

What Must Americans Do to Avoid National Captivity?

Are there specific steps we can take to prevent our nation from going into captivity? Will we take them?

By Gregory Dullum

According to Bible prophecy, the United States, Britain, and British Commonwealth nations (who are descendants of Joseph) will go into national captivity at the end of this age (see Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28).

Can We Avoid Captivity?

Can the United States and British Commonwealth nations avoid going into captivity? Yes! God said, "The instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy it, if that nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it" (Jer. 18:8).

Has this ever happened in history?

Nineveh Repents

It happened to the Assyrian city-state of Nineveh. Nineveh proper was 3 miles long and 1-1/2 miles wide, but greater Nineveh included Calah 20 miles to the south and Khorsabad, 10 miles to the north (*Halley's Bible Handbook* by Henry H. Halley, 1965, p. 365). One source says Nineveh could have had a population of 600,000 total, with 175,000 living within its city walls ("Nineveh," *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, 2003, p. 1192).

God told his prophet, Jonah, "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me" (Jonah 1:1-2).

Although he didn't want to do it, Jonah finally preached to the inhabitants of the city, saying, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" (Jonah 3:4).

The people repented, from the common folk in the street all the way up to



NAPS photo

If U.S. President Barack Obama tried to lead his people back to God, as did some kings in the past, would they follow?

the king on his throne (vv. 5-7). The king declared a fast, saying, "Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything; do not let them eat or drink water, but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily to God; yes, let everyone turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands. Who can tell if God will turn and relent, and turn away from His fierce anger, so we may not perish?" (vv. 7-9).

Their repentance worked! "Then God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it" (v. 10).

Judah Avoids Attack

Early in its existence, the kingdom of Judah avoided national disaster by humbling itself. Their national sins had prompted God to send the Egyptian army against them: "And it happened, in the fifth year of King Rheoboam, that Shishak king of Egypt came up against

Jerusalem, because they had transgressed against the LORD....

"Then Shemiah the prophet came to Rheoboam and the leaders of Judah, who were gathered together in Jerusalem because of Shishak, and said to them, 'Thus says the LORD: "You have forsaken Me, and therefore I also have left you in the hand of Shishak." ' So the leaders of Israel and the king humbled themselves; and they said, 'The LORD is righteous.' Now when the LORD saw that they humbled themselves, the word of the LORD came to Shemiah, saying, 'They have humbled themselves; therefore I will not destroy them, but I will grant them some deliverance. My wrath shall not be poured out on Jerusalem by the hand of Shishak' " (2 Chron. 12:2, 5-7).

Two Things America Must Do

What must Americans (and other modern-day Israelites) do to avoid national captivity? What SPECIFIC things can we do to *turn away God's wrath* from us?

We can START by looking at the *two major sins* that caused ancient Israel to be taken into captivity: IDOLATRY and SABBATH-BREAKING. God says of those Israelites, "But they rebelled against Me and would not obey Me. They did not cast away the abominations which were before their eyes, nor did they forsake the idols of Egypt.... Moreover I also gave them My Sabbaths [plural], to be a sign between them and Me, that they might know that I am the LORD who sanctifies them. Yet the house of Israel rebelled against Me in the wilderness; they did not walk in My statutes; they despised My judgments, which, if a man

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does, he shall live by them; and they greatly defiled My Sabbaths” (Ezek. 20:8, 12-13). See also vv. 15-24.

Our Leaders Cannot Force Us

Our president and congress cannot legally act as did the king of Nineveh or Rheoboham, *requiring* all of us to repent. The U.S. Constitution guarantees *freedom of religion*. Our leaders can, however, set an example, and lead the way. They can declare a national day of prayer and fasting. It will be up to each individual to repent. Each American must be persuaded to turn from his or her wicked ways, to humble themselves, and to seek out the TRUE GOD.

Worship the True God

We must put away all of our false gods. Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus and others must give up their religions and turn to the true God of the Bible. Professing Christians must give up their belief in a false Christ and begin worshipping the true Christ of the Bible. (The true Christ did not have long hair, was not born on Christmas, did not rise on Easter Sunday, and did not do away with his Father’s laws.) Even atheists must give up their FOOLISHNESS and submit to God.

All those who practice witchcraft, sorceries, fortune-telling, palm-reading, astrology, etc., must give up their practices (Ex. 22:18).

All of us must put the TRUE GOD *first in our lives*. If we let ANYTHING come between us and *worshipping the true God*, that thing becomes an IDOL for us.

Keep the Sabbath & Holy Days

Once we have determined to put God first in our lives, we must then begin to keep the seventh-day Sabbath (from sunset to sunset) and all of God’s seven annual festivals (Passover, Feast of Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, Feast of Trumpets, Day of Atonement, the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day).

We must stop working on them. Every business must close on these days. We must rest from our daily affairs and use this holy time to draw close to God. We must attend worship services (“holy convocations”) on all of these Sabbaths (Lev. 23:2-3, 7-8, 21, 24-25, 27-28, 34-36).

If we do these two things—1) humbly turn to God while seeking to obey Him, and 2) keep the Sabbath by resting and attending worship services—God will respond by teaching us more of his ways.

Then we must continue our response by obeying God’s laws as we learn them.

Keep 10 Commandments

We must begin to KEEP the 10 Commandments *wholeheartedly*. After putting away all our gods, we must next put away the *images* of God in our worship places and homes (Ex. 20:4-5). Not only must we destroy our statues of the pot-bellied Buddha, we must rip down our crucifixes, statues and pictures of “Jesus.”

Next, we must stop taking God’s name in vain. We must clean up our language. That may require dubbing new sound tracks to movies, writing new lyrics for old songs, and replacing certain words in our literature. Each individual will have to bridle his or her tongue to avoid using God’s name improperly (v. 7).

We must all honor our fathers and mothers—including gang members and other *rebellious* teens and “tweens” (v. 12).

We must put an end to all murder and hatred (v. 13, Mat. 5:21-24).

We must stop committing adultery, fornication and other sexual sins, including homosexual acts and bestiality (Ex. 20:14, 1 Cor. 6:18, Lev. 20:13, Ex. 22:19).

We must stop stealing (Ex. 20:15).

We must stop lying (v. 16).

We must stop coveting things that other people have (v. 17).

Once we learn and obey the 10 Commandments, we can begin to learn and obey other parts of God’s law.

Agricultural Laws

We must offer the firstfruits of our produce to God (Ex. 22:29, 23:19).

We must let our land rest and not grow crops every seventh year (v. 10).

Financial Laws

Ten percent of our increase we must give to God as a tithe (Mal. 3:8-10). Another 10 percent we must faithfully keep in order to observe the Feast of Tabernacles (Deut. 14:22-26). During our third and sixth years of a seven-year cycle, we must pay a third tithe to help the poor and needy (Deut. 14:28-29).

In addition to tithing, we must give freewill offerings to God on his holy days (Deut. 16:16).

Dietary Laws

We must give up eating the meat that God says is unclean, including pork and shellfish (Deuteronomy 14, Leviticus 11).

Although alcohol is allowed, we must be careful not to become drunk (Eph. 5:18, 1 Cor. 6:10). Likewise, we should

not overeat and commit the sin of gluttony (Prov. 23:21).

A Change in Society

The more we obey, the more God will reveal for us to do. If we obey God, He will have no need to punish us with national captivity. He will relent, as he did with Nineveh, and with Judah under Rheoboham.

And what a society we’ll enjoy! None of us will become victims of wrong doing, for wrong doing will cease! We won’t need locks on our doors and keys in our pockets. We won’t fear for our lives or for our property. Our marriages and families will become stronger and happier. *Good things happen when God’s laws are obeyed!* Our nation will become paradise on earth!

Will America Repent?

Will Americans repent of wrong doing? Will we give up false religious beliefs and start obeying the Bible? Will we, like the people of Nineveh or early Judah, repent, humble ourselves, and change?

I doubt it. Yet, if we don’t, our nation is doomed. National captivity is our destiny.

There is some good news, however.

If we, as individuals, repent of our sins, we can escape the evil times that are coming. God offers safety to those who turn to Him (Luke 21:36, Rev. 3:10, 12:14).

Not all will die in captivity (Isa. 65:8, Jer. 30:11). Many will repent and turn to God (Lev. 26:40-42, Jer. 50:20). And when Christ returns to this earth, one of his first tasks will be to rescue the captives (Isa. 10:20-23, 11:11-12, 14:1-2, 27:12-13, 35:10, 49:9, 13). Our nation will be restored, but it will be under God’s rulership. Our people, at that time, will be willing to learn God’s way of life—a way that leads to peace and eternal life!

The SABBATH SCOOP

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Cape Girardeau, MO 63701-3332

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PRINT CIRCULATION: 81 • COST PER ISSUE: FREE
www.thesabbathcoop.org

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Don't Go Crazy!

We see the world around us falling apart and heading in the wrong direction! Meanwhile we're getting older, weaker and sicker. It can drive us crazy if we let it. Here are some scriptures to keep in mind to help keep our sanity!

By Gregory Dullum

As we see the society that surrounds us sinking deeper into depravity; as our nation heads further down the wrong path, we must be *careful* to KEEP OUR SANITY.

It's *frustrating* to watch our national leaders make one bad decision after another which will ultimately lead to our national destruction. We feel *saddened* by what we see and *powerless* to stop it. God warned that this feeling would overcome our people: "you shall be only oppressed and crushed continually. So you shall be driven mad because of the sight which your eyes see" (Deut. 28:34).

To keep our own heads on straight—and to avoid being driven mad—let's focus on the following scriptures.

1. What if we wake up dreading each day? Remember this: "This is the day which the LORD has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it" (Ps. 118:24).

Instead of dreading each day and wondering what else can go wrong—consider each day as a gift from God to us! The LORD made this day for us! Be thankful to be alive! Rejoice! Paul tells us succinctly, "Rejoice always" (1 Thes. 5:15).

A positive, merry outlook on life is important for our health! "A merry heart does good, like medicine, but a broken spirit dries the bones" (Prov. 17:22).

2. As we grow older, our bodies wear out. It can be depressing to see our hands tremble with age, our backs bow, our teeth fall out, our eyes weaken, our hearing lessen, our hair whiten, our joints stiffen, and our memory become erratic (Eccles. 12:1-6). To avoid going crazy over this natural process, focus on what we still can do instead of what we can't.

Paul wrote: "In everything give thanks" (1 Thes. 5:18). No matter how bad things are, there is always something for which to thank God. We must stop focusing on the negative and thank God for every positive thing in our life.

3. Do we need physical healing? ASK GOD for it (Jas. 5:14-16)! He *boldly* tells us: "For I am the LORD who heals you" (Ex. 15:26).

4. Do we fear death? Does the thought of dying make us anxious? If we worry about what it will be like to die, we can go crazy. Instead, focus on these scriptures:

"Now all wept and mourned for her; but He [Jesus] said, 'Do not weep; she is not

dead, but sleeping.' And they laughed Him to scorn, knowing that she was dead" (Luke 8:52-53).

"These things He [Jesus] said, and after that He said to them, 'Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up.'... Then Jesus said to them plainly, 'Lazarus is dead'" (John 11:11, 14).

Jesus calls death "sleep." It is a long rest! It is NOT eternal—it is only a temporary rest until we awaken *refreshed* in new bodies composed of spirit!

"Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1 Cor. 15:51-52).

5. Are we bothered by seeing our mates, our friends, our brothers and sisters die? It's natural and proper to grieve the loss of loved ones (Eccles. 7:2), but we should not grieve as those in the world who have no hope: "But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope" (1 Thes. 4:13).

Death is not the end of the story. Our loved ones are not gone forever—they are merely asleep for a time—and they will live again! If they were in the church, they will rise at Christ's coming (1 Thes. 4:13-17). If not, they will live again during the time of the White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:5). We are not to become discouraged and give up, but to *carry on* and BE THERE FOR THEM!

6. Do we feel ALONE in our trials? Does it seem as if our prayers are unanswered because they go unheard? If it *seems that way*, it can drive us crazy—but it's NOT THE CASE! "For He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.' So we may boldly say: 'The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can men do to me?'" (Heb. 13:5-6).

Take courage from these words of God: "do not be afraid for I am with you; stop being anxious and watchful, for I am your God. I give you strength, I bring you help, I uphold you with my victorious right hand (Isa. 41:10 *Jerusalem Bible*).

God promises to stick with us through thick and thin. He'll *never* leave us alone!

7. Do we feel the need for protection? God offers it to us! "The LORD is my rock

and fortress and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I trust; my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold" (Ps. 18:1-2). God is a rock-solid fortress POWERFUL enough to *protect us from evil*.

Will He protect us in the day of trouble that is coming? Absolutely! "The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble, and He knows those who trust in Him" (Nah. 1:7). God is capable of protecting us from all kinds of trouble and He *knows each one of us* who trusts Him. *He is on a first-name basis with us*. When in trouble, cry out for help and HE WILL HEAR US.

8. Does God protect us at all times? Yes! "So Satan answered the LORD and said, "Does Job fear God for nothing? Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land" (Job 1:9-10). God keeps us safe from the evil lurking about seeking to destroy us, even if we can't see that evil! He puts a hedge about us and keeps us safe!

Notice how well this hedge works: "A thousand may fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand; but it shall not come near you" (Ps. 91:7).

9. Do we worry about having enough food, clothing or shelter? Christ tells us, "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'...For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things" (Mat. 6:31-32). "And my God shall supply all your need" (Philip. 4:19)!

10. Are we suffering from inexplicable fears or anxiety? Ask for more of God's spirit and stir it up! "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind" (1 Tim. 1:7).

11. Are we carrying around heavy mental, emotional or spiritual burdens? Do the cares of this life sometimes seem to be too much to handle? When that happens, cast all your cares upon Christ and *let Him handle them!* Peter says we should be "casting all your care upon Him; for He cares for you" (1 Pet. 5:7).

12. Remember that everything will work out in the end if we love God and are called by Him: "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to his purpose" (Rom. 8:28).

JOHN THE DISCIPLE WHOM JESUS LOVED

John is told that he and the other disciples would all stumble at Christ's crucifixion.

By Gregory Dullum
Part 13

Judas Iscariot Leaves

It was Tuesday night, Abib 14, A.D. 31. Jesus and his 12 disciples were lounging on floor cushions around a low table in an upper room in Jerusalem. They were observing the Old Testament Passover, which was commanded to be kept in Exodus 12, Leviticus 23 and in other scriptures. They had eaten the Passover lamb, bitter herbs and unleavened bread.

As they were finishing the meal, Jesus had arisen and washed the feet of his disciples, leaving an example for them to do on Passover in years to come. Then He had shocked them with an announcement: one of them would betray him.

John, who was seated in a place of honor next to Jesus, was asked by Peter to find out the identity of this first-century Benedict Arnold. Leaning upon Christ's breast, John asked privately who would betray Him. Jesus said it was he to whom He would give a piece of unleavened bread after dipping it in the mixture of mashed fruit, nuts and vinegar called *haroset*.

When Jesus dipped the bread and gave it to Judas Iscariot, it may have appeared to be *an act of service*, HONORING the man who received it. *Only John* knew the TRUE meaning of the act.

The wicked Haman, when he was invited to dinner by Queen Esther, thought her act of kindness meant great honor and favor for himself. Instead, it meant his death (Esther 5:6-9, 7:1-10). It is likely that Judas accepted the bread from Christ as a sign of honor and, like Haman, was "joyful and with a glad heart," (Esther 5:9), not knowing that the simple act had secretly identified him to John as Christ's betrayer.

When Judas would later that night betray Jesus with a KISS, Jesus was not fooled by his *apparent* act of kindness. He knew immediately its intent (Luke 22:48).

After giving Judas the bread, Jesus told him, "What you do, do quickly" (John 13:27). None of the others at the table knew what this meant. Some thought it meant he was to buy things needed for the Feast, or give something to the poor, because Judas was in charge of the money box (vv. 28-29). This verse helps

establish the fact that Jesus was observing Passover at *the beginning* of the 14th of Abib (after sunset), and NOT the beginning of the 15th, as Jews keep it today.

The 14th day of the first month (on God's calendar) is the *Feast* called Passover—but it is NOT a *holy day*. It is NOT an annual *Sabbath*. It is day upon which buying and selling IS ALLOWED. In fact, it is referred to as a "preparation day" for the first day of Unleavened Bread—Abib 15 (John 19:42). Being a preparation day, it was a day for buying supplies and preparing what was needed for the upcoming holy day.

Abib 15 is a HOLY DAY, and work, buying and selling are prohibited (Lev. 23:4-7, Neh. 10:31). If Jesus and his disciples were eating the Passover on the 15th, they would NOT have assumed Judas was about to go buy something for the Feast—for the Feast of Unleavened Bread would have *already begun* at sunset, and buying was PROHIBITED on that day.

Judas stood up and left the upper room to secretly meet with Jewish leaders and betray Christ.

A New Commandment

John and the other 10 disciples remained seated as Jesus spoke about his upcoming betrayal and crucifixion. He indicated that they, too, must be willing to be martyred as He was about to be. The disciples didn't know what He was talking about. They didn't get it then, and neither do most professing Christians today.

"So, when he had gone out, Jesus said, 'Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him.... Little children, I shall be with you a little while longer. You will seek Me: and as I said to the Jews, "Where I am going, you cannot come," so now I say to you. A new commandment I give you, that you love one another as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another' " (John 13:31-35).

Many professing Christians think Jesus was *replacing* the 10 commandments with a *new commandment* to "love one another." They think as long as they have warm feelings toward other human beings, they are fulfilling Christ's commandment. This is NOT TRUE!

To "love one another" was NOT a *new* commandment! It was an *old* one that had

been in existence since ancient Israel left Egypt (Lev. 19:18). It was a commandment John had heard *from the beginning* of Christ's ministry (1 John 3:11). What was NEW was what Jesus added: "as I have loved you." How had Jesus loved them? He was about to *give his life* for them! Giving his life was the ULTIMATE sacrifice—and the ULTIMATE *expression of LOVE* (John 15:13).

Jesus told his disciples that they would be identified by ALL MEN as his followers if they, too, would be willing to *give up their lives* in MARTYRDOM as He was about to. And indeed, history leaves a record of Christ's followers throughout the ages who have been martyred for their beliefs. We know certain historical figures were true Christians because they *died for their beliefs* and did NOT *betray other Christians to their persecutors*. They are NOT identified as Christ's disciples solely because they had warm feelings for others. While they undoubtedly did have warm feelings of love for others, there is *little historical record of that*. However, we do have historical records of these people *giving up their lives* for one another and for the truth—and it is by their willingness to die for each other and for the truth that ALL MEN know these were followers of Christ.

Peter Interrupts Christ

The disciples didn't know Christ was speaking of *martyrdom*. Peter didn't understand that Christ was about to die and return to heaven. He interrupted Christ, asking, "Lord, where are you going?"

Jesus replied, "Where I am going you cannot follow Me now, but you will follow Me afterward" (John 13:36). Peter didn't understand these words, but Christ had just told Peter that he would be martyred like Christ in the future.

Peter's pride was hurt. He was one of Christ's three *closest* disciples, and yet he was NOT allowed to follow Christ to this *mysterious* destination. He asked Jesus, "Lord, why cannot I follow You now?" As proof of his loyalty, dedication and friendship, he added boastfully, "I will lay down my life for Your sake" (v. 37).

It is easy to make boastful, courageous statements when sitting comfortably around the dinner table with full stomachs and full sense of security. It's another story when the realities of life hit and trials buffet us on every side; when we

are in *REAL fear for our lives!*

This seems to be a common human fault. How many young people, deeply in love on their wedding day, make vows before God to love each other and care for each other *until death do them part?* But years later, while facing the realities of life—its trials and struggles—they *break their vows* and DIVORCE?

How many young Christians, filled with first love, vow to dedicate their lives to God *at the time of their baptism*, but after years in the church, they become disillusioned, bitter, and worn out—and they *forget their baptism vows* and GIVE UP; they *go back to the world*, back to their old ways?

Jesus knew Peter's confidence of the moment *would not last* through the FIERY TRIAL that was coming. In fact, it would barely last through the night. He answered Peter, "Will you lay down your life for My sake? Most assuredly, I say to you, the rooster shall not crow till you have denied Me three times" (John 13:38).

Peter was hurt by this reply, not understanding his own weakness and the MAGNITUDE of events about to occur. Jesus saw his hurt and offered this encouragement, letting Peter know He was on his side:

"Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren" (Luke 22:31-32).

Peter continued to argue in his naivete: "Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death" (v. 33).

Jesus insisted that Peter was wrong. He said to him, "I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me" (v. 34).

John and the others may have smiled at this exchange between Jesus and Peter. They thought that Peter, trying to appear super-righteous and better than them all, was being "put in his place" by Christ. Jesus may have sensed their attitude, for He next addressed them, saying, "All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written, 'I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered'" (Mat. 26:31).

Jesus then told them something VERY IMPORTANT that meant *nothing* to them *at the time*. He told them WHERE they would meet again *after He was resurrected*: "But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee" (v. 32).

Peter was still stuck on Christ's words about denying Him. His PRIDE and HONOR were *on the line here!* He tried once more to defend himself against Christ's words.

"Peter answered and said to Him, 'Even if all are made to stumble because of

You, I will never be made to stumble' " (v. 33). Jesus repeated his claim once more, "Assuredly, I say to you that this night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times" (v. 34).

Peter could not accept this statement. John and the others didn't like being told that they would stumble as well. They all argued with Jesus, professing their love, courage and dedication to Him. "Peter said to Him, 'Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!' And so said all of the disciples" (v. 35).

Jesus admired their dedication, even though He knew it wouldn't last. He reminded them how He had once sent them forth without purse, wallet and shoes, and yet they lacked nothing. Things were about to change. "Then He said to them, 'But now, he who has a money bag, let him take it, and likewise a sack; and he who has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one'" (Luke 22:35-36).

Carrying a sword in Jesus' day is like carrying a gun today. Jesus knew dangerous times were coming, and He told his disciples to arm themselves! Notice their reply: "Then they said, 'Lord, look, here are two swords.' And He said to them, 'It is enough'" (v. 38).

Why did Jesus' disciples have two swords with them? It's likely the disciples acted as bodyguards for Christ, and the swords were a *deterrent* against thieves and brigands as the group traveled the Roman roads of first-century Palestine (even though there is no record of them having to use them up to this point). If thieves learned of the money box Judas carried with him, they may have been tempted to steal it. They would have thought twice, however, when they saw it was protected by 12 men, and at least two of them carried swords!

Jesus knew there was NOT going to be a *big swordfight* at his arrest. There was NOT coming a "shootout at the O.K. Corral." All 11 did not need to carry swords. One was needed—two were sufficient—*for the events about to take place*. Their REAL protection came from God—not swords—for God had plans for them.

Instituting New Testament Symbols

Jesus and the disciples had completed the Old Testament Passover meal. It became time for Jesus to institute New Testament symbols. He had already shown them the footwashing ceremony. Now He was about to have them consume bread and wine with *new meaning*.

He took one piece of unleavened bread,

JOHN

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Fun Fact



Drawing and Fun Fact are courtesy of NAPS

Beethoven was totally deaf when he composed his Ninth Symphony.

Witerature

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

Atlas Shrugged by Ayn Rand, Signet, 1996, p. 809.

Love Is a Gift

"'You're not capable of love, you cheap little gold-digger!' he cried suddenly, in a tone stripped of all color but the desire to hurt. 'Yes, I said gold-digger. There are many forms of it, other than greed for money, other and worse. You're a gold-digger of the spirit. You didn't marry me for my cash—but you married me for my ability or courage or whatever value it was that you set as the price of your love!'"

"'Do you want...love...to be...causeless?'"

"'Love is its own cause! Love is above causes and reasons. Love is blind. But you wouldn't be capable of it. You have the mean, scheming, calculating little soul of a shopkeeper who *trades*, but never *gives!* Love is a gift—a great, free, unconditional gift that transcends and forgives everything. What's the generosity of loving a man for his virtues? What do you give him? Nothing. It's no more than cold justice. No more than he's earned.'" "

Mat. 5:43-46, James 2:8, 1 Pet. 4:8

Quotable Quotes

"Our attitude toward things is likely to be more important than the things themselves." —A. W. Tozer

Memory Scripture

"In everything give thanks..."

—1 Thes. 5:18

John

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blessed it, broke it into 11 pieces, and gave a piece to each of the disciples. He told them that this bread represented his body, which was about to be broken for them (Mark 14:22, Mat. 26:26, Luke 22:19, 1 Cor. 11:23-24).

Then Jesus took a single cup of wine, blessed it, and passed it around for each disciple to take a sip. He explained that the wine represented his blood of the New Covenant, which was about to be poured out (Mark 14:23-24, Mat. 26:27-28, Luke 22:17, 20, 1 Cor. 11:25).

The Old Covenant Passover meal of lamb, bitter herbs, bread, wine and dip was replaced with a sampling of bread and wine. Christ told his disciples, "For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes" (1 Cor. 11:26).

Christ then gave a long discourse. It began in the upper room, and continued after they all left together.

The Church of God *did not yet exist*. It was an *unknown concept* to the disciples. Jesus introduced the idea to his disciples by using the *metaphor* of the TEMPLE. When He spoke the phrase "My Father's house," He was referring to the TEMPLE—NOT to *heaven*, as so many professing Christians believe. Christ *never* called heaven "My Father's house." But He did use this phrase when referring to the temple (John 2:14, 16). Now, He was using the temple to *represent* the CHURCH He was going to build, using the apostles as the foundation (Eph. 2:20). They were to become a *spiritual* temple (1 Cor. 3:16).

Jesus told John and the others, "In My Father's House [the temple] are many mansions [dwelling places]; if it were not so, I would have told you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am [in the church as its chief corner stone and head—(Eph. 2:20, 4:11-15)], there you may be also" (John 14:2-3).

Jesus explained that He and the Father were ONE—in *perfect unity* of mind. When God would give humans his holy spirit—thus bringing them into the church (Acts 2:38, Rom. 8:9, 14)—they, too, would *share in that unity* and become ONE with God and Jesus (John 14).

The Passover ceremony in the upper room concluded with a hymn. As they finished the final verse, Jesus said, "Arise, let us go from here" (John 14:31). Where did they go?

"And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives" (Mat. 26:30, Mark 14:26).

(To be continued!)



Pakistan Quake Kills 39; Creates an Island

"Thousands of Pakistanis ran into the streets praying for their lives Tuesday [Sept. 24] as a powerful earthquake rocked a remote area in the southwest, killing at least 39 people and possibly creating a small island off the coast...."

"Pakistan's chief meteorologist and the U.S. Geological Survey put the magnitude of the quake at 7.7.

"Pakistani officials were investigating whether the earthquake was so powerful that it pushed up the earth and formed a new land mass.

"Witnesses reported seeing a small island appear off the coast of the port of Gwadar after the quake, said the director general of the Pakistan Meteorological Department, Arif Mahmood" ("Quake kills 39 as houses collapse" by Abdul Sattar and Rebecca Santana, Associated Press, *Anchorage Daily News*, Sept. 25, 2013, p. A-8).

Jesus Christ prophesied that earthquakes in various places would be one of the signs that we are approaching the time of the end (Mat. 24:3, 7).

In Revelation, we read of islands being moved by earthquakes prior to Christ's return (Rev. 6:14, 16:18, 20). This Pakistani quake is a foretaste of what's to come!

Pope Francis Delights and Surprises People

"Pope Francis continues to delight and surprise as he pursues his radical pilgrimage across the global psyche—inspiring with his humility while also sending shock waves with his subversive spirit.

"Yes, make no mistake, this humble man from Argentina who describes himself first as a sinner and prefers simplicity to the opulence afforded by his station is, like Jesus Christ himself, a radical...."

"In a world where greed and pride hold hands in the dark, Francis appears as a brilliant apparition of, say it, brother—hope and change. He is a paradoxical mix of friend and foe wrapped in a happy package of tough love: friend of

the poor, downtrodden and marginalized; foe of the purveyor of a status quo that worships money and throws away the young and old. He is, in other words, a problem for the world and poses special anxiety for pious politicians both inside and outside the church walls" ("Pope Francis poses problems for politicians" by Kathleen Parker, columnist for *The Washington Post*, *Anchorage Daily News*, Sept. 25, 2013, p. A-15).

At the end time, a religious leader will rise in Europe who will NOT just be compared to Jesus Christ—he will claim to BE God Himself (2 Thes. 2:1-4)! Pope Francis may or may not be this end-time "man of sin," but he certainly is a man worth watching!

Tattoos Make Inroads Among Older Americans

"Thirty years ago, a good girl didn't do this. A good girl didn't walk into an establishment plastered with images of dragons and flames, hike her shirt up over one shoulder and let her body be injected with ink. Especially not if she was, like Darlene Nash, a 57-year-old grandmother.

"But America has changed since then, and so has Nash...."

"Once the domain of sailors and Aborigines and now a staple for younger Americans of all ethnicities and professions, tattoos are trickling up to the older set. While most who get them still tend to be young—a 2010 Pew study found that 38 percent of millennials and 22 percent of Gen Xers have them—their elders are increasingly joining the party. Fifteen percent of baby boomers have tattoos, and 6 percent of the Silent Generation do" ("Tattoos make inroads with 50-and-older crowd" by Tara Bahrapour, *The Washington Post*, as reported in *The Anchorage Daily News*, Sept. 27, 2013, pp. A-1, A-14).

God does not want his people to tattoo themselves: "You shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor tattoo any marks on you: I am the LORD" (Lev. 19:28). The prevalence of tattoos is one more sign this nation is turning its back on God and is heading for national captivity.