

# SABBATH SCOOP

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## Praying for Our Enemies

*Jesus Christ tells us to pray for our enemies.  
How should we do that?*

By Gregory Dullum

It's not unusual to pray for bad things to happen to our enemies! "Millions of people the world over believe in the supernatural power of curses. According to a Gallup poll on the prayer habits of Americans, 5 percent of Americans—about 14 million people—are willing to admit that they have prayed for harm to come to others.

" 'The actual prevalence of using prayer to hurt others is undoubtedly much greater,' Larry Dossey, M.D., writes in *Be Careful What You Pray For... You Might Get It*. 'Some of these prayers appeared indistinguishable from curses and hexes—attempts to control the thought and behavior of a victim against his or her will' " (*The Kennedy Curse* by Edward Klein, 2003, p. 14).

About 14 million Americans pray for something bad to happen to another human being. Their prayer might go like this: "Dear God, if it is true that lightning never strikes the same place twice, You must be running out of places to strike. I have one for You: the top of my enemy's head!" Have we ever prayed this way? If so, we're in good company.

### In Good Company

Look at the example set by two of Jesus' disciples: "Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him [Jesus] to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem, and He sent messengers before His face. And as they went, they entered a village of the Samaritans, to prepare for Him. But they did not receive Him, because His face was set for the journey to Jerusalem.

And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, 'Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, as Elijah did?' " (Luke 9:51-54).

How did Jesus respond? "But He turned and rebuked them, and said, 'You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them.' And they went to another village" (vv. 55-56).

### The Right Spirit

The desire of James and John to curse those who mistreated them was of the *WRONG spirit*. Of what *spirit* are WE when we pray for our enemies? Are we in the wrong spirit, like these disciples, or are we in the right spirit? What is the right spirit?

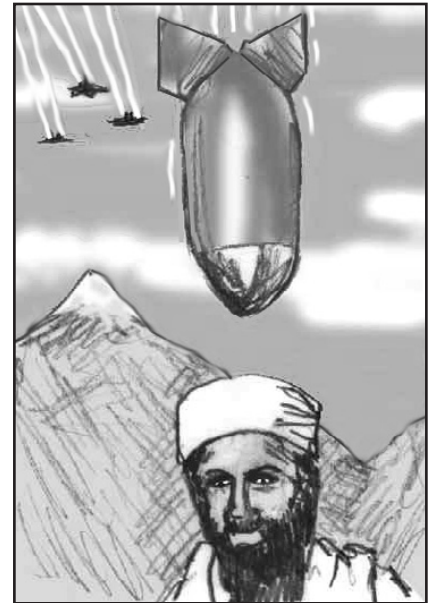
"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of *love* and of a sound mind" (1 Tim. 1:7). Is it *LOVE* to pray for the *DESTRUCTION* of our enemies?

### Love, Bless, Do Good for Enemies

How should we pray for our enemies—from our national nemeses, such as Osama bin Laden and his Al Qaeda terrorists (who want to see Americans die) to a cantankerous coworker, a rotten relative, or a belligerent bully on the bus—whomever we consider to be our enemy?

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus tells us, "You have heard it said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy,' but I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you" (Mat. 5:43-44).

This is a difficult saying of Jesus! How



drawing by Gregory Dullum

How can we pray for those who have done us harm—personally or nationally? Would our prayer for Osama bin Laden be answered like this?

can we bless our enemies? In what way can we do good to them in our prayers? How should we pray for those who spitefully use and persecute us? What words should we say?

Is it right to ask God to *BLESS* their efforts *to persecute us*? Should we *LOVE* the *evil* they have done to us? Should we ask God to *BLESS* our enemies with *riches, honor and glory*? Should we pray for God to *HELP* our enemies *to triumph over us*? That doesn't make sense, does it?

Here are three ways to pray for our enemies. These three prayers are not hateful and will not destroy their lives. And they make sense.

### Protect Me from Them

#### 1. Pray to God, "Prevent my enemies from hurting me."

In 1 Tim. 2:1-2, we are told to pray for

#### PRAY FOR ENEMIES

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## Pray for Enemies

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“all men, for kings and all who are in authority.” Why? We are NOT to pray for their success if they’re evil despots with despicable policies. We are to pray for them “that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.”

King David was a man who had many enemies. He also prayed a lot. Many of the Psalms are his prayers. How did David pray for his enemies? Did he ask God to give his enemies victory over him? Did he ask God to destroy them with lightning bolts?

Look at David’s prayer in Ps. 35:1-8: “Contend, O LORD, with those who contend with me; fight against those who fight against me. Take up shield and buckler; arise and come to my aid. Brandish spear and javelin against those who pursue me. Say to my soul, ‘I am your salvation.’ May those who seek my life be disgraced and put to shame; may those who plot my ruin be turned back in dismay. May they be like chaff before the wind, with the angel of the LORD driving them away; may their path be dark and slippery, with the angel of the LORD pursuing them. Since they hid their net for me without cause and without cause dug a pit for me, may ruin overtake them by surprise—may the net they hid entangle them, may they fall into the pit, to their ruin” (*New International Version*).

David prayed neither for his enemies’ success over him nor for their utter destruction. He told God, “They’re after me. They have set traps to catch me. Let them be caught in their own traps.” He didn’t pray that fire come down from heaven and destroy them. He prayed that they not be allowed to hurt him; that they get caught in their own traps.

How is a prayer like this showing love and blessing our enemies? If we pray that God prevents our enemies from hurting us, our enemies won’t have to face God’s vengeance later. God said, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay.” If we are wronged, God will avenge us. He’s on our side. This is a prayer of love. If we pray, “Don’t let them hurt me,” two things result: we live in peace and they won’t have to face judgment in the future for their evil actions.

### Punish My Enemies

#### 2. Pray to God: Be merciful when You punish my enemies.

There are two parts to this prayer. Let’s take the last part first.

It’s NOT wrong to ask God to punish our enemies. Punishment for a wrong deed is

a good thing! We are told in Prov. 19:18, “Chasten your son while there is hope, and do not set your heart on his destruction.” Correction given in time offers hope for change in the offender! Not getting correction in time can lead to death!

This is further expounded in Prov. 23:13-14: “Do not withhold correction from a child. For if you beat him with a rod, he will not die. You shall beat him with a rod and deliver his soul from hell.”

In much the same way, correction from God can save our enemies from hell.

Correction from God is a good thing! It can be painful to go through, but in the end, it makes us better people. We are told, “Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it” (Heb. 12:11).

God’s correction is therefore a form of his love: “My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; For whom the LORD loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives” (vv. 5-6).

We can ask God to *really love* our enemies, as a father loves his disobedient child.

It’s okay to pray as David did in Ps. 28:4: “Give to them according to their deeds, and according to the wickedness of their endeavors; give to them according to the work of their hands; render to them what they deserve.” This is NOT a prayer for zapping. This is a prayer for God to lovingly chasten, punish, and correct them, to set them on the right path.

The second part of this prayer is that God be merciful when He punishes. We must realize our enemies are deceived. They are human beings as we are but their minds are not open to the truth. We need to realize that we could be in their shoes if God had not called us and opened our minds to his truth.

We want mercy and forgiveness from God when we sin, don’t we? Then we should pray that God be merciful to our enemies. In Christ’s model prayer, we are told to pray, “And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors” (Mat. 6:12).

Jesus Christ set the perfect example. He was falsely accused, unjustly tried, brutally beaten and painfully crucified. While hanging on that stake for six hours, what did Jesus Christ pray? “Zap them”? No. He prayed: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34).

### Open Their Eyes

#### 3. Pray to God: Open the eyes of my enemies that they may repent and be con-

verted. What greater blessing can our enemies experience than having their eyes, hearts and minds opened to the truth?

God “desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:4). He is “not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9).

The Bible doesn’t say if anyone prayed for Paul (then called Saul) *before God called him*—while he was an ENEMY of the church. At that time Paul put some Christians into prison and put others to death (Acts 7:58, 8:1, 3, 9:1-2). If we had lived back then, would we have prayed for God to zap Paul or to convert him?

Look what happened after Paul was called! He became one of God’s most powerful tools in the New Testament! He took the Gospel before Gentiles, kings and the children of Israel (Acts 9:15).

God will call people in his own time. But we are told to love our enemies and bless them. And there can be no greater blessing than to accept God’s way of life.

## Conclusion

So how should we pray for our enemies?

We don’t love the evil they have done to us. We don’t ask God to bless them with riches, honor and glory. We don’t ask God to make our enemies triumph over us. We don’t have to be like the 14 million Americans who pray for evil to come upon their enemies.

We can truly love our enemies, we can truly bless those who curse us, we can truly do good for those who hate us if we pray these three prayers:

1. Prevent my enemies from hurting me.
2. Be merciful when You punish my enemies.
3. Open the eyes of my enemies that they may repent and be converted.

## The SABBATH SCOOP

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Who Is this God We Serve?

# OUR BLOOD AVENGER

*We don't need to waste our time getting angry or getting even with others. We have an Avenger!*

By Gregory Dullum

It was a beautiful late-summer day. Two young men stood talking in a field of mature vegetables under an azure sky.

Suddenly, the older brother grabbed the younger one and threw him to the ground. With quick, violent motions, he beat his brother into unconsciousness. He grabbed a sharp rock and sliced open the throat of the limp body lying among the vegetables. Crimson blood streamed from the wound and soaked into the rich, brown soil.

The first murder in human history had been committed. The Bible describes Cain's murder of Abel in Gen. 4:8.

Abel had been *righteous*. He had done *nothing* deserving of *death*. Yet he was brutally MURDERED by his jealous brother, after God had accepted Abel's offering of sheep but not Cain's offering of vegetables (Heb. 11:4, Gen. 4:1-5).

"Then the LORD said to Cain, 'Where is Abel your brother?' And he said, 'I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?'" (Gen. 4:9). Cain felt no remorse. He thought his actions were justified. He felt AVENGED.

What did God say to Cain? "And He said, 'What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground'" (Gen. 4:8-10).

When innocent people are killed, their blood "cries out" to the LORD! What does it cry? "AVENGE ME!"

God avenged Abel's death by cursing Cain. He would no longer be a fruitful farmer. He would finish out life as a fugitive and vagabond (Gen. 4:11-12). Cain complained that God's punishment was more than he could bear (v. 13).

## Vengeance is a Primal Desire

Vengeance is a primal desire of all humans. When we have been harmed (real or imagined), we long to strike back, *evening the score*. This is the basis of countless books and movies: an innocent person is hurt by murder of a loved one, rape or robbery and the story tells of how the innocent person evens the score. We cheer when the villain gets it!

Unfortunately, we humans take vengeance too far. We hit back harder than we've been hit. Cain felt *disrespected*. He struck back with MURDER. His descendant, Lamech, was *wounded*. He too struck back with MURDER (Gen. 4:23).

Worried that someone would want to get even, Lamech pronounced a "seventy-fold" vengeance on anyone who killed him (v. 24)! This was not life-for-life or two-for-one, but this was vengeance to the degree of 70 deaths for his one!

Vengeance and violence permeated society prior to the flood. "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" (Gen. 6:5).

## Life for Life

God destroyed all mankind in the flood except for Noah and his family. As He started over, God told Noah: "Surely for your lifeblood I will demand a reckoning; from the hand of every beast I will require it, and from the hand of every man. From the hand of every man's brother I will require the life of a man. Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed; for in the image of God He made man" (Gen. 9:5-6).

When innocent blood is shed, the life of the killer (man or beast) must be taken to make things right. Why? Because God made man in *his own image*; therefore human life is SACRED! *No amount of money* could be given as payment for the loss of innocent life. It had to be "*life for life*" (Ex. 21:23; Deut. 19:21).

## Avenger of Blood

God set up a system for that avenging to take place. "In ancient Israel, as in tribal societies in general, the members of the clan were responsible for avenging the death of innocent victims. Unavenged blood cries out to the Lord (Gen. 4:10). Innocent blood defiles the land and must be expiated (Num. 35:31-34), and this is the duty of the avenger" ("Avenger of Blood," *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*, 1993, Bruce Metzger and Michael Coogan, eds., p. 68).

From the time of Noah into Israel's early history, it was the job of the nearest male kin of a murder victim to hunt down the murderer and take his life. This relative was called the AVENGER OF BLOOD. The rest of the family could get on with their lives while the avenger of blood focused on avenging the murder. Some of

the rules for the avenger are described in Num. 35:6, 9-28. Six cities of refuge were established so people who *accidentally* killed someone could flee there and be safe from the avenger.

Why did God establish this system of vengeance for wrongful death? "By observing this law of retribution Israel was spared violence and endless blood feuds" (Metzger and Coogan, p. 68).

## Government Takes on Role

As Israel's government became more centralized under the monarchy, blood revenge was taken out of the hands of the clan and given to the State. The king could intervene and grant immunity from the avenger (2 Sam. 14:8-11).

Today, government has the role of blood avenger. When a judge issues a death sentence in a murder case, it's not wrong! He's acting *on God's authority*. "Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.... For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil" (Rom. 13:1, 4).

## Avenging Other Wrongs

The principle of avenging a wrong applies to more than shed blood. Any wrongdoing committed against an innocent person demands justice.

In the Old Testament, we read the principle of "eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe" (Ex. 21:24-25).

As Christians, we are NOT to avenge wrongs that have been committed against us (Mat. 5:38-44). Paul instructs us, "Repay no one evil for evil.... If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord" (Rom. 12:17-19).

Notice, it doesn't say, "Vengeance is

## BLOOD AVENGER

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# College Letters:

## Lessons of Life Learned at Ambassador College

*When in trouble, do what you can do, seek help from others, and pray to God.*

*“Pray for one another... The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much”— James 5:16*

### Friday, 1-10-75

Dear Mom and Brad,

Believe it or not, this letter is a homework assignment. Yes, classes have begun again. And Mr. Clark, my Reporting and News Writing teacher, wants us to write home and ask you to send out a current local newspaper—(*The Bloomington Sun*) for our study. He’s a cool teacher—from St. Paul [Minn.].

I also wanted to say I got your check, and banked \$5. I will continue to do so until I pay back the \$30 I borrowed from my bank account for the break.

Guess what? Have you heard about the Arthur Rubinstein concert on Jan. 15? Well, Steve and I get to usher! We went yesterday and got fitted for our tuxes. The college is renting them for us! We are ushering for some chorale concert on Sun. & Monday, class on Tues. and Arthur Rubinstein on Wednesday—it’s gonna be a full week! And I think the ushers are going to see *Earthquake* Sat. night. This will also be paid for by the college, to thank us for our service.

Santana came in with a note to all Residence Assistants: We have to keep the dorm in top shape because Mr. Rubinstein will be touring the dorms with HWA [Chancellor Herbert W. Armstrong]. So, he will probably be in my rooms—they usually take guests through first floor.

Also—in the Dec. 23 issue of the *Worldwide News*, on the last page, is a story about Bob Bordeaux, the guy who sleeps next to me. I thought you might find it interesting.

Grant Spong had a bad day yesterday. He found out he’s been dropped from A.C. for flunking 6 semester units.

We are all trying everything to get him back. He’s talked to several people on the committee, and has written a petition, and has several recommendations from faculty.

Santana is going to talk to Dr. Stenger, head of registration, this afternoon. All I can do is pray. Maybe that will do the most good.

M.G. hasn’t called since before the break. She may never call again. If Grant has to go, he’ll be back in Aug. to get his last semester and graduate. But he wants to find out who she is before he goes. Chances

look good that he will get to stay.

Well, I gotta go buy some paint brushes and sketch pad for my art class. This morning I bought myself four books for under \$5:

*Good News for Modern Man* (N.T.)

*The Day Christ Died*

*The Living N.T. Paraphrased*

*The New English Bible* (N.T.)

I bought them 2nd hand at the bookstore in the student center. They got a lot of used books that I’d like to buy, but I don’t have *beaucoup d’argent* [a lot of money]. But I’ve been wanting to get some different versions, and these should really be good for “Early Christian History,” where we’re studying Acts.

All my classes are cool—and I’m looking forward to them.

So send the *Sun* (4th class or 3rd class—printed matter—I forgot which. That should save some postage).

Stay healthy. First day of classes (Wed.) was wet and rainy and cold and foggy—like Minnesota Septembers. It seemed like the first day of school. But yesterday it was clear and warm, like California should be.

Love,

Greg

### Jan. 19, 1975

Dear Greg,

You wouldn’t believe the snow we got. We had such a storm last weekend. They canceled church services on the Sabbath. You can read about it in the *Bloomington Sun*. I’m sending it along with your income tax forms.

I’ll go to Farrell’s one of these days and see if I can get your W-2 form. You should get all your income tax back. I’ll have to get mine all organized and see how much I’ll have to pay.

Guess Brad is going to stay home from school tomorrow because he has a sore throat. We sure have been sick a lot. Guess we don’t eat right with the two of us.

I went over to [Uncle] Mel & [Aunt] Edna’s one night. I saw their pictures they took in Hawaii. Edna also brought back a lot of souvenirs. She gave me a purse and a necklace made from shells. They are so pretty. They really liked it

over there and hope they can go again. Guess it’s pretty expensive, though.

Edna locked herself out of her house one night so she and [her son] Jimmy came here for supper and waited until [her daughter] Joni got home from work.

[A cousin] Bryan Reetz left home and moved into [his sister] Debbie’s apt. with her. He quit school and was going to go to Vo-Tech but guess he has to be out of school so many months before they will take him, so now he doesn’t know what he wants. Those kids are all confused.

Brent [Matson] said [his brother] Loren [my friend] tried to make it home from college during the snow storm & his car stopped and he had to walk till he found a place to stay. It all turned out O.K. but guess his folks & Brent were worried about him.

Hope Grant was able to stay on at College. Hate to see anyone have to leave if they really want to be there.

I hear Mark Bauer [a church friend] is getting married and Ruth [his sister] is going to have a baby. Guess Bauers are planning on going to Tucson for the Feast. Pruzinskes are thinking Hawaii so Brad will be pretty much alone. Maybe he’ll meet some new kids. Well, guess I better quit & drop a note to Linda and Gary.

Love,

Mom

### 1:15 p.m. Sunday, 1-19-75

Dear Mom and Brad,

This is some winter! Temps in the 80s, beautiful sunshine! No smog (except one day). Oh man, I love it! I’m sitting now in a lounge chair in the shade outside of 3rd floor GT [Grove Terrace—my dorm]. the mountains are gorgeous. It’s really hot again today.

When I last wrote, I said I was going to get some art supplies. But when I came back, I talked with Santana about Grant, and found out it was worse than he had thought it was. Dr. Stenger had every right to kick him out—Grant flunked himself. And his teachers all felt he couldn’t make it.

Santana said he hoped Grant would make it back, but doubted that he would. Santana said Grant would have to prove

to the committee that he could make it—that he had changed. But it was too late. There is no way he could show proof of change. Both Santana and I felt he could do it, but we didn't know how he could prove it to the committee. He could try to request a conference with the committee. "I don't think he could take it emotionally," Santana said. "If he could get a conference, I would want to go with him," Santana said. However, the conference may be impossible to get.

Or he could put everything on the line. Have the committee readmit him only until midterm. If Grant hadn't kept a 2.0 GPA [Grade Point Average] by then, they could drop him, no questions asked. But Grant would lose all tuition, most room and board, and could probably never get back to campus again, even if he reapplied. But AC may not allow him to take the risk. And we don't know if Grant was willing to.

Mary Hamilton's weird week had continued. I talked to her at Bible study, and she had gone with the sophomores to the game show, "Concentration." She won the door prize: \$200 worth of various soaps.

I think there was a lot of heart-felt prayers for Grant until the following Tuesday when the committee would decide. I know there was on my part.

Last week I heard the sermon you heard this week on tape, probably. Went to a basketball game Sat. night. We won 55-44.

Last Sunday I did a radio show during the Super Bowl. So I put my headset on audit, and put the radio/cassette on audit. So while everything was going over the air that was supposed to, I was secretly listening to the football game. As I came to the end of the songs, I would switch my headset on program and listen to what I was doing. I didn't want to be too confused. I missed the end of the game, but on my way back to the dorm, I asked guys who watched it on TV. [Pittsburgh Steelers, 16, Minnesota Vikings, 6.] Oh well. Maybe next year.

Sunday night we ushered for Roger Wagner and the L.A. Master Chorale concert.

Monday, Santana said that between him and Grant, they had talked to 5 of the 12 members of the committee. Santana says he has a 50-50 chance. He'll be surprised either way. That night we ushered the second night of the chorale concert.

Tuesday was just like summer. 88°. And super clear. I did all my studying outside. Some on the grass behind the gym. This is the only real grass on campus. [Other lawns were a leafy plant called dichondra.] I did some reading by the stream too. Grant got a phone call from Mr. Paige, his Western Civ. teacher,

but he wasn't around. After my class in [Western] Civ., Santana told me Grant gets to stay! But he is on probation. I went to bed at 11:30, because Grant gave up his radio show while on probation (and 3 of his clubs too), and I had to get up at 5 the next morning to do his show.

At 1 a.m., Grant woke me up. Said he'd been to Mr. Paige's house. They had done a lot of talking, some swimming, and that it had been beautiful, and he is a fantastic teacher.

Wednesday, I got up at 5 a.m., and I did the show from 6 to 8. Grant heard part of it. He told me he "felt like a proud poppa" listening to me. Wed. night, all dressed in tuxedos, we ushered for the Arthur Rubinstein concert. I got to be Chuck Daniel's right-hand man. He's the head usher. I got to carry 1/2 box of pro-



In my tux holding the booklet and program from the Rubinstein concert.

grams out to some Israeli diplomat's car, and they would be sent to Israel the next day. I got to see the 2nd half of the performance from the light room. At the end, I rushed down. I saw two encores (from inside the ground floor door), along with Mr. HWA presenting Mr. Rubinstein a Steuben crystal gift—shaped like Moses breaking the tablets. Mr. Rubinstein thanked HWA for allowing him to play in this auditorium. Mr. HWA got a standing ovation for this. Mr. HWA said he'd name the piano the Rubinstein piano, and have a gold plaque made. Mr. Rubinstein asked if he could have his first name put on it too. Because whenever he is introduced as Arthur Rubinstein, people say, "Are you related to the great Rubinstein?" Laughter from the audience. I have an extra copy of the program and a booklet called "Herbert W. Armstrong—Ambassador for World Peace." If you would like them—(they're super!)—I could mail them to you. Maybe you would like to put them in the church library—or keep them for yourself.

I guess this did great things for the college. A lot of the big businessmen went back and asked their men how come they have never heard of AC or HWA. (I also have a picture of me in my tux holding the two booklets. When I get some money, I'll have copies made, and send you a copy.)

(To be continued!)

## Fun Fact



*Drawing and Fun Fact are courtesy of NAPS*

The English word *alphabet* can be traced back through the Greek to the Phoenician-Hebrew words for ox (aleph) and house (beth).

## Witerature

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

*Here is this month's selection:*

*The Kennedy Curse* by Edward Klein, St. Martin's Press, 2003, p. 175.

## Dulling Senses

"The commission's conclusion is an insult to common sense. Alcohol and sleep deprivation dull the senses and make reflexes sluggish, and the agents who had been drinking (and possibly drugging) and got less than five hours sleep could not have functioned at the top of their form on the day of the President's assassination.

"The agents' behavior in Dallas should not come as a surprise to anyone familiar with the debauched and degenerate atmosphere in the Kennedy White House. Over the period of a thousand days, the Secret Service agents had fallen under the spell of the President and lost their professional objectivity. They acted as though they, too, believed they were immune to mortal laws and insulated from the inevitable consequences of their deeds."

**Ps. 127:2; Prov. 6:9, 23:19-21, Ezek. 16:58**

## Quotable Quote

"He who postpones the hour of living rightly is like the rustic who waits for the river to run out before he crosses."

—Horace

## Memory Scripture

"He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him promptly."

—Prov. 13:24

## Avenger

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WRONG” or “Vengeance is EVIL.” It says, “Vengeance is MINE.” It’s not our job to seek vengeance. It’s God’s job. He is OUR Avenger (Deut. 32:43)! We can get on with our lives and let God take care of those who have done us wrong.

God avenges even MINOR infractions such as defrauding or taking advantage of others. Paul wrote, “...no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the *avenger of all such*” (1 Thes. 4:6, emphasis added).

Jesus said God will avenge wrongs committed against his people: “And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily” (Luke 18:7-8).

God’s vengeance may not come as quickly as we’d like. But He NEVER forgets wrongdoing that has been done against his people. “When He avenges blood, He remembers them; He does not forget the cry of the humble” (Ps. 9:12).

From the time righteous Abel was brutally murdered by his jealous brother until the last of God’s martyrs is killed prior to Christ’s return, God remembers them all and WILL AVENGE their deaths (Rev. 18:24, 19:2, 20).

No matter what evil we have suffered, we can take total confidence in those six words spoken by God Himself: “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay!” And God will do a *perfect* job of avenging us! We’re told, “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Heb. 10:31).

Notice one case when God avenged the mistreatment of Elisha: “...and as he was going up the road, some youths came from the city and mocked him, and said to him, ‘Go up, you bald head! Go up, you bald head!’ So he turned around and looked at them, and pronounced a curse on them in the name of the LORD. And two female bears came out of the woods and mauled forty-two of the youths” (2 Kings 2:23-24).

We humans overdo revenge but God has PERFECT vengeance! He PUNISHES—but He’s not out to DESTROY! He’s not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9)!

The most innocent victim of all time was Jesus Christ, who NEVER sinned, but was brutally abused, scorned, beaten and crucified. God *will avenge* the innocent blood of his Son NOT by *destroying* humanity—but by *saving* us! How ironic that to be saved, we must accept the blood of the very One we are guilty of murdering (Rom. 5:9)!

Instead of DEATH, God will give us ETERNAL LIFE! This is the God we serve—a *loving, merciful* Avenger of blood!



# END-TIME EVENTS

## RECENT WORLD EVENTS & THEIR PROPHETIC SIGNIFICANCE

### North Korea Plans to Restart Nuclear Plant

“North Korea said Tuesday [April 14] it saw talks on ending its nuclear weapons program as ‘useless’ and it planned to restart a plant that makes arms-grade plutonium” (“North Korea Says It Will Restart Nuclear Plant,” Reuters, *The New York Times*, nytimes.com, April 13, 2009, p. 1).

A nuclear-armed North Korea could be part of a great military power called “kings of the east” that will attack Europe (called the “king of the North” or “the beast”) at the time of Christ’s return (Dan 11:40-44, Rev. 9:13-19, 16:12-14).

### ‘Gay’ Agenda Expands

The U.S. continued its downward moral spiral as two states, Vermont and Iowa, allowed same-sex marriages last month.

“It’s a bad day for the country,” said Brian Brown, executive director of the National Organization for Marriage. “There is a palpable sense that something has changed” (“With Victories, Gay Rights Groups Expand Marriage Push” by Abby Goodnough, *The New York Times*, nytimes.com, April 8, 2009, p. 1).

Homosexuality is condemned in the Bible (1 Cor. 6:9). As the United States continues to condone more sin and turn its back on God’s ways, it will lose God’s blessings and eventually cease to exist as a nation (see Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28).

### Quake Hits Italy

A 6.3-magnitude earthquake struck Italy east of Rome Tuesday morning, April 7. The death toll was reported as 179 with 37 people missing and 17,000 people left homeless.

“Some of the towns in the area have been virtually destroyed in their entirety,” said Gianfranco Fini, speaker of the lower house of Parliament in Rome (“Italians Comb Through Rubble After Quake” by Rachel Donadio and Elisabetta Povoledo, *The New York Times*, nytimes.com, April 8, 2009, p. 1).

“Earthquakes in various places” are a

sign that we are in the “beginning of sorrows” leading up to the return of Christ (Mat. 24:3, 7-8).

### U.S. Cuts Military Budget

At a time when North Korea and Iran are announcing plans to increase their nuclear weapons and missile programs, the U.S. is planning to cut its missile defense program.

Defense Secretary Robert Gates “announced cuts in missile defense programs, the Army’s expensive Future Combat Systems and Navy shipbuilding operations. He could kill controversial programs to build a new... communications satellite system, delay development of a new bomber and order only four more of the advanced F-22 fighter jets” (“Military Budget Reflects a Shift in U.S. Strategy” by Christopher Drew and Elisabeth Bumiller, *The New York Times*, nytimes.com, April 7, 2009, p. 1).

God promised that if his people would disobey him, He would break the pride of their power (Lev. 26:19). That is happening as the Obama Administration weakens the U.S. military. Weakening our defenses could open the door to an invading army that will take our people into national captivity (vv. 33-39).

### Obama Seeks Islamic Bond

Introduced as “Barack Hussein Obama,” the U.S. President told Turkey’s Parliament on April 6 that the U.S. “is not and never will be at war with Islam.” According to an April 7 *New York Times* article, Obama said the U.S. “has been enriched by Muslim Americans” as he strove to strengthen ties with Muslim nations.

Pres. Obama’s remarks could be seen as a waning desire to keep Americans safe from further Islamic terrorist attacks, which could further weaken the U.S., preparing it for national captivity.

Pres. Obama also may be turning this nation away from its traditional Judeo-Christian roots to that of Islam, which could speed God’s removal of blessings and protection (Lev. 23:14-39, Deut. 8:18-20).