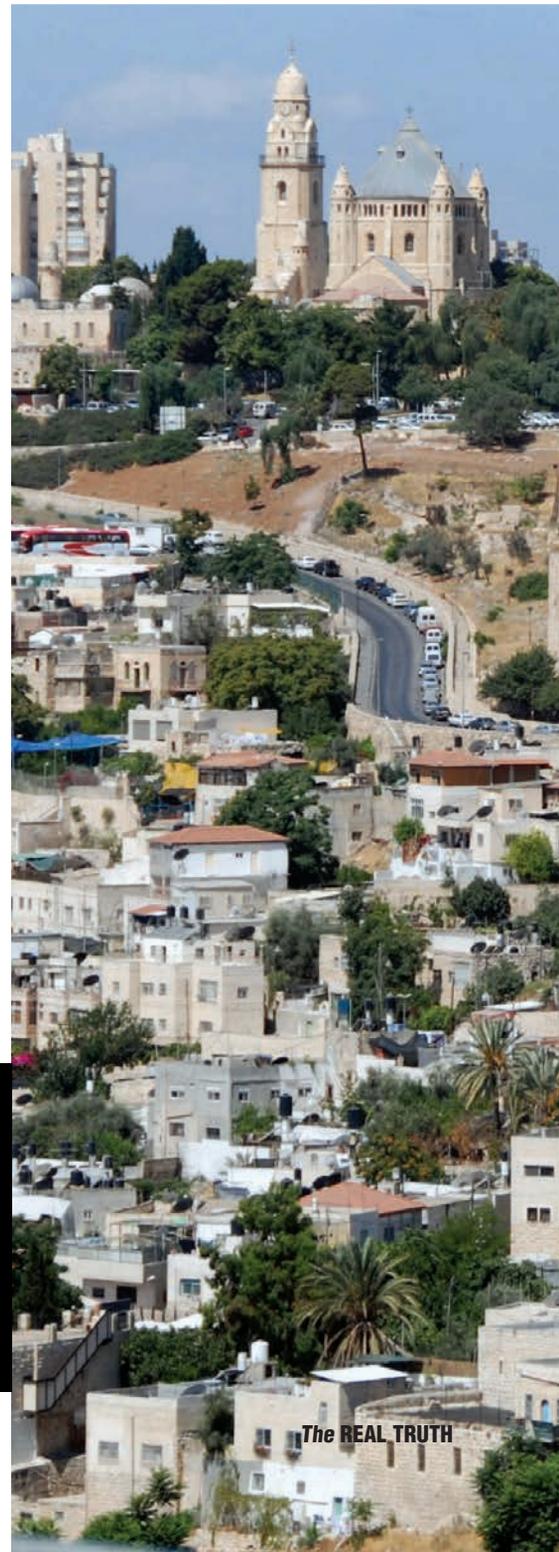
“During John Paul II’s declining years, and throughout Benedict XVI’s papacy, the Vatican was more quiet,” James Walston, a political scientist with the American University of Rome told *USA Today*. “Francis is starting to show he’s willing to be a lot feistier.”

In addition, since he has taken office, Francis has met with Palestinian leaders such as Mahmoud Abbas.

On October 17, the pope welcomed Mr. Abbas to the Vatican and presented him with a gift in appreciation of his efforts to achieve peace in the Middle East, the official news agency of the Palestinian Authority *Wafa* reported.

According to *The Jerusalem Post*, Francis gave Mr. Abbas a pen, saying, “Surely, you have a lot of things you have to sign.”

Mr. Abbas responded, “I hope to sign a peace treaty with Israel with this pen.” □



■ **THE HOLY LAND:** Above left, Vatican officials often stay at the Pontifical Institute Notre Dame of Jerusalem when visiting the city. Above right, Pope John Paul II places a letter in the ancient stones of the Western Wall, Judaism’s holiest site (March 26, 2000). Opposite page top left, Pope Benedict XVI stands in front of the Dome of the Rock on the compound known to Muslims as al-Haram al-Sharif (Noble Sanctuary) and to Jews as the Temple Mount, in Jerusalem’s Old City (May 12, 2009). Opposite page top right, Pope Francis talks with Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas during a private audience at the Vatican (Oct. 17, 2013). Opposite page bottom, the architecture in the skyline of modern-day Jerusalem reveals its varied historical roots.

PHOTOS: STACEY L. PALM/THE REAL TRUTH (ABOVE LEFT, OPPOSITE PAGE BOTTOM); AMOS BEN GERSHOM/GPO (ABOVE RIGHT); ZIV GOREN/MCT/MCT (OPPOSITE PAGE TOP LEFT); MAURIZIO BRAMBATTI/AFP/ (OPPOSITE PAGE TOP RIGHT) GETTY IMAGES



## SOUTH AFRICA

Continued from page 6



for his people. As is so often the case in human history, the gap between aspirations and achievements can be discouraging.

In his autobiography, he wrote, “I am fundamentally an optimist.” While reconciling optimism with day-to-day harsh realities can be difficult in South Africa—and in any nation, depending on time and place—there is a real reason for optimism and hope for the future.

This hope is not naive. You can know with *certainty* that better times lie just ahead.

Billions recite the words “Thy kingdom come” in prayer yet few understand what this really means. Perhaps not surprisingly, this phrase comes from the Bible in Matthew 6:10. While there are numerous explanations of what this “kingdom” is, there is only one that matters—what God’s Word says.

The major theme of the Bible is a coming SUPERGOVERNMENT ruled by Jesus Christ. It is known variously as the “kingdom of God” and the “world to come” (Mark 10:30).

(To learn more about this government, read “Why Should You Read the Old Testament?” found in this issue.)

Yet God’s Word also details the awesome future that is just ahead for South Africa—and for all nations. The following excerpts are from the book *Tomorrow’s Wonderful World – An Inside View!* written by David C. Pack, publisher and editor-in-chief of *The Real Truth*.

**Economy:** “To survive in today’s hostile world, governments must col-

lect exorbitant rates of taxation to finance military forces and expanded law enforcement personnel. Of course, greed on the part of many government leaders accounts for much of the excess taxation that is now so burdensome to so many. As governments expand, they tend to extract more in taxes as a means to redistribute wealth, pursuing the socialistic philosophies that predominate in this world. Outrageous tax rates will be eliminated.

“The administration of God’s government has costs, however. Rather than tax rates ranging from 30 to 90 percent, a tithe—just 10 percent!—will be required. That 10 percent belongs to God (Lev. 27:30). God views this command most seriously: ‘Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me. But you say, Wherein have we robbed You? In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse: for you have robbed Me, even this whole nation. Bring you all the *tithes* into the storehouse, that there may be meat in Mine house, and prove Me now herewith, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it’ (Mal. 3:8-10).

“Most nations have a variety of heavy, burdensome, hidden taxes, and national health and social security services. Ever-mounting taxes become overwhelming to many now struggling to survive. These burdens will be lifted in tomorrow’s world.”

**Health:** “In tomorrow’s world, people will be universally taught that ‘sin is the transgression of the law’ (I John 3:4). [God has] great spiritual laws, but He has numerous *physical* laws as well. Mankind has specialized in how to break them all. He is surrounded, therefore, by every kind of bad physical effect. Rampant disease and illness are among the greatest.

“Savor God’s promise regarding the disappearance of disease and sickness in the world tomorrow and what makes this possible: ‘But there the glorious LORD will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither



■ **STRUGGLING NATION:** Above top, members of an antiretroviral treatment site light candles for World AIDS Day (Nov. 28, 2013). Above middle, a policeman walks past protesters in Diepsloot after five people were arrested for the rape and murder of two toddlers (Oct. 18, 2013). Above bottom, white South Africans in Pretoria protest the murder of farmers, which they term “genocide” (Oct. 10, 2013). Opposite page top, a principal, who witnessed an execution-style killing and lost a student in the crossfire, stands in a classroom (Aug. 27, 2013) Opposite page middle, shantytowns are prevalent in the nation. Opposite page lower middle, a member of Cape Town’s metro police special operations unit stands guard at the gate of a school in an area that has experienced violent gang turf wars (Aug. 27, 2013). Opposite page bottom, children play in the streets in Marikana (July 9, 2013).

PHOTO: ALEXANDER JOE/AFP/ (TOP, MIDDLE, BOTTOM); RODGER BOSCH/AFP/ (OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP, LOWER MIDDLE); ODD ANDERSEN/AFP/ (OPPOSITE PAGE BOTTOM) GETTY IMAGES; KEVIN D. DENEE/THE REAL TRUTH (OPPOSITE PAGE, UPPER MIDDLE)

shall gallant ship pass thereby. For the LORD is our Judge, the LORD is our Lawgiver, the LORD is our King; He will save us...And the inhabitant shall not say, *I am sick*: the people that dwell therein shall be *forgiven their iniquity*' (Isa. 33:21-22, 24)."

"This is what God wants: 'For I will *restore health* unto you, and I will *heal you* of your wounds' (Jer. 30:17)."

"When fully implemented, the government of God will be a picture of harmony and unity, with all those in administration being the right choice for each job—perfectly qualified for the tasks they face."

"Through proper re-education of the world, God's laws of health will become known—and compliance with them will become practical and affordable."

**Cities of tomorrow:** "City planners of the future will always be certain to allow enough room for people to enjoy their homes and the land around them. But the planning of this world's cities has been much different. Overpopulation has translated into overcrowding, with tenement houses teeming with too many people for the space allotted. Row houses are common in many big cities of the world. God says, 'Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place...' (Isa. 5:8). Many of today's cities are better off temporarily becoming waste places. It will be far easier to rebuild them from scratch.

"The cities of the world to come will present a far different—and infinitely better and more beautiful—picture than the cities of today."

**Population/environment:** "God has a Master Plan! No man could ever think of it, or bring it to pass if he did. Yet it will solve *every* problem related to overpopulation, pollution, and production, procurement and distribution of food and water. It will involve a complete change in entire weather patterns around the earth, including ocean currents, jet streams and flow of arctic air. Beautiful, clear water will be available—and in abundance—in all parts of the world. The

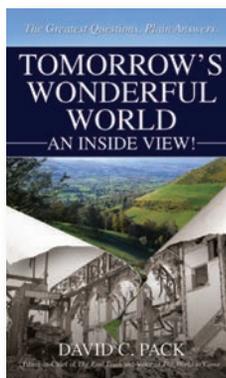
nature of mountain ranges, islands and even placement of continents will allow a repopulation of earth simply inconceivable to modern planners of cities and nations."

**Internal peace and security:** "The streets of cities around the world will soon be safe for all. Look at this description of how Jerusalem, certainly one of the most violent, unsafe cities on earth today, will change: 'There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof' (Zech. 8:4-5). Abandoned buildings, choking traffic, drug dealers, the homeless, street gangs, criminals—and all fear!—will soon only be memories."

With these awesome trends in mind, the words "Thy kingdom come" take on a whole new meaning! The Bible also shows that the entire Earth yearns for this SUPERGOVERNMENT: "For we know that the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now" (Rom. 8:22). The previous verse shows that Creation longs to "be delivered from the bondage of corruption" at the coming of Jesus Christ.

South Africa also awaits the time when it will be delivered from its many national problems. To find out how this will come about, order *Tomorrow's Wonderful World – An Inside View!* at [rcg.org/tww](http://rcg.org/tww) free of charge. In it, you will learn that the Bible, seen nearly everywhere in South Africa, but little understood, lays out a plan for these solutions. It also proves this kingdom is coming *soon*.

At that time, a bright new age—truly and finally—will be born! □



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# OLD TESTAMENT

Continued from page 14

the days of these kings [the last days] shall the God of heaven set up a KINGDOM, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people [mankind], but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms [of men], and it shall stand forever. Forasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands [meaning supernaturally], and that it broke in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God has made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure” (vs. 36, 44-45).

Daniel 7 records: “But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever... Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom” (vs. 18, 22).

After seeing these Old Testament accounts, is it any wonder that Jesus Christ preached the kingdom of God while on Earth?

Recognize that many more verses and passages could be cited showing that the Old Testament is filled with the good news of the coming kingdom of God. Clearly, God’s Word reveals that this—and this alone—was the gospel Christ preached.

## Apostle Paul Preached the Gospel

During His earthly ministry, Jesus instructed His disciples to “go you into

all the world, and *preach the gospel* to every creature [human being]” (Mark 16:15). The apostle Paul obeyed this command as can be seen in two passages of Acts.

“And he [Paul] went into the synagogue, and spoke boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things *concerning the kingdom of God*” (Acts 19:8).

“And Paul dwelt *two whole years* in his own hired house, and received all

subjects are clearly *different*—and that he distinguishes them as two *separate* concepts.

## Still Preached Today!

A prophecy in Matthew 24:14 reveals that Christ’s gospel of the kingdom would continue to be preached until shortly before He returned, known as the time of the end: “And this *gospel of the kingdom* shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.”

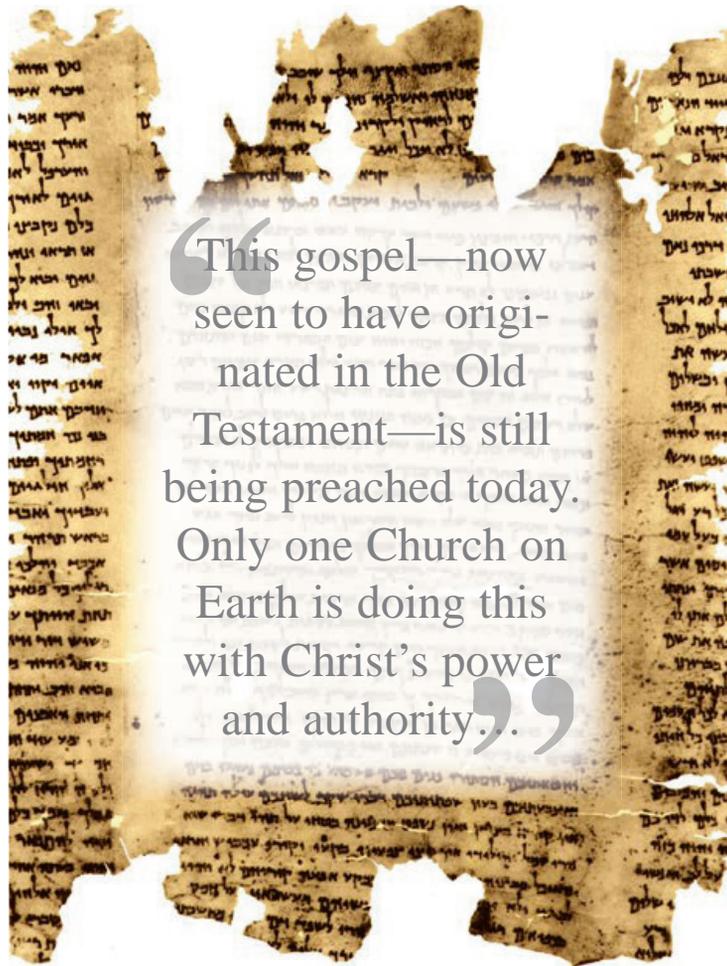
This gospel—now seen to have originated in the Old Testament—is still being preached today. Only one Church on Earth is doing this with Christ’s power and authority—The Restored Church of God, the publisher of this magazine. This is done through a vast library of literature as well as through *The Real Truth* magazine and Pastor General David C. Pack’s video program *The World to Come™*, which is broadcast online and through television.

Not many years remain to announce the arrival of God’s kingdom before the end of this age. Although most will not believe and act on this precious knowledge until it is too late, you have the opportunity to take to heart what you

have learned from God’s Word.

What will you do?

The place to start is by going online and requesting our free booklets *Which Is the True Gospel?* ([rcg.org/witrg](http://rcg.org/witrg)) and *What Is the Kingdom of God?* ([rcg.org/witkog](http://rcg.org/witkog)). They contain much more about the subject covered in this series as well as many other Old Testament verses that foretell God’s kingdom. □



“This gospel—now seen to have originated in the Old Testament—is still being preached today. Only one Church on Earth is doing this with Christ’s power and authority.”

that came in unto him, *preaching the kingdom of God*, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him” (28:30-31).

Along with preaching the coming kingdom of God, Paul also taught about Jesus Christ’s sacrifice, which makes it possible for Christians to enter God’s kingdom. Notice that the second passage shows that these two



# Nine Ways to Eat Healthfully in an Economic Downturn

When money is tight, avoid the trap of fast-food and prepackaged meals.

BY DR. F. JACO VILJOEN WITH STACEY L. PALM

**F**or many around the world, the global economic crisis has produced bitter, grinding hardship. The meltdown of late 2008 and 2009, starting with the mortgage industry, was just the

beginning of a downward trend that left millions without a job or income.

*The Wall Street Journal* published an article in 2009 in which the Federal Reserve Bank estimated, “U.S. households’ net worth tumbled by \$11 tril-

lion” and that, ultimately, “The wealth of American families plunged nearly 18% in 2008.”

A U.S. Census Bureau survey’s data reflected that the official poverty rate in the country rose 2.6 percent from 2007 through 2010, leveling off at 15.1



percent in the same year. This equaled about 46.2 million poor Americans at that time. By 2012, it had increased to 46.5 million.

At present, some sources consider the U.S. economy to be in recovery. However, many states still struggle with high unemployment. And official statistics do not always reflect the whole picture—for example, those who have given up on finding a job are sometimes not included in the unemployment numbers. So it is clear that the pain has not abated.

In fact, for many in America and beyond, it has intensified.

### **The Paycheck and the Pantry**

Even in a “land of plenty” such as the United States, *less money* implies *less food!* This is where extensive governmental aid comes in for millions of citizens. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), commonly known as “food stamps,” pro-

vides the needy with about \$4 per day, per person, according to *The Week*.

But what will \$4 buy?

Las Vegas Mayor Carolyn Goodman decided to find out, taking the challenge of living on food stamps for five days. She described what she ate on one of the days to the *Las Vegas Sun*: “Breakfast: 2 eggs and toast with jelly,” “Lunch: Soup and lettuce with tomato and dressing,” and “Dinner: Tuna sandwich with lettuce.”

This modest fare may seem like a starvation diet to many Americans. However, is this the type of food that most who rely on food stamps opt to purchase?

Anecdotal evidence shows that many of the poorest families tend to buy fast food or heavily processed snacks since they are more filling and provide the immediate gratification of “comfort food” ingredients—fat, sugar and sodium. And in some neighborhoods, there is virtually no

other option—no real grocery stores to be found for miles. The *National Bureau of Economic Research* found that “a one percentage point increase in the resident state’s unemployment rate is associated with a 2-8% reduction in the consumption of fruits and vegetables.”

The fast-food preference is not confined to just one socioeconomic group. *The New York Times* reported, “No country has embraced the movement toward commercialized, prepackaged food as much as the United States. Americans eat 31 percent more packaged food than fresh food and they consume more packaged food per person than their counterparts in nearly all other countries.”

With such a large portion of the population living on ready-to-eat meals, it is no surprise that, during the recession, sales rose 7.1 percent for fast food companies such as McDonald’s, according to *The Associated Press*.

In pure monetary terms, it is a mistake to assume that fast food is the cheapest option. Many books and articles, and practical experience, demonstrate that it is possible to feed a family on healthy, fresh food for less money than it would cost to buy fast food at the nearest drive-thru.

Looking beyond short-term dollars and cents, author Eric Schlosser, in his book *Fast Food Nation*, stated, “The real price never appears on the menu.” He was referring to the long-range price—poor health. A nation that spent (according to Mr. Schlosser’s research) about \$6 billion on fast food in 1970, and a greatly increased \$110 billion in 2000, will see significant health effects in the long run.

### Addictive, Available—and Bad for You

A number of other factors contribute to the enduring popularity of convenience foods.

A Scripps Research Institute study concluded that the “engineering behind hyperprocessed food” results in a product that is “virtually addictive,” further asserting that the “same mechanisms

underlie drug addiction and obesity” (*The New York Times*).

Thus, we are conditioned to crave junk food rather than food that provides wholesome nutrition—and the junk is available most anytime. In the U.S., many small towns have at least one fast-food franchise. According to statistics published by the *Guardian* in early 2013, there is one McDonald’s restaurant for every 22,147 American citizens. Add to this count Burger King, Wendy’s, Taco Bell, KFC, etc.—and remember that many of these are open late.

In the end, human health is negatively affected by food with a high caloric, fat, salt and sugar content. A 2012 American Heart Association report stated, “Obesity (body mass index  $\geq 30$  kg/m<sup>2</sup>) is associated with marked excess mortality [increased death rates] in the U.S. population,” and “one in every six deaths” in the nation is caused by coronary heart disease.

Consider: approximately two-thirds of American adults—155 million!—are classified as overweight or obese, compared to just 15 percent of the population in 1980.

Worldwide, an estimated one in 10 people are obese, with the highest-ranking countries after the U.S. being Mexico, New Zealand, Chile, Australia, Canada, United Kingdom, Ireland, Luxembourg and Finland.

The trend in weight gain has resulted in an increase of ailments such as diabetes, cancer, heart disease, arthritis, dementia, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol. In addition, poor nutrition has been linked to increased levels of stress, fatigue, mood swings, dental problems, joint pain, insomnia and depression.

Are you battling any of these conditions? Do any run in your family?

Has the current state of the world economy squeezed your *personal* economy and made it challenging to eat healthfully?

Even in the face of financial difficulties, you can trade convenient, empty nutrition for a diet that will keep you healthy but not break the bank.

The following are nine tips for eating right even when money is tight.

### (1) Plan Ahead

This can be difficult, especially when working more than one job or facing other serious time demands. But it pays dividends!

Know exactly how much money you have, and determine what kinds of healthful food you can afford. It may help to develop a weekly or bi-weekly meal plan. This does not have to be complicated.

For example, plan dishes and buy items that you can use as ingredients in different meals throughout the week. You may wish to get a large container of spinach and use it for salads with lunch for the first few days and then spice it up and cook it with chicken for dinner on the fourth day.

Proper planning will help you buy what you need once you are at the store and reduce impulse spending. Be sure to compare prices of different brands. Also, avoid shopping when hungry.

In certain countries, using coupons can reap great benefits. Be careful, however, not to buy something simply because you have a coupon for it. Many discounted and advertised products are not nutritious. Remember, your health is at stake!

### (2) Buy Fresh Produce

While this concept may go against conventional wisdom for those on a tight budget since fresh food has a shorter shelf life, the health benefits you reap far outweigh the fact that a given product cannot sit on a shelf for very long.

One fresh produce strategy is to buy items that can be eaten raw or cooked later. For example, kale can be eaten fresh in a salad and sauteed later if it starts to wilt slightly. This also applies to tomatoes, peppers, and green beans, among others.

Even though eating fresh produce sooner is best, it is versatile. It can be used in a salad, cut up and frozen, added to a soup, roasted and so on. Once vegetables are cooked, they often last

“One fresh produce strategy is to buy items that can be eaten raw or cooked later.”





longer. Roasted vegetables, for example, can last up to a week.

In addition, buying fresh produce grown locally has a number of benefits. When this is unavailable, frozen produce can be your next best option.

### (3) Incorporate Protein

Science has shown that protein is critical for brain and muscle development, and can provide better stamina than carbohydrates alone. Protein is also filling, which helps limit total caloric intake.

While it is somewhat more expensive than other types of food, strive to incorporate sufficient protein into your diet. Certain fish (e.g., wild-caught salmon and tuna) are high in nutrients such as vitamin C and essential fatty acids, making them an investment that will boost overall health.

Eggs are another good protein source. Unlike meats, they have a fairly long shelf life. A *Men's Health* article labeled eggs "the perfect protein": "The protein in eggs has the highest biological value—a measure of how well it supports your body's protein needs—of any food, including our beloved beef."

Get the most from eggs by adding them to a casserole filled with vegetables such as summer squash and carrots, which are available almost everywhere and are inexpensive.

While beef also contains protein, be careful what you buy. The most commonly available varieties are laden with antibiotics and hormones, and can be higher in fat and cholesterol.

Other options for protein are chicken, turkey and plant proteins such as quinoa, beans and nuts.

### (4) Schedule a "Cooking Day"

While this system requires some effort, it should result in less wasted food. Statistics from the United States Environmental Protection Agency showed that in 2010 alone, the total national food waste stood at 34 million tons—"14% of the total municipal solid waste stream."

You can reduce or eliminate your

**The REAL TRUTH**

share of this massive amount of wasted food.

Once you plan what you will buy, arrange a time within your schedule to cook meals for the entire week. If, for example, you shop on Sunday mornings, set aside a few hours on Sunday afternoon to make sure that you have meals to eat throughout the remainder of that week.

This can include cooking a breakfast dish that can be eaten every morning, roasting any fresh vegetables that you do not plan to use in your salad that week, freezing coconut milk mixed with berries and honey for dessert, and baking several pieces of chicken to eat with the roasted vegetables for dinner. Anything that you do not use can be stored for later in reusable containers or frozen.

Having meals for the entire week also makes it easy to bring lunch to work or school, rather than resorting to heavily processed convenience foods, which negatively affect both your budget and your waistline.

#### **(5) Use a Crockpot**

Using a crockpot can help you eat a more wholesome diet while also saving time. For example, you can toss a bunch of vegetables into water with a little bit of salt and pepper or vegetable stock before you leave for work in the morning and by the time you come home, dinner will be ready.

One of the most popular crockpot meals is pot roast, which consists of a cut of beef, potatoes, carrots and onions. All of these ingredients can be simmered in a crockpot for more than 10 hours.

Another option for a hectic schedule is to slow cook frozen vegetables while you are away. But be sure to check out the ingredients: many frozen vegetables have added preservatives and chemicals that should be avoided.

Collard greens are an example of a vegetable that is easy to make in a crockpot. Just add a little water, olive oil, salt and pepper and set on low for several

hours. Then enjoy all the healthy nutrients once you arrive home!

If you do not have a crockpot or the funds to buy one, visit a used-goods shop, where they can be found for as low as 10 percent of the original price. It is a worthwhile investment and the health benefits that you reap from your homemade food beat a microwave dinner any day.

#### **(6) Skip Sauces and Use Spices**

Most sauces contain synthetic additives or unnecessary sweeteners. A better idea is to create your own using spices and herbs. Many have health-promoting properties: “Technically, spices are vegetables in concentrated form,” Wendy Bazilian, [registered dietitian], the nutrition adviser for the Golden Door Spa & Fitness Resort in Escondido, California, told *Fitness* magazine. ‘Like veggies, they contain thousands of healthy phytonutrient compounds, including antioxidants.’

“‘I think of dried oregano leaves as miniature salad greens,’ Bazilian says. One teaspoon contains not only six micrograms of bone-building vitamin K but also the same amount of antioxidants as three cups of spinach. And preliminary research indicates that oregano can help fend off stomach flu.

‘Bacteria often hitch a ride on the food we eat, and oregano may keep them from multiplying and making us sick,’ Bazilian continues.”

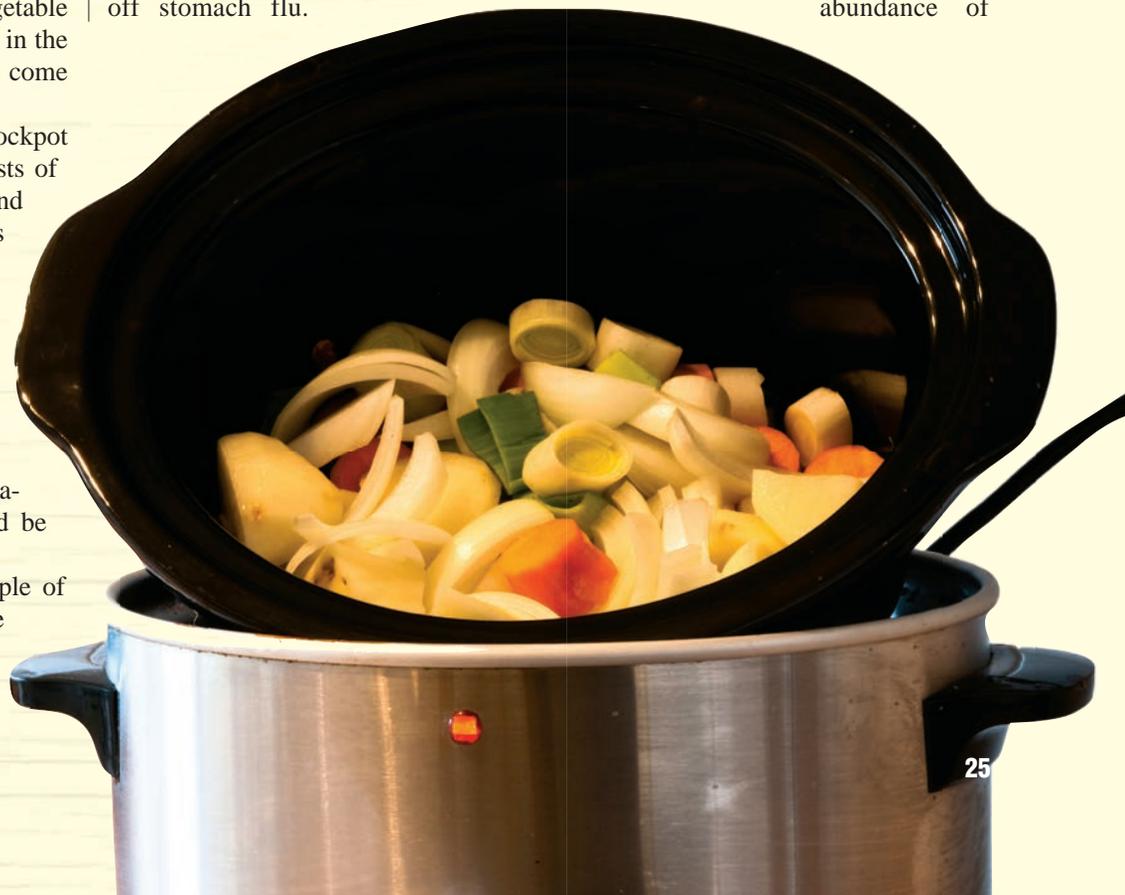
Skip sugar-filled barbecue sauce for your baked chicken and opt instead for a flavorful marinade of olive oil, salt, pepper and red pepper flakes.

In addition, try mixing a few pinches of dried basil into some olive oil with salt, pepper and a trace of lemon to create an easy Italian dressing. This is a welcome alternative to the substances found in most store-bought salad dressings such as polysorbate 60 (an emulsifier that conjoins ingredients) or “caramel color” (which can contain toxic contaminants).

#### **(7) Opt for Nutrient-dense Items**

Ultimately, nutrient-dense food is more filling and promotes satiety (the feeling of being satisfied after eating). It also helps cut down on how much you eat, aiding any grocery budget.

According to an article by the U.S. Department of Agriculture: “Dark green leafy vegetables are great sources of nutrition. Salad greens, kale and spinach are rich in vitamins A, C, E and K, and broccoli, bok choy and mustard are also rich in many of the B-vitamins. These vegetables also contain an abundance of



carotenoids—antioxidants that protect cells and play roles in blocking the early stages of cancer. They also contain high levels of fiber, iron, magnesium, potassium and calcium. Furthermore, greens have very little carbohydrates, sodium and cholesterol.”

The organization later stated, “Perhaps one of the most appealing benefits of dark green leafy vegetables is their low calorie and carbohydrate contents and their low glycemic index. These features make them an ideal food to facilitate achieving and maintaining a healthy body weight. Adding more green vegetables to a balanced diet increases the intake of dietary fiber which, in turn, regulates the digestive system and aids in bowel health and weight management.”

Compare this to the popular alternative—items filled with corn syrup or sugar devoid of nutrition—so-called foodless foods.

*New York Daily News* reported: “The average American eats a third of a pound of sugar every day—130 pounds a year.

“[California-based endocrinologist Dr. Robert] Lustig says his research proves that the sweet stuff causes heart disease and cancer, as well as Type 2 diabetes and obesity.

“And it’s not just the added sweeteners we add to our foods, like table sugar, or the desserts we eat.

“Sugar is everywhere in foods where we least suspect it, including breads, yogurt, peanut butter and sauces.”

Instead, *Discovery News* advised: “Turn to natural sweeteners for your drinks and food alike. Honey, organic maple syrup, molasses, date sugar, brown rice syrup, and stevia are just a few...”

Avoid items that contain bleached flour or empty carbohydrates. And be aware that even whole wheat has changed after decades of hybridization, prompting some to avoid it in favor of other grains such as quinoa and brown rice.

Other foods to consider adding as staples are almonds, apples, avocados, beets, beans, peppers, blackberries, raspberries, blueberries, broccoli,

Brussels sprouts, cranberries, oranges, strawberries, sweet potatoes, and tomatoes.

Finally, minimize consumption of packaged meals. A rule of thumb: if it is boxed, bagged or canned, it has likely spent extended time on a shelf and should only be a small part of your diet.

### **(8) Be Creative**

Living on a budget can sometimes involve sacrifices, such as not eating as much of the variety of foods that you want. For example, a carton of eggs may not be the food of choice for breakfast or even dinner every single day, but it will supply needed protein and be filling.

Mixing tuna with brown rice for a simple meal or sprinkling cinnamon or nutmeg in your coffee instead of using creamer may not be the first choice in more prosperous times, but these small adjustments can be vital for staying within budget.

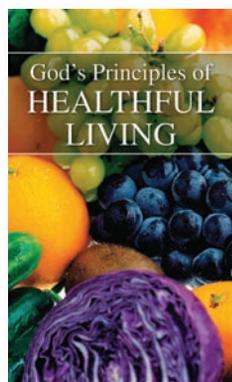
Another tip is to use what is in season. Seasonal foods are often more affordable.

Broaden your culinary horizons. Do not let old habits or the traditions of your particular country dictate your choices. If you have access to the Internet, type a vegetable name into a search engine and see what recipes result. Many people have come up with delicious ways to incorporate certain foods—at a fraction of the cost and in a much more healthful way.

### **(9) Forget Soda, Drink Water**

While water is not food, it will help you feel full and keep your body running well. Some sources recommend drinking one ounce per two pounds of body weight daily.

“Water serves as a lubricant,” a *New York Times* Health Guide stated. “It makes up saliva and the fluids surrounding the joints. Water regulates the body temperature through perspiration. It also helps prevent and relieve constipation by moving food through the intestines.”



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In many places, water is still free. By contrast, soda or other soft drinks are increasingly expensive and can be detrimental to good health given their high levels of sugar and salt. According to *USA Today*, Americans drink an average of 44 gallons of soda per person per year! Think of the health benefits and cost savings that would result if these drinks were replaced with water.

### **More than Food**

This article has briefly addressed some ways to stretch your budget while building your health. To realize the full benefits of these strategies will require more research. A myriad of books are available for free at the library and online to help.

Our booklet *God's Principles of Healthful Living* states: “God’s physical creation is governed by definite, physical laws. These include laws that regulate our bodies. To be healthy, you must follow them.”

“When a person breaks these principles and laws of health—whether through omission or negligence—the body suffers. Among the negative results are malnutrition, atrophy from inactivity, or exhaustion from lack of rest—simple cause and effect.”

Healthy eating is only part of the equation. While it will help your mind stay sharp and minimize illness, it takes a balance of proper diet, sleep, exercise, good hygiene, and certain other elements to maximize health.

These principles are discussed in greater detail in *God's Principles of Healthful Living*, which is available for free at [rcg.org/glohl](http://rcg.org/glohl). Thousands have put them into practice and are already living healthful lives with more vigor and vibrancy than they ever thought possible.

It can take time to improve your eating habits. But the health that you reap in the long run will be well worth it! □

# “I DON'T WANT TO BE YOUR VALENTINE!”



If you knew the true origins of the customs surrounding this celebration, you might not find it so romantic. To learn the real story of this mid-February holiday, read “The Truth Behind St. Valentine’s Day” at [rcg.org/ttbsvd](http://rcg.org/ttbsvd).

## **PORNOGRAPHY**

*Continued from page 11*

Realize these staggering numbers only refer to viewers. They do not address the actors in film and video productions, and the negative impact pornography has on them, including the possibility of contracting AIDS.

Clearly, pornography is anything but “harmless entertainment.” It is warping and distorting the purpose of sex—turning it into a means of satisfying one’s lusts. In all, it creates a lack of natural human emotion and feelings.

Partaking in porn has many side effects that most simply overlook in pursuit of their own pleasure. Yet pornography has much deeper consequences than even its staunchest opponents realize. To firmly grasp this,

one must first understand there is a supreme and divine purpose for mankind.

### **Overarching Purpose**

Mankind’s true purpose of existence is connected to the gospel found in the Bible. Many people in and out of mainstream Christianity have heard of this term and there are nearly as many interpretations of its meaning as there are people interpreting it.

This gospel (or good news), which reveals God’s awesome purpose for creating mankind, is not readily understood by the average person. Jesus confirmed this: “And He said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the *mystery* of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables...” (Mark 4:11). Not only is the true knowledge of the gospel a mys-

tery to most, but the understanding of it must be “given.”

According to God’s Word, every human being has a “spirit.” (This is not to be confused with the Holy Spirit, which is a gift from God as stated in Acts 2:38.) The following verses make this clear: “But *there is a spirit in man*: and the inspiration of the Almighty gives them understanding” (Job 32:8). Also “...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 this *spirit* that separates human beings from animals. Animals function through God-given instinct, which is like being pre-programmed to perform certain functions. Mankind, on the other hand, operates through the power of the mind (another way to describe this human spirit). It is this



mind or spirit that imparts judgment, reasoning and creativity into human beings.

As brilliant as is the spirit in man, unlike God's Spirit, it has limitations. It does not give life to a person nor does it have its own consciousness. It takes information from the body's sensory organs—eyes, ears, nose, taste-buds and skin—and enables a person to interpret it accordingly.

The other significant limitation of the spirit in man is that, by itself, it can only understand physical knowledge. The mind of a man cannot properly interpret spiritual knowledge from God. Incidentally, this explains why so many are confused or find it difficult to properly interpret Scripture.

Paul explains further, "...the things of God knows no man, but the Spirit of God...But the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are *spiritually* discerned" (I Cor. 2:11, 14).

It is the Holy Spirit of God dwelling in a person that allows him to begin to understand "the things of God." This includes understanding the "mystery of the kingdom of God."

God, who is Spirit (John 4:24), reveals that He is expanding His Family by reproducing Himself through human beings. Within God's overall plan of salvation, man can eventually be born into the kingdom of God and be composed of spirit just as God is.

This is part of what Jesus explained in the familiar yet generally misunderstood account in the book of John. Christ said that even though someone is born once to a fleshly (or physical) parent, it is also possible to be "born again"—only this time to a Spirit parent (John 3:8).

(While it is not the purpose of this article to detail this fascinating understanding, request Editor-in-Chief David C. Pack's free booklet *What Does "Born Again" Mean?* by visiting [rcg.org/wdbam](http://rcg.org/wdbam). You will be astounded at the true meaning of this often mis-used phrase.)

The realization that God is reproducing Himself sets up the opportunity to begin understanding the lasting negative effects of pornography.

### Why Sex?

God, as the Creator of all things, created sex for a purpose. It is the product of much planning and forethought. Like all of His Creation, upon completion, sex was deemed "very good" (Gen. 1:31).

One obvious purpose for sex is reproduction. All animals engage in various forms to produce offspring. Human beings were given this ability by God, who also attached a command to it: "...Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth..." (Gen. 1:28).

God, however, did not stop with this instruction. In the book of Genesis and other scriptures, He also instructed mankind about the proper uses of sex—including its place in a proper marriage relationship. The pornography obsession ruins this connection.

Sex, when viewed as it was intended, is a profound expression of *love* between a husband and wife. This is not an act of selfish, "what's in it for me" behavior with the label of "love" attached to it, but instead is the giving of one's self to satisfy his or her spouse. Sex was created to be a pleasurable experience and a gift from God to mankind, which was created "in His own image" (Gen. 1:27).

Pornography warps one's view of sexual relations. It turns contact with the opposite sex into pure sexual gratification. It corrupts a viewer's understanding of the proper use of sex. Instead of expressing love between a husband and wife, it is twisted into an act of self-fulfillment, regardless of the other person's needs or wants. No wonder pornography has such a negative impact on marriages!

God set up the family unit as the basis for a healthy and prosperous society, and to demonstrate how He interacts with mankind. God, as the "Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 6:9) certainly knows the importance of domestic relationships. He designed the family unit to model how He reproduces and eventually leads His children. The expression of love toward one's spouse through sex illustrates the spiritual reproduction process and His willingness to give of Himself for the benefit of others.

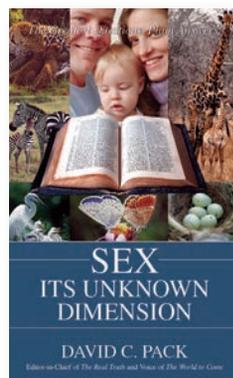
It should not be difficult to see how pornography distorts the true purpose of sex. Instead of a means to express love in a monogamous, committed, marital relationship, sex instead becomes a way for an individual to indulge in his own pleasure at the expense of his mate and family.

### Pornography's True Impact

As has been seen, pornography destroys relationships. It turns sex into merely a means of satisfying one's lusts. Instead of carrying out sex the way God designed and appreciating what it parallels, people have continually sought to redefine it—bringing about a new morality in which any and every form of sex is accepted (and new forms are always welcome).

To learn much more about God's purpose for sex, its intended role in a marriage relationship, and information about proper "sex education" for your family, read David C. Pack's thorough book *Sex – Its Unknown Dimension*, available for free at [rcg.org/siud](http://rcg.org/siud).

God designed sex as a beautiful act within marriage and as a way to draw couples together. It is a gift that God—the Creator and Designer of all things—gave to mankind to engage in as He intended. □



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## PERSONAL

Continued from page 3

replaced him, but upheld the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty.

Each U.S. administration since Mr. Carter's, to varying degrees, has tried to establish peace. This has ranged from the strength of words to the delicate dance of diplomacy—from economic incentives to political compromise.

Diplomatic efforts known as the Middle East peace process picked up again in the fall of 1991 and were sponsored by Spain, the United States, and the Soviet Union. The talks focused on cooperation among Israel and three of its neighbors—Lebanon, Syria and Jordan—and led to a series of agreements between Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization known as the Oslo Accords. By this time, an Israeli-Jordanian peace treaty had been signed. This occurred under King Hussein, King Abdullah II's highly respected, very moderate father. But virtually all the goals are still eluding diplomats over 20 years later.

In April 2003, U.S. President George W. Bush unveiled the Middle East peace plan, called "A Performance-based Roadmap to a Permanent Two-state Solution to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict." Diplomats and journalists called it "the road map to peace."

Devised by the U.S., the European Union, the United Nations, and Russia, the road map was a three-phase blueprint designed to reach a peaceful settlement between the Israelis and Palestinians by 2005. It contained a step-by-step process calling for both parties to take action to reach its objective: creating a sovereign, independent Palestinian state, peaceably coexisting with Israel.

Soon after the road map was outlined, hostilities flared. The 2006 showdown between Israel and the Lebanon-based group Hezbollah continued the cycle. This war had implications elsewhere in the Mideast, including Syria, Iran and the Palestinian territories.

A cease-fire came August 14, 2006. Many declared Hezbollah victorious, including the leaders of Iran and Syria. Syrian President Bashar Assad stated that the outcome of the conflict proved America's plan for the Middle East is "an illusion."

In early 2008, three years after the road map was to have brought a peaceful resolution, President Bush embarked on an eight-day trip to the Middle East. His trip to Israel and the Palestinian territories was intended to continue pressure for both sides to follow through on their commitments to each other, specifically the first stage on the "road map to peace." The plan called for Israel to stop new settlements, dismantle unauthorized outposts built by settlers after March 2001, and lift more travel restrictions on the Palestinians. It also called for

“While governments around the world focus on resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, another problem looms: an Iranian nuclear state.”

the Palestinians to disband terrorist groups and to build the institutions of a functioning state. A number of years after the plan was supposed to be a success, it is *still* failing.

Solutions have simply *never worked* between Israel and Palestine—and they never *will*. Part of the reason is because of other powers in the region who will not under any circumstance permit tiny Israel to have peace with its neighbors. But the greatest reason lies within how different peoples—Jew and Arab—see their connection to the patriarch Abraham so differently.

### Nuclear Battlefield?

While governments around the world focus on resolving the Israeli-

Palestinian conflict, another problem looms: an Iranian nuclear state. Iran has claimed it is committed to the peaceful use of nuclear technology, while denying enriching uranium for weapons. It maintains that its nuclear work is to generate electricity and produce isotopes for radiation therapy in hospitals. World powers, particularly Western nations, are unconvinced. So is Israel.

Some history. In February 2010, on the 31st anniversary of the Islamic Republic, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad announced that Iran was now a nuclear state. He told a huge raucous crowd, "I want to announce with a loud voice here that the first consignment of 20 percent enriched uranium was produced and was put at the disposal of the scientists" (*Tehran Times*).

Weeks earlier, in his first State of the Union address, U.S. President Barack Obama promised Iran would pay a price if it did not abandon its nuclear program, stating "...as Iran's leaders continue to ignore their obligations, there should be no doubt: They, too, will face growing consequences" (*Time*). Of course there has yet come no real price, but only more talk.

Tension over Iran's nuclear ambitions rose with the announcement by its president that he would step up enrichment. Iran is prepared to increase uranium enrichment if the United States attempts to halt its nuclear program.

German newspaper *Der Spiegel* claimed in early 2010 to have access to an intelligence dossier showing the existence of a secret military branch of Iran's nuclear program. This meant Iran's aim of producing a bomb had reached an advanced stage. The article stated, "Experts believe that Iran's scientists could produce a primitive, truck-sized version of the bomb...but that it would have to be compressed to a size that would fit into a nuclear warhead to yield the strategic threat potential that has Israel and the West so alarmed—and that they could reach that stage by sometime between 2012 and 2014."

The explosive Middle East becoming a nuclear battlefield comes ever closer to reality as Iran feverishly works toward atomic weapons.

Experts report that time is running out for Israel to address Iran's nuclear complex before Tehran is able to launch long-range missiles with nuclear warheads at Tel Aviv or other Israeli cities. The prospect of mushroom clouds over this strategic region is terrifying the whole world!

### **An Interim Deal**

A deal was struck in late 2013 between Iran and six other nations (America, Russia, China, France, Britain and Germany). The "interim" arrangement started a kind of "clock" (six months) to find a long-term solution. In the meantime, Israel knows it cannot dare initiate a preemptive strike on Iran's nuclear program. Their hands are tied, for now.

*The Telegraph* reported this: "The interim nuclear agreement with Iran, touted by its proponents as a 'historic deal,' has been described as a 'historic mistake' by Israel's prime minister, Binyamin Netanyahu...The six-month deal is a mixed bag. On the positive side it stems the tide of Iranian nuclearisation by setting its clock slightly back, temporarily capping Iran's nuclear facilities, array of centrifuges and stockpile of low-enriched uranium, and improving the monitoring regime. On the other hand, Iranian enrichment has been accepted as part of the endgame; the clock in the uranium and plutonium tracks continues to tick, albeit at a slower pace; Iran's stockpile of low-enriched uranium (enough for at least five bombs) remains intact; Iranian concessions are all reversible; and International Atomic Energy Agency concerns about military dimensions have not been addressed."

Some analysts are already *expecting* the diplomatic talks to fail since Iran will never allow its nuclear program to be dismantled, making any permanent solution impossible. Waiting six months may not do anything but give the Iranians more time

to develop their program en route to nuclear weapons. In fact, Iran's President Hassan Rouhani stated on a state TV channel, "Enrichment, which is one part of our nuclear right, will continue, it is continuing today and it will continue tomorrow and our enrichment will never stop and this is our redline" (*Fars News Agency*).

The Iranians also announced, just eight days after signing, that they are going to build four more nuclear reactors. Does this sound like a country that has been told or that believes it will have to get out of the "nuclear" business in six months?

Regarding sanctions, do businesses that have been required until now to boycott Iran believe that the Security

“Experts report that time is running out for Israel to address Iran’s nuclear complex before Tehran is able to launch long-range missiles with nuclear warheads at Tel Aviv or other Israeli cities.”

Council of the United Nations will ever be able to enforce such a ban? Of course not. They are rushing at this moment to begin doing business with Iran as though "the bell rang and school is out." Momentum has been lost forever. Reversing the world's reversal on Iran will almost certainly never happen.

The most is at stake for tiny Israel, but also for other Middle Eastern nations who would be affected if war breaks out. Israel will soon be faced with one of the most important decisions in its history.

In the meantime, it is looking to form new alliances. Mr. Netanyahu

held his first meeting with Pope Francis in December 2013. *The Jerusalem Post* stated, "Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu met with Pope Francis in a 25-minute closed-door meeting Monday, with a host of geo-political and religious issues on the agenda as well as a formal invitation for the pontiff to visit the Holy Land next year. It was the first time the two leaders met face to face...According to political experts, Netanyahu's trip, which also includes a meeting with Italian Prime Minister Enrico Letta, is important for all sides: for Netanyahu as he tries to rally support for a hard-line stance against Iran, for Italy as it seeks to play its traditional role as a bridge builder in the Middle East, and for the Vatican as it looks to reassert its role as a global player after several years in which that role was reduced."

### **Third Party**

With each new round of fighting in the Middle East, the rest of the world looks for a third party to present a solution. This provides opportunities for other nations, or groups of nations, to demonstrate leadership on the world stage. The European Union began to intervene some time ago, so far to no avail.

Let's see more from 2010 to the present. At a January 2010 UN Security Council forum, an EU official statement advocated a two-state solution for Israel and Palestine: "If there is to be a genuine peace, a way must be found through negotiations to resolve the status of Jerusalem as the future capital of two States. The EU calls for the reopening of Palestinian institutions in Jerusalem in accordance with the Roadmap [to peace]" ("[EU] Council conclusions on the Middle East Peace Process"). It maintained, "The EU stands ready to contribute substantially to post-conflict arrangements, aimed at ensuring the sustainability of peace agreements" (*ibid.*). Israel will not agree.

Commentator Ghassan Michel Rubeiz, writing for *Common Ground News Service*, a nonprofit initiative for a peaceful resolution to the Middle

East conflict, proposed a future role for EU security forces in the region: “Over the years, Europe’s role as a mediator receded, giving way to an expanding US role in the region. But in more recent decades, European states have achieved excellence in policing peace in many places: in the Middle East, the Balkans, West Africa and elsewhere. Given the opportunity, Europe could provide the Israelis and Palestinians with the necessary international security that is crucial for enforcing a two-state solution.” This portends absolutely monumental—COLOSSAL—implications.

After Israeli troops raided a Gaza flotilla in May 2010, which killed nine and further heightened tensions between Israel and Palestine, the European Parliament “called for a stronger EU role in lifting the Gaza blockade, a day after foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton gave a chilling account of the situation there and suggested an EU naval mission to help with the transfer of goods.” In addition, the EU Parliament proposed “international monitoring of the crossings, including reactivating the European border assistance mission...at the Gaza-Egyptian border” (*EUobserver*).

While the futures of Europe and Israel are intertwined, they will follow very different paths.

After two years of silence, a new round of Middle East peace talks began in September 2010 between Israel and Palestine. The initial meetings were hosted in Washington by President Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. Also in attendance were Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, King Abdullah II of Jordan, and President Mubarak. Participants emphasized creating a “framework agreement” to resolve difficult issues such as disputed borders, security, the status of Jerusalem, new Israeli settlements, and Palestinian refugee rights.

Yet, due to the continuous violence and repeated failed attempts to broker peace, the talks failed. At the

time, Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman, who lives in the West Bank, said, “I do not believe a comprehensive agreement with the Palestinians is possible within a year, nor even during the next generation” (*BBC*).

Today, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry is working with Israel and the Palestinians to create a permanent peace agreement. So far, talks have been unsuccessful.

### Future Foretold

All these events have led more to ask, “What does the *future* hold for the Middle East?” Many millions are pursuing a Bible view of the course of events there. A host of terms are now bandied about. These include the antichrist, the abomination of desolation, Armageddon, World War III, a new world order, and the mark of the beast. But what does the Bible actually say? And does history reveal a *pattern*? Also, other millions wonder about a possible emerging Islamic caliphate, or the arrival of the Mahdi—the Islamic Messiah—or about a final “king of the south” referenced earlier.

We have seen that man cannot find a lasting solution to the Mideast problem. What does God say *He* will bring about in this region?

Now for just a little of the extensive prophecy in Daniel, found in chapter 11, and concluded in chapter 12. In chapter 10, Daniel is left astonished by the prophecy—shocked and overwhelmed by what God revealed would happen “at the end,” or in the *last days*. He was so upset, it records, he did not eat for three weeks (10:2-3)!

In reviewing the prophecy, bear in mind that men inserted all chapter and verse divisions of the Bible. While these can be helpful to readers, they can also inadvertently break up longer stories, thoughts or, as in this case, prophecies. The true meaning and scope of the subject matter can be obscured or lost from view by these divisions.

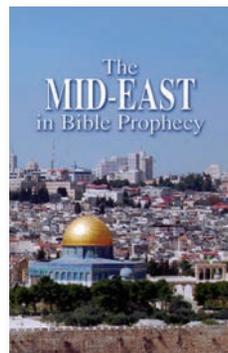
In this case, the entirety of Daniel 11 builds to an unexpected conclusion, yet to be fulfilled.

Some setup. God gives a certain introductory emphasis to those who read the prophecy, and we need to grasp it. First, God gave this prophecy during the third year of the reign of Cyrus, king of the Persian Empire (centered in modern Iran). Notice chapter 10, verse 1: “In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a thing was *revealed unto Daniel*, whose name was called Belteshazzar [his given Babylonian name]; and the thing was TRUE, but the time appointed was long [it involved the distant future]: and he understood the thing, and had understanding of the *vision*.”

Daniel recorded that two powerful kings (actually competing kingdoms tied directionally to “north” and “south”) would play an overarching role in Middle East events, all the way to the time of the end. These two kings are central to the unfolding of vitally important future events, which culminate *before Christ returns!*

Two key verses set the stage. In Daniel 10:21, the archangel Gabriel speaks to Daniel: “...I will show you that which is noted in the *scripture of truth*...” Chapter 11 introduces the time setting. Verse 2 continues, “Now will I show you the *truth*.” When God foretells events, He speaks the *truth!* They are CERTAIN! *They will happen!* Since no scripture can be broken (John 10:35), neither can any verse of this prophecy! Each must stand the test of close scrutiny.

The remainder of Daniel’s prophecy presents absolutely *fascinating* knowledge. It will be covered in Part 2 of this series, which will appear in the next issue of *The Real Truth*. To learn more in the meantime, read my booklet *The Mid-East in Bible Prophecy*, available at [rcg.org/tmeibp](http://rcg.org/tmeibp). It examines the Daniel 11 prophecy verse by verse, including events to occur in the very near future. □



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## WEATHER &amp; ENVIRONMENT



■ **DIGGING OUT:** A man shovels snow off his vehicle four days after a storm swept through the village of Beit Jann, in northern Israel (Dec. 16, 2013).

PHOTO: JACK GUEZ/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

## Harsh Winter Weather Across the Globe

**E**arly in the winter season, several regions struggled with unusually severe storms.

**North America:** A weekend ice storm in December shut off power for residents in Michigan, southern Ontario, Canada, and parts of the U.S. Northeast, according to *CNN*. Ice weighed down trees, which pulled down poles. Broken limbs littered yards. “Authorities blame [the] storm for 17 deaths in the U.S. and 10 in Canada,” *The Associated Press* reported.

Residents were still without power seven days later, when another storm shut down parts of the Pennsylvania Turnpike after a 35-vehicle pileup sent 10 people to the hospital.

Before the official start of winter, the upper Midwest struggled to recover from damage caused by several tornadoes and a blizzard that killed tens of thousands of cattle. The October blizzard dumped nearly three feet of snow on parts of the Northern Plains and stranded more than 80 motorists in western South Dakota, according to the *Chicago Tribune*.

The storm’s early arrival caught ranchers off guard. Silvia Christen,

executive director of the South Dakota Stockgrowers Association, told the *Rapid City Journal* that “...during the cold months, ranchers tend to move their cattle to pastures that have more trees and gullies to protect them from storms. Because [the] storm arrived so early in the year, most ranchers were still grazing their herds on summer pasture, which tend to be more exposed and located farther away from ranch homes.”

In Iowa, responders combed through debris after numerous tornadoes touched down overnight, destroying more than 20 homes and damaging 40 to 50 farms (*Chicago Tribune*).

**Europe:** A severe winter storm in December left five dead and hundreds of thousands without power across Western Europe, according to *The Associated Press*.

“The storm caused four deaths in Britain, including a man who jumped into a fast-flowing river to try and rescue his dog. The severe weather also left a 12-year-old boy crushed to death beneath construction materials in Normandy, France.”

“The Energy Networks Association, which represents power companies across the U.K., said 150,000 homes were without power, mainly in the south of England.”

*The Associated Press* also reported that strong winds in northern Spain’s Galicia region derailed a commuter train, kept its fishing fleet in port, and knocked out power to 88,000 homes.

**Middle East:** A regional cold snap in December blanketed Cairo in snow and stranded motorists in Israel.

As Egyptian children played, adults posted pictures on the Internet of a powder-covered Cairo, which had not seen snowfall in more than 100 years, according to the *Los Angeles Times*.

In Israel, “Nearly three feet of snow closed roads in and out of Jerusalem...and thousands in and around the city were left without power. Israeli soldiers and police rescued hundreds trapped in their cars by snow and ice.”

In Lebanon, “The inclement weather worsened the situation for tens of thousands of Syrian refugees... where many live in makeshift camps, abandoned buildings and other temporary sites lacking heat and protection from the elements.” □

## Intelligence Committee: America's Terror Threat Higher Than Two Years Ago

The threat of terrorist attacks on United States soil continues to grow, top officials from the House and Senate intelligence committees found. Most worrisome is the shifting trend from large-scale attacks to smaller, harder-to-prevent events such as the Boston Marathon bombing.

When asked whether America is generally safer than it was two years ago on *CNN*'s "State of the Union," Democratic Senator Dianne Feinstein stated that "terror is up worldwide." She mentioned the advancing technology of terrorism, such as explosive devices that can evade detection by magnetometers (used to detect metal objects or magnetic fields), is making it increasingly difficult to keep bombs out of the U.S.

On the program, Republican Representative Mike Rogers said he would "absolutely agree" with Ms. Feinstein's assessment and responded that "the pressure on our intelligence services to get it right to prevent an attack are enormous. And it's getting more difficult because we see the al

Qaeda as we knew it before is metastasizing to something different, more affiliates than we've ever had before, meaning more groups that operated independently of al Qaeda have now joined al Qaeda around the world, all of them have at least some aspiration to commit an act of violence in the United States or against western targets all around the world."

He added that terror groups have moved away from events on the scale of 9/11 to smaller attacks, which are "exponentially harder for our intelligence services to stop..."

Earlier in the year, *Los Angeles Times* reported that FBI Director James B. Comey told the Senate Homeland Security Committee that "the risk of that spectacular attack in the homeland is significantly lower than it was before 9/11." Yet Mr. Comey warned that "'what's popped up in its place' is the risk of smaller attacks by so-called lone wolves."

In 2012, the number of terrorist incidents and deaths worldwide reached a record high of more than

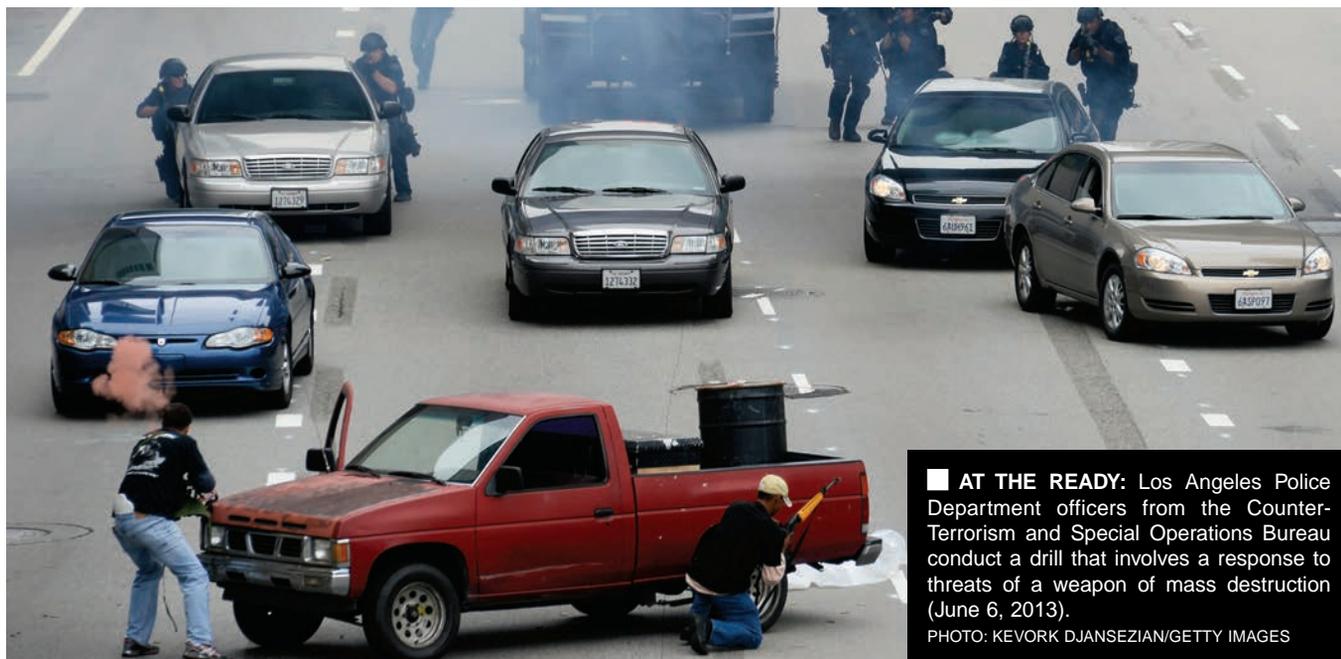
8,500 attacks with almost 15,500 people killed—a 69-percent and 89-percent jump, respectively, over 2011, according to a report by *CNN* about the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism.

U.S. officials worry that terrorism's worldwide increase will translate to higher risks at home.

On another edition of "State of the Union," chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee Representative Mike McCaul stated: "I personally see it spreading like a spiderweb, like a wildfire, through Northern Africa and the Middle East."

"As that threat increases overseas, so too does it increase to the homeland..."

The United States has been forced to adapt to the constant threat from extremist groups. Our article, available at [realtruth.org](http://realtruth.org), "One Nation Under Terror – Three Realities America Can Learn from Life in Israel" addresses how 9/11 changed the nation forever—and how new threats continue to affect the lifestyles of its citizens. □

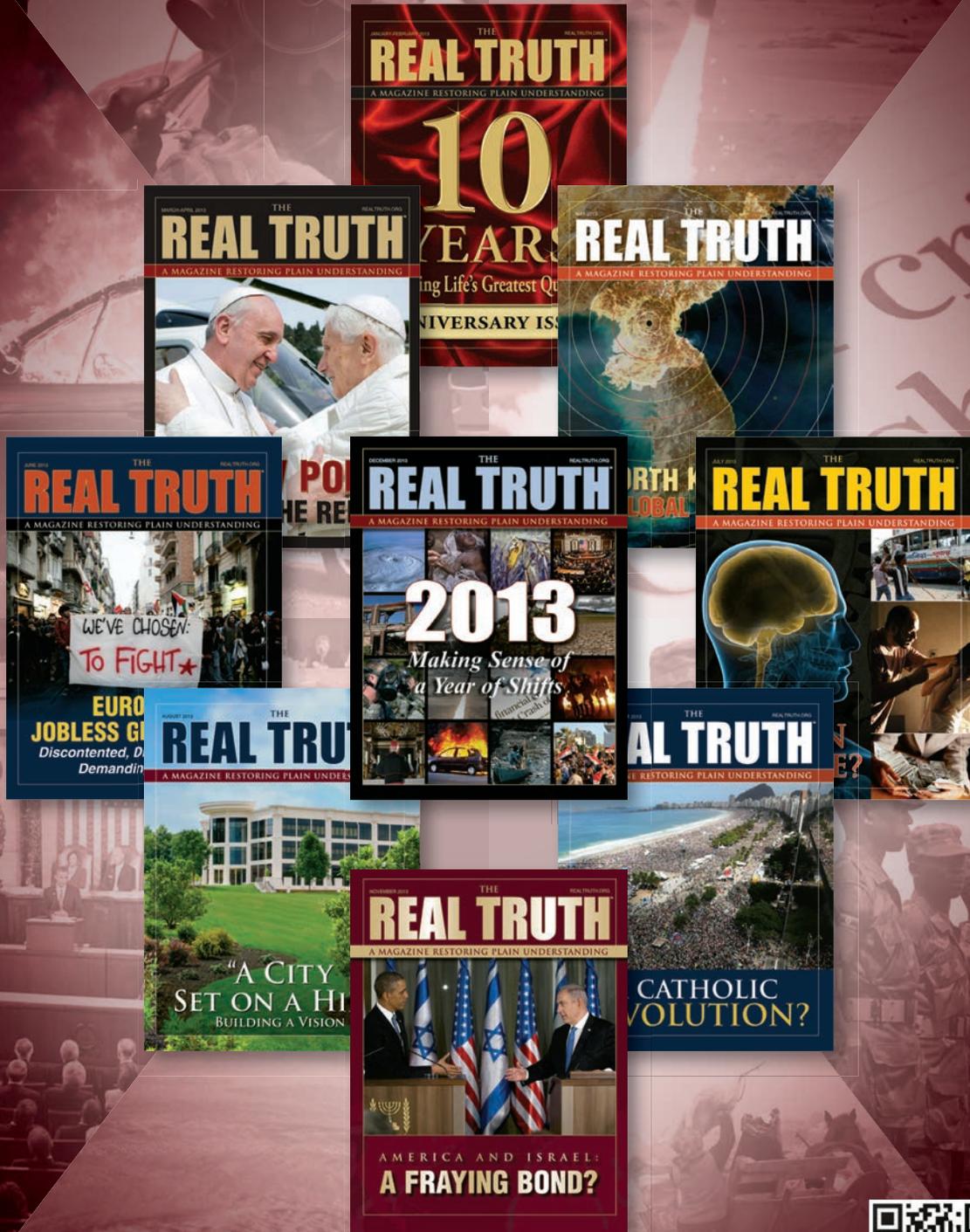


■ **AT THE READY:** Los Angeles Police Department officers from the Counter-Terrorism and Special Operations Bureau conduct a drill that involves a response to threats of a weapon of mass destruction (June 6, 2013).

PHOTO: KEVORK DJANSEZIAN/GETTY IMAGES

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