

THE SABBATH SCOOP

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THE JERUSALEM CHURCH

Miracles mark the church's first days as persecution begins.

By Gregory Dullum
Part 2

Persecution Begins

God worked many miracles in the first days of the Jerusalem church. One particular miracle started a process which brought upon the church its first persecution.

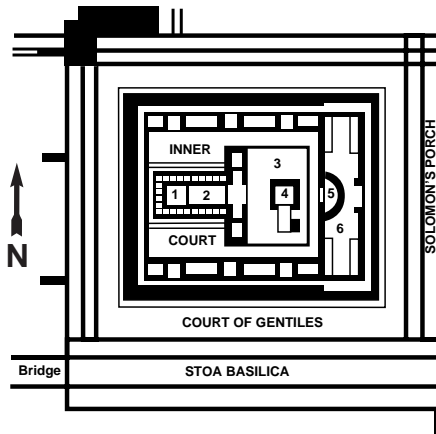
Peter and John went to the temple and healed a lame man who had begged all his life at the temple gate (Acts 3:1-10). The lame man jumped up and told everyone what had happened. A crowd then gathered around Peter and John. Peter preached his second recorded sermon. As he got to the part where he spoke of Christ's resurrection, he and John were arrested by the priests, the captain of the temple and by the Sadducees—a sect of Jews who did not believe in a resurrection—Acts 23:8 (Acts 4:1-2).

Peter and John spent the night in jail (v. 3). How did this affect the Jerusalem church? Did members lose heart and leave? No! The exact opposite happened. The church *grew!* "However, many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of men came to be about five thousand" (Acts 4:4).

God uses *our* TRIALS and PROBLEMS to further *his* cause. The arrest and jailing of two of the church's leading ministers was *NOT* a *setback!* It caused church to GROW and it *opened the door* for the gospel to be preached to the highest-ranking Jews of that time!

Peter and John were brought before the high priest, Caiaphas, and other leading Jews: "their rulers, elders and scribes" (Acts 4:4-6).

Peter was asked by what power the lame man had been healed. Peter, who had cowered in FEAR when questioned about his relationship to Jesus by a *servant girl* on the early morning of the crucifixion; who had vehemently denied knowing Christ three times



drawing by Gregory Dullum

The early church met in Solomon's porch on the eastern side of the temple in Jerusalem. Numbers indicate: 1-Holy of Holies; 2-Holy Place; 3-Court of Priests; 4-Altar; 5-Inner Gate; 6-Court of Women.

when questioned by *common Jews* in a crowd; now BOLDLY answered the question asked of him by the *most POWERFUL Jew in the world!* What made the difference between the morning of the crucifixion and this day? On this day, Peter was "filled with the Holy Spirit" (v. 8). The POWER of God *empowered* Peter!

Peter BOLDLY preached the crucified and risen Christ to these *unbelieving* Jewish rulers (vv. 8-12). He held NOTHING back! He told them, "there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (v. 12), and declared *them* GUILTY of crucifying Christ (v. 10).

These Jewish leaders wanted to PUNISH Peter and John, but they feared the crowd's reaction. The crowd was behind Peter and John; the mass of people gave glory to God because of the miraculous healing God had performed through them. Unable to punish Peter and John, the Jewish leaders resorted to threatening words. They commanded them to stop preaching in the name of Jesus (vv. 17-18, 21).

Peter and John did not cower under these

threats. They wisely replied, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you be the judge. For we cannot but speak the things we have seen and heard" (vv. 19-20).

Peter and John were released, and they immediately returned to their companions in the Jerusalem church. They reported all that had just happened and the entire group prayed to God with one voice. They asked God for the power to speak MORE boldly and to perform MORE miracles (vv. 23-30).

Did they get an answer to their prayer? Yes they did! And they didn't have to wait long! "And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness" (v. 31).

Financing the Church

There was a great disparity of wealth among the first believers. Some were wealthy landowners. Others were penniless paupers. Those who had much burned with a desire to finance the work and to help out their poor brethren.

Believing Christ would return soon, the rich saw no need to hold onto their belongings. Their riches could be put to better use supporting the work of preaching the gospel and helping out their poor brothers and sisters. They weren't forced by the church to give up their land or belongings, but they willingly sold them and brought the money to the apostles to distribute as they saw fit (Acts 4:32-35).

As a result of these donations, two things happened. "With great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus" (v. 33). The work of the church was done with GREAT POWER! And, secondly, "Nor

JERUSALEM CHURCH

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Jerusalem Church

Continued from Page 1

was there anyone among them who lacked" (v. 34). ALL of the brethren had their physical *needs filled* (v. 35).

Because the church was *just beginning*, there were GREAT financial needs and those needs were met by these generous gifts. The church did not require the brethren to give all they had (Acts 5:3-4). It was *voluntary*. And later, as the church expanded, we don't read of this happening in other areas. This practice was limited to the first days of the first church.

The two great needs of 1) doing the work and 2) helping out poor brethren are financed differently today. Nearly 2,000 years later, we know Christ has not returned and his return is still years in the future. We balance our giving with other scriptures that tell us to provide for our families (1 Tim. 5:8, Prov. 13:22).

Instead of selling all we have and giving all the money to the church, we pay a first tithe (10 percent) of our income and give offerings "as we are able" to finance the work (Mal. 3:8, Deut. 16:16-17).

We also pay a "third tithe." Every third and sixth year in a seven-year cycle, we pay an additional 10 percent of that year's income to help the needy in the church (Deut. 14:28-29). Because many governments automatically deduct at least 10 percent from members' paychecks and that money goes to help the poor, including those in the church, members are not required to pay another 10 percent. They are, however, encouraged to give something extra to help the needy in the church who don't qualify for government assistance or who need additional help. Some brethren, however, continue the practice of paying a third tithe every third and sixth year in a seven-year cycle.

Lying to God

As God began his family of spirit-begotten children, He performed many miracles. He used some unusual miracles to drive home an important point to his children: "Don't lie to Me!"

Two church members, a husband and wife named Ananias and Sapphira, conspired to lie to God and his church leaders. They sold property and kept back some of the money. This in itself was not a problem. But they gave the impression that they were giving all the money. As a result of their lies, God struck dead both of them (Acts 5:1-10).

What was the result of this tragic miracle? "So great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things" (v. 11). The church feared to dis-

obey God! (It is interesting to note that this is the first time Luke used the word "church" in the book of Acts to describe these followers of Jesus Christ.)

Church Keeps Growing

The APOSTLES continued to perform signs and miracles (Acts 5:12). The APOSTLES spearheaded the work. Those who were NOT apostles—the *vast majority* of the 5,000 believers—did NOT work miracles. They *supported their leaders* as the leaders did the work!

Where did the church meet for services? "And they were all with one accord in Solomon's Porch."

What was Solomon's Porch? "A stoa or portico was built along all four sides [of the temple], with marble columns 25 cubits high, and ceiled with cedar panels; the royal stoa at the south end had four rows of columns, the others had double rows of columns. The stoa along the eastern side was attributed by Josephus to Solomon" ("Temple," *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*, Bruce M. Metzger and Michael D. Coogan, eds., 1993, p. 733).

A stoa is a covered walk or colonnade with columns on one side—in this case the side facing the temple courts—and a wall on the outside. The outermost corridor on the *eastern* side of the temple was Solomon's Porch. It was about 450 yards long from north to south. The roof, some 40-50 feet overhead, protected the church from the hot rays of the Mideastern sun ("Solomon's Porch," *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary* by Merrill F. Unger, 1988, p.1,209; *Life in New Testament Times* by Ralph R. Gower, 1968, p. 34).

As time went on, the Jewish leaders began to disparage the Jerusalem church which was meeting in the fringes of "their" temple. Their warning to stop preaching in the name of Jesus had done no good. The views of the leaders spread to certain religious Jews—obviously to the Sadducees, who rejected the idea of a resurrection—and probably to the Pharisees as well. None of them dared to join the church. But the common people esteemed the church highly (Acts 5:13).

Multitudes of men and women from Jerusalem and from surrounding communities continued to be converted as they came to the Jerusalem church to be healed (vv. 14-16).

Apostles Imprisoned

The High Priest and his followers (of the sect of Sadducees) became filled with anger at the Jerusalem church. If Peter had been the first pope or pastor general—the lone church leader—he would have been singled out for arrest. But he wasn't. The

first time Peter was arrested, John was too. This time, the Jewish leaders arrested ALL 12 apostles and threw *them all* into the common prison (Acts 5:17-18).

God didn't leave his church leaders in prison! He miraculously rescued them! "But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said, 'Go stand in the temple and speak to all the people all the words of this life'" (vv. 19-20).

The apostles didn't procrastinate. They had no fear of the Jewish authorities who had imprisoned them! Being let out of prison by an angel *strengthened their faith* and caused them to be even BOLDER in their preaching. EARLY the next morning, they were back in the temple preaching, right under the noses of the Jewish leaders! Also note that Christianity is not just a two-hour commitment one day a week for services: the angel described it as "THIS LIFE." It is a whole NEW way of living—a *different* lifestyle! (v. 21).

Meanwhile, Caiaphas called together the council of Jewish leaders and asked to have the apostles brought from prison. The officers went to the prison and found it securely locked up with guards outside. But when the doors were opened, no one was inside! This was reported to the council, and they could not figure out what had happened. Then someone came and told them that the men who had been cast in prison were preaching in the temple!

The captain of the temple took some officers and went to the apostles. This time the apostles were not arrested. No force was used for fear that the crowd of listeners would stone the officers. Instead, the apostles were asked politely to accompany them back to the council. The apostles agreed to come (v. 26).

(To be continued!)

The SABBATH SCOOP

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What's Wrong With Our Weather?

What causes bad weather? Is there a reason why the world has droughts, floods, hurricanes, etc.?

By Gregory Dullum

Is there something **WRONG** with the weather in today's world? Some areas are flooded with torrential downpours while other areas bake with drought! Do violent whirlwinds, tornadoes and hurricanes seem to be more plentiful? Is there a **REASON** for bad weather? Or is everything just part of a natural cycle?

Weather Created Perfect

The almighty God created the conditions that make weather. He created the earth, placed it perfectly in the cosmos, and set it spinning (Gen. 1:1, 4-5). The heat from the sun and the rotation of the earth caused the wind to blow. God created the sky, where weather occurs (vv. 6-7). He created vast seas and dry land which also influence the weather (v. 9).

When God finished creating the conditions that make and affect weather, was there *anything* **BAD** about them? "Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good" (Gen. 1:31). *Everything* God made was **VERY GOOD**—including the weather!

The first man and woman—Adam and Eve—lived *naked* in a garden. They had **NO** clothing and there is no record of any permanent shelter to protect them from bad weather. They didn't hide from harsh winds, cold, driving rain or hurricane gales. And drought wasn't a problem for them: they lived in a lush, green garden (Gen. 2:8-10).

The original state of weather was perfect for human, plant and animal growth! There is no record of violent storms or extreme weather of any kind during the first days of human history. When did the weather change?

After Adam and Eve *sinned*, God told Adam that there would be a curse upon the earth and it would become much more difficult to grow things. This may have included a change in weather, making it no longer pleasant and cooperative for growing things (Gen. 3:17-19).

The Worst Weather Ever

Fast forward about 1,000 years in human history by flipping ahead just three chapters in Genesis, and we come to Noah's flood, the greatest example of bad weather in human history. This one storm erased all human life on the planet, except for eight people aboard

Noah's ark. Talk about a "perfect storm!"

God intervened in the natural course of weather to make the flood occur (Gen. 6:6-7, 13). Why? "Then the **LORD** saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.... So the **LORD** said, 'I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast... for I am sorry that I have made them' " (Gen. 6:5, 7).

God caused bad weather in this case *because of man's sins!* Bad weather can be a form of divine **PUNISHMENT**.

During the flood, God reshaped the earth's surface. He caused some mountains to rise higher than before, disrupting wind patterns (Isa. 2:14). No longer would the world's weather be perfect! After the flood, we read for the first time of famines (caused by drought) and of desert wildernesses (Gen. 12:10, 16:8, 21:14-16, 26:1, 47:13). Some bad weather became part of the natural course of events.

Good Weather Is a Blessing

Good weather—which produces an abundance of crops—could no longer be taken for granted. It became a blessing from God for obedience to Him!

It was part of the blessing given to Jacob (Gen. 27:28). The descendants of Jacob—his grandsons Ephraim and Manasseh (British Commonwealth nations and the U.S. today)—have been blessed with good weather and an abundance of crops because of blessings promised to Abraham and his descendants!

In these "last days" the U.S. and Britain have been blessed by God with great weather (Gen. 48:5, 16; 49:1, 25). But that blessing won't last forever! What must we do to continue to be blessed with good weather and good crops?

God says: "You shall keep my Sabbaths and reverence My sanctuary: I am the **LORD**. If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments, and perform them, then I will give you rain in its season, the land shall yield its produce, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. Your threshing shall last till the time of vintage, and the vintage shall last till the time of sowing; and you shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely" (Lev. 26:2-5). Continued good weather depends upon continued obedi-

ence to God! (See also Deut. 28:1-6.)

Disobedience Brings Bad Weather

What happens if we disobey God?

"But if you do not obey Me, and do not observe all these commandments... I will do this to you... I will make your heavens like iron and your earth like bronze. And your strength shall be spent in vain; for your land shall not yield its produce, nor shall the trees of the land yield their fruit" (Lev. 26:14, 16, 19-20).

To prevent crops from growing, all God needs to do is send bad weather—either too much or too little rain; too high or too low temperatures; hail storms; or strong hurricane-force winds. Although these things may come as *curses* from God, they are *caused* by **OUR sins!**

Similar curses are promised for disobedience in Deut. 28:13-19, 23-24.

God can cause bad weather to get our attention and wake us up spiritually! He stopped the rain for 3-1/2 years, causing a drought during the reign of evil king Ahab (1 Kings 17:1, 18:1, James 5:17-18).

God withheld rain from ancient Israel and Judah because they refused to obey Him (Jer. 2:32, 3:3). History is repeating itself! As the sins of our people increase, God is withholding more and more of his blessings. As our sins increase, our weather will likely worsen (Jer. 5:24-25).

In the latter days, we may experience violent whirlwinds from God as He warns mankind to repent (Jer. 30:23-24).

Jesus Christ said there would be famines before He returned (Mat. 24:3, 7) and He showed John in vision that famine would "ride" at the end time (Rev. 6:5-6). Famine can be caused by several things, but certainly one of those things is bad weather!

Satan, the god of this world, is the "prince of the power of the air" and he, too, can cause bad weather to harm and discourage people—for he hates all mankind. As his rule nears its end, he will show "great wrath"—but he can only do what God allows him to do (Eph. 2:2, Job 1:12, 16-19, Rev. 12:12).

Good weather is a blessing from God. Bad weather entered the scene after mankind sinned and is a tool God uses to punish us and try to get our attention.

When our weather worsens, we should examine ourselves and repent of our sins! God has power over the weather and He can protect us through any "storm"!

College Letters:

Lessons of Life Learned at Ambassador College

We all must go our separate ways. After graduating, put your education to use.

Aug. 25

Dear Greg,

Hi! Sorry we didn't get a letter off to you before college started, but that's the way things go. It was good to get your letter—sounds like you were quite busy. We've been busy too. Grant's job keeps him going & canning & household chores keep me on the move. Grant's had some problems with the boss—seems he likes to pick on everyone and Grant just talked to him & they got some things straight. He got off O.K. for the feast but we don't know if he'll have the job when he gets back. The boss might change his mind. There's a possibility that I might be able to substitute at the high school and elementary. I'm going to see about it Friday.

Well, how's things at college? Do you find it any different & what classes will you be taking? I imagine prices went up too. Will you work or not? I guess you were ready to get back into the swing of things. Both of us do miss going back—(not the school work, but the people). But I guess we all must go our separate ways even though we hate to. But I guess now we have to put to the test what we were taught & make a success out of college. I know that sometimes I feel like I wasted a lot at college and didn't do all I could, but I don't think that one person can get it all. But I'm very thankful that I have Grant & our memories at college. It has made a marked difference in both of us. Marriage does change you an awful lot. It helps you to mature.

Well, enough philosophy and back to reality. Where are you spending the Feast? We'll be at Mt. Pocono and Greg, come Sept. 2 (Trumpets last year) check your diary. Seems Grant mentioned something about that. He took me out w/your dorm for breakfast. I must say we sure had a strange courtship—especially first semester. Oh well, such is life.

Hope you have a very successful year at college & keep in touch. We'd like to keep up with college happenings. Grant will probably put his 2¢ worth in so I'll quit, but before I do: Take care & be good... By the way, watch out for those golf courses.

Sept. 5

Sorry this hasn't gotten mailed yet—It doesn't look like Grant is a very diligent



photo by Gregory Dullum

Jan Morrison, right, kids around with Shelly Richardson and Tom Aadland while working at Farrell's Ice Cream Parlour. Jan wrote a letter to me on a paper placemat while on break.

letter writer. Last night we had rehearsal for Coleen's wedding and we got back late. Must run—have lots to do to get ready for Trumpets—it's been one year since I first dated Grant—oh well. Take care & be good.

Love,

Grant & Jenny [Spong]

Postmarked Sept. 12, 1975

[The following letter was written on the back of a Farrell's paper placemat:]

Dear Greg,

Ah, yes! Once more it is break time in the Farrell's eating room, and cause to write is knocking at the door of opportunity—

This is Jan here. I thought I would fill you in on the last bit of summer happenings here. So far, we have a Taylor's Falls camping trip and a trip to Sweddy's new bowling alley to chalk up.

Taylor's falls was great— We camped, saw *Jaws* for \$2.00 (what a deal) ate free burgers and even square danced and swam in the lake at midnight. If you haven't seen Bob Olson satchet down and allemande you haven't lived (slide, slide, slide). What surprised me was he was good. *Really* good!

I was wondering— how's school? Send a P-card (that's short for postcard). Fill

me in on what's new, will you, okay? I'll write more on another break!

P.S., I really don't think I'm a martyr, but I'm DYING to hear from you! Very truly,

Jan Morrison

P.S.S. Sorry so messy— (I'm rushed).

Sept. 20, 1975

[Another Farrell's waitress, Sue Harper, wrote me from her college in Evanston, Ill.]

Dear Greg,

It's not that I didn't answer your letter for a month, I just got to school yesterday, so your letter had been sitting in my box for a month! I have been out west before that. I met some friends of mine out in Las Vegas & stayed there for a week—it was really an experience—what a crazy city! But the weather was so beautiful—hot sun—*no* humidity (heaven) beautiful sunshine. I loved it—even at night when I thought it felt like 65° it was like 85°—I love that weather—you might be around there—you're lucky—as I sit in 60° rain—I'm envious.

From there I went to Colorado to the Rockies to supposedly backpack BUT—I got some bronchial infection—coughed like crazy for 2 weeks so the doc said if I go mountain climbing I could die or get worse—so we just went camping in the base of the mountains—but it was so beautiful there—I just sat in awe in the midst of God's gorgeous creation—the mountains and surrounding lands are so beautiful—I would like to have just stayed there forever.

My 747 plane flight to Las Vegas was real neat—I loved the earphones & selection of audio entertainment & just flying & looking at the view!

Well, now it's back to the old grind! I just moved in yesterday—up 4 flights of stairs & with my cough & crud in my respiratory system I'd get to the top & cough & wheeze like crazy! But I like my room & it is good to see some of my friends again—but I had such a fun, relaxing summer & love everybody back in Minn.! & (even FARRELL'S) it's hard to get back into it—when classes start I'll really freak out! I'm too lazy after such a fun summer. HELP!

You must be almost to midterms by now & I haven't even started! My schedule looks something like:

[A chart shows remedial education for children with learning disabilities at 9 a.m. M-T-Th-F; psycho-linguistics at 11 a.m. M-F; teaching third-grade math 1-3 p.m. T-W-Th-F; co-teaching seminar on elementary math 2-4 p.m. Mondays; psychology of personality 3-5 p.m. T-Th; and work 5-9:30 p.m. M-W-F at Fanny May Candy Store.]

Looks crazy, huh?

Your schedule looks great—especially the 2:15 class on Mon, Wed, Fri. [softball]. Lucky you—Say do you need a pitcher? [Sue was the pitcher and I was the catcher on our Farrell's softball team which was usually successful in beating teams from other restaurants during the summer.] I really miss softball—but at least I'll get exercise climbing up 4 flights to my room 20 times a day!

I went to the Student Health Service here & the doctor said I was a mess! Crud all through my head & lungs—both of my ears are plugged, too, so I can't hear too well. Classes start Thurs. so I hope I'm fixed by then or I won't hear the lectures!

My sister will be coming here Sunday—she's scared and excited so I'll be busy taking care of her. I saw Katie Olson yesterday after she moved in—it will be fun to see her occasionally—she was homesick after 6 hours—but she'll make it. It was good to be with her 'cause I feel like I was back at Farrell's again!

Well, buddy, thanks for writing, it was so nice to get a letter so soon.

Say, did you get the job on the magazine staff? Good luck. I hope you do!

Say, write again soon when you get the chance—

Take care,
Sue Harper

Postmarked Sept. 23, 1975

[Farrell's cook Brad Larson sent me the following letter:]

Dear Greg,

You won't believe this but guess who this is a letter from. No, sorry to disappoint you, it's not Sue Harper. I must apologize for not writing sooner but I have been working every day lately. Next Sunday will be my second day off in the last month. So how are things at the Hotel Ambassador? So what have you been doing besides going out on hot dates and going to parties? [A joke.] Have you gone out a couple of times for me? How's school? Have you found time to study on occasion? I wouldn't do it too often, however, it tends to warp the mind.

Well let's see what's been going on here lately. First, the first group of schoolers have left for school and the second group should be leaving fairly soon. Here are the people who have left or are leaving: Sue Harper, Sanny Ruhane, Mickie Knisely (she found a job at Steak & Ale so I don't know if she'll remain), Lorna Schad (she's working at Prime Time), Colleen Cavanaugh, Katie Olson, Terri Bungert, Lori Degner, Karin Bergherr, Marie McLain, Terese Waters, Mary Junge, Greg Olson, Mike Schwene and Karen Mueller, Kevin Hutchendorf and Patty Mason, yes, Patty Mason will be working only on weekends. Also there are [some] often talking of quitting like Doug Madsen, Keith Olson, Tom Aadland (he'll only be working once a week) and Terry Wood. So there is a little change in personnel taking place. Oh, I forgot that Linda Harper also left. We have a new assistant, Steve Parker. Today was his first day so I don't know what he's like.

Last Tuesday Brian and Jan and Sandy and myself went to the fair. We had a pretty good time except for the fact I got sick on the double Ferris wheel. I am terrified of heights. Even still, we had a pretty good time.

School will be starting in about a month and I can hardly wait. I'm impressed I was almost able to say that with a straight face. My schedule looks like this, refer to the next page.

[A chart shows calculus at 8 a.m. M-F; King James Bible as Literature at 9 a.m. M-W-F; biochemistry at 11 a.m. M-W-F; sociology at noon M-W-F and biol cancer (auditing this class) 1-2 p.m. Tuesdays.]

I figure for this quarter it will cost \$350 [at Normandale Community College] so I guess that's not too bad. Next quarter I'm thinking of going to either Augsburg or Concordia which will cost me \$2,000 if I attend and \$3,000 a year if I live there. A wee bit of a difference.

I sure hope you're having more success with your mystery girl than I am. Sandy is unbelievable. It took me only 2-1/2 hours to talk her into going to the fair with Jan and Brian and then I didn't even get a handshake goodnight. I'm ticked. I've a good mind to bill her for the evening out. Oh well... Things could be worse although it'll take me awhile to think of it. So how's your mystery girl? I've already resigned myself to the fact that I'm destined to be a bachelor, but they say they have more fun.

Well, I guess that's it for now. Now

COLLEGE LETTERS

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Fun Fact



Drawing and Fun Fact are courtesy of NAPS

The first Father's Day was celebrated on June 19, 1910. The holiday was launched by the Ministerial Association and the YMCA of Spokane, Washington.

Witerature

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

Bootheel Man by Morley Swingle, 2007, Southeast Missouri State University Press, p. 160.

Death Is Unexpected

“‘I have heard this song before,’ he said. ‘It is one of the few advantages of being old. You have seen it all before.’”

“‘What does it mean?’ Dawn Breaks asked. ‘I have never known the priests to break into a lament like this in the middle of the day.’”

“‘It is the death song for a Grand Chief,’ Tall Oaks said. ‘It means Triumphant Falcon has died.’”

“‘But I just saw him. He did not look sick.’”

“‘You never know when your time is coming,’ Tall Oaks said. ‘That lack of forewarning is both a blessing and a curse.’”

Prov. 7:23, 24:22; Eccles. 8:7, 9:12

Quotable Quote

“Remember happiness doesn't depend upon who you are or what you have; it depends solely upon what you think.”
—Dale Carnegie

Memory Scripture

“For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.”

—1 Sam. 15:23

College Letters

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that I've written, you can return a letter. So I guess I better go. My brother is threatening to take the pen I'm using and stuff it up my nose sideways. He's got school early tomorrow so I guess he wants to get to bed. The joke is on him though, little does he know that the pen will fit with room to spare. So until your next letter or until I see you in September, take it easy or anyway it comes.

Yours cordially, truly, sincerely, etc.

Brad C. Larson

B. C. Larson

Big Coward

[Editor's note: We were more than just employees at Farrell's Ice Cream Parlour. We were a family. We shared a common bond. We were part of something bigger than ourselves. We stepped back in time—to the "gay '90s" and we worked as a team to take our customers there as well—providing good food and ice cream in an entertaining atmosphere. At a time when rock music, long hair and jeans were the norm outside of work, we were well-groomed, well-dressed and listened to music from the early 1900s playing in the restaurant. We dressed up in black slacks or skirts and white shirts; ties and styrofoam straw hats.

We did lots of things together outside of work. Often after closing, some of us would find an open restaurant and grab a bite to eat. We also went camping and canoeing and played softball. We played teams from other restaurants—the winning team got to eat free at the loser's restaurant. We almost always won.

Farrell's will always hold a special place in my heart. Even now, as I read over these letters from 35 years ago, I am flooded with warm memories of a special time in my life.

As was mentioned in one of these letters, I flew home Sept. 14 and kept the Feast of Tabernacles in Wisconsin Dells with Mom and Brad. I returned to Ambassador College on Sept. 28.]

Postmarked Sept. 24, 1975

[My future wife, Marie Backfisch, had traveled with friends by car to her home area in Missouri for the Feast in 1975. On Sept. 24, she mailed me a card from Lake Ozark, Mo. The card said, "I'm not doing much of anything..." on the cover and inside added, "...cept thinking of you!" Marie added the following message:]

Hope you had a great feast because I did. See ya soon.

Love,

Marie Lucy



U.S. National Debt Similar to Greece's

The nation of Greece is deeply in debt, which has caused quite a stir among the other members of the European Union. Although the other European nations are reluctant to pour funds into a bottomless pit, it appears that they will have no choice but to bail out Greece.

As bad as things are in Greece, some people are seeing similarities in the U.S.

"It's easy to look at the protesters and the politicians in Greece and at the other European countries with huge debts—and wonder why they don't get it. They have been enjoying more generous government benefits than they can afford. No mass rally and no bailout fund will change that. Only benefit cuts or tax increases can.

"Yet, in the back if your mind comes a nagging question: how different, really, is the United States?"

"The numbers on our federal debt are becoming frighteningly familiar. The debt is projected to equal 140 percent of gross domestic product within two decades. Add in the budget troubles of state governments, and the true shortfall grows even larger. Greece's debt, by comparison, equals about 115 percent of its G.D.P. today....

"For Greece and possibly other European countries, change will come from the outside. The countries lending money for the Greek bailout—chiefly Germany—are demanding big cuts to the welfare state. Greek citizens will soon have a harder time retiring in their 40s" ("In Greek Crisis, Some See Parallels to U.S. Debt Woes" by David Leonhardt, *The New York Times* Reprints, May 11, 2010, pp. 1-2).

Greece will most likely receive its bailout. Germany, as chief lender, will strengthen its position at the head of the European Union, because the borrower is servant to the lender (Prov. 22:7). Germany—modern-day Assyria—is expected to lead a 10-king union of European nations; it will be a world-dominating power called "the beast" in several end-time prophecies (see Daniel 2, Revelation 13 and 17).

In the U.S., the Obama administration

and liberal Congress continue to add to the national debt by increasing government services (such as national health-care), while hurting economic growth to pay for those services (such as proposing cap-and-trade).

Our financial leadership in the world was prophesied: "You shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow. And the LORD will make you the head and not the tail; you shall be above only, and not be beneath, if you heed the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you today, and are careful to observe them" (Deut. 28:12-13).

Our financial demise also was promised! It will come if we, as a nation, disobey God (v. 15)! "The alien who is among you shall rise higher and higher above you, and you shall come down lower and lower. He shall lend to you, but you shall not lend to him; he shall be the head and you shall be the tail" (vv. 43-44).

Robert Greenstein, a leading liberal budget expert, knows the U.S. economic situation well enough "to understand that our Greece moment, whether it takes the form of a crisis or not, is coming" (Leonhardt, p. 2). The time is coming when the U.S. will need an economic bailout!

To whom will the U.S. look when it needs a bailout? Very likely it will turn to the same source to which Greece went—Germany, modern-day Assyria. The prophet Hosea foretold this. Using the name "Ephraim" to represent the modern-day descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh (Britain and the U.S.) and "Assyria" to represent modern Germany, Hosea wrote: "When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah saw his wound, then Ephraim went to Assyria... yet he cannot cure you, nor heal you of your wound" (Hos. 5:13).

Instead of bailing out the U.S., the German-led European Union will invade us militarily and take the remnant of our people into national captivity (Isa. 10:5-7; Jer. 5:15-19, Deut. 28:33, 36-37, 41, 47-52, 64-68).

Because of our sins, our people will remain in national captivity until Christ returns and frees them (Isa. 10:20-22, 11:11-12, 16).