

TOMORROW'S WORLD

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The Global Drug Crisis

Overdoses are skyrocketing.
Is there any hope for a
world dying to get high?

Generational Arrogance

Every generation, it seems, thinks it is smarter than the one before. *How could they have been so foolish as to...?* You fill in the blank.

The passenger pigeon was once the most prolific bird found on the North American continent. Their massive flocks are legend. The sound of an approaching flock was like thunder, and they could darken the sky for hours as they passed overhead. Yet the last known bird died in the Cincinnati Zoo in 1914 (“Why the Passenger Pigeon Went Extinct,” *Audubon*, May 2014). *Surely, we would never hunt or fish a species to extinction!*

World War I was deemed the “war to end all wars,” yet barely two decades passed before the world was plunged into a far more devastating one. *How barbaric they were back then—totally unlike us today!*

The Great Depression in America was felt the world over and contributed to the instability that brought Adolf Hitler to power in Germany. *Surely, this could never happen to us today!*

Examples abound of the disastrous effects of hyperinflation, a phenomenon not limited to war-devastated Germany after World War I or France during their Revolution. Zimbabwe and Venezuela are two more recent casualties of fiat money—paper currency without commodity backing. *Surely, that could never happen to us now!*

Or could it?

The hyperinflation of 1790s France illustrates one way in which inflationary monetary policy becomes unmanageable in an environment of economic stagnation and debt, and in the face of special interests who benefit from, and demand, easy money. In 1789, France found itself in a situation of heavy debt and serious deficits. At the time, France had the strongest and shrewdest financial minds of the time. They were keenly aware of the risks of printing fiat currency since they had experienced just decades earlier the disastrous Mississippi Bubble under the guidance of John Law.... Of course, blame for the ensuing inflation was

assigned to everything but the real cause. Shopkeepers and merchants were blamed for higher prices. In 1793, 200 stores in Paris were looted and one French politician proclaimed “shopkeepers were only giving back to the people what they had hitherto robbed them of” (“Revolutionary France’s Road to Hyperinflation,” *Mises.org*, December 2, 2013).

Sound familiar?

Sobering Problems

But of all the mistakes a generation can make, one of the most shortsighted is to arrogantly throw off the moral foundation of those who have gone before. Those familiar with biblical morality understand that all generations have fallen far short of living up to



God’s standards, but today’s gross immorality brings tragic and destructive penalties. It is all too easy to think that we are smarter and have learned from those ignorant folks who traveled the road of life previously, and that we will never repeat the mistakes leading to wild-life extinctions, senseless

wars, economic catastrophes, or the disastrous results of gross immorality.

It is true that individuals learn from their own past experiences—but the lesson of history is that, by and large, their children and grandchildren do not carry the same lessons. *Times are different. We are smarter today. People back then were ignorant and foolish, un-*

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like us. True, they dressed differently, their hairstyles appear strange to our modern tastes, and they lacked the many gadgets we possess. However, they were far from lacking in intelligence. In fact, previous generations invented the foundations of today's technologies, and any student of history could make the argument that many were better educated a century ago than the average high school or university graduate today!

The events of the last two-and-a-half years should be sobering. We have been experiencing a global pandemic, as well as a serious war transforming Europe in ways yet to be realized. Our grocery shelves sometimes lack basic items, and a shortage in baby formula has disrupted a prosperous America, even while inflation strikes us at the gas (petrol) pumps and in virtually every product we can purchase.

But surely, we are too advanced to let things like this continue. Surely, we may think, all this is merely temporary and will pass shortly. But not everyone is so sure. Many are uneasy about what they see. They sense that the ills that afflicted previous generations are descending upon us today. The seductive thinking that we are more sophisticated than previous generations is about to crumble. Not only have we not learned *from* the past; in too many cases, we never learned *about* the past. No matter where you look, you see trouble.

One recent Monday morning, our office staff went to the Post Office to pick up the mail, expecting trays of requests for our free DVD *The Truth About the Transgender Movement*, which was offered in a recent letter. Instead, there was a worker mopping the floor who explained, "No one shows up for work these days. And when they do, they don't want to work." In the back of the Post Office, a lone worker explained that we had mail, but there was no one to sort it. "Come back tomorrow." How our postal system has fallen! But it is not the Post Office only, and it is not the United States only.

Vaccine mandates have left health care, fire departments, and other infrastructure jobs short-handed, as well as many businesses. Airlines are short of workers, leaving travelers disappointed, stranded, and angry. Police departments also have their hands tied by "progressive" prosecutors and judges as crime spirals out of control. Some police and sheriff departments have run out of money to fuel their cars.

The result is one violent crime after another. "Make a chain, for the land is filled with crimes of blood, and the city is full of violence" (Ezekiel 7:23).

The Only True Solution

Few realize the real cause of our problems. One can point, with some justification, to political leaders, but there is a more fundamental cause that will never be solved by elections or coups. As the biblical book of Proverbs explains, "Like a flitting sparrow, like a flying swallow, so a curse without cause shall not alight" (Proverbs 26:2). Yes, there is a cause for every effect, and that cause is found in our current rejection of God's rule in our lives.

You will find human greed behind almost every economic problem. Crime is the result of not loving our neighbor as ourselves. And our problems are often the result of failing to teach children from an early age that there are penalties for misbehavior. "Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil" (Ecclesiastes 8:11). Lust and selfishness result in broken marriages, but it is in *functional families* that right behavior is most effectively taught.

The biblical book of Judges is also instructive. After Joshua's righteous rule, Israel forgot its Creator and suffered oppression from the surrounding nations. Yet the Israelites finally cried out to God, and He sent them a leader to save them. The whole book is filled with this repeated pattern. One generation after another arrogantly thought it knew better than those who had gone before.

Our world today is self-confidently going down an old path while calling it "progressive." Some may think a newly elected "savior" will solve our problems, but until we turn and listen to our Creator, those problems will continue. Sadly, we see no indication of that happening now, but that day of salvation for mankind *will* come—not by our efforts, but by that strong hand from above (Matthew 24:21–22). That is what we look forward to—*tomorrow's world*.



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When life seems meaningless, many turn to drugs. Yet God made each of us for a transcendent purpose!

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Dying to Get High

The global drug crisis, powered with new intensity by synthetic opioids, is ravaging our world, and the toll in deaths and shattered lives continues to rise. Efforts to stop it are floundering—and often making things worse. As governments fail in their efforts to halt the unfolding tragedy, what does our Creator offer that can make a difference?

By **Wallace G. Smith**

Our world today is obsessed with what amounts to a slow-motion suicide through chemistry. The United Nations has called it the Global Opioid Epidemic. Contrasting it with the COVID-19 crisis, the *Economist* called it “the other epidemic”—the one relentlessly seething and churning under the surface, while coronavirus dominates the news (March 30, 2021). In fact, the COVID-19 pandemic has only fueled its growth.

We are increasingly a world addicted. Seeking a way to push back pain, experience something new, or simply escape reality, desperate millions are consuming record amounts of illegal drugs.

The specter of addiction and drug-fueled self-destruction knows no political borders. The strict punishments meted out by its national religion have not prevented Iran from becoming a ravenous consumer of opium. Highlighting Iran’s unique form of heroin and its culture of homemade crystal meth, the *Economist* once called drug addiction among Iranian youth the region’s “other religion” (August 17, 2013). Russia is experiencing an epidemic of diseases connected to

illegal intravenous drug use, with such diseases growing at rates among the fastest of any other region on earth. And the synthetic opioid tramadol in Nigeria and western Africa is credited with empowering the terrorist organization Boko Haram.

The story for Western nations is the same song with only slightly altered lyrics. As of December 2020, England had seen cocaine-related deaths increase consecutively for nine years in a row. In Canada, the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic saw opioid-overdose deaths rise 96 percent, almost doubling. And then there is the United States.

Setting the (Horrific) Example

The U.S. seems to lead the world in this crisis, but in all the wrong ways. The twenty-first century has now seen more than one million deaths in the U.S. due to drug overdoses.

The U.S. National Center for Health Statistics reports that from 2020 to 2021 deaths due to overdoses on *prescription* drugs dropped between 1 and 2 percent—a small change that should be good news. But those were a small fraction of overdose deaths. Cocaine-related deaths grew 23 percent to more than 24,000, methamphetamine deaths grew 34 percent

to almost 33,000, and deaths due to synthetic opioids (e.g. fentanyl), remained more than double the meth overdoses—growing 23 percent to roughly 71,000.

The non-profit data-collection project *Our World in Data* estimates that, directly or indirectly, over 750,000 deaths occur worldwide due to illicit drug usage, of which over 160,000 are due to overdose. Against the backdrop of such estimates, it should seize attention that in the U.S., the year 2021 alone saw over 107,000 drug-overdose deaths. While estimates suggest that around 1 out of every 100 people in the world have a drug problem, in the U.S., that ratio is one out of every 30.

In one of the most financially well-off nations in the world with one of the highest standards of living, a vast number of people are dying to get high.

and brain—doing what they are designed to do—seek and maintain a regular environment, and the presence of the drug in the body becomes the “norm.” The highs it once brought become harder to achieve as the body becomes accustomed. Eventually, the drug gives little or no pleasure but must be taken to avoid the pain of withdrawal. The body may suffer in the ways we’ve seen in photos of addicts—pockmarked skin, sunken eyes, missing teeth—adding decades to their apparent age. But whatever its effect on the body, perhaps its most debilitating effect is on the mind.

The human mind results from the union of the human spirit, imparted to each of us by God, and the human brain, the most astonishing and complex physical object in the known universe. Opioids short-circuit the brain’s neuronal pathways until the only reward it

seeks to achieve is that provided by the drug. Nothing else but the drug will do—even as, increasingly, no amount of the drug is enough. Before long, with a brain rewired to set aside all concerns but the next fix, the user finds himself willing to take actions he might have once believed unimaginable: Lying. Stealing. Prostitution. Murder. Gone

are the goals, dreams, careers, and relationships that once mattered to the addict. In a very real way, chemical addiction is a picture of the very enslavement Satan the devil—the “great dragon” and “serpent of old” (Revelation 12:9)—would see every human being cast into. Free will seems to disappear, as only one choice appears imaginable: painful and debasing self-destruction, one hit at a time. Perhaps it is not without cause that the elusive quest to recapture their first high is called by some addicts “chasing the dragon.”

The United States of Fentanyl

As civilization’s love affair with addictive and self-destructive chemicals accelerates, the synthetic opioid *fentanyl* has come to play a special part in the statistics of despair we see in our headlines. The *Washington Post* reported that in Pennsylvania, for instance, government officials seized more than 1.8 million doses of fentanyl in only the first three months of the

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Ironically, the U.S. has been one of the most prominent and public of nations to pursue the “war on drugs” that it declared in the 1970s. Yet here we are—50 years and, by some estimates, around \$1 trillion later—and a look at the growing body count would cause many to conclude that the drugs are winning that war.

A Tragedy for the Living

But counting dead bodies, as horrific as the numbers are, is an insufficient means of understanding the toll of the world’s addiction problem. Some “experiment” with what they consider “recreational” use of a drug, until the experiment becomes a habit, no longer recreation. Others begin with prescribed medication, perhaps taken for too long or used in ways for which it was not originally intended.

Regardless of how it begins, before one is aware, a vicious cycle of dependency can set in. The human body

year—more than they had seized over the entirety of the previous year (May 11, 2022).

What makes fentanyl particularly dangerous is the sheer power of the drug. A synthetic opioid like fentanyl differs from natural opioids—such as morphine and codeine—in that it is designed in a lab for the purpose of achieving the same pain-relieving results. Fentanyl is 50 times stronger than heroin and 100 times stronger than morphine. Consequently, many illegal drug manufacturers will add small amounts of fentanyl to other drugs—such as cocaine, heroin, or meth—to intensify the effects. The addition also makes the drugs far more addictive—and more deadly. Synthetic opioids such as fentanyl, even in small amounts, are shockingly potent and dramatically increase the odds of a fatal overdose.

But fentanyl was invented not to kill, but to help. Belgian physician Dr. Paul Janssen developed the drug in 1960 in the hopes of improving doctors' ability to treat pain. The success of the drug, including its capacity to bring relief to those who had grown resistant to pain treatment with other opioids, inspired more and more doctors to use it, with new avenues for deploying fentanyl explored by multiple companies—including tablets, sprays, and lozenges. The intense pain experienced by cancer sufferers was a frequent driving force behind the spread of its use.

It may be shocking to realize that the opioid epidemic in the United States did not begin in the illegal markets, but in the arena of legitimate prescription, where the proportion of patients prescribed opiates skyrocketed in the earliest decades of the twenty-first century. Sometimes, opioids are simply cheaper or easier to administer than other means of pain treatment. In other instances, physicians have been placed

under pressure to prescribe opioids even against their professional judgment, according to testimony given to the U.S. House of Representatives in 2013. In the latter case, connections between payments made to doctors by pharmaceutical companies and the amount of opioids those doctors prescribe—the higher the number of prescriptions, the higher the payments—were examined by CNN in 2018, in a report titled bluntly: “The More Opioids Doctors Prescribe, the More Money They Make.”

While some see any connection as circumstantial, it is still troubling. “I don’t know if the money is causing the prescribing or the prescribing led to the money, but in either case, it’s potentially a vicious cycle,” said Dr. Michael Barnett of the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. “It’s cementing the idea for these physicians that prescribing this many opioids is creating value.” And “value” here means “profit.”

Doping, Dealing, and Dying in Broad Daylight

Many bigger cities around the world have at least one district that has become a virtual open-air drug market. In the U.S., San Francisco is notorious for this, prompting a group of local mothers to organize and purchase a prominent billboard in the city, proclaiming that San Francisco is “famous the world over for our brains, beauty and, now, dirt-cheap fentanyl.” Addicts shooting up can be seen openly in the streets, along with abusers lying unconscious along city roads, as syringes begin to be found scattered like litter and drug-influenced crimes increase. And it is no secret that the growing homeless encampments in areas such as New York and Los Angeles are rife with drug dealing and addiction. One researcher has estimated that as many as 90 percent of the homeless in Los Angeles encampments are drug users, though the figure is disputed. And Philadelphia’s Kensington area was labeled by *The New York Times Magazine* as “the largest open-air narcotics market for heroin on the East Coast”—called by one resident the “Walmart of Heroin”—and, according to some, strategically maintained to prevent the area’s problems from spreading to the rest of the city.

In such places, the desperate need for the “product” and the possibility of massive profits for selling it help ensure that there is plenty of momentum to keep markets open. As the *Philadelphia Inquirer* quoted



A homeless encampment along a downtown roadside resulting from the growing epidemic of drug abuse in Los Angeles, California.

one local heroin dealer, “This is one of the few places in America where you can wake up Monday flat broke and on Tuesday you can have \$10,000 in your pocket” (May 21, 2021).

Of course, the United States is not alone. Brazilians might be familiar with Cracolândia, or *Crackland*, in the impoverished area of Sao Paulo near Luz Station—an area officials attempted to address earlier this year. Tehran, capital of Iran, struggles to manage the area around Davarze Ghar, which translates to “the entrance of the cave” and represents a neighborhood dominated by drug usage and crime.

Like a river flowing to lower ground, where there is demand, supply will find a way to create a market.

“Solutions” That Make Things Worse

Governments are hard-pressed for solutions, and bad ideas are easier to find than good ones.

Station WCVB out of Boston reported in 2020 how the city’s attempts to ease homeless problems in the area created what some call the “Methadone Mile”—fenced-in areas that became virtual headquarters for unrestricted drug use, unrestricted drug sales, and violence. In Portland, where personal use of illegal “hard drugs” has been decriminalized as a social experiment intended to lessen the societal burden of addicts, overdose deaths are now skyrocketing—up 41 percent in 2021 over 2020—and new open-air drug markets have been born.

Seeking to combat overdose deaths, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services set aside an initial \$30 million in December 2021 to create safe spaces for addicts to take their illegal drugs, providing free syringes and “safer smoking” kits. But U.S. officials should learn from the experience of their Canadian neighbors. In March 2020, the government of Alberta reported on their own efforts to create such “supervised consumption services” (SCS) sites to help reduce the number of overdose deaths. While no deaths were recorded at the facilities themselves, “death rates in the immediate vicinity of the SCS locations *increased*. Opioid-related calls for emergency medical services (EMS) also increased in the immediate vicinity following the opening of the sites” (*Alberta.ca*, emphasis ours). Other consequences will not surprise many: The use of non-opioid drugs, meth in particular, increased in many locations; reports of

crime and social disorder in the vicinity of the sites generally increased; and needles, used and unused, along with other drug paraphernalia, began to pile up in the public areas “served” by these sites.

Sometimes, it seems, human beings cause the most harm when we are trying to reduce harm. Still, the question remains: What to do? How do you reverse the direction of a world dying to get high?

It’s not just a “big city” problem. In February 2014, the *American Journal of Public Health* reported that, if anything, the growing opioid problem was proportionally worse in rural, non-metropolitan areas of the U.S. Deaths were more likely, misuse of prescription medications among youth was more probable, and the abuse of multiple drugs and depression were more likely to be involved. If anything, the report notes that the opioid crisis has shown to have a special hold on U.S. states with larger rural, “small town” populations, such as Kentucky, West Virginia, Alaska, and Oklahoma.

As the Brookings Institute has noted in its studies of the U.S. opioid crisis, attempts to prevent drugs such as fentanyl from becoming available illegally in a particular region can be worthwhile, but they cannot be counted upon—and should be recognized as mere delaying actions. Dealing with the crisis must account for the likelihood that, one way or another, these death-dealing substances will make their way to the borders of your own town, the alleys of your own neighborhood, and the thresholds of your own schools.

Our Need for Transcendent Purpose

While legislatures and law enforcement struggle with what to do about the supply of these poisons, the most important end of the problem—demand—is in our own hands.

For those with legitimate medical need who choose to take potentially addictive medicines, prayerfully following instructions and being transparent with their caregivers and loved ones is vital—as is disciplined self-control. King Solomon advised, “Whoever has no rule over his own spirit is like a city broken down, without walls” (Proverbs 25:28). That is, to the extent we fail to control our thoughts, choices, and actions, we become like an unprotected city—capable of being easily taken over and con-

quered by those forces that would become our masters and enslave us.

The appeal of many drugs is rooted in the presence of a great void in the lives of those tempted by their promises. That void is caused by a lack of profound and transcendent *purpose* in life—a purpose that can fill the void and bridge the chasm of hopelessness. Lack of real purpose lies at the heart of many afflictions of modern society. In a real way, the opioid crisis might be seen as a global symptom of the lack of transcendent purpose. And God reveals that we *have* such a purpose. Human beings are a purposeful creation of the God who reigns over all things. That eternal Being created the universe for the very purpose of giving it to mankind as an inheritance (Hebrews 2:5–8). The planets, stars, and galaxies that dot our night sky were crafted for *us* by the hand of a Creator who did not make each one of us only for the life we are living now—with its trials and tribulations—but for a glorious, eternal future beyond this life, to which this life is not worthy of comparison (Romans 8:18).

All human lives, from the kings of nations to the homeless battling their addictions, have been made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26), and each of us bears in that image a whisper of His desire and purpose for us. Just as Jesus Christ, who is our Creator under God the Father (Colossians 1:13–17), once lived in the flesh and now lives in power as the fully glorified Son of God (Romans 1:4), so too does God intend those now in the flesh to devote themselves to Him and to eventually join Him and His Son in the Family of God (1 Corinthians 15:45–49; Ephesians 3:14–15).


With this understanding in place and planted deeply at the center of who we understand ourselves to be, life will be filled with purpose and meaning. Even our trials—our pains, our losses, and our crushing disappointments—gain meaning as we begin to see them in a larger context and endure them in faith, with God’s help, knowing that He is working through them for a larger and more glorious purpose than the false materialistic abundance and shallow physical pleasures promised by this poisoned and confused world. This purpose far transcends the lying and empty pleasures of opioids.



From Global Crisis to Thriving World

Sooner than most imagine, the Creator of humanity will return to transform this world into all He and His Father intend it to be. Christ will bring the reign of the Kingdom of God to this planet, and with it, times of refreshing and restoration (Acts 3:19–21). Instruction in right ways of life—by the Giver and Designer of life—will spread across the earth, until all long to hear the truths that have been denied them in this world by the deceptive “god of this age” (2 Corinthians 4:4). Freed from the shackles of deception and a spirit of carnal self-centeredness, the peoples of the world will begin to see that world anew. The contentment and satisfaction of staying grounded in the real world will far outweigh the illusory promises of today’s pills and the siren song of today’s syringes.

Until that time, we can taste tomorrow’s world while still living in today’s, if we commit our lives to following the divine Author of that world as He leads us through this one. Those who have truly “tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come” (Hebrews 6:5) find themselves desiring more of it. But unlike addiction to the destructive chemicals of our day, which draws us further and further into despair and self-loathing, a hunger for more of the life of God draws us ever upward into realms of hope and fulfillment.

It is the continuing mission of *Tomorrow’s World* to help our readers discover a taste for that world. If you are interested in discovering a satisfaction with life that no drug could ever hope to provide, consider requesting our free booklet *What Is the Meaning of Life?* There is no drug that could ever hope to compete with the joy of knowing the eternal value of every human life—including yours. 

**MAY WE
SUGGEST?**

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Britain's Platinum Queen

Great celebrations occurred in early June of this year to honour the Platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, who reached the milestone of 70 years as monarch on February 6. Platinum is used for this anniversary because of its rarity and perceived value; so, indeed, the Queen's character, forged over her lengthy reign of service to her peoples, could also be considered a rare commodity of great value. On this anniversary, the words of William Shawcross ring out louder than ever from his book *Queen and Country*, wherein he stated that the Queen's commitment and faithfulness should be "celebrated, honoured and cherished" (p. 237) as something of very special value and benefit to her subjects.

The Queen is head of state of the United Kingdom and 15 other nations, including Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. She is Head of the Commonwealth of Nations, which is home to 2.5 billion people and has benefitted from her personal interest and involvement. She is also Supreme Governor of the Church of England and takes very seriously her religion and her commitment to serving others.

On this historic Platinum Jubilee, the Queen's longevity of service was celebrated with a tremendous outpouring of love, respect, and support for an individual who has fulfilled her role in what few would deny is an exemplary fashion. A parade down the Mall, aircraft flypasts, concerts, street parties in towns and villages across the UK, and a Service of Thanksgiving for her long reign took place over four days of celebrations that were broadcast around the Commonwealth and throughout the world.



That world has changed significantly during these past 70 years, but the Queen has adapted and reinvented her role while faithfully carrying out the duties she was ordained to fulfil. She understood the traits of character necessary to successfully fulfil her multifaceted roles. Those include steady and sound conduct, a love of her people, an attitude of servant leadership, and looking to God for courage and strength. Let's look at some key elements of the Queen's strong character that have been so widely appreciated, and then highlight some surprising spiritual lessons her example should prompt us to consider.

An Incalculable Debt of Gratitude

William Shawcross' book further illustrates the impact of the Queen's integrity: "Britain has been enormously fortunate in having... a head of state who has performed her job with the devotion, honour, discretion and constancy of the Queen. The debt she is owed is incalculable but huge" (p. 227). The joy and celebration of the Jubilee are the fruit of her positive leadership and abiding strength of character, so evident over her 70-year reign.

The Queen, now into her 96th year of life, made a lifetime commitment to her office at the age of 21. Since then, as monarch, she has visibly fulfilled her vow to serve her country. In her 14 March 2022 Commonwealth Day message, she restated that promise: "In this year of my Platinum Jubilee, it has given me pleasure to renew the promise I made in 1947, that my life will always be devoted in service." That character trait of service to others has had a tremendous unifying effect among those being served.

A Focus on National Unity

Her unifying influence in the lives of her subjects partly comes from how she has chosen to communicate with them. She annually broadcasts her “own personal message to the nation... always motivated by compassion and concern.... For The Queen, the Broadcast is not only a duty to be fulfilled, it is an opportunity to speak directly to the public, to react to their concerns and to thank and reassure them” (*Royal.uk*).

The *BBC* in 2006 wrote of “How the Commonwealth Sees the Queen,” expressing views of many Commonwealth peoples that “it is simply difficult not to admire the Queen for her perpetual calming and enduring presence.”

When the COVID-19 pandemic was at its height in April 2020, the Queen broadcast a calming message of encouragement and hope in the face of national crisis. “We will be with our family again, we will be



with our friends again, we will meet again,” she said, adding that “if we remain united and resolute, then we will overcome it.” Direct communication like this has helped people to identify with her and appreciate her composed nature throughout all stages of her life as a working mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother.

Always seeking to set a right example, the Queen has also demonstrated a much-needed respect and reverence for God, as she understands Him. This is a vital example to a society that is sharply veering away from belief in God and the Bible.

Celebrations of the Jubilee through the year afford a unique opportunity to consider and appreciate the good fruit of a uniquely long and beneficial reign. But the vital role that the Queen’s *character* has played in the success of that reign must not be missed. The character of an international leader like the Queen is of

immense importance for the people she serves. She is a pacesetter, leading by example in word and deed.

But what about you and me? How important is our character within our own sphere of influence—be it family, workplace, or community? How important is our character to God?

The Character-Image of God

The issue of character is fundamental to the life of a Christian. You might well be surprised to learn the precise meaning and origin of the word. The Greek word *charakter* is used just once in the Bible, in Hebrews 1:3. Translated as “express image” or “express likeness” in many English-language Bibles, its Greek root is *charasso*—meaning to cut, to scratch, or to mark, referring to something engraved as an exact copy or representation of the original. Hebrews 1:1–3 declares that Jesus Christ was the perfect representation or exact likeness of His Father in heaven.

By immersing ourselves in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, we can come to know what God the Father is like, because Christ was and is the very *character-image* of His Father (John 10:30).

This June, millions of people expressed their thanks for the remarkable achievement of the Queen’s 70 years. Much of her success is due to her strength of character—her *platinum* character—and many people across the nation and the world celebrated her dedicated, selfless service. But for all her admirable qualities, the Queen’s character pales in comparison to the character that Jesus Christ can develop within you if you humbly repent, are baptized into God’s true Church, and receive the incredible power of His Holy Spirit. While God directs the course of history through whomever He chooses (Daniel 2:21), those with His Holy Spirit have His personal guidance and help as they strive to let Jesus Christ develop His own perfect character within them (Galatians 2:20).

For the aspiring Christian, it is exciting to know that by living life in harmony with all of Christ’s teaching and example, we are coming to know the character of God Himself. The very purpose of life is to take on God’s character so that it becomes our own. If you would like to learn more about how your life can be transformed in this way, request a free copy of *What Is the Meaning of Life?* or read it at TomorrowsWorld.org.

—Simon R. D. Roberts

WILL YOU TAKE THE MARK OF THE BEAST?



By **Rod McNair**

What is the prophesied “mark of the beast” mentioned in your Bible? Is it a biochip that will be implanted under people’s skin?

Or a paper-thin “data tattoo” mounted on people’s foreheads? For citizens of the United States, is it their Social Security Number? Is it a tracking device—or, perhaps, a thought-control implant? Theories abound as to what this sinister mark will be.

The last book in your Bible—the book of Revelation—describes a mysterious “beast” imposing this mark on mankind: “He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a *mark* on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name” (Revelation 13:16–17).

Scripture warns that this beast will perform great miracles to deceive mankind and will work in conjunction with a powerful military and political system. Yet anyone who accepts the beast’s mark will be *defying God*. The Apostle John writes that those with the mark will “drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation” (Revelation 14:9–10). Surely, we should take that warning *seriously*.

So, what is this mark? And how will it affect you and your family? As we head into the troubled days at the close of this present age, these are *vital questions*.

A False Church with Ancient Roots

Your Bible describes a religious system called “Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and of the Abominations of the Earth” (Revelation 17:5). This system has its roots in the ancient Babylonian mystery religion. Described as a prostitute—an apostate church—it is in direct opposition to God. Scripture describes this system exercising great political influence with world leaders, gaining and giving favors (vv. 1–2).

John further identifies this Babylon as a very rich and wealthy church, “adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication” (Revelation 17:4). Jesus Christ sternly warns His people to leave and shun this system: “Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues” (Revelation 18:4).

But why would any church today be called by such a name? It is because that church today has *teachings* straight out of ancient Babylonian mysteries, which were the precursors of many of the world’s pagan practices (cf. J. Garnier, *The Worship of the Dead*, pp. 8–11). What was one of the key components of these ancient pagan religions? *Worship of the sun*.

A History of Sun Worship

In the days of the ancient Israelites, sun worship was “widely diffused throughout the countries adjacent to Palestine” (*Unger’s Bible Dictionary*, p. 1049). God expressly warned the Hebrews against this form of

idolatry, knowing that it would be a *strong temptation* for them: “And take heed, lest you lift your eyes to heaven, and when you see the *sun*, the moon, and the stars, all the host of heaven, *you feel driven to worship them and serve them*” (Deuteronomy 4:19). God is an invisible Spirit (John 4:24). He made the sun to provide physical light and heat to the earth and its inhabitants, *not* to be worshipped. God is to be worshipped—*not* His creation (Romans 1:25).

Yet, in a supernatural vision from God, the prophet Ezekiel described the Israelites’ apostasy and sun worship: “He brought me into the inner court of the LORD’s house; and there, at the door of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, *were about twenty-five men with their backs toward the temple of the LORD and their faces toward the east, and they were worshipping the sun toward the east*” (Ezekiel 8:16). The 24 courses of God’s priests, plus the high priest, were bowing toward the rising sun. Did God consider this a trivial matter? Absolutely not—He said in the next verse that these and other abominations *provoked Him to anger*. What is the lesson for us, today? Would God be pleased with us if we continued these abominable practices? *Of course not*.

In every generation, God’s people have had to battle against compromising God’s truth—and we must do so today. So, do your beliefs really measure up to God’s instructions? The Apostle Paul instructed Christians to “test all things; hold fast what is good” (1 Thessalonians 5:21). To follow Christ, we must *obey His commands*. We cannot just follow the traditions and imaginations of men. So, ask yourself: Where did you get *your* beliefs?

The Cult of the Sun in the Christian Era

The roots of many modern religious traditions can be traced to ancient Babylon. The old Babylonian sun-god Shamash was known in ancient Rome by his Persian name, Mithra, and his cult grew in prominence around the time of Christ. Author Samuel Dill observed, “Of all the oriental religions which attracted the devotion of the West in the last three centuries of the Empire, that of Mithra was the most powerful” (*Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius*, p. 585). Scholars have noted how closely the story of the god Mithra seems to resemble the story of Jesus. Consider a few examples: Mithra was called a king

and a shepherd, like Christ. He allegedly gave life and healing to the sick and even raised the dead. He supposedly loosed the bonds of the captives, put an end to wickedness, and destroyed his enemies (Morris Jastrow, *Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, pp. 71–72).

Mithraism was superficially similar to some aspects of Christianity. Yet, at its base, it was sun worship—which God calls *an abomination*. How could this be? The answer is that there is a great deceiver, Satan the devil, who “works in the sons of disobedience” and “deceives the whole world” (Ephesians 2:2; Revelation 12:9). His masterstroke has been to create a *counterfeit Christianity* that, while masquerading as God’s true religion, is marked by paganism.

Ask yourself: What is the best way for a con artist to deceive unsuspecting victims—by making his product look drastically different from the genuine article, or by making it look *almost* like the real thing? The latter is exactly what Satan the devil has done in attempting to blur the line between pagan worship and true Christianity.

Mithra was a “god of light” worshipped by showing reverence to the sun, the source of light. Jesus Christ called Himself “the light of the world” and said, “He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life” (John 8:12). Jesus Christ was “the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world” (John 1:9). Yet Jesus did *not* teach His disciples to worship Him by honoring the sun.

Some try to justify a blending of sun worship and the true religion by saying that Christ was prophesied to be the “Sun of Righteousness” arising “with healing in His wings” (Malachi 4:2). But true worshippers of God recognize that the “light” of Christ is spiritual truth. The “darkness” of which Christ spoke is spiritual error and deception.

So, is your religion “marked” by obedience to God’s instructions to worship the Creator, not the creation? Or is it holding on to the ancient traditions that God called abominable millennia ago?

“Christian” Sun Worship?

Many professing Christians assume that their tradition of worshipping on Sunday comes from the Bible. Yet the Bible clearly commands observance of the seventh-day Sabbath, *not* the first day of the week. Daniel foretold that a heretical religious power would

“persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall *intend to change times and law*” (Daniel 7:25). That is exactly what happened during the early years of the New Testament Church, when leaders transferred their Sabbath observance to Sunday.

Even Sunday-keeping scholars admit that the New Testament does not endorse a Sunday “Sabbath”—“We fail to find the slightest trace of a law or apostolic edict instituting the observance of the ‘day of the Lord;’ nor is there in the Scriptures an intimation of a substitution of this for the Jewish Sabbath” (“Sunday,” *Unger’s Bible Dictionary*, p. 1050). No scriptural or apostolic authority commanded the New Testament Church to change its day of worship to Sunday.

But if Scripture does not command Sunday worship, why is it the practice of hundreds of millions of professing Christians today? Could it be that a great deceiver inserted *Sunday* worship into the traditions of unsuspecting people?

Authors George Barna and Frank Viola point out that popular Christianity is filled with many unbiblical elements. They note that Sunday-keeping came about through a compromise between Mithraism and Christianity sought by the pagan emperor Constantine. These authors report that “in AD 321, Constantine decreed that Sunday would be a day of rest—a legal holiday. It appears that Constantine’s intention in doing this was to honor the god Mithras, the Unconquered Sun.... Further demonstrating Constantine’s affinity with sun worship, excavations of St. Peter’s in Rome uncovered a mosaic of Christ as the Unconquered Sun” (*Pagan Christianity?*, p. 19).

So, if you keep Sunday, on whose authority do you observe it? That of a politically savvy *Roman emperor*.

H. G. Wells, in his *Outline of History*, noted that “from the [Mithraic cult] it would seem the Christians adopted Sun-day as their chief day of worship instead of the Jewish Sabbath” (p. 539). *Unger’s Bible Dictionary* reports, “Sunday is the first day of the week, adopted by the first Christians from the Roman calendar (Lat. *Dies Solis*, *Day of the Sun*), because it was dedicated to the worship of the sun” (p. 1050).

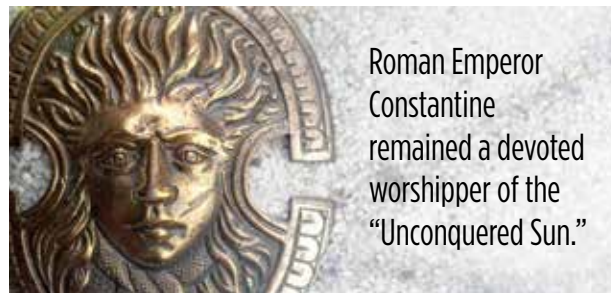
Some assume that John’s reference to the “Lord’s day” in Revelation 1:10 meant Sunday. In fact, however, this is a reference to his visions of the coming Day of the Lord—the prophetic year before Christ’s return. Remember, the Sabbath-keeping Jesus Christ

said plainly that He was “Lord of the Sabbath” (Mark 2:28), which meant the seventh day, not the first!

Other Marks of Mithraism

Mainstream Christianity borrowed more than just Sunday worship from Mithraism. Have you ever wondered where the date for Christmas, December 25, came from? Is there any proof that it was the birth date of Christ? Absolutely not! Jesus Christ was not born in December, because shepherds were not keeping their flocks in the field in the dead of winter (“Luke 2:8,” *Adam Clarke Commentary*). But December 25 was revered as the birthday of Mithra: “The 25th of December... was held as the *Natalis invicti solis*, ‘The birth-day of the unconquered Sun’” (Alexander Hislop, *The Two Babylons*, pp. 159–160).

If you and your family observe Christmas, what god are you worshipping? Certainly *not* Jesus Christ.



Roman Emperor Constantine remained a devoted worshipper of the “Unconquered Sun.”

How can the true God have anything to do with a festival held in honor of the birth of a pagan sun-god?

Easter sunrise service is also one of the hallmarks of the mainstream Christian calendar. Certainly, many sincerely seek to honor Jesus Christ through that tradition. But did Christ really rise at sunrise? Scripture shows that when the women came to His tomb Sunday morning while it was still dark, He had *already risen* (John 20:1).

So, where did the custom of praying toward the east come from? Consider what the historian F. A. Regan has to say: “A suitable, single example of the pagan influence [on professing Christianity] may be had from an investigation of the Christian custom of turning toward the East, the land of the rising sun, while offering their prayers” (*Dies Dominica*, p. 196). Clearly, the marks of ancient sun worship can be found *all over* the traditions that developed in mainstream Christianity.

MARK OF THE BEAST CONTINUES ON PAGE 22

SOCIAL INFLUENCE AND GOD'S WISDOM

Can people really “self-regulate?”

In 2016, American psychiatrist and distinguished professor at Johns Hopkins University Dr. Paul McHugh wrote an article for the *Wall Street Journal* titled, “A New Semester, a New Approach to Campus Turmoil.” Though he may not have realized it, Dr. McHugh touched on an important biblical principle as he covered the story of a Yale professor coming under heavy criticism for what some considered racially provocative comments.

Dr. McHugh referred to an incident at Yale on November 9, 2015, that turned into a student demonstration. The spark that ignited the demonstration was an outburst by a group of students who believed that an open email from Professor Erika Christakis was racially denigrating. In her email, she had suggested that Yale’s “recent admonishments about Halloween costumes, cultural appropriation and racial insensitivity perhaps were unnecessary, since young adults are capable of deciding for themselves what to wear for Halloween and might even learn from being a little bit obnoxious” (January 10, 2016).

Students had a public verbal confrontation with her husband, Professor Nicholas Christakis, which turned into a mob scene as the students cursed at him. As the scenario played out on video for the entire online world to see, many found it hard to avoid noticing some irony, considering that Professor Christakis had co-authored a book in 2009 titled, *Connected: The Surprising Power of Our Social Networks and How They Shape Our Lives*.

In that book, he showed how thoughts and behaviors that we think are determined by our own reasoning are actually shaped—and not always for our good—by people with whom we socially interact, even those who are not in our immediate circle of friends. He used studies—including a renowned project from Framingham, Massachusetts, involving more than 5,000 individuals—to show that the “social cluster” of relationships that forms the fabric of our life profoundly influences thinking and behavior. In other words, he found that there was a social “contagion” that happens whereby our “norms” are

cemented in us through the *influence of those around us*. Specifically, he asserted that we are influenced not only by our friends, but also the friends of our friends.

Understanding this principle directs the approach toward helping people caught up in alcohol or drug addiction, for example. Dr. McHugh wrote that he teaches psychiatrists to manage alcoholic patients by encouraging them to attend 90 meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous in 90 days, in order to help them internalize abstinence from alcohol as a norm.

The Company We Keep

For students of the Bible, this is not new wisdom! For example, Psalm 1:1 says, “Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful.” In Proverbs 13:20, we read, “He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will be destroyed.” And we are told in the New Testament, “Do not be deceived: ‘Evil company corrupts good habits’” (1 Corinthians 15:33).

We are influenced not only by our friends, but also the friends of our friends.

Analysts tell us that human behavior changes to adapt to the social atmosphere we inhabit. Whether we realize it or not, we are exposed to “social contagion” via the people with whom we interact. And since the people who are around *those people* influence them in turn, the friends of our friends likewise ultimately influence us.

The lesson is clear—social influence has the power to affect the course of a person’s life, for good or evil. Do we carefully consider the company we keep, and the priorities thereof? Can people really “self-regulate” their behavior?

Be part of a culture with God-ordained ways of thinking and acting. Request a free copy of *What Is a True Christian?* from the Regional Office nearest you, listed on page 4 of this magazine, or read it online at TomorrowsWorld.org.

—Jonathan McNair



Seven Keys for Bible Study

By **Richard F. Ames**

In times of great trouble, you might think more and more people would turn to the Bible for wisdom and comfort. But you would be wrong. An April 2022 report by the American Bible Society found that roughly 26 million Americans had mostly or completely stopped reading the Bible in the past year.

“What we discovered was startling, disheartening, and disruptive,” said the report’s lead researcher, John Plake. “The ‘elephant in the room’ is COVID-19” (“Report: 26 Million Americans Stopped Reading the Bible Regularly During COVID-19,” *ChristianityToday.com*, April 20, 2022). The report found that just 10 percent of Americans read the Bible daily during 2021, down from 14 percent in 2020. About 39 percent of Americans were found to be “Bible users”—down from 50 percent in 2021.

Researchers could not explain the decline, but they speculated that declining church attendance was a major factor, that people found it hard to study the Bible for themselves and gave up when they didn’t have someone explaining it to them.

But there are keys to personal Bible study that can unlock the truths hidden in this often-mysterious book. Read on to learn *seven vital keys* for Bible study.

Why the Bible?

Year after year, the Bible is the world’s best-selling book. Chances are that you have one on your coffee table—or stored away in a closet somewhere. The Bible is everywhere, it seems. But does anyone really understand this holy book? Can you understand it? How many even read the Bible? If you don’t read this book, you are missing out on the most exciting, mind-expanding information and knowledge the world has *ever known*.

In the mid-1450s, the German printer Johannes Gutenberg gave the world its first printed Bible. A 2021 study by the British and Foreign Bible Society estimated that somewhere between five billion and seven billion Bibles have been printed since then. And now, in our digital age, hundreds of millions of Bibles have been downloaded to people’s smartphones and computers. As of 2021, a popular Bible app by YouVersion had been downloaded more than 500 million times, and users have read or listened to more than 64 *billion* individual chapters of the Bible.

Polls have shown that about a third of the American adult population believes the Bible is the actual word of God and is to be taken literally, word for word. This percentage is slightly lower than it was several decades ago. Most of those Americans who don’t believe that the Bible is literally true believe that it is the *inspired* word of God but that not everything in it should be taken literally.

About one in four Americans believe the Bible is an ancient book of “fables, legends, history and moral precepts recorded by man” (“Record Few Americans Believe Bible Is Literal Word of God,” *News.Gallup.com*, May 15, 2017). And those one-in-four are spiritually *blinded*. The Bible is God’s instruction book to all human beings. As the Apostle Paul wrote to the young evangelist Timothy, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16–17). Remember that when Paul wrote this, the only “Scripture” available, aside from a few letters, was the Old Testament. Yes, *all* Scripture—Old Testament *and* New Testament—is valuable and vital.

The Bible was once at the center of Western civilization. It was even taught in public schools.

More recently, secularism, evolution, and materialism have overwhelmed educational institutions, throwing God, the Bible, and the Ten Commandments out the window. Since then, moral and ethical standards have declined in all sectors of society. That is *no coincidence*. The Bible reveals an unseen spiritual law that explains major trends and decline in the Western world: “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap” (Galatians 6:7). The Western world has been sowing sin, and it will reap disastrous consequences. As Paul wrote, “He who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life” (v. 8). Indeed, the Western world has, sadly, been reaping corruption. That’s why world news needs to be viewed in the light of biblical prophecy. The prophet Hosea stated it this way: “They sow the wind, and reap the whirlwind” (Hosea 8:7).

For those who can understand it, the Bible is a storehouse of valuable treasure. How can we reap the treasures contained in this book? Speaking of true knowledge, the Bible states that “if you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasures; then you will understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God. For the LORD gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding” (Proverbs 2:4–6). In this article, we will briefly review seven fundamental keys for successful Bible study.

Key 1: The Bible Is Always Relevant

Some people believe that since its most recent books were written nearly two millennia ago, the Bible cannot be relevant for us today. That belief is wrong. Not only is the Bible relevant for us today, but its prophecies also reveal humanity’s future and our incredible destiny. The good news is that mankind will not completely destroy itself—Jesus Christ will return at the most dangerous point in human history to save us from ourselves. The Gospel of the Kingdom of God is always relevant. Jesus said that “this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come” (Matthew 24:14).

We look forward to the end of this “present evil age” (Galatians 1:4) and the beginning of a new age, tomorrow’s world! At the turn of the century, a Gallup

poll discovered that “sixty-five percent of Americans [believed] that the Bible ‘answers all or most of the basic questions of life.’” Yes, the Bible is always relevant. It *does* answer the most basic questions of life.

Key 2: The Bible Is a Complete Book

Many cannot truly understand the Bible because they ignore its first 39 books, commonly called the Old Testament. Let’s understand: When Jesus quoted Scripture, He quoted the Hebrew Scriptures, or the Old Testament. In His tremendous spiritual battle with Satan the devil, Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 8:3 when He said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God’” (Luke 4:4). That profound truth is *foundational* to anyone’s happiness and to their eternal life.

Notice: As in His statement above, when Jesus taught us the two great commandments, He quoted them from the Old Testament. The first great commandment—to love God with all our heart, soul, and strength—is written in Deuteronomy 6:5. And Jesus’ second great commandment, which tells us to love our neighbors as ourselves, is from Leviticus 19:18. These Old Testament verses Jesus quoted were and *still are* commandments of God.

While writing to Timothy, Paul spoke of the genuine faith that was in Timothy’s grandmother Lois and mother Eunice. They had taught Timothy the Scriptures from childhood. And what were those Scriptures? *The first 39 books of the Bible*. The New Testament had not yet been written. You can read about that in 2 Timothy 3:15: “From childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” Timothy was able to understand salvation through the Old Testament and through His acceptance of Jesus Christ as His Savior.

The Bible is a complete book. It begins with the book of Genesis and ends with the book of Revelation. In fact, God warns “everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book” that “if anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book” (Revelation 22:18–19). Beware of *anyone* who pro-

claims that some new document is “part of” or a replacement for the Bible. We cannot understand God’s truth, or His plan, unless we study the whole Bible as the word of God. To understand the Bible, we must read both the Old Testament *and* the New Testament.

Key 3: The Bible Interprets the Bible

More than 25 percent of the Bible is prophecy—and much of that prophecy is couched in symbolic lan-

the LORD. ‘And I will stretch out My hand against you, roll you down from the rocks, and make you a burnt mountain’” (Jeremiah 51:24–25).

Here, God uses the symbol of a mountain for a kingdom or an empire. King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had a dream, which Daniel explained to him. The king dreamed of a great image and saw a stone smash the feet of this image. The image represented the Kingdom of Babylon succeeded by the

Persian Empire, the Greco-Macedonian Empire, and finally the Roman Empire. “Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no

MORE THAN 25 PERCENT OF THE BIBLE IS PROPHECY—AND MUCH OF THAT PROPHECY IS COUCHED IN SYMBOLIC LANGUAGE, WITH WHICH THE BOOKS OF DANIEL AND REVELATION ARE FILLED. HOW CAN WE UNDERSTAND IT?

guage, with which the books of Daniel and Revelation are filled. How can we understand it?

Look at one example in the first chapter of Revelation. “He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength” (Revelation 1:16). But how should we understand this description of the glorified Messiah, the Son of Man, standing amidst seven lampstands and holding seven stars? What do these images symbolize? We need not guess; the Bible itself explains the meaning just four verses later: “The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches” (Revelation 1:20). In biblical symbolism, stars are angels and lampstands are churches.

Prophetic literature uses the word mountain as a symbol of a kingdom, empire, or government. Take a look at a passage in Jeremiah, where God is declaring His punishment on the great empire of Babylon. “‘And I will repay Babylon and all the inhabitants of Chaldea for all the evil they have done in Zion in your sight,’ says the LORD. ‘Behold, I am against you, O destroying mountain, who destroys all the earth,’ says

trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth” (Daniel 2:35).

Daniel explained that King Nebuchadnezzar was the head of gold represented in the image (v. 38). But what was this stone that became a great mountain and filled the earth? The Bible interprets the Bible: “And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever” (vv. 44–45).

What mountain or kingdom will rule the whole earth? As so many prophecies explain, that Kingdom will be the Kingdom of God ruled by the King of kings, the Messiah, Jesus Himself! He will destroy the last revival of the end-time Roman Empire. Finally, peace will rule over all the earth under the Government and Family of God.

If a symbolic word is not clear, look elsewhere in the Bible for its meaning. This leads us to our next key.

Key 4: Study All the Scriptures on a Topic

The Bible does not contradict itself: “The Scripture cannot be broken” (John 10:35). Teachers who fail to study all the scriptures on a topic often end up

teaching false doctrines that mislead believers. Take, for example, the controversy that is sometimes characterized as “Law or Grace.” Does God’s grace allow Christians to live a life of rampant sin, blatantly disobeying their Savior? Of course not! As Jesus said, “if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments” (Matthew 19:17). After He made that statement, Jesus went on to mention several of the Ten Commandments. So, we see that God’s wonderful grace does not give us permission to transgress His moral law.

Another commonly misused scripture is Ephesians 2:15. We read of Jesus Christ as “having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances.” Some think this means that moral law and the Ten Commandments are not applicable to Christians. But, consistent with what Jesus teaches elsewhere in Scripture, this verse’s reference to ordinances (Greek: *dogma*)—man-made laws that caused division between Jews and Gentiles—reminds us that Christians, united as spiritual Israel, live under Jesus’ *magnification* of God’s law, rather than under the physical rules that separated physical Israel from the Gentiles.

Consider this plain comment about Ephesians 2:15 from the *NIV Study Bible*: “Matthew 5:17 and Romans 3:31 teach that God’s moral standard expressed in the OT law is not changed by the coming of Christ.” Indeed, Christ abolished some *dogma*—man-made ordinances—but the Ten Commandments are still powerfully in effect.

Careless use of Scripture can lead to false conclusions, such as the mistaken idea that Christ abolished God’s moral law, rather than the truth that He fulfilled and magnified that law. Don’t let preachers sway you with “cherry-picked” Bible verses taken out of context. Study *all* the scriptures on a topic.

Key 5: Understand the Context

But as you study all the scriptures on a topic, go a little further—read all the scriptures around a verse you are studying. Why? For example, some wrongly say that the Jerusalem Conference in Acts 15 absolved Gentiles from keeping the Ten Commandments. But you will get a different idea, the right idea, if you read the Apostle James’ decision for yourself: “Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God, but that we write



to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from things strangled, and from blood” (Acts 15:19–20).

When the Apostles specified these four prohibitions, did that free the Gentiles to sin in other ways? To transgress the commandment that forbids murder, or the one that forbids worship of anything or anyone but the true God? Of course not! The Apostles in no way repealed the moral law of God. To understand this, we need to read the context. What was the main issue? “And certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, ‘Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved’” (Acts 15:1).

The issue was circumcision. The conference decided that Gentiles did not need to be circumcised to be saved. The Apostle Paul later wrote to Gentile believers, “Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters” (1 Corinthians 7:19). Be careful to read all the scriptures around the verse you are studying.

Key 6: Prove All Things

Tomorrow’s World works hard to earn your trust for its credibility and accuracy in biblical teaching. But part of that teaching is that you, dear reader, must “check us out” and prove for yourself what you read in these pages. Don’t take for granted what you read in this magazine. Read it in your own Bible. “Test all things; hold fast what is good” (1 Thessalonians 5:21). Or, as the *King James Version* puts it, “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”

SEVEN KEYS FOR BIBLE STUDY CONTINUES ON PAGE 24

THE FUTURE IS BRIGHTER THAN YOU CAN IMAGINE

We're still holding out for a hero.

It feels like bad news bombards us on every front these days. Sometimes, I mentally wince before tapping on a news app because it's usually full of troubling headlines. The COVID-19 pandemic seems to have intensified many problems, and the continual cycle of stressful news has increased suffering from stress, anxiety, and depression, as many articles have shown lately.

Both the “here and now” and the future feel dark, hopeless, and dreary to many. However, *there is good news*. For those who believe in the God of the Bible and His Son Jesus Christ, there *is* glorious hope for the future. Keeping this vital *promise* of God in mind can bring hope and help us cope with the stress and anxiety that so many people face.

Everything Will Change

This great news was Jesus' message while He preached on the earth. His Father sent Him specifically to *preach the Gospel of the Kingdom of God*, as we read: “Now when it was day, He departed and went into a deserted place. And the crowd sought Him and came to Him, and tried to keep Him from leaving them; but He said to them, ‘I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for *this purpose* I have been sent’” (Luke 4:42–43).

And this message isn't just found in the New Testament; the Old Testament also contains many prophecies about God's coming kingdom (cf. Daniel 2:37–45; Isaiah 2:2–4; Zechariah 14:8–21). The word “gospel” literally means “good news.” Many versions of the Bible translate it that way—for example, “Jesus went about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the *Good News* of the Kingdom, and healing every disease and every sickness among the people” (Matthew 4:23, *World English Bible*).

The Kingdom of God is not just good news—it's *marvelous* news! When Christ returns at the great sound of the seventh trumpet, He will establish His Father's kingdom and rule over the nations and governments of the earth. Scripture describes this magnificent time: “Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, ‘The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms

of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!’” (Revelation 11:15). Even though few understand this truth, this is the moment the whole creation longs for—the time when a strong, righteous leader will bring peace and prosperity for humanity.

The Kingdom of God will be established upon the almighty shoulders of Jesus Christ as He rules and

Christ didn't “sugarcoat” the bad news. However, He also emphasized that, as bad as the bad news will be, the good news will be far greater.

serves mankind as its Counselor, Mighty God, and Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6). The greatness, abundance, and peace of God's Kingdom will never end (Isaiah 9:7), and it will be ruled by God's perfect law, which restores the soul (Psalm 19:7; Micah 4:2). In God's Kingdom, the deserts *really will* blossom like roses. When Jesus Christ heals the world, the blind will be given sight, the deaf will be given hearing, and those who were once lame will dance to the songs of those who were once mute. Tamed animals, rivers of

pure water, and beautiful plants and trees will renew the world, making it the garden that God intended (Isaiah 11:1–10; 35). These events are the changes Jesus *promised* to bring in the not-so-distant future.

It Will Be Worth the Wait

Our days and weeks, our televisions and newspapers, our computers and mobile devices—all are full of stressful events, stories, and opinions. Sadly, the Bible warns that worse is coming before deliverance arrives. Jesus predicted that the Great Tribulation, the worst time in mankind's history, will come before His return (Matthew 24:21). He didn't “sugarcoat” the bad news. However, He also emphasized that, as bad as the bad news will be, the good news will be *far greater*.

One day, the glory and grandeur of God's kingdom will completely overshadow today's bad news—and that bad news will be in the past. As the Apostle Paul said, the bad we suffer now is nothing compared to the good He will reveal to us (Romans 8:18).

—Joshua Lyons

Scripture shows the Apostle Paul asking Christians to lay aside goods on the first day of the week to be sent to Jerusalem (1 Corinthians 16:2), but nothing indicates this was a day of worship. And Paul talked with the disciples “on the first day of the week” in Acts 20:7–12, but a careful reading reveals that this was an evening meal (there were “many lamps” and he spoke until midnight), not a worship service, in preparation for Paul’s journey the next day. In fact, it likely took place after the seventh-day Sabbath was over at sundown, the beginning of the “first day.”

The book of Acts gives us one of the clearest scriptural references to first-century Christians keeping the seventh-day Sabbath. Paul preached to both Jews and Gentiles in the synagogue on the seventh day of the week, the Sabbath (Acts 13:14–41). Many

In contrast, God gives His own marks by which He identifies His true followers. He says that one of the “marks” of His people will be the keeping of the seventh-day Sabbath. Speaking of the Israelites, God said through Ezekiel, “Moreover *I also gave them My Sabbaths, to be a sign between them and Me*, that they might know that I am the LORD who sanctifies them” (Ezekiel 20:12). In the coming days of vengeance and wrath, what could be more important than being sanctified—set apart—by God for special protection? That promise is available for God’s people *today*.

The seventh-day Sabbath is one vital mark of true Christianity—the subject of the Fourth Commandment, in which we are told to worship God while resting from work (Exodus 20:8–11; Leviticus 23:3). Certainly, Sunday laws forbidding the keeping

of the seventh-day Sabbath will be a severe test for true, Sabbath-keeping Christians in the years ahead. Will they take the mark of disobedience and sun worship, incurring God’s wrath? Or will they resist man’s traditions and remain

THE MARK OF THE BEAST IS REALLY NO MYSTERY AT ALL. IT HAS TO DO WITH THE HAND AND THE FOREHEAD—PRACTICE AND BELIEF.

Jews rejected him, but the Gentiles begged him to teach them “the following Sabbath”—which he did (vv. 42–44). This is a clear indication that *even among the Gentiles* the Apostle Paul did *not* neglect the Sabbath; in fact, he worshipped and taught on the seventh-day Sabbath, *supporting* its observance.


Which Mark Will You Take?

Some say that as long as you worship God, it does not matter how you do so. But is that what God says? Clearly, He commanded His people to *not* adopt the worship methods of the people around them—“do not learn the way of the Gentiles” (Jeremiah 10:2)—but instead to be true and committed to following His instructions.

The mark of the beast of Revelation 13 is really no mystery at all. It has to do with the hand and the forehead—*practice and belief* (Revelation 13:16). Mainstream Christianity has the marks of ancient sun worship.

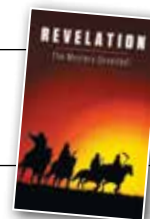
true to the God of the Bible—obeying their Savior Jesus Christ in all ways, including the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath—to please Him and gain eternal life?

What about you? Will you have the commitment to obey God and His commands? Will you have the courage to stand up for the truth, no matter what your friends or neighbors think? Will you be a true follower of Christ, willing to give up everything, if necessary (Luke 18:22)? Sometimes *everything* means giving up preconceived ideas of who God is and how to worship Him.

Search the Scriptures. Find out for yourself. Reject the mark of disobedience to God. Accept His mark of obedience, including observance of the seventh-day Sabbath, and make the decision to obey Him *no matter what*. “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you” (James 4:8). If you courageously and obediently serve God with all your heart, you can be assured that at Christ’s imminent return, you will have the *right* mark. 

MAY WE
SUGGEST?

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The Middle East in Prophecy

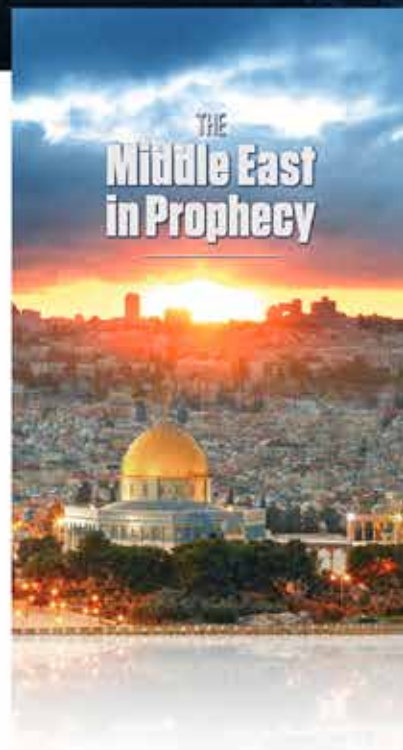
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Notice the attitude of the Bereans, whom Scripture commends for their positive, investigative attitude in reading the Scriptures: “These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so” (Acts 17:11).

One way of testing, or proving, is to practice the principles and precepts of the Bible. Jesus emphasized that we must live by the Bible, by “every word of God.” He said, “But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do the things which I say?” (Luke 6:46). You can prove and test the Bible by practicing its instructions. That is how you can have a good understanding. We read that “the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all those who do His commandments” (Psalm 111:10). Perhaps you have heard teachers talk about “learning by doing”? This principle also applies in your Christian life.

Key 7: Pray for Understanding


The Bible emphasizes that we need a teachable attitude. It tells us that King David of Israel was a man after God’s own heart (Acts 13:22). Notice David’s teachable attitude in praying for understanding: “Show me Your ways, O LORD; teach me Your paths. Lead me in Your truth and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation; on You I wait all the day” (Psalm 25:4–5).

Dear readers, pray for understanding as you read and study your Bible. Pray for guidance. God blesses those who respect the Scriptures and revere His holy word. Almighty God states, “But on this one will I look: on him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word” (Isaiah 66:2).

Live By What You Read

The Bible is the most important book in the world. If you’ve neglected reading the Bible, now is the time to change. Read it daily. If your attitude is right, you will be greatly blessed and your life will be changed. As Jesus said, “The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life” (John 6:63).

Will our nations finally get the message that we need to repent nationally and individually? Will we finally turn to the God of the Bible, heed His warning, and obey His commandments? We need to study the Bible—and *live* by the Bible. As Jesus reminds us, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God’” (Luke 4:4). Only obedience to and a love of the Scriptures can lead to individual and national prosperity.

The Bible is not only a book for today, but also the book of the future. As Jesus said, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away” (Luke 21:33). Thank God that He has shared with us His awesome spiritual truth—and the very purpose of life—through His word, the Holy Bible. 

**MAY WE
SUGGEST?**

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Does the Bible give contradictory accounts of Judas Iscariot's death?

Question: Sorry if this question is morbid, but I'm a little confused. I read in the book of Matthew that Judas Iscariot hanged himself—but, later, I read in the book of Acts that he basically exploded. You've said before that the Bible never contradicts itself, but these accounts don't seem to match. Exactly how did Judas Iscariot die?

Answer: Many have wondered about this, and it is true that, at first glance, the Bible's accounts of Judas' death might seem to be contradictory. But let's take a look at the two key statements on this topic and examine them more closely.

Most students of the Bible know that Judas Iscariot was one of Jesus' twelve apostles, and that he betrayed Him for 30 pieces of silver. In Matthew 27, we read that Judas was remorseful after this terrible betrayal and tried to give the money back to his conspirators, but the priests refused to accept the "blood money" as an offering (v. 6). Verse 5 tells us, "Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself."

According to Matthew and the book of Acts, instead of putting the money into the treasury, they used it to purchase a field in which strangers could be buried. While the book of Acts tells of the field purchased with Judas' money, it seems to describe a different fate for the traitor: "Now this man purchased a field with the wages of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his entrails gushed out" (Acts 1:18).

The field being purchased with Judas' money corroborates Matthew 27:7, but falling headlong and bursting in the middle does not sound like a hanging. How do we reconcile these accounts?

As we've noted before, any time we see what appear to be different accounts of the same facts or circumstance in the Bible, there is no need to assume a contradiction—Jesus Himself tells us that the inspired word of God does not contradict itself (John 10:35). Rather, the multiple accounts act as multiple witnesses, each adding its own detail to the overall picture.

For instance, consider the sign that was nailed above Jesus' head while He was crucified. Depending

on which of the four gospels you read, you'll get a different report concerning what the sign said:

Matthew says the sign read, "**This is Jesus the King of the Jews**" (Matthew 27:37).

Mark writes that the sign read, "**The King of the Jews**" (Mark 15:26).


Luke reports that it read, "**This is the King of the Jews**" and was written in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew (Luke 23:38).

Finally, John writes that Pilate's sign read, "**Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews**" (John 19:19).

Do the gospel writers contradict each other? Not at all! In fact, not only do they say essentially the same thing, but also, when we put all of them together, we get a *fuller* picture—one of a sign reading, "This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews" in the three languages common in the area.

A More Complete Picture

Similarly, the accounts of Judas' death do not contradict one another when they are read as two accounts that work *together* to make for a fuller picture. Judas did, indeed, hang himself out of guilt and shame. But as his body hung there, his corpse did what corpses do—it began to decompose. A decaying corpse will bloat if left alone. Eventually, Judas' dead body fell from the rope or was cut down, and when it struck the ground, it burst open—a terrible end for the one who had betrayed the Messiah.

As is so often the case, when you understand that the Bible does not contradict itself but *does* give multiple witnesses to provide a more complete picture of true events, the problems resolve themselves. To find out more about the inerrancy of original, inspired Scripture, you can request a free copy of *The Bible: Fact or Fiction?* from our Regional Office closest to you (listed on page 4 of this magazine) or read it online at TomorrowsWorld.org. 



THE Works OF HIS HANDS

Programmed to Seek

Most every parent remembers seeing their infant get a first taste of what becomes their favorite food. Much to parents' amusement, legs and hands begin to kick and swing and little faces light up with pleasure and euphoria. Infants, and toddlers all the more, are driven to increasing lengths to seek more of what they want.

The drive to seek the feelings and satisfactions of pleasure or reward is an intricate response designed in your brain. The neural structure of the brain and the associated cascade of brain chemicals have been masterfully designed by a wise Creator. Just like infants and toddlers, you are deeply programmed to seek after constructive rewards on many levels.

Matters of Sensation

The brain, along with the spinal structures involved in this process, are collectively called the *limbic system*, which is the "entire neuronal circuitry that controls emotional behavior and motivational drives" (Guyton and Hall, *Medical Physiology*). These include hunger, satiety, memory, emotional response, social and familial bonding, sexual reproduction, and maternal instincts. The anatomical dimension of the limbic system spans approximately five centimeters in the brain. In this little space, at least 30 anatomically identified structures, with complex interactions, connect directly or indirectly with 50 billion brain cells and 70 trillion body cells.

Thousands of brain chemicals help the limbic system relay information. These chemicals are released locally from neuron to neuron or released systemically like a hormone. In addition to the opiates produced by

the body, these brain messenger chemicals include neurotransmitters like GABA, oxytocin, serotonin, adrenaline, noradrenaline, and dopamine. Most people think of dopamine as a central pleasure-seeking chemical, but it also integrates the "seeking" drive with functions such as cognitive performance, heart and kidney function, and motor control. Produced in multiple locations throughout the limbic system, dopamine is sparked by sensations, or even by our thoughts and perceptions.

Further complicating this mixture are target cells' neurotransmitter receptors. In American baseball, to catch a ball you must have a glove. For dopamine to have any purpose or function, neurons or cells must have receptor sites. Just as different positions on the baseball team have different gloves, each receptor determines the niche use of a dopamine messenger. Dopamine has five identified receptors, each specific to particular tasks such as memory, attention, sleep, learning, impulse control, decision making, and even kidney function. Within the brain, only about 1 percent of neuronal tissue has dopamine receptors, yet those receptor neurons can communicate electrically *throughout* the brain. Once dopamine has completed its message, it must be removed from play, much like a ball boy on a tennis court.

The interactions among these intricate components bring breathtakingly complex, varied, and individualized results. They give us the range of sensations and pleasures of a connoisseur savoring a glass of wine or a piece of chocolate. They spur all the rage, anger, and fear packed into the world's worst wars. They foster the loyalty, affection, faithfulness, and shared memories of an elderly married couple sitting hand-in-hand on a porch swing.

Patterns of Destruction

Sadly, profit-seeking men have exploited these powerful and beautifully designed systems for destructive, addictive results. Though usually harmful, addiction is, from a neurobiological standpoint, merely an extreme manifestation of habit. An addiction essentially hijacks the brain's motivation and reward chemicals, which a wise Creator designed to reinforce good habits and healthy relationships. Not content with the Creator's design, society at large has imagined, innovated, and exploited increasingly potent agents of addiction.

The fentanyl crisis we are seeing today is one tragic illustration of this. Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid that is 50 times stronger than heroin and 100 times more powerful than the morphine that hooked many injured U.S. Civil War soldiers ("Fentanyl Facts," CDC.gov, February 23, 2022). In the constant stream of destructive innovation, fentanyl's recently developed analog carfentanil is 10,000 times more powerful than morphine ("Carfentanil: A Dangerous New Factor in the U.S. Opioid Crisis," Drug Enforcement Administration, Justice.gov).

Sometimes combined with cocaine or heroin, fentanyl has become seemingly ubiquitous in the illegal drug market. "Opioid-involved overdose deaths rose from 21,088 in 2010 to 47,600 in 2017 and remained steady in 2018 with 46,802 deaths. This was followed by a significant increase through 2020 to 68,630 overdose deaths" ("Overdose Death Rates," National Institute on Drug Abuse, NIDA.NIH.gov).

Tasteless, colorless, and odorless, illicitly manufactured fentanyl can be put in nasal sprays or eyedrops, or dropped onto paper or small candies. Like all opioids, fentanyl begins its work by binding to the brain's opioid receptors, bringing euphoric feelings of happiness and relaxation along with pain relief. But as tolerance for the drug increases, the individual can no longer feel *any pleasure outside the opioid*. Desire for the drug takes over the individual's life, and overdose becomes likely.

Signs of fentanyl overdose can appear within minutes or even seconds as the drug essentially paralyzes the central nervous system. According to the National Institutes of Health, a fentanyl overdose causes decreased sensitivity of respiration centers of the brain, leading to a dangerous buildup of CO₂. The breathing reflex can quickly slow or stop. Decreased oxygenation to the brain can lead to "a coma and permanent brain

damage, and even death" ("What is fentanyl?," NIDA.NIH.gov). Truly, a horrible way to die—and a tragic subversion of a system God designed for our ultimate good.

Seeking After Eternity

We are programmed to seek. We know what it is to be physically hungry and what it is to be filled. Sometimes we can feel unmistakably empty, both emotionally and spiritually. Long ago, the Israelite king Solomon, who had wealth beyond measure, sought to satisfy his every desire: "Whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure" (Ecclesiastes 2:10). Yet, for all his seeking, he found only bitter disappointment; "Therefore I hated life because the work that was done under the sun was distressing to me, for all is vanity and grasping for the wind" (v. 17). If we willingly surrender control of our emotions and minds, they can be hijacked by Satan the Devil, also called the Destroyer ("Abaddon" or "Apollyon," Revelation 9:11), who desires to completely disconnect us from God and drive us to "madness" (Ecclesiastes 9:3).

Do you feel you are looking for something you just cannot find? Does it ever seem that nothing can satisfy you anymore? From head to foot, you were made to seek your God. Physically—and, to a much greater extent, spiritually—you were designed to be filled and satisfied with what only your Creator can give you. We live in the "addiction age"—with powerful synthetic drugs, the Internet, alcohol, and pornography offering their baited hooks, waiting to hijack dopamine and other seeking mechanisms in your brain and body. Yet this is nothing truly new; you can read an ancient experimenter's inner thoughts and emotions in your Bible's book of Ecclesiastes. Solomon tried the various escapes of life and concluded that only God can satisfy the heart's desire for something lasting (Ecclesiastes 2:11; 3:11; 12:13).

Though they can certainly help some people to regain a measure of control over their impulses, addiction experts do not have the ultimate answers. Your Bible does, and seeking the truths contained in the word of God has transformed lives. Mr. Wallace Smith's article on page 5 of this magazine focuses on what your soon-coming King intends to do for you and for every victim of this "age of addiction."

—Bryan Fall

World's Rivers Polluted with Drugs

A recent York University study of more than 250 rivers in more than 100 countries around the globe determined that many rivers are contaminated with pharmaceutical drugs. British media reported that “more than a quarter of the 258 rivers sampled had what are known as ‘active pharmaceutical ingredients’ present at a level deemed unsafe for aquatic organisms” (“Pharmaceuticals in rivers threaten world health—study,” *BBC*, February 15, 2022). The study found high levels of paracetamol (a pain killer), nicotine, caffeine, and drugs used to treat epilepsy and diabetes. How do these chemicals wind up in waterways? Most pass through the bodies of those who use them. Waste treatment plants do not completely break them down, and they are released into the environment.

As the BBC notes, the presence of dissolved human contraceptives has already negatively impacted fish development and reproduction, and researchers are concerned that the growing presence of

antibiotics in our rivers will increase the level of antibiotic resistance in disease-causing bacteria. The lead author of the study suggests that reducing the availability of antibiotics and other drugs and more restrictive dosages could help begin to solve the problem.

The detrimental impact of drugs on the ecosystem and human beings living downstream is sobering. However, the Bible reveals the good news that the creation will one day “be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God” (Romans 8:21). The time is coming when humanity will no longer destroy the earth but will learn to use it as God originally intended.

Declining Respect for Western Leaders

In March, when world leaders met in Brussels to discuss the Russia and Ukraine situation, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson was not invited (“EU downplays Boris Johnson Ukraine summit snub,” *The Independent*, March 23, 2022). When Canadian Prime Minister

Justin Trudeau addressed the European parliament about Western nations standing together in defense of democracy, some members of parliament took the opportunity to rail at Trudeau.

Following Trudeau’s speech, Independent Croatian MEP Mislav Kolakušić described him as an enemy of freedom and human rights for his handling of the truck convoy protests in Ottawa earlier in the year: “Under your quasi-liberal boot in recent months, we watched how you trample women with horses, how you block the bank accounts of single parents so that they can’t even pay their children’s education and medicine, that they can’t pay utilities, mortgages for their homes” (“Trudeau faced harsh critics in the EU Parliament this week. Here’s who launched the attacks,” *CBC*, March 25, 2022). Later, German MEP Christine Anderson had additional harsh words for the Prime Minister, accusing him of perverting democracy in his own nation and saying that his actions should have precluded him from speaking in the democratic EU parliament. “Mr. Trudeau,” she concluded, “you are a disgrace for any democracy, please spare us your presence.”

While Britain’s influence has been waning for decades and the United States is increasingly viewed with contempt on the world stage, it seems Canada has joined the ranks of Israelite-descended countries scorned by nations of the world. In biblical proph-

ecy, God clearly warns these nations that, at the end of the age, He “will break the pride of [their] power” because they have turned away from His laws (Leviticus 26:14–19).

Will Sunday Become a Worldwide Day of Rest?

In March of this year, the International Energy Agency (IEA) issued a fuel report. The IEA is an international body made up of 39 member and associate member nations, many of which are major players in international affairs. In its March report, the IEA put forth a ten-point plan to cut worldwide oil use. Some of the action steps include lowering speed limits, working from home three days a week, making public transportation cheaper to use, using high-speed trains instead of airplanes, and increasing the use of electric vehicles.

The third recommendation in the plan calls for the creation of “car-free Sundays.” This idea was tested in 3,000 cities and towns around the globe in 2021. According to the report, “Banning the use of private cars on Sundays brings a number of additional benefits to public health and well-being, including cleaner air, reduced noise pollution and improved road safety.”

The IEA is not a policy-making body, but instead makes recommendations to member nations, who are encouraged to seriously consider adopting them. Imagine the impact of entire nations enforcing car-use bans on



Dissolved human contraceptives have already negatively impacted fish development and reproduction.

Sundays. Entire nations will come to a halt, bringing them one step closer to adopting a “sabbath” every Sunday. Is it possible that the Roman Catholic Church could take advantage of such a shift? The Bible indicates that an enforcement of Sunday worship is coming.

Wheat Prices Soar

With the war in Ukraine, grain prices are soaring. Russia and Ukraine supply a quarter of global wheat exports. Ukraine also produces 13 percent of

Ukraine shuts down exports,” *MSN*, March 7, 2022). In just one week, the price of wheat rose six days in a row, and during the first week of March wheat futures rose by 40 percent. Wheat is now up about 70 percent in 2022, and global food prices have risen nearly 21 percent since last year (“Food prices jump 20.7% yr/yr to hit record high in Feb, U.N. agency says,” *Reuters*, March 5, 2022).

Due to the ongoing war in Ukraine, experts fear a global commodity shock is coming.



global corn/maize exports. The price of wheat on the futures market is also surging (“Wheat continues surge toward all-time high as Russian invasion of

Hungary, a major grain producer, has now ceased exporting grain (“Food Protectionism Is Spreading as Hungary Bans Grain Exports,” *Bloomberg*,

March 4, 2022). A World Food Programme spokesperson noted, “War leads to greater food insecurity, and food insecurity increases the chance of unrest and violence. So a conflict in Ukraine leading to hunger and pushing people into food insecurity elsewhere could have potential for unrest and violence in other areas. And really, the world cannot afford another conflict” (“‘We need bread’: fears in Middle East as Ukraine war hits wheat imports,” *Guardian*, March 7, 2022).

Given broad dependence on global trade and many nations not producing their own crops, the world is ripe for food shortages in many regions—especially under the stress of war and subsequent supply-chain disruptions. Biblical prophecy foretells a time when the shortage of grain will become far worse than it is today, with a quart of wheat selling for an entire day’s wages (Revelation 6:6)—a famine that will come on the heels of war (vv. 3–4).

Exodus from Modern Christianity

The *Christian Post* reported in March that an increasing number of people are not interested in organized religion. Members of Generation Z (born in the late 1990s and early 2000s) are being called the “least religious generation yet” (“Americans are leaving church and most aren’t coming back: report,” March 24, 2022). But those in Generation Z are not just less religious—they are also far more likely to be agnostic or atheist.

What is behind this? New research provides some important insights. According to the *Christian Post*, “There is a growing population of the religiously unaffiliated whose once religious parents raised them without religion.” Those who identify as non-religious are far more likely to come from a non-religious household. Those who currently claim to be religious are far more likely to have had positive religious experiences as they grew up, while “nearly two-thirds (65 percent) of Americans who report having no childhood religious affiliation say they still are unaffiliated as adults, rivaling that of established religious traditions.”

The Bible offers additional insights into this trend away from religion. Proverbs 22:6 tells us, “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.” If we do not teach children about God and biblical principles for living, how can we expect them to choose faith and godly living for themselves? This movement away from faith will bring additional consequences, as the Creator warned: “Because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children” (Hosea 4:6). God holds parents responsible for teaching their children the difference between right and wrong, good and evil. When this does not happen, children will make dangerous choices in their lives. [TW]

LETTERS TO TW

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK



Please pass on to Wallace G. Smith my congratulations on his article, "Lost in the Multiverse," featured in the April–May 2022 magazine. Although a retired attorney, I have studied for the past 40 years the "advances" in cosmological theories about the "multiverse." Mr. Smith does a splendid job of explaining the various theories in a simple but concise way. He makes the obvious point that in scientific inquiries, the simplest explanation is usually the best explanation. Unfortunately, many brilliant minds are truly deceived. Such a shame.

—Subscriber in Florida

At first, I didn't like your magazine. After all what Christian wants to give up Christmas and Easter? Who really wants the truth? Sunday is day 1. Saturday is the 7th day of the week. So easy—so true—why had I not even thought about that? You *cannot* un-ring the bell! Once that truth came to light, I find other things are now being questioned and with your help answers are coming to light also; biblical truth and where to find it. It cost me nothing. I only had to open up, to accept truth, to listen and evaluate for myself—to "ask and receive." Thank you—now I want all my family to know what you have helped me understand.

—Subscriber in California

I would be most grateful to keep receiving your wonderful and informative magazine *Tomorrow's World*. The magazine offers an understanding of events that are happening and events that are going to happen in the future to a world that has largely rejected God our

Creator, Saviour, Redeemer, Justifier, Father, King, and Lord. Our future rests in *Him*.

—Subscriber in Victoria, Australia

I cannot thank you enough for your program and the learning material which were sent to me. What I respect about your broadcasts is that everything is truly out of the Bible and you ask your audience to read along, to check out these scriptures. Thank you and may God keep *Tomorrow's World* broadcast for a long time.

—Subscriber in Illinois

Thank you for the booklets *God's Church Through the Ages* and *John 3:16*—very informative. They both filled in so many gaps in the knowledge I possessed at the time. I checked y'all out for nearly three years before I began to tithe to this Church. Tried since February 2019 to prove falsehood in your words on TV or in the literature y'all produce. Can't. Checked y'all six ways to Sabbath Day—you're right. Thank you for being *real*.

—Subscriber in Texas

I would just like to thank you for giving me the free wonderful Bible study course. I love participating in it and I really enjoy doing it. I've certainly learned a lot about the Bible. Thank you for also sending me the various books which you freely give on your Sunday morning TV programme on Channel 7TWO. I watch it every Sunday and it's great to learn more about God.

—Subscriber in Queensland, Australia

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Mail your letters to "Letters to the Editor" at one of the Regional Offices listed on page 4 of this magazine, or send email to Letters@TomorrowsWorld.org. Letters may be edited for space and clarity.

TOMORROW'S WORLD

TELEVISION LOG



AUSTRALIA

Nationwide 7TWO SU 7:00 a.m.
Nationwide SCIO SU 7:30 a.m.

BARBADOS

St. Michael CBC 8 SU 2:00 p.m.

ISRAEL

Nationwide HBL SU 7:30 a.m.

JAMAICA

Kingston TVJ SU 7:00 a.m.

NEW ZEALAND

Nationwide TVNZ2 SU 5:00 a.m.
Nationwide TVNZ2 +1 SU 6:00 a.m.

PHILIPPINES

Nationwide TV5 MO 11:30 p.m.

SOUTH AFRICA

Nationwide CTV/SA SU 11:00 a.m.

TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

Nationwide CNC3-TV SU 8:00 a.m.

UK & NW EUROPE

WORD (TWN) Sky TV 590 SU 11:00 a.m.
Sky TV 590 SU 12:30 a.m.
Sky TV 590 FR 12:00 a.m.



CANADA

Nationwide Networks (All times Eastern)

Vision SA 3:30 a.m.

FAITH TV SU 5:30 p.m.
MO-FR 10:30 p.m.
TU 5:00 p.m.

CHNU MO-FR 10:00 p.m.

CTV (Maritimes) SU 7:30 a.m.

CTV (Alberta) SU 1:30 p.m.

V-Télé (en français) SU 6:30 a.m.

UNITED STATES

Nationwide Networks (All times Eastern)

Buzzr SU 9:00 a.m.

Charge Network SU 7:30 a.m.

Circle TV SU 8:00 a.m.

The CW Plus SU 8:00 a.m.
MO 2:00 a.m.

Binge SU 9:00 a.m.

getTV SU 7:00 a.m.

Impact TV SU 11:00 p.m.
MO 10:30 p.m.

NewsNation (formerly WGN) SU 6:00 a.m.

The Word Network SU 6:00 a.m.
SU 7:30 p.m.
FR 7:00 p.m.

The Walk TV SU 10:30 a.m.

Z Living SU 8:30 a.m.

DISH Network* (All times Eastern)

Impact Ch. 268 SU 11:00 p.m.
MO 10:30 p.m.

DIRECTV* (All times Eastern)

Word Ch. 373 SU 6:00 a.m.
SU 7:30 p.m.
FR 7:00 p.m.

For the most up-to-date listings, please go to

TomorrowsWorld.org/tune-in

AK Anchorage KYUR SU 6:00 a.m.

Fairbanks KATN SU 7:00 a.m.

Juneau KJUD SU 6:00 a.m.

AL Dothan WTVY (CW) SU 7:00 a.m.

Huntsville WHDF SU 7:30 a.m.

Huntsville WAMY SU 9:30 a.m.

Montgomery WBMM (CW) SU 7:00 a.m.

Opelika WLTX SU 7:30 a.m.

AR El Dorado KNOE SU 7:00 a.m.

Fayetteville KHOG SU 7:00 a.m.

Fort Smith KHBS SU 7:00 a.m.

Jonesboro KAIT SU 7:00 a.m.

AZ Tucson KMSB SU 8:30 a.m.

Yuma KEYC (CW) SU 9:00 a.m.

CA Bakersfield KGET (CW) SU 8:00 a.m.

Chico KHSL (CW) SU 8:00 a.m.

El Centro KECA-LD/KVIQ (CW) SU 9:00 a.m.

Eureka KION (CW) SU 8:00 a.m.

Monterey KCWQ (CW) SU 8:00 a.m.

Palm Springs Sacramento Faith TV SU 3:30 p.m.

Sacramento KION (CW) SU 8:00 a.m.

Salinas BAVC (Public Access) WE 8:00 a.m.

San Francisco KSBY (CW) SU 8:00 a.m.

San Luis Obispo KSBY (CW) SU 8:00 a.m.

Santa Barbara KSBY (CW) SU 8:00 a.m.

Santa Maria KXTU SU 10:30 a.m.

CO Colorado Springs KJCT (CW) SU 7:00 a.m.

Grand Junction WWLP (CW) SU 8:00 a.m.

CT Hartford WDCA SU 7:30 a.m.

DC Washington DC WMDT (CW) SU 8:00 a.m.

DE Harrington WBFS SU 6:30 a.m.

FL Ft. Lauderdale WCJB SU 6:00 a.m.

Gainesville WCJB (CW) SU 8:00 a.m.

Gainesville WCWJ SU 6:30 a.m.

Jacksonville WBFS SU 6:30 a.m.

Miami WJHG (CW) SU 7:00 a.m.

Panama City WTLF SU 8:00 a.m.

Tallahassee WTOG SU 8:00 a.m.

GA Albany WALB (CW) SU 8:00 a.m.

Albany WALB SU 11:00 a.m.

Atlanta WATL SU 10:00 a.m.

Augusta WAGT (CW) SU 8:00 a.m.

Columbus WLTX SU 7:30 a.m.

Thomasville WTLF (CW) SU 8:00 a.m.

IA Des Moines KCWI SU 7:00 a.m.

ID Boise KYOU SU 7:00 a.m.

Idaho Falls KIFI SU 7:00 a.m.

IL Chicago WJYS SU 8:00 a.m.

Moline Mediacom MO 5:00 p.m.

Peoria WHOI SU 7:00 a.m.

Quincy WGEM SU 7:00 a.m.

IN Fort Wayne WPTA SU 7:30 a.m.

Fort Wayne Comcast SU 9:00 a.m.

KS Parsons TWPAP WE 7:00 p.m.

Wichita KSCW-TV 33 SU 11:00 a.m.

KY Bowling Green WBKO SU 7:00 a.m.

Latonia PEG WE 6:30 p.m.

Latonia PEG TH 10:00 p.m.

Lexington WTVQ SU 7:00 a.m.

Lexington Insight Various

Louisville WBNA SU 9:30 a.m.

LA Alexandria KBCA SU 7:00 a.m.

Alexandria KLAX SU 9:30 a.m.

Baton Rouge WBRZ SU 10:00 a.m.

Lafayette KATC SU 7:00 a.m.

Lake Charles KVHP SU 9:30 a.m.

Monroe KNOE SU 7:00 a.m.

New Orleans WNOL SU 7:00 a.m.

Shreveport KSHV SU 10:00 a.m.

West Monroe KMCT SU 6:00 a.m.

MA Springfield WWLP SU 7:00 a.m.

ME Bangor WABI SU 7:00 a.m.

Presque Isle WBPQ SU 8:00 a.m.

MI Alpena WBAE SU 8:00 a.m.

Lansing WLAI SU 11:00 a.m.

Marquette WBKP SU 8:00 a.m.

MN Cloquet KDLH CW Plus SU 8:00 a.m.

Duluth KDLH SU 8:00 a.m.

Mankato KMNF/KEYC (CW) 9:00 a.m.

Rochester KTTC SU 7:00 a.m.

Roseville CTV WE 12:00 p.m.

MO Columbia KOMU SU 7:00 a.m.

Joplin KFJX SU 8:30 a.m.

Kansas City KCWE SU 7:30 a.m.

St. Louis KPLR SU 6:30 a.m.

MS Biloxi WXXV SU 7:00 a.m.

Columbus WCBT SU 7:00 a.m.

Greenwood WBWO SU 7:00 a.m.

Jackson Spectrum SU 10:00 a.m.

Jackson Spectrum WE 4:00 p.m.

Meridian WTKO SU 7:00 a.m.

MT Billings KTVQ SU 7:00 a.m.

Butte KBZK SU 7:00 a.m.

Butte KXLF SU 7:00 a.m.

Glendive KXWB SU 7:00 a.m.

Great Falls KRTV SU 7:00 a.m.

Helena KMTF SU 7:00 a.m.

Missoula KPAX SU 7:00 a.m.

NC Charlotte WAXN SU 9:00 a.m.

Charlotte WMYT SU 8:30 a.m.

Greenville WNCN SU 8:00 a.m.

Hickory WHKY MO 7:30 p.m.

Raleigh WRAX SU 7:30 a.m.

ND Bismarck KXMA (CW2) SU 7:00 a.m.

Fargo KJXB (CW) SU 7:00 a.m.

NM Albuquerque KBWB SU 8:00 a.m.

Albuquerque KCHF MO 7:30 p.m.

Albuquerque KCHF FR 9:00 p.m.

Santa Fe KCHF MO 7:30 a.m.

Santa Fe KCHF FR 9:00 p.m.

NV Reno KREN SU 8:00 a.m.

NY Albany-Troy Spectrum MO 3:00 p.m.

Binghamton Spectrum WE 10:00 p.m.

Binghamton Spectrum FR 8:00 p.m.

Binghamton WBNG SU 8:00 a.m.

Brooklyn BCAT MO 4:30 p.m.

Canandaigua Finger Lakes SU 11:30 a.m.

Elmira WENY SU 8:00 a.m.

Oneida Access TH 2:00 p.m.

Oneida Access TH 7:00 p.m.

Queens Public Access MO 11:00 p.m.

Queens Public Access TU 4:30 p.m.

Riverhead Cablevision SU 7:00 p.m.

Rochester Finger Lakes SU 7:00 a.m.

OH Cincinnati WSTR SU 9:00 a.m.

Cleveland WUAB SU 8:30 a.m.

Fairborn CAC TU 12:00 p.m.

Toledo BBCT SU 7:30 a.m.

Zanesville WBZV SU 8:00 a.m.

OK Ada KTEN SU 7:00 a.m.

Lawton KAUZ SU 7:00 a.m.

Tulsa KOCW SU 8:00 a.m.

OR Bend KTVZ SU 8:00 a.m.

Eugene KMTR SU 8:00 a.m.

Medford KTVL SU 8:00 a.m.

Portland Community SU 12:30 p.m.

PA Erie WSEE SU 8:00 a.m.

Johnstown Attn. Broadband MO 10:00 p.m.

Philadelphia WPSG SU 7:30 a.m.

SC Charleston WCBD SU 8:00 a.m.

Columbia WOLO SU 11:00 a.m.

Greenville WYCW SU 9:30 a.m.

Greenville WGGG SU 11:30 a.m.

Myrtle Beach WWMB SU 8:00 a.m.

SD Rapid City KCLO (ION/CW) SU 7:00 a.m.

SU 7:00 a.m.

WE 12:00 p.m.

SU 7:00 a.m.

SU 8:30 a.m.

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SU 8:00 a.m.

SU 12:30 p.m.

SU 8:00 a.m.

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UPCOMING TELECASTS

Is Christmas a Pagan Holiday?

Most of us know the pagan origins of Christmas. Should they matter to Christians today?

July 28–August 3

Just What Is the Day of the Lord?

The Day of the Lord brings the climax of history! Do you understand what is ahead?

August 4–10

2022 in Bible Prophecy

What does the Bible say about dramatic trends and events that will change our world in 2022?

August 11–17

The End of America

Biblical prophecy is clear: America's future is dire. You need to know the reasons why.

August 18–24

Peace in the Middle East?

What the great world powers cannot achieve will become reality in God's Kingdom!

August 25–31

The End of War

Will we ever see peace on Earth? Learn what must happen before world peace is attainable.

September 1–7

Schedule subject to change

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Mondays 2:00 a.m. E.T.

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