

THE SABBATH SCOOP

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SODOM & GOMORRAH

Why were the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah so wicked? From where did they come?

By Gregory Dullum
Part 1

The U.S. Supreme Court late last month ruled that all states must recognize same-sex marriages—even though the Bible defines marriage as the union of a MAN and a WOMAN (Gen. 2:23-24, Mat. 19:4-10).

After the Supreme Court ruling, we may have heard the comment, “Our nation is becoming more and more like Sodom and Gomorrah.” What do we know about those two cities?

Evil Cities

Sodom and Gomorrah were two cities whose inhabitants were so evil, God destroyed them by raining brimstone down on them (Gen. 19:24-25). Prominent among their “grievous sins” was homosexuality (Gen. 18:20, 19:4-9). The words “sodomy” and “sodomize” come from “Sodom.”

Why were the people of Sodom and Gomorrah so evil? Where were these cities? Were they ever rebuilt? Do they exist today? Is there a future for the people who once lived there? Let’s begin a study of those two cities.

A Sexual Sin

To understand Sodom and Gomorrah, let’s look at their origins and history.

About 1,000 years after Adam and Eve, mankind had become so wicked that God could no longer bear it. He sent a flood to destroy all living things (Gen. 6:5-7). Only eight people were saved aboard the ark: Noah and his wife; their three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth; and their wives (Gen. 8:18). Of those eight, *only* NOAH is called “a just man, perfect in his generations” who “walked with God” (Gen. 6:9). Noah’s FAMILY was *saved* because “Noah found grace in the eyes of God” (Gen. 6:8), NOT because *any of them*



photo by Gary Dullum

A view of the Dead Sea from the Jordanian side looking south. Sodom and Gomorrah probably are now at the bottom of the southern part of the Dead Sea.

were just, perfect, or walked with God.

In fact, one of Noah’s sons was more of a scoundrel than the others. “Now the sons of Noah who went out from the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. And Ham was the father of Canaan. These three were sons of Noah, and from these the whole earth was populated. And Noah began to be a farmer, and planted a vineyard. Then he drank of the wine and was drunk, and became uncovered in his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside. But Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on their shoulders, and went backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned away, and they did not see their father’s nakedness. So Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done to him” (Gen. 9:18-24).

Who was this “younger son?” Most likely, Noah’s sons were listed in birth order, so Japheth was his younger son. But Japheth didn’t do anything to Noah; Ham did. Ham was the middle son, not the younger son. So how can we under-

stand this verse? Ch. 10:6 tells us, “The sons of Ham were Cush, Mizraim, Put and Canaan.” Canaan is listed last, so he was Ham’s youngest son and Noah’s grandson. In Ch. 9:24, where it says “his younger son,” the word “his” may be referring to Ham; in other words, “Ham’s younger son.”

The Hebrew words translated “younger son” can also mean “grandson.” Most scholars go with this understanding and conclude “his son” to be referring to Noah’s grandson. Either way, the finger points to Canaan.

So what actually happened between Noah, Ham and Canaan?

Ham saw the nakedness of his father and he was NOT EMBARRASSED by the sight, nor did he respect Noah’s privacy. He was a man who saw the NAKEDNESS of another MAN and, perhaps, *found pleasure* in the sight. Ham apparently showed the sleeping body of Noah to his son, Canaan, who did a *despicable deed* which is not described in the Bible. What did Canaan do? I have heard two possibilities.

1. Dr. Charles Dorothy, my instructor in Old Testament Survey at Ambassador College, suggested that Ham’s son, Canaan, castrated his grandfather. He did this to ensure his inheritance. Noah had three sons, so the whole world would be divided into thirds and each son (and their families) would inherit a third. However, if Noah had more sons, the world would be divided into more, smaller portions. Canaan made sure Noah had no more sons.

2. Canaan saw the naked, helpless body of his grandfather and he went into his tent and lay with him, as if his grandfather were a woman. What does God think about such a deed? “You shall not lie with a male as with a

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woman. It is an abomination” (Lev. 18:22).

Whatever Canaan did to his grandfather, it appears from the context to be *sexual* (Noah was naked) and it appears to be *very bad* (Canaan was cursed for it).

“So Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done to him. Then he said, ‘Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants he shall be to his brethren.’ And he said, ‘Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem, and may Canaan be his servant. May God enlarge Japheth, and may he dwell in the tents of Shem; and may Canaan be his servant’ ” (Gen. 9:24-27).

Like Father, Like Son

Canaan was cursed. The curse did not come upon Canaan himself, but upon his descendants. Canaan’s descendants were a lot like him. They had the same proclivities.

“The observant mind of Noah saw in Ham, and in his youngest son, who bore a close resemblance to him, those mental characteristics which would impress their stamp upon his posterity: he discerned in those feelings of filial disrespect and indecent levity which had been developed in his outrage upon his venerable father the germ of their national character already matured in this prophetic view. In short, the libertinism of the father is regarded as the type of the intellectual and moral character of his descendants; and thus connected by links of national depravity and debasement, they are viewed as one. In those early times the spiritual and moral relation subsisting between father and son possessed a direct and permanent influence...” (A Commentary, Critical, Experimental and Practical on the Old and New Testaments by Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown, 1945, vol. 1, p. 108).

In other words, like father, like son.

Know Your Bible

By Charles Nenninger

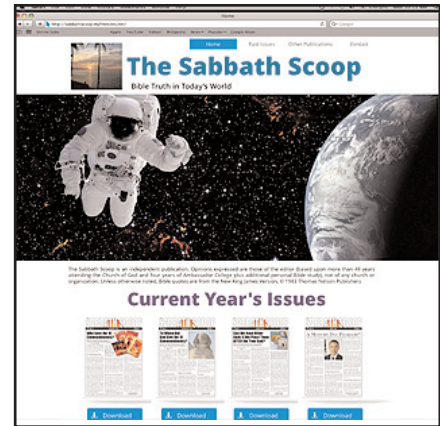
1. Who had an animal that talked back to him?
2. What Feast day is on the 10th day of the 7th month?
3. Who was Joshua the son of?
4. What was the new name God gave the waters of Kadesh?
5. On what mountain did Aaron die?
(Answers on page 5)

New Web Site Now Available

In 2009, *The Sabbath Scoop* launched a Web site so some subscribers could read the magazine online instead of having it mailed to them.

At that time, one of our subscribers ran a company that created Web sites. He created one for me at no charge. His start-up costs were minimal.

Over the years, our costs from the Web hosting company have increased so that this spring’s two-year renewal was \$382.80. This subscriber no longer has his company, and his old laptop which he had used to upload my files quit working. He couldn’t access my Web site with his new computer, so we were unable to post any issues after March 2015. We decided not to renew our Web site since we could



no longer access it.

I tried out several free Web hosting sites and found one that works with my computer. The *Sabbath Scoop* site is now at <http://sabbathscop.myfreesites.net>. On this site you can download PDFs of the current year’s issues, past issues, and sections of my book on church history, *Martyrs and Miracles*. Check it out!

Where Did Descendants Settle?

Where did the descendants of Canaan go to live? “And the border of the Canaanites was from Sidon as you go toward Gerar, as far as Gaza; then as you go toward Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, as far as Lasha” (Gen. 10:19).

The first Biblical mention of Sodom and Gomorrah is in this verse, which says they were in the land of the Canaanites. It is believed that some of this land is now covered by the southern part of the Dead Sea, which has slowly expanded over the centuries. It is currently believed by many that the remains of Sodom and Gomorrah are now at the bottom of the southern part of the Dead Sea (“Sodom,” *Smith’s Bible Dictionary* by William Smith, 1979, pp. 641-642; “Sodom,” *The New Unger’s Bible Dictionary* by Merrill F. Unger, 1988, pp.1205-1206).

Sodom and Gomorrah were not always at the bottom of the sea. They were not always in a dry, desolate wilderness which surrounds the sea. At one time, they were in a green plain full of very rich soil.

“And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram’s livestock and the herdsmen of Lot’s livestock. The Canaanites and the Perizzites then dwelt in the land. So Abram said to Lot, ‘Please let there be no strife between you and me, and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen; for we are brethren. Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me. If you take the left, then I will go to the right; or if you go to the right, then I will

go to the left.’ And Lot lifted his eyes and saw all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere (before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah) like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt as you go toward Zoar. Then Lot chose for himself all the plain of Jordan, and Lot journeyed east. And they separated from each other. Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain and pitched his tent even as far as Sodom” (Gen. 13:7-12).

This was some of the best land in the world! Well watered, it was compared to the Garden of Eden! It was a perfect, idyllic, peaceful place to live, except for one thing: the inhabitants!

(To be continued!)

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228 O’Connell Drive
Cape Girardeau, MO 63701-3332

Editor

Gregory Dullum

Circulation Managers:

Craig Evans • Raleigh Collins
Ed Crook • Gregory Dullum

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You Shall Not Murder

Is all killing murder? How does this apply to Christians today?

By Gregory Dullum
Part 10

The sixth commandment contains only four words: “You shall not murder.” In the *King James Version*, the commandment reads more strictly, “Thou shalt not kill.”

Does this commandment prohibit all KILLING? Is it wrong to kill plants or animals? What about killing enemy soldiers while at war? What about a thief who breaks into our home? Is capital punishment prohibited? Is there a difference between killing and murder?

Hebrew Word Defined

When God spoke the sixth commandment, He used the Hebrew word *ratsach*. It means “to dash in pieces, i.e. kill (a human being), espec. to murder:—put to death, kill, (man-) slay (-er), murder (-er)” (“Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary” included in *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, undated, p. 110).

The emphasis of this word is on *murder* although it could be used for other types of killing. How can we know what God intended? Christ clarified it for us. When He repeated the 10 commandments, the *King James Version* (which uses “kill” in Exodus 20) quoted Him saying, “Thou shalt do no murder.”

Some people believe ALL life is sacred—including plants and animals—and they consider all killing to be murder. This belief is probably an outgrowth of the old pagan religion, which worships nature. Is it okay to kill plants and animals?

Killing Plants

“And if a tree falls to the south or the north, in the place where the tree falls, there it shall lie” (Eccles. 11:3). No spirit leaves a tree when it dies—but one does leave humans and animals when they die (Ch. 3:18-21). Trees don’t go to heaven when they die. They fall to the ground and stay there until they decompose.

God commanded Noah to build an ark from wood (Gen. 6:14). Its size required cutting down many trees: “Build a boat of cypress wood for yourself. Make rooms in it and cover it inside and outside with tar. This is how big I want you to build the boat: four hundred fifty feet long, seventy five feet wide, and forty-five feet high” (Gen. 6:14-15, *New Century Version*).

The ark was about half as long and three-quarters as wide as the *RMS Titanic*, which was the largest ship ever built



photo by Gregory Dullum

Is it wrong to kill an intruder who breaks in our home? Should a Christian serve in the military? Do we need to shed blood to violate the sixth commandment?

up to that time (1912).

After he built the ark of wood, Noah was still considered “righteous” (Gen. 7:1). That means he kept the commandments (Ps. 119:172). He didn’t break the sixth commandment when he killed trees.

Killing Animals

What about killing animals?

Animal sacrifice has been around since Abel sacrificed a firstling of his flock. God respected that offering. He didn’t condemn it (Gen. 4:4). Abel is later called “righteous”—not a “sinner” or “murderer” (Heb. 11:4).

Hunting clean animals is permitted by God (Lev. 17:13).

The “clean and unclean meats chapters” of Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14 tell us that some animals are “clean” to eat. It wasn’t proper to eat an animal that died naturally, so they had to be killed (Lev. 7:24, 17:15, 22:8, Deut. 14:21).

From these biblical examples, we see that the killing of plants and animals does not violate the sixth commandment. What about taking human life?

Killing Humans

Taking a human life is a very serious matter. After the flood, God told Noah, “Surely for your lifeblood I will demand a reckoning; from the hand of every beast I will require it, and from the hand of man. From the hand of every man’s brother I will require the life of man. Whoever sheds man’s blood, by man his

blood shall be shed; For in the image of God He made man” (Gen. 9:5-6).

God considers it a very serious matter to take a human life, but He ALLOWS it under certain conditions. In fact, there were times when He COMMANDED humans to *be killed*.

State Executions

God provided a death penalty to be exacted by the human GOVERNMENT of *his nation*, Israel. Criminals were to be given the DEATH PENALTY when they committed murder (Ex. 21:12), kidnapping (Ex. 21:16), rape (Deut. 22:25), adultery (Deut. 22:22), bestiality (Ex. 22:19), Sabbath breaking (Ex. 31:14), idolatry (Ex. 22:20), evil magic (Ex. 22:18), speaking against the LORD (Lev. 24:13-16), and juvenile delinquency (Deut. 21:18-21).

Indeed, there are crimes so heinous—so detrimental to the perpetrator and to society as a whole—that the proper penalty is death. Executing those guilty criminals is JUSTICE—not MURDER.

Killing an Intruder

What about defending our homes from intruders?

In ancient Israel, under God’s instruction, this was the rule: “If a thief is killed while breaking into a house at night, the one who killed him is not guilty of murder. But if this happens during the day, he is guilty of murder” (Ex. 22:2-3 *NCV*).

Homeowners could use lethal force to protect their lives and property if prowlers broke in at night.

Killing on the Battlefield

Is war murder? God inspired Solomon to write, “To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven: a time to be born, a time to die; a time to plant, a time to pluck what is planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal... a time of war, and a time of peace” (Eccles. 3:1-3, 8). War is not banned in the Bible. In fact, it was a common occurrence.

“War was so common in the biblical period that the OT makes specific reference to times of peace (Judg. 3:11; 1 Kings 5:4; 2 Chron. 14:1, 5-7)....

“Since the Hebrew conquest and settlement of Canaan was partly accomplished by means of armed conflict with a num-

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ber of people, Israel's early history (ca. 1225-1025 B.C.) is, to some degree, a history of the wars of Israel. Following these early phases of Israel's history, the Hebrew monarchy (ca. 1025-586 B.C.) was established and maintained by means of war" ("War," *Harper Collins Bible Dictionary*, Paul J. Achtemeier, ed., 1996, p. 1198).

Killing *enemies of the state* on the battlefield *under God's orders* is not murder. Why not? God is the GIVER of life (Acts 17:25). He has the authority to TAKE IT Himself or to order his people to take it *on his behalf*.

This explains why there were so many bloody wars involving God's nation of Israel. God saw the sins of Israel's enemies and commanded His people to put an end to their lives. The Israelites were *tools in God's hands*. When they took Jericho, they KILLED EVERYONE but Rahab and her family (because Rahab had been promised protection for harboring Israelite spies) (Josh. 7:21-25). Then they killed all the inhabitants of Ai (Josh. 8:26). This was not murder. It was obeying God's instructions.

On the other hand, when King Saul didn't obey God and failed to kill Agag (the king of Amalek), the prophet Samuel told him, "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He also has rejected you from being king" (1 Kings 15:22-23). In this case, *sparing* a life was a SIN! It cost Saul his crown.

Samuel then took a sword and hacked Agag to pieces (v. 33). Samuel was not a murderer; he was obeying God and is one of the faithful who will be in God's kingdom (Heb. 11:32-33).

Defining Murder

Obviously, NOT ALL KILLING is *murder*. When does killing become murder?

The dictionary defines murder as "The unlawful killing of one human being by another; especially with premeditated malice" ("Murder," *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, 1992, p. 1189). God considers killing to be lawful if He orders it. What makes killing unlawful? Let's learn from the example of the first murder.

The First Murder

The first murder occurred very early in

human history. Adam and Eve had two sons—Cain and Abel. They both gave offerings to the LORD. Cain offered the fruit of the ground while Abel offered the firstlings of his flock. God respected Abel's offering but not Cain's.

"So Cain became very angry and felt rejected. The LORD asked Cain, 'Why are you angry? Why do you look so unhappy? If you do things well, I will accept you, but if you do not do them well, sin is ready to attack you. Sin wants you, but you must rule over it' (Gen. 4:5-7, *NCV*).

Cain didn't listen to God. Instead, he met his brother in the field and killed him. God had warned Cain, "sin lies at the door" (v. 7, *NKJV*). From this warning, we know that Cain killing Abel was a SIN. Sin is violating God's law (1 John 3:4). Which law did Cain break? The sixth commandment! He committed MURDER.

What made Cain's killing of Abel *different* from the others we have discussed?

1. The motive was wrong. Cain murdered Abel because of *anger* and *jealousy*. He did not kill him on instructions from God.

2. The victim was undeserving. Abel was a *righteous* man (Heb. 11:4); he didn't *deserve death*. Cain took it upon himself to order a death sentence and carry it out.

3. The result was bad. Abel's murder was a selfish act that benefitted no one. The murder neither improved Cain's life nor society as a whole. In fact, it made the world worse, for a righteous person and his positive influence had been removed from it.

Taking Life Is God's Prerogative

We humans cannot read each other's hearts to determine if someone deserves to die. Only God can do that (1 Sam. 16:7). God is the giver of life and it is his prerogative to order the death of human beings.

God doesn't order the death of humans for no reason. He does it to *protect society* from evil and to save perpetrators from their own sinful, evil lives that bring curses upon themselves.

The wages of any sin is death (Rom. 6:23). All people have sinned (Rom. 3:23). All people have earned the death penalty.

God is merciful. He doesn't want sinners to die; He wants them to repent—to change their lives and obey Him (1 Peter 3:9). So He is patient. He gives us time. We can use that time to repent and grow more like God or we can ignore God and become more wicked. Eventually our wickedness becomes so bad God intervenes. That's why He sent a flood in Noah's day (Gen. 6:5-7). That's why He destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 18:20-21). That's why Jesus Christ is coming back (Mat. 24:3, 12, 21-22, 37).

God's patience is exemplified when He didn't wipe out the inhabitants of Canaan until their sins were "complete" or "full"—meaning they had reached an unacceptable level (Gen. 15:13-16). And He would have spared Sodom if only 10 inhabitants were righteous (Gen. 19:32).

When God kills a sinner (or has his people do it for Him), it is not THE END of that sinner. God will resurrect sinners in the future (Mat. 10:15). He will bring them back to physical life after Satan is cast into a bottomless pit, so they can no longer be influenced by the devil (Rev. 20:10-12). God will give these resurrected people his spirit and teach them his ways (Ezek. 37:14, Micah 4:1-5). Because only God can give these people life, only God can order their deaths.

Sharing the Prerogative

God shares his prerogative of taking human life with human governments in order to advance civilization, have order in society, and keep the peace.

"Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.... For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil" (Rom. 13:1, 4).

Governments have the authority to execute criminals. Capital punishment, *if used properly*, is not murder. It *can become* murder if the motive is wrong, if the victim is undeserving, or if the result is bad. The crucifixion of Jesus Christ and the martyrdom of Christians by man's government could be considered murder.

Abortion

One form of murder that has become accepted in today's society is abortion.

Science tells us that a new life begins at conception. Prior to conception there are two separate elements: an egg and a sperm cell. Once the sperm cell enters the egg, it starts a new life called a zygote. The zygote grows by splitting its cells until it becomes an embryo and a fetus, and eventually being born as a baby.

Killing a baby in the womb brought the death penalty in ancient Israel: "If men fight, and hurt a woman with child, so that she gives birth prematurely, yet no lasting harm follows, he shall surely be punished accordingly as the woman's husband imposes on him; and he shall pay as the judges determine. But if any lasting harm follows, then you shall give life for life" (Ex. 21:22-23).

Euthanasia

On the other end of life is the issue of euthanasia, “the practice of ending the life of an individual suffering from terminal illness or an incurable condition as by lethal injection or by the suspension of extraordinary medical treatment” (“Euthanasia,” *The American Heritage Dictionary*, pp. 633-634).

“On the issue of euthanasia, Judaism, Catholicism, and some other Christian denominations are in agreement that active euthanasia is forbidden because it is murder.... The simple fact is that it is not up to us to play God by deciding when someone’s time is up” (*The Ten Commandments* by Dr. Laura Schlessinger and Rabbi Stewart Vogel, 1998, p. 191).

On the other hand, “passive euthanasia,” or withholding *extraordinary* medical care in order to prolong a life is not considered murder in many circles. “In this so-called passive mode, one does not will to cause death—one is accepting the inevitable. Ordinary care should not be withheld” (ibid., p. 192).

Suicide

Suicide is self-murder and violates the sixth commandment.

When a jailer was about to commit suicide, the Apostle Paul called out to him, “Do yourself no harm” (Acts 16:28). This is good advice for all humans.

Paul tells Christians, “Don’t you know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy that person, because God’s temple is holy and you are that temple” (1 Cor. 3:16-17 *NCV*).

Christian Observance

The sixth commandment means more to Christians than shedding blood. Christians are held to a *higher standard* of commandment-keeping. Jesus Christ came to “magnify the law” (Isa. 42:21). He said, “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill” (Mat. 5:17).

Jesus magnified the sixth commandment: “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder,’ and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment. But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without cause shall be in danger of the judgment” (Mat. 5:21-22).

He further stated, “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy,’ but I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you” (vv. 42-43).

“This is Jesus Christ’s application of the sixth commandment to you and me! If we harbor *hate* and *anger* in our hearts, we are harboring the ‘spirit’ of MURDER!” (*The Ten Commandments* by Roderick C. Meredith, 1968, p. 87).

Christians and Military Service

Although war isn’t murder, we Christians should avoid military service for several reasons. The main reason is this: we are instructed by Christ to love our enemies and treat them as we want to be treated (Mat. 5:44, 7:12). How can we, who are taught to love our enemies, slit their throats or put bullets in their heads?

Gossip

We don’t need knives or guns to violate this commandment; we have tongues, and fingers that hold pens or tap keyboards.

“The Bible tells us, ‘You shall not be a gossipmonger among your people...’ (Leviticus 19:16). A gossip is someone who goes around telling stories, unnecessarily sharing insights into the lives of people who would rather remain private. Gossip has the potential to destroy people’s lives. Gossip is therefore like murder. Even listening to gossip is like standing idly by while your neighbor is murdered” (Schlessinger and Vogel, p. 196).

Gossip doesn’t have to be FALSE to be gossip! If it’s false, it violates the NINTH commandment as well. Gossip that’s TRUE can still violate the sixth commandment because it may harm—even *murder*—the reputations of people!

Public Humiliation

Gossip is done behind the backs of its victims. Another form of murder can be done to their face: public humiliation.

“By rabbinical interpretation, the Sixth Commandment includes not just the literal taking of life. According to rabbinical sages, publicly humiliating someone is figuratively akin to murder.... Words have the power to hurt or heal, depending upon how we use them. If one removed negativity, gossip, slander, hostility, cruel sarcasm, anger, divisiveness, derision, ugly threats, and insults from one’s vocabulary, one automatically and dramatically improves his own life and that of others. Words have a tremendous poten-

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Know Your Bible Answers

1) Balaam. 2) Day of Atonement. 3) Nun. 4) Meribah. 5) Mount Hor.

Fun Fact



Drawing and Fun Fact are courtesy of NAPS

The angel Gabriel appears four times in the Bible: twice in the Old Testament and twice in the New Testament. The name Gabriel means God is mighty.

Witerature

Wit and wisdom to complement the truths of the Holy Bible can be found in secular writings. Here is this month’s selection:

Being George Washington by Glenn Beck, Candlewick Press, 2011, p. 149).

Timing is Everything

“Pulitzer Prize-winning Washington biographer Ron Chernow relates that the young Washington was obsessed with precision and time. ‘Washington,’ Chernow writes, ‘aspired to stand at the center of an orderly clockwork universe.’

“Washington had placed a sundial at a center spot on his estate lawn. A French businessman friend once said that ‘no one ever appreciated better than General Washington the value of time and the art of making use of it.’”

Eph. 5:16, John 9:4

Quotable Quotes

“If you have talent, use it in every which way possible. Don’t hoard it. Don’t dole it out like a miser. Spend it lavishly like a millionaire intent on going broke.”

—Brendan Francis

Memory Scripture

“But this I say: he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.”

—1 Cor. 9:6

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tial impact upon situations and people—they can convey compassion and encouragement, blessings and love. Or, they can kill spirits and relationships” (Schlessinger and Vogel, p. 196).

“Using words and speech to emotionally injure other people is equally wrong. With our tongues and pens we attack them verbally. We assault their feelings. We annihilate their respectability. We damage their reputations” (*The Ten Commandments* by the United Church of God, 1998, p. 46).

Unfair Business Practices

Unfair business practices can violate the sixth commandment.

“No matter the motivation, using methods like starting rumors about someone or even intentionally making someone look bad at work, thereby diminishing their professional worth, is unethical. Intentionally undermining the work of a colleague can result in that person’s failure to receive a promotion or worse, even termination of employment. To take away someone’s livelihood is comparable to murder....

“One can elevate oneself in whatever way one wishes, but it is unethical to do so by diminishing the worth of another. When the Israelites were about to enter Canaan, after forty years of wandering in the desert, God clarifies twelve curses (Deuteronomy 27:11-26). Among these is, ‘Accursed is one who strikes his fellow stealthily. And the entire people shall say, “Amen.”’ Jewish tradition applied this to killing someone’s reputation. Though it may be possible to escape human law, due to stealth, he will not escape God’s” (Schlessinger and Vogel, pp. 203-204).

Harboring Malicious Attitudes

We don’t have to do something to another in order to break this commandment. It’s possible to do so *in our thoughts!*

“Christ amplified the meaning of ‘murder’ to include bitter animosity, contempt or hateful hostility toward others. Merely harboring malicious attitudes toward others violates the intent of the Sixth Commandment. Why? Because this is mental and emotional warfare, the desire to see a fellow human being suffer...

“At times we can be consumed with destructive intentions. Our motives can be diametrically opposite of love. The spirit of murder can live in our hearts, and Jesus tells us the consequence for such thoughts and actions could be our own death in the lake of fire” (*The Ten Commandments* by the United Church of God, pp. 46-47).



Iran’s Nuclear Stockpile Grows

“With only one month left before a deadline to complete a nuclear deal with Iran, international inspectors have reported that Tehran’s stockpile of nuclear fuel increased about 20 percent over the last 18 months of negotiations, partially undercutting the Obama administration’s contention that the Iranian program had been ‘frozen’ during that period” (“Iran’s Nuclear Stockpile Grows, Complicating Negotiations” by David E. Sanger and William J. Broad, *The New York Times*, nytimes.com, June 1, 2015, p. 1).

A nuclear-armed Iran may be part of the coming “king of the South” prophesied to exist in the last days (Dan. 11:40).

Transgender Children’s Books Break a Taboo

“Sam Martin... is now on a mission.... He belongs to a small group of emerging authors who are writing children’s literature that centers on transgender characters, hoping to fill a void they felt as young readers. His debut work of fiction—a semi-autobiographical story about a transgender teenage boy who falls in love with an older boy on the beach in Cape Cod—will be published in a collection this month by Duet, a new young adult publisher that specializes in lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer fiction.

“‘My goal is to write stories that would have helped me feel less alone at that age,’ said Mr. Martin....

“A few years ago, gender fluidity was rarely addressed in children’s and young adult fiction. It remained one of the last taboos in a publishing category that had already taken on difficult issues like suicide, drug abuse, rape and sex trafficking. But children’s literature is catching up to the broader culture, as stereotypes of transgender characters have given way to nuanced and sympathetic portrayals on TV shows like ‘Orange Is the New Black’ and ‘Transparent.’....

“More writers and publishers have started tackling the subject, not just with memoirs and self-help guides tailored to transgender youth, but through novels aimed at a broad readership. This year, children’s publishers are releasing around half a dozen novels in a spectrum of genres, including science fiction and young adult romance, that star transgender children and teenagers” (“Transgender Children’s Books Fill a Void and Break a Taboo” by Alexandra Alter, *The New York Times*, nytimes.com, June 6, 2015, pp. 1-2).

As our nation becomes more like Sodom and Gomorrah, more and more children’s books will attempt to confuse our children about proper use of sex and sex roles in society. There is a reason this topic was once taboo—it was to protect the innocent and developing minds of our children. Warp our children and we’ll have warped adults. If we don’t return to God’s teachings, our national fate will be similar to Sodom and Gomorrah’s: destruction—not from brimstone—but from captivity (Deut. 28:47-52, 64-68).

Pope Calls for Action on Climate Change

“Pope Francis on Thursday [June 18] called for a radical transformation of politics, economics and individual lifestyles to confront environmental degradation and climate change, blending a biting critique of consumerism and irresponsible development with a plea for swift and unified global action” (“Pope Francis, in Sweeping Encyclical, Calls for Swift Action on Climate Change” by Jim Yardley and Laurie Goodstein, *The New York Times*, nytimes.com, June 18, 2015, p. 1).

The Pope’s support of man-made global warming (now called climate change) may cause more people to believe in this hoax, whose purpose is to weaken the U.S. economy. This Pope is anti-capitalist and is meddling in politics, economics and lifestyles—supporting the wrong side while *seeking global unity!* He is paving the way for the end-time false prophet who will FORCE ALL to worship the Beast (Rev. 13:11-17, 19:20).