

# THE SABBATH SCOOP

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## What Made America Great?

*Why is the United States of America the greatest nation on earth today?*

By Gregory Dullum

Here we are, nestled among three of our patriotic national holidays—Memorial Day (May 27), Flag Day (June 14) and Independence Day (July 4). It's a good time to reflect upon what made the United States of America so GREAT. Why is the United States the world's *only* SUPERPOWER?

Is it because we are a PEOPLE who are *superior* to other people on the earth? Are our LAWS *better* than those of any other country? Are we great because of the FREEDOMS those laws allowed? Is it our ECONOMIC system—CAPITALISM—that makes us great? Is our greatness an accident caused simply by our physical LOCATION—protected by two oceans with friendly neighbors to our north and south?

### Go Back into History

To learn why we are a great nation today, we must look back into history. We must go further back than the 20th century, when the U.S. emerged on the winning side of World War II as the only nuclear nation, and rose quickly to join Britain and the Soviet Union as world-ruling powers.

We must go back before 1776, when patriots declared their independence from England.

We must go back prior to 1607, when English settlers established Jamestown on our Eastern shore.

We must turn back the pages of history to before 1492, when Christopher Columbus discovered America.

We must go beyond A.D. 1000, when Leif Ericson discovered America for the Vikings, and the "Mound People" living across this undiscovered land were a thriving civilization.

We must go back thousands of years, before the first groups of hunters crossed the Bering Strait from Asia to North America to become the first set-



Photo by Melissa Dullum

Independence Hall in Philadelphia where the Declaration of Independence was signed in 1776.

tlers of this new land.

We must travel back, before the days when Rome ruled the world and Jesus Christ walked the earth. We must travel back to a time before the Greek, Persian and Babylonian empires existed. To learn the secret of our greatness, we must travel back almost to the beginning of time—to the land of Mesopotamia at the time of Genesis 12—about 2100 B.C.

### The Seeds of Greatness Planted

It was during the life of Abraham, who was born 2161 B.C. ("Abraham," *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary* by Merrill F. Unger, 1988, p. 12), that the seeds of America's greatness were first planted.

When Abraham was about 70 years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, "Get out of your country, from your kindred and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a

great nation; I will bless you and make your name great: I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth will be blessed" (Gen. 12:1-3).

Stop and think for a moment. The U.S. is a GREAT NATION today! People who bless us are blessed, and people who curse us are cursed. And because of the generosity of Americans, many nations of the world are blessed through financial, humanitarian and military aid!

Abraham OBEYED God and was *blessed as promised*.

Later, God made a covenant with Abraham. Notice what He promised as part of the covenant: "you shall be a father of many nations.... I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. And I will establish my covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you" (Gen. 17:4, 6-7).

Please note that this covenant was not to end with the death of Abraham. It was binding upon all his descendants as an *everlasting* covenant. The covenant did not end in Old Testament times, or in New Testament times, but lasted through the centuries until TODAY!

God promised that MANY nations would come from Abraham—not just one, tiny nation of Jews we call Israel!

Kings would come from Abraham! The kings mentioned began with Saul, David and Solomon in the Old Testament, and continued in an unbroken line to the Queen of England today!

This was a fantastic promise to Abraham, considering he was 100 years old, his wife, Sarah, was 90 at the time, and

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they had no children together (v. 17)!

God kept his word. In due time, Abraham and Sarah had Isaac (Gen. 21:1-3).

### Covenant Confirmed to Abraham

Later, God tested Abraham, to see if he would be willing to SACRIFICE Isaac in order to OBEY God. Abraham *passed the test*. An angel confirmed God's covenant and expounded upon it: "in blessing I will bless you, and in multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gates of their enemies" (Gen. 22:17). The blessing of occupying enemy gates also was given to Rebekah, Isaac's wife (Gen. 24:60).

This past century saw the U.S. and British peoples controlling all the great sea gates of the world: Suez Canal, Gibraltar, Malta, Panama Canal, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, Trinidad/Tobago, Faulkland Islands, the Philippines and more. Some of these have had control turned over to other nations. But America and Britain did control these sea gates for a time—a fulfillment of the prophecies in Gen. 22:17 and Gen. 24:60!

### Blessing Passed to Jacob

Isaac blessed his son, Jacob: "Therefore may God give you of the dew of heaven [abundant rain], of the fatness of the earth [livestock], and plenty of grain and wine. Let peoples serve you and nations bow down to you. Be master over your brethren, and let your mother's sons bow down to you" (Gen. 27:2-29).

The greatness of the U.S. and British peoples were foretold right here! They would be blessed with awesome natural resources and would rule over and be respected by all other nations!

The blessings God promised to Abraham were passed onto his grandson, Jacob (Gen. 28:3-4). Abraham's descendants were to become more than one people or nation. They were to become "an assembly of peoples" (v. 3).

We see this promise fulfilled in the British people forming a "commonwealth of nations" and 50 states becoming "The United States of America." Both nations represent an "assembly of peoples."

Will these people be LIMITED to the *land of Palestine*—where the JEWS live today? Or will they EXPAND their influence *around the world*? God told Jacob in a dream, "Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread

abroad to the west and to the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (v. 14).

The British Empire once *circled the globe*! It was said, "The sun never sets on the British Empire!" The U.S. was not the colonizing power that Britain was—but its INFLUENCE *reaches around the globe*. The dollar is the world's currency. English is the international language. And families of other nations have been blessed to receive donations of money, food, equipment, expertise and military intervention from the Americans.

### Destiny of the 12 Sons

Jacob (whose name was changed to Israel in Gen. 32:28) had 12 sons. These sons had families who grew into the 12 tribes of Israel! Most of those tribes became nations that exist today!

Jacob told them what would become of them in the LAST DAYS (Gen. 49:1).

The descendants of Reuben (vv. 3-4) would be known for "excellency of dignity and the excellency of power" but would be "unstable as water." They became the nation of France.

Simeon and Levi were not given territories but were scattered among the other Israelites (vv. 5-7).

Judah (vv. 8-12) became the Jews who inhabit the current state of Israel and are scattered throughout the world.

Zebulun (v. 13) "shall dwell by the haven of the sea" and became the people of Holland.

Issachar, "lying down between two burdens" (vv. 14-15) became Finland, situated between Sweden and Russia.

Dan (vv. 16-18) became the people of Ireland and Denmark, leaving behind their name, wherever they went, like "a serpent's tail."

Gad, who will "triumph at last" over a troop (v. 19), became Switzerland.

Asher, known for rich breads and "royal dainties" (v. 20), became Belgium.

Naphtali, a "deer let loose" (v. 21), became the sexually "free" Sweden.

Benjamin, "a ravenous wolf," (v. 21) became the people of Norway (home to the vicious Vikings) and Iceland.

Now notice the lengthy description of Joseph, whose blessings were passed on to his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. This description *fits perfectly* the people of U.S. and Britain:

"Joseph is a fruitful bough, a fruitful bough by a well; his branches run over the wall. The archers have bitterly grieved him, shot at him and hated him. But his bow remained in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by

the hands of the mighty God of Jacob.... With blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lies beneath, blessings of the breasts and of the womb. The blessings of your father have excelled the blessings of my ancestors, up to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills. They shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of him who was separate from his brothers" (vv. 22-26).

Joseph (represented by his sons, Ephraim and Manasseh) were to be blessed far above the other Israelite nations. The blessing we experience today in the U.S. and British Commonwealth of Nations come from God as a result of the covenant God made with Abraham thousands of years ago!

God made those promises long ago, but they were NOT fulfilled *until* THESE LAST DAYS!

### Contributing Factors

The BOTTOM LINE as to the reason for America's greatness is the PROMISES God made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. But there are some *contributing* factors.

Are we blessed because of WHO WE ARE? Are we *superior* to other people on the earth? The answer is yes and no. We are blessed *because* we are ISRAELITES—descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. But that DOESN'T make us *better* than other people in the world! Moses said of the Israelites, "The LORD did not set his love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of peoples...."

"Do not think in your heart, after the LORD your God has cast them out before you, saying, 'Because of my righteous-

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# JOHN THE DISCIPLE WHOM JESUS LOVED

*Were John and the other apostles married? What happens when John and James make an unusual request of Jesus?*

By Gregory Dullum  
Part 9

## Jesus Teaches on Marriage

Jesus and his disciples left Galilee and traveled toward Jerusalem for what would be Jesus' last Passover in the flesh. When they reached the area of Perea, across the Jordan from Judea, Pharisees came and tested Jesus regarding marriage and divorce. They asked if it were lawful for a man to divorce his wife.

Jesus, as He often did, answered their question with a question. "What did Moses command you?"

They replied that Moses permitted divorce.

Christ responded, "Because of the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. But from the beginning of the creation, God 'made them male and female. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'; so then they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let not men separate" (Mark 10:1-9).

Marriage is a sacred institution created by God. It is NOT something which should be entered into *lightly*. It was meant to *last until death!* Today, too many partners grow tired of each other and divorce for *frivolous* reasons. The only reason for divorce that Christ allowed was if one or both partners committed adultery (Mat. 19:9). Adultery includes other forms of unfaithfulness besides sexual acts (Mat. 5:27-28), and some marriages may not be legitimate from the start, if they involved fraud, deceit or lack of commitment by either partner. (This is not meant to be an all-inclusive study of divorce and remarriage, but simply a look at Christ's statement which He made at the time and the reaction of Christ's disciples to it.)

Christ said marriage was to be *between one man and one woman!* Polygamy was not originally intended and "same-sex marriages" are not *really* marriages at all!

The disciples were surprised at Christ's words. They were not sure they heard Him right. Had he really condemned divorce? When they entered a house, they asked Him again about marriage (Mark 10:10).

Jesus restated his position. No ifs, ands or buts: "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her. And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another, she commits

adultery" (Mark 10:12).

For some reason, the disciples had a hard time understanding the level of COMMITMENT needed for a *lifetime* of marriage. The disciples told Christ, "If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry" (Mat. 19:10).

Jesus agreed with his disciples. Although He was not opposed to marriage—after all, He and his Father instituted it back in the days of Adam and Eve—but He realized that for some, it would be better not to marry so they could focus all their attention on doing the work of preaching the gospel, stating, "there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake" (vv. 11-12).

## Did the Apostles Ever Marry?

Christ did NOT require his ministers to be celibate, as does the Roman Catholic Church. Peter, the leading apostle, was married (Mat. 8:14). According to the Apostle Paul, forbidding to marry was a "doctrine of demons" (1 Tim. 4:1, 3). A requirement of a bishop was that he be "the husband of one wife" (1 Tim. 3:2).

The Bible tells us that Peter was married and Paul was not. What about the other apostles? Were they married? Or did they remain unmarried, so they could dedicate their lives to the church? Did they remain unmarried, knowing their calling would require long, dangerous journeys and that all faced the potential of martyrdom?

We might think they all remained "eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake" but the Bible indicates otherwise!

Many years later, Paul wrote to the Corinthian church, defending the work he and Barnabas were doing, claiming they had a right to be paid for it. Notice what he wrote about the *other* apostles:

"Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as do also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas [Peter]?" (1 Cor. 9:5). By the time Paul wrote this letter, MOST, *if not all* the other apostles were MARRIED to *believing* wives, and the church *paid* for their wives to travel with them!

This view is supported by numerous Biblical scholars. Here are a few:

"It is implied that the Apostles were mostly married; Peter's wife's mother is mentioned Mt8<sup>14</sup>. No doubt their wives were of great service in getting access to

the women of Eastern cities.... He asserts that he could reasonably claim not only support for a wife, but also payment of her travelling expenses as well as his own" (*A Commentary on The Holy Bible*, J. R. Dummelow, ed., 1943, p. 906).

J. W. McGarvey and Philip Y. Pendleton state in *The Standard Bible Commentary: Thessalonians, Corinthians, Galatians and Romans*, (undated): "even as the rest of the apostles [this passage creates a fair presumption that at least the majority of the apostles were married]" (p. 89).

"Paul also insisted that he had 'the right to be accompanied by a wife (literally, by a sister, a wife; or by a woman, v. 5). Undoubtedly, Paul used the term *sister* to designate a Christian, not a sibling. Although the same Greek word (*guné*) may mean either *wife* or *woman*, we have no reason to believe that Paul referred to a female missionary, other than a wife, as a traveling companion. The words 'as the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas' show that customarily, other Christian leaders traveled with their wives. This practice was a positive support for Paul's warning about the danger of sexual abstinence for married couples (7:3-6)" (*1 Corinthians: Guidelines for God's People* by Fred D. Howard, 1983, pp. 75-76).

"The apostles certainly had a right to marry and take a wife along on their travels from place to place while engaged in their work. The idea that γυναίκα here means a *servians matrona*, a woman assistant in missionary work, or merely a companion for the sake of company and to help with the cooking, etc., is even morally preposterous.

"'Even as also (χαί, pleonastic) the rest of the apostles' means either that all of the apostles, save Paul, actually made use of this right and were married and took their wives along on their travels, or at least that the apostles as a class followed this course. What Paul says about this right includes the idea that both the apostles themselves as well as their wives that accompanied them are entitled to support from the congregations whom their husbands serve" (*The Interpretation of Paul's First and Second Epistle to the Corinthians* by R. C. H. Lenski, 1935, p. 361).

It is very likely that most, if not all of the Apostles were married. Some, like

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Peter, may have been married before they were called. Some may have married during the time they followed Christ. Others married after the church began A.D. 31.

### When Did John Marry?

When did John marry? We cannot know for sure. We have speculated that he may have been one of the *youngest* of the disciples, so he may have married *later* than the others.

Here is *another* POSSIBILITY. John writes about himself but doesn't use his name or write in first person (using "I" or "me"). When he was a follower of John the Baptist, he named Andrew but left himself unnamed (John 1:35-37, 40). At Jesus' last Passover, John described himself as "one of his disciples whom Jesus loved" (John 13:23). When He and Peter raced to the tomb after Christ was resurrected, he called himself "the other disciple" (John 20:3-4).

The Gospel of John mentions a wedding that is NOT mentioned by any other writer anywhere else in the Bible (John 2). The groom's NAME is never given. Could it be that John alone mentioned the wedding in Cana because it was HIS wedding, and he was the unnamed groom?

The bride and groom probably were related to Mary and Jesus; for Mary, Jesus and Jesus' brothers were all invited (John 2:1-2, 12). As we noted earlier in this series, John and Jesus were *cousins*.

Also, *all of Jesus' disciples* at that time were invited to the wedding (v. 2). Why were they invited? The bride and groom must have known the disciples well enough to invite them. John knew them—he was one of them!

Who would better fit in this groom's sandals than John? And yet there is no hard evidence; just supposition and speculation.

If John was not the groom at the wedding in Cana, the groom may have been one of the other apostles. John mentions toward the end of his Gospel that Nathanael was a resident of Cana — perhaps the groom was Nathanael (John 21:2)!

If the wedding at Cana was not John's, then we have no record of when or if he ever married. And yet there is a good probability, based upon Paul's comment, that John did, indeed, marry at some point in his life.

### Children Brought to Christ

Once again, little children were brought to Christ that He should lay hands on them and pray. Once again, the disciples rebuked them. Once again, Jesus correct-

ed his disciples, saying, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven" (Mat. 19:13-14; see also Mark 10:13-16 and Luke 18:15-17).

### Forsaking All to Follow Christ

John and the other disciples were about to learn a lesson on what it means to forsake all to follow Christ.

A rich young ruler kneeled before Christ and asked him, "Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?" (Mat. 19:16).

Jesus told the man to keep the 10 commandments, and He started listing some of them (vv. 17-19). Jesus' statement is VERY PLAIN—so why do so many Christians teach that the commandments are done away? It's because they teach *lawlessness*—and although they call themselves Christians, Christ will say to them, "I never knew you!" (Mat. 7:23).

The man talking to Jesus was a commandment-keeper. He replied, "All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?"

Jesus instructed him, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."

The young man went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions (vv. 20-22). His physical possessions were more important to him than eternal life!

Jesus used this exchange to teach his disciples a lesson about riches: "Assuredly I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven" (v. 23). Why is this so? Because rich people TRUST in their *riches* INSTEAD OF *God*.

Most people think the rich "have it made." They have the *easy* life. The disciples had assumed the rich had a *sure path* into the kingdom. This thought was now shattered by Jesus' comment. So they asked Him, "Who then can be saved?" (v. 25).

There was silence as Jesus looked into the eyes of his disciples. They awaited his answer. Finally, his lips moved. "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible" (v. 26).

Peter thought about this man who refused to give away all his possessions in order to receive eternal life. Then he thought about what he had given up. He had left behind a thriving fishing business and its potential riches. He had a wife—perhaps she had not always traveled with him; at times she may have stayed in Galilee with her mother. As they traveled with Christ, they weren't free to be with their families and friends back home in Galilee. Peter wondered if he was to be rewarded for giving up so much.

"See," he said to Christ, "we have left all and followed you. Therefore what shall we have?" (v. 27).

Jesus' answer was addressed to Peter, John, and to them all: "Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (v. 28).

Did John and the others believe their ears? Did they comprehend what Jesus had just told them? When Jesus returns to this earth, they will be given eternal life and will rule with Christ on 12 thrones!

And not only that—*here in this life* would be physical rewards AFTER the church was started. They would no longer be doing this work *alone!* They would be surrounded by brethren who would be closer than family! Jesus told them, "And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife [why would he mention a wife unless some of them were already married?] or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life" (v. 29).

Jesus then told the parable of the workers in the vineyard. All agreed to work for a set wage and all received the same wage, even though some had worked many more hours (Mat. 19:30-20:16). This same principle is true for Christians. Some will grow up in the church and struggle all their lives to do what's right; others may be called into the church just before their death, struggling for only days or weeks. In the end, all will receive the same reward: eternal life.

### Jesus Foretells His Death

As the large group of pilgrims traveling from Galilee to Jerusalem for the Passover drew closer to Jerusalem, Jesus took the 12 disciples apart from the others and told them how He would be handed over to the priests and scribes; they would condemn Him to death; He would be scourged and killed; and He would rise from the grave three days later (Mat. 20:17-19; Mark 10:32-34, Luke 18:31-33).

What did John and the other 11 think about this revelation? They were *clueless*. They didn't understand a word. They thought Christ was going up to Jerusalem as a king to OVERTHROW the Romans and reestablish the Kingdom of Israel. His talk of trials, condemnation, punishment, death, and rising from the dead was foolishness to their ears. "But they understood none of these things; this saying was hidden from

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ness the LORD has brought me in to possess this land, but because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD drives them out from before you, and that He may fulfill the word which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Therefore understand that the LORD your God is not giving you this good land to possess because of your righteousness, for you are a stiff-necked people.... from the day that you departed from the land of Egypt until you came to this place, you have been rebellious against the LORD" (Deut. 7:7, 9:4-7).

Are our LAWS *better* than those of any other country? Yes they are—to the degree that *they align themselves with God's laws!* When America was formed, our settlers and founding fathers based many of our laws on the BIBLE!

"In 1636, John Cotton presented the Commonwealth of Massachusetts with an elaborate legal code based on the books of Moses that included forty-six separate laws drawn from the Hebrew Bible. Though Cotton's plan was watered down, the commonwealth still adopted laws taken directly from Deuteronomy, including punishing crimes associated with the 'first table' of the Decalogue, the first five of the Ten Commandments. These offenses included incest, bearing false witness, even cursing one's parents. A cage was set up for people who did not honor the Sabbath....

"The echo of the Exodus language widely used in America at the time [of its founding] is haunting. The committee's report, submitted to Congress on August 20, 1776, offers vivid, behind-the-scenes evidence that the founders of the United States viewed themselves as acting in the image of Moses. Three of the five drafters of the Declaration of Independence and three of the defining faces of the Revolution—Franklin, Jefferson and Adams—proposed that Moses be the face of the United States of America. In their eyes, Moses was America's true founding father....

"In 1973 political scientist Donald Lutz undertook a comprehensive survey of American political rhetoric during the founding era. He set out with Charles Hyneman to read everything published in America between 1760 and 1805.... The first sentence of their conclusion reads, 'If you ask what book was more frequently cited by Americans during the founding era, the answer somewhat surprisingly is the Book of Deuteronomy.' Thirty-four percent of all references were

to the Bible, compared with 22 percent for the enlightenment and 9 percent for the classics. The Bible was cited four times as often as Montesquieu, ten times as often as Locke, and thirty times as often as Hobbes" (*America's Prophet: Moses and the American Story* by Bruce Feiler, 2009, pp. 28, 67, 92-93).

John Quincy Adams stated, "From the Day of the Declaration... they [the American people] were bound by the laws of God, which they all, and by the laws of the Gospel, which they nearly all, acknowledge as the rules of their conduct" ("America's Biblical Roots" by Noel Hornor, *The Good News*, July/August 2011, p. 5).

As America's laws paralleled the laws of God, she became a wise and blessed people. Moses told the Israelites before they entered the promised land, "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'" (Deut. 4:5-6).

We are great, in part, because of the FREEDOMS those laws allowed! Obeying God's laws grant *freedom* from *suffering* and *death* (Deut. 30:19). The apostle James called God's law the "perfect law of LIBERTY" (James 1:25).

In addition, freedoms of speech, assembly and religion have helped God's true church to prosper in the United States.

Our economic system—capitalism—also has helped make us great. God believes in ownership of private property—that's why He banned coveting and stealing. God's way is not communism or socialism, where the state forces people to give up their personal belongings to the government. Instead of the communist motto, "from each according to his ability to each according to his need" (which gives people no impetus to improve themselves), God believes in *rewarding* people according to THEIR works (Mat. 16:27).

Another contributing factor to our greatness is our PHYSICAL LOCATION—protected by two oceans with friendly neighbors to our north and south. But *WHO gave the U.S. its land?* It wasn't an accident the U.S. is where it is! GOD appointed our boundaries (Acts 17:24-26).

America is great because of GOD—his PROMISES to Abraham, his LAWS which guided our early settlers and founders, and his BLESSINGS of natural resources and wonderful location!

## Fun Fact



Drawing and Fun Fact are courtesy of NAPS

The melody of "The Star Spangled Banner" was originally known as "Anacreon in Heaven."

## Witerature

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

*The Hound of the Baskervilles* by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Planet PDF, pp. 224-225.

## Sufficient for the Day

"Surely we have a case."

"Not a shadow of one—only surmise and conjecture. We should be laughed out of court if we came with such a story and evidence."

"There is Sir Charles' death."

"Found dead without a mark upon him. You and I know that he died of sheer fright, and we know also what frightened him; but how are we to get twelve stolid jurymen to know it?..."

"Well then, tonight?"

"We are not much better off tonight. Again, there was no direct connection between the hound and the man's death. We never saw the hound. We heard it; but we could not prove that it was running upon this man's trail. There is complete absence of motive. No, my dear fellow; we must reconcile ourselves to the fact that we have no case at present, and that it is worth our while to run any risk in order to establish one."

"I have great hopes of what Mrs. Laura Lyons may do for us when the position of affairs is made clear to her. And I have my own plan as well. Sufficient for to-morrow is the evil thereof; but I hope before the day is past to have the upper hand at last."

Mat. 6:34 KJV

## Memory Scripture

"Therefore by their fruits you will know them." —Mat. 7:20

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them, and they did not know the things which were spoken" (Luke 18:34).

### John & James Seek Honor

John and his older brother, James, could not get the idea of ruling over the 12 tribes of Israel out of their minds. Since they were cousins of Jesus, they wondered if their thrones could be next to his. When the time came, could they sit on his right and left side? Who else among the 12 deserved this honor?

They talked the idea over with their mother, Salome, who was Mary's sister. They thought their mom could put in a good word for them with either Mary or Jesus. If Jesus didn't listen to his cousins, He would heed the request of his aunt, wouldn't He?

The three of them approached Jesus and asked for a favor. "What do you wish?" He replied.

Salome said to Christ, "Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on Your left, in Your kingdom."

Jesus said to his aunt, "You do not know what you ask." Then he asked his two cousins, "Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" To "drink of a cup" in scripture is to get one's fill of either good (Ps. 16:5, 23:5, 116:13; Jer. 16:7) or evil (Ps. 75:8, John 18:11, Rev. 14:10). In this case, Jesus referred to the suffering He was about to endure. Baptism is symbolic of death (Rom. 6:3). Christ asked his cousins, "Are you able to *suffer* and *die* as I am about to do?"

John and James replied, "We are able."

So Christ said to them, "You will indeed drink My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared by My Father."

When the other 10 apostles heard of this request, they became very angry with the two brothers.

Jesus then called all of the 12 to Him and explained proper leadership. "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Mat. 20:20-28).

(To be continued!)



### Pandemics Start Small and Spread Worldwide

"Terrible new forms of infectious disease make headlines, but not at the start. Every pandemic begins small. Early indicators can be subtle and ambiguous. When the Next Big One arrives, spreading across oceans and continents like the sweep of nightfall, causing illness and fear, killing thousands or maybe millions of people, it will be signaled first by quiet, puzzling reports from faraway places—reports to which scientists and public health officials, but few of the rest of us, pay close attention. Such reports have been coming in recent months from two countries, China and Saudi Arabia.

"You may have seen the news about H7N9, a new strain of the avian flu claiming victims in Shanghai and other Chinese locales. Influenzas always draw notice, and always deserve it, because of their great potential to catch hold, spread fast, circle the world and kill lots of people. But even if you've been tracking that bird-flu story, you may not have noticed the little items about a 'novel coronavirus' on the Arabian peninsula.

"This came into view last September, when the Saudi Ministry of Health announced that such a virus—new to science and medicine—had been detected in three patients, two of whom had already died. By the end of the year, a total of nine cases had been confirmed, with five fatalities. As of Thursday [May 9], there have been 18 deaths, 33 cases total, including one patient now hospitalized in France after a trip to the United Arab Emirates. Those numbers are tiny by the standards of global pandemics, but here's one that's huge: the case fatality is 55 percent. The thing seems to be almost as lethal as Ebola" ("The Next Pandemic: Not if, but When" by David Quammen, *The New York Times*, nytimes.com, May 9, 2013, p. 1).

One sign that we are approaching the end time is that of "pestilences" or diseases (Mat. 24:3, 7, Ezek. 7:1-3, 15).

### Oklahoma Tornado Kills at Least 91 People

"A giant tornado, a mile wide or more, killed at least 91 people, 20 of them children, as it tore across parts of Oklahoma City and its suburbs Monday afternoon [May 20], flattening homes, flinging cars through the air and crushing at least two schools.

"The injured flooded into hospitals, and the authorities said many people remained trapped, even as rescue workers struggled to make their way through debris-clogged streets to the devastated suburb or Moore, where much of the damage occurred.

"Amy Elliott, the spokeswoman for the Oklahoma City medical examiner, said at least 91 people had died, including the children, and officials said the toll was likely to climb. Hospitals reported at least 145 people injured, 70 of them children" ("Vast Oklahoma Tornado Kills at Least 91" by Nick Oxford and Michael Schwirtz, *The New York Times*, nytimes.com, May 20, 2013, p. 1).

Several scriptures speak of "whirlwinds" used by God to punish a rebellious people in the last days. (This is NOT to say that the *individuals* who suffered from the tornado were guilty of *worse sins* than anyone else in the country—our sins, *as a nation*, cause our punishment *upon this NATION*.)

Some mentions in prophecy of whirlwinds may be referring to speedy "whirlwind" forces of an attacking army. However, they also may be referring to devastating tornadoes and hurricanes.

Because our people have *turned their backs on God*, He will NOT protect us "[w]hen your terror comes like a storm, and your destruction comes like a whirlwind" (Prov. 1:24-27).

God also warns through the prophet Jeremiah: "Behold, the whirlwind of the LORD goes forth with fury, a continual whirlwind; it will fall violently on the head of the wicked. The fierce anger of the LORD will not return until He has done it, and until He has performed the intents of His heart. In the latter days you will consider it" (Jer. 30:23-24).