



Messages from Jesus or Dad are denoted by bold type. Notes from the editors are either in italics or are preceded by "Editor." Short quotes from the Letters are preceded by a bullet and are followed by the reference.

Dinosaurs, Dragons, and Beowulf

Editor: Some time back, John Aggson, a Family member in the U.S., wrote us about the book *Tornado in a Junkyard* by James Perloff (which is now condensed and available on the MO site). He said:

Along with "Tornado's" scientific chapters debunking evolution are [details of] dinosaur sightings that have been reported in history, clear up to one that was documented in Tucson, Arizona, in the 1870s!

[The author] gets into amazing detail. He gets into Roman history and their encounters with dinosaurs. He points out how the Ethiopians called the T-Rex "elephant killers." He tells of one account when the British Railway Co. was blasting rock in southern England, and after a big explosion, a pterodactyl staggered out "screeching" and collapsed. He quotes the documentation on this out of the newspaper and gives the date. They even called in the leading botanist of the day, who identified it as a pterodactyl.

He reports how Marco Polo when crossing the Himalayas saw two "what we would call raptors." He called them "lindeworms," and drew a picture of them in his diary. Later there was a "lindeworm," or raptor, killed and stuffed and put in an Italian museum up until the 1700s, when it mysteriously disappeared.

I am fascinated by an account he gave in his book on the dinosaur sightings that happened in Denmark or Northern Germany in 586 AD. The name of the man involved is Beowulf (pronounced BAY-oh-wolf). He is called the King of the Geats in the late 500s AD. They were possibly a tribe of northern Goths who lived between the Swedes and the Danes on the southern tip of Sweden. The epic poem "Beowulf" is considered the first great work of English literature.

Beowulf is actually written in history as having ruled for 50 years in this area of northern Europe. For 15 years a large creature would come in from the moors at night and kill and eat Danish warriors. It stood on its hind legs, had a huge head with a terrible row of teeth round about, had a long tail and small forelimbs or arms. This ancient poem describes a T-Rex perfectly, yet in those days no skeletons of them had been dug up yet!



SKELETON OF TYRANNOSAURUS REX

Beowulf tells of Noah's Flood and that giants lived before the flood. He uses a giant's sword to kill the second T-Rex he fights!

To get back to the first encounter: Beowulf had his men bed down in their longhouse. That night "Grendel" (the dinosaur) forced its way in under the roof and ate one man alive. While he was bent down where Beowulf could reach him, Beowulf got ahold of one of those little forelimbs and literally ripped it out of the shoulder socket. The creature fled to the moors and died, and Beowulf brought back the "hand of Grendel" to decorate the lodge roof along with all the deer antlers, the book says!

Editor: Myth or reality? Allegory or actuality? We asked the Lord if He could please comment on this—on whether

dinosaurs survived the Flood, whether there were dragons, and exactly what Beowulf fought, if he did—and He responded with the following message:

(Jesus:) It can often be difficult for My children to separate myth from reality, because men can sometimes make myths, based on their imaginings, such as evolution, and call them reality. And at other times men can take reality such as My Word with all that it contains about creation and call it mythical.

This is as true today as it was in days of old.

Also, it is true that in days of old, men wrote some things that were true and some that were not. Some of the things they wrote seemed far-fetched, but were based on the truth—such as the stories of gods and goddesses of old, who were often good and bad angels and spirits that walked the earth in those days. Other things they wrote may have seemed plausible but were in fact fables and fictions, and life has not changed in that regard—modern journalists and authors are just as capable of concocting stories that are entirely false, but which have the ring of truth and deceive many.

So, what is the truth of dinosaurs and dragons? Did dinosaurs survive the Flood and were there such things as drag-

THOTS

"The greatness of a man's power is in the measure of his surrender."—William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army

"We're face to face with our destiny. And we must meet it with a high, resolute courage, for ours is a life of action, of strenuous performance, of duty. Let us live in the harness of striving mightily. Let us run the risk of wearing out rather than rusting out."—Theodore Roosevelt

ons, and did Beowulf battle either or both of these beasts in days long past?

There were indeed dinosaurs in days of old, before the Flood, and scientists have found many of their bones to confirm this. They were created after their kind in the beginning, just as I created the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and the beasts of the field. Some of these fish and birds and beasts were what you would call dinosaurs, and others that man calls dinosaurs were simply very large versions of the common beasts that abounded during that time—giant birds and reptiles and mammals of different sorts.

You see, in the days before the Flood, when the earth was surrounded by the waters above it—what you call the water canopy—the earth was more conducive to life growing and thriving and flourishing. Animals of various sorts grew very large and lived to great ages, as did man, who often lived up to a thousand years. Men also grew. There were giants in the earth in those days, as My Word says.

So man and beast and dinosaur existed side by side in those days, and there was no enmity between them. Men ate grains and fruits and vegetables and dairy products, and eggs and cheese and honey—the herbs and harvest of the fields and of the trees, including even some varieties that did not survive the Flood and are unknown to you today. The dinosaurs and beasts were also vegetarians, and men did not generally hunt or battle dinosaurs in those days, nor did dinosaurs and dragons—for there were dragons—generally hunt man. There was relative peace between man and beast, and even a means of communication, as your David has said.

Q: Did man eat animal products?

According to Genesis, it was just herbs that were given for meat.

A: (Jesus:) Men did consume these animal products, because they could do so without harm to the animals themselves. In fact, in many cases with benefit to the animals themselves, for as you know, if a cow is not milked and has no calves, it is very uncomfortable for it. I taught Adam about these things when I brought the animals to him to name. I created the animals in this way so that they would be of benefit to man, among other reasons.

In the days before the Flood, I advised My servant Noah to gather the various beasts by twos and sevens, according to their kind and whether they

were clean or unclean, and he gathered bird and beast, dinosaur and dragon, into the Ark. “But dinosaurs are huge,” you protest! “How did he ever manage to get them into the Ark?” Well, My dear ones, I had him call the young of each species, both because it would be easier to feed and care for them in the Ark and because they would need to be healthy and hardy and energetic to survive in the world after the Flood, when things would

change drastically. The waters above the firmament would be gone then, as would much of the vegetation on the earth, so there would be less food, a colder, harsher climate, and a shorter lifespan. It would be the young who would adapt and survive. And, even though some of the young dinosaurs and dragons and other beasts were nevertheless large, remember that the Ark was also large, towering 45 feet above the earth. There was ample room for all the creatures it contained.

After the Flood, I put enmity between man and beast and dinosaur and dragon, because men would need to eat meat to survive, as would many of the beasts. So men hunted beasts and dinosaurs and dragons, and these beings hunted man and hunted each other. But I gave man dominion over the beasts of the field and the fowl of the air and the fish of the sea, and man was the victorious hunter. As I told Noah of old, all these beings were delivered into the hand of man, and every moving thing that lived was to be meat for man.

Some dinosaurs continued to be slow and peaceful vegetarians, and provided a lot of meat for man; these species died out in the centuries after the Flood. Other dinosaurs, as well as dragons, were carnivorous and hunted and killed men, but as men multiplied and grew stronger and wiser, they killed these predators or drove them far from their habitations, just as man does with predators today.

In the wilderness areas of the earth after the Flood, there were both dinosaurs and dragons, as well as in the depths of the sea, where some remain even today, unknown and undiscovered by man. Ancient mariners and explorers had many tales that were not true, but some of their tales of sea serpents and dragons and other strange creatures were true, for these beings existed. As the habitations of man expanded, these strange beings were pushed further and further into the wilderness or into the depths of the sea, and their numbers diminished as



ARTIST'S CONCEPTION OF NOAH'S ARK DURING THE FLOOD

well. When they came in contact with men and attacked them, they were often killed in return.

Nevertheless, some of these dinosaurs and dragons survived and their species carried on for many hundreds of years. Other than man, whom they often avoided, they had no other enemies capable of overcoming them, and being reptiles, they often lived to great ages, although not as long as before the Flood.

So, many of the so-called legends of dragons and dinosaurs that roamed the world thousands of years ago, or even hundreds of years ago, are true. These creatures did exist in remote areas, and even wandered into populated areas, where they preyed on man and became part of his history, becoming part of tales which are considered legends or allegories today.

To answer your question, Beowulf did battle three dinosaurs, for there were a number of them in that part of Scandinavia at that time. He did not know Me as you know Me, but he prayed to God and it was counted to him for righteousness, and he was granted victory over these beasts. (His last victory resulted in his death, but that too was a victory, as he came home to Me.) Many other great heroes of the past did the same and gained victory over these beasts. Eventually, as the centuries passed, these great beasts died out. They had been what man might call an endangered species and they turned into an extinct species for the most part, although there are very rare exceptions spread abroad in your world even today.

Some may scoff at these words and ask how these things can be, and I simply point them to My Word, for there they will find dinosaur and dragon, both living side by side with man. In Job you can read about the behemoth, a great beast with a tail like a cedar, with great scales and bones like iron, yet who eats grass like an ox. This, My dear ones, is a literal description of a dinosaur.

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As you read on in Job, you will also read about leviathan, the dragon, whose nostrils smoked, whose breath kindled the coals, and whose mouth emitted flames. He was not all-powerful as your modern movies make him out to be, but he was a fearsome and vicious opponent of man when angered, and a creature which was stamped out with determination over the centuries. Read My Word and see if you do not find him and his kind there, and he has been recorded in My Word as a byword for evil, to the point that even the Enemy of your souls is symbolized as a dragon, for he is a far greater and more vicious foe.

In speaking of these matters, I do not say that every tale of dragons or dinosaurs of the past is true or described accurately. Some were true, others were exaggerated, and yet others were not true. The beasts themselves did exist, however, because My Word is true, and were allowed to continue for a time on earth after the Flood, and form part of the histories of many tribes and nations of old. Men today consider these men primitives and savages, and many were, but they saw and knew and understood some things that men today would consider mysterious and strange and wonderful.

Dad on dinosaurs and dragons

Our pretty travel [agent] asked, “Well, don’t you believe all those big animals like dinosaurs existed?”—Which shows how immediately they relate the belief in evolution to the existence of these prehistoric monsters, etc.

The prehistoric monsters did exist, and you’ll even find records of them in the Bible in the “behemoth” and “leviathan,” the mastodon and dinosaurs of Job 40 and 41.—And you’ll also find here the ancient fire-breathing dragons of historic legends—such as the story of Saint George and the

Dragon—which have actual basis in historic fact, although later accounts have been somewhat embellished by man with considerable fiction. These things did exist.

She said, “Well, why aren’t they here now then?” Because they became extinct like many other creatures and species are becoming extinct even today. “Well, if God made them, why did He let them become extinct?”—Or rather, if they were going to become extinct, why did He make them in the first place? Well, perhaps it was to illustrate how the largest and most powerful and strongest are not always the fittest to survive, contrary to the doctrine of evolution!

The most fearsome of beasts are not those that conquered the earth, but “the meek shall inherit the earth”—little, weak, tiny vulnerable man with his brains and the blessing of God conquered the earth! God told him to, saying: “Multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it and have dominion over it.”—And that’s exactly what man did, in spite of the dinosaurs and the behemoths and fire-breathing dragons and the terrifying monsters of the past, man, the seemingly least fit to survive, outlived them all! (“Sex Works,” ML #306:31–34, Vol. 3)



Did you know that there really were dragons?—Really, fire-breathing, smoke-breathing dragons!

Saint George, a great Christian, actually fought a fire-breathing, smoke-exhaling dragon! There were a few left around in his day! But there used to be a lot of them in Job’s day, and God uses this dragon as a type of the Devil.

I believe what the Bible says in Job, that they actually breathed out fire and brimstone and smoke! You say, “Come on now, Dad, you don’t really believe that old fairy tale stuff, do you?” Yes, I do!



ARTIST’S DEPICTION OF DRAGON

I even believe in Greek and Roman mythology. I believe this is leftover legends of the battles between the angels of God and the demons of the Devil! I believe they really happened! Maybe not exactly as they are finally portrayed in those myths of mythology and legendary tales ... but I believe they’re based on facts of early spiritual warfare between the angels of God, the forces of good, and the forces of evil, the demons and devils of Hell, the Devil! You say, “Now I know this guy is cracked!”

Well, I’ll tell you something, I believe in the Bible, which is even further out than Greek and Roman mythology and all the legends of man and all the fairy tales put together! You want some wild tales and some miraculous supernatural happenings and things that sound like fairy tales?—Just read the Bible! It’s all right here! But even more exciting, more thrilling, more wonderful, because it’s true! Every single word and every letter, every passage is the truth of God! (“Luke 21!—Antichrist Tribulation and 2nd-Coming Salvation,” ML #1507:23–27, GN Book 7)



(Speaking of the Endtime prophets:) It says in the Bible that fire will proceed out of their mouth and devour their enemies! (Rev.11:5) You don’t think that’s possible?

I believe in dragons! They’re in the Bible! You read the 41st Chapter of Job and see! Smoke comes out of their nostrils and fire comes out of their mouths and they’re virtually armor-plated! You read it, if you want to read about dragons and dinosaurs. ... They actually used to exist!—And some of them actually had smoke coming out of their nostrils and fire coming out of their mouths!

If you think that’s a fairy tale, then the whole Bible’s a fairy tale, because that’s what it says! I mean, as recently as dear old St. George of England, he went out and had to still kill some of the remaining dragons, and even in those days it said that smoke was coming out of their nostrils and fire out of their mouths!

They’ve still got one in Loch Ness! They’ve got a monster that dozens of people have seen swimming in that

Q: Many reference books say there’s no record of Beowulf except the poem. Did he really exist?

A: (Jesus:) Beowulf did exist. He was not a legend, although his exploits became legendary and he is unknown in history today. This is partly because many hundreds of years have passed since he lived, but also because he was what the world would consider a godly hero, and the Enemy tries to erase the records and exploits of such men and women from the historical record. Many of the great heroes, saints, and martyrs of the past are little known today, or completely unknown to the world, but not to Me. I preserve the true historical record, and it is far different in many cases than the books written by men!



loch, which is a big deep deep lake up in northern Scotland. So there are a few left somewhere in the world, they've been sighted a few places here and there. A few beasts that have long since been extinct are still hanging around! Probably God left 'em around to scare a few people that needed it! ("The Battle of Armageddon," ML #2216:62-65, Lifelines 18)

Selected Bible verses on dinosaurs and dragons

Behold now behemoth, which I made with thee; he eateth grass as an ox. He moveth his tail like a cedar: the sinews of his stones are wrapped together. His bones are as strong pieces of brass; his bones are like bars of iron. (Job 40:15, 17, 18).

Canst thou draw out leviathan with an hook? None is so fierce that dare stir him up: who then is able to stand before me? Who can open the doors of his face? His teeth are terrible round about.

His scales are his pride, shut up together as with a close seal. One is so near to another, that no air can come between them. They are joined one to another.

Out of his mouth go burning lamps, and sparks of fire leap out. Out of his nostrils goeth smoke, as out of a seething pot or caldron. His breath kindleth coals, and a flame goeth out of his mouth.

The sword of him that layeth at him cannot hold: the spear, the dart, nor the habergeon. He esteemeth iron as straw, and brass as rotten wood. The arrow cannot make him flee. Darts are counted as stubble: he laugheth at the shaking of a spear.

He maketh the deep to boil like a pot: he maketh the sea like a pot of ointment. Upon earth there is not his like, who is made without fear. (Job 41:1, 10, 14-17, 19-21, 26-29, 31, 33).

In that day the Lord with His sore and great and strong sword shall punish



PTERODACTYL

leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and He shall slay the dragon that is in the sea. (Isaiah 27:1).

◆ Ask Dad!—No.22

Subject: Current Comments

■ Still No Weapons of Mass Destruction!

After turning Iraq upside down for more than a year and a half, the U.S. has finally had to confess it couldn't find any weapons of mass destruction there—although Bush said that Saddam's "desire to acquire weapons of mass destruction in the future" was reason enough to invade anyway! Can you imagine? That's not a reason, that's an excuse, and a pretty poor justification for a war and an occupation that have killed up to 30,000 Iraqis so far, and 12 years of sanctions before that which killed more than a million Iraqis!

It makes me furious the way the U.S. invades weak nations like Panama, Grenada, Afghanistan, Iraq and others and blames the death and destruction it leaves behind on them! In other words, it's all their fault that they were invaded and devastated, with part of their army slaughtered and their citizenry becoming "collateral damage"—innocent victims just because they happened to be where the U.S. wanted to drop a bomb, shoot a missile, fire a tank, or shoot a rifle!

It's not a new U.S. tactic, either. It's one they've practiced for hundreds of years! Dear old Mark Twain had them pegged when he described the process that governments use: "Next the statesmen will invent cheap lies, putting the blame upon the nation that is attacked, and every man will be glad of those conscience-soothing falsities, and will diligently study them, and refuse to examine any refutations of them; and thus he will by and by con-

vince himself that the war is just, and will thank God for the better sleep he enjoys after this process of grotesque self-deception."

What he was saying is that it not only serves the government's purpose in blaming the war and destruction on the victim, but the people themselves are then able to soothe their conscience and feel justified, that "They had it coming to them," even if the excuse the government uses is flimsy as can be! People accept it anyway because they don't want to feel bad about themselves or about their government, and they can

keep waving the flag and saying, "God bless America," secure in their goodness and niceness.

Well, if American weapons inspectors are eager to find weapons of mass destruction, they could find a lot in Southeast Asia, where the U.S. dropped more than 72 million liters of poisonous chemicals in Vietnam, or in Laos where there are millions of unexploded cluster bombs littering the countryside, left over from U.S. raids, or in Cambodia or Korea.

Or, if they're interested in more recent WMD, the weapons inspectors could check out Afghanistan, where

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the U.S. left behind some 500 to 600 tons of depleted uranium, or Iraq itself, where there's several times that much, causing cancer, birth defects and deaths in both countries.

A little closer to home, if the U.S. wants to dig up even more WMD, it could go down to its former firing ranges in Panama, where it left at least 100,000 bombs and artillery rounds strewn across more than 7,000 acres, as well as mustard gas bombs that they dropped and forgot about during decades of chemical weapons tests there. One foreign ministry official said, "How is it that [the U.S. military] went to the other side of the world to find chemical weapons that did not exist, and there are chemical weapons that they put here?"

So if the U.S. is really interested in weapons of mass destruction, it can find plenty that it left behind itself in its war or on its former military bases! But it seems that, as hard as it searches, it can't find any that Iraq had. Saddam got rid of it all, just as he said he did!

■ **Back to the Past in Zimbabwe**
Poor Zimbabwe is really in a pitiful state, and its people need our prayers. Under Mugabe the country is going backward instead of forward, with the economy collapsing, starvation and unemployment rising, and civilization itself practically disappearing! Unless something changes, the country is on its way back to the jungle.

People now sit around and joke, "What did we have before candles?—Electricity!" Whereas they once had electricity, they've now had to revert to candles because the power is off so much. Hotels hand out candles and matches to their guests along with their room key.

In the countryside, they have so few ambulances that work anymore that they're using ox carts to ferry patients to the clinics, where they just hope they'll have some medicine to treat them. And if people die, their relatives have to guard the grave or thieves will come along and steal the coffin so they can sell it, leaving the body behind! That's also why electrical cables and even street signs are disappearing throughout the country; they're stripped and melted down and sold.

Zimbabwe used to be one of the richest countries in southern Africa, but now more than a third of the people live on food aid and half the children are malnourished—and if you're a member of an opposition political party, your chances of getting food aid range between slim and none, and your chances of getting beat up or brutalized by Mugabe's goons range between likely and high!

Meanwhile, Mugabe just built himself a 25-bedroom retreat north of the capital that cost more than \$9



ROBERT MUGABE

million, and he's blaming the country's problems on the British and the Americans and the white farmers that he kicked off their land, which now often lies fallow and unfarmed, with wrecked farm machinery littering the landscape.

Well, Mugabe will reap what he's sowed, either in this life or in the next, and I don't think he'll be too happy about it! He'd do well to remember that there've been very few African tyrants who've died peacefully in their sleep—they've usually been killed in coups—and what he'll face after that is even worse, let me tell you!

In the meantime, pray for the poor and the hungry and the helpless and the persecuted of Zimbabwe, that the Lord will care for them and relieve their suffering quickly!

■ Youth Problems in Japan

The poor young people in Japan need help too—not because they lack food or money but because they lack affection and love, family bonds and a home life, and the Lord most of all!

Many of them have grown up very spoiled, because their parents gave them everything they wanted. Often the parents only had one child, too, so that child had no brothers or sisters. Since the parents didn't spend much time with their kids—the father was always working and hardly ever home, and the mother was busy, and the kids were always cramming in school anyway—the parents gave them things instead of love and affection. They're actually having nationwide campaigns to urge parents to hug their kids, because it just doesn't come natural to a lot of parents!

So the poor kids grew up pampered but without much parental love and guidance and communication, have spent most of their waking hours in schools of various sorts, have been under tremendous stress and strain to do well and to make it even in the midst of an economic slump, have been surrounded by gadgets and the good life and the ultimate in materialism, have been subjected to all sorts of perversions and violence and gore in movies and comic books and computer games, and they don't have any heavenly input to help them make sense of it—other

than an occasional visit to a dead Buddhist temple or Shinto shrine to perform a few meaningless rituals, which don't mean much to most of the kids!

After all that, is it any wonder they're having problems? There's been a huge increase in arson, assault, rape, mutilation, manslaughter and even murder by young people, and the situation in some schoolyards is so bad that the media says they're becoming battlefields. Thousands of other kids are so depressed that they won't even leave their rooms or their homes because they can't cope with normal life. And normal life for other kids is to sell themselves to adults for sex so that they can afford to buy the latest designer clothes and gadgets that they want, or to fit in to the latest fashion craze.

That's what happens when you raise a generation without God. Their grandparents rejected Christianity in the aftermath of World War II, and their parents turned to materialism and money after that, and now the older folks don't have anything to pass on to their kids except traditional values: "Be good." Well, the kids don't see any reason to be good because they don't see any reason or purpose or meaning to life, so they're rebelling in their various ways, and the country is suffering because of it.

God bless you Family members who are trying to reach them and help them! I know it's a battle, because you have to fight some of the same influences that are dragging down the Japanese young people, but if you can win them, it's worth it! If you can pluck those young people out of the pit they're in, then you've really got some jewels, some pearls of great price, and wonderful disciples!



JAPANESE TEENS ON THE STREETS OF SHIBUYA

■ Hugo Chávez, Latin Politics, and U.S. Meddling

Latins can be very passionate about politics! In Venezuela, the opposition forced through a referendum to try to get President Hugo Chávez recalled, and in the weeks before the referendum there were all sorts of marches, demonstrations, and near-riots in the streets, with scuffles between those who were pro-Chávez and anti-Chávez.

Chávez won, though, so his supporters are happy, his opponents are disgruntled, and the U.S. is sulking, because they were hoping he'd lose so they'd have someone a little more pro-American and pliable controlling all that Venezuelan oil! Jimmy Carter went there to help monitor the election, and he said, "There's no doubt in my mind that at least in the White House—I don't know about the State Department—there was a deep desire to see Chávez lose."

In fact, it's come out that there was more than a "deep desire" to see him lose—the U.S. was channeling all sorts of money to anti-government groups through its so-called National Endowment for Democracy! They wanted a Venezuelan "democracy" without Chávez, and if it cost them several million dollars to buy it, that was fine with them! It's just one more example of how the U.S. meddles with governments around the world, saying it wants "greater democracy" when what it really wants is a more pro-American regime!



A VICTORIOUS HUGO CHÁVEZ

Wild Weather in the U.S.

The southern U.S. has been hit by four hurricanes so far this year—especially Florida. It's been more than 100 years since a single state has been hit by four hurricanes in such a short time, and many folks in Florida are asking, "Why us?"

I've lived through a few Florida hurricanes myself, and my heart goes out to those poor people who lost loved ones or all they had during those storms. That can be a very sad loss and a difficult situation, I know.

Still, the Lord did many miracles to protect and keep His own and to bring many others to Him! He answered a lot of prayers, and new faith sprang up throughout Florida even as a lot of houses or material belongings were damaged and destroyed. The Lord looks on the material and the physical differently than those who are in human flesh do. While He's a God of love and compassion and mercy, and it hurts Him when His creations suffer, the spiritual is the most important in the long run, because that's what will endure forever. So He sometimes allows what seem like terrible things in the physical, to those who are looking at it naturally, because they bring forth wonderful fruit in the spiritual, to those who can see it supernaturally.

As far as the "Why us?" well, it's not that the people in Florida are any worse than Americans as a whole. There are the good and the righteous, and the evil and the iniquitous, just like most places. But the Lord allowed these



CORVETTE ON FLORIDA BEACH COVERED BY SAND AND MUD FROM HURRICANE

storms to hit Florida as part of the judgments He's allowing on the U.S. as a whole.

You see, when the ruler of a nation goes astray and leads the nation astray in some way, the Lord sometimes allows the nation itself to suffer as a result. That happened a lot in the Bible, where the lessons are brought out very clearly, and it's happened a lot in the thousands of years since that time, but more modern people haven't always realized it or learned their lessons.

In ancient Israel, for example, the actions of the kings often brought down plagues and pestilences and attacks and various disasters upon their countries as a whole. Israel suffered because of Saul. Israel suffered because of David as well, when he sinned by taking a census in Israel. The Lord judged the country itself as a result, and 70,000 men died of a pestilence in the course of one day (2Samuel 24)! And if you go on reading Kings and Chronicles, they're often chronicles of the misdeeds of the kings and the Lord's resulting judgments on both them and their kingdoms!

So the Lord often judged kings and nations by judging their kingdoms and their people, and that's what's happening in Florida.

The Lord is starting to judge Bush and the U.S. government for the destruction they've caused in Iraq, and although it might be more fitting in our eyes if the ground were to open up and swallow the White House and some other government buildings, that's not how the Lord works all the time. The nation itself often suffers because of an ungodly ruler and an ungodly government—in this case, one that they voted into office.

Just as the U.S. has left a swath of destruction in Iraq, these hurricanes, tornadoes and floods have left a swath of destruction in the southern U.S., and there's more to come if the U.S. continues on its wicked way under its present wicked government.

Now that's not something to gloat about or to point the finger about, saying, "The U.S. had it coming to them." If anything, it should cause a greater fear of the Lord to spring forth in you, praying that you'll be an obedient servant and not do anything worthy of His judgments! The Lord's a loving Father and He hates to have to spank His children, but He will if they're naughty and need it!

Bring Back the Wall!

Unifying a divided country doesn't always solve all its problems or make everyone happy. It's been 14 years since the Berlin Wall came down and Germany was reunited, but a lot of Germans would just as soon have the wall back! Apparently about a quarter of West Germans wish the Easterners were back behind the wall, and about 12% of the East Germans wish they were too—they don't want to be part of the united country.

The West Germans feel like they've suffered financially, having spent nearly a trillion euros on reunification, and they haven't seen any benefits in it. The East Germans feel like they're suffering too, with high unemployment and low wages, and they're not seeing much in the way of benefits either, and there's a lot of dissatisfaction and name-calling between East and West.

Well, at least they don't face the threat of war with each other, as they did for so many years, and at least they have an economy! The West Germans are unhappy because their standard of living has gone down and the East Germans are unhappy because their standard of living hasn't gone up enough. If they were wise, they'd thank



THE BERLIN WALL. THERE WAS REJOICING WHEN IT FELL, BUT NOW MANY GERMANS WISH IT WAS BACK.

the Lord that things aren't as bad for them as they are for many countries in Africa, Asia, and the Third World. While the Germans are grumbling, many people from poorer countries would just love to immigrate to Germany to be in their shoes! Even being poor in Ger-

many is a lot different than being poor in other parts of the world—such as sub-Saharan Africa, where the poor have an average income of 65 cents a day!

The Russian School Slaughter

Russia has been having terrible problems with Chechen terrorists, and there've been some horrific slaughters. In the space of a few weeks in August and September, Chechen terrorists blew up the Russian-backed president of Chechnya, killed and wounded dozens of Russian soldiers in raids there, blew two Russian passenger planes out of the sky, set off a bomb outside a Moscow subway station, and killed hundreds of children, parents, teachers and soldiers in a schoolhouse siege near Chechnya. The killings of the poor schoolchildren in particular were heart-wrenching for the Russians.

What makes it tough for the Russians is that Chechnya isn't some faraway country but is right inside their borders, a tiny little republic in southern Russia between the Black Sea

and the Caspian Sea. It may be small, but it's been a lot of trouble for the Russians ever since the beginning, because it simply doesn't want to be part of Russia. It never has.

Back in the 1800s under the czars, when Russia was expanding from Europe to Siberia and from the far north to as far south

as it could conquer, Russia took over Chechnya. Back then it was a bunch of Muslim clans and tribes who lived in the mountains and fought each other and their neighbors, and who united to fight the Russians. In fact, they fought the czar's troops for 25 years. But the Russians won in the end, and Chechnya became a part of Russia—a very unhappy part, and one that kept on rebelling.

Chechnya's history under the Russians has mainly been one of rebellion and revolt. The Chechens staged a big revolt during the Russian revolution of 1917 and they fought battles with Russian forces for another ten years or so, but lost again. Later, in World War II, some Chechens were forming alliances with the invading Germans to try to gain their freedom, and Stalin was furious. He packed the entire population up in freight trains and sent them off to Central Asia, where about half of them died! It was only under Khrushchev that the survivors were allowed to return.

When the Soviet Union broke up in 1991, Chechnya again decided it wanted to be independent, but Russia didn't agree, so heavy fighting went on for years. At least 40,000 people were killed, Grozny (the capital city) was turned into a pile of rubble, and hundreds of thousands of Chechens left to escape the fighting and became refugees in other parts of Russia. Those who were left behind were the very poor, who had no place else they could go, and the very militant rebel fighters, who continued to hide in the hills and the mountains and cause lots of trouble for the Russians, both by attacking them and by launching guerrilla attacks in neighboring republics as well as in Moscow itself.



The heavy fighting of the past has now turned into almost constant guerrilla warfare, and Russia's not doing very well at winning it, so it would just as soon settle it if it could. In recent years Russia has offered the Chechens autonomy, the chance to run their own affairs, but the rebels have said they

won't settle for anything less than independence. It's conducted elections in Chechnya, but the officials elected have been assassinated. It's tried to call a truce and withdraw most of its forces from Chechnya, and the Chechens have responded by becoming bolder in their banditry, kidnapping Russians, journalists, aid workers, or anyone with money, and holding them for ransom, stirred up rebellion in neighboring republics, and launched suicide attacks and guerrilla attacks throughout Russia. The Russians have been willing to talk to the rebels in the past, to try to work out some sort of agreement, but the different rebel clans and tribes don't even agree with each other—about all they agree on is that they want to be independent from Russia!

So Russia has tried all these different things, but now in the aftermath of the school slaughter, it's furious! Putin has said he won't negotiate anymore, and that he reserves the right to launch preemptive strikes on Chechen forces wherever they are, at any time, with overwhelming force. He's said that Russia has been "weak" in confronting the Chechens and that "the weak get beaten," so he's expanding the government's power, his power. People are beginning to whisper—and not very loudly—that it could mean a return to Stalinism and iron-fisted rule again.



RUSSIAN WOMAN MOURNS CHILD KILLED IN SCHOOLHOUSE SIEGE NEAR CHECHNYA.

Well, there's coming a man who'll be an ironhanded ruler—the Anti-christ—and he'll take care of rebels and guerrillas the same way Stalin did, by killing them! But I don't think it's time yet for him to step on the scene, because things haven't gotten quite bad enough, quite desperate enough, for him to act as the "savior" and provide the solutions the world is grasping for. You're going to see more conflict in Russia and in other countries, more turmoil in the Mideast, more rumors of wars, more economic instability here and there, before the Man of Sin makes his entrance. But that day is coming, and it's drawing closer all the time.

So don't look down and be discouraged by some of the horrible things going on in the world. Look up, knowing that the End is drawing closer day by day! Although death and destruction may take place, death isn't the end

of life, and destruction is just of the things that can be seen, not of the things that can't be seen! Jesus is the resurrection and the life, and those who believe in Him never die. And even though the things of this earth pass away, the things of the spirit never pass; they endure for-

ever. And those who pass away not knowing Jesus receive a chance later, because He's a kind and loving and merciful and compassionate Savior! His mercy endures forever, as does His love for all His creations!

So take heart, Family! One day soon there'll be "love and laughter and peace forever after," when the world is free—free of evil men and their evil deeds, free of war and the weapons of war, free of the governments of man, and under the righteous rule of Jesus and His children! It's coming! You can trust His Word! Stand on it and encourage yourself with it when the going gets tough!

In the meantime, buckle your seatbelts and prepare yourself for the dark days ahead. They can be wonderful days for you, days full of victories and soul-winning and disciple-winning and fruitfulness in every way, if you're faithful and obedient and yielded. I love you!

◆ Tidbits

Beating bitterness. (*Leadership Journal*) On June 17, 1966, two black men strode into the Lafayette Grill in Paterson, New Jersey, and shot three people to death. Rubin "Hurricane" Carter, a celebrated black boxer, and an acquaintance were falsely charged and wrongly convicted of the murders



RUSSIAN COMMANDO WITH HOSTAGES FREED DURING THE SCHOOL SIEGE

in a highly publicized and racially charged trial. The fiercely outspoken boxer maintained his claims of innocence and became his own jailhouse lawyer. After serving nineteen years, Carter was released.



RUBIN "HURRICANE" CARTER

As a free man, Carter reflected on how he has responded to injustice in his life: The question invariably arises, it has before and it will again: "Rubin, are you bitter?" And in answer to that I will say, "After all that's been said and done—the fact that the most productive years of my life, between the ages of twenty-nine and fifty, have been stolen; the fact that I was deprived of seeing my children grow up—wouldn't you think I would have a right to be bitter? Wouldn't anyone under those circumstances have a right to be bitter? In fact, it would be very easy to be bitter. But that has never been my nature, or my lot, to do things the easy way. If I have learned nothing else in my life, I've learned that bitterness only consumes the vessel that contains it. And for me to permit bitterness to control or to infect my life in any way whatsoever would be to allow those who imprisoned me to take even more than the 22 years they've already taken. Now that would make me an accomplice to their crime."—James S. Hirsch, *Hurricane: The Miraculous Journey of Rubin Carter* (Boston/New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2000), p. 310. **(Dad:) You may have the right to feel bitter, but it's still wrong. And if and when you get bitter, you're only hurting yourself, not those who were guilty of any wrong or injustice toward you. Why make it worse? Make it better by forgiving and even forgetting if you can! Remember, love covers a multitude of sins (1Peter 4:8).**

Safe and sober travel. (*Health-DayNews*) Drunk driving kills all year long, but the toll can be especially devastating during the holidays. Alcohol is a contributing factor in 40 percent of highway deaths [in the U.S. most of the year], but the percentage spikes around the holidays, to 52 percent on New Year's weekend.

Here's how to protect yourself and your loved ones:

- If you drink, don't drive. If you drive, don't drink.
- If you're on the road and see someone driving erratically, slow down and/or move off the road.
- Always wear a seatbelt, even in the back seat. Otherwise, you may be killed on impact,

and kill others as well. Studies have shown that if the person in the back is not belted, they increase the risk of death of the front passengers by 500 percent because they act as a missile.

- If you're partying away from home, make sure you have a designated driver. If not, arrange to stay overnight.
- Don't serve alcohol 90 minutes before the party ends. Instead, bring out the coffee.

Making money or making a difference? (Dave Anderson) Are you just making money or are you making a difference? Are you consumed with success or striving toward significance? My hope is that it's the latter, because becoming merely successful isn't a good enough return on God's investment in your life. Perhaps you've experienced the emptiness of success.



Strangely, attaining position and possessions often creates a letdown. It's like the child who, after all the hype and anticipation, opens his final present on Christmas morning and is stricken with the sinking feeling, "Is this all there is?" And while multitudes become successful financially, few live significant lives. In fact when most people reflect upon their years on earth they will realize they did not live a significant life precisely because it was so easy to settle for a successful one. Sadly,

when most people die it will be as though they never lived. Frankly, this is inexcusable, because significance is within the grasp of everyone willing to embrace the right priorities. Contrary to what Hollywood promotes, it is not what you get or accumulate that makes you significant but what you give away; what you contribute; the value you add to others and what you become in the process. **(Dad:) Why be a success in a world in which Jesus was considered a failure? Why be the friend of the world and the enemy of God? (James 4:4)—Especially when this world and all its wealth will pass away, while those who do the will of God abide forever! (1John 2:17).**

No matter how busy you are. (Jim Rohn) No matter how busy you are, make sure and find some time over the next few weeks to reflect, think, give and plan.

The week between Christmas and New Year's is an ideal time for this. Spend time with the ones you love and care about. Take some time to talk with your spouse and kids about goals and dreams for the coming year. Use this as a time to recharge your batteries and think about the changes or additions you want for your life in the year to come.

I believe you will find the act of reflecting, thinking, dreaming and planning to be one of the most important exercises you can do that will positively impact the next 12 months.

Don't neglect to commit yourself to set this time aside or you will find that the business of life can and will get in the way.

Take time to gather up the past year of victories and defeats, and then wipe the slate clean and thoughtfully design the next year the way you truly desire it to be. **(Dad:) Merry Christmas, dear Family! God bless you for all your efforts to make it a meaningful one for the world, one filled with love and joy and peace, through helping them to know the reason for it all—Jesus! And may your New Year be new and wonderful in every way. I love you!**

