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BRITAIN TO LEAVE E.U.

Many in the world were stunned by this turn of events, but we, in the church, were expecting it. Why?

By Gregory Dullum

“Britain has voted to leave the European Union, a historic decision sure to shape the nation’s place in the world, rattle the Continent and rock political establishments throughout the West.

“Not long after the vote tally was completed, Prime Minister David Cameron, who led the campaign to remain in the bloc, appeared in front of 10 Downing Street to announce that he planned to step down by October, saying the country deserved a leader committed to carrying out the will of the people.

“‘Today marks a turning point for Europe,’ Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany said. ‘It is a turning point for the European unification process.’ ...

“Britain will become the first country to leave the 28-member bloc, which has been increasingly weighed down by its failures to deal fully with a succession of crises, from the financial collapse of 2008 to a resurgent Russia and the huge influx of migrants last year. ...

“In the meantime, nothing will change immediately on either side of the Channel, with existing trade and immigration rules in place. The withdrawal process is expected to be complex and contentious, though under the bloc’s governing treaty it is effectively limited to two years. ...

“For the European Union, the result is a disaster, raising questions about the direction, cohesion and future of a bloc built on liberal values and shared sovereignty that represents, with NATO, a vital component of Europe’s postwar structure. ...

“‘The main impact will be massive disorder in the E.U. system for the next two years,’ said Thierry de Montbrial, founder and executive chairman of the French Institute of International Relations. There will be huge political transition costs, on how to solve the British exit, and the risk of a domino effect or

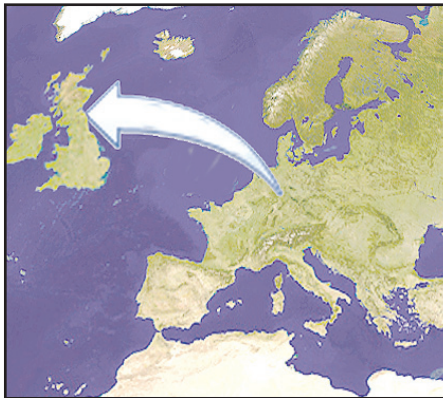


Illustration by Gregory Dullum

Britain voted June 23 to leave the European Union. How does this significant event fit into Bible prophecy?

bank run from other countries that think of leaving’ ” (“Britain Votes to Leave E.U.; Cameron Plans to Step Down” by Steven Erlanger, *The New York Times*, nytimes.com, June 23, 2016, pp. 1-4).

Kate Warne, an investment strategist with Edward Jones, wrote to her company’s investors, “Britain voted on June 23 to leave the European Union (EU). In response, stocks dropped, bond prices rose (lowering interest rates further), and the value of the British pound fell sharply. Markets hate surprises and uncertainty, and this vote provided both.”

People in the world and financial markets may have been shocked by the news, but we in the Church of God were not. Why not? Because we understand some basic principles of Bible prophecy regarding Britain and Europe.

Promises Made to Abraham

Britain is not mentioned by name in the Bible but this world power is not ignored in Scripture! To unlock the mystery of who the British people are, we must go back to the Bible patriarchs.

When God called Abram, He told him, “I

will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great: and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (Gen. 12:2-3).

Through Abraham, *all the world* would be *blessed*. This was fulfilled in part by Jesus Christ [considered a descendant of Abraham] who made SALVATION available *to all people*. But this prophecy also has an *end-time* application, as many prophecies do!

Britain and the U.S. are descended from Abraham! Because of these two nations, much of the world has been blessed. Britain’s colonization spread Western civilization around the globe. The U.S. and Britain have shared their wealth with the less fortunate and have brought liberty to oppressed peoples all over the world!

Later, God expounded on his promises: “No longer shall your name be called Abram [meaning “Exalted”], but your name shall be Abraham [meaning Father of a Multitude]; for I have made you 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. 17:5-7).

Abraham would be the father of MANY NATIONS. This prophecy was partially fulfilled in the Old Testament with the establishment of two nations—the House of Israel and the House of Judah. But two nations is not the same as “many”!

How do we know the U.S. and Britain came from Abraham? Let’s continue reading in Genesis.

BRITAIN

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Britain

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Possessing Gates of Enemies

Abraham and his wife Sarah had a son named Isaac in their old age. He was the “child of promise” (Gal. 4:28). The promises of God were passed on to him.

After Isaac married Rebekah, their descendants were further blessed: “And may your descendants possess the gates of those who hate them” (Gen. 24:60).

In the 20th century, Britain and America controlled the important sea gates of the world, fulfilling this prophecy. These included such strategic points as: Alaska, American Samoa, Guam, Hawaii, Midway, the Panama Canal, the Philippines, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, England, Gibraltar, Malta, India and Pakistan, Cyprus, Ceylon, Maldiv Islands, the Suez Canal, Hong Kong and more. (Find a complete list with a map in the book, *The United States and British Commonwealth in Prophecy* by Herbert W. Armstrong, 1967, pp. 12-13. A map without a list is in the free United Church of God booklet, *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*, 2007, p. 75).

Promises of Greatness

Isaac passed the blessings and promises of God on to his son, Jacob: “Therefore may God give you of the dew of heaven, of the fatness of the earth, 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. Cursed be everyone who curses you, and blessed be those who bless you” (Gen. 27:28-29).

This blessing was fulfilled as Britain and America became WORLD SUPERPOWERS, causing other nations to “bow down to them.” The “dew of heaven” and “fatness of the earth” belong to Britain and America, who possess some of the world’s richest farm land and an abundance of natural resources.

Britain’s empire (which later became a Commonwealth of Nations) was foretold by Isaac when he sent his son Jacob to Laban to acquire a wife. He called it “an assembly of peoples”: “May God Almighty bless you, and make you fruitful and multiply you, that you may be an assembly of peoples; and give you the blessing of Abraham, to you and your descendants with you, that you may inherit the land in which you are a stranger, which God gave to Abraham” (Gen. 28:3-4).

On his way to Laban, Jacob had a dream in which God told him, “Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west

and 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).

Britain Descended from 12 Tribes

Jacob married Leah and Rachel, two of Laban’s daughters. He had 12 sons by them and their handmaidens (Gen. 35:22-26). Jacob’s name was later changed to Israel (Gen. 35:10). His 12 sons had families that grew into the 12 tribes of Israel. One of those sons was Joseph, who had two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. It is from those two brothers that Britain and America descended. Here is further evidence:

End-Time Blessings

God told Jacob, “a nation and a company of nations shall proceed from you, and kings shall come from your body” (Gen. 35:11). This is a description of the United States (a nation) and British Commonwealth (a company of nations).

Jacob placed his name (Israel) on his two grandsons, Ephraim and Manasseh, making them equal in status to their 11 uncles (Gen. 48:26). Because the name “Israel” was placed on Ephraim and Manasseh, many Bible prophecies that mention “Israel” are intended for the U.S. and Britain in the last days.

Jacob set Ephraim, the younger son, ahead of Manasseh, claiming Ephraim would become a company of nations and would be greater than his older brother, who would grow into one great nation (Gen. 48:19). Britain became a world-encompassing empire of nations and the U.S. has become the single superpower that now exists in the world.

One final prophecy intended for these “last days” (Gen. 49:1) adds to the evidence that Britain and the U.S. are descended from Ephraim and Manasseh. Jacob said of Joseph (the father of Ephraim and Manasseh):

“Joseph is a fruitful bough, a fruitful bough by a well [and the U.S. and Britain have used their agricultural blessings to feed the less fortunate nations of the world]; his branches run over the wall [the influence of Britain and the U.S. have extended beyond their national borders]. The archers have bitterly grieved them [these two nations are hated by many other nations], but his bow remained in strength [they have maintained military strength], and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God [God has blessed their military efforts in past wars]. ... With blessings of heaven above [good weather] and blessings of the deep that lie beneath [abundant coal, oil, gold, diamonds, silver, iron and other natural resources]” (Gen. 49:22-25).

What other two nations in these last days fulfill all these prophecies? One can only conclude that Britain and the U.S. must be Joseph’s descendants!

National Captivity Prophesied

Britain and the U.S. were blessed by God so that the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph would be fulfilled. God cannot lie (Titus 1:2).

God does not have to continue to bless people who REJECT Him and his way of life. He told Israel that He would bless them if they obeyed Him but He would curse them if they disobeyed (see Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28). The British and Americans are turning their backs on God more and more, rejecting his laws and way of life.

Where will the sins of Britain and America ultimately lead them? To national captivity (Lev. 26:31-35, Deut. 28:36-37, 41, 47-52, 64-68).

Who will their captor be? In history, the ASSYRIANS took captive the 10 tribes of Israel (including Ephraim and Manasseh) in 721 B.C. History is likely to repeat itself, for God calls the Assyrian the “rod of his anger” whom He uses to punish an ungodly people (Isa. 10:5-6).

Where are the Assyrians today? Just as the Israelites migrated from ancient Assyria (where they were captives) into northwest Europe and America, the Assyrians themselves migrated into what is now Germany.

Bible prophecy indicates that Germany will lead a union of 10 European nations that will take Britain and the U.S. captive. That is why it is no surprise that Britain voted to separate from the E.U.!

We’ll look at prophecies regarding Europe next month.

(To be continued!)

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Is There Hope After Suicide?

Suicide is the last act some people will do in this life. Will it keep them out of the Kingdom of God?

By Gregory Dullum

Life is the most precious thing we have. It is a GIFT FROM GOD! For those who had difficulty conceiving, this statement is very real. For the rest of us, we only need to read Genesis 1 to realize all life originated from God at creation.

Life can only come from life. Human life is considered by most societies to be very precious; even SACRED. That's why murder is such a serious crime.

Murders make headlines! But there is another form of taking human life that doesn't clamor for the limelight. It's often a source of embarrassment and confusion; it's rarely mentioned in obituaries and is usually spoken about in hushed tones. That form is suicide—taking one's own life.

Suicide in the World

Suicide committed by unbelievers in the world is TRAGIC. It's a major cause of death among teens. It's also a problem among war veterans who have difficulty returning to civilian life.

Every so often, news headlines announce that suicide rates are up, or that a famous person committed suicide, sparking conversations about this hush-hush subject.

In our discussions, we may ask each other, how can someone in his (or her) right mind take his (or her) own life? Within our question lies the answer. Victims of suicide are usually not in their right minds.

We also may wonder about the spiritual fate of those who take their own lives. When suicide is the last act that people commit in this life, will it affect their afterlife? The Bible says murderers will not

be in the kingdom of God (Rev. 22:14-15). Is suicide self-murder that will keep people out of the kingdom of God? Is it an unpardonable sin?

Many undoubtedly have been influenced by the Roman Catholic view of suicide, which has been taught for about 1,600 years—since Augustine.

The Catholic View

The Catholic Church officially believes suicide can be a ticket straight to hell, as explained in the book, *This is Catholicism* by John Walsh (1959):

“Q. 2. *What does the Fifth Commandment forbid?*”

“The Fifth commandment forbids the taking of human life on one's own authority, for God alone is the author and owner of every life, and only He has the authority over it. ...

“Q. 3. *What are mortal sins against the Fifth Commandment?*”

“One may sin mortally against the Fifth Commandment by suicide, murder, mercy killing, abortion ...

“Q. 4. *Why is suicide always a mortal sin?*”

“Deliberately to take one's own life, or even to attempt to take it, or even really to desire to take it, is always a mortal sin, because God alone is the master and owner of human life, and only He may lawfully determine when a man's life is to end” (p. 63).

The Catholic Church calls the commandment against murder the fifth instead of the sixth. It also uses the term “mortal sin,” which is defined this way:

“Mortal sin is a serious offense against the law of God. ...

“To commit a mortal sin is the most vile and fearsome thing that a person can do. It is an act hideous in itself, for by mortal sin a person designedly snubs God, scorns His wisdom, and despises His goodness, to grovel before a creature. It is an act frightful in its consequences because its penalty is hell” (Walsh, p. 41).

In spite of this condemnation of suicide *by name*, the Catholic belief system offers *some hope* for suicide victims. In order for a sin to be a mortal sin (sending one to hell), the following conditions must be met: “he knows or suspects that what he is doing is very wrong, gravely evil, seriously sinful; he is fully aware of the fact that he is doing it; with complete liberty he chooses and wills to do it. If even one of

these elements is missing, the sin is not mortal but venial” (Walsh, p. 42).

A venial sin is “when the evil done is not seriously wrong; when the evil done is seriously wrong but the sinner mistakenly regards it as only slightly wrong; when the evil done is seriously wrong but the sinner does not fully will to do it” (ibid.).

According to Catholic belief, one who commits a venial sin can still “go to heaven”: “If a person dies with venial sins on his soul, his entrance into heaven is delayed until he has expiated and atoned for his sins” (Walsh, p. 43).

It can be argued that most people who commit suicide are *not* in their right minds and are *not* fully aware of their actions. Wouldn't this mean suicide is a venial sin? If so, why state that suicide is ALWAYS a mortal sin (leading to hell)?

The Catholic belief system is flawed, for there are no such things as mortal sins, venial sins, eternal souls and an ever-burning hell that is punishment for sinners. This strong stance against suicide may have been established with good intentions: to scare people away from considering it.

The Jewish View

Jews also take a very dim view of suicide. In their 1998 book, *The Ten Commandments*, Dr. Laura Schlessinger and Rabbi Stuart Vogel write, “Judaism and Christianity reject the idea that our bodies are ours to do with as we wish. ...

“Since our bodies are not ours, not only is the taking of another life forbidden, but so is the taking of our own life. If we believe that life is a gift from God, we forfeit certain rights with the acceptance of that gift. Namely, we cannot terminate the lease prematurely. Though the individual contemplating suicide may feel that life is unfair or God is punishing him or her, taking one's own life potentially undermines the cosmic order of the universe” (pp. 186-187).

Just as the Catholic faith seems to provide an escape from hell for extenuating circumstances, the Jewish faith also offers compassion for sufferers:

“The rejection of suicide is an attempt to force a person to find meaning rather than taking the easy way out. The physical and emotional condition of terminally ill people, like those suffering from advanced

Know Your Bible

By Charles Nenner

1. What were the pagan priests called whom Elijah killed at the Brook Kishon?
2. Who had 12 barrels of water poured on a sacrifice and it still burned?
3. How many days a week did the Pharisees usually fast?
4. Which apostle leaned against Christ's bosom at his last Passover?
5. How many chapters are in the Book of Revelation?

(Answers on page 5)

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Suicide

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stages of AIDS, challenges the compassion of a no-suicide policy, but the theological difficulties of establishing acceptable criteria for suicide are too problematic. [In other words, there are too many problems saying suicide is *acceptable* under certain conditions.] The Jewish perspective on suicide is that the individual has sinned only if he has killed him or herself ‘with one’s full wits.’ Most people who kill themselves are at wit’s end. In this situation, the suicide most usually occurs in the midst of depression. Unless it can be proven that the individual killed him or herself as a decided, informed act, it is not considered deliberate. The despondent suicide would be given burial rights and respect.

“The Catholic Church’s doctrine is similar. Grave psychological disturbances, anguish, suffering, or torture can diminish the responsibility of the one committing suicide. The eternal salvation of people who have taken their own lives is, of course, God’s venue” (Schlessinger and Vogel, pp. 187-188).

This last sentence is VERY IMPORTANT. Ultimately, *it is God’s decision* what will be the fate of those who commit suicide.

Church View of Worldly Suicide

We in the Church of God are not worried about what will happen to worldly people who commit suicide. We don’t mourn as others who have no hope (1 Thes. 4:13).

For most people, their “day of salvation” is in the FUTURE (Rev. 20:5, 11-13). Those not called by God during their human lives will be resurrected back to human life in the Great White Throne Judgment. They will be given God’s spirit and will have a chance to live God’s way at that time (Ezek. 37:1-6, 14). They are NOT condemned to hell!

How they died in this life has no bearing on this resurrection. The person who committed suicide will rise next to the murderer, his victim, and the person who died a natural death.

Suicide in the Church

The topic of suicide becomes more complicated when the person who commits it is IN THE CHURCH. Our time of judgment is NOW (1 Pet. 4:17). When a church member’s last act is to take his or her own life, is it an unpardonable sin that will keep the church member out of the kingdom of God?

Notice what we, in the Church of God, have written about suicide *in the past*. This formed my belief system as I grew up in the church.

“There are hundreds of those in our society *who take their own lives*. But this, too, is *violating* the sixth commandment! It is God who gives life—and no man has the right to take that God-given life, even the one to whom it has been committed as a steward. For such a one is *refusing* to fulfill the purpose for his creation—and is in effect *condemning* and BLASPHEMING the very Creator in one of the strongest possible ways!” (*The Ten Commandments* by Roderick C. Meredith, 1960, 1968, p. 92, emphasis his).

The Bible plainly states that murderers will not be in the kingdom of God (Rev. 22:14-15). They are bound for the lake of fire (Rev. 21:8). Blasphemers against the holy spirit are similarly condemned (Mark 3:29). Like the Catholic teaching, this was probably written with good intentions to discourage people from committing suicide, but offered no comfort for loved ones affected by the tragedy.

Some church messages delved into why people commit suicide.

On April 7, 1969, I was told in a sermon from Richard Plachae that suicide was Satan’s counterfeit for repentance. People come to a low place in their lives, and instead of turning to God and taking the proper step of repentance, they choose to end their lives.

On Aug. 18, 1974, Art Mokarrow said in a Bible study, “As long as there is a prize and rules to life, we are positive toward life. No one likes to lose. When mankind starts to lose, they get angry and frustrated. Job 3:25. Job was afraid he had lost the game of life.

“Inflation is escalated loss. *Man cannot cope with loss*. That produces the increase in suicide.”

In a March 7, 1975, Bible study, David Antion said, “When we fear something unpleasant, we escape, if not physically, then mentally. The mile-a-minute talker hides himself. You can’t get a word in edgewise. To protect the self, one may be a braggart, or always right.

“Drinking is another means of escape. Most alcoholics hate alcohol. But they hate life more than alcohol.

“The ultimate form of escape is suicide. Life is too scary. People are afraid to live life.”

Church View Mellowed

The church’s view on suicide mellowed over the years. When Dr. Meredith’s booklet, *The Ten Commandments*, was reprinted in 1977, there was no mention of suicide when discussing the sixth commandment.

When the United Church of God published its booklet, *The Ten Commandments*, in 1998, it left out any mention of

suicide as well. It does mention that *some forms* of killing were NOT MURDER:

“The Sixth Commandment does not specifically apply to manslaughter—deaths caused accidentally through carelessness or other unintentional actions. Such deaths, although serious occurrences, are not considered—by the laws of God or man—to fall into the same category as premeditated murder” (*The Ten Commandments*, The United Church of God, 1998, p. 44).

The Bible on Suicide

What does the Bible itself say about suicide? It says very little, other than to describe a few instances of it happening.

Let’s look at five examples of suicide recorded in the Bible: Saul, his armor-bearer, Ahithophel, Zimri and Judas.

King Saul was severely wounded in battle and didn’t want to be taken prisoner by the Philistines. He asked his armor-bearer to kill him but the armor-bearer refused. So Saul fell on his own sword. The armor-bearer then fell on his sword as well (1 Sam. 31:3-5). The Bible makes no comment as to the morality of this.

Ahithophel was a man who gave good advice and expected it to be heeded. When Absalom heeded the contradictory advice of Hushai instead, Ahithophel couldn’t bear his rejection. “Now when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled his donkey, and arose and went home to his house, to his city. Then he put his household in order, and hanged himself, and died; and he was buried in his father’s tomb” (2 Sam. 17:23). Again, there is no condemnation of his deed.

When King Zimri saw that his city was captured in battle, “he went into the citadel of the king’s house and burned the king’s house down upon himself with fire, and died” (1 Kings 16:18). Zimri was wicked, but suicide isn’t listed as one of his sins (vv. 19-20).

The most well-known suicide in the Bible is that of Judas, who betrayed Christ. He became remorseful after his betrayal and tried to give back the 30 pieces of silver, but the Jewish leaders wouldn’t accept it. “Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself” (Mat. 27:5). Judas is *often mentioned* negatively as the one who *betrayed* Jesus, but he is nowhere in the Bible condemned for *taking his own life*.

In the Everyday Study Edition of the *New Century Bible*, a one-page article titled “Murder” states:

“Suicide or ‘self-murder’ is not specifically prohibited in either the Old or New Testament (see, for example, 1 Samuel 31:4-5), but in a long tradition following Augustine (fifth century C.E.) Christians

have viewed killing oneself, no matter what the circumstance, as a violation of the sixth commandment” (1996, p. 79).

Suicide Is Not Murder

Is suicide truly breaking the sixth commandment, “You shall not murder”?

Murder is defined as “The unlawful killing of one human being by another, especially with premeditated malice” in *The American Heritage Dictionary* (1992, p. 1189).

It is doubtful that all suicides are “unlawful.” Are there *really* laws forbidding suicide? What would be the penalty under such laws?

Suicide is NOT committed by one human *against another*.

Some suicides *could be* committed with MALICE *against oneself*, if they are committed while suffering from DEPRESSION. “Psychoanalytic theory interprets depression as anger turned inward against the self” (*Introduction to Psychology* by Ernest Hilgard, Richard Atkinson and Rita Atkinson, 1975, p. 466). Not everyone agrees with this interpretation.

The Bible states, “For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it” (Eph. 5:29). If this is true of some suicide victims, their act may not be caused by malice, but by SELF-LOVE. They may think, “I hurt *beyond what I can bear*; the ONLY way to bring RELIEF is to kill myself.”

Other suicides may be a result of misplaced LOVE for others. They may sincerely believe their loved ones *will be better off* without them.

Contemplating Suicide

What causes people to commit suicide? It usually is considered when one is overwhelmed by life’s problems. Many people have contemplated suicide but have never gone through with it. Instead, they dismissed the idea, worked through their problems and went on.

When suffering from depression (a medical condition that is different from merely feeling depressed), people have a much harder time working through their problems. “The chief symptoms of depression are passivity and dejection. The individual experiences an overwhelming inertia: he feels unable to make decisions, to initiate activity, or to take an interest in anything or anyone. He broods over his inadequacies and worthlessness, has crying spells, and may contemplate suicide” (Hilgard, Atkinson and Atkinson, p. 466).

Radio commentator Glenn Beck is an example of someone who suffered from depression and contemplated suicide. In his book, *The Seven Wonders That Will*

Change Your Life, co-authored with Keith Ablow, M.D., (2011), Beck wrote, “There was a time several years earlier when I was clinically depressed. I lived in Louisville, Kentucky, at the time and would drive by a highway bridge abutment on my way to work every day. In my mind, that hunk of concrete had my name on it. Often, as I approached it I would step on the accelerator. A couple of times I had even veered toward it. But I always drove right by. I could never take that final step. I was too much of a coward. ...

“Don’t get me wrong. I wanted to do it. I *wanted* to die back then. Really and truly, I did. You can feel so trapped by depression that suicide seems like a logical way out. The illness hijacks your brain. You wrongly believe—with all your heart—that death is the only answer, the only way to make everything okay again. Fortunately, a friend of mine took me to see a doctor who started me on medication. In the days before the medicine began to work I was holding on by a thread” (p. 22).

Obviously, Beck didn’t commit suicide. The medicine helped. Later, he realized life didn’t have him trapped. There were always choices that can be made.

One choice is to get closer to God, the giver of life (2 Chron. 7:14). Our loving Father *does not want us to die!* He wants us to LIVE (Ezek. 33:11, Deut. 30:19-20, Ps. 56:9, 2 Peter 3:9)!

Satanic Influence

On the other hand, *Satan wants us dead*. Fortunately, God limits Satan’s ability to harm us (Job 1:9-10). That doesn’t mean he won’t try to get us to harm ourselves.

When Satan tempted Jesus, he tried to get Him to jump from the pinnacle of the temple (Mat. 4:5-7), which would have been viewed as an act (or attempt) of suicide.

When Jesus cast out demons from one man, they entered a herd of swine, causing the swine to rush into the sea and drown. This was mass suicide, although it involved animals and not humans (Luke 8:26-34).

Before Judas betrayed Christ and later committed suicide, “Satan entered Judas” (Luke 22:3). Since Satan influenced Judas to betray Christ, could he have influenced him to commit suicide as well?

Satan is the god of this world (2 Cor. 4:4). He is the prince of the power of the air (Eph. 2:2). Even if he and his demons are not directly involved with every sui-

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Know Your Bible Answers

- 1) Prophets of Baal. 2) Elijah. 3) Two.
- 4) John. 5) 22.

Fun Fact

of creation, history, holidays & the Bible



Drawing and Fun Fact are courtesy of NAPS. The Hundred Years War between England and France actually lasted 116 years.

Witerature

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

Being George Washington by Glenn Beck, Threshold Editions, 2011, pp. 149-150.

With God on Our Side

“During the revolutionary era most colonists believed that God had played a large part in all the victories of the patriots. They believed that the establishment of a free nation was destined to them by God and that fighting was a divine cause. After all, how else could they have survived against the world’s greatest military power for so long?”

“Colonial religious leaders regularly preached that liberty was an inalienable right, handed down by a higher power. The Founders were always hardheaded realists about the chances of victory and concerned about human nature’s tendency toward greed, but they never wavered in the belief that the cause of American liberty was divinely inspired.”

Ps. 56:8-11, Rom. 8:31, Luke 1:27

Quotable Quotes

“Recession is when your neighbor loses his job. Depression is when you lose yours.”

—(attributed to) Harry S Truman

Memory Scripture

“For with God, nothing will be impossible.”

—Luke 1:27

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dal individual, Satan still broadcasts attitudes of depression that can cause people to think suicide is their only answer.

Not Fully Accountable

Suicide is not usually committed by people in their right mind. There are many possible causes. They may be in deep depression, under great mental stress and/or physical pain, or at their wit's end. The side effects of certain medication can cause suicidal thoughts. And Satan can tempt people to do things they would not do otherwise.

A minister in the Church of God committed suicide this past May. He had been one of my ministers when I was a child and was someone I greatly admired.

Dr. Meredith, who wrote the church's harsh criticism of suicide in the 1960s, described the tragic death of this minister in kinder terms: "He was under a great deal of stress and was sometimes not 'himself' according to his wife and many others. He was under medical treatment and at the time he took his life was undoubtedly in one of the spells under deep depression. ...

"[W]e feel that [this minister] will eventually be resurrected and be honored for what he did do in the decades of faithful service to God's people when his physical and mental condition were normal."

Suicide is NOT the unpardonable sin. The unpardonable sin is to willfully, with all one's faculties, refuse to submit to God and deliberately choose to live a way of rebellion, with contempt for God's laws. Suicide victims don't turn their backs on GOD. They aren't thinking straight as they turn their backs on a LIFE filled with anguish, seeking *relief* from *overwhelming* pain and suffering.

Suicide Is a Tragic Loss

This is NOT to say suicide is okay or a good option for handling our problems. Suicide is NEVER the RIGHT answer! *Never* think that causing our own DEATH can be the answer to LIFE's problems.

"Suicide is a crime against the self and against God. Many people, isolated and depressed, often forget that they have a duty to become a blessing unto the world, each in special ways. Each suicide is a profound loss for all humanity and history, since the person's contribution and the subtle or dramatic impact that might have been [are] lost" (Schlessinger and Vogel, p. 188).

Suicide is indeed a tragic, profound loss. But from what I see in the Bible, it's NOT an unpardonable sin that will keep someone out of God's kingdom.



Gun Violence Reported in Calif., Minn., Ill. & Fla.

Violence has hit the news in June.

"Before he fatally shot a U.C.L.A. professor he had studied under, a gunman apparently killed a woman near his home in Minnesota, then drove to California planning to gun down two professors, but found only one of them, law enforcement officials said Thursday [June 2].

"The gunman, identified as Mainak Sarkar, killed Prof. William S. Klug on Wednesday morning, then took his own life, leaving a note asking that someone check on his cat in his apartment in St. Paul, Minn., the Los Angeles police chief, Charlie Beck, said. In his apartment, police found what they described as 'a kill list,' including the names of Dr. Klug, another U.C.L.A. professor and a woman who lived in nearby Brooklyn Park, Minn.

"Los Angeles officials alerted the police in Brooklyn Park shortly after midnight, and the officers who went to the address found 'an adult female who was deceased of an apparent gunshot wound,' said Mark Bruley, deputy police chief of Brooklyn Park" ("U.C.L.A. Gunman May Have Targeted 2nd Professor and Killed Woman" by Ian Lovett, Richard Pérez-Peña and Jack Healy, *The New York Times*, nytimes.com, June 2, 2016, p. 1).

Two days later, *The New York Times* ran this story:

"It is Friday night in Chicago, and the Memorial Day weekend is just getting started. The Police Department plans to deploy more than a thousand extra officers to deal with the violence they fear will intensify with the unofficial start of summer.

"There is no stopping the gunfire, which comes in bursts and waves, interrupting holiday barbecues, igniting gang rivalries, engulfing neighborhoods, blocks, families.

"From Friday evening to the end of Monday, 64 people will have been shot in this city of 2.7 million, six of them fatally. In a population made up of nearly equal numbers of whites, blacks and Hispanics, 52 of the shooting victims are black, 11 Hispanic and one white. Eight

are women, the rest are men. Some 12 are shot in cars, 11 along city sidewalks, and at least four on home porches.

"It is a level of violence that has become the terrifying norm, particularly in predominantly black and Latino neighborhoods on the South and West Sides. With far fewer residents, Chicago has more homicides than Los Angeles or New York" ("A Weekend in Chicago: Where Gunfire Is a Terrifying Norm" by Monica Davey, *The New York Times*, nytimes.com, June 4, 2016, pp. 2-3).

Within a fortnight, a Muslim terrorist entered a night club in Florida that was frequented by homosexuals and shot more than 100 people.

"Dozens of bodies were removed overnight Monday [June 13] from a popular gay nightclub here [Orlando, Fla.] as investigators tried to piece together what had led to a shooting rampage 24 hours earlier that left 50 people dead, including the gunman, and 53 wounded" ("Orlando Nightclub Shooting Leaves Loved Ones Waiting in Anguish" by Lizette Alvarez and Richard Pérez-Peña, *The New York Times*, nytimes.com, June 13, 2016, p. 1).

Why so much violence? The gunmen may have had different motives, but the bottom line is this: we are in the last days, and it was prophesied to be like this (2 Tim. 3:1-3). The end time will be "as the days of Noah" (Mat. 24:37), and the days of Noah were "filled with violence" (Gen. 6:11).

N. Korea Tests Missile

"A day after North Korea launched an intermediate-range ballistic missile into high altitude—after five consecutive launch failures—the country's state-run media proclaimed the test a success on Thursday [June 23], and quoted Kim Jong-un, North Korea's leader, as boasting that his arsenal could strike United States forces in the Pacific" ("North Korea's Successful Missile Test Shows Program's Progress, Analysts Say" by Choe Sang-Hun, *The New York Times*, nytimes.com, June 22, 2016, p. 1).

North Korea may be part of "kings from the east" who will exist at the end time (Dan. 11:40-44, Rev. 16:12-16).