

THE SABBATH SCOOP

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Surviving 9/11—Inside the Tower!

*What was it like to see an airliner heading straight for your window and crashing into your office?
What lessons can we learn from this true story of rescue and survival?*

By Gregory Dullum

Nine years ago this month, terrorists hijacked four American jetliners. Two were flown into the 110-story Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York City.

Amazing stories of heroism, rescue and survival have emerged from inside the Twin Towers that awful morning. Let's look at one of them, as reported in the book, *102 Minutes: The Untold Story of the Fight to Survive Inside the Twin Towers* by Jim Dwyer and Kevin Flynn (2005).

Confusion reigned that morning. Few knew what actually had happened when the first jet airliner hit the North Tower at 8:55 a.m., New York time.

Mizuho Capital Markets and its corporate affiliate, Fuji Bank, had offices on every floor between 78 and 83 in the South Tower. A minute after the plane hit the North Tower, someone burst onto the bank's trading floor—the 80th floor—and yelled, "It's a bomb! Get out!" Evacuation orders were given throughout the building.

On the 81st floor, Stanley Praisnath, an assistant vice president for Fuji bank, and Delise, a temporary assistant, took a local elevator down to the 78th floor, which was a "sky lobby." There, they switched to an express elevator and took it to the ground floor.

Less than 10 minutes after the North Tower had been hit, Praisnath and 17 other bank employees were in the ground-floor lobby of the South Tower, ready to exit the building.

As they approached the security turnstiles, a guard stopped them. "Where you guys going?" he asked.

"We saw fireballs coming down," Praisnath replied.

"No, no," the guard said. "All is well here. You can go back to your office. This building is secure."

The authoritative voice of the guard



AP photo

18 minutes after a hijacked airliner hit the North Tower of the World Trade Center, a second hijacked airliner struck the South Tower.

sent the bank executives back to the elevator. Praisnath asked his assistant, "Delise, why don't you take the rest of the day off?" She liked the idea and left. Praisnath and the others returned up to their offices as quickly as they had come down.

At 9:02, Praisnath arrived back at his desk on the 81st floor. His phone was ringing. He answered it and heard the female voice of a colleague in Chicago. "Are you okay?" she asked.

"Yes, I'm fine," he assured her.

"Stan, are you watching the monitor—are you watching the news to see what is going on?"

"Yes," he said again. "I'm fine."

As he spoke, Praisnath spun his seat around toward the windows, which faced the New York Harbor and Statue of Liberty. He wasn't staring out the window but in the corner of his eye he noticed an unfamiliar shape on the horizon. He turned slightly, to look squarely out the window. It was an airplane, heading straight for his window. He could see red and blue markings and the letter "U" on the plane as it approached.

Praisnath dove under his desk and

screamed to God as his colleague listened on the phone and watched the TV screen in horror.

At 9:02:59 a.m., United Airlines flight 175 plunged through the South Tower of the World Trade Center. The airliner tilted as it struck; its wings ripped a hole from the 77th through the 85th floors.

Praisnath's room, on the 81st floor, was hit. Curled up under his desk, he watched the ceiling collapse over him. The room was torn to bits with wires and cubicles and drywall tangled together. Part of the wing jammed into a door 20 feet away from Praisnath.

The bank executive left the safety of his desk and crawled 131 feet across the 81st floor, through the remains of the loan department, a lounge, a computer room and a telecommunications room. He pounded on walls and screamed, "Help! Help! I'm buried!"

Two employees from Euro Brokers on the 84th floor were making their way down a stairway and heard Praisnath's cries. Brian Clark said to Ron DiFrancesco, "Come on, Ron, we got to get this guy."

DiFrancesco held his backpack over his mouth to filter out the dust but he couldn't breathe the air on the 81st floor. So he backed out into the stairway and went up to join a group of people escorting a heavy-set woman.

Praisnath and Clark struggled through the rubble of the 81st floor, clawing their way toward each other. A nail went through Praisnath's hand. He pounded it out by slamming his hand against a board. When they ran out of things they could move, they were still separated by rubble; Clark on top of it and Praisnath under it.

"You must jump," Clark told Praisnath. "It's the only way. You've got to

INSIDE THE TOWER

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THE JERUSALEM CHURCH

James is martyred and Peter is arrested on orders of Herod.

By Gregory Dullum
Part 5

A.D. 39—Gentile Callings Confirmed

Trouble awaited Peter when he returned to Jerusalem after he had baptized the Gentile Cornelius and his family into the church.

“Now the apostles and brethren who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. And when Peter came to Jerusalem, those of the circumcision contended with him, saying, ‘You went in to uncircumcised men and ate with them!’ ” (Acts 11:1-3).

Until this time, all of the church members had been Jewish. It was unlawful, according to Jewish customs, for Jews to mix socially with Gentiles (Acts 10:28). God was opening the doors of his church to people of all nations, but the Jewish brethren (“those of the circumcision”) did not yet grasp this!

What did Peter do when he was criticized for meeting with Gentiles? Did he pull rank, telling them that he was the primary apostle and they had to abide by his decisions? No! “But Peter explained it to them from the beginning” (Acts 11:4).

Peter told them the whole story, from the beginning, how God had revealed to him in a vision that he should call no man common or unclean, and how God had already given the Gentiles his spirit, so there was nothing preventing him from baptizing them (vv. 5-17).

Peter concluded by asking the Jerusalem brethren a question. “If therefore God gave them the same gift as He gave us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?” (v. 17).

How did the brethren respond?

“When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, ‘Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life’ ” (v. 18).

There is an old saying, “A man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still.” Had Peter “pulled rank” as a leading apostle and told the Jerusalem brethren that he was right, they were wrong, and they must accept his new teaching, they would not have embraced it wholeheartedly. Instead, he explained the whole situation and asked them what they would have done. With the ball in their court, they silently contemplated all

the facts, and they came to the same conclusion as Peter! Unity in the church was preserved through a potentially very divisive topic.

Barnabas Sent to Antioch

News came to the Jerusalem church that a large group of Jewish converts was meeting in Antioch, started by brethren who had fled after Stephen’s stoning.

Antioch was a great Greek metropolis on the seacoast north of Sidon. It was the third largest city in the world at that time, with a population of almost 225,000. Compare that to Jerusalem’s population of 30,000-45,000. Only Rome and Alexandria were more populous than Antioch (*New Testament History* by F.F. Bruce, 1972, p. 231; *Ambassador for Christ* by William Barclay, 1975, p. 63).

The apostles at the home office decided to send Barnabas to Antioch, “for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith.” As a result of sending Barnabas there, “a great many people were added to the Lord” (Acts 11:24).

Barnabas needed help. So he went to Tarsus, found Saul, and brought him to Antioch. For a whole year (A.D. 40), the two of them stayed in Antioch (Acts 11:19-26).

A.D. 41 Famine in Judea

About A.D. 40, prophets came from Jerusalem to Antioch. One of them, named Agabus, prophesied that a great famine was coming.

The disciples in Antioch collected relief (food and money to buy food) for the brethren living in Judea and sent it to the home office in Jerusalem. The relief was not sent directly to the scattered brethren in Judea. It was sent to the home office, where church leadership directed its distribution.

When was this famine? Luke tells us it was during the days of Claudius Caesar (Acts 11:28). Claudius’ reign was marked by numerous droughts. Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown’s *Commentary on the Whole Bible* describes four of the droughts and concludes, “The one here referred to appears to be the second of the four above enumerated, which took place A.D. 41—an important date this for tracing out the chronology of the Acts” (1967, vol. vi, p. 78).

During the famine of 41, Paul and Barnabas traveled to Jerusalem with relief that had been donated by the brethren in Antioch.

Barnabas and Saul stayed in Jerusalem to help oversee the distribution of their offering. Luke mentions their return to Antioch later in Acts (Ch. 12:25).

A.D. 44—James Martyred

“Now about that time Herod the king stretched out his hand to harass some from the church” (Acts 12:1).

This is Herod Agrippa I, before whose son (Herod Agrippa II) Paul made his celebrated defense in Acts 26. This Herod is the grandson of Herod the Great.

Josephus tells us that this Herod was not known for cruelty, as was Herod the Great, nor for licentiousness, as was his uncle Herod Antipas. This Herod was known for “rigidity in observance of Jewish rites, gentleness, beneficence, and love of popularity. Plainly it was this last characteristic, combined with the first, which prompted the persecuting acts recorded in the first part of this chapter, while the vain-glorious exhibition related in the latter part of it is easily explained by the last characteristic” (Jamieson, Fausset and Brown, p. 79).

Herod Agrippa I believed in rigid Jewish observances and wanted to be popular among the Jews over whom he ruled. Persecuting the church, which didn’t keep all of the Jewish traditions, brought Herod praise from the Jews. Emboldened

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by Jewish support, Herod arrested the apostle James and had him beheaded with a sword (Acts 12:2).

James was the first of the 12 apostles to be martyred. He was killed A.D. 44 (*New Testament Survey* by Merrill C. Tenney, 1961, p. 254).

James was the older brother of the Apostle John—the two were called the “sons of thunder” by Christ (Mark 3:17) and were originally partners with Peter in a fishing business. Peter, James and John were the top three apostles in the church, having received special attention and training from Jesus (Mat. 17:1; Mark 1:29, 5:37, 9:2, 13:3, 14:33; Luke 5:10, 6:14, 8:51).

Why was James martyred and not Peter or John? Perhaps James was available in Jerusalem while the others were out of town. We have already seen examples of Peter and John visiting brethren in churches scattered throughout Judea (Acts 8:14, 25, 9:32).

Peter Arrested

The unbelieving Jews were pleased by Herod’s attempt to cut off the head of God’s church in Jerusalem. Since Herod sought to be popular among the Jews, he was encouraged to wreak more havoc on the church. When Peter returned to Jerusalem to keep the Feasts of Passover and Unleavened Bread, Herod had him arrested and planned to martyr him as well (Acts 12:3).

Peter was put in jail and guarded by 16 soldiers. Eight watched in prison and eight were at the gate. Herod planned to bring Peter out to the Jewish people after Passover. Meanwhile, the church prayed earnestly for Peter’s safety.

The night before Peter was to be turned over to the Jews, he was sleeping between two soldiers. His right hand was chained to the left hand of one, and his left hand was chained to the right hand of the other (Jamieson, Fausset and Brown, pp. 80-81).

Suddenly, a light shone in the prison and an angel appeared next to Peter. Neither Peter nor the guards woke up. The angel struck Peter on his side to awaken him and said, “Arise, quickly!” Groggy and unsure of what was happening, Peter sat motionless. The angel pulled him to his feet, and as he did, the chains fell from Peter’s wrists.

Then the angel said, “Tighten your belt and tie your sandals.” Peter obeyed. “Put your cloak around you and come with me,” the angel further instructed. Peter followed the angel out of prison but didn’t know if what was happening was real or a vision.

They walked past two guard stations and came to the iron gate that opened to the city. The gate opened by itself and they went out. The two walked down a street and suddenly Peter noticed that he was alone (Acts 12:6-10).

Realizing that this was not a vision—that God had indeed miraculously rescued him from Herod and the Jews—Peter walked to the home of Mary, the mother of John Mark. Many brethren were inside, praying for Peter’s release.

Peter knocked at the outside door and Rhoda, a servant girl, answered. She recognized Peter’s voice through the door and was so excited that she raced back to tell the others and left Peter outside knocking. The brethren didn’t believe Rhoda. They called her crazy and said it must have been Peter’s angel. They finally opened the door and were amazed to see it was indeed Peter!

Peter motioned for them to be quiet and told them how God had rescued him from prison. He instructed them to pass along the news to “James and the brethren.” Then Peter left and “went to another place” (vv. 11-17).

Who was this James mentioned by Peter? He could have been referring to John Mark (v. 12), in whose mother’s house he had spoken these words. But it seems most likely that he meant James, the brother of Jesus, who by now had become the leader of the Jerusalem church.

When Peter left the house of John Mark’s mother, where did he go? His immediate destination was somewhere away from this group of believers. If any soldiers came searching for this escaped prisoner, they wouldn’t find him among this small congregation.

Some believe Peter left at this time for Rome. He didn’t go there. His mission was elsewhere. The 12 apostles were commissioned to go the lost sheep of the 10 tribes of Israel (Mat. 10:5-6).

Journeys of the 12 Apostles

Beginning A.D. 43, the apostles left Jerusalem to preach in other areas. “Universal Greek tradition declares that the apostles did not leave the Syro-Palestinian region until the end of 12 years’ ministry [A.D. 43]. The number 12 symbolizes a new organized beginning” (“Where Did the 12 Apostles Go?” Part 2, by Herman L. Hoeh, *The Good News*, September-October 1987, p. 16).

Greek historians have preserved the journeys of the 12 apostles. One source is *Antiquitates Apostolicae*, translated into English by William Cave in 1684. According to this source, Peter “was a long time in Britain, where he converted many

Nations to the Faith” (p. 45). Peter may have left Jerusalem for Britain at this time to stay out of Herod’s grasp!

Peter’s brother, Andrew, preached along the shores of the Black Sea (Cave, pp. 137-138).

Simon the Zealot preached in North Africa and in Britain. He would eventually be crucified in Britain (Cave, p. 203).

James, son of Alphaeus, preached the gospel in Spain, Ireland and Britain (Cave, p. 148).

Thomas preached in Parthia, near the Caspian Sea (Cave, p. 189).

Bartholomew shared the vast plains with Thomas but spent part of his time in Armenia and in Asia Minor (Hoeh, p. 19).

Jude preached in Assyria, Mesopotamia and parts of Parthia (Hoeh, p. 19).

Philip preached among the Scythians surrounding the Black Sea (Cave, p. 168).

Matthew went to Parthia (Cave, p. 182).

Matthias preached to Israelites living in Dacia [modern Romania] and Macedonia [northern Greece] (Hoeh, p. 20).

John went to Gaul [France] (Hoeh, p. 20).

While the 11 remaining apostles were away preaching to the lost House of Israel, James, the brother of Jesus, stayed in Jerusalem, overseeing the church there.

Herod’s Last Days

As morning dawned on the day after Peter’s escape, “there was no small stir among the soldiers about what had become of Peter” (Acts 12:18).

“But when Herod had searched for him and not found him, he examined the guards and commanded that they should be put to death. And he went down from Judea to Caesarea and stayed there” (v. 19).

Herod died unexpectedly later that year—A.D. 44. On a chosen day, he put on his royal robes, sat on his throne and made a speech to the people (v. 21). This was probably Claudius’ birthday celebration Aug. 1 (Bruce, pp. 262-263).

The people shouted, “The voice of a God and not of a man!” Immediately an angel of God struck down Herod because he didn’t give honor to God. He was eaten by worms and died (Acts 12:22-23).

After the death of Herod Agrippa I, “the word of God grew and multiplied” (v. 24).

Barnabas and Saul completed their mission of distributing food to the needy brethren in Judea. They traveled from Jerusalem to Antioch, taking John Mark with them (v. 25).

(To be continued!)

College Letters:

Lessons of Life Learned at Ambassador College

There is no reason to be ashamed of the church or Ambassador College.

[Editor's note: Mom replied to my last letter, which was hand-written, starting around the outside of page 1 and spiraling toward the middle; and starting in the middle of page 2 and spiraling toward the outside.]

Oct. 26, 1975

Dear Greg,

Sure did enjoy your long letter even if I did get wound up in a knot. Of course the second page unwound me. Was glad you sent the clipping about Bernie. Told Bradley I'll have to put a sign on the bed downstairs, "Bernie slept here," because it sure looks as if he'll be rich and famous some day.

Suppose you have heard Mr. Wayne Cole [an evangelist from headquarters in Pasadena] was here Sabbath and told us Mr. Prunkard [Mom's pastor] was asked to take a three-months leave. It really bothered me because you know how well I liked him. He said they would send someone to take his place but didn't say who. Guess it doesn't really matter.

Brad, Phil, Mark & the two youngest Pruszinski girls went to the show Sat. night. I took them over and then visited June Harris while they were there. Afterwards we all went to Farrell's. The kids all wanted French dips but they don't have them any more so they had dessert. They don't have the diet plate any more either so I had the patty melt and a salad. One of the fellows who seated us asked how you were doing. They sure were busy. There was a whole bus load of kids and teachers.

I'm supposed to go out to dinner with Mrs. Edgell and Mrs. Parsons next week Sunday but now I don't know. I asked Lance for it off and he is short girls again so I'll have to work. If they wait until I'm off, I'll still go.

We went to Carol & Mel's 25th wedding anniversary last Sunday. I made her cake for her. It was fun seeing Wesley again and all the other people who came down from Danube. Edna wasn't able to go because she had pneumonia so afterward Brad & I went over to their house to see her for a little while.

Poor Tammy [our dog] is still limping on three legs. It does seem a little better,

Excerpts from Bernie Nikolai's letter

[Editor's note: Bernie Nikolai was a 1975 graduate of Ambassador College who landed a great-paying job (for 1975) with Xerox. He wrote a letter which was published in the student newspaper. Nikolai had spent the night at Mom's while passing through Minneapolis on a journey while he was in college, so I sent her a clipping of his letter. Excerpts are reproduced here:]

"I'm only mentioning money to you, Dr. Oberlander [director of financial aid and career services], not because I want to brag, but in hope of possibly helping other AC grads escape a sense of futility that I sense exists. I have a very good shot at earning \$25,000 to \$30,000 my very first year at Xerox....

[I am] 22 years old, no business experience, and a degree in Theology from an unaccredited institution. I found out later that only 6 out of 400+ applicants were hired, and I was hired in less than 24 hours.... I know I had a lot of God's help.... I feel very strongly that Ambassador College students and people in the Church as a whole *vastly* underestimate themselves. Within 4 days of trying in Toronto, a city I had never been within 800 miles of before, I had 2 solid job offers from 2 very good companies. And frankly it was *easy*.

The speech training I received at AC in class and Ambassador Club was invaluable. If there is an apathy towards club and speech class this year, tell the students the training they will get may

mean thousands of dollars per year more in their pocket. It's true in my case. I was very confident and I knew what I was talking about in the many interviews I had in a short period of time. This had a very powerful, positive effect....

I am convinced 100% that an AC graduate who simply has guts and goal is pure dynamite on the employment market!!!

There is no such thing as defeat. There honestly isn't. People without God's Spirit have done incredible things by sheer determination. To those of us that have God's Spirit, our potential even here and now in this day and age defies imagination!...

I've sparked a lot of interest towards Ambassador College at Xerox. Again my approach in explaining the college was very unorthodox. In brief it was very aggressive. AC was the best college in the world and I had several reasons to prove what I knew to be true. One of the executives at Xerox said he was more impressed with AC than any other college in the world and placed it equal with Harvard. We don't know what we're getting at AC.... I am *positive* the only limitations an AC grad has is *himself* (or herself). Most of us have pretty puny little goals, if we have goals at all. We are content to wallow in mediocrity. We are ashamed of our religion, our college, and our God. And it's time we started to do something about it.

though.

Greg, don't get yourself so involved with activities that you lose out on so much sleep. You'll pay with your health if you do. It sounds like you are so busy. So the Mystery Girl is back.

Well, there isn't much more going on around here.

Love,
Mom.

Undated

Dear Greg,

I can't imagine myself with a [driver's] license either. One reason is that I don't have one yet. Actually, tomorrow I may have one. At 7 a.m. my instructor is picking me up to go take the test. Can you send me some pointers real quick?

By the way—how did the speech go—the one about the dimensions (named after the author of the theories).

I really bugged my physics teacher with the theories. I also slightly disturbed a senior who happened to be in the room instead of at the yearbook meeting where he was supposed to be.

He asked for proof of my theories. I didn't have an answer then but I do now.

There is a new show on channel 2 at 11 p.m. here. It's called "Monty Python's Flying Circus." It is a very crude show from Britain. Sometimes it has nudity. Last night it didn't. RATS! It did have one funny part though. It was a sequence when they looked into the lives of penguins for the purpose of medical discoveries. They started out by showing outlines of man's body vs. the outline of a penguin's body and the size comparison of the two brains.

"As you can see," the man started, "the brain of the penguin is smaller than that of the man. Now this doesn't mean much, but, if you enlarge the size of the penguin till it is as big as the man (here they show another pair of outlines this time both were the same size) you will note that the brain of the penguin is still smaller than the man's. In fact it would take a penguin 42 ft. tall to have the same size brain as a man." Here the guy walked in front of a pair of legs belonging to such a beast.

Now the guy stood in front of a chart where penguins were compared to two other groups of people. "As you can see, the prehistoric man scored higher than the penguin, but the penguin scored higher than the BBC Planning Commission.

"One of the problems with the penguins is the environment. To overcome this, we went to the zoo." At the zoo, this guy in a white smock stands in front of a pond full of penguins and says, "How much is 2&2?"

The penguin goes quack and the profes-

sor says, "Did he say 4... Did he say 4?"

A man watching the whole thing shakes his head no.

"The environmental problem was overcome," says the first guy again, "but we forgot about the language barrier."

To overcome this, they put a group of people who do not speak English into the pond. The response was the same as the penguins.

"This proves that penguins are as smart as people who don't speak English."

Then they showed penguins replacing people all over the world.

Last night Phil?

Not last night but the night before (Sat.) Phil, Mark, his sisters, and I went and saw *Hearts of the West*. It was a cool movie.

School grades look like an A- average, possibly less.

BOY THIS TYPEWRITER IS IN BAD SHAPE!!!!!!

I THINK MY MIND IS GOING, IT'S CORRODED, CORRUPT, DECAYED.

THE NORMAL THOUGHTS HAVE COME AND GONE,

THE STRANGER ONES HAVE STAYED.

I suppose I should go to bed now, though I probably won't sleep. I'll see you in a few days, weeks, months, years, decades, centuries, millennia, or eons. Good bye and good luck.

Your Someday Famous Brother,

(signed) Bradley Dullum

Bradley Dullum

Inside the Tower

Continued from Page 1

jump out of there."

On Praitnath's first jump, he didn't reach Clark. He tried again. Clark grabbed him and heaved him across the barrier. They fell to the floor, hugging.

"I'm Brian," Clark said.

"I'm Stanley," Praitnath responded. They retreated to the stairs and headed down the 81 floors to the ground.

Around the 68th floor, they found light and fresh air.

At the 44th floor, they left the stairwell to take a break at the lower sky lobby. All the lights were on. The lobby was deserted except for a security guard. "Do you have phones?" the guard asked them.

"No, why?" Clark replied.

"I am with this man who's injured," the guard said, gesturing to a moaning man with a massive head wound on the floor behind the guard's stand. The phones on that floor weren't working. "I'll stay with

this guy, but you've got to promise that you'll get a stretcher and medical attention for him," the guard told them.

"We'll do our best," Clark said.

At the 31st floor, Praitnath and Clark stopped again. This time they found an open conference room in the offices of Oppenheimer Management Corporation. They each called home. Praitnath left a message, Clark briefly told his wife that he was okay. Then Clark dialed 911 and relayed the information about the injured man on the 44th floor. Then they departed for the ground-floor lobby.

By 9:30, most of the 6,000 people who had entered the South Tower to work that morning had left or were about to leave. Fewer than 1,000 remained. Of those, 600 would never leave. Perhaps 200 were already dead, killed when the plane hit.

Eighteen people who had been at or above the impact zone were still making

INSIDE THE TOWER

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Fun Fact



Drawing and Fun Fact are courtesy of NAPS

According to Celtic legends, the hazel tree is the tree of knowledge.

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. 174.

Life Is Short; All Die

"'Everyone must die eventually,' he said. 'We all are dying every single day from the moment we are born. It is a chilling rite of passage when a child reaches the age where the concept of personal mortality is fully understood. As children, we believe we will live forever. We flit from activity to activity like a butterfly, never once thinking that a time will come when we will depart this world. It is a sobering moment when we learn that our stay on this earth is temporary. From that point forward, time rushes by with increasing speed.'

"His old eyes were unwavering. They seemed to peer into the depths of her soul. 'Everyone must die, but most of us never know our time or place in advance.'"

Eccles. 8:7, 9:12; James 4:14

Quotable Quote

"Greatness is a spiritual condition worthy to excite love, interest, and admiration."

—Matthew Arnold

Memory Scripture

"So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver."

—2 Cor. 9:7

Inside the Tower

Continued from Page 5

their way down the stairs. Considering the trauma and their injuries, they moved at a good clip. The 18 included Clark and Praisnath.

As the 18 people reached the lower floors and the lobby, they brought reliable information on the state of the stairways. They had found a way past the crash site and fire. Stairway A was the only stairway that was clear from the roof to the ground. These 18 made it to safety.

Above the fire were hundreds of people who didn't try to get down. Unaware that Stairway A would lead them safely to the ground, they believed they were stranded. Some had gone to the roof. Others believed the stairs were fraught with danger.

At 9:58:59, the South Tower suddenly collapsed into a massive cloud of dust and a pile of rubble.

Only four people who had been above the 78th floor of the South Tower made it out alive. Richard Fern and Ronald DiFrancesco had found a stairway that was relatively intact.

Praisnath survived only because Clark had heard his cries and stopped to help. Clark said if he had not stopped to rescue Praisnath, he probably would have been with a group of coworkers who were persuaded by an ailing stranger to go up, not down, and they consequently perished.

There are some spiritual lessons we can take from this true story.

1. The plane crashes and building collapses were unexpected. Christ's return will come at a time when we least expect it and it will catch people unaware (Mat. 24:36-50, Luke 21:35).

2. A security guard told Praisnath his building was okay and he should return to his office on the 81st floor. In the last days, there will be scoffers telling us that things aren't so bad, this society won't end and Christ isn't returning soon. Don't listen to them (2 Pet. 3:3-4).

3. We can't do it on our own. Praisnath would have died without Clark and Clark would have died had he not stopped to save Praisnath. We need the fellowship, encouragement and instruction we receive from the ministry and brethren in the church to get through the difficult days ahead (Heb. 10:25).

4. Stairway A was the only stairway that was clear from top to bottom, and few found it. Spiritually speaking, there is just one way to be saved, and few will find it (Mat. 7:13-14).

5. It is amazing that someone so close to the plane's impact survived. God can save us through our trials, no matter how difficult they seem (Ps. 91:2-13, 1 Cor. 10:13).



Chinese Missile Could Shift Balance of Power

"U.S. naval planners are scrambling to deal with what analysts say is a game-changing weapon being developed by China—an unprecedented carrier-killing missile called the Dong Feng 21D that could be launched from land with enough accuracy to penetrate the defenses of even the most advanced moving aircraft carrier at a distance of more than 900 miles.

"Analysts say final testing of the missile could come as soon as the end of this year....

"The weapon, a version of which was displayed last year in a Chinese military parade, could revolutionize China's role in the Pacific balance of power, seriously weakening Washington's ability to intervene in any potential conflict over Taiwan or North Korea....

"Funded by annual double-digit increases in their defense budget for almost every year of the past two decades, the Chinese navy has become Asia's largest and has expanded beyond its traditional mission of retaking Taiwan to push its sphere of influence deeper into the Pacific and protect vital maritime trade routes" ("Chinese missile could shift power balance in the Pacific" by Eric Talmadge, *The Associated Press, Southeast Missourian*, Aug. 6, 2010, p. 10A).

Bible prophecy speaks of an end-time army of 200 million coming out of the East across the Euphrates River into the area outside Jerusalem (Rev. 9:14-19, 16:12-14). This massive army will prepare to battle an occupying force that has come from the north—Europe (Dan. 11:40-44). Both of these armies seek world domination, and if this battle would be allowed to take place, all human life on this planet would be destroyed (Mat. 24:22).

Before the battle between these two armies can take place, Christ will return, and the armies will fight Him instead of each other (Rev. 17:14, 19:19-21).

It is likely that the army of 200 million coming out of the East will be manned for the most part by Chinese. What other nation has the manpower to

build so great an army?

The Eastern army also may contain some soldiers from other Asiatic powers that will unite with China to form an Asiatic bloc, just as we are seeing Europe unite and the Arab or Muslim world unite into their own political blocs.

Russia Suffers Drought

"Prime Minister Vladimir V. Putin on Thursday [Aug. 5] banned all exports of grain after millions of acres of Russian wheat withered in a severe drought, driving up prices around the world and pushing them to their highest level in two years in the United States.

"Russia is suffering from the worst heat wave since record-keeping began here more than 130 years ago....

"Wheat prices have soared by about 90 percent since June because of the drought in Russia and parts of the European Union, as well as floods in Canada.... Exports from Ukraine, another major exporter, are down sharply this year" ("Russia, Crippled by Drought, Bans Grain Exports" by Andrew E. Kramer, *The New York Times* reprints, Aug. 5, 2010, p. 1).

Jesus Christ said there would be famines signaling the beginning of sorrows before He returned (Mat. 24:3, 7-8).

Gay Ministers Welcomed

"With a laying on of hands, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on Sunday [July 25] welcomed into its fold seven openly gay pastors who had until recently been banned from the church's ministry" ("Lutherans Offer Warm Welcome to Gay Pastors" by Laurie Goodstein, *The New York Times* reprints, July 25, 2010, p. 1).

Homosexuality is condemned in the Bible (Lev. 18:22-23, 20:13; Rom. 1:24-27; 1 Cor. 6:9-10). That a church would approve of such conduct indicates how depraved some Americans have become. The further we get away from obeying God, the closer we are getting to God's punishment, ending in national captivity (see Deuteronomy 28 and Leviticus 26).