

THE SABBATH SCOOP

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Giving Up a Honeymoon in Paradise

What was it like for Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden? How did Satan get them to give it all up?

By Gregory Dullum

Adam and Eve, the first humans to walk the earth, had *everything* going for them!

They were NEWLYWEDS honeymooning in a beautiful tropical paradise. They lived in a garden filled with sweet, fragrant flowers displaying spectacular colors. Trees heavy with ripened fruit were all around. Vegetables were ready for the picking (Gen. 1:11-12, 29; 2:8-9).

Rivers of fresh, pure, unpolluted water sparkled in the warm sunlight and splashed over rocks along their courses (Gen. 2:10). At least one branch of a river may have roared over a cliff into a pool below, creating mankind's first shower and bath.

The garden teemed with exotic animals and birds of every color and kind. There were no bars or concrete walls—the animals were completely tame as they roamed free (Gen. 2:19-20).

And talk about privacy! This married couple could enjoy each other's beautiful naked bodies all day and night without any shame, embarrassment or fear of being spied upon (Gen. 2:25). There were no other humans! And as for marital relations, there were no prohibitions whatsoever! In fact, it was just the opposite! They had been told to "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it" (Gen. 1:28).

OUR romantic honeymoons end after a few days but Adam and Eve's could have lasted forever! In the midst of the garden was the tree of life (Gen. 2:9). They could have eaten of its fruit and lived forever (Gen. 3:22).

Adam and Eve were probably created to *appear* about 20 years old—that's the age when one achieved adulthood in the Old Testament (Num. 1:3, 18, 20). That means they probably had the raging hormones of 20-year-olds. They also had the physical strength, emotions, enthusiasm, curios-

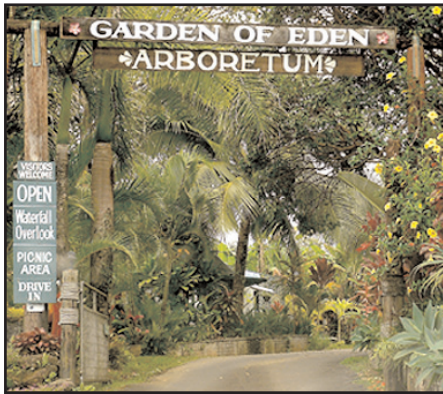


photo by Gregory Dullum

The entrance to the Garden of Eden when the garden was open. This is not the Garden of Eden of Genesis for it's open and there is no angel with a flaming sword. This arboretum is on the Hawaiian island of Maui. And as beautiful as it is, this garden can't compare to the original!

ity, and *lack of wisdom* of 20-year-olds. Considering they had no childhood, how much knowledge did they have?

Within seconds of coming into existence, Adam and Eve were walking, talking and understanding far more than babies of the same age do. How strange it must have been to be 20 years old but have no memories! God must have implanted *some knowledge* in their brains at creation. And why not? Computers we buy have knowledge (applications or programs) already loaded in them!

Although Adam and Eve were the only humans in the garden, they were not *totally* alone. There were TWO spirit beings who had access to the garden.

THE LORD God

The first was known to Adam and Eve as "the Lord God" (Gen. 3:8). He was "the Word," who later became Jesus Christ (John 1:1-3, 14). The Word had created Adam and Eve under instructions from

another spirit Being called the Father (Gen. 1:26-27, Luke 10:22, John 5:30, Col. 1:16). Adam and Eve considered the Word to be *their Father*, because He had created them in his and his Father's image (Gen. 1:27). This may be why one of Christ's titles is "Everlasting Father" (Isa. 9:6).

The Word probably appeared in human form to Adam and Eve. When Adam was created, "the LORD God... breathed into his nostrils the breath of life" (Gen. 2:7), creating an image resembling mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. God did not have to be in human form to perform this, but He *could have been*.

When the LORD God spoke to Adam and Eve, Did they hear a VOICE booming from the sky but see no BODY? That could be *frightening!* It is more likely that He appeared in *human form* and conversed with them *face-to-face*, just as He did twice with Abraham (Gen. 18:1-5, 16-33; 14:18-20, Heb. 7:1-3).

Adam and Eve not only heard LORD God *talking*, they heard Him *walking* in the garden (Gen. 3:8, 10). That indicates a *physical presence* causing such sounds as feet clomping on mud or scuffing over stone, and the rustling of leaves and branches pushed aside by arms or legs.

The LORD God appeared to Adam and Eve as a LOVING Father, giving them help and instructions as any Father would give to his children. Then, He left them alone. He gave them their privacy, their space to grow. He was the PERFECT Father figure—the Dad we all wish we had!

Adam and Eve had a *very close* relationship with their Creator God, and the opportunity for ETERNAL LIFE *at their fingertips!* They had *everything going for them* during this awesome honeymoon! So what went WRONG? What made them give up all this?

ADAM AND EVE

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Adam and Eve

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Satan

What went wrong has to do with the second spirit being in the garden. He was an unsavory fellow called Satan the devil—the fallen archangel Lucifer (Ezek. 28:13). He manifested himself—not as a man—but as a DRAGON or serpent (Rev. 12:9).

While the Word loved Adam and Eve enough to give his life for them (John 3:16), Satan hated them and wanted them dead. He was jealous of their existence, for humans have the potential of becoming God family members (Rom. 8:14-17).

When he was Lucifer, Satan tried to take over God's throne (Isa. 14:12-15). He wanted TO BE GOD! He deceived a third of the angels to follow him in a rebellion against God. There was war in heaven and Satan lost. He was cast to the earth (Rev. 12:3-4, 7-10).

Satan *failed to become God!* And now there were two humans who had the *potential* to SUCCEED where he had FAILED. They could become sons of God if they lived their lives in obedience to God and learned to be like Him (Mat. 19:17, 5:48).

Satan ruminated on a way to destroy these mortals and one day he set forth his plan into action. What DAY was that?

Day of Deception

Adam and Eve were created on the sixth day of "creation week" (Gen. 1). At what time of year was creation? Jewish tradition gives us a possibility:

"The ancient Rabbis believed that the Lord created the world in the first week of the month of Tishri. Therefore the first day of the seventh month [The Feast of Trumpets] is considered the beginning of creation and the beginning of the year, and hence the Jewish time reckoning" (*The Gospel in the Feasts of Israel* by Viktor Buksbazen, 1958, p. 23).

On the sixth day (Friday, Tishri 6), God created Adam and Eve (Gen. 1:26-31). The next day was the holy Sabbath (Gen. 2:2-3). I have heard it said that God taught Adam and Eve on the Sabbath, and immediately the next morning—Sunday morning—Satan, in the form of a serpent, preached the first Sunday sermon!

This is certainly *possible*, for Satan loves using Sunday morning services to deceive the world through his false ministers (Rev. 12:9, 2 Cor. 11:13-15).

However, the Day of Atonement, which pictures binding Satan for 1,000 years, is the 10th day of Tishri (Lev. 23:27, 16:2-10, Rev. 20:1-3)—four days after Adam and Eve's creation. This day pictures the END of

Satan's rule. Could it also mark the BEGINNING of his rule—the day Adam and Eve ATE THE FORBIDDEN FRUIT? If so, then ONE reason we DON'T EAT on the Day of Atonement may be because Adam and Eve DID!

There is no way to know how much time passed between Adam and Eve's creation and Satan's deception. It's not important to know. What is important is that we understand how Satan got these two honeymooners to give up everything they had going for them and believe his lie. Perhaps if we understand how Satan got to them, we can prevent him from getting to us the same way.

Let's go back to the beginning and see what led up to Adam and Eve eating the forbidden fruit.

Creation of Adam

When the sun set on Thursday of creation week, the sixth day began. God created the animals on this day (Gen. 2:24-25). Since God does not sleep (Ps. 121:4), He probably created them during the dark hours.

Adam was created before Eve (1 Tim. 2:13), probably in the early morning hours just as it was getting light. The Bible says a "mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground." Early morning mists are common but they "burn off" as the sun rises in the sky and the day warms up.

"And the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being" (Gen. 2:7).

The man was placed in the garden of Eden (v. 8). God gave Adam instructions on how to take care of the garden (v. 15). He clearly commanded Adam to avoid one tree: "And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, 'Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it, you shall die'" (vv. 16-17). These words went directly from God's lips into Adam's ears. Eve was not around to hear them.

God assigned Adam the task of naming the animals, probably on Friday afternoon. He brought each animal and bird to Adam to see what he would call it. Adam noticed that the animals were male and female; they had companions. But there was no companion for him. He felt lonely.

Creation of Eve

God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam and He performed surgery. Opening up Adam's body, God took one of his ribs, and from Adam's rib, He made Eve. God then healed Adam. When Adam awoke from his sleep, God brought Eve to him.

Adam was amazed by what he saw! He

fell head-over-heels in love with her! He said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man" (Gen. 2:23).

God had already given Adam instructions on how to live. The Bible does not say God repeated the instructions to Eve. It may have been Adam's job to pass along the instructions to his wife, for he was the LEADER of the family and she was to SUBMIT to him (Eph. 5:22-23).

Adam, trying to protect his wife from harm, may have embellished upon God's command regarding the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. After repeating God's command not to eat of it, he may have added, "Don't even touch it!"

Adam had lived without Eve and he remembered how lonely life was. He truly appreciated her! He would have done *anything* for his wife! He would have climbed mountains, crossed oceans, *slain a dragon!* This brave, dashing 20-year-old man wanted to be her *knight in shining armor*.

Eve, on the other hand, may have taken Adam a *little bit* for granted. He had already existed when she came on the scene. She NEVER felt the *loneliness* and *emptiness* Adam had experienced. Instead, she may have bristled a bit at having to SUBMIT to her husband (many women do). She may have wondered why *he* should be *her* head. It very likely was not a *major problem* for her—they probably didn't fight about it—but the thought may have crossed her mind and simmered on a back burner as the two of them kept the very first Sabbath.

Little did Adam realize there truly was a *dangerous* DRAGON nearby! That dragon would tell Eve she would no longer have to SUBMIT—he offered her the opportunity to *become like God!*

(*To be continued!*)

The SABBATH SCOOP

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Difficult Times Told in Rhymes

As the United Church of God completes a 19-year time cycle, we look back at the trials we went through.

Pentecost (June 8) is the day upon which Jesus began his church A.D. 31. For nearly 2,000 years, the church has struggled, preserving the truth through apostasies, splits and power grabs. The church has survived, because Jesus promised the gates of hell would never prevail against it (Mat. 16:18).

A lot of truth had been lost prior to the calling of Herbert W. Armstrong in 1926. Through Mr. Armstrong, God restored many Bible truths, and the church saw tremendous growth. Attendance grew to more than 80,000. Three college campuses trained men and women for service in the church. *The Plain Truth* magazine reached 8 million circulation and "The World Tomorrow" radio and TV programs circled the globe.

After Mr. Armstrong's death in 1986, apostasy crept in again. Church leadership changed doc-

trines so the Worldwide Church of God became like *mainstream* "Christian" churches. In late 1992, Evangelist Roderick Meredith was fired and disfellowshipped for not accepting the changes. He started the Global (now Living) Church of God on Jan. 2, 1993.

Two years later, in May 1995 (19 years ago last month) a group of 150 ministers and their wives met in Indianapolis, Ind., to form the United Church of God. Many who clung to the truth of God in those years migrated from the Worldwide Church of God to the Global Church of God and to the United Church of God, where the truth was still taught. Both Global and United have gone through additional splits since then.

During those difficult times, some of us turned to poetry and song to express our feelings. We reprint three examples here.

I Wait on the Lord

By Marcus Omer

How easy the task to walk the straight path,
when seeds of affinity we're sowing.
How easy the charge to wait on the Lord,
when the milk and the honey are flowing.

How calm is that walk, how pleasant the talk,
when the winds of the storms are not blowing.
How joyous the Feast, secure are the least,
where the peacocks and chiefs are not crowing.

But rocky the road and heavy the load
when we're burdened with afflictions from men.
Contending for power, the flock they devour,
when they've distorted the Name once again.

The promise is sure, His words are all pure,
So I will wait for the Lord, yet I sigh,
for I grieve for the men who can't comprehend,
those who would harm God's heritage may die.

It Won't Be Wrong Now

(Sung to the tune of "It Won't Be Long Now"
by Ross Justsum)

By Gregory Dullum

It won't be wrong now
On the Sabbath to work,
To eat shrimp and pork,
It won't be wrong.

It won't be wrong now
To hang onto our tithes
To our own self be wise
It won't be wrong.

(Chorus:)
The church has suddenly changed its doctrines,
The leaders will lie now through their teeth.
The wolf in sheep's clothing is certainly here.
Little child, it won't be wrong now.

It won't be wrong now
If the leaven's not gone
If fasting's not done
It won't be wrong.

It won't be wrong now
If you don't keep the Feast
It won't matter the least,
It won't be wrong.

(Chorus)

The Christian

(Sung to the tune of "The Boxer"
by Simon and Garfunkel)

By Gregory Dullum

I am a true Christian
Though my story's seldom told,
Almost squandered my salvation
For a pocket full of mumbles
Which are called "new truth."

All lies and jest
Still, a man hears what he wants to
hear
And disregards the rest.

Well, I left my home
And my family,
And I joined the Church of God.
Where the Bible truth was taught
to us
In the quiet of the rented church
hall.

Then the truth seemed to change
And everything
We once believed
Well all of it had to go
Changing for the doctrines
Other "Christians" know.

(Chorus:) Lie the lie. Lie the lie, lie,
lie the lie; lie the lie. Lie the lie,
lie; lie the lie. Lie the lie, lie lie.

Asking for some explanations
I went looking for the truth
But I got no answers,
Just a command to shut up
And to believe it.
I do declare
There were some times when I
was so confused
That I took some comfort there.

(Chorus)

When they're preaching not the
Bible truth,
I'm wishing I was gone.
Going where?
Then the Holy Spirit leads me
Where truth is taught
Truth's still taught,
Going home.

In the clearing stands a Christian
And a seeker of the truth
And he carries the reminders
Of every lie that was told him
And cut him till he cried out
In his anger and his shame,
"I am leaving, I am leaving."
But the Christian still remains.

(Chorus)

JOHN THE DISCIPLE WHOM JESUS LOVED

John called a 'pillar' in the church; he preaches in Asia and moves to Ephesus.

By Gregory Dullum
Part 21

John Called a 'Pillar'

Luke's account in the Book of Acts does not mention John by name when it discusses the Jerusalem Council of A.D. 49.

The Apostle Paul, however, does tell us John was there, and adds an interesting tidbit about him.

Writing to the churches in Galatia, Paul describes this visit to Jerusalem: "Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took also Titus with me. And I went up by revelation, and communicated to them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to those who were of reputation, lest by any means I might run, or had run, in vain...."

"But on the contrary, when they saw that the gospel for the uncircumcised had been committed to me, as the gospel for the circumcised to Peter (for He [Christ] who worked effectively in Peter for apostleship to the circumcised also worked effectively in me toward the Gentiles), and when James, Cephas [Peter] and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised" (Gal. 2:1-2, 7-9).

John is described as one of the PILLARS of the church, along with James (the half-brother of Jesus) and Peter! Paul also confirms, as mentioned last month, that John was to take the gospel to the circumcised—to Jews and to the lost tribes of Israel—while he would continue to preach the gospel to Gentiles.

Following the Jerusalem Council, Paul decided to revisit the churches in Asia Minor (Acts 15:36). Barnabas wanted to take John Mark, who had deserted them on their first journey, but Paul would not let him come. So Barnabas took John Mark and went to Cyprus while Paul took Silas and returned to Asia Minor (vv. 37-41).

Start of New Testament

It was about this time that the first Gospel may have been written. Several sources agree that the Gospel of Matthew may have been written around A.D. 50 (*The New Unger's Bible Handbook* by Merrill

F. Unger, 1984, p. 365; *New Testament Survey* by Merrill C. Tenney, 1961, p. 143).

Matthew had been preaching the gospel to the Israelites of the lost 10 tribes who had settled in Parthia and Asiatic Ethiopia. Those converted to the Church of God by Matthew asked him to write a history of the Savior's life to leave with them, which he did (*Antiquitates Apostolicae* by William Cave, 1684, p. 182).

It was probably in the fall of A.D. 50 that Paul, while in Corinth, wrote his first epistle to the church at Thessalonica. This letter was saved, copied, and passed around, becoming the book of the Bible we know as 1 Thessalonians. His second letter was written a short time later, A.D. 51.

John Preaches in Asia

The Catholic Encyclopedia says some believe John left Jerusalem about this time. It notes that John was in Jerusalem for the council meeting on circumcision in 49. Then it adds:

"When Paul came again to Jerusalem after the second and third journey (Acts 18:22; 21:17) he seems no longer to have met John there. Some wish to draw the conclusion from this that John left Palestine between the years 52 and 55..." (as quoted in the Internet article, "The Apostle John, sometimes called John the Evangelist" by COGwriter).

Where did John go?

William Cave tells us: "In the division of Provinces which the Apostles made among themselves, Asia [what we call Asia Minor] fell to his share.... Some time (probably years) after her death [the death of Mary, Jesus' mother] he took his journey into Asia, and industriously applied himself to propagating Christianity, Preaching where the Gospel had not yet taken place, and confirming it where it was already planted. Many churches of note and eminency were of its foundation, *Smyrna, Pergamus, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea*, and others; but his chief place of residence was at *Ephesus*, where *S. Paul* had many Years before settled a Church, and constituted *Timothy* Bishop of it. Nor can we suppose that he confined his Ministry merely to *Asia Minor*, but that he Preached in other Parts of the *East*; probably in *Parthia*, his first Epistle being an-

ciently intitled to them; and the *Jesuits* in the relation of their success in those Parts, assure us that the *Bassorae* (a People of *India*) constantly affirm from a Tradition received from their Ancestours, that *S. John* planted the Christian Faith there" (Cave, p. 156).

Other Church Happenings

While John was preaching between Ephesus and India, events were occurring in other areas of the Church of God. John may have been made aware of these happenings by letter or messenger.

- A.D. 57—During his third journey, Paul writes to the Galatians about false ministers leading church members astray by preaching *another* (false) gospel: "I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you into the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:6-8).

- Later that same year, Paul returns to Jerusalem, where he meets with James and "the elders" but there is no mention of meeting with "the apostles," probably because they are all out of the area preaching to the lost 10 tribes of Israel (Acts 21:17-18). Paul is arrested in Jerusalem and is sent to Caesarea, where he remains imprisoned until A.D. 59, when Porcius Festus takes over from Felix as proconsul.

- A.D. 59—Paul, on trial before Festus, appeals to Caesar and is sent to Rome after the "Fast"—the Day of Atonement in the fall (Acts 25:11-12, 27:1, 9). He remains under house arrest in Rome until late 61 or early 62.

- A.D. 60—Matthew is martyred while preaching the gospel in Ethiopia (*A History of the True Religion* by A. N. Dugger and C. O. Dodd, 1972, p. 52).

- A.D. 62-66—Acquitted of any crime, Paul travels from Rome to Spain, Gaul (France), and Britain; then back through Europe; and revisits Crete, Ephesus, Philippi, Nicopolis, Corinth, Miletus and Troas, leaving behind an elder in each area.

- A.D. 63—Luke writes the Acts of the Apostles, a history of the church up to that point.

- A.D. 64—Rome burns. The finger of

suspicion points to Emperor Nero. He needs a scapegoat, so he blames the Christians, starting a major persecution against the church.

- A.D. 66—Paul arrested in Troas and taken again to Rome. Peter visits Paul in Rome and is himself arrested.

- About this time, Timothy is arrested and imprisoned at Ephesus, the city which became the home base of John. Whatever charges are made against Timothy don't stick, and he is released (Heb. 13:22). He visits Paul in the Roman prison.

- A.D. 67 John Mark writes the Gospel of Mark. He was not an apostle, so where did he get his information? Tradition says he wrote the book while in Rome as a disciple of Peter (*Unger's Bible Handbook*, p. 383).

Later that year, Peter and Paul are martyred in Rome.

Following the death of Peter and Paul, Timothy returns to Ephesus (where he probably relates these events to John). John Mark follows Peter's instructions and goes to Alexandria, Egypt, and starts a church there.

There were more martyrdoms at this time. "Erastus, the chamberlain of Corinth; Aristarchus the Macedonian; Trophimus, and Ephesian by birth, and a Gentile by religion, converted by St. Paul; Joseph, commonly called Barsabas, and usually deemed one of the seventy; and Ananias, Bishop of Damascus, are among those who perished during this persecution" (*Foxe's Book of Martyrs* edited by Marie Gentert King, 1978, p. 14).

Nero's persecution didn't stop there. "About the same time Saints James, Phillip, Matthew, Mark, Matthias, Jude, Bartholomew, Thomas, and Luke the Evangelist also suffered martyrdom for the cause of Christ" (King, p. 13).

- A.D. 69—On Pentecost, the Church of God in Jerusalem hears a supernatural voice tell them: "Let us remove hence!" The church obeys, and flees to the town of Pella, in the mountains across the Jordan River (*The Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course*, Lesson 49, p. 11).

- A.D. 70—Roman armies besiege and destroy Jerusalem.

A Successor to James

John probably was involved in selecting a successor to James—someone to oversee the day-to-day operations of the church. The headquarters church, of course, was now in Pella instead of Jerusalem, but it was still called the Jerusalem church.

"After the martyrdom of James and the

capture of Jerusalem which instantly followed, there is a firm tradition that those of the apostles and disciples of the Lord who were still alive assembled from all parts together with those who, humanly speaking, were kinsmen of the Lord—for most of them were still living. Then they all discussed together whom they should choose as a fit person to succeed James, and voted unanimously that Symeon, son of Clopas mentioned in the gospel narrative [John 19:25; perhaps Luke 24:18] was a fit person to occupy the throne of the Jerusalem see. He was, so it is said, a cousin of the Savior, for Hegesippus tells us that Clopas was Joseph's brother" (*The History of the Church* by Eusebius, translated by G.A. Williamson, 1984, pp. 123-124).

John Moves to Ephesus

John probably had spent quite a bit of time preaching in Asia Minor. When the Jerusalem church fled to Pella in 69, he did not remain in Pella. He continued north, returning to Ephesus:

"According to long received tradition, John made Jerusalem his headquarters, caring for Jesus' Mother till her death, and, after the destruction of Jerusalem, made his residence at Ephesus, which by the close of the Apostolic generation had become the Geographic and Numerical Center of Christian Population. Here John lived to great age, and wrote his Gospel, his Three Epistles, and Book of Revelation. Among his pupils were Polycarp, Papias, and Ignatius, who became, respectively, bishops of Smyrna, Hierapolis, and Antioch" (*Halley's Bible Handbook* by Henry H. Halley, 1962, p. 558).

As we can tell by the number of prominent martyrdoms and by the destruction of Jerusalem, this was a dangerous time to be Christian!

"And the Church of God everywhere in Roman lands was silenced. No meetings were allowed after A.D. 69 out of fear of revolt after the death of two Caesars already that year.

"Thus ended, after just two 19-year time cycles, the work of the Apostolic church in Jerusalem!" (*Correspondence Course*, Lesson 49, pp. 11-12).

The church continued to meet in secret but feared getting caught by the Roman authorities. There were *penalties* assessed but NOT a *complete ban* on Christianity under Emperor Vespasian (69-79) and his son, Titus (79-81). "As members of an unauthorized religious association they were liable to summary penalties, but

JOHN

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Fun Fact



Drawing and Fun Fact are courtesy of NAPS

The Roman Emperor Augustus, it's said, was so afraid of thunder he would hide in a closet whenever a thunderstorm came up.

Witerature

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

The Adventures of Pinocchio by Carlo Collodi, *The Great Reads*, 2005, p. 50.

Learn to Work

"Keep still, you ugly Cricket!" cried Pinocchio.

"But the Cricket, who was a wise old philosopher, instead of being offended at Pinocchio's impudence, continued in the same tone:

"But if you do not like going to school, why don't you at least learn a trade, so that you can earn an honest living?"

"Shall I tell you something?" asked Pinocchio, who was beginning to lose patience. "Of all the trades in the world, there is only one that really suits me."

"And what can that be?"

"That of eating, drinking, sleeping, playing, and wandering around from morning till night."

"Let me tell you for your own good, Pinocchio," said the Talking Cricket in his calm voice, "that those who follow that trade always end up in the hospital or in prison."

Prov. 6:6-11, 10:4, 12:24, 21:25;
Luke 15:11-17; 2 Thes. 3:10

Quotable Quotes

"Do not let what you cannot do interfere with what you can do."

—John Wooden

Memory Scripture

"You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination."

—Lev. 19:29

John

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there was no express ban on Christianity as such" (*New Testament History* by F.F. Bruce, 1972, p. 412).

Two martyrdoms of note under Vespasian were Barnabas in 73 and Simon Zelotes in 74 (Dugger and Dodd, p. 56).

Domitian Becomes Emperor

Domitian, Titus' younger brother, became emperor A.D. 81. He was not the able leader his brother or father had been. "Like so many who lack a talent for leadership, Domitian hid behind a cloak of oppressive autocracy. He demanded that he be addressed as 'lord and god.' Any criticism of himself was considered treason and punished by death" (*The Mainstream of Civilization Part 1* by Joseph Strayer, Hans Gatzke, E. Harris Harbison and Edwin Dunbaugh, 1969, pp. 84-85).

"The Emperor Domitian was naturally of a cruel disposition; he first slew his brother, and then raised a second persecution against the Christians....

"During this reign there were various tales published in order to injure the Christians. Among other falsehoods, they were accused of indecent nightly meetings, of a rebellious spirit, of murdering their children, and even of being cannibals; and at this time, such was the infatuation of the pagans, that if famine, pestilence, or earthquakes afflicted any of the Roman provinces, it was charged on the informers; and many, for the sake of gain, swore away the lives of the innocent... The various kinds of punishment and inflicted cruelties were, during this persecution, imprisonment, racking, searing, broiling, burning, scourging, stoning and hanging. Many were lacerated with red-hot pincers, and others were thrown upon the horns of wild bulls. After having suffered these cruelties, the friends of the deceased Christians were refused the privilege of burying their remains" (King, pp. 14-15).

John was no longer a young man. He was probably in his early 70s when Domitian became emperor. The three synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) had existed for years. John decided to write his own Gospel to accompany the others.

Scholars are not sure when John penned his Gospel. Erwin R. Goodenough says it was written as early as A.D. 40, though few scholars accept a date this early. Some place it as late as 140, which also is unlikely. We will discuss John's writings in depth next month.

(To be continued!)



Obama Plans to Further Weaken U.S.

"President Obama is expected to announce on Monday [June 2] an Environmental Protection Agency regulation to cut carbon pollution from the nation's 600 coal-fired power plants, in a speech that government analysts in Beijing, Brussels and beyond will scrutinize to determine how serious the president is about global warming.

"The regulation will be Mr. Obama's most forceful effort to reverse 20 years of relative inaction on climate change in the United States, which has stood as the greatest obstacle to international efforts to slow the rise of heat-trapping gases from burning coal and oil that [some left-leaning] scientists say cause warming.

"The president had tried, without success, to move a climate change bill through Congress in his first term, and such legislation now stands no chance of getting past the resistance of Republican lawmakers who [correctly] question the science of climate change. So Mr. Obama is taking a controversial step: He [while ignoring the Constitutional bounds on his power] is using his executive authority under the 1970 Clean Air Act to issue an E.P.A. regulation taking aim at coal-fired power plants, the nation's largest source of carbon pollution" ("Governments Await Obama's Move on Carbon to Gauge U.S. Climate Efforts" by Coral Davenport, *The New York Times*, www.nytimes.com, May 26, 2014, p. 1).

America needs energy to run properly. Nearly everything we do takes electricity. Much of our electricity is produced by coal-burning power plants. Obama can weaken this nation by regulating coal-fired power plants out of business, using as an excuse, the HOAX of man-made global warming.

The U.S. must be weakened before it will go into national captivity. God promised if we sinned against Him, He would "break the pride of our power" and would ultimately send this country into national captivity (Lev. 26:18, 31-35, 44). Our national sins are mounting and the time of our captivity is drawing

near! Those who survive the captivity will be rescued and return home shortly after Jesus Christ returns to this earth (Isa. 10:20-23, 11:10-16).

European Parliament Holds Elections

"An angry eruption of populist insurgency in the elections for the European Parliament rippled across the Continent on Monday [May 26], unnerving the political establishment and calling into question the very institutions and assumptions at the heart of Europe's post-World War II order.

"Four days of balloting across 28 countries elected scores of rebellious outsiders, including a clutch of xenophobes, racists and even neo-Nazis....

"The newcomers did not win enough seats to dominate the assembly, which approves European Union-wide legislation and elects the commissioners who act as the union's executive branch. Centrist parties will retain control of the body even if all the newcomers vote as a bloc, and it is not clear how closely they will ally with one another" ("Populists' Rise in Europe Vote Shakes Leaders" by Andrew Higgins, *The New York Times*, www.nytimes.com, May 26, 2014, p. 1).

When Christ returns to this earth, there will be a union of "10 kings" ruling in Europe (Dan. 2:40-45, Rev. 17:12-14). These 10 kings will not be strongly united; there will be divisions among them: "And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile. As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay" (Dan. 2:42-43). This 10-nation union may rise from the current European Union.

Attack Kills Six Students

Six University of California students were killed in a shooting rampage May 23 in Isla Vista, Calif. This type of violence can be expected because we are in the "perilous times" of "the last days" (2 Tim. 3:1-4).