

TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

WATCH

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PROVERBS 8:13

Proud of *What?*

by *Mark Armstrong*

Who dreamed this up? Who decided queers could have the rainbow? Now they're trying to make us all accept it. They've been trying all along, but we were too busy with our lives to be bothered. Lately, they've been cramming it down our throats. Now we're bothered.

I wonder if somebody on the board of Budweiser has reconsidered. Was it really a good idea to have a transgender represent them? What is it with men wanting to be women, anyway? I thought it was a man's world. These corporations are having to make a conscious decision to lose money. Did they really think beer drinkers would appreciate the little girl act by an adult male? Having been to several locations that sell adult beverages, I can attest that they are well stocked with Bud Light.



In the old days companies were in business to make a profit, and they tried everything to make us customers. They were accountable to their shareholders, who also invested to make a profit. What changed? These outfits got so big that they think they can cram reprehensible nonsense down our throats. Do we have no choice? If you want to shop there, you'll do it under the rainbow flag. Target's stock has fallen dramatically. I'm guessing they didn't take a shareholder vote before the decision to put children's

transgender bathing suits near the front door.

But CNN is coming to the rescue. According to one of their articles, the downturn in Target's stock is the fault of everything but their transgender children's display. It's just a general downturn in the economy. These right-wing outlets are way out of line. You mean, we're not mad?

The pretender's administration is showcasing this perverted ideology. They've decided to make us choke it down, and nobody better complain. Who would dare? They've got all kinds of names for any non-compliant. The news networks are on board. It's PRIDE month.

We're not proud. The event at the White House with who-knows-what cavorting around the pretender is an affront. It's an affront to God, and if it's all the same, we'd rather not offend Him. Especially when everything is already falling apart. ☐



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*Humble yourselves
in the sight of the Lord...
James 4:10*

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NEXT TIME IT'S FIRE

by Michael Armstrong



The rainbow is an interesting choice for those who have tried to make it their banner of late. Is it a Freudian slip or an intentional affront? Either way there is an aspect to it that is quite appropriate.

In the Bible story, the rainbow is the sign given that God will never again destroy the earth with water (Genesis 9:11-17). All of the chapters that cover Noah and the flood are interesting reading; the story is in Genesis 6 through 9. It is hard to imagine what the world was like before this cataclysmic event.

We read of life spans hundreds of years long. The pristine, untouched world, brimming with natural resources. How different would that be from our crowded cities? Genesis 2:6 says, "But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground." Was the environment completely different than it is today?

A rainbow can be seen when sunlight passes through moisture in the air. The light refracts (changes direction) and

is reflected back. The effect is relative to the position you are viewing it from. The bow is visible at a 42 degree angle from your point of view and the double rainbow occurs at 51 degrees. Did God only put these principles into place after the flood or did the conditions on earth change in such a way to allow us to view this phenomenon? We can only speculate on the fundamental, scientific differences that may have been.

One thing that hasn't changed is human nature. The reasons for the flood are the fundamental problems that have plagued humanity throughout history and will continue to do so until the end. "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Genesis 6:5). "The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence" (Genesis 6:11).

These are the problems we face today; the same sins that have always incurred God's wrath. One of the last things we read

about Noah is that he was violated by his grandson Canaan (Genesis 9). Canaan's descendants are those who were driven out of the promised land hundreds of years later after thoroughly corrupting themselves.

Many of those sins were sexual and are explicitly listed in Leviticus 18 as a warning. "None of you shall approach to any that is near of kin to him, to uncover their nakedness: I am the Lord" (verse 6). "Moreover thou shalt not lie carnally with thy neighbour's wife, to defile thyself with her" (verse 20).

"Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination. Neither shalt thou lie with any beast to defile thyself therewith: neither shall any woman stand before a beast to lie down thereto: it is confusion. Defile not ye yourselves in any of these things: for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you: And the land is defiled: therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants. Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my

judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations; neither any of your own nation, nor any stranger that sojourneth among you:" (verses 22-26).

It doesn't matter if it occurs as overt paganism or is couched in the feel good language of "love" and "acceptance." God abhors sin. It is an affront against Him and an automatic curse against ourselves. The same is true of all sin. Stealing is wrong even if you fancy yourself striking back at evil corporations. Lies destroy trust, personally and in our institutions.

These standards are permanent, written in stone like the Ten Commandments. They don't change to suit our whims. Proverbs 18:2 says, "A fool hath no delight in understanding, but that his heart may discover itself." Society is being deceived by exactly that.

We are being told that if you feel a certain way, it is your truth, so embracing and exploring it must be the path to happiness. Ridiculous. How can any moral standard be subject to individual desire? If that were so, there could be no standard of any kind!

Children have to be taught and trained to know what is good for them. Otherwise they would eat candy for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Does wanting it make it a good idea? The truth — what is right — exists outside of our desires. Our challenge is to bring ourselves into alignment with it.

Real truth has become politically incorrect. There are lots of sins to take issue with, but until they dedicate a month to blasphemy or covetousness we'll have to

play the hand we're dealt. Sodom lent its name to a particular act when a crowd surrounded Lot's house and demanded, "Where are the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may know them" (Genesis 19:5).

Like the flood, what happened there is a warning to all

The rainbow reminds us that God will not flood the earth again, but we should also remember why He took such drastic action.

generations. "The shew of their countenance doth witness against them; and they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not. Woe unto their soul! for they have rewarded evil unto themselves" (Isaiah 3:9). That warning was for Jerusalem towards the end of the kingdom period.

Compare it to 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." Forgiveness is available, but these acts will not be tolerated forever.

The church in Rome was told what would come if they left God and pursued "vain

imaginations."

"For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly,

and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet" (Romans 1:26-27). The conclusion is in verse 32, "Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them."

Can we ignore this affront? The Bible is clear about the reasons for God's coming wrath (Colossians 3:6, Ephesians 5:6). The rainbow reminds us that God will not flood the earth again, but we should also remember why He took such drastic action.

God takes no pleasure in the sins or the pride of man. Those who disregard His warnings are in for an awful shock some day. "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (2 Peter 3:10). We would do well to remember that next time it's fire. □

Heaven on Earth?

excerpt from the book by Garner Ted Armstrong

Every day, in thousands of funeral services all over the western Christ-professing world, ministers attempt to soothe the heartbroken, bereaved families of those who have died. They say the loved-one is “even now in the arms of the Lord,” and has gone to heaven.

Somehow, no matter the oft-repeated clichés and promises, the wails and sobs of those who have lost family members are clearly in evidence. Is it because death is such a hated enemy? Is it because, no matter the assurances about “going to heaven” when we die, many people cannot bring themselves to rejoice when a loved one dies?

There can be no more important questions than WHY we were born; WHY we are on this earth in this human life; WHAT HAPPENS when we die; WHERE we are going!

There are some puzzling problems with the concept of each human being, regardless of race, having an “immortal soul” which is either destined to “go to heaven,” or “go to hell.” What if many of them never so much as heard about Christ and heaven?

If a Protestant missionary was attempting to reach a remote Chinese village, and had a flat along the way, and while he sweated over the jack and patching materials a little sick Chinese girl died, never having so much as heard the name “Jesus Christ” in her brief lifetime, does her “soul” go instantly to an “ever-burning HELL FIRE”?

Is such a scenario LOGICAL? Does it sound like something a loving God would do to a precious little child?

Will she ever have an opportunity to learn about Christ and His sacrifice?

When Peter was challenged at the “Beautiful

gate” as a result of healing a crippled man, he said, “Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole.

“This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.

“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:10-12).

Even the little Chinese girl must be saved in and through the name of Jesus Christ. But first, she must be given an opportunity to learn about Christ; to learn how He died for the sins of all mankind; to learn what sin IS; to learn about repentance, baptism, and the receiving of the Holy Spirit. She must have a CHANCE for salvation! Was her only chance wiped out because of the missionary’s flat tire?

The false doctrine of the “immortality of the soul,” coupled with the false idea that every human being, regardless of race or nationality is having a chance for salvation NOW, and only now, causes much confusion. God has decreed that ALL will have an opportunity for salvation, and that it is only when REJECTING the truth of God when it is brought to you that you are lost!

Plainly, God’s word says the vast majority of all mankind WILL HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY to be saved. He says, “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9).

**NO “SECOND CHANCE,” — BUT EVERY HUMAN
WILL HAVE A FIRST CHANCE!**

There is coming a SECOND RESURRECTION! Christ Himself plainly said so! “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years” (Revelation 20:6). The FIRST resurrection is the resurrection of the “dead in Christ”; those who have repented, been baptized, and received God’s Holy Spirit, and who have become “new creatures in Christ.” Paul spoke of this FIRST resurrection in his famous “resurrection chapter,” 1 Corinthians 15. He said, “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming” (1 Corinthians 15:22, 23).

The converted Christians who have died are to rise FIRST, in the FIRST resurrection. Notice another proof: “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first” (1 Thessalonians 4:16).

But the REST of the dead; those who have never heard, or had an opportunity for salvation during their physical lifetimes, will not be resurrected until AFTER the one thousand year reign of Christ, at the time called the “Great White Throne Judgment Day,” as pictured by the last annual holy day of God each year.

Notice the proof: “And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years [this pictures the “dead in Christ” who were in the FIRST resurrection, as well as the living who were instantaneously changed at Christ’s coming (see 1 Corinthians 15:50-52)] .

“But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished” (Revelation 20:4, 5).

Who are “the rest of the dead”? Obviously, all the dead who were NOT in the first resurrection; who were not CONVERTED; who had never heard the name of Christ! The “rest of the dead” includes our little Chinese girl, and the countless millions like her in nations all over the world, from the time before the flood up until the time of the second coming of Christ!

The “rest of the dead” includes all those who have never consciously REJECTED salvation! Think of it! How many gallons of tears have been shed by worried loved ones whose beloved children or other family members died “unsaved”? To discover the real TRUTH about the state of the un-

*Did not Christ say there are those
who God IS NOT CALLING,
and who have not been given an
opportunity in this lifetime?*

saved dead; to learn that deceased loved ones are profoundly ASLEEP IN THEIR GRAVES; that they will come up in a great resurrection; that they will HAVE A CHANCE FOR SALVATION should be met with great JOY by anyone! What a vast relief it is to learn that it is only those who deliberately, consciously REJECTED God and His laws who will burn in Gehenna fire; that others, who were not called in this life, will have a wonderful opportunity for salvation!

Did not Christ say there are those who God IS NOT CALLING, and who have not been given an opportunity in this lifetime? He certainly did! He deliberately concealed the meaning of much of His teaching to those who were not being called at that time! Notice it, “And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables?

“He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.

“For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.

“Therefore speak I to them in parables: because

they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.

“And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:

“For this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them” (Matthew 13:10-15). Read that again! Can you believe it? Jesus Christ said this in His own words! Plainly, He said “No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him” (John 6:44) and explained that not all are called to repentance and salvation at the same time.

You may have deceased loved ones who simply were NOT CALLED of God during their physical lives. If God did not CALL them, is it their fault? Is it logical that God would punish such people for all eternity in screaming agony when He decided it was not time to call them?

What about those to whom Jesus spoke in parables, saying “LEST at any time they should see with their eyes”? Believe it or not, Christ did NOT come to “save the world” THEN, during His sojourn on this earth in the flesh!

Notice the description of the great second resurrection: “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 out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

“And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell [Greek: *hades*, meaning “the grave”] delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works” (Revelation 20:12, 13). The Greek word for “books” is *Biblos*, from which we derive the English word “Bible.” God is consistent. God does not change. He does not judge one part of mankind according to one standard, and another part according to a different standard.

You and I are being judged, DAILY, by the word of God. The “Holy Biblos,” or holy BOOKS of the Bible are used as God’s standard for judgment! In the “Great White Throne Judgment,” or the second resurrection, the SAME God uses the SAME books to judge in the SAME WAY! Notice the dead are judged by and according to their WORKS, the very thing many preach against! Judgment is not SENTENCING! It is, instead, a “trial” period, this time a period of one hundred years; a much longer than the average human life span, during which all those who did not REJECT God and His truth will have a glorious opportunity for everlasting life! □

Call or go online to order the FREE book

Heaven on Earth?

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THE MODERN IDENTITY OF THE PEOPLES OF WESTERN RUSSIA

-PART TWO-

by Craig M. White, FriendsOfSabbath.org

In part one we discovered that the peoples of Byelorussia plus many of the fair-skinned people scattered amongst Meschech and Tubal are descendants of Abraham and Keturah through their son Midian. But what of his brother Medan? Which modern nation descends from him?

MEDAN

Historically, the Medanites dwelt alongside the Mitanni and they formed a kingdom in the Middle East during the tenth and ninth centuries BC. It is for this reason that historians call the Mitanni the “early Medes.” The empire of the Medanites or Medes is often referred to in textbooks as the Amadai-Mada-Medes empire (Mario Cappieri, *The Mesopotamians of the Chalcolithic and Bronze Ages*, p. 152. NB: Madai, Midian and Medan were closely associated with each other at that time and are still to this day). The Amadai were descendants of Madai who were subject to the Medes, the ruling class of the Empire. Herodotus lists their tribes as the

Busae or Buza (that is the natives), Parataceni, Struchates, Arizanti, Budii or Budini and Magi (*The Histories*, Book 1, Chapter 101).

What was the physical type of the Medes? All historians mention that the earliest tribes of the Medians were an Indo-European ruling class over the Madai according to a range of historians and anthropologists. This Mede ruling class called themselves Arioi or Arii (Herbert Hannay, *European And Other Race Origins*, p. 200) meaning noble.

The Medes were more numerous and powerful than the

Persians who were of the same race but who seem to have been an eastern Median tribe who broke away (Mario Cappieri, *The Mesopotamians of the Chalcolithic and Bronze Ages*, p. 139). The Persians were first in the central-west areas of Persia then later in the south-west (Arthur Cotterell, *The Encyclopedia of Ancient Civilizations*, p. 147). From what can be gathered by historians, these Aryan Persians originated in a far away land called Airyanem-Vaejo and came into the Iranian plateau possibly from southern Russia (Clement

“THEN again Abraham took a wife, and her name was Keturah.

“And she bare him Zimran, and Jokshan, and Medan, and Midian, and Ishbak, and Shuah.

“And Jokshan begat Sheba, and Dedan. And the sons of Dedan were Asshurim, and Letushim, and Leummim.

“And the sons of Midian; Ephah, and Epher, and Hanoch, and Abidah, and Eldaah. All these were the children of Keturah.”

(Genesis 25:1-4)

Huart, *Ancient Persia and Iranian Civilization*, p. 26). They were basically pastoral and possessed watch-dogs, sheep, oxen and horses and travelled in wagons which had axles and wheels. In general, researchers trace the Indo-Aryans to the Austro-Hungarian plains or to southwest Russia (Edwin Yamauchi, *Persia and the Bible*, p. 33). One would agree that that is where many of them later migrated to, but their homeland prior to that would have been in the Middle East. Professor Hannay throws further light on the original Persians:

“... The present inhabitants of Persia ... succeeded to territories which were abandoned ... and to a name imprinted thereon by the ... White Race which then disappeared. These incomers, who now go by the name of Farsiyan ... are doubtless the descendants of the Non-Persian subject-populations of antiquity, are not racially

identical with the Persians who vanished” (Herbert Hannay, *European And Other Race Origins*, p. 315).

Professor Sayce, writing in his famous *The Races of the Old Testament*, agrees that the original Persians belonged to the fair-skinned, Nordic division of the White Race: “The physical type of the country-men of Darius and Xerxes, like that of their modern descendants, was Aryan in all of its traits. Travellers still speak of the fair-complexioned, blue-eyed populations met with in the Persian highlands ... The Persians were at the outset a Median tribe.” (Archibald Sayce, *The Races of the Old Testament*, pp. 162-63)

They called themselves Airya (Aryan). Darius the Great on his tomb calls himself “an Arya of Arya(n) descent”. Xerxes called himself “harri”, meaning “noble” or Aryan. Today Persia is known as Iran or Aryan (NB: this term

“Aryan” must not be confused with Hitler’s misappropriation of the term), but these people are not the original Persians or Medes as we have seen. Professor Sayce affirms that the original Persians were a tribe who were originally with the Medes but who broke away from them for a time and had established themselves next to the Elamites (Sayce, *ibid*, p. 163). He further states that:

“**The Medes** proper were an Aryan people, who claimed relationship to the Aryans of Northern India and the Aryan populations of Europe, and **one of the tribes belonging to them was that of the Persians** ... But in classical times the older inhabitants of the regions into which the Medes migrated were classed along with them under the general title of ‘Medes’” (Sayce, *ibid*, pp. 45-46) [emphasis mine].

According to Herodotus, the Persian tribes were: the Pasargadae,



Naqsh-e Rostam, a mausoleum of Achaemenid Persian kings located near Shiraz, Iran. From left to right, tombs of Darius II, Artaxerxes I, Darius the Great, Xerxes I.

Maraphii, Maspai (descendants of Mash?), Panthialaei, Derusiaei (note *rus*), Germani (certain Hittites), Dai, Mardi (a tribe of Elamites), Dropci and Sagartii (*The Histories*, Book 1, Chapter 125, Sections 3-4). They called the land which they settled in southern Iran as Parsuash. The same territory is still called Farsistan to this day. Their chief towns were Persepolis (known today as Takht-e Jamshīd) and Parsagarda after which the Hebrews called the Persians “Parsa” (James Douglas (ed), *New Bible Dictionary*, p. 970); and the Euphrates River “Perath” or “Peres” — “River of the Persians”. Of course the name originated from a geographical region in southern Iran which was called “Persis”, the Greek form of the old Persian “Parsa.” After the Assyrian Empire collapsed, the Persians annexed Elam. They became closely identified with the Elamites who live today in parts of eastern Europe; the Persian kings even ruled from the Anshan district of Susa in Elam. It seems quite plausible that the true, original Persians, descend from Medan and/or two sons of Midian, Ephah and Epher. These may be the Apharsites mentioned by Ezra (Ezra 4: 9) and whom Bullinger and others reckon as Persians (Ethelbert Bullinger, *The Companion Bible*, p. 623).

The peoples in Persia today are mixed. The fairest Persians are those living around Persepolis (Takht-e Jamshīd) who are slender, have chestnut hair and are fairer than the surrounding Persians but there are still a few blondes among them (Francis

Huxley, *Peoples of the World in Colour*; p. 127; Vere Childe, *The Aryans*, p. 160). Also in north-west Iran many blondes persist (Griffith Taylor, *Environment, Race and Migration*, pp. 186, 214), still have features akin to Europeans (Taylor, *ibid*, p. 210) and have intermarried with the Semites (Francis Huxley, *Peoples of the World in Colour*, p. 127) and others.



Herodotus mentioned that the Thracian-Dacian people who lived in what is now the Balkans and western Ukraine used embroidery to decorate their clothes, like those still worn today.

WHERE ARE THE ORIGINAL MEDES AND PERSIANS TODAY?

When the peoples of Madai migrated to the Ukraine, these Medanites migrated with them and dwelt in close proximity to Madai and Midian as they had in the Middle East in previous centuries in a similar configuration. Pliny refers to these Medanites as the tribe of Medi which during his time dwelt north-west of the Black Sea (*The Natural History*, Book 4, Chapter 1, Section 2). Of Thrace he writes, “**The Medi, who live on the right bank of**

the river Struna right up to the Bisaltae abovementioned, and the Digerri and the various sections of the Bessi on the left bank, as far as the river Mesto” (Book 4, Chapter 11, Section 40) [emphasis mine].

Herodotus indicates that the Medes were in upper Asia or inner Asia, north of the Caucasian Mountains (*The Histories*, Book 4, Chapters 1, 12) and Strabo (c64 BC – 23 AD) who lived in Pon-

tus (in northern Turkey) stated that the Maedi were a people of Thrace bordering on the Illyrian Thunatae (i.e., western Ukrainian/Rumanian area) (*Geography*, Book 7, Chapter 5, Section 7). He also mentions “the Caucasian, or Moschian, Mountains” (Book 11, Chapter 2, Section 1).

Broadly speaking, the Medi dwelt in western Russia near or in eastern Rumania. Lempriere’s *A Classical Dictionary* also makes reference to them, but as the “Medobythini, a people of Thrace” (p. 365). It should also be noted that

a river in the Baltic region was known as the Persante (Henrik Birnbaum, “Indo-Europeans between the Baltic and the Black Sea”, *The Journal of Indo-European Studies*, Vol. 12, Nos. 3 & 4, p. 238) which may be a direct derivation of Persian.

Peoples, Nations and Cultures, by Professor John Mackenzie explains: “The name of the Belorussians is thought to derive either from their light blond hair, their white folk costumes or from the fact that their land remained unconquered by the Mongols in the 13th century ... Before the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991, the Belorussians had no experience of national independence, having always been under Soviet, Russian, Lithuanian or Polish rule.” (p. 295)

As they migrated into Russia out of the Middle East, their language gradually changed. D’iakonov notes: “The fate of the Iranian dialects is ... very vague

... in the first millenium B.C.E. **the language of the Ukrainian Scythians was still understandable for the ancient Medians**” (Igor D’iakonov, “On the Original Home of the Speakers of Indo-European”, *Journal of Indo-European Studies*, Vol. 13, Nos. 1 & 2, p. 148) [emphasis mine].

Such a revelation. His statement is obviously self-explanatory. We have seen historical reference to the Medi and Medo tribes in the western Ukraine as being descended from the original Medes. One of the tribes of the Medes was Budii according to Herodotus: he refers to the Budini (or Boudini) nation he visited near the Borysthenes or Dnieper River (*The Histories*, Book 4, Chapter 21, Section 108). They dwelt among the Sauromatai. Soviet historian Vakar writes that the word Budini is a variation of Vudini, Veneti, Venedi or Vendi and that various authorities feel that they may well be the most ancient

of Slavic tribes and remote ancestors of the Belorussians (Nicholas Vakar, *Belorussia, The Making of a Nation*, p. 38).

Today one branch of these Medo-Persian people is known as the Buzhians or Volhynians and they dwell in north-west Ukraine. Physical anthropologists tell us that like the White Russians, they are slightly shorter than the central/eastern Ukrainians (Madaï) and have a high percentage of blondes. Overall, their eyes are a light-brown in colour, but many have blue eyes. They are fair-skinned (John Geipel, *The Europeans: an Ethnohistorical Survey*, p. 230) and like the mixed remnants in Iran, their headform is brachycephalic (Carlton Coon, *The Races of Europe*, pp. 570-71; Griffith Taylor, *Environment, Race and Migration*, p. 214) while their closest genetic relatives are the Belorussians (*Great Soviet Encyclopedia*, Vol. 10, p. 610).

The Volhynians are often included with the Belorussians in historical works. Let us also remember that the original name of the Volhynians was Buzhians (Samuel Cross, *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, p. 38). One of the tribes of the Medes were the Busae, as we saw previously. Surely, then, the blonde, neo-Nordic Volhynians descend from the Medo-Persians. Another tribe among the Medo-Persians was the Sagartii. In southern Russia anciently dwelt the Saghadu (Herbert Hannay, *European And Other Race Origins*, p. 310) or Sagetai (Hannay, *ibid*, p. 311). Various other people in that area were called Persae and Parthi by Roman writers (Hannay, *ibid*,



Lubart's Castle, or Lutsk Castle, built in the 14th century, was named for the last ruler of united Galicia-Volhynia, Liubartas.

p. 422). With them were the Dahi tribe, very likely descended from the Dai tribe of Persia.

Another tribe of ancient Persia was the *Derusiaei* — could this have been the remnants of the Mitanni? A district of Medo-Persia was named Gedrosia (Michael Grant, *Ancient History Atlas*. 1700 BC to AD 565, p. 21; Edward Rapson, *Ancient India*, map between pages 28, 29) and later we find the Gerus or Gerrhus river in Georgia flowing into the Caspian Sea (Lempriere's, *A Classical Dictionary*, p. 282). A river with the same name was found in Scythia (Lempriere, *ibid*). Also, a city of Geresa once existed in Georgia (Lempriere, *ibid*) which may be place names left behind during their migrations northwards into the greatness of western Russia.

OUTCOME OF RESEARCH

In part one I referred to Russian President Putin and his open ambition to unite the territories of the old Russian Empire and Soviet Union. Especially uniting the nations of Belorussia and Ukraine with Russia itself. Will he succeed? Ethnically take a close look at photographs of himself — from his youth to the present. What do you see? This author sees a man representing some of the people in western Russia that are a mix of Abrahamic and Meschech stock.

So today, the peoples of Russia are from a number of sons listed under Japheth, but many are also descended from Abraham's concubine Keturah. The scores of ethnic groups resident in this vast country can be more-or-less categorised into several stocks



or nations. Biblically we can be reasonably sure of the following origins of these peoples:

- **Great Russians** — Meshech and Tubal
- **Belorussians (mainly White Russians)** — Midian (with Medan in the south of the country)
- **Ukrainians (Ruthenians)** — Madai (and Medan in the northwest of the country)
- **Central Asian** - Gog (Edomites and Turkics)
- **Far eastern Asians and Eskimos** – Magog
- Plus many others

This is all explained in my book *In Search of ... the Origins of Nations* (chapters 8, 12).

Of course the boundaries

of these nations do not show a clear racial picture. Instead, there is some overlap and like all nations, demonstrate a model of a cline. Today the majority of the Latvians, Lithuanians, Belorussians and northwest Ukrainians plus some others of their stock scattered across the greatness of Russia, descend from Abraham through Keturah, dwelling among the peoples of Meshech and Tubal.

Finally, the Medes are prophesied to come against end-time Babylon in Jeremiah 51:28, undoubtedly as part of the prophesied eastern forces.

From this research, I conclude that the Belorussians and northwest Ukrainians descend from Abraham's sons Midian and Medan. □

BIBLE STUDY*by Dr. James & Natalie Ricks*


Trusting God In Perilous Times

THE SAINTS WILL BE SEALED FOR PROTECTION IN THE LAST DAYS

It is good to remember that the frightening plagues of the end times will not harm the saints. They are sealed by God for protection. Those that do not worship the beast and his image are safe. The rest of the world is in danger.

Revelation 7:2-3, "Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, saying, 'Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.'" (NKJV)

God will protect those so sealed. Even before those trying times, God promises not to let anyone be tried by any trial, internal or external, beyond our ability to cope with it through His help.

1 Corinthians 10:13, "No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it."

God is with us and He knows our every weakness and Jesus is helping us learn to trust Him. Ask for extra help when life gets difficult.

ASK GOD FOR THE POWER TO TRUST IN HIM

One reason Jesus came in the flesh was to be able to fully understand what it is like to be human and weak. Thereby He can help us even more so when we need it. Our savior is our back up. He helped an unconverted man with his lack of faith and trust. Note:

Mark 9:23-25, "Jesus said to him, 'If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes.' Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, 'Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!' When Jesus saw that the people came running together, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, 'Deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and enter him no more!'"

During the crucial moment, Jesus gave the man the EXTRA faith to make it work, and the very stubborn, evil demon was cast out. Even the Apostle Paul had trouble with his human nature at times. What did he do? He relied on and trusted that Jesus would get him through. Note Paul's battle with his own weaknesses and with human nature in general:

Romans 7:22-25, "For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of

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sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God — through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the Law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.”

Paul answers his own question for us. It is Christ who will rescue us. We need to do our part by trying to overcome and Jesus will get us through to the end. We must learn not to doubt God, no matter how tricky our human nature may be.

Romans 8 verse 1, “There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.”

V. 5, “For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.”

When we sin we need to repent and focus our minds on the things of God. Never get discouraged and give up the fight — Jesus is with us all the way. The adversary, and possibly some aspects of human nature, want us to feel guilty and give up. God will never leave us. We can trust him.

1 John 3:19-20, “And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him. For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things.”

The Apostle John warns us about too much guilt-type thinking. God is greater than our consciences. Never give up resisting sin. That is what the adversary wants. One must learn to accept Christ’s forgiveness. Jesus’ love for us is stronger than any negative feelings we might harbor. Learn to block negative thinking and the idea that we are unworthy. No one is worthy. Only then can our trust in God grow stronger.

GOD HAS PLACES OF SAFETY FOR HIS PEOPLE

During the Great Tribulation, which is a short period of time, the Church of God will be in var-

ious places of safety. True believers would have long since rejected the Mark of the Beast and other worldly symbols. Jesus told believers to flee to the mountains for safety (see Matthew 24:16). God will protect us from Satan’s clutches.

Revelation 12:13-14, “Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male Child. But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent.”

The church members are the spiritual Israelites. We are the number one target of evil. God will protect us. Many believers will be alive and doing fairly well at the return of Christ. How do we know that to be true? The New Testament tells us this fact:

1 Thessalonians 4:15-17, “For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.”

Philippians 3:20-2 “We also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body...”

Paul wrote to the Thessalonians because they feared that those who had passed away had lost their salvation. Paul explained that we should not mourn for them as the world does, because they also will be raised to glory like all of us who are alive and well and awaiting Jesus’ second coming. Paul clearly did not know the timing of when this would happen. We also do not know the timing but we do know that God will take care of us at the end of this age.

Do not fear the end times — we win in the end! Probably, many converted during the short tribulation period will face persecution but will come out of it as heroic martyrs. It is wrong to think

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that weak brethren will be persecuted. The strong, mostly converted inside the tribulation, will be heroes for Christ.

BE LIKE DAVID, WHO TRULY LOVED GOD

Psalms 9:10, “And those who know Your name will put their trust in You; For You, LORD, have not forsaken those who seek You.”

Psalms 13:5-6, “But I have trusted in Your mercy; My heart shall rejoice in Your salvation. I will sing to the LORD, Because He has dealt bountifully with me.”

Psalms 23:4, “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil;

For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.”

Psalms 27:1, “The LORD is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid?”

Psalm 31:24, “Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the LORD.”

David loved God with a passion. As time goes along we can also learn to love God increasingly. We can more and more appreciate Jesus and His righteousness. Love casts out fear. Remember, if God is for us who can be against us? No one!

Romans 8:38-39, “For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present, nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” □

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Crises Everywhere

by Mark Armstrong

The Chinese apparently feel as though they have the upper hand. You've seen the videos. They ran a warship dangerously close to a U. S. destroyer, and flew an airplane right in front of one of our military jets. In the ship affair, it was nearly a collision. What if a collision happened? Would it be WWII? Maybe the Chinese think they'd come out on top. We've certainly got the right leader, for them.

Here in the U. S. we have more scandals than we care to follow. It's off the chart. We have a squinting octogenarian pretending he's got everything under control, but he doesn't even know which way he's supposed to walk, or pretend to trot. He keeps performing these unbelievable pratfalls, the airplane stairs, the bicycle, and now the stage. He was sandbagged! By his own people. Turns out the sandbag was to keep his teleprompter from taking flight. Video crews use them all the time.

It's as if the U. S. government has declared war on its citizens. They don't care that we believe little if anything they tell us. It doesn't even matter anymore. They'll call us conspiracy theorists over drinks. The agencies have all gone woke. Yes, it's a miserable term, but they like it. It

means everything we detest.

Meanwhile, the border is fine. The Department of Homeland Security says so. They've got it all under control. But we see a much different story on our screens. They're releasing the illegals with a court date? "You got a problem with that, you racist?" You mean these vast streams of people are all here now? Awaiting a court date, years out? Call us crazy, just don't say we're...

They no longer need a convincing explanation. They just need to say a line or two for our consumption and then hurry away, leaving us irritable. It doesn't matter that it's not true. It doesn't even matter that they know we'll reject their line. It only matters that they have something to say, and screw us if we don't like it or believe it. They're off to a waiting plane or car, and we're left with some hapless reporter who doesn't dare dispute what's just been said.

As for International relations? We're driving enemies into each others arms. Saudi Arabia, Iran, Russia. The U. S. is no longer a beacon, but a toothless adversary. Our fearless leader keeps taking ridiculous pratfalls in public. We'd hate to know what we don't see. It must be terrible.

Zelensky has been making

the rounds. He needs weapons and money, real bad. We can't trust the mainstream reporting on the endless war. Apparently it needs to go on for nearly ever. It's a boon to the munitions makers, and the defense industry, just don't let it end. Donald Trump says he'd have the war stopped inside of 24 hours. That supposes it's still going on two years from now, and that he'd be in a position to do it. We probably can't trust the reporting, but the videos show massive destruction of residential buildings. It can't be pretty for those who decided they could ride it out. Who's going to rebuild all those buildings? Nobody.

You have to brace yourself before even turning on the news. It's unbearable. Yet they carry on as if we're not wise to the blatant manipulation. When will they finally admit they've steered us wrong on many important issues, for years. We don't tune in to find out what's going on, we tune in to see what they're saying about what's going on. It's not like we expect them to tell us the truth anymore. We've had every imaginable line crammed down our throats. They've used fear, tried to create a panic over COVID to the point some people may never give up their masks.

Continued next page

Now we're supposed to agree with crazy people so we don't hurt their feelings? What country is this? Women's sports has been turned into a mockery, with men who've decided to "become" women and have been allowed to compete in sporting activities. But, they've been on hormone blockers since they were twelve, and it appears... Well, we know the difference. No, we're not going to follow what has become the conventional logic. They're not what they're pretending to be, no matter who says what. But for whatever reason, these big organizations have decided what everybody must think. To the point that they're losing business. But they have a sterling reputation in Europe! Executives must be comforted in the knowledge that they'll have the highest of ESG scores when they go bust.

Consider the case of Sri Lanka. They were among the

most highly rated by the UN and European organizations. But that didn't make much difference. It's great that they went green, but that made them go broke. A full scale implosion, with the Prime Minister having to hide out lest the hungry mob get to him. If you look, there are all kinds of articles explaining what went wrong. They ran out of fuel and food while going green. That's what happened.

Beautiful people that we know and like are saying nonsense, like we'll go along because we liked them in some movie character. That doesn't mean that the sexes are interchangeable, or that global warming is real, or that the public should still be lining up for more COVID vaccines. All this badgering is starting to wear thin.

Brace yourself. They've arrested Trump. What else could they possibly do? Don't answer that. Earlier attempts have not

gone well. Everyone who's arrogantly tried to bring him down has slipped into obscurity or worse. But the news organizations are playing defense. Every dirty player has been treated as royalty, until they go incognito and can't show their face anymore. In the meantime, the networks and their weird assortment of "experts" are saying things that anybody keeping up knows is, uh, wrong. They want to give him 100 years.

The pretender has been in illegal possession of classified documents from Vice Presidential years, some stacked in the garage where they've been photographed. Terrible testimony is coming from all directions, in addition to the laptop containing arrangements we were never meant to understand. There's more brash criminality than we can comprehend, but TRUMP! They've just got to get him.

If you haven't heard a Trump speech lately, it'll do you good. Now he claims to know who is who, something he clearly didn't in his first term. The bigwigs in power now can't let him come back, so they've charged him with crimes. Not that they didn't before, but the guys who prosecuted those supposed misdeeds have slipped into obscurity. Now they've got new guys, no doubt with great reputations and accomplishments, to fall on their swords. After, that is, they've got the images they so desperately want, circulated at just the right time. Now they can't afford to miss. The country might be saved, and that's not on the agenda. □



Conditions in Sri Lanka deteriorated until angry mobs overran the government in 2022. The economic crisis is still ongoing.



WORLD NEWS BRIEF

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

FAR EAST

The Chinese crusade for influence continues around the world. The list of countries conducting trade with China or Russia in the Chinese yuan has grown. Pakistan now uses it to purchase Russian crude oil. Brazil and Argentina have signed agreements to use it for trade. Honduras has shifted recognition to Beijing, coming into line with the “one China” policy and leaving Taiwan only 12 formal acknowledgments of sovereignty.

Saudi Arabia and Iran formalizing relations through Chinese diplomacy marks a major shift for the region. The United States has been courting India, a long time rival of China and purchaser of Russian military equipment. The use of Indian port facilities for the U.S. Navy is significant, as is the purchase and even domestic manufacture of military technology.

Meanwhile, China is not immune to the economic woes of the west. Their GDP growth is failing to meet modest expectations, potentially falling below 5% for the year. While we have been raising interest rates to fight inflation, they have been lowering them to stimulate their economy. This could create a disparity in the value of our respective currencies with problematic aspects for both sides.

BEST PICTURE

Nominations for this Oscar must now meet new Representation and Inclusion standards. Diversity quotas have to be met in 2 out of 4 categories for a film to be eligible for consideration, according to internal R.A.I.S.E. guidelines. These

categories include: 1) The actors or movie narrative. 2) The creative department and all aspects of production. 3) Internships and training programs sponsored by the studio for specific communities. 4) Executive roles in marketing or distribution. The quotas vary by category. According to their website the standards are, “designed to encourage equitable representation on and off screen to better reflect the diverse global population.”

FEDNOW MEANS NOW!

FedNow is the name of a new instantaneous money transfer system developed by the Federal Reserve. It is launching as an alternative to the private clearinghouse method that causes transfers and checks to take days to process. Participant’s funds will be available immediately after completing a transaction, which is particularly significant for banks and other large institutions. It will likely have a significant impact on the government’s own payments such as federal employee salaries, social security and tax refunds. Role out of the system is in its early stages. Participation is optional, though the program is seen as potentially replacing the current, slower Federal system.

BIG TECH PUSH-BACK

Big businesses make big targets, and the liabilities of processing enormous amounts of personal data are only just being explored. The Federal Trade Commission extracted a massive settlement from Amazon and its subsidiary Ring. Ring (video doorbells, surveillance and smart-home technology) did not properly protect or

limit access to customer's recordings. Cameras record continuously, though sometimes placed in a home's private areas. Inappropriate access did occur, though Amazon holds the issues were resolved and predate their takeover of Ring. Their Alexa device also allegedly failed to delete children's information when requested. By settling, no wrongdoing is formally acknowledged. This prevents subsequent civil liabilities.

Facebook is also taking a beating. Canada is demanding compensation for news outlets featured on the platform, similar to what Australia put in place but farther reaching. Facebook will likely eliminate their news page in the region. Malaysia has also vowed legal action. Their complaint, like many other nations where speech is not exactly free, is that content they don't like is not removed quickly enough. The EU also hit Facebook's parent company, META, with a fine of \$1.3 billion for transferring user data to the United States.

To what extent companies can exploit user data is a volatile topic. Privacy is an issue as well as ownership when information is used to train A.I. algorithms. The Writers Guild in particular has contended that A.I. scripts are essentially plagiarism; that they cannot be anything more than an amalgamation of the works put in to it. Google's Ad business is also being investigated under anti-trust laws.

MAKING A SPLASH

That's what North Korea's latest military spy satellite did... Right into the sea. Faltering after the first stage, it set off alarms in both South Korea and Japan before splashing down. Out of North Korea's six attempted satellite launches, only two have been successful. This was the first attempt in years, though it is generally considered part of North Korea's missile program. There has been no shortage of missile launches. Dozens have already occurred this year.

BLOCKING THE BLOCKING OF BLOCKERS

20 states have passed laws prohibiting minors from receiving what is called "gender affirming care." This includes the use of so-called "puberty blockers," controversial drugs that stop

natural development. Judges have blocked these laws from coming completely into effect in Indiana, Alabama, Oklahoma, Arkansas and Florida. The resulting legal battles will likely take years. Many other states are considering similar legislation. The fight also extends to the classroom. Rules about what is appropriate to teach children and at what age have become very contentious.

ALMOST REMEMBERING THE SABBATH

A case regarding observance of the Sabbath day is before the Supreme Court of the United States. Only it is not over the actual Sabbath Day but Sunday. It involves a postal worker from Pennsylvania who is trying to tie the 4th commandment to the 1st day of the week. Possibly, he doesn't realize that he is acknowledging Catholic authority over that of the Creator who sanctified, or set apart and made Holy, the 7th day at creation, but we digress... The case is still important. The court has previously ruled that religious observance accommodations do not have to be made if they create an "undue burden" on the company. This definition is broad enough that many have lost or not gotten jobs on account of the Sabbath, as some readers (and writers) of this magazine can attest. Whether the current court is willing to issue clear guidelines on what actually constitutes a "burden" remains to be seen. An operation as vast as the postal service may find it difficult to prove giving someone a consistent day off is really that much trouble.

ANTI-LGBTQ LAWS

African nations are passing laws that prohibit homosexuality. Uganda has legislation in place that criminalizes even the promotion of homosexuality. "Aggravated homosexuality," with a minor, disabled person, or when a terminal disease like HIV is transmitted, now carries the death penalty. Neighboring nations like Kenya, Tanzania and South Sudan are attempting to get similar laws through their legislatures. This is in spite of pressure from the United States and many European nations. There have been threats to cut aid to the region and even sanction governments if they refuse to repeal the laws. □



A CRASH COURSE IN CRYPTOCURRENCY

by Stuart Rowland

Cryptocurrency. You hear about it on the news all the time. Some people love it — others seem to hate it. But, in reality, most people know very little of just what exactly cryptocurrencies are. And, if we are honest, any discussion of “crypto” runs the risk of getting very, very complicated if not approached with a certain level of discipline.

But, fear is for yellowbellies! Onward we go!

To understand cryptocurrencies, we need to discuss three very important areas: Economic Theory of Value, Cryptology and Proof of Work, and finally Transparency and Consensus. We do not aim to build a vast network of understanding in these areas in this presentation. Instead, we will open the doors to these basic concepts. If you wish to dig deeper, you are most welcome and invited to do so.

Our first stop requires us to look at what exactly is a currency (money).

Understand, if we were to put one-hundred economists in a room and ask them to define value, we would probably get one-hundred and ten answers! Economics often borders more closely to philosophy than sci-

ence. But, for our purposes, we are going to put one basic theory out, and will build our discussion on it.

The value of any currency can be expressed by the labor required to acquire it.

Gold is considered valuable because it is rare. To find it, you have to pan river sand or dig mines. You have to really work at getting it. It requires labor. The labor is the primary source of its value.

Likewise, a farmer plants corn. It grows; it makes ears of new corn. The farmer harvests the corn. Again, the labor is a primary source of value for the corn.

No matter what goods or services are being produced, labor is always a determining factor in the value of the good or service.

With this in mind, currencies become placeholders, or better yet, storage methods, for holding the value of labor apart from the actual work being done.

If I work for an hour cleaning a floor, but the person that hired me to work for them has nothing of value that I can barter for in exchange for my labor, my labor might otherwise be lost. But, if a society agrees that labor

can be stored for future exchange by holding on to a currency, my labor is not lost. I will use it later, maybe to buy food or make use of a utility.

Beyond that, it is left to the worker and the consumer to define the value of labor and the value of the goods and services being offered. And, that is WAY beyond the scope of this article.

Instead, we want to take one thought with us from this part of our discussion: To have value, a currency must be connected to labor in some way.

Part two of our road map leads us into exploring the field of cryptography. Again, there are lots of definitions for this, but we are going to craft them down into one easy-to-apply guide:

Cryptography is the practice of encoding and decoding data so that authorized people can access the data while those not authorized are blocked from having that same access.

Back in the long, long time ago, folks would encrypt their financial information using tools like the ink pen and the checkbook. These documents would be secured by things like strongboxes or safes, with keys or combination locks. While these meth-

Continued next page



Inside a large Bitcoin/cyrpto mining operation. Hundreds of computers work nonstop, contributing to the mining of new Bitcoins and verifying the entire blockchain every ten minutes.

ods were extremely safe, access times were not measured in milliseconds, but often in hours, days — sometimes even longer!

Thanks to the Internet, things move a great deal faster. And, security methods have been developed to move equally fast.

There are dozens of known, and likely hundreds of hidden methods for encrypting financial data. Those methods are, again, beyond the scope of this discussion. Just understand that cryptocurrencies will always possess cryptography systems.

So, we have a currency, and it is (as best we can make it) secure to store our labors. But, wait a second — how do we put labor into a cryptocurrency?

Same song, tenth verse: lots of ways. But, for this study, we are going to look specifically at how Bitcoin did it.

First, do you remember from school what “prime num-

bers” are? Prime numbers are any whole number that can only be evenly divided by one and itself (no remainders). Three is prime, because it can be divided by three one time, and by one three times. Anything else would leave a remainder from the division.

So what? Anyone can find a prime number, right?

True. If I asked you to figure out if eighty-six was prime, you could do that in less than a minute. No biggie.

But, if I asked you to figure out if this number was prime:

7857494056866568493825
62324465877363455546786987
46451

That will take a lot of time. That will take a lot of...LABOR!

Bitcoins are based on the concept of “Proof of Work,” such as finding very large prime numbers. Checking those huge numbers takes human time. It takes computer time. It takes electricity.

All these things are labor. Labor now is attached to the Bitcoin currency. And, with that, now it is left to economic forces to determine the value of that labor, and therefore the value of the Bitcoin.

But, that wacky big number I typed in above is of an unknown status. Is it prime and therefore worth a LOT of money as a Bitcoin? If I just say it is, what is there to keep me honest, to correct for potential mistakes and such?

Here is where we enter that final section, Consensus and Transparency.

When a number is claimed to be a prime, that claim is published to the Internet. At that point, other computers on the net will start checking to see if the claim is valid. As more computers send back their, “Yes, I checked it for this number as a divisor, and it checked out good!” a consensus is formed. When a certain level of consensus is achieved, the positive result is published. A Bitcoin is born! The finder gets the new Bitcoin.

In some other types of cryptocurrencies, just participating in the check earns you a small piece of the new coin. Lots of ways, lots of currencies.

The point to take with us here is that nothing happens without a consensus. Every action, from discovery to use to each transaction, is published so everybody can see the actions, and those actions are agreed upon. And, the way those things are announced, tracked and observed is by using what is called a Blockchain.

Think of the blockchain as an electronic version of the old checkbook. Every deposit, every check, every fee gets written down in the ledger of the checkbook. This way, you can balance your account at anytime, and know exactly what is where with your money.

Like the ledger, if someone tries to edit the data, everything that follows is visually messed up. Totals no longer show correctly, dates don't line up. The blockchain is the key to transparency in the crypto usage. Everybody sees it, everybody knows what is happening. But, the blockchain doesn't show specifics. If you go buy a banana, it doesn't say, "Joe Bob bought a banana at the Quickie Mart." It would say something closer to "Account 65453434445 sent .001 Bitcoin to Account 2424554886746 at THIS TIME on THIS DATE." Using the blockchain, if the Quickie Mart says Joe Bob never paid for that banana, the exchange can be searched for and shown as proof.

Now, currently, blockchains are very open. The fact that any person can read them is part of their strength. No government, no bank has any say over that system. It exists openly, unrestrained and beyond regulations or laws.

Being beyond any governmental regulation means dealing with cryptocurrencies is very "Old West" in that, "You takes your chances when you plays the game." If you buy a Bitcoin for \$20,000 and the value falls to \$5,000, there is nobody to go crying to. Your choices, your re-

sponsibilities. Likewise, though, if you buy a coin at \$5,000 and it blows up to \$50,000, that is all yours! Investment capitalism at it's finest!

Here, however, is where I would be remiss to not give a fair warning about the potential dark side of crypto.

There is a quote that pops up on the Internet from time to time that basically says, "It matters not how the people vote, it only matters what votes are counted."

There are an amazing number of central banks around the world that are moving to remove cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin, replacing them with their own, bank-owned and bank-controlled versions.

While that quote may not be from any historical character, a similar one can be said about cryptocurrencies:

"They who own the blockchain own the currency."

There are an amazing number of central banks around the world that are moving to remove cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin, replacing them with their own, bank-owned and bank-controlled versions. By doing this, they would have complete control over the blockchain of their own currency. This means that they could edit the information without the outside world even being aware of such changes.

Worse yet, remember our banana purchase example earlier? Imagine how a bank controlled, government-monitored transaction might be recorded:

Account 65453434445,

Bob, Joe, 1234 Mina Street, Anystate, US sent .001 Bitcoin to Account 2424554886746, Quickie Mart #322, 545 Express Street, Anystate, US at THIS TIME on THIS DATE. Bob, Joe is currently on the DHS "Fruit Watchlist" for hate speech against fruit-producing corporations.

Potentially, everything you buy or sell could be monitored to the most ridiculous levels.

Buying too much milk? That would be forcing more dairy

cows to pollute the air. So, higher charge for your purchases.

You live on Mina Street? That street isn't watching enough TV that is government approved. Fee taken from your account without you even knowing it happened.

And, piggy banks and other ways to hide some cash for a rainy day? Nope — Bank cryptocurrencies have the ability to attach expiry dates. If you don't spend it, it goes poof after a certain date.

To summarize, cryptocurrencies have the potential to revolutionize finance on a global scale, leading to a level of fairness and stability never before seen. But, they have the equal potential, in the wrong hands, to create a financial prison the likes of which are too horrible to consider. Be watchful. Be wise. Peace be unto you...

THE EMERGING FASCIST CABAL

by Dr. James Ricks

Listening to Klaus Schwab of the World Economic Forum, it became clear that his programs represent the new modernized Fascism of our day. Who is Klaus Schwab who brags of restructuring the world? Wikipedia says, “German engineer, economist and founder of the World Economic Forum (WEF). He has acted as the W.E.F.’s chairman since founding the organization in 1971...”

“His parents had moved from Switzerland to Germany during the Third Reich in order for his father to assume the role of director at Escher Wyss AG, an industrial company and contractor for then

Nazi Germany.” They could have remained in Switzerland and neutrality during the war but instead chose to help the Mussolini/Hitler cabal.

Continuing on, Wikipedia reads, “Schwab has authored or co-authored several books. Some consider him to be ‘an evangelist’ for ‘stakeholder capitalism.’ In January 2017 Steven Poole in *The Guardian* criticised Schwab’s *Fourth Industrial Revolution* book, pointing out that ‘the internet of things’ would probably be hackable. He also criticised Schwab for showing that future technologies may be used for good or evil, but

not taking a position on the issues, instead offering only vague policy recommendations.”

Perhaps this is because he and his cohorts wish to use the internet of things to manipulate and eventually control the masses.

INFLUENCE ON THE FUTURE

POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

Also from Wikipedia’s article, “According to the Transnational Institute (TNI), the Forum is planning to replace a recognised democratic model with a model where a self-selected group of ‘stakeholders’ make decisions on behalf of the people. The think tank summarises that we are increasingly entering a world where gatherings such as Davos are ‘a silent global coup d’état’ to capture governance.

“In a 2017 interview, Schwab said that what we are very proud of is the young generation like Prime Minister [Justin] Trudeau... We penetrate the cabinet. So yesterday I was at a reception for Prime Minister Trudeau and I know that half of his cabinet, or even more than half of his cabinet, are actually Young Global Leaders.”

The other major leader of the Forum is George Soros. Soros also has a potentially troubling Fascist



Klaus Schwab, WEF founder and chairman, delivers a speech at the 2023 World Government Summit in Dubai.

background. He is Hungarian. The Nazis came late to Hungary because, until early 1944, Germany and Hungary were allies. But when they did arrive, their orders were to put the “Final Solution” into effect with deliberate speed. Soros’s father, a Jewish lawyer in Budapest, secured fake Christian identities for himself, his wife, and his two sons following the German invasion. Soros’ current supporters say his father beguiled and deceived the Gestapo. But critics say the teenage Soros and his dad sold out their own people to the Fascist death camps.

A SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVE ON MODERN FORCES OF DECADENCE

The evil unleashed upon the world in WWII is almost beyond comprehension. The world saw evil multiply far beyond anything in the past, like concentration camps, genocides, weaponized poison gas, the bombing of civilian populations. The war found soldiers massacred by the millions. The horrible programs of the evil Communist empire killed 100 million of their own citizens. The box cars taking victims of the Fascists and Communists to their deaths were done by men who are gone — but the demons who encouraged them are still with us. Are they reformed? No! They are planning to bring this evil back to the world the first chance that comes along. The COVID-19 crises is an opportunity they have been exploiting.

Ephesians 6:11-12, “Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.”

We are really in a struggle against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. We need to be informed and strong. Deception is a staple of evil empires. Therefore these new Fascists would not use that label. Their street thugs in the 1930’s — called black shirts and brown shirts — today give themselves a new name. They are the antifascist or “Antifa.” But they also wear black and and do the same things as in the past; try and terrorize and brutalize the political opposition. They are modern day “storm troopers” for the new Fascism. Further, the new system is brainwashing our youth like the original Fascist education system.

CHRISTIANS CATAPULTED U. S. INTO ECONOMIC AND SCIENTIFIC LEADERSHIP

Beliefs are vital to economic and scientific success. The west was clearly ahead of other parts of the world. Why? Christianity led the west to freedom, capitalism and overall success. Max Weber, a German social scientist, argues that capitalism grew out of the Puritan strain of Calvinism. They believed that one could show that they were truly predestined for salvation by success in business. However they also did not believe in flashy signs of success like mansions etc. Therefore they had to reinvest their gains through banks. This capital would grow other enterprises. They and other denominations pushed the protestant work ethic as well.

2 Thessalonians 3:10, “For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.” (NKJV)



Hitler at a groundbreaking for a new section of highway. The Nazi Party greatly increased social programs, resorting even to slave labor for the benefit of the state.

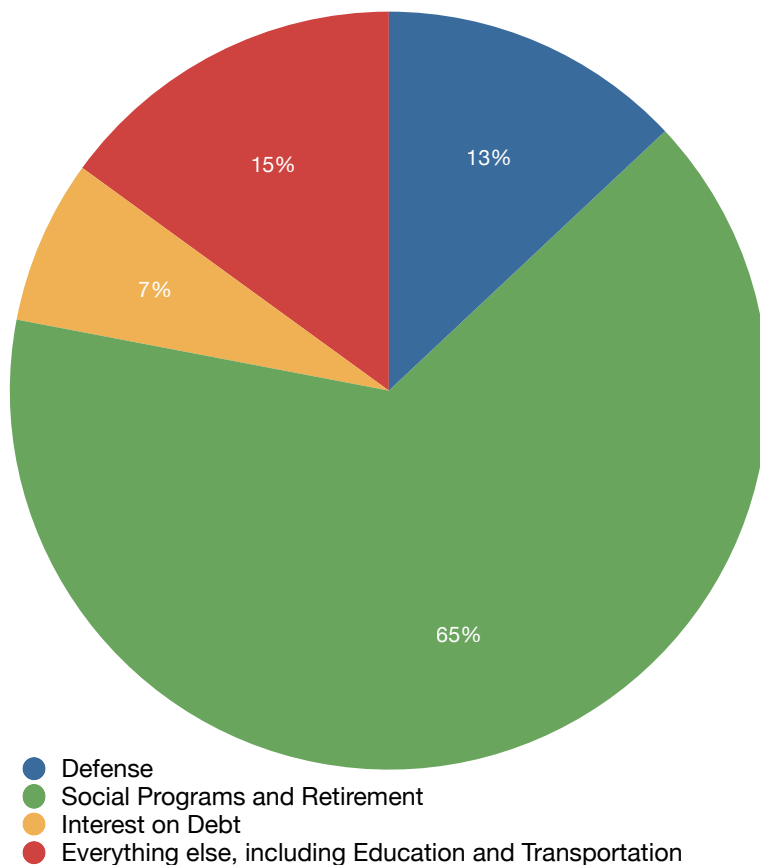
The Puritans landed in the Mayflower to begin the New England colonies. The most prominent group in early American colonies were the Puritans and this may account for much of the economic success of the colonies. Western Civilizations also were the first to facilitate growth through global banking and insurance. Some recent surveys indicate that younger Americans now believe more in socialism than capitalism. Why is this true? The younger generation is confused by misguided education. Public schools do not teach the significance of the collapse of the Berlin Wall or the collapse of the evil Socialist Communist Empire, which was the greatest economic disaster

and failure of the 20th century.

Giving too much power to anyone trying to create a socialist paradise will fail. People without God are too sinful and carnal. Absolute power corrupts absolutely! Socialism under any form or leadership CANNOT WORK, because the system is a demotivator as far as productivity is concerned. You cannot redistribute what has not been produced. The low producers are rewarded regardless of their lack of production so they then do even less. The high producers get the same meager income as the others so they are now demotivated and also produce less.

“INCOME REDISTRIBUTION”
IS STEALING

U.S. Federal Spending 2022



Source: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities and the Congressional Budget Office

Government enforced income redistribution is in violation of one of God’s irrevocable laws. It will make matters worse. However, charity used wisely is good. Money should be used wisely with our priorities on God and His righteousness. Capitalism rewards people for efficient production and good customer service. Total Socialism is designed around big government management and ownership of all resources. This cannot be achieved without coercion and force. The people will have no free choices regarding products.

Deuteronomy 30:19 reads, “I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life...” (NKJV)

Powerfully, God supports free choice. Fascism uses mega corporations to limit the choices and control of the people. In contrast, capitalism relies on persuasion and marketing. Consumer demand decides which products and at what price. The public can say no to one product and choose another. In a free market economy the people decide, not a few elites at the top. Carl Marx believed that the enlightened ones should run all of society. America is designed on freedom for the individual. Within His laws, God also believes in free choice in this age. Pray for God’s blessings and protection, and the throttling of the new fascism which is trying to crush individual freedoms and has widespread power throughout the globe.

Historian Lord Acton stated that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely.

Intellectuals argue that socialism and fascism failed because evil corrupt dictators have run the systems. If they were in charge it would be a Utopian paradise. But the system of forced decision making and spending other people's money by force corrupts leadership, period. Power is corrupting! All the totally socialist governments have gone in that direction, including the last government to go in that direction, Venezuela. Venezuela used to be the most prosperous nation in Central America. Now it is a brutal dictatorship with people fleeing starvation!

HOW DO FREE MARKETS FORCE EFFICIENCY?

1. A firm is either efficient or it is bankrupt. Survival of the fittest is driven by market forces. A business is either competitive, or it will bleed customers who will find other firms to supply their needs.

2. Competition puts downward pressure on prices. One of the strongest laws of human economic behavior is the law of supply and demand. Things that are plentiful will have lower prices, and rare products, or those in short supply, will have higher prices.

Competition puts an inexorable downward pressure on prices. When a firm can eliminate some of the marketplace competition with the iron hand of government through Fascism, customers will suffer.

3. The profit motive drives firms to please customers. Profits force producers to cater to the wants and desires of their many customers. Market forces are good for society.

4. Consumer demand directs productivity to areas of greatest need. Decisions made by millions of consumers direct the economy toward pleasing the customers. Bureaucrats cannot predict consumer demand accurately and waste resources.

5. Social programs must help people without disincentivizing work ethic. Saving and being responsible with resources is the best policy.

6. Some government regulation is necessary. However, over regulation diminishes economic freedom and prosperity.

7. You cannot redistribute what is not produced. Class warfare has led to disaster in the past. Socialism's redistribution violates at least two of God's infallible commandments; the

commandment against stealing and the commandment against coveting. Class warfare encourages both coveting and stealing. Class warfare also impoverishes the poor and working class in the following ways:

1. When you raise taxes on capital you get less job-creating capital and a decline in new enterprises.

2. When you raise taxes on income you get less consumer spending and less jobs.

Capitalism has lifted hundreds of millions out of poverty to middle class and higher incomes in China and India, and other poor nations have benefitted once they introduced even limited capitalist policies.

CAUTIOUS IMPROVEMENTS ARE NEEDED IN SOCIAL PROGRAMS

Parts of our safety net for citizens could use improvement. Helpful principles should guide policy makers for such programs. Politicians not radicalized should gradually improve the system. Huge mistakes are thereby avoided. Social programs should be designed to help, not addict. Manage social programs like Medicaid so that waste is not encouraged. Free services are often abused. □

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Ashamed to Pray

by Michael Armstrong

It can be difficult to approach God when something is wrong. It is easy to be intimidated if a struggle is ongoing or a sin has recently occurred. Days go by, maybe even weeks, months or years. In many ways it is like a personal relationship that has fallen apart. The time that has passed adds to the problem, making communication awkward. Is the relationship something you are willing to let go?

With God, the answer has to be, “No.” You cannot afford to let that one slip. Unfortunately, our personal relationships sometimes pass the point of no return. It can be difficult to find common ground or reestablish trust. Even if both parties are willing, things may never return to the way they were before.

Our relationship with God is not like that. No matter how long it has been, or how far you have wandered astray, there is a way back. If you have even the tiniest inkling that things are not right, that you have lost something that you need back, that door is open. Just acknowledging that you have been driven apart is the first step towards reconciliation. If only...

If only what? That is the deeply personal aspect of our problem. Possibly only you and God know what has driven you apart. And if you don't know how it happened, rest assured, He does! “Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither His ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear” (Isaiah 59:1-2).

This is not saying that only a perfect person can cry out to God for help. Far from it. If that were so we would all be doomed. Your sincerity matters, though. “A voice was heard upon the high places,

weeping and supplications of the children of Israel: for they have perverted their way, and they have forgotten the Lord their God. Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. Behold, we come unto Thee; for Thou art the Lord our God” (Jeremiah 3:21-22).

Certainly we can ask Him for help overcoming our problems. However, it would be foolish to think that we could continue deliberately sinning and draw close to God at the same time. The two are utterly incompatible. Christ said, “No servant can serve two masters...” in Luke 16:13. Is it pride that keeps you from reestablishing a relationship with God? Are you unwilling to admit fault? Do you desire to continue deluding yourself that certain actions were necessary; that you really only did what you had to?

“Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the Lord pondereth (considers) the hearts” (Proverbs 21:2). This proverb cuts to the bone. Good luck finding someone who doesn't have an explanation for why they did what they did. In the end, our excuses don't matter. The standards of God are not suspended for our convenience. Sure, there may be reasons, and good ones, too. But repentance is an admission of guilt. It is saying, in spite of anything else, that I did wrong; that I need to do better and I cannot do it alone. It is the first step in having a relationship with God.

Whether you are first realizing you need Him or desiring reconciliation after a great deal of time, start there. The only way that can happen is through prayer. Do not walk away from your means of communicating with God. However difficult or awkward it may be at times, keep that line open.

We tend to think our own sins are the worst; that a person like me could never be forgiven. Sorry, but not one of us is nearly so special. “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (1 Corinthians 10:13).

If you’re hiding behind the idea that, “God wouldn’t want somebody like me,” forget it. That’s an excuse, a way for you to justify avoiding Him. Paul was actively attacking the saints when he was called, helping to persecute and put them to death (Acts 8 and 9). King David was found guilty of murder, adultery, and other sins and yet was called a man after God’s own heart (1 Samuel 13:14). When he confronted his guilt he repented bitterly and sincerely (Psalm 51). Who are you to say God has no use for you?

Even Jesus Christ said, “I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me” (John 5:30). If we find ourselves separated from God, it is not His will that brought us there. Paul said, in 2 Timothy 2:22, “Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart...” Continuing in verse 26, “And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.”

It’s easy to forget that part. As we drift away from God we also drift out from under His protection. Our own human nature, and that of others, can be hard enough to contend with but there is also a spiritual aspect to the problems we face. Peter wrote about being humble and prayerful, about staying close to God for peace, protection and ultimate victory.

“Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon Him; for he careth for you. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you” (1 Peter 5:6-10).

There is no other way to true happiness and contentment in this life or to salvation in the next. We cannot achieve these things by ourselves. Continuing in a mistake is worse than making it in the first place. How can we have a relationship with God if we won’t communicate with Him?

Luke recorded that after observing Jesus praying, His disciples asked Him to teach them how to pray. A logical request. They had seen the healings and miracles that had taken place after some of Jesus’ prayers so they probably figured He knew how to do it right. You can read what is called “the Lord’s prayer” in Matthew 6 or Luke 11. Keep in mind they asked Him *how* to pray. It is a model

*Have mercy upon me, O God,
According to Your lovingkindness;
According to the multitude of Your
tender mercies,
Blot out my transgressions.*

*Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
And cleanse me from my sin.*

*For I acknowledge my
transgressions,
And my sin is always before me.*

*Against You, You only, have I sinned,
And done this evil in Your sight—
That You may be found just when
You speak,
And blameless when You judge.*

Psalms 51:1-4

of what to say, not a script to be repeated endlessly.

He began by addressing God, “Our Father in heaven,” the creator of mankind, and in saying “hallowed be Thy name” expressed the wish that God would be revered by all. To ask, “Thy kingdom come,” is to desire the pure system from above that will abolish the corrupt institutions with which man has plagued the world. “Thy will be done,” looks forward not only to the irresistible nature of God’s authority but the willingness of those who are called to carry it out.

“Our daily bread,” shows that God cares about our physical needs and that we can ask Him to provide for them. “Forgive us our sins/debts as we forgive others...” If we sin against a friend, we need their forgiveness to reestablish that relationship just as we need God’s forgiveness for the spiritual aspect. Can we expect that mercy from God or those around us if we are perpetually severe and hard hearted?

“Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,” is a plea to help us avoid situations that would lead us to sin. Also for protection from those who would subvert us and the penalties of our own shortcomings. Evil can come from many places in addition to being a result of ungodly actions.

It is fitting to add that when we petition God, our Father in heaven, we should do so in the name of our savior, His Son. “And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may

be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in My name, I will do it. If ye love Me, keep My commandments” (John 14:13-15).

He also told us to have faith that what we ask can occur. “Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them” (Mark 11:24). A mature understanding would prevent us from making excessive or unnecessary requests. Such things do not necessarily benefit us and are inconsistent with the example of “our daily bread,” or what we actually need to get by.

Prayer is absolutely necessary to establish and maintain a relationship with God. It is a comfort and a support through all the trials we face. Do not let yourself or anything else rob you of that. Be humble, beg God for a fresh start and He will give you one.

Christ told the parable of the unjust judge in Luke 18 to encourage us to be persistent and prayerful. The judge finally took up the cause of a widow who bothered him day after day after day. He compared that to God and those He has called. Will He not act on our behalf when we cry out to Him over and over again? Do we not have problems that need solving, wounds that need healing, sins that need to be forgiven? Are there not enough problems in the world to keep us on our knees until Kingdom come? Do not suffer in silence. A good place to start is “Our Father in heaven...” □



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BIBLE CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

LESSON SIXTEEN: LAW OF GOD, PART ONE

The law of God as revealed in the Bible is a good, right and perfect system of eternal directives and principles which reflects God's character and serves as a means of expressing His love toward man. God's law teaches man how to properly worship God, how to love his fellowman, how to live life abundantly, and, at the same time, how to prepare for an eternal spiritual life in the family of God. The law of God is represented in both the Old and the New Testaments and is expressed by both physical actions and spiritual motivations.

DOCTRINAL OVERVIEW

The Church of God looks to the whole Bible, both Old and New Testaments, as its fundamental source of doctrine and teachings. We accept Christ's statement that "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4). Jesus plainly accepted the authenticity and inspiration of the entire Old Testament with its three major divisions — the Law, the Prophets and the Writings (Luke 24:44) — as being relevant for the New Testament ministry of the Church of God. In support of this, the apostle Paul wrote: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine" (2 Tim. 3:16). Therefore, the character, personality and specific teachings of Jesus Christ — both as the Rock that went with Israel in the Old Testament (I Cor. 10:4; Deut. 32:15, 18) and as the son of man and the son of God in the New Testament — are the foundations of our biblical understanding of man's relationship to the law of God.

God's law in its fullest, most complete sense is spiritual and could not be discovered or discerned by man without direct revelation from God. The fullness of God's law involves every facet of personal and collective human existence. Though its

expression may change as the circumstances change, the eternal spiritual law of God is unchanging and is always the ultimate object of any biblical law, code or instruction expressed in human language. God's laws are all designed to lead to a consummate knowledge and understanding of God and of the ultimate purpose of life, and to supreme godly love and character.

Divine law is the totality of the means whereby God instructs man how to live most abundantly in this present physical life, and how to most effectively prepare for the future spiritual life in the Kingdom of God.

The New Testament writers clearly express a positive attitude towards God's law as magnified and given spiritual impact and import by Jesus Christ. Jesus stated that "all the law and the prophets" — the entire Old Testament — were based on the overall principles of love toward God and love toward one's fellow man (Matt 22:36-40). Furthermore, Christ made it very clear that He did not come to destroy the law or the prophets (Matt 5:17). John tells us that sin is the transgression of the law (I John 3:4); and Paul says that the law is holy and just and good (Rom. 7:12).

The overall approach to God's law in the New

Continued next page

Testament is summed up in the statement, “He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him” (I John 2:4). However, in fulfilling Isaiah’s prophecy of magnifying the law and making it honorable (Isa. 42:21), Christ instituted certain changes. Christ Himself specifically abrogated certain statements in the law, in relation to swearing and to marriage, for example, to bring the laws given at Sinai more into conformity with the original intent of the commandments upon which they were based. Moreover, Acts 15 makes clear that the law in regard to circumcision, which had antedated the covenant at Sinai, was not binding upon Gentile Christians. Therefore, based upon this example of God’s Church using the power entrusted to it by Christ to make binding decisions (Matt 16:19), the Church of God recognizes the same administrative responsibilities — based upon New Testament principles and examples — to determine the application of Old Testament laws today.

DOCTRINAL EXPOSITION

The term “law” is intrinsic to any systematic study of theology. Yet, the English word “law” carries a narrow, legal connotation which may cause a misunderstanding of the biblical terms. A number of words in both the Old and the New Testaments are commonly translated “law” in the major English versions. These words, however, often admit of broader meaning than the normal English usage and do not necessarily have the legalistic overtones of their English counterparts (or are otherwise unequivalent).

A thorough study of the Hebrew and Greek terminology in the Bible would be out of place here because of length and technicality, though some of the major terms are briefly discussed later on in this paper. But it might be helpful to illustrate why “law” may not always be a suitable equivalent of the original. An important term in the Old Testament and later Judaism is the well-known Hebrew word *torah*. It may refer to law as a legal system; it may refer to specific regulations and statutes. Yet *torah* is often used in the broad sense of anything considered traditional, customary, and authoritative. Perhaps the best English equivalent is “teachings” though even that may not be broad enough in meaning.

One needs to be careful that he does not assume laws are necessarily categorized by the Hebrew (or English) terms used. There is no consistent terminology for the various types of laws. For example, one might assume a distinction between “statute” and “ordinance” as found in certain translations. However, neither term consistently translates the same Hebrew word. Thus, the Hebrew *hoq* is variously translated as “law,” “statute,” “ordinance,” and “commandment” in the major English versions. The Ten Commandments are never called by the Hebrew term usually translated “commandment” (*miswah*). They are simply referred to as the ten “words” (*devarim*). As mentioned previously, the word *torah* means much more than just the English word “law.”

It is also important to note that the term “law of Moses” is itself used interchangeably with the term “law of God.” Thus, in Nehemiah 8, the expression alternates between “law of Moses” in verse 1 and “law of God” in verses 8 and 18. The term “law of Moses” is generally used as a designation for the Pentateuch or “Torah.” The term “law of Moses” would thus apply to anything in those five books, whether it be the Ten Commandments or the sacrificial laws or circumcision. Such usage is confirmed in the New Testament as, for example, in Luke 24:44.

Thus, the occurrence of “law” in an English translation may imply — depending on the original Hebrew or Greek and the context — “legal system,” “regulation,” “sacrificial ritual,” “Ten Commandments,” “principle,” “natural law,” “the Pentateuch,” “customary tradition,” “belief,” etc. It is therefore impossible to give a simple definition of “law.” The concept of “law” in the Bible is complex and cannot be defined or summarized in any brief way without danger of oversimplification. The very complexity of the subject requires that the many aspects of the biblical concept of law be discussed. No adequate understanding of the teaching of God’s Church on law can be gained without a thorough and careful reading of the entire overview given here. Seldom is an “either/or” position taken. The Church believes in freedom and law, faith and works, love and law, forgiveness and justice, reward and selfless service,

grace and law, to name only a few of the traditional dichotomies found in treatments of the subject.

The Bible itself sets the tone for the use of the term “law.” Sometimes law is viewed as the only important thing, sometimes as a good thing; at other times it is considered something obsolete, inadequate or incomplete. Perhaps the epitome of biblical discussion on the subject is found in Paul’s writings, yet it is obvious that Paul has been frequently misunderstood.

LOVE IS THE FULFILLMENT OF THE LAW

God is love. That is His nature and essence (I John 4:8). It is only from God that we can learn what real and perfect love is. A great deal depends on the guidance of His Holy Spirit, but God’s love is essentially expressed and taught through His law (Rom. 13:10; I John 5:3). It is the major vehicle by which His love has been made known to mankind.

If we human beings had the love that God has — perfect, complete and limitless love — we would have no need of any external moral law (though we should still need God to reveal to us His Sabbath, holy days, spiritual meanings, ceremonial laws, etc.). If human beings had the full knowledge of love, plus the full power to express that love that God has, there should be no need of external guidelines or codified statements or definitions or examples of any kind: we would always express love to its full extent. But we are not God, and we do not have the perfect love which is exemplified in Him. Human beings must learn love. Christians must grow toward that absolute embodiment of love of which all fall so short. This is the purpose of God’s law.

How can one know love unless he is taught what it is and how it works? Ultimately, it is learned by practice. Yet, before one can practice it, there must be some sort of beginning. The various aspects of God’s law in the Bible are designed to give a start to the individual. These aspects then lead him to greater and greater understanding of this concept until he learns to live by internalized spiritual motivations which, while no longer adequately expressible in human words, impel him to continue to fulfill the objective of God’s law which is love at the highest plane.

The concept of love can be epitomized, albeit inadequately, in the following statement: Love is both wholehearted worship toward God and outgoing concern for one’s fellow man equal to the natural concern for self. This is seen in Matthew 22, where Jesus says that the great commandment in the law is to:

“...Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets” (vv. 36-40).

Here, Jesus states that our love must be first toward God with full fervency, and then toward our neighbor in a manner equal to our love for ourselves. In fact, these two great commandments of God are the very foundation of God’s law on which all the law and all the prophets hang. All the biblical books on the law and the prophets teach one, by example as well as by command, how to show love toward his neighbor. Many of the basic principles of loving one’s fellow man are well known; the basic principles of love of neighbor have appeared in almost every culture, age and religion (cf. Rom. 2:14-15).

Yet, love of God is a point about which there is considerable difference of opinion. For that reason God gave four basic commands or principles that are the first four of the great Ten Commandments (Ex. 20:3-11). The last six proceed to give basic principles of love of fellow human beings (Ex. 20:12-17). Thus, the two “great commandments” of love of God and love of man are made more specific in the broad precepts of the Ten Commandments (cf. Deut. 5:7-21).

Limited as they are, however, human beings find it difficult to translate broad principles into practical application.

Therefore, when God gave the Ten Commandments to ancient Israel — though it is clear they had already been known for thousands of years — He did not stop there. He went on to give them more detailed instructions, some of them rather broad, others very minute and detailed, applicable only to a specific situation in a specific time or culture. (These will be discussed later at length.)

It is in the detailed physical regulations that man first finds himself able to grasp what God's law is all about (cf. James 1:22-25). Almost everyone understands the need today for a speed limit or a no-parking sign. Likewise, in ancient Israel, there was little chance for dispute about the need for a parapet surrounding one's roof (Deut. 22:8). These are very tangible regulations which anyone can come to grips with. It is these detailed instructions — often time or culturally bound — which begin to lead one toward the higher concepts of God's law and hence "love." This is assuming that one obeys them and reflects on their purpose: to teach one how to love God and how to love his fellow man.

The command to build a guard rail around one's roof has variable application in societies today. It would only serve as a bird perch in some areas of the world. Yet in the society of ancient Israel, as also in certain modern forms of architecture, it was, and is, common to use the roof as living quarters or for other similar purposes. One who did not protect the users of his roof with a guarding parapet was guilty of negligence and, consequently, of not loving his neighbor. One cannot love his neighbor, after all, if he does not correct a potential hazard to life and limb.

As the individual regulates his life by these more narrow ordinances, he starts to perceive what it means to think of others. He begins to grasp the meaning of living a life which shows concern for others and is not just purely egocentric. Suddenly, the minor regulations have a significance greater than their specific object or immediate concern. The man who would never think of killing a neighbor in cold blood might accomplish the same act — through unthinking carelessness — by not penning up his berserk bull. The one who caused an innocent person to be condemned by his false testimony would be as guilty of his blood as if he had struck him with a meat cleaver.

The detailed regulations, whether statute, ordinance or judgment (the terminology is of little

significance, as already discussed, since the Hebrew terms do not correspond exactly with the English ones) lead to more general precepts. As the individual attempts to apply the more minute instructions and in so doing considers their purpose, he comes to see how they relate to one another and how they incorporate broader concepts. These broader concepts themselves cohere to form the basic structure of love embodied in the Ten Commandments. Through these two major facets unfold love of God and love of man — neither of which can be omitted from the total meaning of love.

At this point, the artificial dilemma regarding the spirit of the law and the letter of the law takes on a different perspective. Ultimately, the love of God can be discerned only through His Spirit. It cannot be expressed in human language in other than inadequate form. This is why knowledge of God's love is conveyed through legal, ethical and moral regulations. These instructions are not ends in themselves. They point to the true end and provide a means of reaching it. They were not, in their deepest significance, set up as a code by which a person could be adjudged innocent or guilty. They were designed to show the way to love of God and love of man.

Naturally, in any human society which does not understand God's perfect love, some sort of administrative system of reward and punishment is necessary. In the same way, the concept of sin as the breaking of God's law is a New Testament concept, and sin plays an important part in New Testament theology. Yet it is due to the failings of human nature, not because God is simply interested in the law as a means of judging sin. Ultimately, the law points beyond the level of sin, transgression and living by the letter to the love of God.

To fulfill the law to its greatest extent is to have perfect love. Conversely, to have perfect love means to fulfill the law in its most spiritual manifestation. □

SUMMARY: Read these scriptures in your own Bible:

- **1 John 4:8 - God is love.**
- **2 Timothy 3:16 - All scripture is given by inspiration of God.**
- **Exodus 20 - The 10 commandments.**
- **Romans 13:10 - Love taught through law (also 1 John 5:3).**

QUESTIONS (ANSWERS BELOW):

1. God's law teaches man how to:
 - a) properly love God
 - b) love his fellowman
 - c) Live life abundantly
 - d) prepare for eternal spiritual life in the Family of God
 - e) all of the above
2. God's laws are all designed to lead to knowledge and understanding of God, the purpose of life, and of godly love and character. True or False?
3. The English term "law" and the biblical term "law" have the same definition and meaning. True or False?
4. The term "Law of Moses" and "Law of God" are used interchangeably in the Bible. True or False?
5. The term "law" in the English translation may imply, depending on the original Hebrew and Greek and the context, which of the following:
 - a) legal system
 - b) regulation
 - c) sacrificial ritual
 - d) ten commandments
 - e) principle
 - f) natural law
 - g) the Pentateuch
 - h) customary tradition
 - i) belief
 - j) all of the above
6. God is love (1 John 4:8). God's love is essentially taught through His law. True or False?
7. The first time man knew of God's law was when the commandments were given to Moses at Mt. Sinai. True or False?
8. Ultimately, the love of God can only be discerned through His Spirit. True or False?
9. Which of the following statements is false?
 - a) the knowledge of love is conveyed through legal, ethical and moral regulations.
 - b) the laws in their deepest significance are set up as a code by which a person could be adjudged innocent or guilty.
 - c) the laws point to the true end and provide a means of reaching it.
 - d) laws were designed to show the way of love of God and love of man.
10. To fulfill the law to its greatest extent is to have perfect love. True or False?

LESSON SIXTEEN — ANSWERS:

- | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------|-----------|------------|-----------|--------|-----------|------------|-----------|--------|------------|
| 1. (e) | 2. (True) | 3. (False) | 4. (True) | 5. (f) | 6. (True) | 7. (False) | 8. (True) | 9. (b) | 10. (True) |
|--------|-----------|------------|-----------|--------|-----------|------------|-----------|--------|------------|



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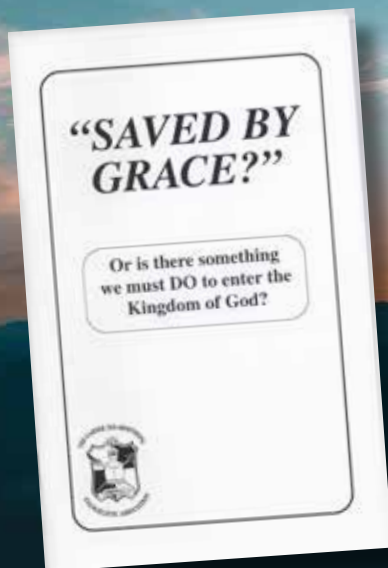
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