

THE SABBATH SCOOP

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Do All Dogs Go to Heaven?

What happens to animals when they die? Some believe they go to heaven. Will our pets ever live again?

By Gregory Dullum

The sun had set, the Sabbath had begun, and another work week had come to an end. I sat on a wooden dining-room chair as our dog, Lady, sat on her haunches, staring up at me.

I looked into her big brown eyes and said, "You've had a good life." The editor at the newspaper where I work, David Bloom, had given Lady to us. They had called her Daisy for the short time they had owned her. We gave her a more regal name and I reminded her of that. "You should be glad that you went through life as Lady Dullum instead of Daisy Bloom," I told her.

Lady had been our dog since she was six weeks old back in 1998. In April of this year she would turn 12 (84 in dog years), which was getting old for a beagle/rat terrier mix.

Early the next morning, I got up and let Lady go outside as I had done nearly every Sabbath morning for the past 11 years. After making a pot of coffee, I let Lady back in the house and sat down at my computer. As she had habitually done, Lady sat at my feet. I invited her front paws onto my lap and I gave her a "big hug" and told her what a good dog she was. I think this was a highlight of her week—her customary hug and compliment from the "big dog" in the house.

Lady seemed extra playful that Sabbath morning as my wife, Marie, and daughter, Melissa, got up. Melissa played with her a little, but she didn't have much time. Our Sabbath service time had been switched that week from 2:30 p.m. to 10 a.m. and we had to get ready for church.

When services ended about noon, we fellowshiped for awhile and went out to lunch with a friend. When we pulled up into the carport, we could see Lady lying in the backyard grass, sleeping in the afternoon sun. She didn't wake up to greet us, which was unusual.



photo by Melissa Dullum

Lady Dullum in 2007.

Before I had a chance to check the mail and bring my briefcase into the house, Melissa called out from the kitchen that Lady wasn't breathing. I opened the gate to the backyard and examined Lady more closely. There was no up-and-down movement to her rib cage and stuff had come out of both ends of her. Lady was dead.

Later that Sabbath, Marie held open a black garbage bag and I used a shovel to place Lady's stiff body inside. The next morning I dug a small grave beside the concrete birdbath and buried Lady in the corner of the backyard.

Some Think Animals Go to Heaven

Shortly after Lady died, I read an article titled, "Jake will be missed!" by Laura Brothers. Like Lady, Jake had died while the author was away and she wondered how death had come to her dog. She wrote: "All these things I think about and ponder in my heart, and hold on to my belief that all creatures go to heaven. And that I will meet him again some day, along with all the other beloved animals and friends who have gone before me" (*Pet Prints*, March 2010, p. 2).

What became of Lady, Jake, and other pets that have died? Are they gone forever? There was an animated movie made in 1989, titled, *All Dogs Go to Heaven*.

Do they really? Will we see our pets again in the kingdom of God?

If we base our beliefs on Bible teachings instead of movie titles, we can know the truth.

The State of the Dead

What is the state of the dead? Do the dead (either human or animal) continue a conscious existence as spirit beings after dying? Or is it all over?

"But for him who is joined to all the living there is hope, for a living dog is better than a dead lion. 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. 9:4-5, 10). The dead know nothing! They are no longer conscious!

A Future for Humans

However, there is a future for humans! Mankind was made in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27). We are the children of God, destined to become glorified spirit beings (Rom. 8:16-17). How can that happen if we cease to exist at death?

Humans are physical. We are not spirit beings. We do, however, have a spirit in us. It's what powers our minds and makes us different from animals. It enables higher thinking ability and makes it possible for us to have a relationship with God. The Bible calls it the "spirit of man" (1 Cor. 2:11). It is not the man—the man is flesh—it is a spirit inside him. Human character, memories, personality, etc. are recorded and saved in that inanimate spirit.

When we humans die, we go into the grave and return to dust (Gen. 3:19).

DOGS GO TO HEAVEN?

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THE JERUSALEM CHURCH

Office of deacon is created and Stephen is martyred.

By Gregory Dullum
Part 3

The apostles had been released from prison by an angel and were back preaching in the temple the next morning! The captain of the temple took officers and went to the apostles. They brought the apostles without force before the high priest, Caiaphas, and other Jewish leaders.

Before the High Priest

“And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest asked them, ‘Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name [Jesus]? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man’s blood on us!’ Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, ‘We ought to obey God rather than men’ ” (Acts 5:27-29).

With great BOLDNESS, the apostles told the leading Jews that THEY were GUILTY of MURDERING Jesus Christ (v. 30)! But Jesus did not stay dead. The apostles told the high priest they had witnessed his resurrection (v. 31).

The council, which was made up of Sadducees who didn’t believe in a resurrection, became *furious!* They wanted to KILL the apostles (v. 33)!

As they deliberated on how to execute these Christians, Gamaliel, a wise teacher of the law who was respected by all, stood up and asked that the apostles be put outside the room while he addressed the council.

When they were alone, Gamaliel said, “Men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what you intend to do regarding these men” (v. 35). He reminded the council of two other men who had led similar groups but they died and their groups disbanded. “And now I say to you, keep away from these men and let them alone; for if this plan is the work of men, it will come to nothing; but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it—lest you even be found to fight against God” (vv. 38-39).

The council agreed with Gamaliel (v. 40) and yet the apostles did NOT get off *scott free!* They were brought back into the room and BEATEN (v. 40)! Again, they were *commanded NOT to speak in the name of Jesus*, and they were released.

Although sore and bruised from their beating, the apostles were not beaten spir-

itually or emotionally! Instead of being *worried, depressed or afraid* by what had happened, they *rejoiced!* “So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ” (vv. 41-42).

From that time on, the Sanhedrin, the governing body of Jews in Jerusalem, was NOT responsible for *initiating* persecution against the Church of God. Persecution came from other sources but the leading Jews in Jerusalem, following Gamaliel’s advice, kept hands off!

A.D. 32 — Deacons Ordained

There were three types of people in Palestine in the early days of the Church.

First, there were the “Hebrew” Jews who spoke Hebrew or Aramaic and lived under the Pharisaical laws in Palestine. They were born in Judea and thought they were superior to Jews who were born outside of Judea. These Jews kept hands off the Church following Gamaliel’s advice.

A second group were the Hellenists. These were Greek-speaking Jews who were born outside of Judea. They didn’t follow all of the Pharisaical laws. They were zealous missionaries, seeking to convert gentiles to Judaism. (Paul and Stephen were converted from this group of Jews.)

The third group of people were the non-Jews, called gentiles. If a gentile became influenced by Judaism, he was referred to as a “Judaizer.”

Gentiles were not called by God into his church in the early years. For the first few years, all of the church members were Jews—either “Hebrews” or “Hellenists.”

After the church had existed for about a year, a conflict arose in the Jerusalem church between the Hebrews and the Hellenists.

“Now in those days, when the number of disciples was multiplying, there arose a murmuring against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution” (Acts 6:1).

Why were the Hellenist widows being neglected in the daily distribution of food? Perhaps it was because those in

charge of distributing the food were Hebrews and they continued to believe as they had been raised—that the Hebrews were better than the Hellenists. Or it may have been that the Hebrews outnumbered the Hellenists in the Jerusalem church and the Hebrews were served first. By the time the Hellenists widows received their portion, little remained.

This unequal distribution of food became a problem. It led brethren to murmur against each other and threatened to divide the church! It wasn’t a matter of doctrine; it was just a physical matter! The church hasn’t changed much in 2,000 years. Today, people in the Church of God still get upset and offended over physical matters.

The problem came before the 12 apostles and they saw it for what it was—a small, physical matter that did not compare to the great spiritual work they were doing. They had their eyes on the bigger picture! How did they handle the problem? Did they quit doing the work to feed widows?

“Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, ‘It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word’ ” (Acts 6:2-4).

There are several points we should

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learn from these verses.

Peter was NOT the lone ruler of the church. If he were, this matter would have been brought to him and he would have appointed the seven men. Instead, we are told that ALL 12 APOSTLES were involved in the process. They set the qualifications for the office of deacon and then turned the process over to the brethren. The 12 apostles didn't choose the deacons. The brethren selected them from among themselves!

After the brethren selected seven candidates, the candidates were brought before the apostles. All 12 apostles—not just Peter—prayed and laid hands on the seven men, anointing them as deacons (vv. 5-6).

The first seven deacons in the Church of God were: Stephen, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch.

It is very likely that these seven deacons were not only Hellenists but also leaders of the Hellenist group. We have detailed knowledge only of Stephen and Philip. Nicolas may have figured prominently in a group which later disrupted the church: "Nicolaus, the Antiochene proselyte, figures in the second-century Christian literature as the founder of the Nicolaitans who (as we learn from the letters to the Seven Churches of Asia in the Apocalypse) endeavored to relax the requirements of the Council of Jerusalem" (*New Testament History* by F. F. Bruce, 1972, p. 219).

What was the result of creating this new office of deacon to take care of the physical needs of the Jerusalem church? "And the word of God spread, and the number of disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith" (Acts 6:7).

Stephen Preaches

One of the seven deacons was Stephen, who is described in the Bible as "a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit." He performed miracles: "full of faith and power, [he] did great signs and wonders among the people" (Acts 6:5, 8).

"Stephen belonged to the Hellenistic Synagogue called the Synagogue of the Freedmen; its membership embraced Jews from Cyrene, Alexandria, Cilicia and Proconsular Asia" (Bruce, p. 220).

The Jews in this synagogue disputed with Stephen but were unable to win their arguments. "And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke" (Acts 6:9-10).

What did they argue about? "It was in the synagogue that he (Stephen) first



drawing by Gregory Dullum

Those who stoned Stephen laid their outer cloaks at the feet of Saul—who was later converted and called Paul.

publicly voiced his criticism of the Temple order and his conviction that the order had now been decisively superceded by the coming of Jesus. This led to a regular debate in the synagogue in which Stephen's arguments proved irrefutable" (Bruce, p. 220).

Stephen taught that Jesus was the new High Priest and the old order of the priesthood was done away. His fellow Jews could not successfully argue against him. What did they do instead?

"So they paid some men to say, 'We heard him speaking against Moses and against God' " (Acts 6:11 *Good News Bible*).

Stephen was accused of two-fold blasphemy. He was accused of abrogating the law of Moses, who established temple service, and against God, because the temple was considered to be where God was present and where worship of Him was conducted (Bruce, p. 220).

These false accusations stirred up "the people, the elders, and the scribes," who attended the Synagogue of the Freedmen. They took Stephen before the Sanhedrin—the Jewish council that governed all the Jews in Jerusalem—and formally accused him, again using false witnesses (Acts 6:12-15).

Stephen Accuses His Accusers

Stephen now stood as the lone Christian before the same Jewish council that Peter and John—and later all 12 apostles—had stood before. On the last occasion, the apostles had been beaten and released. Stephen probably wondered if a similar beating awaited him.

Stephen was given the opportunity to answer the false accusations. His reply is recorded in Acts 7.

He summarized the Hebrew scriptures that we call the Old Testament. He showed how they didn't stop with Moses

as the end-all, but pointed toward the coming of Jesus Christ. He accused the Sanhedrin of being in the same position as the rebellious Israelites who wished to return to Egypt and who worshiped the golden calf (Acts 7:39-41). This did not win him any favor from the council!

Then Stephen boldly made his point. "You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers, who have received the law by the direction of angels, and have not kept it" (Acts 7:51-53).

"Such language could not fail to provoke their anger, and Stephen, seeing their hostility and realizing the certainty of an unfavourable verdict, appealed from their judgement to that of the heavenly court, where Jesus stood as witness and counsel for the defense" (Bruce, p. 224).

This explains why Stephen looked to heaven and saw the vision of Jesus at God's right hand (Acts 7:55-56).

When he reported aloud what he saw, the council reacted harshly! They were already stinging from Stephen's accusations. His claim to see Jesus in heaven was too much for them to handle. "Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; and they cast him out of the city and stoned him.... And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, 'Lord Jesus receive my spirit.' Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, 'Lord, do not charge them with this sin.' And when he had said this, he fell asleep [dead]" (vv. 57-60).

The men who threw the sharp, heavy rocks at Stephen did not wish to have their throwing arms hindered by their outer cloaks. Before they cast their stones, they removed their outer garments and laid them at the feet of a man named Saul (v. 58).

Was it legal for the Jews to kill Stephen without a Roman trial?

"The most probable account of the matter is that during the closing part of Pilate's administration, especially when he was in Caesarea, the Jewish rulers knew that they could take certain discreet liberties.... Where public order was not imperiled, an incident like the stoning of Stephen would be over and done with long before it reached the procurator's ears, and on such a *fait accompli* he may well have judged it wise to turn a blind eye" (Bruce, p. 226).

(To be continued!)

College Letters:

Lessons of Life Learned at Ambassador College

Flying first class makes a difference.

[Editor's note: When I returned to college after keeping the Feast of Tabernacles in Wisconsin Dells, I flew first class. A friend from college, John Vierra, flew coach on the same flight.]

Monday, 9-29-75, 12:55 p.m.

Dear Mom and Brad,

Just thought I'd drop a line and let you know I not only got out here okay, but I got out here FABULOUSLY! I'm not kidding! FIRST CLASS MAKES A DIFFERENCE!

The seats are about twice as wide as coach, and consequently, so are the seat-back tables. After I sat down and put my case under the seat, the ramp agent came up to me and asked me where my friend was sitting. I said in coach. He said he knew that, but where. I didn't know. He asked what his name was. I told him. He then went back, and I heard him call out "John Vierra." Not too long later, John came moving up beside me with all his stuff. The ramp agent gave him a new ticket envelope with a new seat assignment... next to mine.

The stewardess had asked me if I wanted anything to drink before we took off, but I declined. Later, in the air, she asked me again, and I had a manhattan. John followed suit. I was thinking I could use 2 Tithes to pay for the drink. In coach they cost \$1.50. But in first class they're FREE! If I had remembered that, I wouldn't have ordered such a strong drink, and would have had two instead.

I saw you wave good-bye from the window. I guess you saw me, huh?

Anyway, so we took off, and then the stewardess carried all these magazines around and asked if we wanted to read one. Again, I declined. Then came dinner time. I didn't know we'd be served any snack! They brought out cloth napkins, and spread a linen tablecloth on our big seat-tables.

Next, a stewardess came by with a tray, and using some tongs, lifted a white roll of cloth onto our tables. It was hot and wet. I saw one of the guys across the plane using it to wash his hands and face, so we decided to also. It felt good. Then she came by, and used the tongs to pick them up.

Dinner, for the first time, was hot—a toasted sandwich of beef, turkey, and

cheese, salad, pickle, olives, a huge hunk of brownie, and champagne. I finished it off with coffee. Then we settled back. I wrote my journal and listened to the headset. I may have dozed a little bit, cuz [because] I was so tired.

We finally landed in L.A., and we deplaned. We waited around in the terminal a little, and finally Linda [my sister] walked in. Cathy Widmer was there too. I decided to ask again if there would be room for John, and we finally decided we could squeeze him in. I think he was really glad.

When we got my stuff, Linda wondered what was in the box, so I opened it right then and there, and gave it to her. "Oh goodie," she said. "A plastic bag!" Cathy liked the bag too, so I said she could have the bag. Linda was really impressed by the [stuffed] dog. She had really wanted one. She said in Vegas, if she had won something, she would have got a big stuffed dog. But she was really happy.

She took us back to campus, and I got her stuff out of my footlocker. "It's curtains for Linda," I said. She was surprised about the fudge and cheese. She gave Cathy and me some fudge. But she wouldn't open the cheese, because I would eat it all, she said. Anyway, I took all my stuff to the dorm and then I found Steve [Brooks]. I was up until 4 a.m. or so. Had to get up at 7:30.

I will be on KBAC [Radio] four days a week, with my own show from 5-6 p.m. (PRIME TIME!) Monday through Thursday. Plus, I read the news once on Sunday, and will be on the air once a week during class (Broadcasting) with classmates doing a special show called "SHOWCASE!" It all sounds very exciting.

Then, when I checked my mailbox, I had three letters in it, all from girls. Sue Harper (at college; used to work at Farrell's), Jan Morrison (Farrell's) and Marie Backfisch (AC student in Ozarks for the Feast).

Now I have to answer their letters while I'm in the mood. So, hang in there: Loveyabunches.

Greg

Monday [9-29-75]

Dear Greg,

It is real foggy this morning. It is hard to think about going to work.

Saw the enclosed article in the *Bloom-*

ington Sun. I thought you might enjoy it. Hope you had a good flight home and all is well.

Love,

Mom

[Enclosed was a clipping, "Kennedy publications win again." It began, "For the fourth consecutive year Kennedy high school student journalists returned from the Minnesota High School Press Association annual convention with the top-rated newsmagazine and yearbook in Minnesota." I had been on the staff of the newsmagazine when I was in high school.

Next, I received a card from Sue Kangas, a friend in the Minneapolis North church. The front of the card had printed on it a little girl wearing a big hat with flowers who was holding a basket and had a cat beside her with the message, "With thoughts of you from Sue." Inside was this letter:]

10/2/75

Dear Greg,

Well, hi! Sorry I took so long to catch up on my letter writing. School is keeping me quite busy lately. History is all caught up except for 3 make-up tests which I am not looking forward to. Biology is still a little shakey and speech class is on the verge of awful and falling. As for math class, oh boy...!!!

Anyway! How are your classes coming along? Did you have any catching up to do after the Feast?

Did you go to any activities like Buck Owens? Yes, you did. Now I remember. (Amnesia) Did you go on the Ducks or Dells boat tours? The ducks were pretty fun but the cost was awful. The Dells tour (lower Dells) was more worth its cost (\$5.00) and it was really beautiful scenery plus a relaxing afternoon. There was so much to do and so little time to do it in.

How was your trip back? I suppose you flew. (Must be rough!)

This stationery isn't very roomy.

Guess what. I made it for a part in our high school musical. We're putting on *The Unsinkable Molly Brown*. I play Molly Brown's private maid. Yay Ra Ra! There weren't many parts (39 to be exact) so I was lucky to get a decent part; instead of a townsperson or policeman or something like that. I would have settled for *any* part

but luckily I got a fairly decent part. The maid is French. Wow!!

Well, time and room are drawing this letter to a close. Write soon.

Love,
Sue

October 12, 1975

Dear Greg,

Imagine you need some money by now so I better write. Played bridge Monday night and had top score. I really had some good cards. Even bid a little slam (don't happen too often) and made it. They don't give prizes—I mean gifts. Everyone puts in 25¢ then top score gets \$1.00, 2nd highest 75¢ and low 25¢. I liked the gifts better but it was fun playing anyway.

Wednesday night Mr. Moskel [Mom's minister] called and asked me to make a 50th wedding anniversary cake and sheet cakes to feed 250 for last Saturday night. I really had to work to get it all made on such short notice.

Then Saturday night we went to the social and anniversary party. It was fun to get out but I was so tired.

Brad drove home from there (The Brooklyn Center Civic Center). He is getting pretty good. He doesn't have his license yet. I think he will try to get it this week. He has only been working Sundays since he got back from the Feast. He asked for a few more hours so maybe they will give him some more.

I was offered a secretarial job last week at work by a customer. It would be Vern Gagna's (the guy who used to wrestle [professionally]) secretary. The pay would be about the same as I'm making but it would be much further to drive besides more expenses for clothes so will stay where I am.

Thursday night was Weight Watchers. I lost 9 pounds my first week which was a good start. Have been sticking to it real good so hope to be thin someday.

We have been having a beautiful fall. It got up to 85° today—almost too warm. We dug carrots last week and there must be over 1/2 bushel. They are all sitting here to be cleaned and frozen. We have quite a few squash, onions and melons but that's it. I don't think the onions will keep too good because some are growing already.

Tammy [the dog] chased a squirrel a week ago and must have twisted her leg or pulled a muscle because she still can't walk on it. It did seem to be getting better and then she slid on the kitchen floor and hurt it again. Such is a dog's life.

Well, it's almost bed time so better get going so I can work tomorrow.

Love,
Mom

Dogs Go to Heaven?

Continued from Page 1

Our spirit returns to God in heaven (Eccles. 12:7). It remains inanimate until the resurrection, when it is placed into another body—either a physical or spirit body—depending upon which resurrection (Ezekiel 37; 1 Cor. 15:35-49).

No Future for Animals

There are no scriptures that tell of dogs, cats or other pets romping through heaven. If they did go to heaven, a dead lion (made spirit) would be better than a living (physical) dog—and it's not! No scripture speaks of animals being resurrected. Animals were made for man, and man exists solely on the earth.

Whether human or animal, we both cease to exist at death. There is a difference, though! Human spirits return to God to be placed in another body at the resurrection. Animal spirits do not.

"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 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 spirit of man returns to God in heaven because humans are to become sons of God! Animals were not created to become spirit beings but to serve mankind (Gen. 1:28). Some were made for food (sheep, cattle, turkeys, etc.), some for work (horses, mules, donkeys, oxen, etc.), some for beauty (songbirds, butterflies, etc.), some for companionship (dogs, cats, etc.) and all are part of a natural, physical, ecological cycle. They serve no spiritual use.

Animals do not have the spirit of man! They have the "spirit of the beast." It is what gives them their personality; their limited memories; their ability to learn commands and tricks; to recognize sounds. The "spirit of the beast" is not preserved in heaven. It "goes down to the earth."

Do all dogs go to heaven? In spite of movie titles and the beliefs of some people to the contrary, the Bible reveals that no dog goes to heaven. No cat, no cow, no lion, no bear, either. Animal existence is limited to the few moments of life they enjoy on this terrestrial sphere.

Fun Fact



Drawing and Fun Fact are courtesy of NAPS

Since 1881, any time a new U.S. flag has been designed—following the admission of a state or states—the new banner has been unveiled on July 4.

Witerature

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

A Look Inside... For Better or For Worse by Lynn Johnston, 1989, Andrews McMeel, pp. 42-43.

There's a Spirit in Man

"One day, on impulse, I asked if I could watch an autopsy and permission was granted...."

"I watched as the body was opened. All the components, neatly packed one against the other looked exactly like the diagrams in *Gray's Anatomy*.

"Each organ was carefully removed, dissected, weighed, and recorded in a notebook.

"It occurred to me that this was like one of my father's empty clock cases; the workings out for repairs—or the back of a television set with all the electrical parts removed.

"The difference was that no matter how well it was reassembled, no ordinary current could bring life back to this machine.

"What magic makes a living, loving, thinking person out of flesh and bone?"

"I thought I had lost all faith in spiritual things when Elly died, but here in this macabre setting, my belief in God suddenly returned. Confronted by the harsh reality of death came the knowledge that there must be a reason for life. There was a spirit!"

1 Cor. 2:9-14; Eccles. 7:1-3

Memory Scripture

"But Jesus answered him, saying, 'It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God."'"

—Luke 4:4

U.S. Turns 234—

How Many Years Are Left?

The United States turns 234 years old July 4. How many more years will this nation continue to exist?

The U.S. and British Commonwealth nations exist today because of promises God made to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. We were prophesied to be great nations with strong economies, powerful militaries, an abundance of food, and given control over the gates of our enemies (Gen. 12:2-3, 22:17, 24:60, 27:28-29, 28:14, 35:10-11, 48:3-5, 16, 19, 49:1, 22-25).

As long as Americans obeyed God, He blessed them (Lev. 26:1-13; Deut. 28:1-14). The Bible tells us, “Doing what is right makes a nation great, but sin will bring disgrace to any people” (Prov. 14:34 *New Century Version*).

As our nation turns from obeying God, it will be cursed (Lev. 26:14-46, Deut. 28:15-68). The final curse will be war and national captivity (Lev. 26:25, 31-35; Deut. 28:36-37, 41, 47-52, 62-68).

Our people are rebelling against God! God says through the prophet Isaiah, “Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth! For the LORD has spoken: ‘I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me; the ox knows its owner and the donkey its master’s crib; but Israel does not know, My people do not consider.’ Alas, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a brood of evildoers, children who are corrupters! They have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked to anger the Holy One of Israel, they have turned away backward... You will revolt more and more. The whole head [government] is sick, and the whole heart faints. From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness in it...” (Isa. 1:2-6).

The U.S. can repent and save itself! Nineveh repented at Jonah’s preaching and was saved from destruction (Jonah 3:4-10). God offers Americans that same opportunity: “ ‘Come now, and let us reason together,’ says the LORD. ‘Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured by the sword’ for the mouth of the LORD has spoken” (Isa. 1:18-20).

How many years are left? That depends upon if America repents! Even if our nation fails to repent, we, as individuals, can obey God and be saved from the worst times (Rev. 3:10, Luke 21:34-36)!



Europe in Financial Crisis; Plans Cuts

“Europe’s economic picture darkened further Monday [June 7] as Britain’s prime minister declared the nation’s finances to be worse than feared—requiring sacrifices that will affect “our very way of life”—and the euro slid further toward parity with the dollar.

“From small EU nations like Hungary and Greece to big ones like Germany, which on Monday announced its own harsh austerity measures, the continent’s economic and fiscal crisis is showing no sign of letting of letting up.

“Germany, Europe’s economic powerhouse, promised a raft of spending cuts, vowing to ‘set an example’ for heavily indebted Greece, Spain and Portugal, which are buckling under debt loads and threaten to drag Europe’s currency union down with them....

“Luxembourg Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker—who leads the eurozone finance group—said he was ‘concerned about the abruptness of the fall,’

“The eurozone faces a slow economic recovery that is currently relying far more on exports than growth at home, where people are still reluctant to spend and companies aren’t keen to take on new hires.

“Unemployment in the eurozone reached a 10-year high of 10.1 percent in April....

“Perhaps frightened by the near-bankruptcy of Greece, European nations are now prioritizing budget cutbacks over stimulus spending—in sharp contrast with the United States” (“Germany, U.K. prepare to make painful cuts” by Aoife White and Robert Barr (The Associated Press), *Southeast Missourian*, June 8, 2010, p. 10A.

Britain, whose people are descended from Ephraim, is suffering from financial woes as is America, whose people are descended from Ephraim’s brother, Manasseh. National disobedience to God is promised to bring economic distress on these two Israelite nations (Deut. 28:15, 43-45).

All of Europe is suffering financially. A world dictator called “the beast” in the Bible is prophesied to rise out of Eu-

rope. Adolph Hitler used the financial crisis in pre-W.W. II Germany to propel himself to power. Could the end-time dictator use the current crisis to follow in Hitler’s footsteps?

While European nations are cutting government spending to get out of the financial crisis, the Obama administration and liberal Congress in the U.S. keep piling on more national debt by increasing government spending. Their policies are further weakening the U.S. economy, bringing upon this nation the economic punishment God promised because of our people’s sins.

Iran Has Fuel for 2 Nuclear Weapons

“In their last report before the United Nations Security Council votes on sanctions against Iran, international nuclear inspectors declared Monday [May 31] that Iran has now produced a stockpile of nuclear fuel that experts say would be enough, without further enrichment, to make two nuclear weapons....

“The inspectors reported Monday that Iran has now produced over 5,300 pounds of low-enriched uranium, all of which would have to undergo further enrichment before it could be converted to bomb fuel.

“The inspectors reported that Iran had expanded work at its sprawling Natanz site in the desert, where it is raising the level of uranium enrichment up to 20 percent.... While increasing that to 20 percent purity does not allow Iran to build a weapon, it gets the country closer to that goal” (“U.N. Says Iran Has Fuel for 2 Nuclear Weapons” by David E. Sanger and William J. Broad, *The New York Times* Reprints, May 31, 2010, pp. 1-3).

A nuclear-armed Iran may be part of the “king of the South” prophesied to push at (or attack) the “king of the North” (Europe) at the end time. Europe will respond with fury and occupy the Holy Land, where its armies will battle Christ when He returns to set foot on the Mount of Olives (Dan. 11:40-44; Zech. 14:1-4; Rev. 17:12-14, 19:19-21).