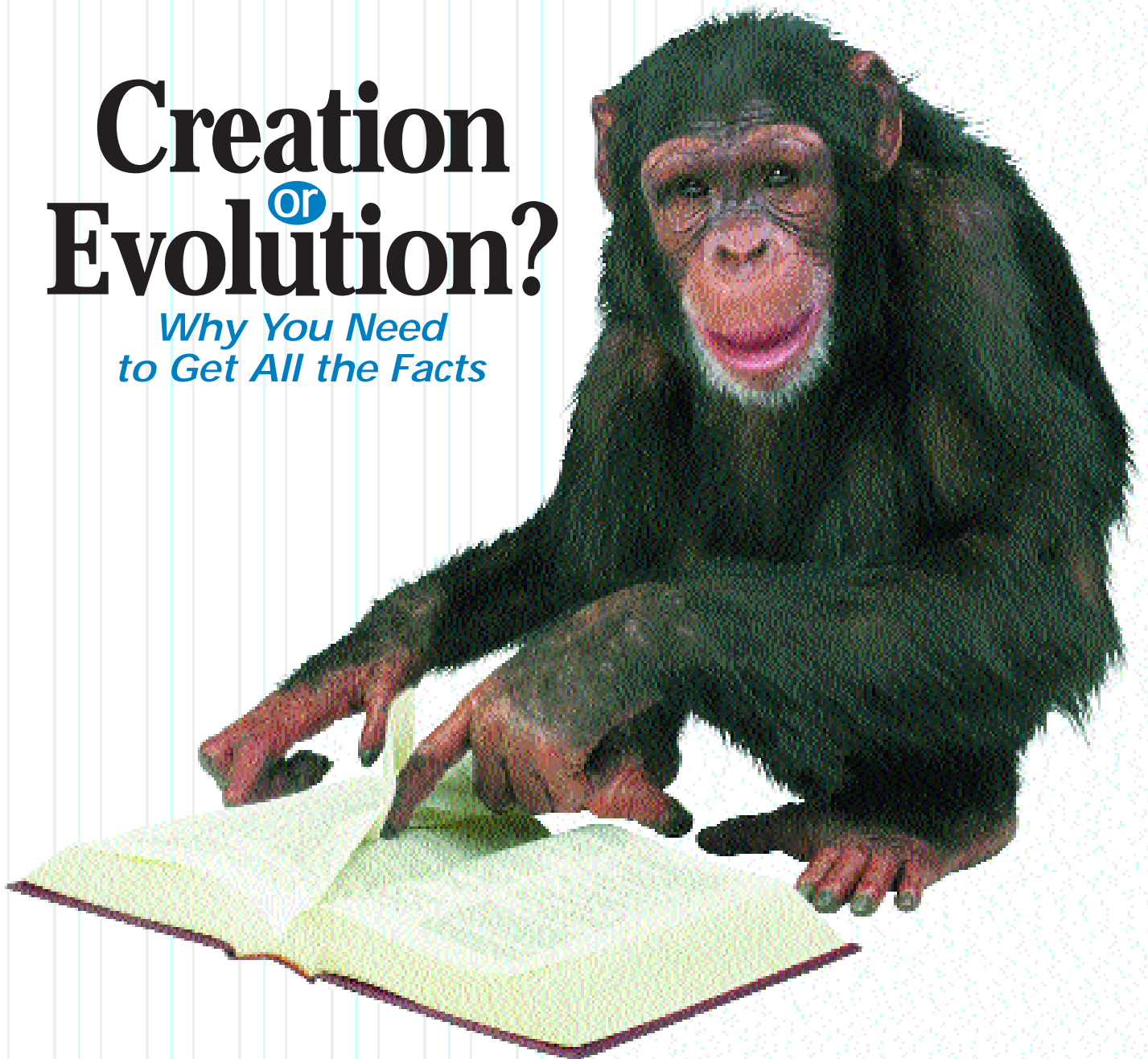


^{The} Good News

July/August 1998

Creation or Evolution?

*Why You Need
to Get All the Facts*



Adultery: No Longer Sinful or Shameful? • Coping With Depression
Israel's Early Kings • Help Your Children Cope During Family Setbacks

Evolution or Creation: Does It Matter?

What difference does it make whether we believe in creation or evolution? It seems odd that, only a few generations ago, laws prevented the teaching of evolution in some U.S. states. Now the opposite is true; the Bible is banned from classrooms. Serious discussion of the biblical view of the creation of our universe—and our human origins—is forbidden in public schools.

Why the hostility toward the Bible? Certainly not all scientists agree that there is no Creator and that we are all the product of random chance.

NASA director Wernher von Braun, the “father of the American Space Program,” observed: “[Evolutionists] challenge science to prove the existence of God. But must we really light a candle to see the sun? . . . What strange rationale makes some physicists accept the inconceivable electron as real while refusing to accept the reality of a Designer on the ground that they cannot conceive of Him?”

Is evolution true? Curiously enough, our human existence is one of the best arguments against it. According to evolutionary theory, the traits that offer the greatest advantage for survival are passed from generation to generation. Yet human reproduction itself argues powerfully against this fundamental premise of evolution.

If evolution is the guiding force in human development, how is it that higher forms of life evolved with male and female sexes? If humans are the pinnacle of the evolutionary process, how is it that we have the disadvantage of requiring a member of the opposite sex to reproduce, when lower forms of life—such as bacteria, viruses and protozoa—are sexless and far more prolific? If they can reproduce by far simpler methods, why can't we? If evolution is true, what went wrong?

Let's take it a step further. If humans are the result of evolution continually reinforcing characteristics that offer a survival advantage while eliminating those that hinder perpetuation, how can we explain a human infant?

Among thousands of species, the newly born (or newly hatched) are capable of survival within a matter of minutes or days. Many never even see their parents. Yet, among humans, an infant is utterly helpless—not for days, but for years after birth. A human baby is completely reliant on adults for the nourishment, shelter and care he or she will need to survive. Meanwhile, caring for that child is a distinct survival disadvantage for adults, since giving of their time and energy lessens their own prospects for survival.

Unfortunately, such obvious flaws in the theory of evolution are too often overlooked. Even Charles Darwin, whose theories about evolution took the world by storm, had second thoughts. In his later years he reflected on what he had started: “I was a young man with unformed ideas. I threw out queries, suggestions, wondering all the time over everything; and to my astonishment the ideas took like wildfire. *People made a religion of them*” (emphasis added).

Could man create a religion with no god? The widespread acceptance of evolution shows that we have done just that. The Bible teaches us that God created man. Evolution teaches us that man created God.

If God created man, we have no right to ignore Him. If man created God, we can easily ignore Him. What man has made, he can do away with. Thus we are free to act as though God doesn't exist.

Which is the myth, God or evolution? Louis Bounoure, director at the French National Center of Scientific Research, stated: “Evolution is a fairy tale for grown-ups. This theory has helped nothing in the progress of science. It is useless.”

Professor Bounoure was wrong about one thing. Rather than being *useless*, evolution is quite *useful* if one wants to reject the idea of God.

In this issue, *The Good News* begins a series examining evolution. You can know whether evolution is true. We hope you'll examine the evidence carefully. It *does* matter.

—Scott Ashley

Good News

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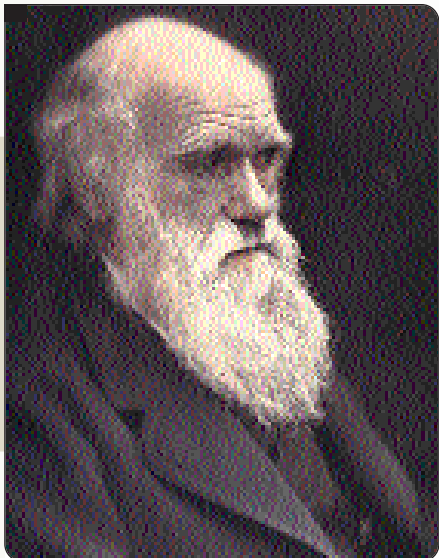
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Did God Create Man?

This issue of *The Good News* begins a series on creation and evolution. Did God form the heavens and the earth—or is the world and everything in it the result of mindless, random and evolutionary forces?

by Mario Seiglie

H

He couldn't believe his eyes. Along with many other Catholics around the world, on Oct. 25, 1996, he read a newspaper headline that announced, "Pope John Paul II Backs the Theory of Evolution."

For Tulio Hernandez, a 32-year old-Catholic, the news came as a shock. The newspaper mentioned the pope had addressed the Pontifical Academy of Sciences in Rome and mused that the theory of evolution seemed valid for the physical evolution of man and other species through natural selection and hereditary adaptations.

"The Pope said we could have descended from the apes," said *Il Giornale*, a conservative Italian newspaper. The Pope clarified that he regarded the human soul as being God's creation and not subject to the evolutionary process. (This mixing of evolution and God is called *theistic evolution* and, as we shall see, has an enormous impact on whether people take the Bible at face value or whether much is considered to be well-meaning myth.)

What was Tulio's reaction? "It left me quite confused," he remarked. "I had always thought Adam and Eve really existed and had been created directly from the ground by God."

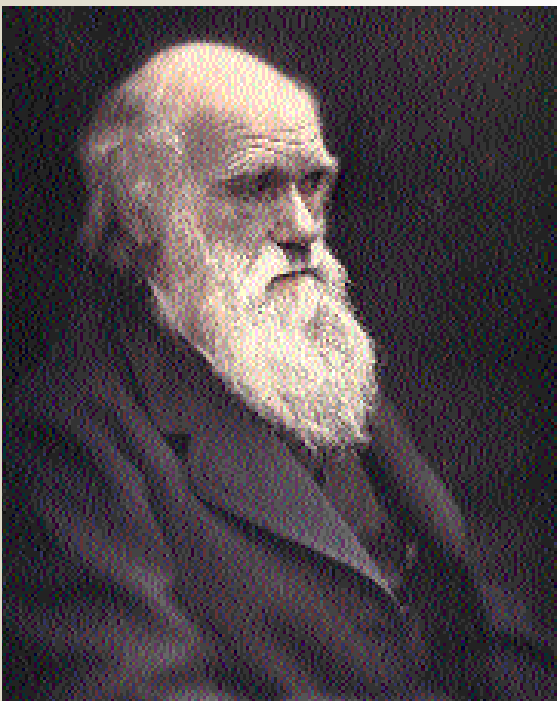
What were his thoughts now about biblical teachings and the afterlife? "I don't know," he said, "but I'm looking seriously into reincarnation and other religions for more answers."

How did this surprising declaration by Pope John Paul II come about? What are factors that led to this far-reaching conclusion?

How early Catholics understood Genesis

Notice what *Time* magazine said about the pope's endorsement of evolution: "[Pope] Pius [in 1950] was skeptical of evolution but tolerated study and discussion of it; the statement by John Paul reflects the church's acceptance of evolution. He did not, however, diverge at all from Pius on the question of origin of man's soul: that comes from God, even if 'the human body is sought in living material which existed before it.'"

The statement is unlikely to influence the curriculum of Catholic schools, where students have studied evolution since the 1950s. Indeed, taking the Bible literally has not been a hallmark among Catholics through much of the 20th century. Asked about the pope's statement, Peter Stravinskis, editor of the 1991 *Catholic Encyclopedia*, said: "It's essentially what Augustine was writing. He tells us that we should not interpret Genesis literally, and that it is poetic and



Charles Darwin is renowned for his hypothesis of the process of natural selection as the driving force behind evolution. Although others had earlier advocated the theory of evolution, Darwin's ideas helped it gain widespread acceptance.

theological language” (*Time*, international edition, Nov. 4, 1996, p. 59).

So, from the time of Augustine and for the next 1,300 years, covering roughly the medieval age, the view of the Greek philosophers became the standard for explaining creation and a flat earth in the Roman church. Further, ecclesiastical leaders adopted the earth-centered view of the universe of Ptolemy, a Roman astronomer of the second century. “It was . . . from the work of previous [Greek] astronomers,” says the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, “that Ptolemy evolved his detailed description of an Earth-centered (geocentric) universe, a revolutionary but erroneous idea that governed astronomical thinking for over 1,300 years . . .

“In essence, it is a synthesis of the results obtained by Greek astronomy . . . On the motions of the Sun, Moon, and planets, Ptolemy again extended the observations and conclusions of Hipparchus—this time to formulate his geocentric theory, which is popularly known as the Ptolemaic system” (15th edition, Chicago, 1975, *Macropedia* Vol. 15, “Ptolemy,” p. 179).

The Bible and the universe

Thus it was not the biblical perspective but the Greek view of the cosmos that was to guide man’s concept of the universe for many centuries.

Whereas the Greeks thought of the earth as stationary and imagined that everything else circled around it, the Bible speaks of earth revolving in space. Job 38:14 compares the earth to a seal turning and leaving its impression of day and night in the sky.

Although the Greeks thought Atlas held up first the heavens and later the earth, and the Hindus believed the earth rested atop four gigantic elephants, the Bible has long revealed the true explanation. We read in Job 26:7 an astonishingly modern scientific concept, that God “hangs the earth on nothing.” Science has demonstrated that this “nothing” is the invisible force of gravity that holds the planet in its orbit.

Over time, of course, these erroneous Greek ideas, incorporated into the Roman church, were proven wrong. “The early Fathers thought they were defending the Bible when they argued that the world must be flat,” says British

physicist Alan Hayward. “But in fact they were only defending their own wrong interpretation of the Bible. And in the long run they harmed their own cause, by giving people the impression that Christianity was opposed to the scientific method of seeking knowledge” (*Creation and Evolution*, Bethany House, Minneapolis, 1985, p. 80).

The voyages of various explorers, including Christopher Columbus’s journey to the New World, demonstrated that the earth was round rather than flat. A bit later Nicolas Copernicus calculated that the earth was not the center of the universe. However, he was cautious about challenging the Roman church on this belief. More than a century would elapse before someone would be bold enough and possessed sufficient evidence to clash with the church.

In the 1690s, after he had invented the first telescope, Italian astronomer Galileo Galilei saw clear evidence that the earth revolved around the sun and not vice versa. The church considered the idea heretical, and Galileo was threatened with death if he did not

recant. Finally he did, although legend has it, as he left the presence of the pope, he muttered under his breath about the earth: “But it still moves.”

“When the Roman church attacked Copernicus and Galileo,” says Christian philosopher Francis Schaeffer, “it was not because their teaching actually contained anything contrary to the Bible. The church authorities thought it did, but that was because Aristotelian elements had become part of church orthodoxy, and Galileo’s notions clearly conflicted with them. In fact, Galileo defended the compatibility of Copernicus and the Bible, and this was one of the factors which brought about his trial” (*How Shall We Then Live?*, Fleming H. Revell Co., Old Tappan, New Jersey, 1976, p. 131).

In fact, some believe that the invention of the printing press and subsequent broader distribution of the Bible in the 1500s played a large role in the emergence of modern science. “The rise of modern science,” says Francis Schaeffer, “did not conflict with what the Bible teaches; indeed, at a crucial point the

Ancient Near-Eastern Concepts of Creation

At the beginning of recorded history, some 5,000 years ago, the Sumerians of Mesopotamia left accounts of their creation myths inscribed on cuneiform tablets. The first civilizations of the Fertile Crescent all had similar creation accounts, but the only one without myth and with a moral and perfect God is the biblical version.

It is quite natural to conclude, as nations gradually distanced themselves from the true Creator God and sank into immorality and polytheism, that their understanding became corrupted and eventually was used to prop up their political, social and philosophical outlooks. Nevertheless, a kernel of truth was left as a witness of the original, uncorrupted account.

The Sumerians conceived the earth as being flat and the sky as a canopy of clouds and stars. They believed earth and sky were created by two gods: An, the male sky god, and Ki, the female earth god. These two gave birth to a multitude of other gods, each with a particular power and responsibility over a part of the creation or physical phenomena (lightning, trees, mountains, illness, etc.). They lived in a kingly court in heaven with An, the supreme god, surrounded by four subordinate creator gods. Below them was a council of seven gods and, finally, the 50 remaining minor gods.

All physical occurrences could be interpreted by the priests as the result of the particular mood or whim of one of these gods. They could be placated by offerings and sacrifices. Although these deities were considered immortal, their supposed conduct was nothing but human. They were depicted as often fighting among themselves, full of petty envies and lusts and subject to hunger and even death.

A few centuries later the Babylonians conquered the Sumerians and modified these myths to exalt their own civilization. Now it was the Babylonian god Marduk who was in charge, and he formed the heavens and the earth by killing a female god, Tiamat. By her division into two pieces, the heavens and earth were separated.

Such are some of the reasonings of the human imagination.

—Mario Seiglie

Scientific Revolution rested upon what the Bible teaches.

“Both Alfred North Whitehead and J. Robert Oppenheimer have stressed that modern science was born out of the Christian world view . . . As far as I know, neither of the two men were Christians . . . Because the early scientists believed that the world was created by a reasonable God, they were not surprised to discover that people could find out something true about nature and the universe on the basis of reason” (Schaeffer, pp. 132-133).

As this more biblically based science expanded, ecclesiastical leaders had to admit that their long-held positions were wrong. With these two teachings—that the earth was flat and that it was at the center of the universe—proven false, the church had lost two rounds of prestige against emerging science. As time went on, scientific study grew increasingly apart from the dominant religion, which was mired in its Greek and medieval thought. This gap has only widened with time.

The theory of evolution

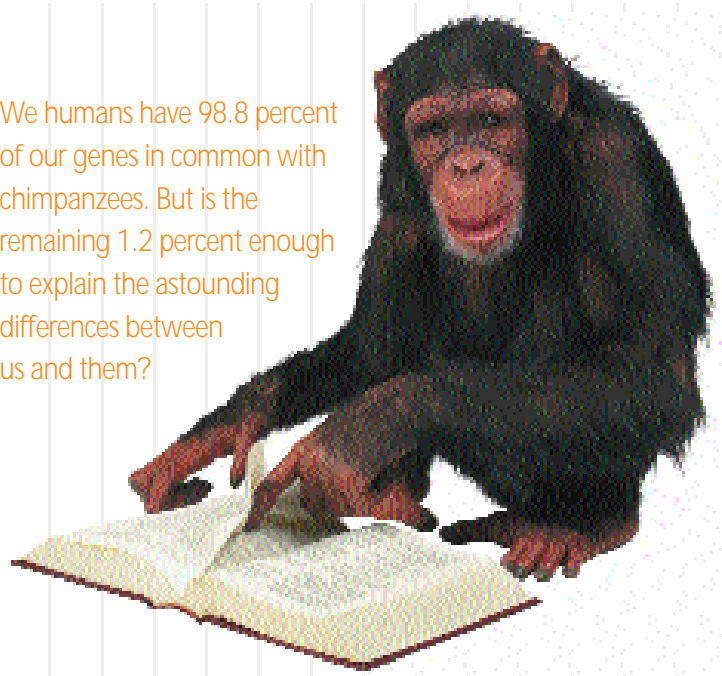
“The early Greek philosophers,” explains Dr. Hayward, “were probably the first thinkers to toy with the notion of evolution. Along with many other ideas from ancient Greece it reappeared in western Europe in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries . . . But one great difficulty stood in the way. Nobody—not even Lamarck, who made a brave attempt—could explain convincingly how evolution could have taken place. Each species seemed to be fixed. There seemed no way in which one species could give rise to another.

“Darwin changed all that with his theory that the way evolution worked was by ‘natural selection.’ He proposed that small variations in each generation—the kind of natural variations that enable breeders to produce new varieties of dogs and cows and

apples and roses—would eventually add up to very big differences, and thus, over hundreds of millions of years, could account for every species on earth” (*Creation and Evolution*, Bethany House, Minneapolis, 1985, pp. 4-5).

Thus, in the late nineteenth century, scientists and educators were sidetracked from finding the truth about the origin and meaning of life when they adopted Darwin’s reasoning. Their widespread acceptance of an alternative explanation for the existence of man and the creation apart from the account of Genesis soon led to a general distrust of the Bible. This massive shift of thought has had far-reaching consequences for humanity. “Darwinism,” says Dr. Hayward, “begins to look more like

We humans have 98.8 percent of our genes in common with chimpanzees. But is the remaining 1.2 percent enough to explain the astounding differences between us and them?



The Testimony of the New Testament

Many passages show us that Jesus Christ and the apostles fully accepted the Genesis account of the creation. Christ talked about “the beginning of the creation *which God created*” (Mark 13:19; see also Matthew 24:21).

He once asked some who questioned Him: “Have you not read that He who made them [Adam and Eve] at the beginning ‘made them male and female?’” (Matthew 19:4; Mark 10:6). Later the resurrected Christ referred to Himself as “the Beginning of the creation” (Revelation 3:14).

Many are surprised to learn that the Bible reveals Christ as the Creator! More than once the apostle Paul explained to early Christians that God had created all things *by Jesus Christ* (Ephesians 3:9; Colossians 1:16). Hebrews 1:2 tells us that God “has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, . . . through whom also He made the worlds.”

Paul also told the Athenians that God had made all nations “from one blood” (Acts 17:26); all are descendants of Adam and Eve. Paul believed all that was written in the Law and the Prophets (Acts 24:14), including the Creation accounts.

Finally, both the specifics and the general tenor of Peter’s last letter tell us that he, too, believed in creation (see 2 Peter 3:4-7 in particular).

—John Ross Schroeder

a huge maze without an exit, where the world has wandered aimlessly for a century and a half” (Hayward, p. 58).

Meanwhile the churches, on its base of Greek philosophy, could not adequately explain and defend aspects of their teachings. They, too, were ultimately sidetracked by their mixing of pagan philosophy with the Bible.

Acceptance of evolution

Some of the reasons for the acceptance of Darwin’s theory involved conditions of the time. The 19th century was an era of great social and religious unrest. Science was riding a crest of popularity. Impressive discoveries and inventions were appearing constantly. Darwin himself had an impeccable reputation as a dedicated naturalist, and the length and tediousness of his book hid many of the real weaknesses of his theory (he described his own book as “one long argument”). It was in this climate that Darwin’s theory gained acceptance.

At the same time, the Roman church was being affected by its own cumulative mistakes about science as well as the critics’ onslaughts against its teachings and the Bible. The church itself began to accept scientific explanations rather than supernatural ones.

The momentum grew in the 20th century until Protestants



Could tiny, random changes in the genetic code of primates, over millions of years, finally give rise to humans? Charles Darwin thought they could and did.

The Greek Concept of Creation

The ancient Greeks had no shortage of creation myths, with many elements taken from the Babylonian model. Two poets, Homer and Hesiod, described the Greek religious system with their national gods in charge, living in a royal court full of intrigues and lusts.

In his version, Hesiod saw the origin of the universe as deriving from the chaos, the vastness of space, that produced the first goddess, Gaea (earth). She created Uranus (heaven), who became her husband, and they produced many lesser gods. The division between heaven and earth occurred when one of their sons, Cronus, in a fit of jealousy attacked his father, Uranus. Zeus, the one who became the chief god, was born from this irate Cronus and his wife, Rhea.

The Greeks also believed the earth was flat and surrounded by a vast ocean. The Romans later incorporated this view of the planet into their beliefs around the time the Christian era began.

Sadly, the only surviving writings about Christianity from the first centuries after the apostles come mainly from men steeped in Greek thought and philosophy. These were Justin Martyr (110-165 A.D.), Clement (160-220), Origen (185-254) and Augustine (354-430), all former disciples of the thinking of Plato and Aristotle. In this way Greek explanations of a flat earth as well as other aspects of Greek philosophy entered the Roman church and formed much of its theology.

"The problem with Gentile Christians," notes church historian Samuele Bacchiocchi, "was not only their lack of familiarity with Scripture, but also their excessive fascination with their Greek philosophical speculations, which conditioned their understanding of Biblical truths. While Jewish Christians often erred in the direction of legalism, Gentile Christians often erred in the direction of philosophical speculations which sundered Christianity from its historical roots" (*God's Festivals in Scripture and History*, Biblical Perspectives, Berrien Springs, Mich., 1995, pp. 102-103).

In particular, Origen and Augustine began to interpret much of the book of Genesis as allegory. They viewed the Genesis account as being filled with symbolic fictional figures representing truth, human conduct or experience. Gradually, this allegorical method became the norm in the Catholic understanding of much of Genesis. Clearly, later popes were influenced by these conceptions held by the early church fathers.

—Mario Seiglie

and Catholics alike accepted *theistic evolution*. This is the belief that God occasionally intervenes in a largely evolutionary process through such steps as creating the first cell and then permitting the whole process of evolution to take place, or by simply waiting for the first man to appear from the gradual chain of life and then giving him a soul.

"Darwinian evolution to them," says Dr. Hayward, "is merely the method by which God, keeping discreetly in the background, created every living thing . . . The majority of theistic evolutionists have a somewhat liberal view of the Bible, and often regard the early chapters of Genesis as a collection of Hebrew myths" (Hayward, p. 8).

The implications for the trustworthiness of the Bible are enormous. Is it the inspired and infallible Word of God, or are parts of it merely well-intentioned myths? Are sections of it simply inaccurate and unreliable? Were Jesus Christ and the apostles wrong when they affirmed that Adam and Eve were created directly by God? (Matthew 19:4; 1 Corinthians 15:45).

Was Christ mistaken, and did He mislead others? Is 2 Timothy 3:16 true, that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for *doctrine* [church teaching] . . ."? As you can see, the implications for Christian faith and teaching are profound (see "The Testimony

An Erroneous Interpretation of Genesis

One of several controversies that broke out between the scientific community and the Roman church concerned the age of the earth. The church had taught through the centuries that the earth was only a few thousand years old. The Reformers shared that view. An English bishop, James Ussher (1581-1656), announced that he had pinpointed the creation of Adam as not only in 4004 B.C., but, to be more precise, at 8 o'clock on Saturday morning, Oct. 22.

None of this, of course, was spelled out in the Scriptures. To regard the creation of the earth and Adam to be at virtually the same time is erroneous, as we shall see in a future installment.

Consequently, it came as a great surprise in the 19th century when the emerging science of geology began to discover and analyze many deep, fossil-laden strata. In 1799 William Smith, known as the father of English geology, established what was called the geologic column. Two centuries of subsequent geologic work all over the globe have largely vindicated his basic conclusions.

Even today geologists, having drilled as far as seven miles into the earth's crust, can find oil by comparing the rock layers to the geologic column. The same basic pattern has been confirmed by thousands of geologic and oil explorations. The essentials of the geologic column were established before Charles Darwin came onto the scene.

The earliest geologists, many of whom were studious Christians, believed that an ancient earth did not contradict the biblical account. After all, they had seen that the Bible did not give a date for the original creation. Genesis 1 could be seen as an original creation, and later, after an indeterminate period, came the formation in seven days of the present human, animal and plant life as we know it. Up to that time in the Western world, no one had questioned the biblical account of the creation of living things. Evolution was not generally accepted.

—Mario Seiglie

of the New Testament,” p. 6).

Perhaps the effects of his own theory on Darwin’s own faith can illustrate the damage it can do to religious convictions. Darwin started as a theology student and a staunch respecter of the Bible, but once he formulated his theory he lost faith in the Old Testament. Later he could no longer believe in the miracles of the New Testament.

A danger lies in following in Darwin’s footsteps. Remember the old saying, “If you teach a child he is only an animal, don’t complain when he behaves like one”? Can we not lay part of the blame for today’s rampant immorality and crime on society’s prevalent values and beliefs derived in part from this theory?

Darwinism and morality

If there isn’t a just God to judge the actions of men, isn’t it easier for man to do as he pleases? Sir Julian Huxley once admitted why many quickly embraced evolution with such fervor: “I suppose the reason we jumped at *Origin of Species* was that the concept of God interfered with our own sexual mores” (Henry Morris, *The Troubled Waters of Evolution*, San Diego, Creation-Life Publishers, 1974, p. 58).

He later wrote, “The sense of spiritual relief which comes from rejecting the idea of God as a superhuman being is enormous” (*Essays of a Humanist*, London, Penguin, 1966, p. 223). Could this have something to do with the immorality seen in so many schools and universities where God is banned from the classroom and evolutionary theory is taught as fact?

So can the Genesis account be reconciled with the idea of an ancient earth? What about evolution? How strong is its case? These questions will be covered in future installments. *GN*

RECOMMENDED READING

Can you really believe the Bible? Can you prove whether the Bible is truly the Word of God? These are crucial questions. Request your free copy of *Is the Bible True?* to discover the answers for yourself. At the same time, request *How to Understand the Bible*. Both are free for the asking. Just contact us at the office in your country (or the country nearest you) on page 2 of this issue.

Scientists, *Creation and Evolution*

No one should assume that scientists uniformly agree that there is no God and that the world around us is the product of a mindless evolutionary process. Consider what some scientists have to say about creation and evolution:

“For I am well aware that scarcely a single point is discussed in this volume [*On the Origin of Species*] on which facts cannot be adduced, often apparently leading to conclusions directly opposite to those at which I arrived.”

“I was a young man with unformed ideas. I threw out queries, suggestions, wondering all the time over everything; and to my astonishment the ideas took like wildfire. People made a religion of them”

—Charles Darwin (1809-1882), British naturalist credited with popularizing the theory of evolution through natural selection

“The more I study nature, the more I stand amazed at the work of the Creator. Into his tiniest creatures, God has placed extraordinary properties that turn them into agents of destruction of dead matter.”

—Louis Pasteur (1822-1895), French scientist, developer of pasteurization process for milk and vaccines for anthrax, chicken cholera and rabies, dean of the faculty of sciences at Lille University

“Manned space flight is an amazing achievement, but it has opened for mankind thus far only a tiny door for viewing the awesome reaches of space. An outlook through this peephole at the vast mysteries of the universe should only confirm our belief in the certainty of its Creator.”

“One cannot be exposed to the law and order of the universe without concluding that there must be design and purpose behind it all . . . The better we understand the intricacies of the universe and all it harbors, the more reason we have found to marvel at the inherent design upon which it is based . . .

“To be forced to believe only one conclusion—that everything in the universe happened by chance—would violate the very objectivity of science itself . . . What random process could produce the brains of a man or the system of the human eye? . . .

“They [evolutionists] challenge science to prove the existence of God. But must we really light a candle to see the sun? . . . They say they cannot visualize a Designer. Well, can a physicist visualize an electron? . . . What strange rationale makes some physicists accept the inconceivable electron as real while refusing to accept the reality of a Designer on the ground that they cannot conceive Him? . . .

“It is in scientific honesty that I endorse the presentation of alternative theories for the origin of the universe, life and man in the science classroom. It would be an error to overlook the possibility that the universe was planned rather than happening by chance.”

“Atheists all over the world have . . . called upon science as their crown witness against the existence of God. But as they try, with arrogant abuse of scientific reasoning, to render proof there is no God, the simple and enlightening truth is that their arguments boomerang. For one of the most fundamental laws of natural science is that nothing in the physical world ever happens without a cause.

“There simply cannot be a creation without some kind of Spiritual Creator . . . In the world around us we can behold the obvious manifestations of the Divine plan of the Creator . . . We are humbled by the powerful forces that move the stars, and the purposeful orderliness of nature that endows a tiny and ungainly seed with the ability to develop into a beautiful flower.

“The better we understand the intricacies of the universe and all that it harbors, the more reason we have found to marvel at God’s creation.”

—Dr. Wernher von Braun (1912-1977), NASA director and “father of the American Space Program”

“The theory of evolution is impossible. At base, in spite of appearances, no one any longer believes in it . . . Evolution is a kind of dogma which the priests no longer believe, but which they maintain for their people.”

—Paul Lemoine (1878-1940), director of Paris Natural History Museum and president of the Geological Society of France



Creation & Evolution

by Jerry Aust

The Good News: As a lawyer and law professor, how did you become interested in writing a book that analyzes Darwinism?

Phillip Johnson: I was in England on sabbatical in 1987-88 and began reading on the subject. I found it fascinating and began looking into it further. I found out many interesting things. For example, some scientists at the British Natural History Museum were saying things that were completely contrary to the Darwinian theory, and they were being told to shut up and keep quiet. I looked into it to find out what was going on.

While there, I bought all kinds of scientific books and read the scientific journals at the University of London, where I was a visiting professor. In retrospect, it's perfectly logical that I should get into this subject, because fundamentally it's all about the relationship between assumptions and proof. Specifically, people aren't always forthright about their assumptions.

Evolutionary biologists state their assumptions as fact. They state their assumptions emphatically, then treat them as proof. One of the first things I noticed was that some evolutionary biologists I talked to couldn't appreciate the

difference between what they'd proved and what they'd only assumed. They didn't really understand the difference. Thus I wrote *Darwin on Trial*, which is really a critique of bad reasoning presented as legitimate science.

GN: Concerning evolution and its effects on modern educational systems, you mention intellectual superstition. What is that?

PJ: What we get as science in the Darwinian theory of evolution is not based on science. It's based on a prior commitment to materialism and philosophy. Facts take second place to that philosophy, and therefore what we're getting is what I call a materialist mythology. That's what I mean by intellectual superstition.

GN: Would you briefly identify the themes of your books *Darwin on Trial*, *Reason in the Balance* and *Defeating Darwinism by Opening Minds*?

PJ: *Darwin on Trial* is my book on evolutionary science. It goes into the scientific detail fairly thoroughly to show that the evidence is against the theory [of evolution] at every point. This leads to the conclusion that what is driving the evolutionary-science community is not the evidence but a philosophical position that they endorse in spite of the evidence. So that's the book for people who want to go deeply into the science of it.

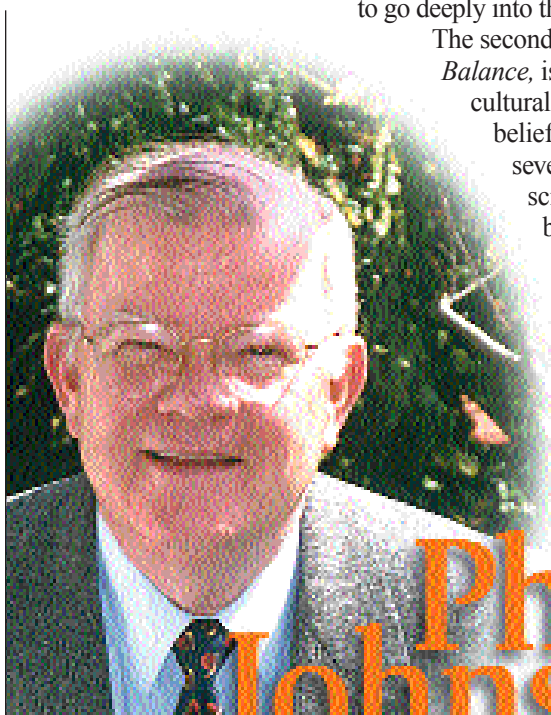
The second book, *Reason in the Balance*, is mainly about the cultural implications [of belief in evolution]. It has several chapters on the scientific background, but the main theme is

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He is a graduate of Harvard University (1961) and received his law degree from the University of Chicago (1965). He was law clerk for California chief justice Roger Traynor (1965-66) and for U.S. Supreme Court chief justice Earl Warren (1966-67).

He has also been a visiting professor at the Emory University School of Law, Atlanta (1982-83), and at University College, London (1987-88).

His books are available in many stores or through InterVarsity Press at (800) 843-9487. Further information is available on the World Wide Web at www.arn.org/.



A Good News Interview with

Phillip Johnson

to show that the philosophy behind Darwinian evolution—which is materialism, or naturalism—has become in effect the established religion of our country.

This has great consequences for subjects like law and ethics, because, if God is dead and a mindless process of evolution is our true creator, then God's moral authority is also dead. That means that all questions of value are up to us and we can change the rules at any time that we like. So that's the foundation for the moral relativism that we seek out throughout society.

The third book, *Defeating Darwinism by Opening Minds*, is specifically addressed to graduating high-school students, beginning college students and their parents and teachers. It is basically intended to prepare these students for the kind of indoctrination that they will receive in college, not only in the science curriculum but throughout the curriculum.

They will be presented material which presupposes that nature is all there is, that there has never been any supernatural influence from the ultimate beginning to the present and that God belongs in the category of what they call religious belief, which is to say subjective fantasy.

So this book is to prepare them for what they'll be hearing and to under-

stand the thinking behind it, because these subjects are not presented straightforwardly. The professors don't say that they're going to convince you that naturalism is true; they start out with that assumption, and everything follows from there. You have to understand where they're coming from to have an understanding of what's wrong with this whole system.

GN: How will these high-school students, who are going into college, be exposed to what you are saying about defeating Darwinism? Apart from discovering your book, how can more people be made aware that modern education will automatically teach them the effects of naturalism?

PJ: This is what families have to take

responsibility for. The public-school educators are not going to teach students something that undermines the philosophy they're trying to inculcate in them, that they've been taught to believe themselves. So it has to be a very high priority for Christian families to make sure that their children learn.

This is one of the things that has energized the home-schooling movement to such an extent. But it isn't necessary for parents to go that far. They can read up on and learn these ideas themselves and make sure they're taught in the home or in church or in some kind of educational, supplemental program.

The Christian community has all the resources it needs to do this kind of educating, whether the public schools like it or not. The limitation here has been that the parents and the ministers and the youth workers and teachers haven't understood the issues. They have been misled to believe that the kind of secular education we're receiving is compatible with a Christian belief system and that the theory of evolution in particular is only about minor scientific matters that don't touch the larger issues of life.

However, this is fundamentally untrue. So the real problem is that the parents, teachers, youth workers and ministers—everybody—need to learn to understand this and develop some kind of a program to communicate that to our young people. It's very much within our resources; the problem is simply one of understanding.

GN: As a tenured professor in a major university, you've seen how the commonly accepted educational belief system has been assumed as true by many academicians and how this notion has had its effect on young students' minds.

PJ: It does, and it molds the thinking of the whole culture. What is really insidious about it is that people don't realize that their thinking is being molded. It comes in through the assumptions, and that's where the effective indoctrination and propaganda work.

The way to put something across to

people so that it gets into their minds is not to tell them something straightforwardly, because then their defense is up. Then they can recognize it and make counterarguments. What you do is to assume it and smuggle it in in the unstated assumptions behind the stuff that you are teaching on the surface. This is what occurs in the educational system, and this is what I teach people to be able to spot.

GN: This approach you're taking is revolutionary, isn't it?

PJ: Yes, this is a peaceful, intellectual revolution.

GN: You advance the notion that 90 percent of Americans believe in God.

PJ: They say they do. They'll answer a poll question that way. How deeply that penetrates into their thinking is quite a different question. People answer poll questions by giving the answer they think they are supposed to give. So you have to do a lot of interpreting to get truthful results.

GN: This leaves us about 10 percent who, to some degree and on some level, are agnostic or who at least promote naturalism, even unwittingly. Is it possible that 10 percent can dominate the 90 percent in this area, and, if so, how?

PJ: Sure, they can, especially if they take the high ground, the high intellectual ground. You see the education at every level. Government, lawmaking and all those things presuppose the viewpoint of the 10 percent. Now, this is masked because the viewpoint of the 10 percent is not inconsistent with religious belief.

So people can have a naturalistic worldview and accompany it with a lot of God talk—that is to say their understanding is that God belongs in this category of religious belief, and so, effectively, everybody has their own God. The whole thing is part of their imaginative life. In their view, God is not real in the sense that the theory of evolution is real, which is to say that it's taught as true for everybody. Their view is that God is real if that idea works for you.

So that's the viewpoint on God which is taken throughout public life in the United States, and it's why somebody can say with some sincerity I'm a very religious person and yet they will have a fundamentally naturalistic understanding of what that means.

This kind of understanding is presup-

If science is going to deal with the question of whether there is a Creator, it ought to openly and honestly deal with both sides of the issue rather than just one.

posed in public life, and that is why the idea of tolerance has become central. In this way of thinking, true religion means that you never interfere with somebody else's belief system and that all of these are relative systems good only for the person who holds that

I want people to realize that, although 90 percent of the country says they believe in some sort of intelligent Creator, the opposite is what is being taught and proclaimed as fact.

belief, so government should presuppose none of these beliefs.

That means, effectively, that the agnostic position—which says we have no knowledge of God—becomes the neutral position which governs the country. This is what the Supreme Court has effectively enacted and imposed in its religious-liberty decisions.

So, whether that is ever changed as a governmental matter, it's really important for people to understand what is going on and why the laws have changed in the direction that they have. That's the subject that I explained in *Reason in the Balance*.

I want people to realize that, although 90 percent of the country says they believe in some sort of intelligent Creator, the opposite is what is being taught and proclaimed as fact. It isn't because the evidence supports that, but because a small minority believe in the power of blind chance and naturalistic forces.

Public education is no longer under public control. Now the teachers' unions, curriculum planners and government officials have established control over education in general. The public doesn't like a lot of what goes on in the schools, but they're told it's none of their business.

GN: What plans do you have to get your information out to the public, electronically or otherwise?

PJ: That's what I've written about in my latest book, *Defeating Darwinism by Opening Minds*. That book really answers the question, especially in chapters six and seven, where I explain what I call the "wedge strategy." This is the building of an intellectual movement and includes the combination of a strategy aimed at legitimating the critique of evolutionary naturalism in the secular universities and in

bringing a common understanding of this issue to the Christian world.

GN: How would you like to see the subject of beginnings approached in science classes?

PJ: First and foremost, the subject should be approached with honesty and

candor. I agree with the Darwinists that students should learn more about evolution. The difference is that they want to indoctrinate students, and I want them to learn the flaws in the theory. I want them to see why the fossil evidence is so inconsistent with Darwinism and how they point to a few isolated examples and ignore everything that doesn't fit their premise.

If science is going to deal with the question of whether there is a Creator, they ought to openly and honestly deal with both sides of the issue rather than just one. They say they stay away from religious issues, but that is false. They deal with them constantly by trying to persuade people that there is no intelligent Creator who had a hand in the creation, that purely physical, material mechanisms were the only thing at work. They refuse to deal with all the compelling evidence for an active, intelligent Creator.

GN: Regarding the Bible's view on truth vs. deception, Revelation 12:9

speaks of Satan, who deceives the whole world. In a much larger spiritual context, could the biblical account of an unseen god of this world deceiving mankind fit into this paradigm of naturalism, which you show undergirds and pervades our assumed educational relativism?

PJ: Yes, it certainly does. However, I prefer not to go to the book of Revelation because that makes a lot of people very nervous. When I'm speaking on this subject, the scripture I prefer to start with is

Romans 1:20-21, which states that since the creation of the world God's invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made.

We see the reality of the Creator through the creation, but then we see that, even though men knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.

So what the Bible is saying is that, to avoid the reality of a Creator, people have exchanged the truth of God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator.

Evolution is another form of nature worship, which is what the Bible is talking about here. It's a way of getting God out of the picture, by replacing the true God with the god of the human imagination. The proposition is, effectively, that God didn't create man. It's the other way around: Man created God out of human imagination. Of course, what man has created man can command. That's the key point. So Romans 1:20-21, which bears this out, is the scripture that I prefer to emphasize.

GN: Are you ever able to use this scripture when arguing your points with the scientific community?

PJ: When I'm speaking to a secular university and a scientific audience, I stay

completely away from anything to do with the Bible. In that context, the fact that something is in the Bible is considered to be a reason not to believe in it. You're not going to persuade those people with scriptures. That's the kind of subject that comes up with a Christian audience, the ones who want to find out how this ties in with the Scriptures. Unless people have some initial willingness to believe that God is real, and can reveal His Word, they will never believe the Bible. **GN**

Evolutionary theory has great consequences for subjects like law and ethics, because if a mindless process of evolution is our true creator, then God's moral authority is also dead.



An Overview of Conditions

Drug addiction: An enormous global industry

According to a recent UN report, the illegal-drug industry generates \$400 billion to \$1 trillion in revenues and accounts for 8 percent of global trade—an industry larger than sales of iron or steel and almost as great as oil and gasoline or textiles.

Cocaine accounts for some \$130 billion of the drug trade, followed by \$110 billion for heroin, \$75 billion for marijuana and hashish and more than \$60 billion for synthetic drugs.

The amount spent on illegal drugs is roughly double that spent on legal pharmaceuticals, which account for \$233 billion annually, according to the report. Drug users spend more for deadly addictive drugs than they do for legal medicinal drugs, cars or clothing.

Drug abuse exacts an enormous financial toll on American society, costing an average of \$300 per person annually in added medical costs, criminal activity and declines in productivity. On average, health costs for a drug abuser are about 80 percent higher than for others of the same age.

The United States has an estimated 12.8 million drug

The amount spent on illegal drugs is roughly double that spent on legal pharmaceuticals, which account for \$233 billion annually.

abusers, equaling 6.1 percent of the population.

In spite of some reports of slowing drug usage, the reports stated that global production of coca leaf and opium have roughly tripled in the past 10 years, and global marijuana output has increased 50 percent. (Source: Gannett News Service.)

Taking stock of Britain

Last year, 1997, brought a sharp change of focus to the British Isles. After nearly 20 years of Conservative government in Whitehall, a decisive national election ushered a Labour administration into power with such a vast majority that monumental changes suddenly became feasible.

Already Scotland is to have an elected parliament and Wales a national assembly. This historic turn of events doesn't bode well for the future of British sovereignty. Further, the central government in London appears much less resistant to the pressures that Brussels—headquarters of the European Union—will inevitably bring on Englishmen's way of life.

The justice system is a case in point. A fundamental principle of law with the American and British systems is that one is innocent until proven guilty. That traditional supposition is

now under threat in Britain because on the Continent it tends to work the other way around.

As columnist Leo McKinstry explained: "At a meeting of the European Social Affairs Council, the government is to sign up to a new directive shifting the burden of proof in cases of sex discrimination from the employee to the employer. In other words under this inane Euro-regulation, firms accused of sex discrimination will be guilty until proved innocent."

European reversals of British court judgments are fairly common. For instance, in September of 1997 a lesbian couple won a sex-discrimination case against a train-company employer for failure to provide the same benefits as it did for heterosexual couples.

Britain has also been in the dock with the European Union (EU) over the Continent's maximum-48-hour working week. Perhaps much less serious in nature, but still a blow to the British psyche, is that in "two years packaging and recipes must by law be metric only." Yet the results of a poll show that, "despite a 30-year campaign to force Britain to go metric, the majority of its citizens still find it more convenient to use feet and inches, pints and pounds." Anglo-Saxon tradition dies hard.

At first glance merely comical, the plight of the British lavatory takes on a sobering significance when the implications are carefully considered. Said one Sunday newspaper: "The British lavatory, widely regarded as the world's most elegant and efficient means of waste disposal, is about to be challenged by its leaky European rival." According to the British Council, "millions of gallons will go down the pan every day" in a country recently troubled by serious water shortages. So much for the battle of the flushes.

The above news items represent only the tip of the iceberg of numerous EU regulations that are being brought into conflict with long-held British traditions. The public does not yet realize the full extent of the changes taking place on a daily basis. Sovereignty is fast shifting from London to Brussels. When the peoples of the United Kingdom fully comprehend what is taking place, there may be real conflict between Britain and the European Union. (Sources: *The Express* [London], *The Sunday Telegraph* [London].)

The millennium bug and the year 2,000

At the close of the 20th century, people are beset by so many threats that it's hard to keep up with them. Not least of the problems is all the fuss emanating from the calendar date itself—the beginning of the year 2,000.

The millennial clock is ticking away, and some observers fear that the transition from the familiar double-digit 19 to double-digit 20 is going to be a technological nightmare of catastrophic proportions. The problem? Hundreds of thousands of computer programs have been written using only the last two of the four digits of the year. The year 1998, for example, is represented by 98. When 2000 arrives, many computer programs that have not been corrected will assume that the year 1900 has arrived.

This problem is generally known as the "millennium bug." No one is quite sure exactly what will happen in a world





tions Around the World

increasingly dependent on computers. But many observers agree that it threatens to temporarily ground air transport, cause severe stock-market drops and precipitate numerous economic and business calamities. Apparently even our defense systems could be menaced.

Governments have not ignored the threat. Prime Minister Tony Blair of Britain has taken it seriously and made available

Many observers agree that the 'millennium bug' threatens to precipitate numerous economic and business calamities.

20,000 computer professionals to work on the problem, now only about a year and a half away.

However, we have much more serious endangerments to consider than just calendrical technicalities. As journalist and author Marina Benjamin reflected: "From its inception, the twentieth century has been less a century to celebrate than one to survive. And as it draws to a close with threats to our continued existence multiplying both in scale and number—so that to add to the evils of overpopulation, possible nuclear warfare and famine, we now face a catalogue of environmental hazards and a legion of new microbial foes. . . ." (*Living at the End of the World*, pp. 8-9).

"Will we survive?" is still the biggest question dogging the human species. Jesus Christ Himself looked down through the centuries and anticipated the dilemmas of the world at the end of this age. He said that end-time events would so seriously imperil humanity that the survival of the species would be in doubt.

He spoke of "a time of great distress, such as there had never been before since the beginning of the world, and will never be again" (Matthew 24:21, *Revised English Bible*). Yet Christ guaranteed our survival as a species in the same promise He gave to the Church of God (Matthew 16:18). "If that time of troubles were not cut short, no living thing could survive; but for the sake of God's chosen it will be cut short" (verse 22, REB).

Christ had mentioned earlier that "all these things are the first birth-pangs of the new age" (verse 8, REB)—anticipating the coming utopian time: His 1,000-year millennial reign, which would follow in the wake of our present problems. What we have to endure is a difficult transition. Yet our eventual deliverance is sure. For further understanding, please request the free booklet *The Gospel of the Kingdom*. (Sources: *Newsweek*, *Yorkshire Post*.)

Coming soon: a common European currency

If Jan. 1, 2000, promises to be one of the pivotal dates in history, Jan. 1, 1999, is probably no less important to the European Continent. The latter is the date when 11 national forms of legal tender will be fused into one common currency, dubbed the euro. This transition will probably turn out to be one of the biggest steps ever taken in pursuit of European unity. It is difficult to see how political and military union will not follow if the change to the common currency is a success.

Among the countries of Western Europe, Britain, along

with Sweden and Denmark, has chosen a more-independent economic course. The United Kingdom has a history of exercising caution toward European alliances. The British were slow to enter the present European Union (EU), and many of the island's inhabitants have felt a sense of discomfort ever since. Though Britain plans to adopt the new currency about three years after its introduction (about 2002), some observers doubt that she will ever take that step.

The British are not the only ones approaching the euro with caution. In the new currency the world will see a competitor to the U.S. dollar, which has dominated monetary exchanges for decades. What will be the impact of this new currency?

In the words of Rupert Wright in *The European*: "The dollar is the Coca-Cola currency, recognisable and tradeable throughout the world: almighty, all-conquering. Since it toppled sterling when the British devalued in 1931, it has been the only truly global currency for more than 60 years. It is used to settle more than 50 per cent of all trade. Want to buy a jumbo jet? It is priced in dollars. Oil? \$16.20 a barrel will do nicely. . . ."

"Now there will be soon be a new kid on the block: the euro. On 1 January 1999 the 11 members of Euroland will formally launch a new currency that will instantly be huge—second only to the dollar and with the prospect that it might one day even challenge it for supremacy" (May 4-10, 1998).

Likely the euro will quickly assume the role of a parallel currency in the opt-out countries of the European Union as well as Eastern Europe. The Mediterranean and North Africa will also see plenty of euros.

Many are making claims in advance. "The euro is the event of the century; the euro will make people forget the deutschmark," said Helmut Kohl, chancellor of Germany. Brian Reading, director of Lombard Street research, says the euro "will replace the dollar as top dog."

But other voices predict an accommodation. Writes Norbert Walter, chief economist for Deutsche Bank: "There is room in the ring for the dollar and the euro. It is a fight that probably neither can win outright, nor do they need to. The dollar and euro are each likely to wind up with about 40 per cent of

Some Europe watchers wonder if this common medium of exchange is not another major step towards the fulfillment of biblical prophecies.

world finance, with about 20 per cent remaining for the yen and a few smaller currencies such as the Swiss franc and [British pound] sterling. The euro will launch with a big bang and continue with a slow-burning fuse."

Some Europe watchers wonder if this common medium of exchange is not another major step towards the fulfillment of biblical prophecies about a dominant political, economic and military power yet to rise in the territory that once constituted the nucleus of the old Roman Empire. Prophecy tells us that this crucial occurrence will precipitate events leading to the second coming of Jesus Christ. (Sources: *Newsweek*; *The Times* [London]; Daniel 2, 7; Revelation 13, 17.)

—John Ross Schroeder and Scott Ashley



Sordid scandals among the elite of society have dominated the news lately in several countries. It sometimes seems that extramarital relationships and political power go together. Some politicians abuse their position by taking sexual advantage of others. However, their supposed victims are not always blameless. To be able to boast of a relationship with a famous figure appeals to the vanity of some.

As King Solomon was inspired to write 3,000 years ago, “there is nothing new under the sun” (Ecclesiastes 1:9). Solomon was an authority on having multiple partners; the Bible tells us that he had 700 wives and 300 concubines (1 Kings 11:3).

Solomon might have excused himself by claiming that he was only following the lead of other monarchs in the Middle East at the time for whom multiple wives and concubines were a sign of status and prestige. But he should have known better. After all, he had access to the true God. The Bible also tells us that Solomon’s pursuit of many women of various religions led to idolatry and “turned away his heart” from God.

More recently King Charles II of Great Britain

good example of fidelity. A 19th-century president was known to have had a mistress and an illegitimate child. Recent revelations show that more-recent presidents have indulged in extramarital relationships.

Some would say that the only difference between then and now is the publicity given today’s leaders. Back then the press kept quiet. As part of an unspoken gentlemen’s agreement, reporters did not betray the dalliances of politicians, princes or kings.

An age-old temptation

Adultery is nothing new. Nor is prostitution, commonly referred to as the world’s oldest profession. Throughout the ages men and women have tried to justify sex outside of marriage, sometimes even to legalize it.

The early theologian Augustine, who fought a long personal battle with sexual temptation, taught that the woman was the criminal when it came to adultery, the man being a mere accomplice.

How should we view public morality? Some think that affairs should be a politician’s private business.

Should society turn a blind eye to sexual

Adultery

No Longer Sinful or Shameful?

What does adultery tell us about a person and a nation?

by Melvin Rhodes

(1660-85) was publicly known as a philanderer. He left illegitimate heirs, but no children to take the throne. Charles had apparently been influenced by the French court of Louis XIV. Like most European monarchs at the time, “Louis lived an atheist and died a Catholic,” as one historian put it. Religion was not taken seriously, and deathbed repentances were common.

In contrast, Queen Victoria (1837-1901) was a pillar of rectitude. She was a committed family woman, remaining faithful to Prince Albert and not even remarrying after his death. But her son and successor earned a dubious reputation.

Some American presidents have not set a

shenanigans in high places? Certainly we shouldn’t clamor for every lurid detail. The apostle Paul admonishes us in Philippians 4:8 to think on “whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.”

This advice would preclude Christians from focusing their attention on the seamier side of life and gossip about the rich and famous.

But it still matters. Adultery always matters. Whether the adulterer is John Doe or a king, president or any other kind of leader, adultery

matters, and adultery is *always* wrong.

Politicians and the public may have varying definitions of adultery. But adultery, by biblical definition, is the violation of the marriage contract by either or both partners in the marriage through sexual activity with a third person. The commandment against adultery should be understood to include fornication (sexual relations before marriage), incest and male and female homosexual practices, all of which are outlawed in the Bible.

Adultery is considered such a serious sin by Almighty God that it is prohibited by one of the Ten Commandments. Our Creator says: “You shall not commit adultery” (Exodus 20:14; Deuteronomy 5:18).

God was and is serious about this sin. In ancient Israel people who committed adultery suffered capital punishment (Leviticus 20:10). Adultery is described as an abomination in God’s eyes (verse 13).

It is interesting that, whereas some may feel that any sexual activity short of intercourse is not a sin, the

is a sin (Matthew 5:28).

Deeper dimensions

When we take time to look at the Ten Commandments more closely, we see that in principle committing adultery is not just breaking the Seventh Commandment. James 2:10 reminds us that “whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.”

It’s no good blaming it on somebody else, either. The same apostle also wrote that “each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death” (James 1:14-15).

Earlier in the same chapter James, the Lord’s brother, said that “blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love him” (verse 12).

Clearly, the matter is serious. Like breaking any of the Ten

(Matthew 5:48), even as He is perfect. God is love (1 John 4:8). It is essential therefore that we learn to love as God loves. God’s love is completely selfless, not selfish. God’s love is concern toward others. He does not want to hurt anyone (Isaiah 11:9). He gave His law to protect us and those around us from harm’s way.

God is vitally concerned about our happiness and wants us to have lasting, loving relationships rather than pursue self-gratification at the expense of others. Breaking God’s law, or any one of His commandments, results in hurt and pain for all involved—even the one who might get some temporary pleasure from sin (Hebrew 11:25).

In contrast to what God says, illicit love affairs are often depicted in a favorable light in films and other entertainment media. Not only do the purveyors of popular culture neglect to focus on the dark side of adultery as a betrayal of the marriage vows, but they often overlook the dire consequences that follow.

Jonathan Rauch, correspondent for *The National Journal* in Washington, D.C., observed that “adultery represents a serious problem for society as well as individuals on a variety of levels. Society has a strong interest in binding people together into long-term couples. Marriage civilizes and settles men (especially younger men), promotes secure homes for children, helps achieve economic stability for both partners, ensures that everyone has somebody to look after him or her in times of ill health. To serve these functions marriages must be durable.”

But today’s casual acceptance of adultery is the archenemy of long-lasting marriages.

Many sins involved

Breaking the Seventh Commandment is a character issue. Not only has the guilty party broken the marriage vow, but he

or she has allowed another person to come before God—thereby also breaking the First and Second Commandments.

This sinful, shameful act also shows no respect for parents and in-laws who also suffer when adultery is committed—

Adultery is considered such a serious sin by Almighty God that it is prohibited by one of the Ten Commandments.

Scriptures show us that anything involving “uncovering nakedness”—for the purpose of sexual misbehavior—is a sin (Leviticus 18:6-19). Jesus Christ went so far as to say that even desiring to interact sexually with someone other than your marriage partner

Commandments, committing adultery endangers our happiness and jeopardizes our eternal salvation (Romans 6:23).

But why is it so important to God?

Adultery is an issue that comes down to *character*: God wants us to “be perfect”



thereby breaking the Fifth Commandment (Exodus 20:12).

The Eighth Commandment has also been broken in that the affection, love and trust of someone else's spouse were stolen (verse 15).

And the Ninth Commandment is also broken because lying and deceit are involved (verse 16).

We see that at least six of the Ten Commandments are broken in adulterous acts—sometimes more, if the sinful act should lead to murder (verse 13) or taking God's name in vain (verse 7), which can be done when people try to justify their sin.

Adultery's consequences

How can any adulterer ever be trusted on any issue? If so many of God's Ten Commandments are broken when adultery is committed, then adultery is a major trust factor. The guilty party has lost the trust of others, not just that of his wife or her husband.

As Jonathan Rauch put it: "An adulterer is a missile with many warheads, capable of wrecking a series of homes." How tragically true. Adultery has a wide-ranging ripple effect. It often leads to divorce, which in turn divides families. Not only are the husband and wife affected, but the children, any grandchildren, parents on both sides and even society at large.

A recent British survey on the reasons for divorce showed that adultery was the biggest reason by far, contributing to 31 percent of divorces (*The Daily Mail*, Jan. 26). Also, in Britain "it's an uncomfortable fact that 50 percent of divorced and separated fathers lose contact with their children after just two years" (*Independent on Sunday*, Feb. 15). No wonder Malachi 2:16 says that God hates divorce.

The verse continues with a strong warning to our nations: "Divorce . . . covers one's garments with violence." Much of the violence in our society is the direct result of broken homes—often broken as a consequence of adultery.

God cared enough for Israel's greatest king that, after his act of adultery, which in turn led to deceit and murder, He sent the prophet Nathan to King David to help him face up to his sin and repent of it. "Why have you despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in His sight? You have killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword; you have taken his wife to be your wife . . ."

The result? "Now therefore, the

sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife" (2 Samuel 12:9-10). Adultery has consequences that can last for generations.

No exemptions to God's commands

Not only politicians are guilty. Others who hold high office have fallen victim to this sin. This sadly includes religious leaders, who know better. They know the Word of God but sometimes fall into the trap of rationalizing that their supposed special relationship with God somehow protects or exempts them from the consequences of sin.

God doesn't see it that way. "The wages of sin is death," He inspired the apostle Paul to write (Romans 6:23). And "God shows no partiality" (Acts 10:34).

The same apostle listed the qualifications of a minister in his first epistle to the evangelist Timothy: "A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife . . ." (1 Timothy 3:2). Adulterers should not be ordained to the ministry, and adultery is grounds for expulsion from the ministry. Ministers "must have a good testimony among those who are outside [of the church], lest [they] fall into reproach and the snare of the devil" (verse 7).

This is not to say that those who have committed adultery cannot repent and be forgiven. When the woman caught in the act of adultery (John 8) was brought before Jesus by religious zealots who wanted to see the full penalty of death carried out immediately, Jesus defended her by turning to her accusers and saying, "He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first" (verse 7).

Because no one was willing to self-righteously proclaim that he was without sin, everyone walked away. Then Jesus turned to the woman and said, "Go and sin no more" (verse 11). Although He defended her, He did not defend her sin, and He unequivocally told her not to sin again.

To those who have committed the sin of adultery, this passage should be encouraging. Jesus Christ paid the penalty for all human sin—but, on repentance, it is absolutely essential to cease the practice completely.

This is more easily said than done. Some have a habitual sexual addiction on a par with heroin or alcohol abuse. The

sinner often needs help from others. The ministry or reliable and trusted personal friends can be of inestimable help, but in stubborn cases competent professional assistance should also be sought.

No one caught in the grip of sexual addiction should hesitate to seek help. Calling for assistance is a solid sign of a repentant attitude and a sincere desire to overcome. Those who are called on for assistance should not look down on anyone genuinely seeking help nor betray a confidence (Galatians 6:1-2).

Repentance requires change

Here lies good advice for anyone caught in the sin of adultery, even prominent people in our society. When this sinful act has been committed, trust has suffered. If that trust is to be regained, sincere repentance must be in evidence, as was the case with King David (2 Samuel 12:13): "A broken and a contrite heart—these, O God, You will not despise"—a quote from verse 17 of David's heartbroken prayer of repentance (Psalm 51).

Although world and national leaders may follow in the footsteps of Kings Charles II and Louis XIV, their deathbed repentances are not what God wants. It's no use living a sinful life while hoping to put things right later. God wants a change of heart now—not only for His sake, but for ourselves as well, individually and collectively.

Solomon wrote: "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people" (Proverbs 14:34). It's difficult for other nations to take leaders seriously when they are surrounded by sordid rumors. Perhaps many have not really understood the seriousness of sexual misbehavior. Clearly, our current Western society takes infidelity far too lightly. This is all the more reason to heed the advice of the apostle Paul to the Athenians: "Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30).

The sooner leaders start living by the laws of God, the sooner they and those who naturally regard them as role models will become the kind of examples Jesus Christ described: "the light of the world" and "a city set on a hill . . . Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:14-16). *GN*

Depression:

Ways to Win the Battle

How widespread is depression? What are its causes? Most important, what are the weapons in the struggle against depression?

by Noel Hornor

Depression has troubled people everywhere, in every age. The ancients wrote about it, often calling it melancholia. "Aretaeus, a physician living in the second century, A.D., described the melancholic patient as 'sad, dismayed, sleepless . . . They become thin by their agitation and loss of refreshing sleep . . . At a more advanced state, they complain of a thousand futilities and desire death'" (Norman Wright, *An Answer to Depression*, Harvest House, Irvine, California, 1976, p. 8).

Depression is one of the most prevalent afflictions. Health practitioners encounter it so often that it has been called the common cold of psychopathology. Psychologists have estimated that during any month 5 percent of American adults suffer from depressive illness. *Health* magazine estimated that one in eight U.S. citizens has been treated with Prozac, a popular antidepressant.

Americans suffer depression more than residents of most other countries. Research shows that, as Asian countries adopt Western culture, they show a corresponding increase in diagnoses of depression.

A problem without bounds

Depression, however, knows no territorial or national bounds. William Manchester aptly described the outlook of someone who is depressed: "Every day he chisels his way through time, praying for relief" (*The Last Lion*, Dell, New York, 1983, p. 23). Mood fluctuations are normal, but severe melancholia "resembles the passing sadness of the normal man as a malignancy resembles a canker sore" (ibid.).

The depressed person's perspective alters. He views life through a distorting lens. He often imagines that he will never be well. "Pervading everything is hopelessness, an irrational sense that, regardless of effort, nothing will change or that things will only get worse" (David B. Cohen, *Out of the Blue*, W.W. Norton & Co., New York, 1994, p. 76). The depressive's belief that his life will never return to normal exacerbates his ailment, casting a pall over the future. A gloomy outlook leads some to contemplate suicide.

Depression is not a problem only for the sufferer. The strain on friends and family can be brutal. A depressed person may be easily angered. A parent's depression is especially hard on young children. "It is probably not possible to calculate the degree of pain and the exhaustion such families feel" (Demetri Papolos, M.D., and Janice Papolos, *Overcoming Depression*, Harper Perennial, New York, 1992, p. 249).

The causes

Depression is an illness so complex that the professionals don't

really understand it. For some, depression is triggered by chemical imbalances and is best treated with medications. Sufferers are wise to seek help to determine any underlying physical cause. Without addressing the underlying cause, other steps will not be of much help.

For others, the roots of depression may be psychological and social. These factors include "genetic transmission; personality characteristics; early life experiences, particularly childhood loss . . . ; and stressful life events" (*The New Harvard Guide to Psychiatry*, edited by Armand M. Nicholi Jr., M.D., Harvard University Press, 1988, p. 323).

Life's major stages may bring on episodes of depression: the transition from teenage to adulthood, the approach of menopause, the arrival of the retirement years, the loss of a mate.

The loss of something of great importance is a major reason for depression. "Significant losses have long been viewed by clinicians as precipitating causes of depression" (Papolos and Papolos, p. 202).

Almost all professional counselors agree that "depression is a human . . . response to painful life circumstances, frequently in the form of losses" (Peter R. Breggin, M.D., *Talking Back to Prozac*,

Scriptural promises assure us that God's ways, when properly understood and applied, produce the joy, inner peace and self-control that so many people are lacking. They can act as a powerful antidote to the spiritual and emotional pain that lies at the heart of depression.

St. Martin's Press, New York, 1994, pp. 203-204). In other words, depression is a common response to pain.

Anger may be a cause—as well as a symptom—of depression. Hostility and resentment are a psychological threat to those who are brooding and resentful.

Holding a grudge is particularly harmful. "If we hold grudges, we will eventually become clinically depressed" (Frank B. Minirth, M.D., & Paul D. Meier, M.D., *Happiness Is a Choice*, Baker Books, Grand Rapids, 1996, p. 39). Some counselors believe that residual anger can adversely affect the chemical balance of the brain, resulting in impaired mental functioning.

Good news about depression

The good news is that the majority of those who suffer from

Seeking Help From God

God—along with His inspired Word, the Bible—is the most powerful resource for combating depression. The Bible provides enlightenment and encouragement—tremendous help in depressing situations. Here are some examples.

The Bible acknowledges that depression can be debilitating. “A man’s spirit sustains him in sickness, but a crushed spirit who can bear?” (Proverbs 18:14, New International Version).

The Expositor’s Bible Commentary says about the same verse: “In physical sickness one can fall back on the will to live; but in depression the will to live may be gone, and there is no reserve for physical strength. The figure of a ‘crushed’ spirit suggests a broken will, loss of vitality, despair, and emotional pain. Few things in the human experience are as difficult to cope with as this” (Vol. 5, p. 1026).

The Scriptures can be particularly helpful when sin and the resulting guilt lie at the root of depression. The Bible shows how recovery begins: with repentance and forgiveness. The experience of David is enlightening:

“What happiness for those whose guilt has been forgiven! What joys when sins are covered over! What relief for those who have confessed their sins and God has cleared their record. There was a time when I wouldn’t admit what a sinner I was. But my dishonesty made me miserable and filled my days with frustration. All day and all night your hand was heavy on me. My strength evaporated like water on a sunny day until I finally admitted all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide them. I said to myself, ‘I will confess them to the Lord.’ And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone” (Psalm 32:1-5, *The Living Bible*).

The Bible helps sufferers from depression brought on by anger. For example, the prophet Jonah grew angry (Jonah 4:1) at his circumstances. Later we read that he was depressed and even wanted to die. “Then he wished death for himself, and said, ‘It is better for me to die than to live’ ” (verse 8)

But the Bible counsels us to put away anger: “Do not let the sun go down on your wrath” (Ephesians 4:26). In other words, we are not to allow anger to carry over from day to day, but to conquer it.

The Bible provides us with examples of men of God trusting in Him to recover from depression. “The LORD shall enlighten my darkness,” as David so eloquently stated (2 Samuel 22:29). David knew God would help.

The Bible gives good advice about a related problem: stress. Jesus Christ promised relief from the stresses of life. “Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28, New International Version).

Stress begets anxiety. Jesus gives advice for the anxious: “Therefore do not be anxious for tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own” (Matthew 6:34, New American Standard Version).

Don’t add to your stress by worrying about the complications you will face tomorrow and beyond. Live one day at a time.

The events, forces and circumstances of the world around us can negatively affect us in many ways. But we need not be controlled by them. “In the world you will have tribulation,” Jesus said; “but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). We can overcome the negative influences—the depressing aspects—of our world.

The Bible shows that depression can be induced by the spirit world. It presents Satan as having a major unseen influence on humanity. He and the demons are called “rulers of the darkness of this age” (Ephesians 6:12), swaying people with negative influences, inspiring destructive thoughts (Ephesians 2:2), which add to the spiritual influences we have to resist.

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour,” the apostle Peter tells us. “Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world” (1 Peter 5:8-9).

These are only a few of the many scriptures that can be helpful in overcoming discouragement and depression. The Psalms are filled with encouragement. Make a habit of using the Bible as your key source of spiritual strength.

—Noel Hornor

depression can recover. Professional practitioners estimate that 80 percent of people can gain substantial relief.

Routine—but important—steps that anyone can take can assist in avoiding depression in the first place. Maintaining a productive, useful life is important. The experts agree that an active life is beneficial therapy.

An example of a man who overcame depression and led a productive, fulfilling life is Theodore Roosevelt, 26th president of the United States.

Roosevelt suffered crises that might have ruined someone less determined. As a young husband, he was pounded by a double tragedy. His mother and wife were stricken by unexpected illnesses. At first their afflictions did not appear to be serious, but they grew worse, and both died within a few hours of each other on the same day, in the same house. To make matters worse, Roosevelt’s wife had given birth to a daughter only two days before. He attended the double funeral in shock.

One of his friends wrote that Roosevelt was so grief-stricken that “he does not know what he does or says” (David McCullough, *Mornings on Horseback*, Touchstone, New York, 1981, p. 285).

Roosevelt later wrote: “When my heart’s dearest died, the light went out of my life for ever” (*ibid.*, p. 288).

He put himself to work. Three days after his wife’s death, he was back at his desk as a state legislator. He immersed himself in activity. His philosophy for life might be best expressed in his own words: “Black care rarely sits behind a rider whose pace is fast enough” (*ibid.*, p. 15).

Contact and support

Cultivating relationships is vital to one’s well-being. Psychologist Dorothy Rowe wrote: “You have to find . . . people to confide in, and you have to overcome the habit of keeping things to yourself” (*Depression: The Way Out of Your Prison*, Routledge, London, 1996, p. 199).

We recognize that sometimes we need a hand to hold. “Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls” (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10). Strong bonds are crucial to happiness.

The passing of time is also an important ally. “Time by itself—and probably the personal resources and new experiences that surface as time passes—seems to cure the vast majority of depressions” (Breggin, p. 204).

What about professional help?

Whether to seek professional help is, of course, a personal decision. The resources people use to tackle everyday problems may not be effective in dealing with depression. In such cases, profes-

sional help may be called for.

Counselors know how to deal with depression. They know the dynamics of the malady and can help people realize that their problems are manageable.

Christians and others can benefit from counseling that includes a biblical approach to fighting depression: the positive effects of trusting in God.

Therapeutic practice relies on three primary means of treating depression: medication, counseling and electroconvulsive therapy (ECT). Professionals often use medication or counseling therapy, or a combination of both. When they place their patients on medication, they usually quickly feel better. How the treatment works is still partly a mystery. "The cold, hard truth is that even when these drugs work, no one really knows how or why" (*Health*, April 1997, p. 122).

Prospective patients should be aware that medications do have side effects.

Many clinicians recommend a combination of counseling and chemical treatment. Some believe that medication therapy is a simple matter of replacing a depleted brain chemical that is responsible for proper neurotransmission in the brain. A neurotransmitter is a chemical that serves as a messenger between brain cells. Medications generally focus on a specific brain chemical.

Many of the recent generation of antidepressants affect the level of serotonin, one of the brain's neurotransmitters. But, besides serotonin, researchers have identified more than 60 other chemical messengers (*ibid.*). So to think that depression can always be cured by tinkering with one chemical is unrealistic.

ECT (applying minor electrical stimulation to the brain) sometimes alters a depressive state for the better. As with medications, how and why it works are not clearly understood. This therapy is rarely used, usually only in severe cases.

Why the increase?

Why is depression on the upswing?

Surely the state of society is partially responsible. David Cohen wrote that "dramatic changes in social conditions—in the promotion of materialism and egocentricity . . . , the toleration of incompetent, irresponsible, and antisocial behavior—can produce correspondingly dramatic changes in the rate of depression and other forms of mental illness" (Cohen, p. 58).

No doubt the lack of specific goals, direction and purpose are contributing factors. Many people have turned many away from traditional spiritual values and firm belief in God.

Before the scientific age, people derived a sense of purpose from their spiritual belief system. As scientific knowledge has increased, biblical knowledge has been increasingly rejected, or simply forgotten, resulting in widespread lack of understanding of

Continued on page 27

Is It Depression or Only the Blues?

Sometimes we're sad. When we're less than buoyant, we may say we're "depressed." But real depression—clinical depression—is more than just being sad or not quite buoyant. It involves severe symptoms and biochemical changes.

Many minor episodes of depression are the result of disappointment. Hopes may fail to materialize, and frustration results. The writer of one of the books of the Bible realized this: "Hope deferred makes the heart sick . . ." (Proverbs 13:12).

When hope is dashed, discouragement can grow. When this happens, it helps to think the situation through and pinpoint the cause. This can restore a positive perspective.

Some people's marginally "blue" feelings become a way of life. Such people seem unable to sustain an optimistic outlook. The roots of such feelings can run deep. Such a person may be modeling behavior he saw as a child in someone else.

Habitual harshness by parents can drive a child toward perpetual gloominess. The apostle Paul advises parents: ". . . Do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged" (Colossians 3:21).

An expert on depression, Peter Breggin, observes: "Many people go through life with what might be called a 'low-grade' depression. They are apathetic and life seems monotonous with nothing to look forward to. There are no highs anymore, nothing to delight the senses, the heart, or the mind. Life may not seem utterly dark, but it's gray. Lacking in energy, seemingly unable to find any brightness in life, life becomes a treadmill of boredom and bleakness" (*Talking Back to Prozac*, St. Martin's Press, New York, 1994, p. 201).

Here are some ways to overcome the blues:

Alter your routine. Start a new hobby or other interest. Different activities can renew a zest for life, resulting in an outlook that leaves no room for dejection. "Depression is especially responsive to changes in circumstances . . . [It] is lifted by falling in love, making a new friend, adopting a pet, learning a new skill, joining a church, traveling, [or] participating in volunteer or reform work . . ." (Breggin, p. 204).

Volunteer work seems to be particularly helpful. A study of 3,000 people reported that 95 percent of them experienced increased optimism after volunteering.

Beginning a program of regular physical exercise can help. Exercise has known physiological and psychological benefits, including stimulation of the production of endorphins, natural substances that increase people's sense of well-being. Psychological advantages include increased self-confidence and less depression (Edmund J. Bourne, Ph.D., *The Anxiety & Phobia Workbook*, New Harbinger Publications, Oakland, 1995, pp. 91-92).

Research shows that diet plays a role in psychological well-being. For example, highly refined, high-sugar foods have been linked to depressive tendencies.

Focus on accomplishments rather than failures. When we suffer setbacks, we should not view them as failures. We should learn to think of them as learning or growth experiences. Too many people become depressed when they err and punish themselves for their mistakes. We should learn from our errors and turn potential stumbling blocks into stepping-stones.

Forgetting past problems is a valuable key. Mental-health counselor Kathleen Powers says: "An optimist has the ability to let go of the past, while a pessimist holds onto everything. It's kind of like driving while looking through the rear-view mirror. It looks like the road to where you're going, but really it's where you've already been" (Knight-Ridder/Tribune News Service, Feb. 23, 1996).

Applying these practical points can help when we are down in the dumps. The most important key of all is to trust God. We can increase our hope in Him by reading and applying the Bible. The Scriptures were written so that we can have hope (Romans 15:4). Hope and depression are incompatible mind-sets. We can repel gloomy thoughts when we build up our hope through God's Word.

—Noel Hornor

The Early Kings of Israel: A Kingdom Divided

by Mario Seiglie

Recent issues of *The Good News* have covered some of the archaeological evidence that confirms and clarifies the biblical record from Genesis through Solomon's kingdom. We continue the story with the breakup of Israel, looking first at the archaeological evidence for the northern 10 tribes of Israel and their rulers. Later we will direct our attention to the nation of Judah, which outlived the kingdom of Israel by more than a century.

After Solomon's tragic apostasy as a ruler, God removed the blessings of national unity from the tribes of Israel. He had told Jeroboam, the future king of the northern 10 tribes of Israel: "Behold, I will tear the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon and will give ten tribes to you (but he shall have one tribe for the sake of My servant David, and for the sake of Jerusalem . . .), because they have forsaken Me, and worshiped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians . . . and have not walked in My ways to do what is right in My eyes and keep My statutes and My judgments, as did his father David" (1 Kings 11:31-33).

Around 930 B.C. the united kingdom was divided, with Jeroboam governing the northern 10 tribes and Rehoboam, Solomon's son, governing the two southern ones, Judah and Benjamin. (As priests, a good portion of the tribe of Levi eventually either resettled in or remained with the southern kingdom.) As both of their wicked reigns came to an end—and according to God's prophecies of punishment for disobedience—ominous clouds began to appear over Israel's northern horizon. Assyria began to awaken as a powerful enemy in that region.

Eugene Merrill suggests: "Perceptive observers of the world scene could already discern by 900 [B.C.] the stirrings of the Assyrian giant. Though it would be almost fifty years before they fell beneath its heel, the little kingdoms of the west could hear it coming" (*Kingdom of Priests*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1996, p. 336).

Once Israel came under Assyria's expanding imperial reach, archaeological evidence attesting to Israel's historical evidence increases. Not only were the Assyrians meticulous recorders of their political, economic and religious life; they also developed an

exquisite stone-carving technique, called bas-relief, which records their lives and accomplishments on numerous palace walls.

In the 19th century British archaeologists excavated many of Assyria's principal cities. Nineveh, one of several capitals during the history of the empire, has been extensively explored. Archaeologists have even found in one of those capitals a vast library of cuneiform tablets that belonged to one of Assyria's final kings, Ashurbanipal (ca. 669-627 B.C.).

With this wealth of information about Assyrian history, it would be natural to expect some mention of the long relationship between Israel and Assyria, as well as the final Assyrian victory over the northern tribes. This is precisely what has been found.

Omri, king of the house of Israel

After Jeroboam's short-lived dynasty came to an end around 905 B.C., the next dynasty of importance was founded by Omri (881-870 B.C.). He is mentioned in Assyrian monuments for his military exploits and his establishment of Samaria, a vast fortress city that became the capital for the northern tribes. Because of his impressive military and political achievements and Omri's line of powerful successors, the Assyrians would refer to Israel as "the land of Omri" even long after the Omride dynasty had ceased to exist.

"The reputation of Omri won by his achievements," says *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, "is evidenced by the fact that for over a century after his death, Samaria was called in the Assyrian records 'House of Omri' and the land of Israel the 'land of Omri'" (Abingdon Press, Nashville, 1962, p. 601).

Not only is King Omri mentioned in Assyrian records, but he is named on a monument made by one of Israel's eastern neighbors, the Moabites.

The Moabite Stone

More than a century ago an Arab chieftain showed an Anglican missionary a beautiful black monument that had been discovered at Dibon, east of the Jordan River, the region of ancient Moab. This discovery triggered fierce competition among the

With this wealth of information about Assyrian history, it would be natural to expect some mention of the long relationship between Israel and Assyria, as well as the final Assyrian victory over the northern tribes. This is precisely what has been found.

Western nations, which sought to acquire this Moabite Stone (also called the Mesha Stela), dated to the ninth century B.C. What has survived of the monument is found today in the Louvre museum in Paris. The monument itself is a record of how King Mesha of Moab rebelled against and finally rolled back Israelite domination of Moab established by King Omri and perpetuated by his son Ahab.

At the beginning of the reign of Omri's grandson, Jehoram, the Moabites sensed opportunity and rebelled. They were successful in gaining independence.

The first few lines of the text record the king's boast: "I am Mesha, son of Kemosh[it], king of Mesha, the Dibonite. My father ruled over Moab for 30 years, and I ruled after my father . . . Omri (was) king of Israel, and he oppressed Moab many days . . . And his son succeeded him, and he too said: 'I will oppress Moab'. . . And Omri had taken possession of the land . . . and he dwelt in it in his days and the sum of the days of his sons: 40 years; but [the god] Kamosh restored it in my days" (translated by Andre Lemaire, *Biblical Archaeology Review*, May-June 1994, p. 33).

Here we find confirmation by Israel's enemies of what is recorded in the biblical narrative. The Bible documents the Moabite rebellion and subsequent independence, but adds what king Mesha failed to explain: that he won the Moabites' independence only after he had sacrificed his son to their pagan god.

The Bible even relates the pivotal story of that battle in the rebellion. "Now Mesha king of Moab was a sheepbreeder, and he regularly paid the king of Israel [referring first to Omri, then to Ahab and now to his grandson Jehoram] one hundred thousand lambs and the wool of one hundred thousand rams. But it happened that when Ahab died, that the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel . . .

"And when the king of Moab saw that the battle was too fierce for him, he took with him seven hundred men who drew swords, to break through to the king of Edom [his ally], but they could not. Then he took his eldest son who would have reigned in his place, and offered him as a burnt offering upon the wall; and there was great indigna-

tion against Israel. So they departed from him and returned to their own land" (2 Kings 3:26-27, emphasis added throughout).

King Mesha did triumph, but (perhaps understandably) in the Moabite stone he refrains from any mention of the costly price he paid for independence.

Some critics have doubted the biblical account of King Mesha's human sacrifice, since it seemed far-fetched that a king would



The Moabite Stone records the Moabites' rebellion against three kings of Israel—Omri, Ahab and Jehoram—described in 2 Kings 3:26-27.

offer up his own son and successor to the throne. Yet in 1978 a tablet from the Syrian city of Ugarit mentions just this type of sacrifice during war. The text said: "O Baal, drive away the force from our gates, the aggressor from our walls . . . A firstborn, Baal, we shall sacrifice, a child we shall fulfill."

Baruch Margalit, associate professor of Bible at Haifa University in Israel, explains what was meant in the biblical text by Israel having been "indignant" with Mesha's sacrifice of his son. "The word denotes the psychological breakdown or trauma that affected the Israelite forces when they beheld the sign of human sacrifice atop the walls of Kir-Hareseth. The author of the

Ugaritic text apparently anticipated this reaction of mass hysteria when he confidently predicted the withdrawal of the attacking force . . . It follows that Mesha's sacrifice of his son, rather than unprecedented, was in fact an integral, if seldom implemented, part of an age-old Canaanite tradition of sacrificial warfare" (*Biblical Archaeology Review*, November-December 1986, p. 63).

Ahab's clash with the Assyrians

Not only did the Assyrians have great respect for King Omri. They also had high regard for his son Ahab, who was a skilled and powerful military leader. The Bible, however, is not so much concerned with Ahab's military exploits as with his establishment of Baal worship in Israel after he married the Phoenician king's daughter Jezebel.

States *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*: "Ahab followed a wise policy in defense, entering into alliance with Phoenicia, Judah, and even his erstwhile enemies the Arameans. On the other hand, he fell under the influence of his fanatical pagan queen Jezebel, who led him to worship Baal as Yahweh's peer, and consequently to introduce such horrors as tyranny (1 K[ings] 21), religious persecution (18:4), and human sacrifice (16:34)" (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1979, Vol. 1, p. 75, "Ahab").

Although the Bible is quite critical of Ahab's morality, it does acknowledge his military prowess and that he defeated the Arameans and Syrians several times (1 Kings 20:1-30). The Assyrians also record a major battle with Ahab and a coalition of other neighboring states. Although they dealt Ahab's confederation heavy losses, the battle did temporarily halt the Assyrian advance to the west.

"Ahab is mentioned in the Monolith Inscription of Shalmaneser III (858-824 B.C.), which tells the story of the great battle Shalmaneser fought at Qarqar against an Aramean-Israelite coalition . . . Ahab alone is said to have contributed two thousand chariots and ten thousand foot soldiers. Ten lesser kings who took part made important contributions in infantry and cavalry" (*ibid.*, p. 76).

King Ahab's house of ivory

Archaeologists haven't found only Assyrian

ian evidence for the existence of King Ahab. While excavating Samaria they have found indications of another biblical description connected to Ahab's reign—his house of ivory. The Bible says of Ahab, "Now the rest of the acts of Ahab, and all that he did, *the ivory house* which he built and all the cities that he built, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?" (2 Kings 22:39).

Herschel Shanks, editor of *Biblical Archaeology Review*, writes: "An important ivory find from the Iron Age comes from Ahab's capital in Samaria where over 500 ivory fragments were found . . . The Bible speaks of Ahab's 'house of ivory' (1 Kings 22:39). Does this refer to the paneling of the walls or to the furnishings? To put the matter differently, did the ivory fragments found at Samaria decorate the walls of the building or the furniture? There is some evidence from Nimrud that a room in an Assyrian palace was, in fact, paneled with ivory veneer. Was this the case at Samaria? On the basis of the evidence at hand, it is difficult to tell.

Jehu kneels before an Assyrian king

Because of the wicked rule of the "house of Omri," God sentenced Ahab, Jezebel and their descendants to death. He would use a general of the Israelite army, Jehu, to accomplish most of these sentences. God told the prophet Elijah: "Go, return on your way to the Wilderness of Damascus; and when you arrive, anoint Hazael as king over Syria. Also you shall anoint Jehu the son of Nimshi as king over Israel. And Elisha . . . you shall anoint as prophet in your place. It shall be that whoever escapes the sword of Hazael, Jehu will kill; and whoever escapes the sword of Jehu, Elisha will kill" (1 Kings 19:15-17). God would not allow the enormously wicked acts of the House of Omri to go unpunished.

Jehu eventually killed not only Jezebel, but all of Ahab's children, in effect exterminating the dynasty of Omri. Although Jehu became God's rod of retribution, he failed to purge Israel of all vestiges of false religion.

"Because you have done well in doing what is right in My sight, and have done to the house of Ahab all that was in My heart, your sons shall sit on the throne of Israel to the fourth generation.' But Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the LORD God of Israel with all his heart; for he did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam, who had made Israel sin. In those days the LORD began to cut off parts of Israel; and Hazael conquered them in all the territory of Israel . . ." (2 Kings 10:28-32).

During the spiritual decline of Jehu Assyria again began directly to threaten Israel. Soon Israel was paying Assyria tribute—protection money—to spare itself warfare and invasion. The Assyrians carved an impressive monument, called the Black Obelisk, to the achievements of King Shalmaneser III. The monument includes detailed panels portraying King Jehu (or his emissary) bringing tribute to the Assyrian king. This elaborate illustration is the earliest known depiction of an Israelite (king or commoner).

This famous monument of the ninth century B.C., now prominently displayed in the British Museum in London, was discovered in 1846 in the Assyrian city of Nimrud. It includes scenes depicting the tribute given to the king and the bearers of that tribute. On one side, in the second scene from the top, the inscription reads, "Tribute of Iaua [Jehu], son of Omri. Silver, gold, a golden bowl, a golden beaker, golden goblets, pitchers of gold, tin, staves for the hand of the king, [and] javelins, I [Shalmaneser] received from him" (*Biblical Archaeology Review*, January-February 1995, p. 26).

The scene is startling. There before the Assyrian king is either Jehu himself or one of his chief representatives kneeling in submission. The monument, including not only his name but his picture, is remarkable evidence of this biblical king.

This series in *The Good News* will continue covering archaeological discoveries relating to the later kings of Israel. **GN**



The Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III records Assyria's domination of its neighbors. Included among the scenes of the tribute brought to Shalmaneser is the Israelite king Jehu (or his representative) bowing before the Assyrian monarch.

"Whether paneling for the wall or decoration for furniture, the houses of ivory—based on a highly sophisticated Phoenician ivory industry—were for the Hebrew prophets symbols of social oppression and injustice; the 'ivory houses' [mentioned in Amos 3:15] were also evidence of participation in the barbarous pagan practices and heathen worship of Phoenicia. Based on the archaeological evidence, the prophets knew what they were talking about" (*Biblical Archaeology Review*, September-October 1985, p. 46).

"Thus Jehu destroyed Baal from Israel. However Jehu did not turn away from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin, that is, from the golden calves that were at Bethel and Dan. And the LORD said to Jehu,



Photos courtesy trustees of the British Museum



Jeroboam

King of the Northern Ten Tribes

by Jerold Aust

Jeroboam, an effective administrator under King Solomon, pleaded Israel's cause before Solomon's son and successor, Rehoboam: "Your father made our yoke heavy; now therefore, lighten the burdensome service of your father, and his heavy yoke which he put on us, and we will serve you" (1 Kings 12:4).

Jeroboam, chosen spokesman for most of the tribes of Israel, addressed Rehoboam at Shechem, not Jerusalem. That their meeting was in this northern city added to Rehoboam's troubles, for he knew the northern tribes were chafing at the heavy-handed tax and labor policies administered from Jerusalem.

Under Solomon's long and peaceful rule, Israel had lived in the lap of luxury, attributable at least in part to a heavy tax burden that allowed Israel to militarily and economically dominate the area and control its profitable trade routes. But this tax burden eventually generated considerable resentment among the people.

Rehoboam wanted to keep his father's affluent kingdom intact. But Jeroboam had different ideas: He planned to rule over a new kingdom to be formed from 10 of the 12 tribes of Israel, and Rehoboam unwittingly played right into his hands.

King Rehoboam needed a little time to consider his position and determine his response: "Depart for three days, then come back to me" (verse 5).

In the privacy of his court, Rehoboam

turned to the elders who had counseled his father and asked: "How do you advise me to answer these people?"

The elders answered wisely: "If you will be a servant to these people today, and serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be your servants forever" (verses 6-7).

This is wise advice in any age, particularly so at such a critical time.

Although Rehoboam was the son of the wisest of men, he didn't inherit his father's wisdom: "But he rejected the advice which the elders had given him, and consulted the

rejected the advice which the elders had given him; and he spoke to them according to the advice of the young men . . ." (verses 13-14).

Rehoboam's abrasive words quickly drove a wedge among the 12 tribes: "Now when all Israel saw that the king did not listen to them, the people answered the king, saying: 'What share have we in David [Rehoboam's grandfather]? . . . To your tents, O Israel! Now, see to your own house, O David!' So Israel departed to their tents" (verse 16).

The northern 10 tribes proclaimed

Jeroboam was talented, ambitious, brave and industrious in his responsibilities. Though he showed himself diligent in his early duties, his weaknesses eventually grew apparent.

young men who had grown up with him, who stood before him. And he said to them, 'What advice do you give? . . . ?' Then the young men who had grown up with him spoke to him, saying, 'Thus you should speak to this people who have spoken to you, saying, "Your father made our yoke heavy, but you make it lighter on us . . . And now, whereas my father laid a heavy yoke on you, I will add to your yoke; my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scourges!"'" (verses 8-11).

The third day Jeroboam and other representatives returned to Rehoboam. "Then the king answered the people roughly, and

Jeroboam king over their newly formed kingdom. Rehoboam was left with only two tribes—Judah and Benjamin—along with a good portion of the tribe of Levi, which was interspersed among all the other tribes of Israel. Thus Israel was split into two kingdoms: Israel in the north, ruled by Jeroboam, and Judah in the south, ruled by Rehoboam from Jerusalem.

Jeroboam's background

Jeroboam had significantly gained prominence during King Solomon's reign.



Seeing that the young man was industrious, made him the officer over all the labor force of the house of

Joseph” (1 Kings 11:28).

First-century Jewish historian Josephus adds further details: “. . . When Solomon saw that he was of an active and bold disposition, he made him the curator of the walls which he built round about Jeru-

salem; and he took such care of those works, and the king approved of his behaviour, and gave him, as a reward for the same, the charge of the tribe of Joseph” (*Antiquities of the Jews*, book VIII, chapter vii, section 7).

Seeds of Separation: Why Did the Kingdom of Israel Split?

For numerous reasons the roots of Israel's disunity go as far back as Egypt. God knew from the beginning that good intentions don't always produce good actions: “The Spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Matthew 26:41).

When Israel accepted His covenant (Exodus 19:8), God was well aware of the people's physical weaknesses: “Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!” (Deuteronomy 5:29). The people would eventually reject Him (Deuteronomy 31:16-18, 27-29).

As Creator of mankind, God well understands that “the carnal mind is enmity [hostile] against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be” (Romans 8:7).

Later in Israel's history, the prophet Samuel wrote of Israel's desire for human rulership over God's theocratic rule: “And the LORD said to Samuel, ‘Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, *but they have rejected Me*, that I should not reign over them. According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt, even to this day—with which they have forsaken Me and served other gods—so they are doing to you also’” (1 Samuel 8:7-8, emphasis added throughout).

Clearly, the people of Israel rejected God as their king. They wanted Samuel to establish a human monarchy to rule over them, as was the practice in surrounding nations. The Israelites got what they wanted—except that their king was to be directly subservient to God.

God warned the Israelites that a human king would take their sons to maintain a standing army and their food to sustain that army: “ ‘And you will cry out in that day because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves, and the LORD will not hear you in that day.’ Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel: and they said, ‘No, but we will have a king over us, *that we also may be like all the nations*, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles’” (1 Samuel 8:18-20).

The seeds of Israelitish disunity germinated, taking firm root when King Rehoboam ascended the throne after Solomon's death. These seeds, which eventually separated the 12 tribes, existed long before Israelite unity dissolved. Three previous kings of Israel played indirect parts in Israel's ultimate separation:

- *Saul's failure as king.* When Saul was to be anointed as Israel's first king, he demonstrated a measure of humility (1 Samuel 9:21; 15:17). However, as time passed, his character weaknesses came to overshadow his strong qualities. In the climactic episode of his failure to lead in godly manner, God told Samuel to instruct Saul that he should punish Amalek for attacking the Israelites when they came out of Egypt (1 Samuel 15:2). He gave Saul specific instructions.

Saul heard God's directives clearly. But, because he feared the people more than God (verse 21), he did what was right in his own eyes to gain their favor. His actions brought about his downfall and the end of his dynasty.

When he saw the king's appearance, David would say to him, “As a youth he

apparently wasn't as tall as his older brothers. But he had a godly heart (1 Samuel 16:7; Acts 13:22), and God made him Saul's replacement as king over Israel.

Over the course of his 40-year reign, the trappings of power, prestige and prosperity at times obscured David's spiritual vision and clouded his judgment. Although he wholeheartedly repented (Psalm 51), his sins and other problems sowed seeds of distrust and jealousy that would bring later problems.

Shimei clearly reflected this resentful attitude in his denunciation of David as he fled for his life from his own son, Absalom: “The LORD has brought upon you all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose place you have reigned; and the LORD has delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom your son. So now you are caught in your own evil, because you are a bloodthirsty man!” (2 Samuel 16:8).

David had many troubles in his life. Both he and the nation would reap the consequences for his sins (Galatians 6:7). Difficulties in David's house began with David's adulterous relationship with Bathsheba. The son born from their illicit union eventually died (2 Samuel 12). There was also incest in David's house, between Amnon and his half-sister, Tamar. In time Absalom, Tamar's full brother, murdered Amnon over this shameful act (2 Samuel 13).

In David's kingdom his oldest son, Absalom, rebelled against him and attempted to usurp the kingdom, a seditious act that eventually cost Absalom his life (2 Samuel 13-18). David's kingdom suffered famine, war and plague (2 Samuel 21-24). These events set the stage for more problems.

- *Solomon's false gods.* God chose Solomon, David's son, as Israel's third human king. Early in his reign Solomon asked God for wisdom, understanding and the ability to properly rule the nation (1 Kings 3:5-13). Later, however, Solomon's many wives and concubines turned his head and heart away from God (1 Kings 11:4).

Solomon's example helped sow the seeds of apostasy and separation from God throughout the nation. The reigns of both Rehoboam and Jeroboam, as well as those of most of the subsequent kings of Israel and Judah, followed Solomon's apostate example.

- *Rehoboam's faulty reasoning.* Havoc broke out when Rehoboam became king. The time for internal strife and ultimate separation was ripe throughout Israel, particularly in the north. Rehoboam ignored the sound wisdom of his father's seasoned advisers and followed that of his youthful, inexperienced peers. He unwittingly facilitated a split foreordained by Almighty God.

The seeds of separation were sown early by Israel's kings. They were watered and nurtured by many self-centered acts over multiple decades. Ultimately Israel reaped the harvest when much of the nation, seeing itself as largely disenfranchised, rallied behind an ambitious servant in Solomon's incredibly wealthy empire: a man named Jeroboam.

The nation's separation into two fragmented and competing kingdoms was bad enough. Even more devastating was their separation from God and the more far-reaching consequences of that fracture: the later destruction of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah.

—Jerrold Aust



However, relations between Solomon and Jeroboam would not remain so respectful and peaceable.

As Solomon grew older he fell increasingly into idolatrous worship. He so disgraced himself through his worship of idols that God rebuked him: “I will surely tear the kingdom away from you and give it to your servant [Jeroboam]” (1 Kings 11:11).

Jeroboam’s ascendancy wasn’t the product of his own righteousness but came about, rather ironically, by Solomon’s idolatry.

A message from God

Privately the prophet Ahijah revealed to Jeroboam God’s intention to make him the ruler of a new kingdom: “. . . When Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem . . . the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite met him on the way; and he had clothed himself with a new garment, and the two were alone in the field. Then Ahijah took hold of the new garment that was on him, and tore it into twelve pieces.

“And he said to Jeroboam, ‘Take for yourself ten pieces, for thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: “Behold, I will tear the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon and will give ten tribes to you . . . because they have forsaken Me, and worshiped Ash-toreth the goddess of the Sidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Mil-com the god of the people of Ammon, and have not walked in My ways to do what is right in My eyes and keep My statutes and My judgments, as did his father David.”’” (1 Kings 11:29-33).

Here we see the reason for the kingdom of Israel splitting into two nations: idolatrous worship, or the rejection of the manner of worship God had prescribed in His Word.

Ahijah continued God’s message: “However I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand, because I have made him ruler all the days of his life for the sake of My servant David, whom I chose because he kept My commandments and My statutes. But I will take the kingdom out of his son’s hand and give it to you—ten tribes . . . So I will take you, and you shall reign over all your heart desires, and you shall be king over Israel” (1 Kings 11:34-37).

Josephus complements the biblical account: “Being a young man of warm temper, and ambitious of greatness, he could not be quiet.” Jeroboam decided

to seek control of the northern tribes immediately, and “he endeavored to persuade the people to forsake Solomon, to make a disturbance, and to bring the government over to himself” (*Antiquities of the Jews*, book VIII, chapter vii, section 8). Solomon, who learned of Jeroboam’s

all the house of Judah and Benjamin, and to the rest of the people, saying, “Thus says the LORD: ‘You shall not go up nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel. Let every man return to his house, for this



Jeroboam devised a cunning plan, creating two golden calves for the people to worship, and strategically placed them at the northern and southern ends of the country.

subversive design, responded by trying to kill him. But Jeroboam fled to Egypt, where he remained until the king died (1 Kings 11:40).

Confrontation with Rehoboam

After Solomon’s death and Rehoboam’s ascension of the throne, Jeroboam’s countrymen summoned him from Egypt. Shortly thereafter he and Rehoboam had the confrontation.

After the northern 10 tribes announced their intention to reject the House of David, Rehoboam became desperate: “. . . He assembled all the house of Judah with the tribe of Benjamin, one hundred and eighty thousand chosen men who were warriors, to fight against the house of Israel, that he might restore the kingdom to Rehoboam the son of Solomon.

“But the word of God came to Shemaiah the man of God, saying, ‘Speak to Rehoboam the son of Solomon, king of Judah, to

thing is from Me.’” Therefore they obeyed the word of the LORD, and turned back, according to the word of the LORD” (1 Kings 12:22-24).

Jeroboam: The good and the bad

Jeroboam had a golden opportunity to succeed, even during a time of great division. The Bible says little of his early life, although his parents are named. His father, Nebat, was deceased, for Scripture identifies his mother, Zeruah, as a widow (1 Kings 11:26).

Jeroboam was from the tribe of Ephraim (1 Kings 11:26), one of the most powerful tribes among the 12. He was talented, ambitious, brave and industrious in his responsibilities. Though Jeroboam showed himself diligent in his early duties, his weaknesses eventually grew apparent.

In one of his first acts, Jeroboam chose Shechem—between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim in northern Israel—as his



fortifying it (1 Kings 12:25). Shechem's strategic location was geographically as well as religiously significant. Its religious ties went back not only to the patriarchs but to the Canaanites. Jeroboam sought to distance himself and the people from the influence of the kings of Judah in Jerusalem (verses 26-27).

Jeroboam was also apprehensive about his people's religious life, which centered on the temple and priesthood in Jerusalem. He devised a cunning plan, creating two golden calves for the people to worship, and strategically placed them at the northern and southern ends of the country (verses 28-29). The one in the south he placed at Bethel, on the main road to Jerusalem. Those among the northern tribes who intended to travel to Jerusalem for God's feasts (Leviticus 23) then could be easily diverted to worship at Bethel instead.

Jeroboam also established idolatrous worship on high places and appointed his

own priests from other than the tribe of Levi (1 Kings 12:31). Perhaps his greatest single change was to tamper with God's annual Holy Days. Instead of observing the Feast of Tabernacles in the seventh month as God had commanded, Jeroboam instituted an alternate feast in the eighth month, "in the month which he had devised in his own heart" (verse 33).

The king's terrible spiritual blunders were to bring untold suffering on the house of Israel and Israel's descendants. Under Jeroboam's leadership the northern tribes soon drifted away from the pattern of religious worship God had commanded. It was bad enough before the national schism (1 Kings 11:30-33), but the degeneration only worsened after the nation separated. In the south religious worship and morality similarly suffered a sharp decline (1 Kings 14:22-24).

Degeneracy and destruction

Jeroboam's counterfeit religion, with its own priesthood, gods and religious festivals and observances, was destined to play a major role in Israel's downfall.

Through Ahijah God had encouraged Jeroboam to rule properly: "... You shall reign over all your heart desires, and you shall be king over Israel. Then it shall be, if you heed all that I command you, walk in My ways, and do what is right in My sight, to keep My statutes and My commandments, as My servant David did, then I will be with you and build for you an enduring house, as I built for David, and will give Israel to you" (1 Kings 11:37-38).

But Jeroboam failed to exploit his remarkable opportunity. Rather, he instituted an idolatrous form of worship as the official religion of the new kingdom. In spite of God's warnings, Jeroboam refused to turn from his idolatrous ways.

God pronounced a sobering final edict against Jeroboam: "Because I exalted you from among the people, and made you ruler over My people Israel, and tore the kingdom away from the house of David, and gave it to you; and yet you have not been as My servant David, who kept My commandments and who followed Me with all his heart, to do only what was right in My eyes; but you have done more

A Future Reunion for Israel and Judah

Israel's separation began during the reigns in the 10th century B.C. of Rehoboam and Jeroboam. However tragic separation may be, God includes within His masterful design a plan to redeem Israel and humankind, to eventually bring them together with God and each other (Romans 11:7, 25-27).

God reveals that all 12 tribes of Israel will once again be united: "Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; and *I will make them one nation in the land*, on the mountains of Israel; and *one king shall be king over them all*; they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again . . .

"Then they shall be My people, and I will be their God. *David My servant shall be king over them*, and they shall all have one shepherd; they shall also walk in My judgments and observe My statutes, and do them. Then they shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob My servant, where your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell there, they, their children, and their children's children, forever; and *My servant David shall be their prince forever*. Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them . . . I will set My sanctuary in their midst forevermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them; indeed I will be their God, and they shall be My people. The nations also will know that I, the LORD, sanctify Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forevermore" (Ezekiel 37:21-28, emphasis added).

Have such prophecies ever been fulfilled? Ezekiel wrote these words some 350 years after Jeroboam's reign. The northern 10 tribes of Israel had been defeated and carried away into captivity at the hands of the Assyrians in the eighth century B.C. Ezekiel himself was writing from Babylon, where he, along with much of the kingdom of Judah, was

Ezekiel did not live to see these words fulfilled, nor has anyone since. A careful reading of the Bible shows that only a few remnants of the northern 10 tribes ever reunited with the exiles from the kingdom of Judah in their homeland. And later even their descendants were largely scattered after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in A.D. 70.

Although many descendants of Judah have resettled in the Middle East since the modern state of Israel was established in 1948, most of Judah's descendants remain scattered among the nations.

Clues as to when Ezekiel's prophecies will finally be fulfilled can be found in the words that "David My servant shall be king over them" and "My servant David shall be their prince forever."

If David will literally "be their prince forever," this will obviously be after *he has been brought back to life*. Several passages in Scripture show that this resurrection of David—to eternal life—will occur at Jesus Christ's return (1 Corinthians 15:12-54; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17; Acts 2:34). It is at that time that this man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22) will be given eternal life, along with many others who will live and reign with Jesus Christ (Revelation 20:4-6). Made immortal, David will then be able to rule over a reunited Israelite kingdom forever.

The Israelites will eventually be reunited under King David and reconciled to their Creator, from whom their sins had cut them off (Isaiah 59:1-2).

This prophecy is but a tiny glimpse of the astounding future God reveals to us through His prophets. To understand more, be sure to request your free booklets *What Is Your Destiny?*, *God's Holy Day Plan: The Promise of Hope for All Mankind* and *What Happens After Death?* These are yours for the asking when you contact us at the addresses on page 2 of this issue.

—Jerold Aust



evil than all who were before you, for you have gone and made for yourself other gods and molded images to provoke Me to anger, and have cast Me behind your back—therefore behold! I will bring disaster on the house of Jeroboam . . .” (1 Kings 14:7-10).

A legacy of tragedy

Summarizing Jeroboam’s and his successors’ rule, the Bible says: “Then Jeroboam drove Israel from following the LORD, and *made them commit a great sin*. For the children of Israel walked in *all the sins of Jeroboam* which he did; they did not depart from them, until the LORD removed Israel out of His sight, as He had said by all His servants the prophets. *So Israel was carried away from their own land to Assyria, as it is to this day*” (2 Kings 17:21-23, emphasis added).

So Jeroboam’s sins had far-reaching consequences. They led to the removal of God’s blessings on the 10-tribed nation because not one of Israel’s kings who followed Jeroboam initiated the necessary reforms that would have led the nation back to God’s way of worship. Instead, all continued in his sins (2 Kings 3:3; 10:29; 13:2; etc.). God does not give us a choice on *how* we are to worship Him (Deuteronomy 12:32). He gives us a choice of *whether* we will worship Him according to the instructions He has given.

Israel was instructed to worship the Eternal God, not two golden calves. God’s people were told that the Feast of Tabernacles was to be observed in the seventh month of the year, not the eighth month. Not one of Israel’s kings restored the true worship of God. The result was a devastating national captivity for all 10 tribes.

Many in the mainstream Christian world have not learned this vital lesson from the life of King Jeroboam. The practices he set in motion—substituting his own days, methods and kinds of worship for those God commanded—have continued down to this day.

God tells us in His Word when and on which days we are to worship. He does not want us to invent our own special festivals or borrow them from the pagan practices of yesteryear. (If you are not already familiar with the true biblical Sabbaths, both weekly and annual, please write for our two free booklets *Sunset to Sunset: God’s Sabbath Rest* and *God’s Holy Day Plan: The Promise of Hope for All Mankind*.) **GN**

Depression

Continued from page 19

why human beings exist. Cohen adds: “As the physical world yielded up its secrets, humans became less central in the ultimate scheme of things” (ibid., p. 279).

Lacking knowledge of a clear purpose for life results in a kind of existential anxiety with diminished inspiration about and toward life. Anxiety spawns moods of depression. It is difficult to be positive in a universe void of purpose. It is also hard to be upbeat when science has made it possible for the human race to destroy itself.

Need for spiritual guidance

But there is hope. Jesus Christ tells us, “I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly” (John 10:10). To have hope we need to learn God’s purpose for human life.

The Bible teaches us about that purpose. God’s design includes a plan that offers eternal life to everyone (Romans 6:23). The apostle John wrote about it: “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

“Everlasting life” will include peace, joy and happiness but no gloom, no depression. “And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed way” (Revelation 21:4).

Scriptural promises like these assure us that God’s ways, when properly understood and applied, produce the joy, inner peace and self-control (Galatians 5:22) that so many people are lacking. They can act as a powerful spiritual antidote to the spiritual and emotional pain that lies at the heart of depression. **GN**

RECOMMENDED READING

Be sure to request your free copy of *What Is Your Destiny?* This booklet will help you discover the awesome purpose for human life and the incredibly positive future God has in store for you and all of humanity. Just contact us at the office in your country (or the country nearest you) on page 2 of this issue.

Godly People Also Can Suffer From Depression

Some have imagined that depression is always the result of some sin, of a moral weakness or failing. Although sin can cause depression, it is not true that sin is behind all bouts of depression.

The Bible describes the struggles of several people who suffered with depression—including David, Elijah and Job—even though they were faithful servants of God. These men did not suffer primarily because they were sinners. They suffered because they were human and were susceptible to severe pressures—conditions to which many of us can relate.

Job became depressed after suffering many personal losses—first his material possessions, then all his children. Then he was devastated by a grievous bodily affliction: He broke out in painful boils.

Elijah grew depressed when he was rebuked while he was anticipating a moment of triumph. His lofty hopes were crushed; he became sick at heart.

The depressions of David, as related in some of the Psalms, stem from any of several probable causes.

These men recovered and went on with their lives, serving God.

No one should take a condemning or critical approach toward someone because he is depressed. The sufferer often already feels self-revulsion. He blames himself and perhaps thinks he has sinned. He may submit himself to torturous recriminations and dredge up all the evil he has done in his life, real or imagined. Because of their high standards, Christians can especially be vulnerable to this thinking.

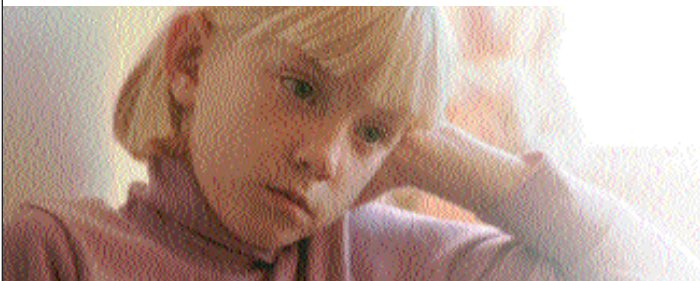
Passing judgment on someone who is already depressed will only add to his sorrow. When Elijah became fearful and depressed, he fled from his God-given responsibilities. Yet God didn’t berate Elijah. He spoke to him in a “still small voice” and encouraged him (1 Kings 19:1-18).

Anyone who is depressed needs encouragement. “A friend owes kindness to one in despair . . .” (Job 6:14, New American Bible). Don’t forget that members of the family of a depressed person need support and encouragement. Depression is a trial for them, too.

—Noel Hornor

“The parents’ reaction to a crisis is likely to trigger similar behavior in their children”

—Russell Jones, Ph.D. and family counselor



Helping Your Children Cope in Family Crises

By Becky Sweat

One of the biggest mistakes parents make when facing a crisis is not being open and honest about it with their children.

When Rhonda Blake learned she needed a serious operation, she was unsure how to break the news to her teenage children. “I was nervous about the surgery, but I didn’t want them to worry, so I told them it was just a minor procedure,” she says. “After I got home from the hospital, they told me they had known I was scared and they were upset with me because I made so light of it.”

After Jack and Mamie Phillips lost their home in a fire, they were uncomfortable talking about it with their daughter. “Whenever my daughter brought up the subject, I’d tell her let’s not talk about the fire, it’s over now, let’s just think about the new house we’re going to live in,” Jack relates. “It wasn’t until I overheard my daughter telling a friend how scared she was in the fire that I realized I never gave her a chance to tell me how she felt.”

Most families face a setback sooner or later: a serious automobile accident, the loss of a job, financial difficulties, a house fire or natural disaster, a diagnosis of cancer or death of a relative.

At those times it can be hard to know what to say to your children or how much detail you should go into. Sometimes it may seem best just to pretend the problem doesn’t exist rather than address what happened. Yet your children are going to feel the stress of the situation, whether you help them deal with it or not.

Nobody is immune

When any family member is facing a crisis, the tension usually spreads to everyone else in the family. Says Russell Jones, Ph.D., a family counselor and professor at Virginia Technical University: “Children will often mimic the behavior of their

parents. If a child sees Mom and Dad upset or screaming, it’s likely that the child will react in a similar way.”

One of the biggest mistakes parents make when facing a crisis is not being open and honest about it with their children. “Often parents try to keep the problem from their children because they don’t want them to worry,” says Nancy Schlossberg, Ed.D., professor emerita at the University of Maryland and author of *Going to Plan B*. “Unless parents explain what’s bothering them, their children may think that something they did is to blame. This can be a worse burden on them than knowing what’s really happening would be.”

When parents try to hide a family problem such as financial difficulties, their children may still learn about the situation from a secondary source. Sometimes the whole neighborhood knows that the father lost his job, but no one has told the children until they hear the news from the child across the street.

Says Carol Goldberg, Ph.D., president of Getting Ahead Programs (a corporation that conducts stress-management workshops for families): “If you’re not open with your children and then they find out anyway, it makes them feel like you don’t trust them and that they’re not a vital part of the family.”

Make things easier for everyone

Even when the crisis is something the entire family must confront, such as a natural disaster or automobile accident, parents may not feel comfortable discussing it with their children.

“Many times parents inadvertently reinforce fear and anxiety in their children by telling them to not talk about a stressful situation,” Dr. Jones says.

“That gives the children no outlet to express their feelings and to have the situation normalized.

“Children need to know their feelings are real, that their experiences are not unique to them and that others have felt the same way and made it through similar situations.”

No one wants to talk about unpleasant

will be the model for your child.

If your family is undergoing financial difficulties, for instance, your children do not need to hear an emotional outburst from Dad that everything’s falling apart. However, they need an explanation, in an objective way, that because of the situation they can’t go to summer camp or that you have



situations or share bad news, yet sometimes doing so is a necessary part of parenting.

“One of our roles as parents is that of shouldering problems and burdens because we’re older and bigger and we can see the light at the end of the tunnel that our children can’t,” says Bettie Youngs, Ph.D., a family counselor and author of *Stress and Your Child*.

She adds: “Parents, as having the leadership role in the family, need to think about what’s happening in their lives and how that is going to affect their children, and then present the news in a way that is both kind and gentle.”

The following suggestions may help you break bad news to your children and help them face family setbacks positively and courageously.

- **Be open and honest.** Show your children you respect their ability to understand the problem. Get it out in the open and reduce stress for everyone concerned.

Keep in mind that, if your children see you becoming worried or anxious without an obvious reason, they may begin to think: Oh, no, Dad is upset with me.

Dr. Schlossberg says: “It’s important that parents take a look at what the problem is and figure out how they’re going to deal with the situation, because if they are coping poorly that is going to spill over into the children and make them anxious, worried and fearful.”

Remember that your reaction to the crisis

to postpone buying the new bicycles you had promised them. (Have some reasonable alternative in mind, though.)

Although you should make it clear to the children what kind of changes the family has to make during this period, you shouldn’t overwhelm them with information or bring up larger issues they haven’t asked about. Trying to second-guess what they want to know can have the unintentional effect of planting worries they had never thought of.

It’s good to let your children know you’re unhappy about the situation, but you shouldn’t burden them with more than they can handle. It’s best to simply say you are concerned; for example: “I’m concerned that my paycheck may not cover all the things that we’re used to having now that Dad isn’t working.”

Back to Dr. Youngs: “When parents are worried or fearful, children worry and are fearful,” she says. “Kids expect their parents to be everything, to be their security, to make their world happen, whether they are 16 or 6. It worries kids that their parents are worried. Concern, on the other hand, is legitimate. It says you are on the ball with the situation because all is not well.”

- **Get your children to express their opinions and assumptions.** Encourage questions to try to get your children to verbalize their concerns: “How are you feeling?” “Did that make you upset?” “Did that scare you?” By asking these kinds of

questions you give children an opportunity to express what they are thinking, to have the experience normalized by their seeing that others react like they do when bad things happen.

Also, give your children time to think about what you’ve told them. They need time to accept whatever is or isn’t going to happen.

- **Provide a sense of hope.** Find something about the situation you can be positive about. Make it clear that you’re not giving up and that you’re working on a plan to put the situation back on track. Stress that this has happened to other families, and your family can make it through too.

Reaffirm the importance and stability of your family. “Let the children know that the family is united in supporting each other, that no matter what happens the parents will make every effort to do the best they can for the children and to overcome whatever obstacles there are,” Dr. Goldberg counsels.

Emphasize that, although tough times are not easy to face, one reason they happen is to make families stronger. Explain that it takes ingenuity and resourcefulness to face setbacks and that you know your family has the courage and strength to see the situation through.

- **Focus on specific steps each family member can take to help.** Get your children involved in the solution stage. If the problem is financial, you could discuss the family budget at a family meeting and solicit input from the kids regarding ways the family could save money. Ask them questions such as: What suggestions do you have? What are some steps you could take to help?

“Sharing decisions regarding what to cut back on can make kids feel a part of the team and want to take responsibility for doing their part to help the family,” Dr. Schlossberg says. “You can alleviate a lot of the stress by involving your children in the solution stage, asking them to look at the issues, offer suggestions and be a part of the process.”

When you ask for their input and cooperation in improving the situation, they can learn important problem-solving and life skills. By working together to solve a problem, parents and children can grow closer when facing hard times.

The many setbacks in life can teach family members how to deal with them more effectively, how to minimize crises and how to work through them together. *GN*

Living With Siblings

By Becky Sweat

Even though they share a room, Jennifer, 15, hasn't spoken to her sister, Nicole, in more than a week. "Nicole is always taking my clothes and using them without asking," Jennifer complains. "Last week was the last straw. I found my new sweater tossed in the laundry room, and it had a big stain on it. When I asked Nicole about it, she acted like she had no idea what I was talking about."

Ryan, 16, says he's tired of his younger brother, Sean, 13, hanging around when his friends are over. "He's such a pest," Ryan says. "Every time my friends come over, Sean turns into my shadow and wants to do whatever my friends and I are doing. I wish Sean would find some friends of his own and leave me alone."

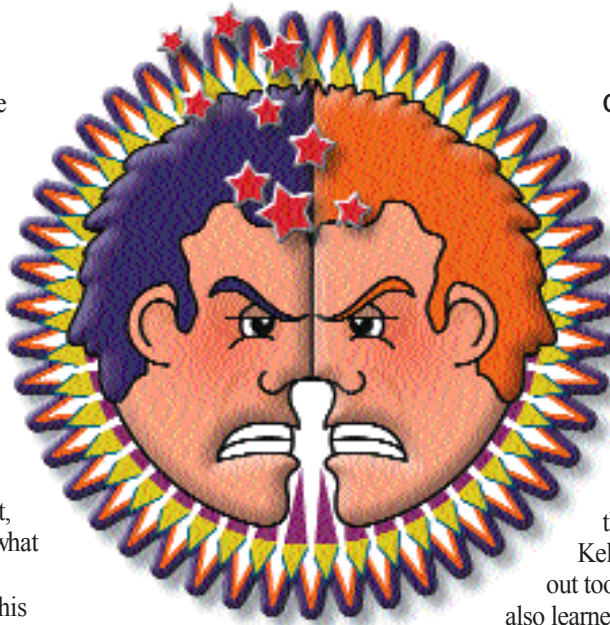
Sources of conflict

What makes siblings get on each other's nerves? Lack of privacy is one factor. "When living in a family there is generally a lack of privacy for everybody," says Dr. Clifton Saper, Ph.D., a family counselor in Elk Grove, Illinois. "That's not usually a problem for young children, but, as kids hit adolescence, privacy becomes more of an issue."

Maybe your brother eavesdrops whenever you make a telephone call. There may be nowhere to go for peace and quiet when you need to do your homework. Perhaps your sister sees nothing wrong with invading your bedroom closet and taking your possessions without asking.

Age differences have a part to play. "The difference between a 16-year-old and a 13-year-old in interests, capabilities, freedom and activities can be huge," says Dr. Peter Goldenthal, a family counselor in Devon, Pennsylvania, with a special interest in sibling rivalry. "Typically, older siblings want to differentiate themselves from the family, so they're not that interested in hanging around with their younger brother or sister."

Tim, 16, says he just doesn't think he has much in common with his 12-year-old sister. "My little sister, Emily, keeps bugging me to play games with her, and she acts all hurt and upset when I say I've got other things to do," he says. "But I just got my driver's license, and my friends from school want to go places with me, so what can Emily expect?"



Competition and fairness

Siblings who are close to each other in age often view each other as rivals and may compete with each other for friends and popularity, academics and athletic accomplishments.

"My sister, Kelly, is just a year younger than me, and it seems whatever I do she does the same," says Amanda, 17. "When I decided to try out for the lead in the school play and Kelly found out, she decided to try out too. When I took up tennis, Kelly also learned to play. She seems bent on proving to me that, even though she is a year younger, she can still do anything I can and better."

Another cause of sibling conflict is perceived unfairness. "One sibling may think the other is getting more than his or her fair share of attention, privileges, space or other perceived limited resource," says Dr. Charles Thompson, professor of counselor education and counseling psychology at the University of Tennessee.

There may be only one car or computer at home, and you think your brother gets to use it a lot more than you do. Or maybe you feel your parents are tougher on you than they are on your younger brother or sister.

"The older sibling is the first to enter high school, to ask for a later curfew and to drive a car," says Dr. Mary Halpin, an adolescent counselor in Deerfield, Illinois, "and typically parents are more cautious with firstborns because they're inexperienced having an older teen, and so their rules are stricter.

"Then, when the younger sibling comes along, the parents are usually more relaxed with the high-school scene, and so they allow the younger one more leeway, and the older sibling thinks that's unfair."

Making the relationship work

There are bound to be minor tiffs now and then, but there don't have to be—and shouldn't be—frequent blowups and tension. Relationships with your brothers and sisters should be supportive and strong. Here are some suggestions for improving the relationship you have with your brother or sister and becoming better friends:

- **Change your perspective.** If your younger sister says, "How come you always have time for your friends but you never have time for me?," before you get defensive or angry

ask yourself some questions. Is it possible that the statement is not criticism but really a way of saying "I care about you"?

See if you can understand what your sibling is trying to get at rather than immediately replying with a negative comeback. Challenge yourself to try to understand what's going on in your brother's or sister's life.

If you have younger siblings who follow you around, realize they're not trying to make your life miserable. "What usually happens is that younger siblings tend to idolize the older siblings, and that's why they want to follow in their footsteps," Dr. Saper says. "They very often see him or her as a role model."

Understand that your younger sibling is so pesky and doing everything you're doing because he looks up to you. Try to find some ways to include your younger sibling in your activities every once in a while and he will feel less need to pester you for attention.

• **Don't compare yourself to your sibling.** You may look at your brother's abilities and think to yourself, "It's not fair; he's better than I am at everything." But realize he may be thinking the same about you. Everyone has talents, and no one will succeed in everything all through life. Let your siblings shine in their own areas of strength.

Rather than wish you had the same

strengths and abilities as your brother or sister, look for your own talents and strengths and work on developing those.

• **Give your sibling some space.** If you are sharing a bedroom with your sister, sit down with her when you're both calm and come up with a system of rules for the room that both of you can agree on. "For this to work, both siblings have to be mature, sensitive and willing to negotiate and make compromises," Dr. Goldenthal says.

Make it a rule that you will not borrow each other's things without asking. Set aside a time for quiet time each night so you can get your homework done. Allow each sister to have some of her own wall decorations. You might want to designate certain areas of the room as being one girl's. Talk about how you will handle situations when your friends are over and you want to talk with them in your room. Once you agree on your rules, stick to them.

• **Build positive interactions.** Rather than always focusing on resolving conflicts all the time, ask your sibling to take part in some kind of fun, noncompetitive activity with you.

Go to a movie or take a walk together. Spend several hours at the park, recreation center or pool. Treat your sister or brother to a sundae at the ice-cream shop. Give yourselves a chance to do something enjoyable and positive with each other so you're not always quarreling and getting

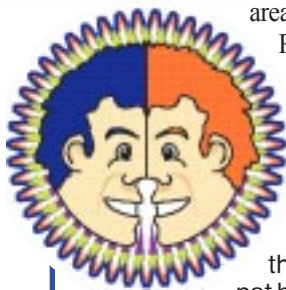
on each other's nerves.

• **Look at the long term.** During your teen years you may have interests that are quite different from those of your younger siblings, and life with them may seem intolerable at times. Try to look at the big picture. Realize that, no matter how frustrating life with your brothers and sisters can be right now, it's not always going to be that way. "Many adults who are close to their brothers and sisters will tell you they didn't get along with each other growing up," Dr. Thompson says.

Chances are, your siblings will be the ones you turn to for help in your adult years. Unlike friends who come and go throughout your life, your siblings are always going to be your siblings.

With patience and understanding on both sides, you might find that your brothers and sisters are a good source of support and advice. The Bible even tells us that "a brother is born to share troubles" (Proverbs 17:17, Revised English Bible).

Granted, it's no fun when your little brother reads through your diary or your sister helps herself to your clothes. It may seem hard to believe, but years from now as adults you and they will look back at your teen years and laugh about the stunts you used to pull on each other. For the present, try to have a sense of humor and apply some of the tips in this article. If you do, things are bound to get better. *GN*



Tips Toward a Truce

You and your brother or sister might not be on the best of terms. Maybe you had a big fight and neither of you has taken the steps toward a truce. Although it may not be easy, you need to talk things out so that you can be on cordial terms again. Here are some suggestions:

• **Plan a time to sit and talk.** Rather than barging into your sister's room and yelling at her, knock on her door and ask if the two of you can talk at a certain time. Choose a time to talk after you both have had time to think rationally about the situation and are calm.

• **Listen.** Make it a rule that each of you will get five minutes' uninterrupted time to talk about your concerns while the other person listens carefully. You can flip a coin to see who goes first. Listen with an open mind and try to understand your sibling's point of view. Your brother or sister may have an entirely different perspective on the situation.

Listening is an underrated, but vital, skill. Without listening, you'll find it hard to communicate. The Bible gives some excellent advice on how we can get along better: "Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry" (James 1:19, New International Version).

• **Choose your words carefully.** Give yourself time to think

about what you want to say before you open your mouth to speak. Don't name-call, criticize or fault-find or bring up the past. Start your talk with something like, "I'm unhappy about what happened between us, and I would like things to be better," rather than, "You're a pain in the neck." Stick to the here and now and the issue.

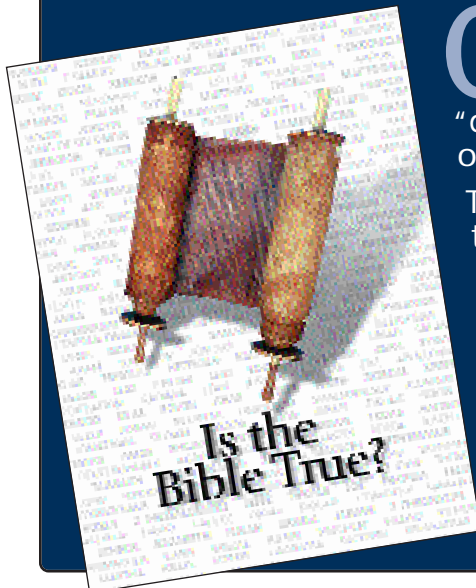
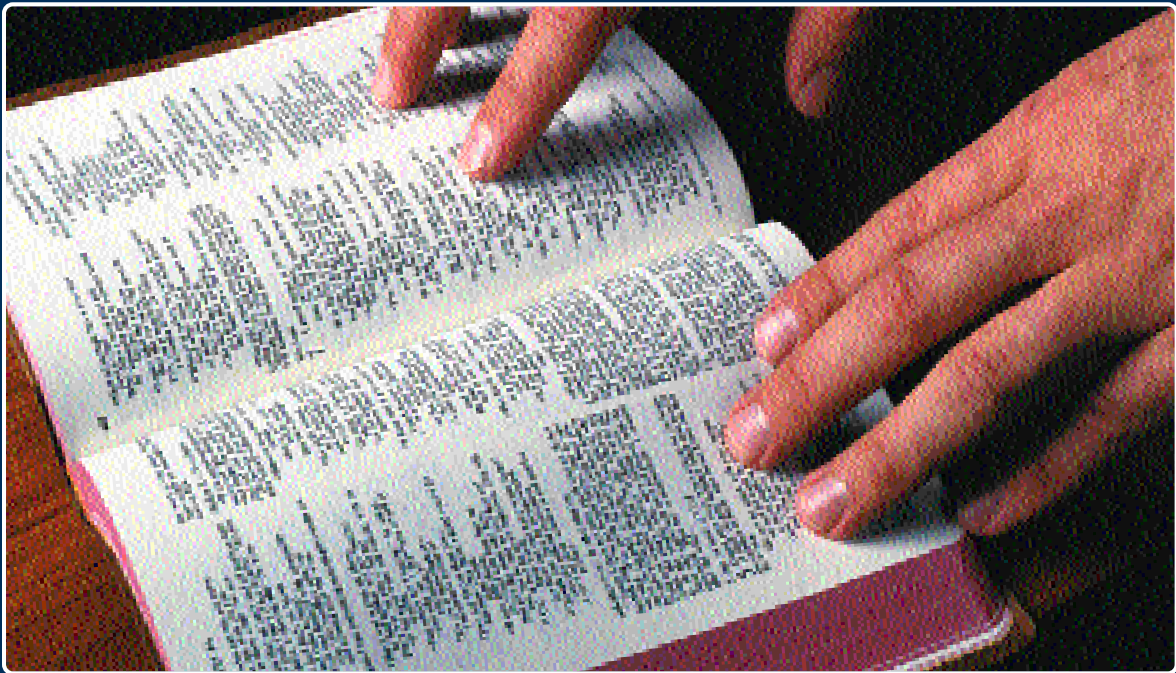
Put into practice the biblical advice: "A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger" (Proverbs 15:1). You'll likely see communication improve dramatically when you give this a try.

• **Use "I" statements.** Talk from your own point of view by making "I" statements: "I don't think you're aware of what you're doing here" or "I don't think you realize how much this is bothering me." Avoid making statements that begin with "you": "You did this . . ." or "You always . . ." "You" statements tend to be accusatory and put others on the defensive.

• **Know when to get an adult involved.** If you are getting nowhere one on one, suggest that a third person step in to help the two of you get the problem solved. Choose an adult who can remain neutral and one whom you both trust, such as one of your parents, an aunt or uncle or a young adult at church whom you both like and respect.

—Becky Sweat

Can You Believe the Bible?



Can you believe the Bible? What is this book, really? Is it only a collection of ancient legends and literature, as many believe? What about scientific discoveries that "disprove" the Bible? What about the historical and archaeological records? Do they contradict or confirm the Bible?

These are crucial questions. Humanity faces challenges that threaten our very existence, yet all too often we ignore the one source that actually has the answers. Shouldn't we, then, see if this source really is true?

You can discover the truth for yourself in *Is the Bible True?* This full-color, fully illustrated booklet discusses these vital questions and helps you find answers. Request your free copy at the address inside the front cover of this issue.

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