

News Flash:

Billy Graham Is NOT in Heaven!

The famous preacher thought he was going there, and professing Christians think he made it.
But a reliable source tells us he didn't make it!

by Gregory Dullum

World-renowned evangelist Billy Graham died Feb 21. He was a popular and well-respected Protestant preacher. Over the years, many U.S. presidents had consulted with him.

Graham preached that when we die, we go to heaven. He undoubtedly believed he was going there. Most professing Christians probably assume he is there, looking down on them.

But guess what? HE DIDN'T MAKE IT. How do I know? I have it on the best authority: God tells us so in his inspired Bible!

In the traditional "Christian" view of heaven, our immortal souls leave our physical bodies upon death and ascend to heaven. Those souls are fully conscious, sentient beings. Some people may believe we sprout wings and halos as we become angels.

God plainly tells us in the Bible that when we die, we lose all consciousness. Our LIFE ENDS when we die. We don't go on living as disembodied souls.

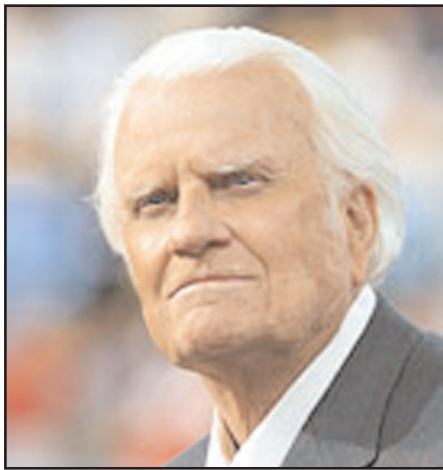
The prophet Ezekiel tells us twice that we have NO *immortal* soul. Our SOULS DIE. "The soul who sins shall die" (Ezek. 18:4, 20).

Humans Are Dust

God told the first man Adam that he was a MORTAL being; he *wouldn't live forever*. "In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return" (Gen. 3:19).

God didn't say, "your body is dust but YOU will go on living *as a spirit being*." He said "DUST YOU ARE."

We humans are physical creatures who return to dust when we die. King



World renowned and well-respected Protestant preacher Billy Graham died Feb. 21.

David knew that: "What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Will the dust praise you? Will it declare your truth?" (Ps. 30:9).

No Consciousness After Death

The grave is a place of destruction, where the body decomposes. There is no consciousness there. "Shall Your lovingkindness be declared in the grave? Or Your faithfulness in the place of destruction? Shall your wonders be known in the dark? And your righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?" (Ps. 88:11-12).

Billy Graham and others who have died are not in heaven singing praises to God accompanied by harp music. They are silent: "The dead do not praise the LORD, nor any who go down into silence" (Ps. 115:17).

King Hezekiah knew that if he died, his days of praising God were over. He begged

God to spare his life with these words: "For Sheol [the grave] cannot thank You, death cannot praise You; Those who go down to the pit cannot hope for Your truth. The living, the living man, he shall praise You" (Isa. 38:18).

King David knew there was no conscious continuation of life after death when he said to God: "For in death there is no remembrance of You; in the grave who will give You thanks?" (Ps. 6:5).

David's son, King Solomon, wrote: "For the living know that they will die; but the dead know nothing, and they have no more reward. ... Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going" (Eccles. 9:5, 10).

David's Not in Heaven

King David was described as a man after God's own heart (1 Kings 11:3, Acts 13:22). He was not without sin, but when he sinned, he repented wholeheartedly. If anyone in the Bible should have gone to heaven, you would think that David did. HE DIDN'T.

The Apostle Peter said, "Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. ... For David did not ascend into the heavens" (Acts 2:29, 34).

Jesus Christ, whom we know came from heaven and returned to heaven after his death, gave us a list of everyone who has died and gone to heaven. Notice all the names on his list: "No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is

BILLY GRAHAM

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Billy Graham

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the Son of Man" (John 3:13). Not *one single person* has ever died and gone to heaven—except for Jesus Christ Himself!

Heaven, as a place to go when we die, is just a FAIRY TALE PLACE. It makes for some good jokes—for example, see "Smile Awhile" on this page—but *it's not real!*

If David didn't go to heaven, neither did Billy Graham! So what happened to David, Billy Graham, and all who have died? Are they gone forever? No!

Twice Jesus Christ referred to death as a sleep—a time of unconsciousness—from which we will awaken (Mat. 9:24, John 11:11). In these two instances, Jesus

brought people back from the dead to human life in the flesh.

Brought Back from the Dead

There are nine times in the Bible where humans are brought back from the dead to *continue* their HUMAN lives.

1. Elijah raised the widow's son (1 Kings 17:17).

2. Elisha raised the son of the Shunamite woman and her husband (2 Kings 4:32-35).

3. A dead body being buried came back to life when it touched Elisha's bones (2 Kings 13:21).

4. Jesus raised a synagogue ruler's 12-year-old daughter from the dead (Mark 5:35-42).

5. Jesus raised the son of the widow of Nain (Luke 7:12-15).

6. Jesus raised Lazarus from the grave (John 11:14, 38-44).

7. When Christ died on the stake, many saints came to life from their graves (Mat. 27:52-53).

8. Peter raised Dorcas (or Tabitha) from the dead in Joppa (Acts 9:36-37, 40).

9. Paul raised Eutychus, who fell from the third-story window and died (Acts 20:9-12).

In each case, the dead person was dead—sleeping—and they were brought back to life. They had not gone to heaven to "be with the Lord" and then suddenly yanked back to earth!

What Happens When We Die?

If we don't go to heaven when we die, is this life all there is?

Solomon wrestled with this question and he gives us the answer. He realized that we humans are physical, just as the beasts of the earth. Our bodies decompose in the grave. But there is more to human beings than our physical bodies. We also have a spirit in us that returns to God upon death.

"I said in my heart, 'Concerning the estate of the sons of men, God tests them, that they may see that they themselves are like beasts.' For what happens to the sons of men also happens to the beasts; one thing befalls them: as one dies, so dies the other. Surely, they all have one breath; man has no advantage over beasts, for all is vanity [temporary]. All go to one place: all are from the dust, and all return to dust. Who knows the spirit of the sons of men, which goes upward, and the spirit of the beast, which goes down to the earth?" (Eccles. 3:18-21).

The man—the body—goes into the ground and returns to dust just as beasts do. However, there is a spirit in man that goes upward. It leaves the body and returns to God!

"Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it" (Eccles. 12:7).

Part of Billy Graham—his body—is lying in the grave. Another part of Billy Graham—his spirit—did go to heaven, where it will be stored until a time in the future when it will be placed into a new body and brought back to life.

The Spirit in Man

What is this spirit in man? It's not his ghost. It's not an immortal soul that goes on living after the body dies.

The spirit in man is a spirit God places inside of us that gives us our intellect. It explains why man is so much more developed than animals. We have language skills that animals don't have. We have dreams and ambitions and desires that don't exist in the animal world. "For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of man which is in him? Even so, no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. 2:11).

The spirit in man records the essence of who we are—our character, our personalities and our memories. But the spirit in man *requires a body* to be active. It's similar to a recordable DVD with a movie of our life being made. By itself, the DVD has no action. It's a round, silver-colored plastic disk with a hole in the middle. You can stare at it all you want; you can hold it up to the light, but you can't see the movie until you put it in a DVD player. When you put it in a DVD player, the movie *comes to life!*

When we die, the spirit—the "DVD" recording of who we are and how we have lived—is removed from the machine (our bodies) and stored in heaven until it will be placed in a new machine (a new body). At that time, "the movie will play again" and

Smile Awhile

"A merry heart does good, like medicine" (Prov. 17:22). Here is this month's dose:

Jake, Johnny and Billy died and went to heaven. "Welcome," St. Peter said. "You'll be very happy here if you just obey our rule: Never step on a duck. If you step on a duck, the duck quacks, they all start quacking and it makes a terrible racket."

That sounded simple enough until they passed through the Pearly Gates and found thousands of ducks everywhere. Jake stepped on one right away. The ducks quacked, making an unholy racket, and St. Peter came up to Jake bringing him a ferocious-looking Amazon woman. "I warned you if you broke the rule you'd be punished," St. Peter said. Then he chained the Amazon woman to Jake for eternity.

Several hours later, Johnny stepped on a duck. The duck quacked, they all quacked, and St. Peter stepped up to Johnny with an angry-looking, shrewish woman. "As your punishment," St. Peter told Johnny, "you'll be chained to this woman for eternity."

Billy was extremely careful not to step on a duck. Several months went by. Then St. Peter came up to him with a gorgeous blonde and chained her to Billy, uniting them for all time. "Wow!" exclaimed Billy. "I wonder what I did to deserve this?"

"I don't know about you," said the beautiful woman, "but I stepped on a duck."

The SABBATH SCOOP

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we will live again! This is called a resurrection. We will have no memory of what happened between our death and our resurrection. We are unconscious in the grave.

New Bodies

“But someone will say, ‘How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?’ Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies. ... So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body. ... The first man [Adam] was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven. As was the man of dust, so are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man” (1 Cor. 15:35-36, 42-44, 47-49).

Those who are Christ’s will have their spirits placed inside of new SPIRIT BODIES. (They will NOT be placed back into physical bodies as happened in the nine instances we mentioned earlier.) In our spirit bodies, we will look like the resurrected Jesus Christ, shining in glory as He does!

When Is the Resurrection?

When does this happen? It doesn’t happen immediately after we die. It will happen when Christ returns to this earth!

Job knew this. He said, “If a man dies, shall he live again? All the days of my hard service I will wait, till my change comes. You shall call, and I will answer you; you shall desire the work of your hands” (Job 14:14-15).

When will the dead be raised? NOT *immediately after they die!* “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. 15:50-52).

The last trump is the seventh trumpet to sound right before Christ returns to the earth! As Christ is returning to this earth, true believers will rise from the grave as spirit beings and meet Christ *in the air* (within the earth’s atmosphere)!

“For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air” (1 Thes. 4:16-17).

Christ will be returning *to the earth* to establish God’s kingdom ON EARTH. His true believers will rule with him on earth—not heaven—for 1,000 years (Rev. 11:15, 20:4). This is the FIRST resurrection (v. 5b).

Will Billy Graham be part of the first resurrection? That is God’s call, but scriptures indicate he will NOT be. He was NOT part of the *true* Church of God. He did not keep the seventh-day Sabbath, which is a sign between God and his people (Ex. 31:13). Although he did the best he could with what he understood, *God did not call him*. God did not open his mind to understand the truth He has revealed to those of us in the Church of God. He taught mainstream Protestant religion, which holds to some beliefs that are anti-law. They believe the law of God was done away and ALL WE NEED is faith in Jesus. Christ addressed people like this when He said, “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name, cast out demons in your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’ ” (Mat. 7:21-23).

Graham will most likely be among “the rest of the dead” who will not live again until the thousand years are finished (Rev. 20:5a).

At that time, he will be brought back to human life and taught God’s truth from the Bible (vv. 11-12). This time, called “the great white throne judgment,” will be a time of learning God’s truth and living God’s way *here on earth* (not in heaven). During this time, Satan will be bound so he won’t be able to deceive

these humans brought back to life (vv.1-2). They will be given the holy spirit to help them understand and accept God’s truth. They will know that the true God is the LORD (Ezek. 37:12-14).

According to the Bible, *Billy Graham did not go to heaven when he died!* He went into the GRAVE. He is no longer conscious. His inanimate spirit returned to God. At the time of the great white throne judgment, God will place Graham’s spirit into another physical body and he will live again as a human, being taught aspects of God’s way of life that he did not understand during his previous lifetime.

At the end of the white throne judgment period, if he embraces the truth of God that will be taught to him, he will then be given a spirit body and will live forever! If he rejects God’s way, he will be cast into a lake of fire and burned up (Rev. 20:13-15).

Although I have used Billy Graham as an example, my intent was not to single him out; what we have discussed applies to all of humanity. All who have not been part of God’s called and chosen in this life will have their opportunity in the white throne judgment period.

For Those Called Now...

For those of us whom God is calling now, we have the opportunity to be part of the first resurrection. It is a better resurrection (Heb. 11:35). We won’t have to wait until after the 1,000-year period to become spirit beings. We’ll be changed at his coming.

To be part of that first resurrection, we must repent, be baptized, and receive the holy spirit through the laying on of hands (Acts 2:38). We must then be led by that spirit (Rom. 8:14). To receive eternal life, we must live by the 10 commandments—including the Sabbath (Mat. 19:16-19)—and live by all of the instructions God has given us in the Bible (Mat. 4:4). We must never give up living God’s way. We must endure to the end of our lives or until Christ returns—whichever comes first (Mat. 24:13).

Conclusion

Billy Graham is not in heaven. But that doesn’t mean he has lost his chance for salvation. He will get his chance in the white throne judgment period.

We, however, have our chance now! We must not blow our chance for eternal life; it’s the only chance we have.

“For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?” (1 Pet. 4:17).

Know Your Bible

by Charles Nenninger

1. What kind of bird fed Elijah at the brook Cherith?
2. “What kind of bird did Noah send out first? Second?”
3. When “the voice of the turtle” is heard in the land, what animal is making the noise?”
4. How many did God set aside who did not bow their knee to Baal?
5. How many prophets of Baal were slain by Elijah?

(Answers on page 4)

WHY ARE CHILDREN KILLING CHILDREN?

What is causing school shootings? What can be done to stop them?

by Gregory Dullum

“On Tuesday, it was a high school in small-town Kentucky. On Monday, a school cafeteria outside Dallas and a charter school parking lot in New Orleans. And before that, a school bus in Iowa, a college campus in Southern California, a high school in Seattle.

“Gunfire ringing out in American schools used to be rare, and shocking. Now it seems to happen all the time.

“The scene in Benton, Ky., on Tuesday [Jan. 23] was the worst so far in 2018: Two 15-year-old students were killed and 18 more people were injured. But it was one of at least 11 shootings on school property recorded since Jan. 1, and roughly the 50th of the academic year.

“Researchers and gun control advocates say that since 2013, they have logged school shootings at a rate of about one a week. ...

“Some of the shootings at schools this year were suicides that injured no one else; some did not result in any injuries at all. But in the years since the massacres at Columbine High School in Colorado, Virginia Tech and Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn., gun safety advocates say, all school shootings seem to have lost some of their capacity to shock” (School Shooting in Kentucky Is Nation’s 11th of Year. It’s Jan. 23” by Alan Blinder and Daniel Victor, *The New York Times*, nytimes.com, Jan, 23, 2018, pp. 1-2).

Another School Shooting

Less than a month later, another school shooting grabbed the headlines. This time, it was in Parkland, Fla.

“A former student opened fire with a semiautomatic rifle at a Florida high school Wednesday, killing at least 17 people and sending scores of students fleeing into the streets in the nation’s deadliest school shooting since a gunman attacked an elementary school in Newtown, Connecticut.

“The shooter, who was equipped with a gas mask and smoke grenades, set off a fire alarm to draw students out of classrooms shortly before the day ended at one of the state’s largest schools, officials said.



“Authorities offered no immediate details on the 19-year-old suspect or any possible motive, except to say that he had been expelled for disciplinary reasons from Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, which has about 3,000 students” (Grieving another school shooting” by Terry Spencer and Kelli Kennedy, Associated Press, *Southeast Missourian*, Feb. 15, 2018, p. 1A).

WHY is this happening? Why are children killing children? Why is this happening NOW?

Are More Gun Laws Needed?

After an Oregon school shooting in May 1998, radio commentator Charles Osgood said the problem was GUNS. *We have too many guns in this country and they are too accessible to kids.* He said in the U.S. in 1997, more than 5,000 children died from gunshot wounds. In Japan, not one. Japan has strict gun-control laws. We don’t.

Going back to the Sandy Hook tragedy: “Just hours after Adam Lanza’s first bullet was fired, Mayor [of New York City] Michael Bloomberg urged the president to ‘send a bill to Congress to fix this problem.’ Because Congress could legislate away evil madness, you see” (*Hands Off My Gun* by Dana Loesch, 2014, p. 22).

After the Parkland, Fla. shooting, students around the nation walked out of classes in an organized protest. They stood outside for 17 minutes at 10 a.m. on March 14; one minute for each of the slain students. Marches and protests are held to get the government to do something to stop school shootings. But what can the government do?

MORE gun laws or STRICTER gun laws will not stop gun violence!

“But where have many of the mass

tragedies occurred? Virginia Tech. Aurora, Colorado. Schools. And what do these locations have in common? They are designated ‘gun-free’ zones” (Loesch, p. 38). So, you see, it’s ALREADY illegal to bring guns to school to kill students. MORE laws or STRICTER laws will not make a difference!

“Why are progressives unable to recognize that their gun control was already in place? Guns were already forbidden. I am still waiting for someone to explain how more laws like a gun-free school zone, in a state with some of the most stringent gun control laws in the country, would have prevented the actions of Adam Lanza, a man whose intent was to violate the law on that terrible day.

“The twenty-year-old Lanza could not have legally obtained the firearms he used, because it is illegal in Connecticut to purchase or possess a firearm under the age of twenty-one. Because he couldn’t legally obtain a gun, Lanza stole his mother’s firearms. Theft is a crime. That is not failure of gun laws; it is a failure of personal responsibility. What will more redundant laws do when the laws already in effect fail to stop a criminal—who, by the very definition of the word, has no intention of following the law anyway? More laws for criminals to not follow? Does the [political] left expect criminals and madmen who already don’t follow the laws on the books to suddenly become law-abiding citizens because progressives pass new anti-gun laws?” (Loesch, p. 39).

Guns Are Not the Problem

Guns are not the problem. We have had guns in our homes since the first white settlers built their first log cabins on our

shores. As a nation, we have *always had guns*. But we have NOT always had children killing children.

The presence of guns in a home does not turn children into murderers. Radio commentator Dana Loesch spoke about growing up in the Ozarks:

“It also never occurred to me that our grandparents’ or our parents’ firearms were toys with which we could play. We knew what firearms were and that you can’t un-pull a trigger; we were taught that lesson from the very first moment we could walk. Guns aren’t toys. The lesson about guns was so ingrained in our communities that people had them in gun racks in their pickups, without any fear that a child might grab one. That was unheard of. My grandpa’s own handcrafted gun case didn’t have a lock and was used more to display his collection than to keep them locked away. Our parents taught us not to touch a hot stove, not to run into the street, not to play with guns. Most important, we were taught a respect for life” (Loesch, p. 4).

So why are children killing children today? Loesch hit upon one reason.

Not Taught to Respect

Our children are not being taught to respect other people’s property or their persons. Bible-based principles have all but disappeared in the education of our young.

After World War II, society changed. There was no longer an emphasis on living by “the Good Book.” Instead, it became a time of “anything goes” which led to permissive sex, mind-altering drugs and an attitude of rebellion against authority. There was rapid moral decay.

Now the children of the 1950s and ’60s have grown up and have had children of their own. And, generally speaking, their children ended up worse than their parents! They have not been taught to respect their elders. They have not been taught the difference between right and wrong. They have not been taught to live moral, up-standing lives and to “love your neighbor.”

What have they been taught instead? That life has no meaning. We are simply animals that evolved and have no purpose.

We also have become very affluent. That has had a negative effect on our society. Judge Robert Bork, in his 1996 book, *Slouching Towards Gomorrah*, explains this process.

“Affluence reappeared in the late 1940s and in the decade of the 1950s and has remained with us since. ... Affluence brings with it boredom. Of itself, it offers little but the ability to consume, and a life centered on consumption will appear, and be, devoid of meaning. Persons so afflicted will seek

sensation as a palliative, and that today’s culture offers in abundance. ...

“With the time and energy of so many individuals freed from the harder demands of work, the culture turned to consumerism and entertainment. Technology and its entrepreneurs supplied the demand with motion pictures, radio, television, and videocassettes [and now DVDs, live streaming, cell phones, social media and Web sites], all increasingly featuring sex and violence. Sensation must be steadily intensified if boredom is to be kept at bay. [The violence in movies has to be “ramped up” to keep the same amount of excitement. That’s why today’s war movies are filled with bloody, gory battle scenes instead of actors just falling dead as in movies our parents watched.]

“A culture obsessed with technology will come to value personal convenience above almost all else, and ours does. ... Among the consequences, however, is impatience with anything that interferes with personal convenience” (pp. 8-9).

Get in the way of someone’s personal desires and wishes, and they turn violent!

Many young people have been raised to be selfish and demanding. They have been taught to strike out and hit and kill whatever gets in the way of their immediate pleasure. If they didn’t learn it from watching their parents, they learned it from today’s culture; the music, movies, television shows and literature.

Not Taught to be Peacemakers

Our children are not taught to be peacemakers. What does *this world* call a PEACEMAKER? In the “Old West” the “peacemaker” was the Colt .45 pistol—a weapon designed to KILL *quickly and easily*.

How does THIS WORLD view peacemaking? *I am at odds with you. I want peace. BANG! You’re dead. Now I have peace.*

One time while attending an awards ceremony at the Cape Girardeau Sheriff’s Office, the sheriff quoted scripture. He said, “Blessed are the peacemakers.” To whom was he referring? To the deputies who had death-dealing pistols strapped to their hips!

Instead of teaching us how to make peace, much of our entertainment teaches us how to seek revenge. Revenge is a powerful motivator. It makes good movie plots. Many movies are based on the idea that someone has wronged another, so the vic-

CHILDREN KILLING CHILDREN

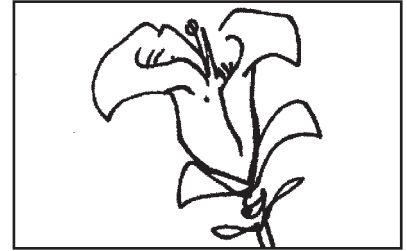
Continued on Page 6

Know Your Bible Answers

1) Ravens. 2) Raven; dove. 3) Turtle dove. 4) 7,000. 5) 850.

Fun Fact

of creation, history, holidays & the Bible



Drawing and Fun Fact are courtesy of NAPS

The white trumpet lily, which blooms naturally in springtime, was brought here from Bermuda. They are often called “Easter Lilies” because they bloom around Easter time.

Witerature

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

Enthusiasm Makes the Difference by Norman Vincent Peale, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1967, p. 238.

Talking Too Much

“Enthusiasm is not necessarily a flashy or heated phenomenon, but rather a strong, controlled motivation, and may be present in the quiet and restrained person, as well as in the vigorous extroverted individual.

“Of the people whom I have observed who fit this description, the late Calvin Coolidge comes to mind. He was such a quiet man, he was referred to as ‘silent Cal.’ But he had a personality in which enthusiasm operated under cool control. He was one of few politicians who used words sparingly. His speeches were short and succinct. He said what he wanted to say and no more. He won the liking of a great many people by not talking too much.”

Prov. 10:19, 13:3; Eccles. 6:11

Quotable Quotes

“We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.” —Winston Churchill

Memory Scripture

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God” —Mat. 5:9

Children Killing Children

Continued from Page 5

tim spends the next two hours of celluloid getting even. And when he is finally successful, the audience cheers! This may make a good story, but it makes a bad example to live by (Rom. 12:17-21).

Out of Touch with Reality

In order to get soldiers to kill the enemy, our military desensitizes them; it trains them to think of the enemy not as real people with families and ideas and goals and problems, but as simply targets; just something to shoot at; something to be destroyed.

I believe our video games and violent movies are desensitizing our young people's minds in much the same way.

Children spend hour after hour destroying zombies and aliens and enemy soldiers on their TV, computer and phone screens. The graphics of these games are so real, it makes it hard for young minds to distinguish fantasy from reality. After so much killing and destroying of unreal targets, it becomes easier to point a gun at a real person and pull the trigger.

Satanic Influence

Obviously, not every child who plays a video game goes out and shoots up a school. Some individuals are more influenced by the world around them than others. And *whose world* is this? Satan is the god of this world (2 Cor. 4:4).

Satan is *filled* with VIOLENCE (Ezek. 28:16). It would not surprise me to learn someday that some school shooters and other mass murderers were directly influenced by Satan or his demons. Murder is an evil act committed by a sick or evil mind. Satan can influence people to be evil. One demon-possessed man in the Bible was "exceedingly fierce" and sought to harm others (Mat. 8:28).

We Are in the End Time

Another reason for the violence is a *fulfillment* of PROPHECY. These end times are prophesied to be violent.

"But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: for men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God" (2 Tim. 3:1-4).

Christ prophesied about this end time: "And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold" Mat.

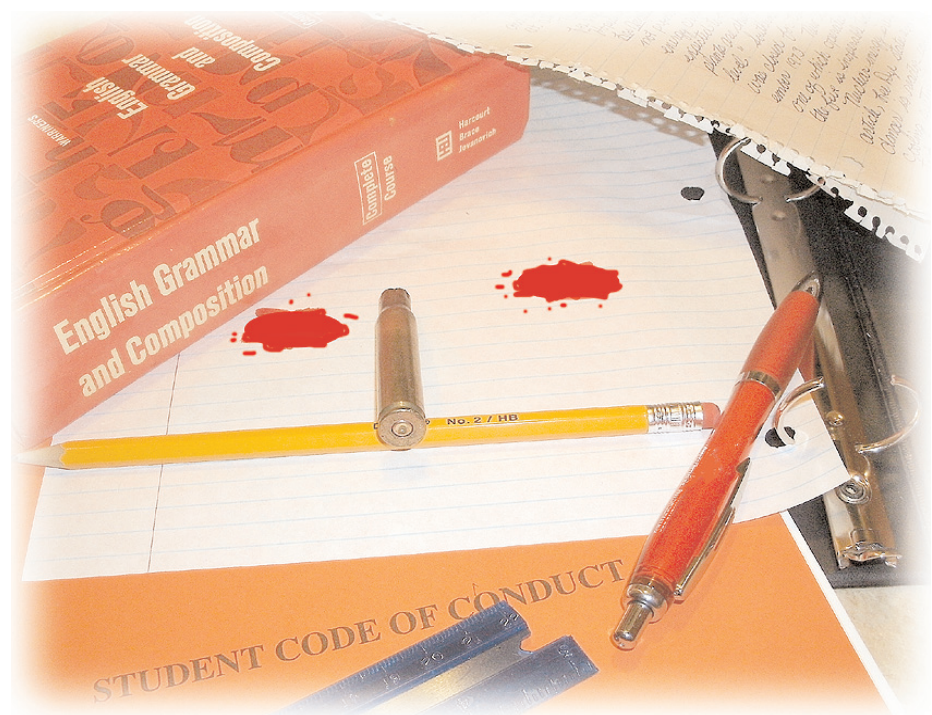


Photo by Gregory Dullum

24:12). The more this country breaks God's laws (which define love), the less love will be shown.

But in the end time, there will be *little* LOVE and *much* VIOLENCE. Matt. 24:38 tells us this time will be as it was in the days of Noah. What was it like to live before the flood?

"Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. ... The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. And God said to Noah, 'The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth'" (Gen. 6:5, 11-13).

What is God going to do about the violence which fills our land today?

"And say to the people of the land, 'Thus says the LORD God to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the land of Israel [The U.S. is descended from Manasseh, one of the tribes of ancient Israel]: "They shall eat their bread with anxiety, and drink their water with dread, so that her land may be emptied of all who are in it, because of the violence of all those who dwell in it. Then the cities that are inhabited shall be laid waste, and the land shall become desolate; and you shall know that I am the LORD" ' " (Ezek. 12:19-20). God will send national captivity. When? It may be soon! A few verses later God says, " 'For I am the LORD. I speak, and the word which I speak

will come to pass; it will no more be postponed; for in your days, O rebellious house, I will say the word and perform it,' says the LORD God" (v. 25).

Violence Will End

There is a happy ending to all this. Jesus Christ will return and establish his government and peace will reign in this land.

Isaiah 60:18 tells us, "Violence shall no longer be heard in your land, neither wasting nor destruction in your borders."

Micah 4:4-5 adds, "But everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree, and no one shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken. For all people [now] walk each in the name of his god, but [when God's kingdom comes] we will walk in the name of the LORD our God forever and ever."

The causes of violence in our world won't exist when God's kingdom comes. People will be taught God's way of life, respecting and loving each other. They will be taught the true purpose of life so it won't seem empty and meaningless. Satan will be bound so he can no longer influence people to be evil. Entertainment will be cleaned up. There won't be a constant diet of murder and mayhem being fed to our young people to get them used to killing.

There will be no more violence in our schools and on our streets. We will at last experience peace because we will be ruled by the Prince of Peace and the law of love.

And we, who are training to be *TRUE peacemakers*, (not pistols and not policemen) will rule with Christ as sons of God (Matt. 5:9, Rom. 8:16-17, Rev. 5:10).