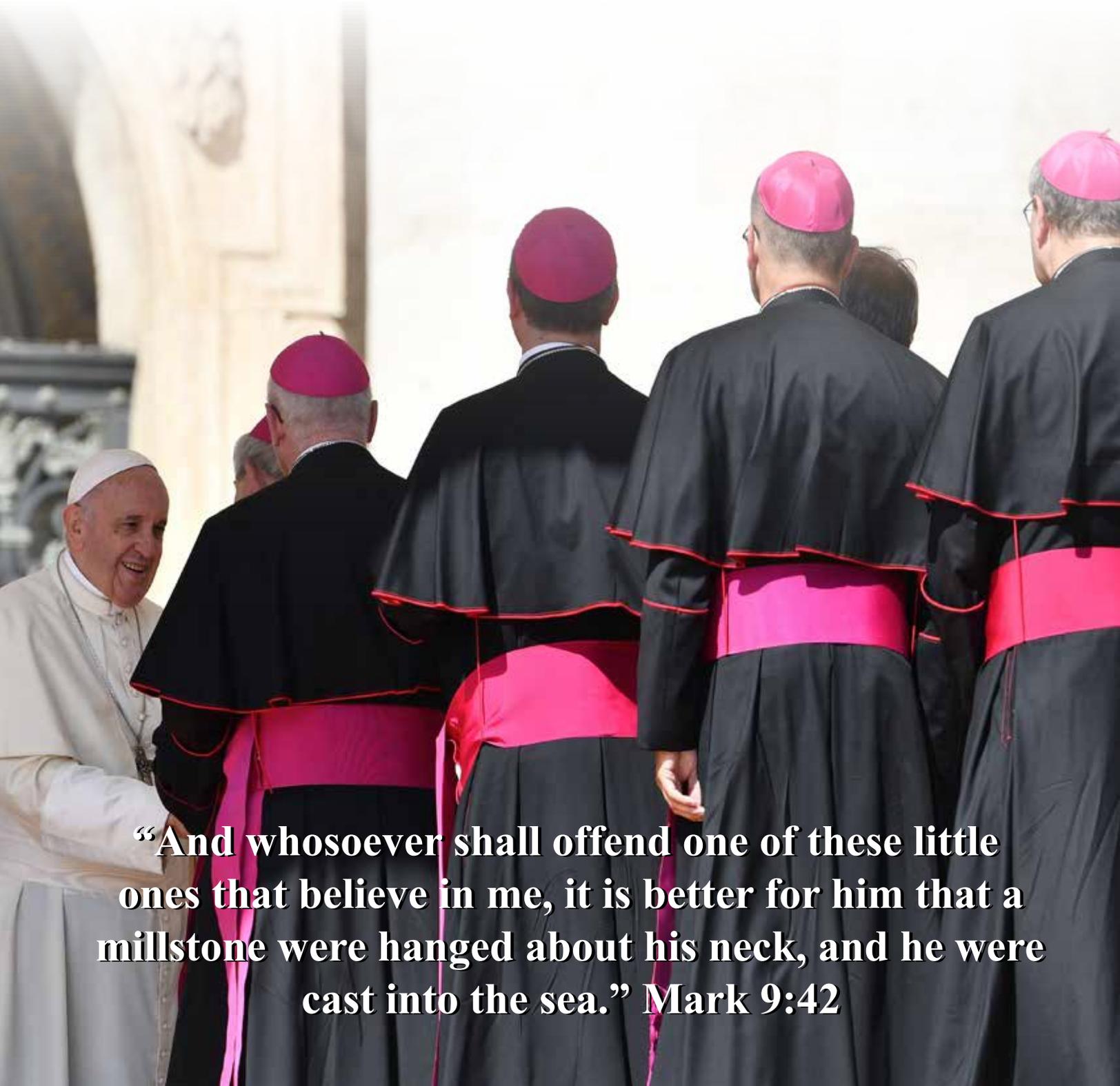


*TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY*

# **WATCH**

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**“And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.” Mark 9:42**

## COMMENTARY

# THE POPE KNEW, THEY ALL KNEW

by *Mark Armstrong*



It's all over the place. Even the Fake News outlets haven't been able to white-wash a scandal so huge, so horrific. So, for the most part, they report it briefly before returning to their mission of destroying the Trump presidency. Of course the pope knew! He knew what was up when he visited Chile in January 2018 where he faced unprecedented hostility, and issued "a somber apology" for the unspeakable abuse Catholic priests had visited upon the children of their congregations. It was somewhat difficult to ignore when three Catholic churches were firebombed coincidental with his arrival.

"Clerics" have been elevated to high office by the Vatican even while involved in the cover-up of crimes committed by their colleagues. From the LA Times, January 16th, "Francis in particular has been heavily criticized for his 2015 appointment of a bishop, Juan Barros Madrid, to head the Diocese of Osorno in Southern Chile.

"Some abuse victims have accused Barros of protecting a mentor, Father [sic] Fernando Karadima, who was investigated by the Vatican and found to have

abused teenage boys and adults for years from his parish post in Santiago. He was never prosecuted criminally, but in 2011 the Vatican sentenced him to a life of prayer and penance." Cruel and unusual, isn't it?

Recently he was scolding an audience of nuns about the evils of GOSSIP! It was supposedly a light-hearted comment when he compared convent gossip to terrorism. Is there some doubt as to what that was about? The nuns must have known too! The bishops, the cardinals, they've all known all along. The excuse heard over and over is that every profession has a bad apple now and again. But the vast majority of Catholic priests are wonderful teachers and mentors to the children in their care. Really?

What percentage of priests is 300 in one state, pray tell? And why did this information only leak out in an Attorney General's report out of Pennsylvania? It made news around the world recently because it involves so many priests in a single state, having raped and abused at least a thousand, and probably many more children (predominantly young boys) over a long period of

time, dating back decades.

This is an open secret that has been part and parcel with the Catholic Church across the United States and all over the world (many South American countries, Australia, Ireland, Italy...) It has been known and written for decades that Catholic "divinity schools" and seminaries are bastions of homosexuality. Apparently there's no hope of success or elevation within this powerful organization for would-be priests without being a little light in the slippers, to put it mildly.

The current scandal involves the former ambassador from the Vatican to the United States, Carlo Maria Vigano, having written an eleven page letter saying he warned Francis, the beleaguered pope, about the heinous homosexual activities of the former archbishop of Washington, Theodore McCarrick toward "young seminarians." According to Vigano, he personally warned the "humble pontiff" of McCarrick's history in 2013, telling him that there had been a litany of complaints and that the Vatican retained a thick dossier dating back to the year 2000 cataloging him as a serial abuser. His letter quotes his

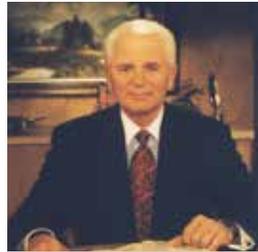
*Continued on page 27*

FEATURES

Commentary:  
**The Pope Knew,  
They All Knew 2**  
*Mark Armstrong*



**Socialist Venezuela Falling  
Apart as President Maduro  
Shockingly Blames Party 23**  
*by Kenneth Rapoza, Forbes*



**When You Die  
– Then What? 4**  
*Garner Ted Armstrong*



**All Roads Lead to Rome 28**  
*Michael Armstrong*



**Bible Study: Higher  
Spiritual Standards 14**  
*Dr. James Ricks*

**Facebook’s  
Antidote  
to Russian  
Interference  
in US Elections 33**  
*Murray Allatt*



**The Balance of Our Choice 17**  
*John Mitchell*



**Islamic Challenge to Italy 37**  
*Michael Burkert*

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page 25 – (bottom) David Shankbone/Shutterstock  
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page 39 – Lalupa/Wikipedia

# When You Die – Then What?

**My mother died about midnight. I was holding her hand, praying for her to “hang on,” as she grew weaker. But one moment she was alive and the next, dead.**

**What happened at death? What happens next?**

**Did my mother die – or only a part of her? Is she still conscious? Are the dead yet able to see the sorrows and tears of loved ones?**

*by Garner Ted Armstrong*

Death is the enemy of man and we all hate it. We hate it most of all when death strikes very close loved ones, taking them away from us; out of our lives, away from our daily routines—just gone. Most do not understand death.

Why is it that, with all our advancements in science and industry—our accumulation of knowledge, that we still do not know the answers to the biggest and most puzzling questions of all—what are we, and where are we going?

Millions believe in some kind of life after death. But no one seems able to prove such an assumption. Some believe we never die but go on living, in one place or another, or in one form or another, for all eternity. Others believe we have always lived. They think life is a strange succession of different existences—each in a different form, in a different place.

But no one seems to know for sure!

## **JUST HOW IMPORTANT IS IT?**

When public-opinion pollsters ask Mr. and Mrs. Average Citizen their opinions about life, death, and the hereafter, they find most simply unconcerned.

They just don't like to think about it happening to them.

But when death strikes suddenly EVERYTHING is changed! Suddenly, we must pause, in our swiftly moving lives, to face death. And we are compelled to ask, “Just what is death?” And, for that matter, what is life?

Can anything, after all, be more singularly important than the answers to these questions?

You're here. You live. But why?

## **UNSOLVED DILEMMA OF CENTURIES**

Serious though these questions are—urgent though they be—man has not yet answered them! Science does not know; says it cannot know. Philosophers, theologians, anthropologists, historians, scholars of every stripe

have put their minds to these fathomless mysteries for many centuries now, and have not found the answer!

Today, modern space-age science, and a dazzling array of technological achievements have created an awesome new Dagon for the Western World. The average citizen finds himself continually amazed at all that is accomplished in the name of “science.”

He faithfully trusts this false god of science to lengthen his life span, transplant his kidneys when they fail, help him reduce or put on weight, change his very personality, and perhaps allow him to choose the sex of his progeny.

The modern world looks to its mechanical god—science—to SAVE it from all its troubles. People look to medical science to save them from sickness; to the physical sciences to produce the continual flow of goods and services to make their life one of physical ease and pleasure. They look to the “life” sciences to explain to them what they are,

and where they're going, and the meaning of life. But, somehow death stops it all!

At death, science stops its mouth. A doctor, quietly sympathizing with grieved members of the family may say, in a kindly voice, "I'm sorry, there is nothing further medical science can do for him."

Today, the world exalts knowledge. It holds aloft the institutions of "higher" learning. The leaders of mankind are products of these same educational institutions—the "educated" men of the world.

But can anyone claim to be truly educated who does not know what HE is? Is "educated" the correct description for one who does not know why he is alive—or where he's going, or what is death, and what happens at death?

These men CAN know. They could have understood, long ago, had they not rejected the very foundation of all knowledge: the revealed Word of God!

But God has said of them, "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge [in their education, their institutions of higher learning] God gave them over to a reprobate mind..." (Romans 1:28).

Death is a fearful, unknown blank to the great minds of this world. They simply do not know what it is!

But you can know—if you're willing to know! Jesus thanked His Father that He had "hidden these things from the 'wise and prudent' and revealed them unto

babes!" (Mat. 11:25).

### **YOU CAN DIE!**

If anything could be called "instinct" in the human creature, perhaps the "instinct" of self-preservation could.

We just automatically seek to preserve, to protect, to lengthen and hang on to our lives! But we CANNOT! How futile, how utterly helpless we feel, when we are urging a loved one to "hang on"—to fight to live—and see that life ebbing away right before our eyes!

But that average person just never gets around to thinking about his own death.

And I don't mean moribundity of spirit or fear of death. I do not mean a constant contemplation of death. But the knowledge of how truly mortal, how temporary, how fragile this physical, chemical existence really is!

Somehow, the average person feels himself almost indestructible. He can imagine something terrible happening to someone else, but it's almost impossible to imagine it happening to himself. It's like a fear of the unknown.

Since most people do not know what is life, what is death, and what happens at death, they simply prefer not to think about it.

But we can die. And we do. And we shall.

But, what happens then?

### **WHAT IS YOUR LIFE?**

Just what is this physical, chemical, brief experience we call "life," anyhow?

Now that you think about it, words like "life" and "death" are words almost no one has ever researched, or looked up in a dictionary.

If you did try to find some "scientific" definition for life, you would find only some statements to the effect of "the state of being alive," or the ability of a "living" organism to utilize organic life in a living metabolism, and other such "double-talk" which would NOT, in actual fact, tell you what life is!

But the Creator of all life does tell you what it is!

And He stresses its source, and its temporary qualities, and its uncertainty! Listen!

"Whereas you know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appears for a little time, and then vanishes away..." (James 4:14).

Always, God Almighty stresses the uncertainty of life. He says, "For dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Genesis 3:19).

You are a physical, temporal creature entirely dependent upon a metabolic process of muscles, nerves, sinews and bone, upon blood and air, upon food and water. You are a living organism—a terribly fragile, temporary creature.

You're made of the elements of the ground. Perhaps, in our modern societies, of food nicely served on "man-made" plates of fine china we don't like to think of the fact our food is literally composed of so much "dirt" and that we are, very literally, "dirt." But we are!

Your Bible reveals the life of man is a purely chemical, physical existence, that our metabolic process is the same as that of animals! (Eccl. 3:19.) Nowhere does your Bible say man has an immortal soul, or that there is a “soul” in man. Rather, the Bible shows man IS a soul. That is, each

take place—NOT of being alive during death!

#### THE CERTAINTY OF DEATH

You know several people who have died. Probably, some were very close to you and you cherish the memory of them, remembering the way they were, the things

ONE source to which you can go to get the true answer, and that source is the inspired Word of your God!

The Bible is, in a sense, the obituary of the leading men that God used throughout history. The greatest men of the Bible all died!

Perhaps we haven’t thought about that. But it brings out a tremendous principle and should give all of us comfort through life!

David was a man after God’s own heart. When David prayed, God heard. The Psalms are, in many cases, actual prayers David prayed. One of those Psalms bears directly on the subject of death!

### Job spoke of being kept in the grave and waiting for a change to take place—NOT of being alive during death!

soul (*nephesh*, in the Hebrew) is a person, and can die.

Read Ezekiel 18:4 and 18:20 where God says, “the soul that sinneth, it [the soul] shall die.”

It is true there is a “spirit” in man (Job 32:8) but that spirit is NOT the man and is not conscious apart from the man. Job, in the same book said, “But man dies, and wastes away, yes, man expires [original, implying exhalation, or expiration of air] and where is he?” (Job 14:10.)

In this same passage, God inspired Job to say “O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me! If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands” (Job 14:13-15).

Job spoke of being kept in the grave and waiting for a change to

they said and did, their personality and character. Yet, they are dead.

In the modern, “chic,” God-rejecting world, death is ignored by most people. It’s something that “happens” once in a while to soldiers, or victims in automobile accidents, or elderly people, or cancer patients, or those you read of in the newspapers. But most people simply do not like to face death. The idea is repugnant to them.

Still, as the old saying goes, “There’s nothing surer than death and taxes.”

Isn’t it about time you wondered about death? Isn’t it about time you began to admit to yourself there is such a thing? And isn’t it about time you proved to yourself the real truth about it?

Remember again, there is no “dead” person to whom you can talk. Science can’t give you the answer. Philosophers say they do not know what death is, except that it is not life. There is only

#### DAVID DIED

David was afflicted. In what exact way we don’t know. But he apparently was very near death!

He cried out in Psalm 102:1-5: “hear my prayer, O Lord, and let my cry come unto thee.

“Hide not thy face from me in the day when I am in trouble; incline thine ear unto me: in the day when I call answer speedily.

“For my days are consumed like smoke, and my bones are burned as an hearth.

“My heart is smitten, and withered like grass; so that I forget to eat my bread. By reason of the voice of my groaning my bones cleave to my skin.”

Finally, he cried out in verse 24, “I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days...”

David cried out to God to lengthen his life—to save him

from death! And God Almighty answered that prayer!

David didn't die as a young man. He ruled Israel for forty years. David lived his full "three score and ten" and died at the age of 70.

But the point is that David did die!

In I Chronicles 29:28, we read this of David, "And he died in a good old age, full of days, riches and honour: and Solomon his son reigned in his stead."

The apostle Peter was inspired to write: "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day...for David is not ascended into the Heavens" (Acts 2:29-34).

David lived a full life; God answered his prayers; he did have the mind of God (Acts 13:22).

But David died—and he is still dead. David is NOT in heaven. That's what your Bible says.

But why?

Why did David die? Why hasn't he received his reward? Will David ever be conscious again?

#### **THE APOSTLE PETER DIED**

Peter was one of the leading apostles in the New Testament Church! He was one of the Original Twelve Disciples—handpicked by Christ.

Peter knew he was going to die!

He said in II Peter 1:13-15: "Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in

remembrance; knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me.

"Moreover I will endeavor that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance."

So Peter died.

Yet, he wrote the book on hope.

Peter hoped for the resurrection and the kingdom of God. But he certainly didn't expect to receive it then. Peter himself said that Christians would not find the praise and honor they sought until the appearing of Jesus Christ! He clearly stated in Acts, as we saw, that David was NOT in heaven—but dead and buried.

Yet, God allowed Peter—one of the most important men in God's Church to die!

#### **THE APOSTLE PAUL DIED**

The apostle Paul wrote 14 books of the Bible. He was the apostle to the Gentiles, held a very important spiritual office, had worked diligently and hard for many years, and appears to have been one of the most truly spiritual men who ever lived.

He was stoned, shipwrecked, put in prison. Paul was certainly tried in every conceivable way.

But he died.

He said: "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the

righteous judge, shall give me at that day" (II Timothy 4:6-8).

The apostle Paul isn't in "heaven." He said he won't get his reward until that day—the day Christ returns!

Christ said, in Revelation 22:12, "My reward is with me!"

But Christ isn't here yet. The apostle Paul is still dead and buried.

And did you notice?

The apostle Peter and Paul viewed death rather objectively. Although it was a sobering experience, the apostle Paul almost welcomed it. He said in Philippians 1:21, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain!"

When Stephen was martyred, he simply said, "Lay not this sin to their charge!" (Acts 7:60.)

Why?

Why in the face of death were these men calm? What is it that they knew about death that didn't frighten them?

#### **PEOPLE OF GOD ALLOWED TO DIE**

James and John were murdered. God allowed it!

Elisha, who raised the dead to life, and was the greatest servant of God in his day became sick and died.

You can read it in II Kings 13:14, "Now Elisha was fallen sick of his sickness whereof he died."

But, "maybe Elisha lost faith" - you say?

Not at all!

Notice, verse 21. "And it came to pass, as they were burying a man, that, behold, they

spied a band of men; and they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha: and when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood up on his feet.”

God inspired that!

He wanted to get across a great principle!

That is, God’s servants—the greatest of them—do die! But God wanted to be sure no one had reasoned that perhaps Elisha had lost faith. So He inspired this account to occur after Elisha’s death.

Here was proof that Elisha had not lost faith; God had not forsaken him.

It merely came time for Elisha to die. He had served his purpose on this earth. Elisha became sick and God simply allowed him to die. God took him from the evil to come.

God allowed the wife of Ezekiel to die. Ezekiel was one of the most powerful servants

of God on the face of the earth. He had actually seen the throne of God in vision. God revealed some of the most detailed and important prophecies ever given to man through Ezekiel.

But God allowed his wife to die. And it can be demonstrated that Ezekiel had not yet lived to be fifty—and certainly his wife had not lived her “three score and ten.”

But God allowed her to die. The account is found in Ezekiel 24:16-18.

“Son of man, behold, I take away from thee the desire of your eyes [his wife] with a stroke: yet neither shalt thou mourn nor weep, neither shall thy tears run down.

“Forbear to cry, make no mourning for the dead, bind the tire of thine head upon thee, and put on thy shoes upon thy feet, and cover not thy lips, and eat not the bread of men.

“So I spake unto the people in

the morning; and at even my wife died; and I did in the morning as I was commanded.”

The next few verses explain what her death was to signify to the people at the time. But the point is she died.

#### **MRS. ARMSTRONG’S DEATH**

My mother, Mrs. Armstrong, was in her seventy-sixth year. She had lived a full life.

Right now, she’s in a better condition than any of the living. She’ll never have to shed one more tear. She won’t feel cold or heat. She won’t ever go hungry.

She’s safe. She can’t fall away. She’ll never again have to struggle to overcome this or that problem. She’s safe.

God says, “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints” (Psalm 116:15). Mrs. Armstrong’s death was precious in God’s sight. She had lived a life of great service to God’s Work; had overcome her human nature; had qualified to have a place in the Kingdom of God.

Mrs. Armstrong is in the grave now. She is waiting for the second coming of Christ; waiting for the resurrection from the dead, just as are Elisha, and David, and Peter, and Paul.

#### **ANY LIFE AFTER DEATH?**

Remember what Job was inspired to say? “O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me! If a man die, shall he live again? All the



**Tradition holds that the Cave of the Patriarchs houses the double tombs of Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob and Leah, considered the Patriarchs and Matriarchs of the Jewish people.**

days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come" (Job 14:13, 14).

Job knew about the resurrection of the dead. And so does anyone who knows the promises of God! Your Bible speaks in both Old and New Testaments of a resurrection of the dead—a re-creation of life!

Daniel was inspired to write, "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt" (Daniel 12:2).

Later, Christ quoted these same words. Read John 5:21 through verse 29! Jesus said: "For as the Father raiseth up the dead...even so the Son quickeneth [makes alive] whom He will...Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. . . Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (judgment; margin).

Christ spoke of more than one resurrection!

Notice the proof. Turn to Revelation, chapter 20. Now read verses 4 and 5. "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them [Greek word: "*Psuche*" - meaning same as "*Nephesh*" in the Hebrew] that were beheaded for the witness of

Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshiped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived reigned with Christ a thousand years"!

And the "souls" John saw in this vision were dead! Notice: "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished!" (Revelation 20:5.)

John saw a vision concerning the resurrection of the just! Christ promises rulership with Him to those who overcome (Rev. 2:26; 3:21) which He will give at His return (I Cor. 15:23; Phil. 3:20, 21).

The resurrection of the dead was the whole hope—the heart and center of the message of the early Church! Notice how it completely dominates the sermons of Peter and Paul in early Church history. Read all of the following verses in context in your own Bible! "...have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up..." (Acts 2:23, 24). "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses... For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself [proving David, too, expected to wait till a change came, through a resurrection!], The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool" (Acts 2:32-35).

Peter continually emphasized Christ's resurrected as proof of the future resurrection of all mankind! "And killed the Prince of Life, whom God hath raised from the dead..." (Acts 3:15). "Unto you first God, having raised up

His Son Jesus..." (Acts 3:26). "... the Saducees came upon them, being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead!" (Acts 4:1-2.)

Notice! Peter preached the resurrection! He said nothing about the completely pagan doctrine of any supposed "immortal soul" or going to "hell" or "heaven" when one dies!

Rather, he emphasized how even David, a man after God's own heart, was dead and buried (Acts 2:29) and showed the believers that David had not gone to heaven (Acts 2:34), but was waiting in his grave, just as the Bible says, until a resurrection of the just!

#### MEANING OF LIFE

Paul was inspired to write one whole chapter on the subject of the resurrection! You need to study the whole 15th chapter of I Corinthians!

Notice how Paul was directed of God's Holy Spirit to answer the "let's suppose" and "what if?" kind of questions people would ask!

"But some man will say, 'How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?'" (I Cor. 15:35.)

And true to that prediction—people ask: "Yes, but what about those 'vaporized' at Hiroshima and Nagasaki?" People want to know about men buried at sea, eaten of sharks. And what about those cremated?

All right—what about them?

Is it "difficult" for God

because the same body no longer remains?

Ridiculous! And that's exactly what Christ inspired Paul to write about such questions. "Thou fool—that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die...so also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption... it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body!..." (I Cor. 15:36-44.)

Just as Job said, there is a complete change at the resurrection. A spirit is being given life—not an old, disease-ridden, maimed or mangled, shot or burnt, hideously deformed or wasted human, physical body!!

"We shall be changed!" said Paul. (I Cor. 15:52.)

#### HOPE OF THE DEAD

Can you see? Your creator says death is death—just as you know it is—and that a resurrection from the dead is the whole hope of a Christian! That's why Paul asks, "Else what shall they do which are baptized for [Greek: "Huper" meaning for the hope of] the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the hope of [margin] the dead? And why stand we in jeopardy every hour?" (I Cor. 15:29-30.)

The hope of the dead is a resurrection from the dead! Baptism symbolized that resurrection!

"Therefore we are buried [by being immersed completely in water—symbolizing burial] with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the

Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection!" (Romans 6:4-5.)

Your God shows you that those who have truly been converted, who have utterly surrendered to Him—who have given up their carnal arguments, their resentment and hostility toward God and His Word, and who have begun to really live by God's Word, will be in the resurrection of the just!

Paul said this was the driving ambition in his life!

"...and I count all the things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus...that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection...if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead!" (Phil. 3:8-11.)

But what about those who have NOT been converted? What if someone dies who never really knew the truth? What about the millions upon millions of Asians, Africans, and members of all races right down through history who never even heard the name of Christ, let alone had an opportunity to hear and study His word? What becomes of them?

#### THE REST OF THE DEAD

Christ spoke of a resurrection to "judgment" (John 5:29). The word rendered "damnation" in the Authorized Version is more correctly translated "judgment" from the original.

Notice how the Bible interprets the Bible on this important

point!

John was inspired to say, "But the rest of the dead [those not included in the resurrection to eternal life at Christ's coming!] lived not again until the thousand years were finished!" (Rev. 20:5.) The words following this parenthetical statement then refer back to the first resurrection of the dead in Christ!

But the rest of the dead—those millions having never heard; never having an opportunity for salvation "lived not again until the thousand years were finished!"

Notice verses 11 through 15! "And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened which is the book of life: and the dead were judged [not sentenced, or "condemned," but judged] out of those things which were written in the books according to their works..."

Notice what the Bible does NOT say! Millions have falsely pictured this event as a great "assembly line" of miserable humans, marching endlessly past a great "courtroom," each told in his turn, "You go to heaven," "You go to hell!"

Isn't that the way you have always pictured it?

But that isn't what the Bible says!

Your creator says the dead will finally be judged out of

things written in the “books,” and that they will be judged by their works!

And what are those books? The original Greek word is “Biblos.” And “Biblos” is translated correctly into English as “Bible.” Surprising though it may seem, there is nothing “holy” about the word “Bible” when it is used by itself. But when the word “Holy” is added to the word Bible, (which merely means books) then the meaning is Holy Books!

Of course!

That is exactly how you will be judged. God says, “I change not!” (Mal. 3:6.) Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today, and forever (Heb. 13:8). God will judge those people in the future just as He judges today!

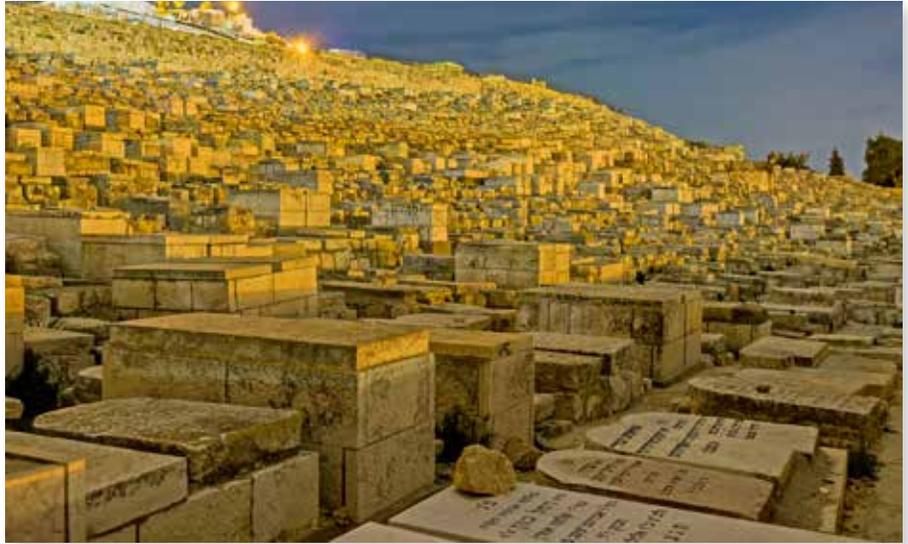
And how does He judge His own people?

“For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?” (I Peter 4:17.)

Judgment is a “discerning.” Those who are members of God’s true Church, members of the very body of Christ (I Cor. 12:13) are being judged now! (I Peter 4:17.)

And how are they being judged?

Christ said, “...Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Mat. 4:4). “Thy word is truth,” (John 17:17) said Jesus Christ. The books or “Biblos” which are the laws by which you and I are judged are the books of your own Bible!



**Mount of Olives Jewish Cemetery contains hundreds of thousands of tombs, including the tombs of famous figures in Jewish history.**

Each Christian is judged, according to his works, based upon the Word of God.

Your God is fair. God does not judge you by one “method,” and then judge multiple millions, or even billions of other human beings by a totally different standard. Think about it for a moment.

Does it make sense to you that millions of people could be sent to a supposed “ever-burning hellfire,” helplessly and uselessly beating at the flames that threaten to engulf them, shrieking in hideous and all-consuming agony forever and ever and ever—for all eternity, just because a missionary had a flat tire?

Let’s follow it further. Perhaps (and this is not so far-fetched but that it could have been true), a missionary was striving to reach a tiny Chinese village. Let’s assume the missionary ran into trouble with his ancient old Ford automobile, and received a severe tire puncture on the rough and rocky road.

Perhaps the missionary labored several hours under the hot sun to repair his tire—arriving at the village several hours later than he had intended. Meanwhile, the elderly grandfather of the family upon which he was about to call had “passed away.” Mind you, this missionary was going to bring the “name” of Christ to this isolated Chinese family.

But the grandfather died! All during his lifetime he never once had an opportunity to even hear the name of Christ—let alone hear one word out of the Word of God or one word from a missionary, teacher, preacher, government official, or even a neighbor about his responsibilities before God.

Rather, he had been reared in the Taoist or Buddhist religion.

Does it make sense to your rational mind that this elderly Chinaman would then be doomed to spend all eternity in an ever-burning hellfire because a missionary had a flat tire?

Preposterous!

And so it is preposterous according to your Bible!

No, your God is a just God! He treats all human beings equally! He deals the same way with Chinese as with Africans, the same with Americans as with Britons, the same with Australians as with Germans, and the same with Asians as with Latin Americans!

Those who have never had an opportunity to learn about God's word and His laws, who have never even heard the only name whereby man must be saved (Acts 4:12) must have that opportunity!

Religious hobbyists, arguers, scoffers, and bigoted antagonists will oftentimes accuse the Great Creator for this masterful plan of offering a so-called "second chance"!

With boiling rage, many a religious hobbyist has shrieked his venom at any supposed "second chance"!

But is this a second chance? When, pray tell, did these millions of wretched, hapless, disillusioned and illiterate souls ever have a "first" chance?

They never did. But they will.

God says, "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished!"

And these will be resurrected to "judgment" which is NOT a sentencing based upon deeds they did in ignorance. But is, rather, a period of 100 years duration (Isaiah 65:20) during which every one of these multiple millions, perhaps even billions of human

beings must have the same opportunity you have!

How righteous, how just, how merciful, and how PERFECT is the great plan of God!

What happens, then, if a loved one of yours died not having "understood" much of the word of God?

#### **THE FIRST CHANCE— FOR EVERYONE!**

Death is death—the complete absence of life and consciousness.

Remember, your Bible reveals the "dead not know anything." There is no consciousness of the passing of time. In the parable of Lazarus and the rich man, the rich man "lift up his eyes" in a resurrection—unaware that thousands of years had passed between the time when he died and his yet future resurrection. If you have not yet read the gripping booklet on Lazarus and the Rich Man, then write or call our office for your free copy immediately.

The majority of those dying today in all nations are NOT converted!

The majority of those having died through the past centuries died with no knowledge of Christ, of the Bible, or the way to salvation. But they are not hopelessly lost.

Notice what God says about His own specially chosen people, Israel. "What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded (according as it is written God hath given them the spirit of slumber; eyes that they should

not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day" (Rom. 11:7-8).

Are God's own elect (Isaiah 44:1; 45:4) lost forever because God Himself has caused them to be blinded to His truth?

No! Notice the proof! "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in" (Rom. 11:25).

God has a time schedule He is working out. He will finally give all those ancient Israelites—whose hearts were hardened, who did not know the way to salvation—their first chance!

Notice it. "And so all Israel shall be saved!" (Rom. 11:26.)

He says further, "For God hath concluded them [shut them up in unbelief—original] all in unbelief, that He might have mercy on all!" (Rom. 11:32.)

"...God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (I Tim. 2:3, 4).

Every human being WILL be given an opportunity to hear, and to understand the Word of God. He will then make up his own mind; make his own decision about whether he will obey!

#### **WHAT ABOUT SUICIDE?**

And what if someone kills himself? Will he be resurrected? Of course! Suicide is self-murder. God commands, "Thou shalt not kill" and says the wages of sin, which is the breaking of God's

Ten Commandments (I John 3:4), is death (Rom. 6:23).

In the case of suicide, the penalty is the same as for any other broken law. In the resurrection after the millennium of peace on the earth (Rev. 20:5), the resurrection to judgment, any person having committed suicide will learn the enormity of his sin; will hear the Word of God, just like the millions of others who committed sins, and who died not having the knowledge of the truth.

### IS THERE A HELLFIRE?

Believe it or not, the Bible shows there must be a third and final resurrection! This time, a resurrection to death—by fire—for those who have deliberately and willfully sinned.

Remember, there are three classes of people with whom God is dealing. Those who have repented, and, whether living or dead, will rise to meet Christ in the air (I Thess. 4:15-18), coming down on that day with Him to the mount of Olives (Zech. 14:4) to rule with Him for 1,000 years (Rev. 2:26; 3:21; 5:10; 20:4). Then there are the millions of those who have never understood—the “rest” of the dead (Rev. 20:5).

And then there are those who will not choose to repent—who are finally to lose out on salvation!

Notice the Bible proof!

After the millennium of Christ’s rule on earth; even after the picture of the Great White Throne resurrection to judgment (Rev. 20:11-12), God says, “And

death and hell [Greek word, “Hades” meaning the grave] were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death!” (Rev. 20:14.)

A grave is only a grave when it contains a body. This scripture speaks of a resurrection to phys-

the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up!” (II Pet. 3:10.)

But before giving this awesome warning of impending destruction of the wicked, Peter

**A resurrection is the hope of the dead—not living for all eternity in some fanciful “limbo” or compartment of “heaven” or “hell.”**

ical life, for the incorrigible evil, and a “Gehenna” fire destroying them!

Read what God inspired the prophet Malachi to write: “For behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up...and ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet...” (Mal. 4:1-3).

The Gehenna fire of your Bible is much hotter than the pagan myth of an “ever-burning” fire. This fire really burns—it destroys!

Write or call for the booklet about *Lazarus and the Rich Man*. It explains how the rich man comes up in this final resurrection—only to see the advancing wall of flame before him. There is a mighty real fire revealed in the Bible—*Gehenna* (Greek word) fire.

Peter said, “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and

again shows the righteous mercy of the loving God, who “... is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance!” (II Pet. 3:9.)

There is the real truth about death—from your own Bible! Death is death—without consciousness. A resurrection is the hope of the dead—not living for all eternity in some fanciful “limbo” or compartment of “heaven” or “hell.”

The stories you’ve heard all your life about the boiling pots or the “pearly gates” are sheer myth! But the plain truth of your Bible is clear! What a great blessing it is to know the truth about death! And how especially comforting is this knowledge when you must literally see death come to a loved one.

God’s great and merciful purpose in our lives is achieved because Christ conquered death! He will soon release those who are “waiting” for their change to come—and that day is much nearer now than you may think! □

## BIBLE STUDY

by Dr. James &amp; Natalie Ricks



# Higher Spiritual Standards

## JESUS DEMANDS OBEDIENCE TO GOD'S LAWS

Did Jesus want more or less obedience to the written law than the Pharisees? Did the Pharisees have higher, tougher standards than Jesus? One issue is divorce. The religious leaders of Israel saw in the law the ability to divorce one's wife. Christ told them that while that law did exist, it only existed because of the CARNALITY AND WEAKNESS OF MEN. Christ's standards were higher than the religious leaders and are based on the original intent of God.

Mat. 19:5-9, "And said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'. So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.

"They said to Him, 'Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?'

"He said to them, 'Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery.'" (NKJV)

Pragmatism and the welfare and safety of women allowed for divorce laws in Israel but, Jesus had higher spiritual standards than the Pharisees. Paul also followed the same higher spiritual standards. Paul told believers to remain with pagan spouses

if it was in any way possible. However Paul said if they do leave the marriage they are not bound. Note I Corinthians 7:27. One cannot force an unconverted mate to honor the marriage vow. The Sermon on the Mount reveals a number of issues in which Jesus' standards are deeper and higher than the leaders of Israel. Christ told his disciples that they should obey the deep spiritual intent of the law including every jot or tittle of the law.

Mat. 5:18-19, "For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."

Christ says that if we teach that the law is done away we are *wrong*. He demands we try and keep the law, the written law of God. He surprisingly told his disciples that they had to be more obedient than the super religious Pharisees.

"For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven" (Mat. 5:20).

Jesus then commences to show his followers what he means by deeper and truer obedience to the law. The first issue he tackles is the law on murder. He says you cannot just not physically murder someone, but you also cannot murder him in your thoughts and in your mind and in your heart.

Mat. 5:21-22 "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever

## BIBLE STUDY

murders will be in danger of the judgment.’

“But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, ‘Raca!’ shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, ‘You fool!’ shall be in danger of hell fire.”

“You have heard that it was 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 and persecute you;” (Mat. 5:43-44).

Jesus raises the bar. He set standards so high that it literally changed the world. Most religions say support your followers and smite the infidels. But not Christ. He set higher standards of obedience to God’s Laws than even the Pharisees. Love your enemy? Wow! What was his goal for his disciples?

“That you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?

“And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect” (Mat. 5:45-48).

Jesus explains that when we obey His laws in a spiritual manner we can become more like the Father. This certainly is raising the bar. We cannot hate no matter the offenses. One should avoid evil people but not hate them, it is not good for our character and well being. Then Jesus talked about adultery. He not only said do not commit adultery but do not commit adultery in our hearts. If one looks upon a woman (i.e., pornography) in order to commit adultery in the mind he is also guilty. Note verse 28 of Matt 5. Again a higher standard existed with Christ than the religious leaders.

### TRUE REPENTANCE AND OBEDIENCE REQUIRE A HIGHER STANDARD

The true followers must understand God’s Laws at a higher and deeper level to fully repent and follow

Jesus. Believers have a higher standard to uphold even than the religious leaders of the world. Jesus said that about His world.

Mat. 5:13-14, “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.

“You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.”

In a society led by the Pharisees and scribes Jesus said his followers had to be the salt, the wonderful spiritual flavor, and the light. Does that sound like his followers had a free pass with regard to the law and relied on grace alone? It sounds like they were expected to be the light of the world, the ones setting the highest standards of conduct and repenting the deepest when they failed. Then after repentance, becoming the true lights. Jesus said, “If you love me, keep my commandments,” which are the same commandments that Christ himself delivered to Moses on Mt. Sinai and kept with the deep, true intent of God.

We should look at the Fifth Commandment regarding honoring our elderly parents. The Pharisees and scribes had set up extra laws which allowed a child to avoid taking care of his parents. The Corban system allowed them to pay off the religious leaders instead of taking care of their parents. This added law allowed for the breaking of one God’s Ten Commandments. Jesus was very critical of the entire system.

Mark 7:9-13, “He said to them, ‘All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition. For Moses said, “Honor your father and your mother”; and, “He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.” But you say, “If a man says to his father or mother, ‘Whatever profit you might have received from me is Corban’ [a gift to God], then you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother, making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do.’”

Jesus insisted on all the laws being obeyed, and not allowing people to avoid one which also enriched the religious leader’s system. The corruption of the Pharisees is obvious. This revelation from Jesus

## BIBLE STUDY

came from an accusation of the Pharisees with regard to hygiene. Were the Pharisees really concerned with the disciples' hygiene? No! This was really about the extra laws and traditions which were instituted over the years by the Pharisees and scribes since returning from exile. They required a ritual hand washing before eating. It was about man made laws and traditions. They are found today in the Talmud, Mishnah and Midrash.

Can we see why Jesus was so upset with them? Read Matthew 23 to see a clear picture of Christ's view of the religious leaders of his society. It was not just their hypocrisy: they really did not obey the written Law of God as they should have. They found ways to exempt themselves as well from true obedience in some areas. Pharisees were not simply not practicing what they preached but their works were far short of what God required. Some of them were self-righteous show offs and others were evil.

Mat 23:2-3 says, "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do." (NKJV)

Jesus is saying obey the Pharisees only when they accurately apply the scriptures but do not follow their personal examples. The leaders found ways to exempt themselves from some of the harsh rules they hung on the people. The leaders of Judah like the rest of this world were deceived regarding the real, deep meaning of God's Laws. In the future the entire world will really know God and His high standards.

Mat. 23:4-5, "For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments."

They put on a good show of religiosity and obedience, but Christ's standards for obeying the written law—not just their extra rules and laws—was far greater and higher. Never did Jesus repudiate the written law, just the Pharisee's manufactured regulations. Paul reiterated this in a letter to evangelist Timothy.

1 Tim. 1:8, "But we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully." Paul understood that some of the leaders of Israel were improperly applying the Laws of God. Jesus maintained the highest standards of lawful obedience to the Law for us. Grace was never an excuse to break God's laws, see Romans 6:1-2.

### CHRIST'S NEW COVENANT MAKES THE LAW MORE BINDING, NOT LESS

Jesus came to offer us a path to repentance and true change of character with the help of God's Holy Spirit. Through the power and grace of God we believers are being led to place the spiritual goodness of the Law in our hearts.

Heb 8:10-11 "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

"None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them." (NKJV)

Jesus raised the standards to much higher spiritual levels. He wants us to have the law—its righteousness and love—inside of us. Wow! Someday in the future kingdom, the entire world will really know and understand God's Laws and ways as well. □

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# The Balance of Our Choice



*by John Mitchell*

“We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of Heaven. We have been preserved, these many years, in peace and prosperity. We have grown in numbers, wealth and power as no other nation has ever grown; but we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace, and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us; and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own...” (Presidential Proclamation - April 1863). And those words are truer today than they ever were in Abraham Lincoln’s day.

Drained by war, torn by crime, sick with drug abuse, ridden with immorality, driven with lust, stricken with senseless procrastination, lack of purpose, flagging loyalty, and spiritual poverty, a great nation looks over the edge into chaos. We don’t know why we are. America has no great cause. There is no great

goal toward which we unitedly press. There is no great single unifying bond, no common spiritual dedication; no deep transcendental purpose for which we strive. Never before has there been a time when Americans found they could argue by merely mentioning the name of their country.

Today Americans disagree about America. Some aren’t even sure what America is. Great voices of protest are heard from every conceivable source. Sneers from young, would-be revolutionaries are answered by hoarse shouts from hard hats and super-patriots. The “Make America Great Again” bumper sticker is answered by the “Make America smart again, Impeach Trump” slogan. Some say America is falling apart. Others say America has never been better. Politicians, sensing the public weariness over the past eight years of gloomy reports, plead for a “what’s good about America” dialogue. The rhetoric of conservative leaders is answered by the acidic tongue

of the ultra liberal, or the young rabid “New Leftist”, such as the newly elected congresswoman from New York, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.

Incisive analysis of society’s ills has always brought rebuttal and disagreement. But the vicious attacks and language used is something we are not used to in America. There was a time when both sides could argue their ideals and positions, each born out of a sense of what was best for this country. Some have said at the end of debates, “We are all patriots.” Really? No, all are not patriots for America or American ideals.

Where went our patriotism? Did something kill it? Did it just gradually die? Patriotism is, after all, a deep, prideful love of one’s country, a thankful appreciation for the freedoms and liberties bought at such a dear cost by the tens of thousands who paid the most horrible of prices. Patriotism is love of country and love FOR country. But like the love within a tight knit family, a

*Continued next page*

completely patriotic American can become very, very angry at trends within his or her country. Just as parents who dearly love their children can become angry when they witness the child making a decision they know will harm them. Patriotism can never be blind flag waving, a star-spangled refusal to admit family difficulties, a blind determination to remain studiously ignorant of deep family sickness.

Today, youthful Americans chide the super-patriots with insistent flag waving by literally dressing in the flag. Red, white and blue sells more than any other color combination at the moment. Shorts, jeans, shirts, ponchos, hats and posters with anti establishment rhetoric attached are the “dress uniform” of the day for the teeming throngs of paid “useful idiots” who, when asked what they are protesting, have absolutely no clue. Most have no idea of who America is and most importantly, why America is.

The reason is that we have become so affluent that the knowledge and reason for why America is America has lead us to a generation of people who have forgotten how to sacrifice; who were never taught why we are so blessed or how to have a love of and for America. To quote former President Ronald Reagan as he assessed this condition: “Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn’t pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same, or

one day we will spend our sunset years telling our children and our children’s children what it was once like in the United States where men were free.”

Most Americans have forgotten how to sacrifice. We’re sick, and our greatest sickness is our stubborn refusal to acknowledge our own moral and spiritual poverty. To diagnose our many illnesses is to invite snorts and sneers from a rising number of “super patriots” whose stock in trade is the big-business Chamber of Commerce attitude of “Let’s talk about what’s right about America.” Fine, let us do so. We are the greatest single power the world has ever known. We have risen to dizzying heights of technological development and scientific achievements. American footprints dot the moon. Our language, our culture, our products have girdled the globe. We have been blessed with the most fabulously rich piece of real estate on this good earth. Our standard of living has risen to material heights never imagined in the science fiction of yesterday. We’re rich! Filthy rich! But, where did we get our wealth? How did we get rich in the first place? The fabulous lands of our peoples, our mineral resources, our natural stands of timber, our sprawling grazing and farm lands, our almost endless coastlines, our strategic sea gates, our favorable climates, our very inventive genius and ingenuity; all were given to us by the God this generation has forgotten.

The Biblical Patriarch Jacob

foretold the fantastic wealth of America. He said in:

GENESIS 49: 22-26, “Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall; his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob even by the God of thy Father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty who shall bless thee with the blessings of heaven above [meaning our climate and general weather conditions], blessings of the deep that lieth under [our minerals, coal, oil, gas and natural resources], blessings of the breasts, and of the womb [our longer life expectancy and generally better health]: the blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was chief among his brethren.”

Yes, we’re very rich. And we’re also very sick. Sick with our own affluence—with crime, pornography, disease, unemployment, inflation, divorce, massive urban crises and racial inequality. Our most precious national resource, our youth, are sick. Today, our nation’s youth spurn and reject almost every facet of all that can be called the “status quo” achieved by the older generation. They are sick to death of lying, cheating, double standards. They are sick of the “Do as I say, not as I do” hypocrisy of a generation of self-seekers whose goals of ma-

terialism have resulted in the conditions presently around us. They are sick of useless wars—undeclared, unnecessary, and unfinished. But one sickness doesn't heal another. Two wrongs never make a right.

America desperately needs a great cause. She needs a vital, living, noble, just purpose. Perhaps it's not too late for the younger generation to succeed where their elders have failed. Maybe they can yet catch the vision of a great cause, a dynamic goal which calls for, and is worthy of, great sacrifice.

In his inaugural address, President Nixon said, "We find ourselves rich in goods, but ragged in spirit." He said that ours is a "crisis of the spirit," and added that, to solve "...a crisis of the spirit, we need an answer of the spirit." But what has happened to the spirit of America? Where went our pride?

There are reasons for a decline in patriotism. There are reasons for our spiritual poverty, our moral sickness. We Won the War, and Lost the Peace! After September 1945, Americans could get back to the business of their own private lives. That global conflict, which had called upon Americans for the highest kind of sacrifice, was over. The world had been made safe for democracy, or so we thought.

Americans had fought against the very embodiment of evil and they had, together with their Allies, won. With the last enemy vanquished and the documents of total surrender signed,

the only remaining task was to clean up the loose ends of war. For the majority, it was time for a transition into an era of peace and prosperity. But with the explosion of a nuclear bomb by our former ally, Russia, Americans soon began receiving an insistent and obvious message: The world

war for total victory.

History is written that successive generations may learn from it. In Korea, America wrote history in the blood of her sons, husbands and fathers. But we failed to read and learn from that lesson. After the tens of thousands of rotting corpses were either bur-

**"Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction."  
— Ronald Reagan**

had not been made safe for democracy after all. World War II had not been the war to end all wars. Suddenly, the specter of all-out nuclear war loomed large.

Then came the Korean War. Korea changed America and very few have realized how drastic the change was. To understand what's been happening to us, we need only to look back as far as 1950. We lost in Korea and therein lies the answer to "Where went our Why." Since Korea, America has not had a victory. Her sons have fought in far corners of the world in undeclared wars for "limited political objectives," led by civilians. The one bright moment in what became a tiresome series of humiliating defeats, stalemates and docile subservience to piracy was the Cuban Missile Crisis. But even that was short-lived. We wound up with a stalemate in Korea. We hoped for the same type of stalemate in Vietnam. Today stalemate is still the name of the game; not all out

ied or left to decay on the rugged, icy slopes of Korea, after a major war had sapped American military and economic strength, the world had learned a lesson: They learned that the United States' will could be challenged. That the pride in her power was flagging. That fourth-rate countries with vastly inferior industrial, economic and military strength could test America's might time and time again and find it weakened, unsure, and cautious. And so for the first time Americans tried to fight a conventional war for limited political purposes, for limited military objectives, with "conditioned response" and the piecemeal contribution of military hardware and personnel. Make no mistake. Korea was an absolute turning point of recent history. It was the first big crack in the PRIDE of America's power.

The cruelest thing one human being can inflict upon another human being is to take away his confidence, his pride. To strip

the manhood, the moral courage, the volition from another is to subject him, utterly, to the cruelest sort of torment. It kills his spirit. The unsatisfactory conclusion to the Korean War was a cruel blow to the manhood of America. A little time had been bought, but at enormous cost. Perhaps it is good few Americans realized in 1952 how terribly soon another useless conflict, for the

that the war just might be over at any moment. Every common soldier knew in his heart that his commanders, all the way up to the highest diplomatic levels, did not want victory. They did not want North Korea, they wanted truce. Each fighting man knew in his heart he would never see the Yalu River bordering Communist China; that he would never drive the enemy from North Korea.

more than an order, for a victory more than stalemate, for territory rather than for attrition. When viewing the Korean War and the Vietnam War with all their futility, in retrospect it makes our current situation in our wars in the Middle East, and the protracted struggle of these past eighteen years, all the more incomprehensible.

To break the pride of a people, you must first break their spirit. Then make their purposes only selfish, personal ones. Make life and peace and the materialistic goals of an affluent society more urgently important to them than sacrifice for a transcendental cause. To break the pride of a people, you must have them greedy, sick with lust, insatiable with desire for orgiastic abandon. You must continually wear down their national pride, their God-given purpose, their deep loyalty to the whole family living within one concept of government, one blessed land they call home.

The pride in our power is gone. Our spirit has been broken. Something has been steadily killing us. We have no single, grand goal toward which we unitedly press. We envision no great purpose which calls from us individual and collective sacrifice. We are ennobled by no special, unique pursuits which are righteous in a world filled with unrighteousness. We have compromised our morals, made futile our religions, destroyed our families, corrupted our youth.

What caused it all? We forgot the God who gave us our free-

**We forsook the Creator who blessed and enriched us above all peoples who have ever walked the earth.**

same limited objectives, with the same inevitable outcome, would be joined. To have known in the early '50s that the same agonizing task was to be attempted all over again might have been even more disastrous to American will and resolve than the actual occurrence.

"Limited objective" became the byword. With it came confused aims. Most Americans would never understand painful, prolonged struggle over worthless real estate for limited political objectives. They could understand fighting for home, and for country. They could understand fighting against the forces of evil and to make the world safe for Democracy. But they would never understand fighting for limited goals, simply to "demonstrate" to an enemy, or to "inspire" others. Once the "Peace" talks began, it was lost on none of the troops

Americans proved they were willing to die to make men free. They were willing to fight, and if need be, die for their own homeland, or for the preservation of their own way of life, their freedoms and liberties, their loved ones, and their sons and daughters. They could fight like no other soldiers when it was for victory, when it was to conquer, to enforce a total surrender upon a hated foe. But could they fight with the same spirit for "limited political objectives" in a strange country to carry out their part as functionary of worldwide geopolitical considerations? They proved, in World War II, and again in Korea, and in Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan that they are superb warriors. They proved they can win. But they also proved in Korea, in Vietnam, today in Iraq and Afghanistan, that they need to fight for a cause

doms and liberties! We forsook the Creator who blessed and enriched us above all peoples who have ever walked the earth. Our laymen plunged into materialism with greedy delight, and our churchmen gave their blessing, calling the breaking of God's Ten Commandments a "new morality." As a nation, we have forgotten God. We do not keep His laws. And that same God says to us:

Leviticus 26:18-20, "And if ye will not yet for all this hearken unto me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins. And I will break the pride of your power; and I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass: And your strength shall be spent in vain: for your land shall not yield her increase, neither shall the trees of the land yield their fruits."

It's been broken. We don't keep the Ten Commandments. Can anyone, in good sense, deny the connection? "And I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass, and your strength shall be spent in vain." We have spent our strength, oh, how we've spent it. We have wasted our energies, our vast wealth, our young men and women; we have spent enormously, vastly, prodigiously. And we have done it all in vain. We have spent our homes and families, our farms and produce, our factories and their products. We have spent our time and our concern. We have spent dearly, all in vain.

Something terrible has happened to America. What has been broken is the inner core of

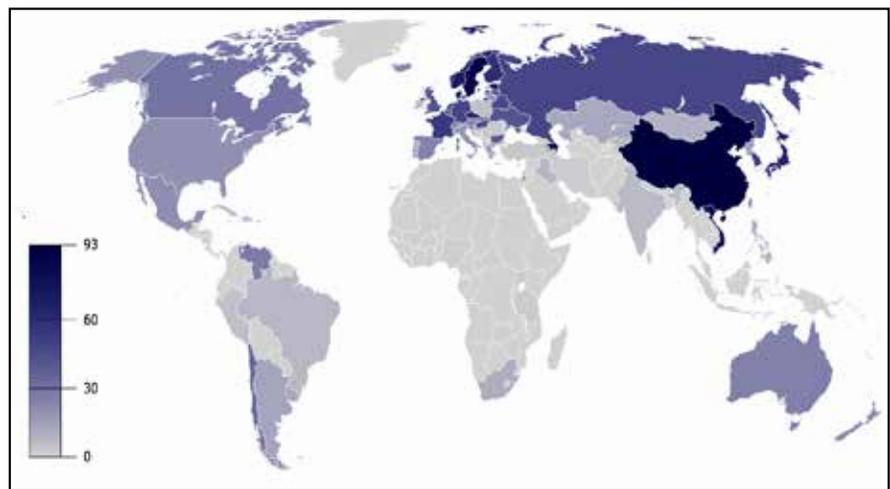
a healthy, viable people. Some leaders have recognized what had made America great. The late economist, Roger Babson said, "The test of a nation is the growth of its people—physically, intellectually, and spiritually." Money and so-called prosperity are of very little account. Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, Spain, France, and Britain all had their turn in being the richest in the world. Instead of saving them, their so-called prosperity ruined them. Our nation is now rated the richest, but it could easily become a second class nation and head downward. Money will not save us. Crops will not save us. Trade wars will not save us. Stock Exchanges and banks will not save us. Only a sane spiritual revival which changes the desires of our people will save us. We must be filled with a desire to render service, to seek peace through strength rather than security through weakness, to put character ahead of profits. Even the Republic for which our fa-

thers fought and bled could result in our downfall.

Those who disagree, including the super-patriots who want to hear nothing except "what's right about America," insist that only a small number of individuals are really sick; that too much publicity is given to the evils in society, and that society is really no worse than it has ever been. They see America as only a little confused, perhaps temporarily procrastinating, but not really sick. But America is really sick; the diagnosis is spiritual cancer, and the disease could be fatal!

It's not too late for America to see the vastness of her sins, just as she has recognized the vastness of her wealth. It is not too late for a spiritual answer to our deepest problems of the spirit. But it's much, much later than you think.

The measure of a nation's greatness is not its industrial capacity, not its natural resources, not its GDP. It is the quality of the character of its people. Amer-



**World map indicating percentage of the population of a country which identifies as atheist or claims no belief in God as of 2006.**

ica has been losing its character upon which it was founded. The question is, have we lost the will and ability as a nation to repent before God, whose guiding hand inspired our founding? Can you envision government leaders

ment. He really does exist. And He does say in His Word that He punishes people who are constantly breaking His laws and bringing the awesome problems we see everywhere around us today upon themselves. It does

in the soil, striving by our own humanly devised mechanical means to produce crops. God says, “Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee” (Jeremiah 2:19), and “O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in Me is thine help” (Hosea 13:9).

**So far, God is not yet directly punishing our peoples. He is merely letting us kill ourselves.**

With all that, in His great mercy Our Creator says, “It’s not too late for America yet.” We could still repent; and He would help us. Notice the conditions: “Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, are these. For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbour; If ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your hurt: Then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, forever and ever,” (Jeremiah 7:3-7). Otherwise a national captivity and scattering of our peoples to the four winds is foretold in the book of Ezekiel (5:11-12.)

dropping to their knees in real heartfelt repentance before God, crying out to Him to deliver us from our awesome national problems? “Ridiculous!” some would say. And because such a picture of national repentance is so “ridiculous” to even imagine, our peoples are headed for perhaps the greatest national punishment that ever came on any nation. Notice this prophecy from the book of Ezekiel:

Ezekiel 9:9, “The iniquity of the House of Israel [our modern English-speaking peoples] and Judah is exceeding great and the land is full of blood [America leads the world in crime] and the city full of perverseness [our cities have become asphalt jungles of crime, immorality, drug addiction and sensuous pleasure seeking], for they say, The Lord hath forsaken the earth, and, the Lord seeth not.”

And isn’t that exactly what millions say today? “God doesn’t exist,” “He’s gone way off somewhere,” “He’s gone into retirement.” But God is not in retire-

ment to Him how we live!

Ezekiel 7:3-4, “Now is the end come upon thee, and I will send mine anger upon thee, and will judge thee according to thy ways, and will recompense upon thee all thine abominations. And mine eye shall not spare thee, neither will I have pity: but I will recompense thy ways upon thee, and thine abominations shall be in the midst of thee: and ye shall know that I am the Lord.”

Does this sound a little vague, perhaps a little archaic? A little too much like “Old Testament Fire and Brimstone?” Don’t delude yourself! God is going to punish our peoples severely for our national and individual crimes and sins unless we really repent and turn to Him.

So far, God is not yet directly punishing our peoples. He is merely letting us kill ourselves. He is letting us suffer the automatic consequences of our own ways. We abuse the earth He gave us, polluting our rivers and streams with pesticides and chemicals. We kill the nutrients

Right now our current leadership is striving with all they have to restore America’s pride, its power. Our economy is the strongest in the world, our rebuilt military the best fighting machine on this planet. There are more jobs now than there are people to

# SOCIALIST VENEZUELA FALLING APART AS PRESIDENT MADURO SHOCKINGLY BLAMES PARTY

*by Kenneth Rapoza, reprinted with permission from Forbes.com*

News flash! Socialism in poor, closed-door economies is a failure. So says Nicolas Maduro, who happens to be the president of one: the biggest failed state in the Americas, poor ol' Venezuela.

In a surprising twist on Monday, Maduro went against the Socialists United (PSUV) playbook

of blaming Washington (especially the CIA) for Venezuela's troubles.

"The production models we've tried so far have failed, and the responsibility is ours—mine and yours," Maduro told the PSUV party congress.

Venezuela's economy is a

disaster. The country faces a massive brain drain, with middle-class people leaving in droves to Madrid and Miami. Lower-income Venezuelans are trekking across borders into Colombia and Brazil.

Inflation is off the charts, up thousands of percentage points over the last few years, and up hundreds of percent this year alone. The currency is useless. Some towns have taken to bartering.

Venezuelan GDP will contract by more than 10% again this year. For this oil-rich country, once the richest in South America, the reactionary socialist policies enacted under decades of PSUV rule have been completely ruinous. The fact that Maduro finally admits it is telling, and no small feat on his behalf. Maduro should be commended for it.

"Enough with the whining," Agence France Press reported him saying. "We need to produce with or without [out-



**Caracas, Venezuela May 30, 2018. Venezuelan president, Nicolás Maduro, during a state visit by the Cuban president Miguel Diaz-Canel to Venezuela. Recently, in a rare moment of honesty, Maduro blamed himself and his party for the country's crisis.**

*Continued next page*

side] aggression, with or without blockades, we need to make Venezuela an economic power,” he said.

PSUV was created by the late Hugo Chavez. Once one of the most popular leaders in Latin America, the red beret-wearing anti-imperialist had luck on his side for most of his governing years. High oil prices kept the one-trick-pony Venezuelan economy humming.

But Chavez was a dyed-in-the-wool “Open Veins of Latin America,” “Wretched of the Earth” socialist. His leadership comes from a position of revenge for years of colonial pillage and foreign corporate malpractice, particularly those displacing and killing indigenous populations.

As a result, Chavez saw capitalism and, to a large extent the United States as an enemy of the state.

Washington helped the Chavez storyline by antagoniz-

later. Venezuelans were not surprised. Chavez became that much more popular.

But to many, PSUV is more than a bunch of postcolonial Chavistas who believe socialist

**Inflation is off the charts, up thousands of percentage points over the last few years, and up hundreds of percent this year alone.**

ing him at every turn, convincing PSUV voters that they were still being persecuted by a foreign power. He survived a coup attempt in 2002, orchestrated by or at least with the blessing of U.S. intelligence forces, according to mainstream media reports years

policies are the way to govern. PSUV is also the party of narco-traffickers and other unsavory characters. The Treasury Department lists Maduro’s recently deposed vice president Tareck El Aissami as a drug trafficker. He stepped down this



**A graffiti wall with a painting of the former Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez and his successor Nicolas Maduro. The country they loved is crumbling, largely due to Chavez’s policies, continued by Maduro.**

summer, some say as a fig leaf to the Trump Administration. El Aissami is sanctioned from traveling to the U.S. or buying and selling U.S. assets. He says he owns no assets in the U.S. and denies all allegations against him.

The bulk of PSUV politicians, however, do not have El Aissami's background nor face allegations of wrongdoing. But one thing they have in common is the belief that socialism works, even in a poor country.

Clearly their view is skewed. Next-door neighbor Cuba has been a socialist, closed economy for decades. The largest island in the Caribbean has been stuck in the past since the 1950s.

**DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISTS: MEET NICOLAS MADURO**

Maduro's mea culpa on his country's economic demise comes at a time when many new Democrats in the U.S. are advocating for socialist policies, such



**Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren: more taxes, more regulation. Free health insurance. Free public colleges. Who's buying?**

as expanding Medicare insurance and free public college tuition. The problem is funding these programs for such a massive population.

While everyone argues that taxing the rich and wealthy corporations is the solution, they forget that the rich will simply hide

their wealth offshore to avoid taxation. And large corporations will simply relocate their corporate headquarters to low corporate income tax jurisdictions, keeping nothing but research and development here at home. Apple did this in Ireland—case in point.

Strong economies, helped along by low taxes, bring in more money to the government. High taxes encourage tax fraud and reallocation of resources to low-tax jurisdictions and—in a global economy—offshore to other countries.

Wealthy social democratic countries, such as those in Scandinavia, tend to be smaller than Venezuela. Sweden has around 10 million inhabitants. Norway has even less. Venezuela has around 30 million people living within her borders.

Corruption and political willpower are a perennial problem in Latin America. High taxation



to fund social programs is more likely than not to line the pockets of the government.

#### MEANWHILE, IN THE FAILED STATE OF VENEZUELA ...

Power blackouts are a daily occurrence in parts of Venezuela today despite PSUV's redistributionist policies designed to help the poor. Help them with what, exactly? Surely not help them keep the lights on. Or pay for medicine. Or food. Or a bus ride to work.

Running water is scarce in some towns. ATMs are empty in

some towns, too. Public transportation in smaller cities outside of the government hub of Caracas is unreliable.

AFP reporter Alex Vazquez visited one such city recently, San Juan de los Morros, and talked with the locals. He said it has become a city where "nothing works."

**High taxation to fund social programs is more likely than not to line the pockets of the government.**

"They send (running) water once a month. The rest of the time we have to buy it," Vazquez quoted a woman named Florimar Nieves, a school teacher, as saying in a story that ran on the AFP wire yesterday. "There have been times where we've had no electricity for 24 hours."

Meanwhile, Democratic socialists here say that the only reason socialism hasn't worked is that no one is doing it right.

Maybe it works in small, rich, homogenous societies like Norway. Like Venezuela, they too have a lot of oil. But their income and capital gains taxes are lower (flat tax of 25%). Norway has also been reducing their corporate tax rate, down from 50% in the 1980s to around 24% today. Norway is also an open market economy.

By comparison, Venezuela is a generally closed economy taxing nasty, evil corporations (and even nice ones) at a whopping 34%. They could tax them at 80% if they wanted and give everyone free health care and free college and free busses to work.

But before long, and if this crisis keeps up, the only company Venezuela will have left is its state-owned oil firm Pdvsa and a few mom-and-pop businesses selling food to the poor—who need President Maduro more than ever to help them pay for it. □



**Hunger prompted the massive and deadly Venezuela riots of 2017. A year later, the Venezuelan people have become accustomed to rummaging through garbage bins to find anything to eat.**

## The Pope Knew

*Continued from page 2*

purported statement to Francis, “...I don’t know if you know Cardinal McCarrick, but if you ask the Congregation of Bishops, there is a dossier this thick about him. He corrupted generations of seminarians and priests and pope Benedict ordered him to withdraw to a life of prayer and penance.” Where have we heard that before? There is apparently some dispute over whether “Benedict” in fact permanently de-frocked “Cardinal” McCarrick. Maybe someone should ask him.

Soon after the pope was personally informed and warned of McCarrick’s scandalous record, McCarrick was sent on a series of international missions representing “the church,” to include a trip to China, thus having been “rehabilitated” by the Vatican. Vigano’s letter says that two successive secretaries of State at the Vatican knew, and had plenty of evidence as to McCarrick’s well-documented predilections. But the corker was that he personally informed Francis (Bergoglio) only a short time before the Vatican sent him out as a representative, presumably in his priestly uniform. He also represented the Vatican during U. S. – Cuba talks during the Obama administration. Oops.

That little detail meant that the pope himself was involved in covering up the magnitude of the scandal by allowing McCarrick to travel in representation of the Vatican, presumably as a Cardinal. Vigano’s letter also identified the



archbishops and cardinals who had been personally informed or seen evidence of McCarrick’s long history. To have named the names of these lofty prelates is considered by the mainstream media, an “unthinkable” breach for Vigano to have committed.

When the pope was asked upon his return to the Vatican from Ireland (where he also had to acknowledge the priest/pedophilia outrage, delicately) he appeared to be aggressive saying, “I won’t say one word about that.” That, being the letter accusing him of covering up McCarrick’s evil deeds by re-assigning him to official Catholic missions.

It is mighty convenient that the acts of these weird holy men are so unspeakably wicked that they can’t even be spelled out in the press or any polite company anywhere. The details are such that no one can even imagine. Who would even allow such depravity into their mind?

As recent news attests, from the police raids of “drug-fueled homosexual orgies” at the priest-

ly Vatican residences, and the many “gay” scandals that have rocked Rome, this is a very queer outfit. We only hear about apologies and penance when children are involved. Francis is indeed the one who, soon after having been chosen, said the church owed an apology to homosexuals who’d been offended in some way by church teachings or policies. Now apologies are being proffered to the families of children who have been abused by their own high and mighty clergy.

There have been hundreds, undoubtedly thousands of these situations, and they shrug it off. “Is it fair to apologize?” Francis asked in Chile. Long before the advent of Francis, the “church” sold valuable properties and paid out enormous sums to buy the silence of victims who were but children when they were abused by the backward collars.

We’ll probably never know the full extent of evil committed by the vile priests in tall hats and flowing robes. Maybe it’s just as well. □



# ALL ROADS LEAD TO ROME

*by Michael Armstrong*

Perhaps no other organization on earth has wielded influence or generated controversy on the scale of the Roman Catholic Church. Likewise the Roman Empire, from which it sprung, is nearly beyond comparison in the annals of history. This Empire has been the single greatest influence on western thought, customs, and institutions. The Catholic Church, worthy of its heritage, continues to exercise an authority that transcends borders. It boasts the largest “Christian” congregation in the world with an estimated 1.2 billion adherents.

Today it is rocked by scandal of the most vile nature. Those who have studied its sordid past will hardly be alarmed by current revelations. The intrigue and depravity of the Catholic Church has penetrated the public consciousness to the point that most of the growth and progress made by Christians in relatively modern eras has been on account of protestants, those whose very identity is defined by rebellion against Catholicism.

To the uneducated, uninterested, or non-believing however,

discerning differences between Christian sects is hardly worth the effort. Indeed, the beliefs and practices of the largest and most successful protestant denominations are virtually indistinguishable from the organization they have “protested” against. For this reason, the entire perception of Christianity is tainted by the degeneracy of the unholy charlatans who have claimed the headlines yet again.

Paul, in his letter to the church in Rome during his day, issued a sharp reprimand to those whose claims of purity and righteousness in contrast with their deeds had shown them to be hypocrites and had actually led to the truth of God being reviled among the gentiles. He wrote, “Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God? For the name

of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written.” (Romans 2:21-24)

As these hideous stories continue to unfold, can there be any doubt about the injury sustained by any moral authority the Roman Church might retain? To many, they may never have had any in the first place. The damage is done to the children and young adults raised and educated, through no fault of their own, under such a system. How could it possibly retain their respect? Does this not factor into why countless millions have ceased to practice any form of religion? Sadly, all of Christianity suffers on account of these dark deeds. Even if the disillusionment were limited only to Catholics, it weakens a bloc who has typically stood for traditional values against social “progress.”

While these repercussions are lamentable, a tragedy among tragedies is that the Roman Catholic Church was ever considered “Christian” in the first place. Its traditions and accouterments prove it utterly worthy of its Roman heritage. Its history

and that of the Empire are inseparable. A brief examination of the customs and beliefs extant at and before its inception reveal at great deal. Much light can be shed on how this powerful organization can be so at odds with the teachings of scripture, and how its highest echelons can be embroiled in such salacious debauchery.

Let it first be stated that “Catholic” by definition means “universal.” While it is not the only modern church to use this term to describe itself (others include Eastern Orthodox, Anglican, Lutheran, and some Methodists) it is not surprising that such inclusive terminology would be employed. Rome never shied away from adopting the deities or customs of those it conquered. Much of what was established in those days continues in modern times.

The days of the week, the months, the planets, all bear the names of their gods. Sol, Helios, and Luna all serve as the root for a great many English words. The root of Venus has manifested itself in such diverse terms as wish, wean, win, venison, venom, venerate, and, less surprisingly, venereal. Other words based on the names of gods include cereal, janitor, junior, juvenile, narcissist, aphrodisiac, gigantic, hyacinth, mentor, panic, siren, tantalize, and fortunate.

Most of our major holidays deserve a special study of their own. Such observances as the festival of Sol Invictus (the unconquerable sun) on December

25, and January 1 dedicated to Janus (the god of beginnings and endings, whose two faces looked into the future and the past) were covered with Christian meaning. Allegedly marking the birth and circumcision of Jesus Christ, they allowed the average citizen to accept the new religion of Rome without actually changing any of their customs.

This strategy characterized the growth of the Roman Empire. Instead of suppressing the cults and beliefs of the conquered, they fit them into the existing hierarchy of their religion. By preserving local traditions, even to

the point of temple construction, they maintained social norms and promoted stability. An altar stone, now housed in a museum in Cologne, Germany, inscribed about the 2nd century AD provides us an example. It depicts a sacrifice, performed by a Roman and in typical Roman manner, to the goddess Vagdavercustis, who is most likely of German or Celtic origin.

This practice is also evident in the early development of Rome. Much was borrowed from the Greeks, who were their predecessors in world dominance. Greek belief divided governance



**Mosaic of the Vatican grottoes under St. Peter's Basilica, on the ceiling of the tomb of the Julii. Representation of Christ as the sun-god Helios or Sol Invictus riding in his chariot. Dated to the 3rd century AD.**

of the earth into three realms: the sky, the sea, and the underworld ruled by Zeus, Poseidon, and Hades respectively. The Romans also elevated a triad above the multitude of deities, the first of which included Mars, Quirinus, and Jupiter. Quirinus was the founder Romulus made into a god, but Jupiter was supreme among the gods.

The lineup later changed to Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva. Jupiter remained premier in all

theology. The accouterments, lilies, eggs, etc., are inescapable links to the practices of ancient Rome.

Third in the Capitoline Triad, as it is called, was Minerva. Primarily associated with wisdom, her influence was applied to strategy, music, poetry, medicine, commerce, and many crafts. The owl was her “sacred creature,” on account of which owls are symbolic of wisdom to this day. Minerva is still prominently fea-

tures her image.

The extent to which western life features relics from the Roman Empire makes the links between ancient and current religious belief all the more obvious. The ancient Romans worshiped a triad, the Roman Catholics worship a trinity. With their festivals largely intact, a group of three still supreme, and many of their other traditions preserved, transitioning to “Christianity” probably didn’t involve many practical changes for the average Roman.

The story of Emperor Constantine and his role in advancing Christianity towards becoming the religion of Rome is well known. Disagreement among the various churches, not helpful in promoting the unity necessary in maintaining an empire, led him to personally intervene and chair the famous Council of Nicea in 325 AD. The trinity was one main issues before the council, others included Sunday worship and Easter. Evidently ecumenical agreement did not prove to be enough as shown by Constantine’s edicts, such as against the Arians and against heretics.

While some scholars doubt the legitimacy of Constantine’s own conversion, it is undeniable that he paved the way for Christianity to become the religion of Rome, however spurious the version they adopted. At his death it was said that he ascended to heaven, certain believers were even criticized for offering sacrifices before his statues.

This calls to mind the

**The extent to which western life features relics from the Roman Empire makes the links between ancient and current religious belief all the more obvious.**

matters and was given titles such as invictus, emperor, and triumphantor. Juno was both Jupiter’s wife and sister. As queen of the gods she was given a great many roles over time, including war and the preservation of the Empire. She was always of great importance to women and her care of the state was portrayed in matronly fashion. Some of her primary functions included childbirth and fertility, and she came to be associated with many rites of this nature in February.

Her own festival was at the beginning of March, intentionally coinciding with the renewals brought by spring. Her son Mars was allegedly conceived by a magical flower. These days the Roman Catholic Church promotes its own spring festival, again thinly veiled with Christian

taught in modern education institutions. Hundreds of universities, among them some of the most prestigious in the world, feature her image in their seals and use her name for their buildings or programs.

A statue of Minerva is at the center of the Sapienza University of Rome. This university was founded in 1303 by Pope Boniface VIII for ecclesiastical studies. It is currently one of the premier educational institutions in Europe and among the best attended. She appears on the seal of California, whose statehood being granted without previously being a territory was equated to Minerva being born fully grown. The Congressional Medal of Honor, the highest honor and decoration available to a member of the United States Military, also

traditions of the Imperial Cult often called emperor worship. It began with the first emperor, Augustus. Succeeding the republican era of Roman history, Augustus became emperor in 27 BC. In this role he also assumed the title of chief priest, which continued with subsequent emperors. Though he resisted their efforts during his life, after death the Senate voted to deify him. Many future rulers would also have this honor bestowed upon them.

The Catholic Church goes through a similar review process before recognizing an individual's sainthood. It involves a thorough review of life and character. Evidence of a miracle being performed after praying to the saint is required for beatification except in cases of martyrdom. The process is long and canonization cannot occur until after a second miracle occurs.

Saints are considered particularly efficacious in situations they are known to have experienced in life. There are a great many patron saints for certain locations or particular professions. Having a multitude of heavenly beings to invoke dependent on circumstances was part of life in polytheistic Rome. Even the earliest Romans believed they were watched over by their ancestors. Other beliefs about the afterlife are not incongruous with church dogma.

Continuity in the approach to prayer is remarkable. Proper formula was stressed above all else. Even privately, recitation

dominated the expression of personal need or desire. Today use of the rosary and the responsive readings of mass are familiar to any practicing Roman Catholic. Ancient public rituals were even more demanding, requiring trained professionals. For this they had the College of Pontiffs (Collegium Pontificum) consisting of the Pontifex Maximus, the Rex Sacrorum, the Flamens, and the Vestal Virgins.

Does that ring any bells? Because bells were in fact rung. Such a multitude of religious paraphernalia existed, some of it quite vulgar, that it nearly defies comprehension. One cannot find the use of an ancient religious object such as the tintinnabula

anywhere in modern life except in the ceremonies of the Roman Catholic Church. Phallic symbols were common in pagan culture, how is it that attaching one to the roof of a building now signifies that it is a place of Christian worship?

An obelisk (read phallic symbol) is one of the defining icons of St. Peter's Square in the Vatican. It is Egyptian in origin, constructed possibly around 2500 BC, and was moved from Heliopolis (a center of sun worship) to Alexandria by Emperor Augustus during his reign. Later, the infamous Caligula brought it to Rome and placed it in the center of what would become known as Nero's circus. Transferred to



**Left:** Ancient Roman tintinnabulum depicting Jupiter and the Capitoline Triad. Typically adorned with bells and male genitalia, tintinnabula were supposed to ward off evil spirits. **Right:** Catholic tintinnabulum depicting Christ and saints.

its current location in 1586, it didn't have to be moved far as the Vatican now occupies much of the same ground. This was accomplished at the direction of Pope Sixtus V.

Sixtus V must have been quite the obelisk fanatic as he is also responsible for erecting a number of others. He transferred one from the Circus Maximus, originally taken from the temple of Amun in Karnak, to Lateran Palace, an ancient palace of Roman Emperors that became the main papal residence. He also moved the Flaminio and Esquiline obelisks. Popes Pius VI, Clement XI, Alexander VII, Clement XIV, and Pius VII all had obelisks transported as well. The Pantheon, itself a former temple now used as a Roman Catholic Church, received one belonging to a temple for Isis.

Occupying the same land, using the same buildings to celebrate the same holidays with the same rituals, the Roman Catholic Church remains an empire in its own right. It rules a sovereign state, participating in world affairs on par with other nations. This is part of the reason the misdeeds of its clergy have so long gone unpunished or remained unknown. The silence of victims has been paid for while the perpetrators are secreted away. This pattern of abuse, in its very nature, has its roots in antiquity as well, as will be evidenced by the deviance of their predecessors.

The history of the Roman Empire is so long, and its borders so large, that no single statement

can define what sorts of practices were typical to its entirety. There were times when heterosexual monogamy was encouraged as the basis for the healthy growth and foundation of the empire. Celibacy was required in certain cults and sects, such as the Vestal Virgins. On the whole however, there was ample opportunity for decadence.

Both slavery and prostitution existed, legally, throughout the Empire. Slaves were the absolute property of their masters and could be subjected to any degradation. Both male and female prostitutes were ever available. Carnal exploits with a slave or prostitute of either gender was an unremarkable fact of life. Notable citizens of the highest standing could engage in them without the slightest loss of reputation. For a married man to engage in such pursuits was not even considered adultery, which term they only applied to relations with a married woman. There were no moral taboos associated with these actions.

Deities were not all the Romans borrowed from Greece. Pederasty remained one of their predilections. It was common for young male prostitutes to use Greek names, regardless of where they were from. Tales of their gods included such unnatural couplings, as in the case of Zeus and his cup bearer Ganymede. In earlier times, males between the ages of 13 and 20 participated in such relationships, with much older men, as an initiation to adulthood. These associations

were considered advantageous both socially and economically.

To anyone who holds to the moral teachings of scripture, such occurrences are abhorrent. Yet the Roman Catholic Church is currently plagued by scandals of the exact same nature. Are they not worthy of their history in every way? How can they possibly claim to represent the true God, and be the church founded by Jesus Christ, when the defining aspects of their religious practice are so firmly rooted elsewhere? Jeremiah 10:2 includes the phrase, "learn not the way of the heathen."

God has never failed to punish his people when they forsook His commandments and observances, and instead indulged in the customs of their neighbors. Is it not worse yet to take those customs and claim they honor the true God? Hundreds of Priests have abused thousands of children in Pennsylvania alone. Acts so disgusting you can hardly bear to consider. What if the extent were known worldwide?

The world desperately needs the pure truth and guidance of scripture. This hypocritical monolith, an antiquated amalgamation of the vilest nature, is not fit to represent or lead the Christian world. Truth is readily available to those who seek it. We can only pray that those who have suffered the most find their way out from under the oppressive deeds and dogma of these wolves in sheep's clothing. The wrath of the Shepherd will surely find them out. □

# facebook's

# Antidote to Russian Interference in US Elections



by Murray Allatt

GTAEA-Australia has boosted on Facebook (paid for posts to be distributed) hundreds of posts offering booklets, CDs, DVDs and the *Twenty First Century WATCH* magazine to targeted audiences in Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the UK, the USA and the countries of northwest Europe.

Until very recently we have had no problem gaining approval to boost our Ads—which can variously consist of video of GTA TV programs, sermons, links to booklets on Biblical topics, links to GTA audio/video sermons and blog commentaries. However, as many other users of Facebook who boost posts have become aware, over the last six months there has been a fundamental shift in how Facebook treats its advertisers and their boosted posts (Ads).

In April, this year, we boosted a post advertising the new hard copy print edition of, *The Ten Commandments* booklet by Garner Ted Armstrong. The boosted post ran for 66 days—without issue. However, on day 66 we were abruptly advised that the Ad was “Not Approved”. It still had a substantial budget in hand.

The explanation was given: **“Not Authorized for Ads with Political Content**

*“Your ad was not approved because your Page has not been authorized to run ads with political content.*

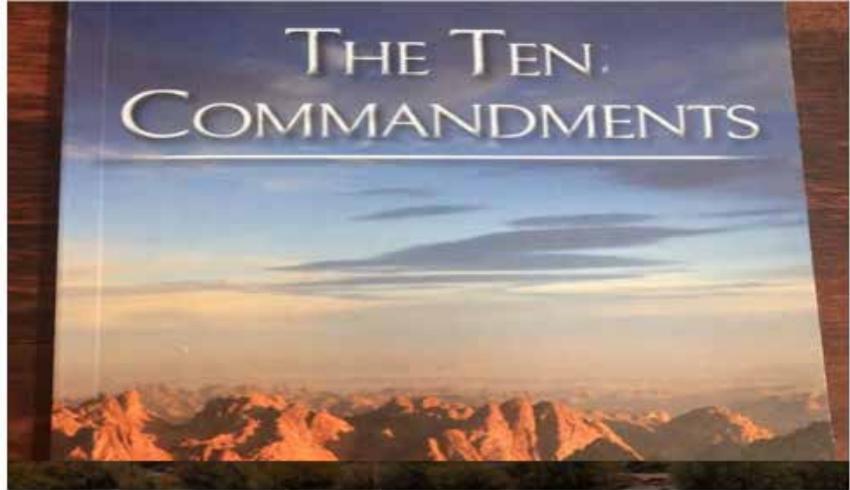
*“What to do: Complete the authorization process.*

*“You can check the status of your review in your Support Inbox.”*

The “political” post is shown below.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS – banished from court houses, schools and other public buildings, and said to be “done away” by many of the christian churches and not necessary to observe to receive salvation. Did Jesus Christ “do away” with the Commandments?

Matt. 5:17-22 “7Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. 18For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the l... [See More](#)



67,878 people reached [Boost Again](#)

Recent Activity

Boosted on Apr 03  
Audience: Australia, Canada, United Kingdom, N...  
By Murray Allatt · **Not Approved**

[View Details](#)

Now, what Facebook does not do—ever—is identify specifically what it is about a post that is claimed to be “political.” We are left to guess. Are the words “banished from court houses, schools and other public buildings,” political? Or did someone at Facebook read the book online and find something that qualified for Facebook’s definition of what is “political?”

If we look at the dictionary definitions of “political” we find there are several. The Oxford dictionary proffers the following:

*“Political” - Adjective*

*1.1 Relating to the government or public affairs of a country.*

*“a period of political and economic stability”*

*1.2 Interested in or active in politics.*

*“I’m not very political”*

*1.3 Motivated by a person’s beliefs or actions concerning politics.*

*“a political crime”*

*2 derogatory. Done or acting in the interests of status or power within an organization rather than as a matter of principle.*

Perhaps one of those definitions could be stretched. But really?

Facebook does have a stock response to queries about their rejection of ads, often ads that a few months earlier ran without issue. Here is one exchange:

“Hi Murray,

I’ve put together some information about our ad policies and the actions you can take.

Here’s what’s preventing your ad from being approved:

The text and/or imagery

you’re using qualifies as political, based on the definition we’re using for enforcement.

“You can learn more about what qualifies as political in the Ads Help Center.

“What to do next:

“You must authorize your Page to run political ads. To begin the authorization process, please visit your Page’s Settings. You can find more information here. Once you’re authorized to run political ads, be sure to select the political ad option. Your ad will run with the political ad header and disclaimer.

“Thanks,

“Nick - Facebook Ads Team”

Now, when you go to the Ads Help Center you find a plethora of material of what Facebook now says requires “Ad authorization.”

When you click on Ads Help Center you find that not only “political” matters (according to Facebook’s enforcement policy) but matters of national importance also fall under the authorization process. Helpfully Facebook has listed topics that are verboten in boosted ads without authorization—at least so far as any ad running in or targeted to the USA. Below is just some of Facebook’s Ads Help Centre explanation.

“This is an initial list of top-level issues that will be considered to require advertiser authorization and labeling for ads targeting the US. We expect this list may evolve over time.

- abortion
- budget
- civil rights
- crime

- economy
- education
- energy
- environment
- foreign policy
- government reform
- guns
- health
- immigration
- infrastructure
- military
- poverty
- social security
- taxes
- terrorism
- values” (*Ah, values—have we fallen foul of this dot point by promoting “Christian” values in what Facebook would like to be a “values” free society?*)

**“Other Countries Not Listed Above:** This section is only applicable to you if ad authorization is available in your country and your country isn’t listed above.

“If the ad authorization process is available in your country and you plan to run ads targeting your country that are related to politics or issues of national importance, we currently don’t enforce on a specific list of issues related to your country. You should use your own judgment and any applicable local requirements to determine what a “national legislative issue of public importance” is in your country. Issues may be topics discussed or debated at a national level that may influence the outcome of an election or result in/relate to existing or proposed legislation.”

As noted at the outset we are based in Australia, according to

the above information, a country not yet under the thrall of Facebook’s “political” advertising dictum. But we do boost into the USA, among other countries and therefore fall under this policy. As we have many of our “followers” located in the USA our posts now go there automatically regardless of targeting. But those ads get to followers in the US not by paid advertising boosts but by reason of they being “followers.”

Now, it would not be a problem if Facebook restrained itself to regulating genuine political Ads. But a TV program advertising a book about prayer? Most recently, August 4, our boost of a Garner Ted Armstrong TV program video, “Is God a Mystery?,” having been approved, was then two days into a seven-day boost, then the message, “Not Approved”.

You guessed it. The boosted ad was, “Not approved because your Page has not been authorized to run ads with political content.”

This particular video was embedded on our Facebook page and boosted from there. During it’s short run it had over 10,000 views.

The verbiage promoting the program was this:

*IS GOD A MYSTERY?*

*In this TV program video Garner Ted Armstrong asks the question, “Is God a Mystery?” And “Is your religion any good to you if you can understand it?” Offered is a free booklet titled “Is God a Mystery?” There is also an audio sermon on CD, “Must You Believe In A Trinity To Be*

*Saved?”*

This video program remains on our Facebook page with our other embedded GTA TV program videos. The post remains on our page as well. Just not boosted. Should any wish to view the post and the video we’d be obliged to hear opinion as to how a program discussing the trinity rates as either “political” or “a matter of national public importance” such as it requires authorization to run as a “political” ad.

Now, it may make some sense to be rated “political” the odd post we boost. In early July, we boosted an ad for the latest edition of *Twenty-First Century WATCH* magazine.

OK. Let’s concede the cover did depict a political event and the text has a familiar ring to it. No doubt. But let’s also ask whether if *Newsweek* or *Time* magazine (Do those magazines still exist?), or *The New York Times*, were running ads on Facebook to boost circulation and ran with that cover—would they need to be “authorized” by Facebook to run “political” ads? Probably not.

Facebook provides an inexpensive way to reach a large audience with the messages we

wish to deliver. However, there is a more difficult path to navigate in Ad choice than was the case just a short time ago so far as what content can be boosted with some assurance it will not be later rejected. Initial approval does not guarantee later review will not result in a “Not Approved” status, due to a faceless person employed by Facebook determining what is “political” under Facebook’s “enforcement definition of ‘what is political.’” Those determinations appear to be very subjective in some instances.

Now, it certainly appears that all of this disruption in using Facebook’s boosted post



facility has its origins in Donald Trump's election in 2016 and the claim (among several claims as to why the defeat came about) by his opposition that Russia had a real impact on the election outcome by posting some ads favoring both him and his opponent on Facebook. We're not blaming Donald Trump.

Now, as an organization based in Australia, with not just Australia but the Anglo world and the rest of the world to boost to, what if we just dropped the USA as a target country for our boosted (paid) Ads. Well, in line with Facebook's "helpful" instructions excerpted above, by excising the USA as a target country we resubmitted Ads for the GTA

TV programs *The Answer to Unanswered Prayer* and *Is God a Mystery*—both "Not Approved" with the USA included as a target country—are now approved to run in Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the UK. We will resubmit other "Not Approved" Ads and target them to countries other than the USA. Hopefully all will be approved.

Now it may be that the political Left in these other countries will eventually have the ear of Facebook and other social media platforms and be able to impose similar bans on dissemination of Christian and other conservative messages in these countries by use of Facebook's "political" definition and this bogus notion

of "issues of national importance" including "values". But right now, it is only the USA that Facebook, Twitter and the gaggle of other left leaning social platforms are interested to dictate what the populace reads and views.

Truly, the temptation is there to think this is all just a bad plot line from a Hollywood B grade "thriller." That would be wrong. It really has the ring of Orwell's 1984 at least as to what is transpiring in the USA. The rest of the western world may not be far behind. And all because Donald Trump won the 2016 Presidential election? Really.

So much for freedom of speech, freedom of association, freedom of religion. □

## Balance of Our Choice

*Continued from page 22*

fill them. What a great position to be in. We are the world's leader in energy of all types and we are starting to export it to other nations to reduce the influence of bad actor nations that dominated Europe with their energy exports through political blackmail. A feeling of pride in America is

swelling once again in the hearts and minds of true patriotic citizens. Yes, we appear to be on the way to restoring America to her God given example to the world. But will it last?

God says He's willing, if we are. He wants us to repent individually and collectively as a nation. If we do then He will forgive and restore what was taken away and what defined us, the

"why" of America, which is the proper pride of our power among the nations. If we don't, then all our efforts, both the individual citizens and the leaders of America, will find once more (and perhaps for the last time) our pride will be broken and we will have spent our strength in vain. God, please help us to choose to repent and be your people. The future of America hangs in the balance. □

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# Islamic Challenge to Italy

by Michael Burkert

Our daily news is rife with stories of Islamic upheaval and unrest in places such as Denmark, Sweden and Germany. What is little recognized however is the challenge Islam poses to Italy. The home of the Roman Catholic Church would not seem to be the most fruitful land for Islam to flourish, yet Islam is there, it's ever-present and it's hostile.

Unknown to most is that there are over two million Muslims living in Italy today. A staggering 250,000 Muslims are now Italian citizens. Islam continues to grow in the land of the popes, largely due to immigration, some legal, but mostly illegal. The Italian government appears to be both incompetent and impotent in any efforts to curb the massive flow of hostile Muslims into Italy.

Islam is not a recognized religion in Italy. That's correct, Islam is not an officially government recognized religion and as such, there are only eight government authorized Mosques in the country. Yet there are thousands of unofficial Mosques that have already popped-up across the land. The Italians don't like this much and accordingly see their government as out of touch with the people, much as they see the

Roman Catholic Church as out of touch. They are particularly displeased with the pope.

## ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION A SHARP THORN

Italy, it seems is chocked full of immigrants from Albania, Morocco, Egypt, Tunisia and Somalia, also many Pakistanis have also chosen Italy to stage their onward movement to Germany, Britain or the United States.

There are hundreds of thousands of Syrians, thanks to the European Union mandates that require Italy to accept these so-called "refugees." That means

that the Italian government must house, feed, clothe and provide (unlimited) medical care for the refugees, above and beyond any such care provided to Italian citizens, and this is causing much anguish among the Italian people!

Hundreds of thousands of Muslim immigrants, both legal and illegal simply do not care to work. They rely on handouts from the Italian government, which is cash strapped and itself reliant on handouts from the EU, primarily Germany. You can see Muslims hanging around on the streets, smoking cigarettes and drinking tea. They play Arab board games



**Turin, Italy - August 21, 2018: Thousands of Muslims in prayer during the Islamic Sacrifice Festival, Eid Al-Adha.**

*Continued next page*

and harass women walking down the streets. This shocking conduct is seen in Rome near some of the historical sites as well as in other locations, during the re-

and he is 22 years old and a veteran of the Italian Army. He led off the discussion with some pointed questions about what Americans thought about Benito Mussolini.

## Pope Francis has stated a number of times that Islam is strengthening Europe and is a blessing to the church.

cent visit to Italy. While the eyes of the Carabinieri (national police) and the local police are on them, Muslim no-go zones have already been established and are respected by the police. Accordingly, crime is higher than ever and will in no doubt increase with time!

The Italians are not happy about this and will no doubt eventually seek alternatives! That might mean growing support for the fascists, thought to be headed by Alessandra Mussolini, a descendant of the 1920's to 40's dictator of Italy, Benito Mussolini.

### NEW RESPECT FOR MUSSOLINI

While staying at a hotel in Rome, which was near the old city wall, a young man working at the desk asked if it would be possible to speak to some Italian students who would welcome the chance to practice English with a native speaker. Curiosities follow as to the attitudes of university students in Rome, and astonishment at what was said!

The visitation was with seven students, both men and women, their initial spokesman was a young man named Luigi Renaldi,

It was conveyed that most Americans only have a vague knowledge of Benito Mussolini, since he was deposed in 1943, at the height of World War II. Then an earful of what these student friends thought of Il Duce! These young people were strong Italian nationalists; a movement that is considered to be growing.

Benito Mussolini is thought to have been a great politician and leader of Italy. He always

stressed the strength and power of the Italian people and loved his country. It is widely believed that Mussolini would never allow Muslim immigration to threaten Italian life, culture, and even the language. His great downfall was mentioned and was attributed to his alliance with Hitler and National Socialism.

Due to the Muslim invasion and assertiveness it is apparent that fascism may well be on the rise as it is seen as an alternative to losing the nation to Islam! But, there is another problem that faces Italy and it comes from within the walls of the "Stato Vaticano," otherwise known as The Vatican.

### POPE FRANCIS AND ISLAM

Pope Francis may be the most "Islamic Friendly" pope in history. Always in the past the Catholic popes have been hostile



**Verona chapter of Forza Nuova, far-right Italian Nationalist party, rallying in front of the Castelvevchio against immigrants in Italy.**

toward Islam and have taken extreme steps to avoid its influence in Europe. After all the Roman church is a EUROPEAN church, it always has been. But today, things are changing. The crusades of the past were ordered by the popes of that day. They sought to free the Holy Lands from Muslim domination and keep Islam OUT of Europe!

Pope Francis has stated a number of times that Islam is strengthening Europe and is a blessing to the church. It's apparent that the pope is oblivious to the dangers that Islam poses to Europe and the Roman church!

The Pontiff has also expressed his belief that the Quran is a "book of peace." A book of peace? Hardly! But when one is deceived, one is deceived! Revelation 12:9 comes into play and as it states, "And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him." In Pope Francis' case, it is doubtful that deception is all that difficult a task for Satan the devil!

Another example of how the pope is so far out of touch is that he publicly has stated his support for government funding of Mosque construction. He is also a strong advocate for recognizing Islam as a "great religion" in Italy. He strongly supports official recognition of Islam. The final outrage, as seen by many Italians, is that Pope Francis has offered to build a Mosque on the



**The Mosque of Rome, the largest mosque in the Western world.**

grounds of the Vatican. To most Italians that proposal is not only outrageous, but a direct threat to their church and their nation.

Subsequently, there is little support for "Il Papa (the pope)." However, he is the pope and even some of the student acquaintances were unwilling to criticize him. They were all Catholics and while not loyal practitioners of the faith, drew the line at openly criticizing "Il Papa."

Despite the ecumenicalism professed by Pope Francis, the fact that Muslims absolutely hate the Roman Catholic Church cannot be denied. The former self-appointed Islamic State, Caliph of Islam, Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi, proclaimed that the time would come, when the green flag of Islam flew over the Vatican and that St. Peter's Basilica would be turned into a Mosque.

While Pope Francis is "making nice" with Muslims and

Islam, the hatred of anything that implies Christianity is on the target list of Islamic radicals. This is a fact that few recognize today.

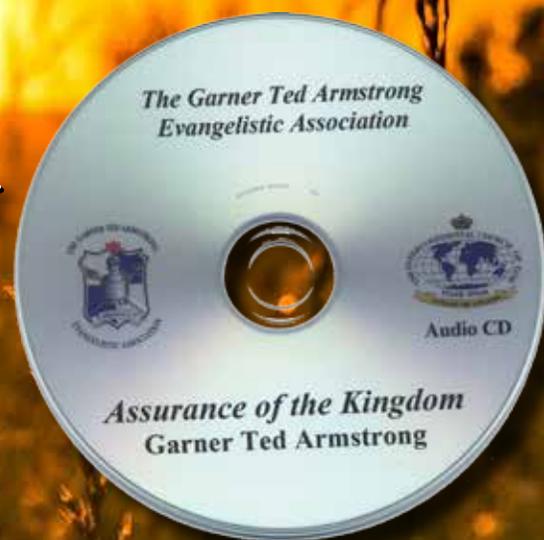
What is certain is this: Islam poses a greater threat to Europe and particularly Italy than ever before. King John I of Poland defeated the Ottoman invaders at the Gates of Vienna on September 11, 1683; Europe thrived after the Muslims' threat no longer was a cause of concern. Today, only the blind and the deceived fail to see the threat to Italy and Europe, but a new "Renaissance" is on the horizon!

The Holy Bible doesn't reveal that Europe will be Muslim, quite the contrary; the Ten European nations that will form the final United States of Europe will NOT be led under the green flag of Islam! When the Last Chapter of European History is finally written, it will not be penned by a Muslim! □

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