

THE SABBATH SCOOP

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A MODERN DAY PHARAOH?

Why is Pres. Obama making decisions and setting policies that weaken America? History can give us a clue!

By Gregory Dullum

Once upon a time there was a great country, blessed by God. Agriculturally, it was the breadbasket of the world. Crops were so abundant that this nation could feed, not only its own people, but also starving people in many other nations.

This country had great military strength. It had the most modern weapons of warfare and one of the greatest standing armies, feared by other nations. It was a world superpower.

This nation led the world in many ways. Its civilization, culture and religion were exported to other nations in the world. Its people were very religious. Although MOST people didn't worship the *true* God, *there were some who did*. And it was through these few true worshippers that *God did a great work*, making His name known *around the world*.

This nation was a beacon on a hill; a shining light; an *example for other nations to follow*. It acted like a magnet, attracting people from many other nations. Yet, this nation wasn't perfect. For one thing, it had *slavery* in its history.

There was a time when its LEADERS had *respect for the God of the Bible*. But then, one day a new leader arose, who had a different belief system. He was a power-hungry dictator who wanted to run the country *his way*. And he did. He ran his country *into the ground*. He made one bad decision after another. His bad decisions caused God to *STOP blessing* his nation and to start *cursing* it. When he came to power, his nation was *on top of the world*. During his reign, he brought the greatest nation on earth *to utter ruin*.

Who was this ruler? What nation did he rule? Perhaps you thought we were describing America today. But let's



NAPS photo

When Pres. Barack Obama ran for office, he promised to "fundamentally transform" America. Things have become a lot worse under his rule. Why?

see if another country fits this description and consider what we can learn from it.

A Nation Harkens to God

Let's step back in time to the days when ancient Egypt was a world-ruling empire. One of God's chosen people stood before the ruler of Egypt and gave him a message from God. "Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, 'The dreams of the Pharaoh are one; God has shown Pharaoh what He is about to do'" (Gen. 41:25).

Joseph explained that seven years of famine were coming. But they would be preceded by seven years of abundance. He suggested that officers be appointed to collect one fifth of the produce in the plentiful years so there would be food to eat during the famine (vv. 29-36).

What was Pharaoh's reaction to God's message? "So the advice was good in the eyes of Pharaoh and in the eyes of all his servants. And Pharaoh said to his ser-

vants, 'Can we find such a one as this, a man in whom is the Spirit of God?' Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, 'Inasmuch as God has shown you all this, there is no one as discerning and wise as you. You shall be over my house, and all my people shall be ruled according to your word; only in regard to the throne will I be greater than you' " (vv. 37-39).

There was a time when Egypt was ruled by GOD-FEARING men. Joseph was second in charge in the land, and everyone listened to him. Under Joseph's rule, Egypt was able to prepare for the great famine. *Blessed* for seven years, *Egypt was able to feed the world* when famine came. "The famine was over all the face of the earth, and Joseph opened all the storehouses and sold to the Egyptians. And the famine became severe in the land of Egypt. So all countries came to Joseph in Egypt to buy grain, because the famine was severe in all lands" (vv. 56-57).

Joseph's Family Joins Him

Joseph's family—the original Israelites—came to Egypt during the famine and were *treated royally at first* (Gen. 42:1-2, 46:26-27, 47:5). They were given the BEST land in which to dwell (v. 6).

New King Makes Israelites Slaves

As time went on, the Israelites grew greater in number (Ex. 1:6-7). A new king arose who was different from the previous rulers (v. 8.) The previous rulers knew Joseph and his God. This new ruler did NOT know Joseph or his God. He caused the Israelites to become slaves (vv. 9-11).

What was Egypt like at this time?

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Modern Day Pharaoh?

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Egypt a World-Ruling Empire

The New Unger's Bible Dictionary calls this period "The New Empire" which lasted from about 1570 to 1160 B.C. Just prior to this, the horse and chariot had been introduced to the Nile Valley. So Egypt had the most advanced weapons of that time.

Notice how "the New Empire" is described: "This was the heyday of Egyptian splendor and building activity, as evidenced by the vast temple at Karnak..." Thutmose III, who reigned about 1482-1450, was called "The great conqueror and builder."

Unger's tells us, "This warrior conducted seventeen campaigns and extended the empire to its widest limits in Palestine, Syria, and the regions of the upper Euphrates and on the Nile up to the Fourth Cataract. At the Battle of Megiddo, about 1482 B.C., he defeated the Hittites. According to the chronology preserved in the Masoretic Text, he was probably the pharaoh of the oppression."

In other words, Thutmose III enslaved the Israelites. It is believed that under the next Pharaoh, Amenhotep II, who reigned from 1450 to 1425 B.C., the Israelites left Egypt. According to Unger, under Amenhotep II's reign, "The great empire began to decline" ("Egypt," *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary* by Merrill F. Unger, 1988, p. 337).

Pharaoh Forgets God

The leadership of Egypt forgot Joseph and Joseph's God! "Afterward Moses and Aaron went in and told Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD God of Israel: "Let My people go, that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness."' And Pharaoh said, 'Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, nor will I let Israel go'" (Ex. 5:1-2).

Egypt's leadership PERSECUTED God's people, turning them into slaves and killing their male babies.

When God sent Moses to Pharaoh to demand that the Israelites be freed, Egypt was at a ZENITH OF POWER. It had extended its influence into Palestine and Syria. It had a great army with many horses and chariots—the latest military weaponry of the day. It was experiencing its heyday of splendor and building activity.

Curses Come

Pharaoh refused to let the Israelites go. Not just ONCE, but every time Moses came and demanded that he let them go.

And every time Pharaoh refused, *God cursed Egypt*, bringing it down a notch. Instead of BLESSING Egypt, as He had under Joseph's rulership, God now CURSED Egypt with plagues.

You could say, every major decision this pharaoh made was the WRONG one for his country. Every time he refused to let the Israelites go, his people suffered. Water was turned to blood. Frogs invaded their homes, beds and cooking vessels. Lice bit their flesh. Swarms of flies invaded every crevice of their living quarters. Boils and sores broke out on man and beast. Hail and fire fell from the skies, killing all the beasts who were left out in the field and destroying the flax and barley crops. Locusts "covered the face of the whole earth, so the land was darkened; and they ate every herb of the land and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left. So there remained nothing green on the trees or on the plants of the field throughout all the land of Egypt" (Ex. 10:15). A mysterious, supernatural darkness covered the land for days. The firstborn of man and beast died on the night of Passover. And much of Egypt's army and weaponry were destroyed in the Red Sea when Pharaoh ordered his army to pursue the Israelites.

When this Pharaoh came to power, Egypt was at the top of the world. Because of his bad decisions, Egypt was reduced to rubble; its agriculture destroyed, much of its army and weaponry gone. From being a world superpower, Egypt was reduced to a third-world needy country, all because of ONE MAN'S wrong decisions.

Egyptian Reactions to Pharaoh

Did any Egyptian realize Pharaoh was making BAD decisions? Did anyone try to get Pharaoh to change his mind?

"Now the magicians so worked with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not. So there was lice on man and beast. Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, 'This is the finger of God.' But Pharaoh's heart grew hard, and he did not heed them, just as the LORD had said" (Ex. 8:18-19).

Pharaoh would NOT heed the advice of his magicians. Pharaoh was determined to lead his country down the WRONG path!

Moses' Reaction

What did Moses think about Pharaoh's WRONG decisions? He cried to God because the Israelites were suffering too! He said, "LORD, why have You brought trouble on this people? Why is it You have sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, he has done evil to this people; neither have You delivered Your people at all" (Ex. 5:22-23).

What did God tell Moses? "Then the LORD said to Moses, 'Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh. For with a strong hand he will let them go, and with a strong hand he will drive them out of his land'" (Ex. 6:1).

The Right Man for the Job

God told Moses to be patient. This Pharaoh would let Israel go. God knew the CHARACTER of this man. He was the RIGHT MAN for the job at that time.

Dan. 4:17 tells us, "the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, gives it to whomever He will, and sets over it the lowest of men." God CHOSE this Pharaoh to rule Egypt at this time.

Remember when Queen Esther was told by Mordecai, "who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (Esth. 4:14)? God brings certain rulers to power at certain times so that HIS PURPOSE will be accomplished.

What was the purpose God wanted accomplished under the Pharaoh of Moses' day?

"For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, 'Even for this same purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that My name might be declared in all the earth'" (Rom. 9:17).

God needed to reduce the Egyptian Empire to rubble. This would accomplish four things:

1. Force Pharaoh to let the Israelites go;
2. Prevent the Egyptians from coming after the Israelites;
3. Diminish Egypt's influence over Palestine so the Israelites could conquer that land more easily; and
4. Create fear among Israel's enemies

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The SABBATH SCOOP

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Do Not Take God's Name in Vain

What does it mean to take God's name in vain? Why is it wrong?

By Gregory Dullum
Part 7

The third commandment is: "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain" (Ex. 20:7).

The warning at the end of this commandment should make us realize this is VERY SERIOUS business. The society in which we live thinks nothing of uttering God's name in a flippant manner. But we must be very careful how we use God's name!

Cursing With God's Name

Most people would agree that this commandment is telling us not to curse or swear using God's name, or use his name in a flippant manner. And this is certainly PART of the prohibition of this commandment.

We should not use God's name in any profane manner. "Profane" means "Marked by contempt or irreverence for what is sacred" and "to put to an improper, unworthy, or degrading use" ("Profane" *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, 1992, p. 1446.) Related to the word "profane" is the word "profanity" which is defined as "The condition or quality of being profane" and "Abusive, vulgar or irreverent language" ("Profanity," *ibid.*).

The most OBVIOUS way to break this commandment is to utter the words "God," "Jesus," "Christ," "Lord," etc. in any context that is not reverently addressing the actual Beings who have those names. We see this being done all the time in popular culture (books, movies and music).

This commandment also condemns the use of profane phrases with God's name

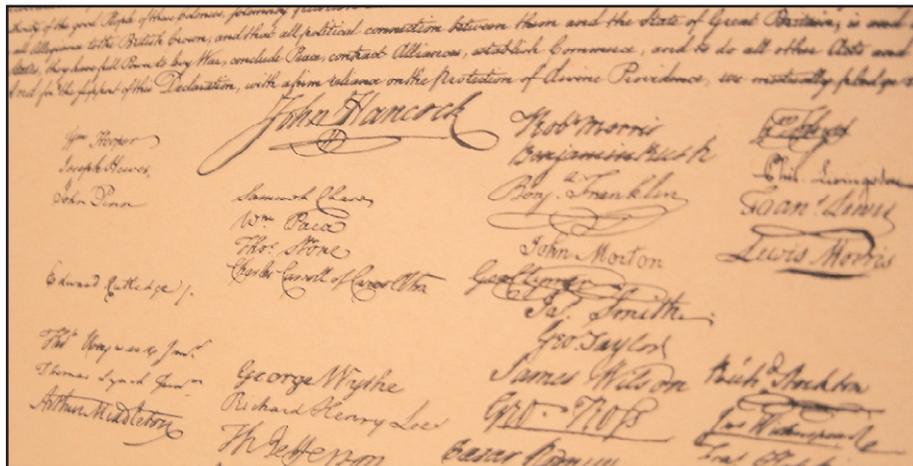


photo by Gregory Dullum

When we sign our name to a document, it is more than just placing a series of letters onto a page. Our name represents our whole being. The signers of the Declaration of Independence pledged their lives, fortunes and sacred honor to the cause. We must therefore be careful how we use God's name, for it represents his whole being.

attached, even if God's name is left unsaid. That means we should avoid such phrases as "Goddamit" (God damn it) or "dammit" or "damn" or "dammit all to hell" or "hell" when we are not actually asking God to damn something.

Uttering Other Profanity

Technically, this commandment does NOT prohibit the use of profanity that *does not contain God's name*—words we politely refer to as "four letter words" which are meant to shock and offend. These words often are synonymns for excrement or sexual acts but they are NOT used in *polite society*. Unfortunately, our society is becoming so VULGAR that *profanity is becoming commonplace* and many people see nothing wrong with using it.

Is it okay for we Christians to use profanity if it doesn't contain God's name?

Paul told the church at Ephesus, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers" (Eph. 4:29). Uttering "dirty" expletives edifies (builds up) no one and certainly does not impart grace to the hearers! Indeed, some people would be shocked to hear such words!

Paul added, "Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice" (v. 31). Uttering profanity is something usually done in anger and could be classified as

"evil speaking." Christians are to put away such speaking!

Paul was even more direct when he told the church at Colosse, "But now you must also put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth" (Col. 3:8). Christians should not use "filthy language" or "dirty words."

Another term for uttering profanity is "swearing." One of the dictionary definitions of "swear" is "To use profane oaths; curse." Jesus Christ, who came to magnify the law (Mat. 5:17), instructs us, "do not swear at all" (v. 34).

What comes out of our mouth reflects what is in our hearts. As Christians, we should strive to be clean and pure and moral, and our language should not be ugly and offensive.

Jesus explained it this way while speaking to Pharisees who accused Him of casting out demons by the power of Satan: "Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned" (Mat. 12:34-37).

GOD'S NAME
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Know Your Bible

By Charles Nenner

1. What sea is known as the Great Sea?
2. Where did a person flee who killed someone in ancient Israel?
3. How long did a person have to stay in a city of refuge?
4. Into what sea does the Nile River flow?
5. From what two sources did waters of Noah's flood come?

(Answers on page 5)

God's Name

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The third commandment *specifically* prohibits using GOD'S NAME in profanity. The commandment can be *expanded* or *magnified* to include under its umbrella a prohibition against using ALL profanity.

Using Euphemisms for God

Some people don't actually utter God's name when they swear—they use euphemisms instead. A euphemism is “substituting a mild, indirect, or vague term for the one considered harsh, blunt or offensive” (*American Heritage Dictionary*, p. 632).

When people utter euphemisms, they have *in their heart* God's name but *out of their mouth* comes a Milder word. Using such words are still breaking the spirit of the third commandment! Examples of euphemisms are “Gosh,” “Golly” and “Goodness” (corruptions of “God”), “Gosh darn” or “Gol darn” (God damn), “Gee,” “Gee whiz” and “Jiminy” (Jesus), “Cripes” (Christ), and “Jiminy Crickets” (Jesus Christ).

Other phrases to avoid are “darn it” (damn it), “land's sakes” (Lord's sakes), “e gads” (the gods) and “Lordy” (Lord). I'm sure there are more that we have heard others say or we have said ourselves.

God's Name Is Holy

God's name is holy! Jesus said in his sample prayer, “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name” (Mat. 6:9). We therefore should treat God's name as special, and not drag it through the mud by using it in a profane manner.

“This is really all about respect....

“When we use God's name frivolously... we dishonor God and display irreverence—we ultimately malign or diminish God's reputation. We aren't showing the proper respect for God. When we use profanities in general, even when God's name is not invoked, we aren't showing the proper respect for people—which is one of God's oft-stated desires as indicated throughout the Bible. We show disrespect to people when we use either direct profanities toward them or even simply use profanities in their presence.

“Language is our way of communicating what we want and reflects who we are. By using bad language, we diminish the divine spark within us that defines our humanity. This certainly is not an emulation of God's ways” (*The Ten Commandments* by Dr. Laura Schlessinger and Rabbi Stewart Vogel, 1998, p. 69).

God wants us to show respect for his

name. He does not want us to use it frivolously or without thought. That means we shouldn't use such casual phrases as “Thank God” if we really just mean, “I'm glad to hear that” and we aren't really offering thanks to God. For example, there are the oft-repeated initials, “TGIF” that mean “Thank God it's Friday.” For what exactly are we *thanking God* when we use this phrase? Friday comes after Thursday every week WITHOUT God's help. This is a frivolous use of his name.

Initials are big in this world of texts, e-mails, and instant messaging. A common response to a message is “OMG” which stands for “O my God!” This phrase is used without reverence to the Almighty God whose name is invoked.

A phrase uttered in similar circumstances is “God!” “my God” or “my word!” Jesus is “the Word” (John 1:1). These phrases, and others like them, use God's name frivolously and should not be uttered by us.

Using Hebrew Names

Are we breaking the third commandment if we fail to use God's Hebrew names? Some refer to God only as “Yahweh” or “Jehovah” and may call Jesus “Yeshua.”

Does God require us to address Him ONLY in Hebrew?

“First of all, however, let us make it clear to those who may have been misinformed on the subject of *reverencing* God's ‘name’ does NOT mean trying to speak Hebrew or Greek or learning to pronounce God's name in the original Biblical languages! There are certain sects that make a great matter out of this. Some claim that ‘Jehovah’ is the Father's name. Others claim that it is ‘Yahwah,’ others ‘Yahvah,’ and others use still different variations. The truth of the matter is that since all admit that the Hebrew vowels have not been preserved, *no one knows* how the Hebrew names of God should be pronounced!

“Also, and even more important, God Himself inspired Daniel and Ezra to use the Aramaic word for God in nine chapters of the Bible which they wrote in this language, and the *New Testament* writers were inspired to use the *Greek* words for the deity” (*The Ten Commandments* by Roderick C. Meredith, 1968, p. 47).

I have no problem if people addressed me in their native languages. If my name were John, and a French person called me Jean or a German called me Johann, it wouldn't bother me. I'd know they are addressing me in their native tongues and no disrespect was intended. I'm sure God looks at it the same way. He created the different languages (Gen. 11:1, 6-9), so

why would He be offended if we called upon Him in our own language? In English we call Him God, in French it's Dieu, in Spanish it's Dios. When Jesus Christ was near death on the stake, he cried out to God—NOT in Hebrew—but in Aramaic, “Eli, Eli” (Mat. 27:46).

On the day of Pentecost, God's spirit allowed Jews from many different countries to hear Peter's sermon *in their own language* (Acts 2:5:6). Do you think God, through his spirit, translated every word into those languages *except his name*? I doubt God left his name in Hebrew.

Those whose god MUST be addressed *only in the Hebrew tongue* in order to show him proper respect worship a very SMALL god indeed!

Taking God's Name

Speaking God's name in an irreverent manner is PROHIBITED by the third commandment. But that is not the COMPLETE understanding. (After all, the commandment is against “taking” God's name in vain—not against “speaking” God's name in vain.)

“This is obviously a ubiquitous form of profaning God's name, but the true translation of this commandment from the Hebrew points to ‘carrying the Lord's name in vain.’ That means that actions, behaviors, and positions we take in God's name must not defame Him. History is pockmarked with episodes of torture, murder, rape, and plundering all in ‘God's name.’ This, of course, is a deeper profanity” (Schlessinger and Vogel, pp. 68-69).

We 21st century Christians are probably not guilty of committing torture, murder rape, etc., *in God's name*. But we can break this commandment in a similar way, if we are not careful.

In our human experience, when do we “take” another's name? A bride getting married usually takes her husband's name. She changes her last name to his. We, in the Church of God, are the bride of Christ (Eph. 5:23-24, 32). We have “taken” Christ's name if we call ourselves “CHRISTIAN.” How can we take that name “IN VAIN”?

Jesus Christ gives us a clue when He said, “These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men” (Mat. 15:8-9). If we call ourselves a “man of God” or a “Christian,” but *we don't live up to that name*, we are taking it “in vain.”

To better understand the term “in vain” we turn to *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*. There are two basic Greek words translated “in vain”: *kenos* and *mataios*. They are syn-

onymous.

Kenos “expresses the hollowness of anything, the absence of that which otherwise might be possessed. It is used... of a person whose professed faith is not accompanied by works, James 2:20....

“The synonymous word *mataios*, vain, signifies void of result, it marks the aimlessness of anything.... *Kenos* stresses the absence of quality, *mataios*, the absence of useful aim or effect” (“Empty,” vol. II, p. 25).

As Christians, we must bear the good fruit of a Christian, or we are taking God’s name in vain!

“Jesus asked, ‘And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do NOT the things which I say?’ (Luke 6:46). Prayer without *obedience* is a subtle form of BLASPHEMY!...

“The HYPOCRISY of religious denominations and religious people is infinitely worse than the profanity of the street” (Merideth, p. 54).

Paul warned that if we *call ourselves God’s people* but refuse to OBEY Him, we *blaspheme God’s name* to unbelievers (Gentiles) around us (Rom. 2:21-24). They see our *ungodly conduct* and conclude, if that is a man of God, *I want nothing to do with that God!*

We can disgrace God by our CONDUCT! “Paul explains that even some who regard themselves as Christians can disgrace God’s name by their conduct. ‘Let as many bondservants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and His doctrine may not be blasphemed’ (1 Timothy 6:1).

“Our conduct should be above reproach” (*The Ten Commandments* by the United Church of God, 1998, p. 29).

What’s in a Name?

When we are told NOT to take God’s “name” in vain, there is *more to this* than just God’s appellation. We are not speaking only about his “name” as we use that word in English.

“In our Western societies we can lose the significance of a name. We think of spelling out a name, one letter at a time, rather than the biblical sense of a name that conveys the attributes of the individual (see Proverbs 22:1)” (“‘Whatever You Ask in My Name’” by Robin Webber, *The Good News*, March-April 2015, p. 32).

“Throughout the Bible, names are full of meaning. Scholars have long recognized that both for ancient Israel and the ancient Near East as well as for early Judaism and Christianity, the name of a person, place, or thing was somehow connected to and descriptive of its essence and/or personality. Thus the names of individuals expressed their per-

sonality and status or nature. This is reflected in those stories where an individual’s name is changed in recognition of a changed nature, personality, or status. Examples include Jacob’s name being changed to Israel following his successful all-night wrestling match with an unnamed divine being (Gen. 32:22-32) and Abram’s name being changed to Abraham after the institution of the covenant (Gen. 17:1-8)” (“Names and Namegiving,” *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*, Bruce M. Metzger and Michael D. Coogan, eds., 1993, p. 545).

“Throughout His Word, God’s *name* is connected with His attributes—His power, His eternal existence, His mercy, His faithfulness, His wisdom, His love” (Meredith, p. 49). “The names of God show us what God is like—they reveal His CHARACTER!” (ibid., p. 48).

This commandment is more than a prohibition against cussing. It is a command to love and respect God for who He is and to change our behavior so it conforms to his law and his will. If we take God’s name by calling ourselves his people or “Christians,” we must live our lives in a way that brings honor to Him.

This is what God expected of the ancient Israelites! Moses told them, “Surely I have taught you statutes and judgments, just as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should act according to them in the land which you go to possess. Therefore be careful to observe them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.’ For what great nation is there that has God so near to it, as the LORD our God is to us, for whatever reason we may call upon Him? And what great nation is there that has such statutes and righteous judgments as are in all this law which I set before you this day?” (Deut. 4:5-8).

We are to be shining examples of what it means to live God’s way! If we take God’s name, we are to develop his character through obedience to his laws. We are to be reflections of Him. When people see us, they should see God in us. Jesus put it this way: “Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven” (Mat. 5:16).

To the degree that we fail to do this, is the degree to which we take God’s name in vain.

Know Your Bible Answers

- 1) Mediterranean. 2) a city of refuge.
- 3) Until the high priest died. 4) Mediterranean. 5) Springs and rainfall.

Fun Fact



Drawing and Fun Fact are courtesy of NAPS

During the Middle Ages in Europe, people would take a long walk after Easter Mass in their new clothes. This tradition eventually became what is known as the Easter Parade.

Witerature

Wit and wisdom to complement the truths of the Holy Bible can be found in secular writings.

Pinocchio by Carlo Collodi, The Great Reads, 2005, pp. 54-56.

Lying: the Worst Habit

“The Fairy sat looking at him and laughing.

“‘Why do you laugh?’ the Marionette asked her, worried now at the sight of his growing nose.

“‘I am laughing at your lies.’

“‘How do you know I am lying?’

“‘Lies, my boy, are known in a moment. There are two kinds of lies—lies with short legs and lies with long noses. Yours, just now, happen to have long noses.’

Pinocchio, not knowing where to hide his shame, tried to escape from the room, but his nose had become so long that he could not get it out of the door.

“Crying as if his heart would break, the Marionette mourned for hours over the length of his nose. No matter how hard he tried, it would not go through the door. The Fairy showed no pity toward him, as she was trying to teach him a good lesson, so that he would stop telling lies, the worst habit any boy may acquire.”

Prov. 6:16, 19, 12:22, 19:9; Rev. 21:8

Memory Scripture

“A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who speaks lies shall perish.”

—Prov. 19:9

Modern Day Pharaoh?

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so Israel would be safer as they wandered in the wilderness, and later when they conquered Canaan.

U.S. Similar to Egypt

We in the United States of America find ourself in a similar situation to that of Egypt in the time of Moses. Our nation is the world's only *superpower*; one that has been *greatly blessed* by God. We have the world's *largest military* armed with the *most advanced weaponry*. We have an *abundance of food* with which we *feed the world*. But we, as a people, have FORGOTTEN Joseph and his God. Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 explain that if we obey God, we will be blessed. But if we disobey and forget God, we will be *cursed*. Our nation is beginning to experience the *curses of God*.

We now have a leader who may claim to be Christian but was raised a Muslim. *He does not know Joseph or Joseph's God*. He came to power when our nation was in its "*heyday of American splendor*." Every major decision he makes is the *WRONG* one for this country. His policies are *weakening* America. Why? God warns that if our people disobey Him, ultimately national captivity awaits us. Somehow, *our nation must be weakened* so it can be taken captive. Remember Dan. 4:17! Playing off of Esther 4:14, we ask, "Who knows whether our national leaders, including our current president, have come to power *for such a time as this?*"

We have spent a great deal of space in this article discussing ancient Egypt under a certain Pharaoh, probably Amenhotep II. Or have we? Perhaps that pharaoh was a type of a ruler we see on the world scene today—one who is ruling America.

As Americans, we might be tempted to react as did the magicians—to *try to change the direction* our leadership is taking this country. But it won't do any good to try to influence our political leaders. *Their hearts are hardened*. They will do what they are going to do.

As Christians, we may react as did Moses, and cry out to God about our leaders taking our nation down the wrong path. God tells us, as He told Moses, "Be patient. I am working out my purpose. It will all work out for the best in the end. As you see events unfold, you will see my power being shown, and in the end, my name will be declared in all the earth."

Let's not *fear* our modern-day Pharaoh nor *worry* about what he is doing to this country. Ultimately, God is in charge, and His *WILL will be done!*



Netanyahu Criticizes Obama's Nuclear Deal

"With dark warnings and a call to action, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel used one of the world's most prominent venues on Tuesday [March 3] to denounce what he called a 'bad deal' being negotiated with Iran and to mount an audacious challenge to President Obama...."

"Netanyahu took the rostrum in the historic chamber of the House of Representatives to tell a joint meeting of Congress that instead of stopping Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons, Mr. Obama's diplomatic initiative 'would all but guarantee' that it does, in turn setting off a regional arms race.

" 'This deal won't be a farewell to arms,' Mr. Netanyahu told the lawmakers, who responded with a succession of standing ovations. 'It would be a farewell to arms control. And the Middle East would soon be crisscrossed by nuclear tripwires. A region where small skirmishes can trigger big wars would turn into a nuclear tinderbox.'..."

"Mr. Netanyahu argued that Iran's 'tentacles of terror' were clutching Israel and that failing to stop it from obtaining nuclear weapons 'could well threaten the survival of my country.' Tehran already dominates the capitals of Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Yemen, he said, and the United States should demand that it stop aggression against its neighbors and threats to annihilate Israel before agreeing to any deal" ("In Congress, Netanyahu Faults 'Bad Deal' on Iran Nuclear Program" by Peter Baker, *The New York Times*, nytimes.com, March 3, 2015, pp. 1-2).

A nuclear-armed Iran may be part of the coming "king of the South" prophesied to exist in the last days (Dan. 11:40). The king of the South may be a union of Muslim nations.

Poles Fear Russia May Attack Them next

"As the crisis [in Ukraine] drags on, what was unthinkable at the end of the Cold War now seems not quite so un-

likely to many Poles: that the great Russian behemoth will not be sated with Ukraine and will reach out once again into the West. The thought is darkening the national mood and rippling across the entire region in ways that reflect a visceral fear of an aggressive and unpredictable Russia" ("Poles Steel for Battle, Fearing Russia Will March on Them Next" by Rick Lyman, *The New York Times*, nytimes.com, March 14, 2015, pp. 1-2).

One of the signs that we are in "the beginning of sorrows" prior to Christ's return is "wars and rumors of wars" (Mat. 24:3, 6-8).

At the time of the end, the king of the North (a 10-king European union) will attack the king of the South (probably a muslim union) and then will be troubled by news from the east (Dan. 11:40-44). That troubling news may be an attacking army of "kings from the east"—probably a union of Russian, Chinese and other Oriental nations (Rev. 16:12-16).

Drought Continues

"And now, as the end of the official rainy season approaches—this state [California] gets 90 percent of its water from December through April, most of it in December and January—California is facing a punishing fourth year of drought. Temperatures in southern California soared to record-high levels over the weekend, approaching 100 degrees in some places. Reservoirs are low. Landscapes are parched and blighted with fields of dead or dormant orange trees. And the Sierra Nevada snowpack, which is counted on to provide 30 percent of the state's water supply as it melts through early summer, is at its second lowest level on record" ("As California Drought Enters 4th Year, Conservation Efforts and Worries Increase" by Adam Nagourney, *The New York Times*, nytimes.com, March 17, 2015, p. 1).

"Famines" are prophesied to occur as we near the end time (Mat. 24:3, 7; Rev. 6:5-6). Drought is a curse that God will use to punish this nation as it turns its back on Him (Deut. 28:15, 23-24).