

21ST CENTURY

WATCH

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GODS BEFORE ME.

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What Else Could Go Wrong?



by Mark Armstrong

The media preaches to us like we're schoolchildren. You can't even watch a documentary on nature anymore for all the global warming dogma they're going to slip in. John Kerry has resigned his post as one of the foremost intellects on the subject. We might find out the expenditures of his entourage someday.

Our media has made as little as possible of the tractor protests in Europe, but it is a huge deal. Europe thinks, by and large, that they are more sophisticated than Americans, and are ahead of us on saving the planet (as if you can "save the planet" while giving India and China a pass). Most of us who've been around a while know this is ridiculous. But even now they're touting warm temperatures in Texas as proof of the ideology.

Is there a ceasefire in the Israel-Gaza war? There is something going on behind the scenes in Qatar, but who knows? American statements and Israeli actions don't match up these days. Does the pretender think that Anthony Blinken is calling the shots? He's not, but who knows what kinds of pressures are being applied? To hear the Israeli military spokesmen tell it, they're not quitting until Hamas is no more.

Texas has closed down the Federal welcome wagon. For a minute it looked like the Federal government might cross swords with the State, but apparently thought better of it. Litigation is pending. It probably wouldn't have looked good politically, and it's getting to be that time. I doubt the Federal officers dealing with the onslaught are too happy about

the situation. It seems most of the guys that should be policing the border are busy handing out necessities to the flood. Not to quote too directly, but what do you think will happen when millions swarm in, because they can? They're not coming from the usual places anymore.

For some reason we've got thousands from China. What's that all about? They can't travel without the acquiescence of the system over there, can they? It makes you wonder how compromised we are. What's going to happen to the United States? Is everybody compromised one way or another?

Have you ever heard of a ruling like the one just handed down by New York Judge Engoron? Mark Levin says the ruling is unconstitutional and

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Far from the border, New Yorkers gathered last summer to protest the migrant surge in New York City where over 175,000 illegal immigrants have taken up residence at local schools, hotels and homeless shelters.

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ARE YOU “UNDER” THE LAW?

by Garner Ted Armstrong



Biblical ignorance is the hallmark of our times! Millions of professing Christians know virtually nothing about the Bible. Millions understand little of the “spiritual” sounding phrases they hear from pulpits. Here, in simple language at last, are the Bible answers to some of the most puzzling and important questions to your life! Here is the truth about YOU and the LAW of God.

You’re living in a lawless world! As never before, you see violence, lawbreaking, flouting of authority the world over! There is no more obvious feeling gripping the hearts of men than that of rebellion against the law.

Why? What is it in human nature that makes us resent order and authority? Why do all humans have inner compulsions to break the law? Why is it vast percentages of people cheerfully admit they have, at one time or another in their lives, broken laws of sufficient importance to have landed them in jail?

Flouting of the law is like a game, a holiday atmosphere of fun and frolic to whole segments of our populations today.

No wonder people are eager to believe God is “dead” — that His law is done away. Millions of professing Christians literally resent the laws of God. Millions believe they need to pay no attention whatever to the Ten

Commandments. That there are no orders to be followed, no obedience required of Christians, no works involved in their Christian lives!

THE FATAL MISTAKE MILLIONS ARE MAKING!

It’s time you saw, with your own eyes, from the pages of your own Bible the plain truth about God’s laws and your relationship to them.

First, why is it “religious” terms always seem confusing to people? You’ve probably heard me mention how it seems many people are not truly “satisfied” with their religion unless it sounds so vague and meaningless, so “mysterious” and so couched in “pseudo-sanctimonious” and “spiritual” terms that it loses candid meaning to them.

The very moment the terms “law” or “grace” are mentioned to many professing Christians they are almost automatically confused. But why?

Simply because they have been fed — yes, spoon-fed — a great deal of confusion on the subject! But let’s not be confused. Let’s come to understand.

What do you mean, “grace”? Let’s decide, at the outset of this discussion, to know what we mean by different terms. Grace, as it is clearly set forth in your dictionary, and in your Bible, has a far different meaning than that which is deliberately put upon it by many false ministers in this world.

WHAT IS GRACE?

What does the word “grace” mean to you?

Does it imply permission to sin? “Certainly not!” you might answer. Well, then, does it mean you do NOT have to keep God’s laws? “Of course!” many would immediately reply.

But wait a minute! What IS sin? “Sin is,” the Bible answers, “the transgression of the

law” (I John 3:4). Well, then, if that’s what sin is — if sin is the breaking of God’s laws — sin is failing to KEEP God’s laws!

If that is true (and your Bible says it is) and if “grace” means you do not have to obey God’s law — then does not “grace” mean to many of you that you may sin?

“Of course not,” you might answer. But then, isn’t it all a little confusing?

It certainly is! Satan and his ministers (II Cor. 11:13) have confused the meaning of grace in most men’s minds. This whole world, according to your Bible, has been deceived (Rev. 12:9; 20:3).

JUST WHAT, THEN, IS GRACE?

Grace is, according to *Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary*, “Favor, kindness, mercy, etc.,” and, the ecclesiastical usage, “Divine mercy or forgiveness”!

Yes — that’s just it! Grace is *forgiveness*. Grace is *mercy*. Grace is *pardon*.

But forgiveness of what? Why, what is a Christian, but one who has, through the shed blood of Jesus Christ, obtained mercy and pardon from his past sins? It is through the blood of Jesus Christ we must obtain grace! Christ died, then, to show grace toward us, didn’t He?

“Of course,” you would answer. Well, if this is true, and the Bible certainly says it is — then may we go on sinning after Christ has shown us grace?

Let’s let the Bible answer, not the ideas of men!

Paul was inspired to write, “What then? Shall we sin [that is, shall we break any one of God’s Ten Commandments] because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid!” (Rom. 6:15.) There is the Bible answer! Paul plainly reveals that we must not think we may sin, that we can ignore, or live contrary to God’s Ten Commandments, just because God has shown us some of His great mercy!

Why did God have to show us His mercy? Why did we need “grace”?

God answers, “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned!” (Rom. 5:12.)

Yes, every human being has broken God’s Holy Laws, the Ten Commandments! Remember, it is the breaking of these laws, as they are applied in principle, and as they are magnified by Christ in His teachings, that IS SIN (I John 3:4).

Every human being has, because of his very nature of basic hostility toward God’s laws (Rom. 8:7) been convicted by God’s law as guilty of sin! The penalty of sin is death (Rom. 6:23). Christ died in order to erase our past sins! (Rom. 5:8.)

That is what grace is! It is the unlimited mercy of our God — the unearned, unmerited pardon of our God, when we totally repent of our past sins!

Notice it! “In whom [Christ] we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the

riches of His grace!” (Eph. 1:7.)

Grace, then, is God’s loving willingness to forgive us of our past sins!

THE MODERN DECEPTION

Even before the close of the New Testament canon, Almighty God inspired Jude to write, “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that you should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ” (Jude 3, 4).

The actual history of what happened from that time to this is now available! Remarkable, almost unbelievable discoveries are rapidly being made which amply prove that, true to the prophecies of your Bible, certain men did creep in “unawares” — men who deliberately, with planned forethought, attempted to undermine the pure truth of God which was once delivered to the saints.

This, remember, was a prophecy of many centuries ago! Jude went on to describe these men as those who had a basic resentment and hostility toward all government, and the symbols of government, those in authority! “Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities!” (Jude 8.)

What is in the minds of most professing Christians concerning their relationship to God today?

Basically, it is simply this: they have become convicted that a person should live a “righteous life!” They have become convinced that they have been “sinners” — which usually means persons who have lived “unrighteous lives.” To most, an “unrighteous life” merely means

individual, rather than a quality of God.

In other words, instead of understanding the true meaning of the word grace as revealed in your Bible, many have come to feel that grace is merely a Biblical term which vaguely means the Christian is in a “saved” condition. It means that God has smiled on the individual, “chosen” him, put him “under grace” and made him a “Christian.”

Most professing Christians realize there must be a certain change in their lives when they “repent” or receive, or accept Christ.

having various “worldly” habits and interests, perhaps dancing, drinking, or playing cards. It may even involve the various modes and styles of apparel. There are dozens of different categories in the minds of men as to what actually constitutes sin! But whether it involves various of these habits, indulgences, or “worldly acts” most professing Christians would say that conversion, to them, means “living for God.” It means living a “good” life, rather than an “evil” life. It means to think “good” thoughts, rather than thinking “evil” thoughts. In a sort of vague, nebulous way, most professing Christians realize there must be a certain change in their lives when they “repent” or receive, or accept Christ.

To most — grace is the state of a Christian who is “living for God!” Grace has come to falsely mean, to most professing Christians, a condition of the

How have YOU thought about it? Have you ever really been clear on the subject? Have you ever been able to really track down, in your own Bible, your beliefs regarding your present state? Have you ever really proved, in your own Bible, the true meaning — that is, the Bible meaning — of sin?

Let’s clear the air. Let’s not be confused. Let’s come to understand!

WHAT REPENTANCE IS

“Repent ye therefore, and be converted” (Acts 3:19), said the apostle Peter. To be converted means to be changed.

This change of which the Bible speaks is far from a nebulous or vague sort of change. It is a very definitely described change, a complete and total change, a change that God requires in every facet of your individual lives! Jesus said, “Except

you repent, ye shall all likewise perish!” (Luke 13:3, 5)

To repent means to be deeply broken up and sorry over having sinned! Peter continued, as you read in Acts 3:19, “...and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.”

Surely every one of you knows that Jesus Christ died for the express purpose of taking upon Himself our sins? Surely you all know, as a matter of basic, practical, Biblical fact, that the sinner must call upon Almighty God to apply the sacrifice of Jesus Christ in order to forgive his sins?

David, experiencing the real depths of repentance, cried out, “Have mercy upon me, Oh God, according to Thy loving kindness, according unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.

“Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!” (Ps. 51:1, 2.)

David was calling for the mercy of God. He was pleading with God to extend grace because of his past sins. Later, David said, “Oh how love I Thy law! It is my meditation all the day” (Ps. 119:97).

When you repent, you repent of having sinned! And to repent from sin means not only to be totally broken up and sorry over having sinned — it means to come to a deep resolve and determination, with the help of God’s Holy Spirit, not to sin again!

Never forget — what is sin? “Sin is the transgression of

the law” (I John 3:4).

When you have totally repented and been forgiven, then God says, “Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in the lust thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but yield yourself unto God...for sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the law but under grace” (Rom. 6:12-14).

Do you see? A repentant person is a person who has been sorry that he has sinned. That means he is totally convicted of having broken God’s law, is sorry that he has broken God’s law, and has now determined, with God’s help, never to break God’s law again!

Paul goes on to answer a question which might immediately arise in the minds of some who do not know the meaning of the term “grace.” He says, in the scripture immediately following the one you just read, “What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid!” (Rom. 6:15)

Can you now really begin to see?

When your Bible speaks of being “under the law,” it means, by its very context, under the “penalty of” the law — not obedience to the law. To obey the law is to be “within the law.” To sin — disobey — is to become “under the law.”

HOW SINNERS ARE JUSTIFIED!

Another very important clarification of terms is to come to understand the meaning of the

word “justified.”

Why do so many not know the plain truth about such terms as “grace,” “justification,” “sanctification,” “redemption,” “conversion,” “dedication,” “confirmation,” and other such “theological-sounding” terms?

Simply because there has been a great conspiracy to deliberately confuse these terms in the minds of people, keeping the precious truth of Almighty God about the most important subject in your life — that of your personal salvation — obscured behind spiritual drunkenness.

To many people, justification means vaguely the same thing “grace” has meant to so many thousands of deceived persons. It means, to many deceived ones, a “condition” permanently attributed to a Christian.

Many people think once a person is “justified” he is “made right” from then on. But this is simply untrue. Again, let’s go to the only source to understand these all-important points.

“For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified” (Rom. 2:13).

But how could this be? Simple. It is just as Almighty God says. It is those who not only hear but actually do and perform the laws of Almighty God, just as Jesus said they should in the Sermon on the Mount (Mat. 5:19), who shall be justified!

I have heard my father, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, say many times, “God will not save a single person he cannot govern!” While there is no scripture which says these words directly, there are many scriptures which uphold this basic principle by direct inference. The one you have just read is a very good example. Those who have come to stand in awe and in fear of the holy laws of God, who do now realize they have been convicted of sins in the sight of those laws, and have become totally repentant of having broken those laws, shall be — as a result of their repentance — justified!



Baptism symbolizes the death of our sinful self and the beginning of a new life to be lived in obedience to God.

Justification is not a permanent “condition” of a Christian. It has to do with the removal and forgiveness of past guilt.

JUSTIFIED BY LAW?

God plainly says that the works of the law, the works and the deeds of the law — any law — whether the Ten Commandments or any other law, will not justify anyone. “Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law” (Rom. 3:28).

Of course! God did not say in Romans 2:13 that it is by the doing of the law that individuals can be justified. He merely said that those who are willing to obey His holy laws are those who are now eligible for such justification!

Justification comes as God’s free loving gift, through the quality of God which is called “grace.”

Notice it: “being justified freely by His grace through the

redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 3:24).

Neither justification nor grace are a “condition” of a Christian which shall be perpetually attributed to him. The apostle Paul, foreseeing this confusion and deliberate conspiracy to obliterate the plain truth of this simple doctrine, went on to say “whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance [grace] of God” (Rom. 3:25).

Could anything be plainer? Grace is not a permanent “condition” of a Christian, but is a quality of Almighty God, expressed toward a repentant sinner who now realizes his guilt before God’s law, and now wants, with all his heart, soul and mind, to obey God’s laws and principles!

Justification is not a permanent “condition” of a Christian, but is the immediate condition at the exact time of his

total repentance and surrender to God; put simply, justification is the “condition” of the newly repentant sinner which is the result of God’s grace!

Neither grace nor justification comes by the works of God’s law. They do not come by obedience to God’s law, or to any other law.

Rather, your Bible plainly shows that God will extend His unmerited pardon, His grace, to those who have been totally repentant because they have disobeyed. They have now resolved to begin obeying! Once they have made this resolve in their minds, God says such persons can BE justified! Once Almighty God ascertains that basic attitude of total surrender toward God, He will now extend His righteous and merciful grace toward that sinner, by forgiving him of all his past sins!

Now notice an important scripture you’ve probably seen or heard quoted many times on this subject: “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.”

This is where most theologians always end the quotation. But let’s read all of it. “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus [the “new man” as a result of God’s Holy Spirit] unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them!” (Eph. 2:8-10)

Of course! We are the handiwork of God, created as new creatures, once we have been converted, “in Christ Jesus”



The bread and wine of the Lord’s Supper represent the sacrifice Christ made for all repentant sinners and is eaten with the humble knowledge of God’s mercy toward His people.

for the express purpose of living by every word of God. Living by every word of God means living in obedience to God's laws. It means living in humility. It means living a "good" life — but Almighty God is the One who tells us what a "good" life is!

He tells us by the perfect example of the life of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ obeyed, perfectly, all His Father's commandments!

Peter says, "...because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps, who did NO sin, neither was guile found in His mouth" (I Peter 2:21-22).

Did you notice it? Jesus Christ, by doing no sin, did obey all of God's Ten Commandments. He set you, and He set me, an example! Are you willing to follow His example?

GOD'S LAW MUST BE OBEYED!

Now read these plain scriptures, and come to your own private decision as to what you

shall do with them. Jesus said plainly, "...but if you will enter into life, keep the commandments!" (Matt. 19:17) Paul wrote, "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandments holy and just and good" (Rom. 7:12). Paul went on to say, "For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin...if then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law, that it is good" (verses 14 and 16). "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man" (verse 22). "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" (verse 25). "If you fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,' ye do well, but if ye have respect to persons ye commit sin, and are convicted of the law as transgressors. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all!" (James 2:8-10)

"And hereby do we know that we know Him, if we keep His

commandments. He that saith, 'I know Him,' and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (I John 2:3-4).

Finally, read the definite description of the end-time remnant of God's true Church at the precise moment of their persecution in the wilderness, just immediately prior to the second coming of Christ!

"And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, WHICH KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD, AND HAVE THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS CHRIST!" (Rev. 12:17.)

Can you now come to see? The truly converted Christian is living within God's law and has experienced God's loving grace in being granted forgiveness for his past transgressions of God's law.

May God help you to come to see these plain truths. Be honest with yourself. What will you DO about it? ☐

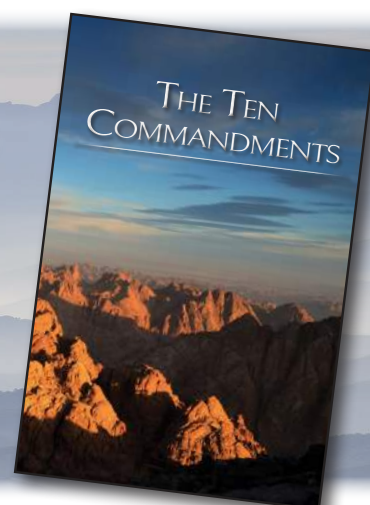
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The Ten Commandments

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MODERN IDOLATRY

by Michael Armstrong

“Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me; And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me, and keep My commandments.” Exodus 20:4-6

How relevant is this scripture? It is the second of the ten commandments and it deals with idolatry, the worship of objects representing God or the “gods” of the pagan world. Other translations of the Bible render “graven image” as “carved image” or even bluntly as “idol.” There is little dispute over what the commandment says though how to apply it has been conversational at times.

Living in a “Christian” nation one might be tempted to think this command a relic from the ancient world. We can easily see its relevance in Moses trying to keep Israel from retaining the customs of Egypt or the reforms of Josiah. But what about us? Despite a rise in neo-paganism, relatively few have been tempted by such foolishness and those who have are likely driven by rebelliousness rather than belief in these so-called “gods.” How then do we apply this commandment?

Some have taken it as a ban on works of art “or any likeness of any thing,” even as decoration. This cannot be the intent. God’s plans for the Ark of the Covenant and the Tabernacle included likenesses of Cherubim, almond branches, flowers, and pomegranates (Exodus 25 & 27). In Solomon’s day, the large brass “sea” for the priests to wash in was supported by 12 oxen (2 Chronicles 4). These objects themselves were not worshiped despite their place in the rituals ordained by God. This helps us come to a better understanding of “graven image” in the

context of idolatry.

Not that overlap is impossible. There is an instance in Numbers 21 where the Israelites spoke against God and were attacked by poisonous snakes. When they repented, God told Moses to make a brass serpent and put it up high on a pole. Visible from all over the camp, those bitten were told to look at it and live. In John 3:14-15, Christ compares this episode to our faith in Him, with belief in God’s power being necessary for salvation as it was for healing in the historical episode. While the record of this may strike us as odd, the serpent was crafted at God’s direction.

Apparently, it was preserved for hundreds of years and is mentioned again in the time of Hezekiah. It is said that the children of Israel were burning incense to it, worshiping it as an idol, but the practice is thought to have been a recent development rather than dating back to the time of Moses. Hezekiah called it Nehushtan, meaning “brass snake” in the sense that it was nothing more than that, and destroyed it as recorded in 2 Kings 18:4.

Why do men debase themselves by serving objects rather than God, worshiping “the creature more than the Creator” as it says in Romans 1:25? Even attempts to commemorate God’s greatness are often perverted. Consider the story of Gideon in Judges chapters 6-8. God called him to deliver the land from the oppression of the Midianites. After the notable victory he took a portion of the spoil

and made a golden ephod, a type of priestly garment (Judges 8). It came to be idolized (verse 27) though it is extremely unlikely this was Gideon's intent. He both refused to become a king (verse 23) and restrained idolatry in Israel during his life (verse 33).

The tendency to place tangible items between ourselves and the Eternal is not absent from modern Christianity, it rather permeates the most popular sects. The acceptance of Christianity by the Roman empire in the fourth century caused an explosion of the practice. Disputes over the use of icons contributed to the split between the Orthodox and Catholic faiths in the eighth century and figured heavily in the Reformation of the sixteenth century.

Catholicism has always considered the use of icons as essential, though they claim this "veneration" of objects is different from outright worship. Foremost among their arguments in defense of the practice is the idea that Christ superseded or overruled the ten commandments. Nothing could be further from the truth. Yet Catholic influence is still plainly visible in Protestant practice, despite claims of relying on "scripture only." You will find few churches without steeples and fewer still without crosses, not to mention myriad other traditions. The prevalence of these and the use of icons varies dramatically in practice around the world.

Islam is typically regarded as hostile to idolatry in any form or fashion. Some allege its holiest site, the *Kaaba* in Mecca, was integrated from earlier forms of worship though most believers hold to the idea it marks the location of Adam and Eve's first altar or the location where Abraham sent Hagar and Ishmael (Genesis 21). The black stone, set in a corner of the *Kaaba*, is kissed or pointed at (the quantity of worshipers being too great for all to approach) as the structure is circled during the *Hajj* but clerics maintain its importance as an historical rather than holy object.

Many of the traditional religions, from Africa to Asia traveling west, are far less scrupulous. The veneration of ancestors and lesser deities are manifested in countless images and icons. Even in ostensibly atheist China such practices are common and widespread to the point of not being considered religion. Shrines of shared superstition have even been avenues of intrigue to re-assimilate Taiwan.



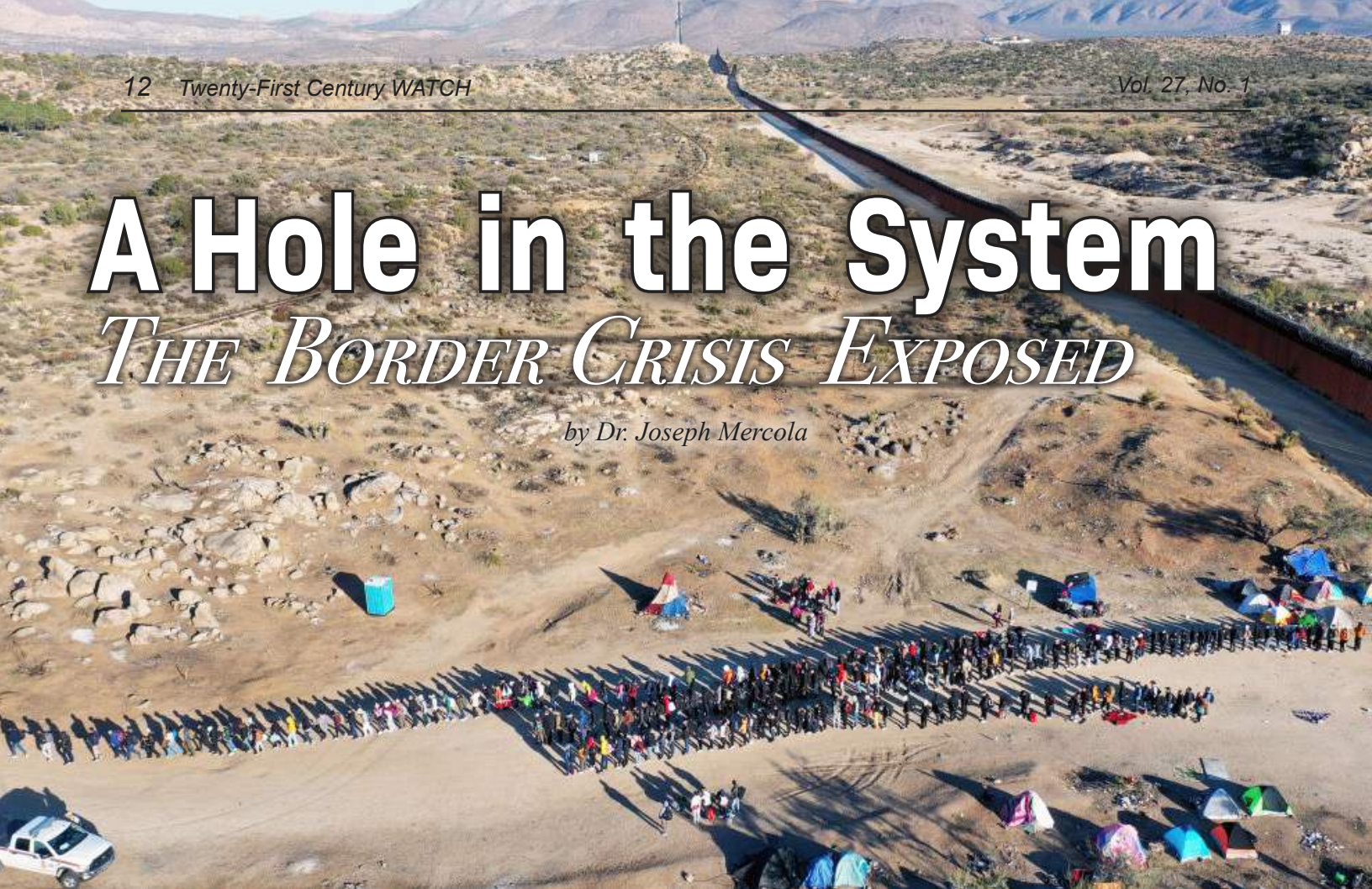
India, now the world's most populous nation, is overtly idolatrous. The Prime Minister, Modi (above), recently consecrated a temple to the Hindu deity Ram. Reportedly purifying himself for 11 days, he inaugurated the temple amidst massive public celebrations, bowing himself before an idol depicting Ram as a child. Modi is up for election this year and leads a coalition empowered by the idea that India is being retaken by Hinduism. Such oddities as mobs intervening to rescue cattle destined for slaughter have colored recent years, though cows are legally protected in many states. This is reality in one of the most up and coming nations of the world, whose favor has been increasingly courted by east and west.

Is this commandment not relevant? Which portion of the world may we not apply it to? This is true of its literal application, there is no end if we consider it spiritually. No idea, and certainly no object or practice, should be substituted for the worship of God in spirit and truth (John 4:23). He does not condemn children for the sins of their parents (Deuteronomy 24:16) but, as with many bad decisions, the effects can be felt for many generations. We all stand guilty before God, but let us repent and He will give, "mercy unto thousands of them that love Me, and keep My commandments (Exodus 20:6)." □

A Hole in the System

THE BORDER CRISIS EXPOSED

by Dr. Joseph Mercola



As reported by “60 Minutes” February 4, 2024, while the illegal migrants flowing across the U.S. southern border come from

all around the world, the fastest growing group are from China. A 4-foot gap at the end of a border fence, 60 miles east of San

Diego, California, is one of the newest routes taken by many.

“60 Minutes” shows dozens of Chinese making their way through the small opening early one morning, unfazed both by cameras and an armed border agent standing nearby. Over four days, the crew counted nearly 600 migrants — many of them Chinese — crossing the border through this illegal entryway.

In 2023, border patrol apprehended 37,000 Chinese nationals crossing illegally, 50 times more than in 2021. Many of the Chinese nationals “60 Minutes” spoke to said they were trying to escape the repressive politics and declining economy of their home country.

They claim they learned about this particular route on



Migrants attempting to cross in to the U.S. from Mexico are detained by U.S. Customs and Border Protection at the border November 28, 2023 in Jacumba Hot Springs, California.

TikTok. Indeed, “60 Minutes” was able to find videos providing detailed step-by-step instructions for making the trek through South America to the Mexico-U.S. border, including how to hire smugglers to drive them to this particular opening in the fence.

BORDER CLOSED TO JOURNALISTS, BUT NOT ILLEGAL CROSSERS

Meanwhile, investigative journalist Sharyl Attkisson notes that as the border crisis continues to worsen, authorities are cutting off access to journalists. “To be clear, they haven’t cut off access to the illegal border crossers,” she says. “They have cut off access to the media. So while foreigners can still cross at will, the credentialed press are restricted from public property where we could see it.”

Texas is now trying to stem the relentless tide of several thousand migrants crossing the border each day. Under Operation Lone Star, Texas is funding the installation of anti-climb fences and razor wire in areas that were previously wide open. Twenty-five other governors are also backing Texas’ decision to crack down on the border invasion.

In a January 2024 Fox News appearance, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott said, “Because the Biden administration has really, truly abdicated its responsibility to secure the border and enforce the laws, Texas, very simply, is securing the border.”

Texas has also passed a new law, which takes effect March 5,

2024, that will make illegal border crossing a state crime. Local police will then have the authority to make arrests, and a judge can order illegal crossers to be returned to Mexico.

significant percentage of people selling drugs in San Francisco — as many as half — are undocumented immigrants.

“It is time to withdraw the protection of sanctuary from

Lack of work, housing, food and social services all end up fueling crime that make American communities less safe and more inhospitable.

In the meantime, Abbott has resorted to bussing a fraction of the apprehended illegal crossers to sanctuary cities in other states. As a result of having to live with the consequences of unrestricted influx, some sanctuary cities are now starting to rethink the sanity of unvetted migration.

Lack of work, housing, food and social services all end up fueling crime that make American communities less safe and more inhospitable. So, while some illegal migrants may be escaping dire conditions in their homelands, Biden’s open border policy is guaranteeing that these people won’t be any better off here either.

SANCTUARY CITIES ARE STARTING TO REALIZE WHAT THE PROBLEM IS

For example, in February 2023, a local San Francisco news station reported:

“San Francisco is rethinking its ‘sanctuary city’ status as fentanyl continues to kill a staggering number of overdose victims. Investigators believe that a

undocumented immigrants trafficking fentanyl on our streets,’ Supervisor Matt Dorsey said Tuesday. Dorsey is proposing legislation to change San Francisco’s sanctuary city policies to exclude undocumented immigrants who are arrested for dealing the powerful opioid.

“The legislation would deny ‘sanctuary’ to adults who have been convicted of a fentanyl-dealing felony within the past seven years, and re-arrested for another fentanyl-dealing crime or violent felony crime.”

The burden of illegal migration is also making itself felt in places like New York City, another once-proud sanctuary outpost. In early February 2024, Betsy McCaughey, a former lieutenant governor of New York, penned an article in the *New York Post*, stating:

“NYCs migrant crisis hits new level of madness: Free rooms, meals to thugs who are robbing us. Maria Manaura, 32, who’s been arrested at least eight times in the six months since she arrived from Venezuela, is living at the Row NYC Hotel, once



After the barriers were placed, dozens of migrants were sitting shoulder to shoulder on the sidewalk waiting for their chance to enter Roosevelt Hotel. Manhattan, New York, August 01, 2023.

hailed for its unbeatable Times Square location and front-row view of the Theater District.

“Now it’s drug infested and violent but still costs taxpayers \$500 a night for each of the 1,300 rooms given over to migrants. Manaura was busted again last week for snatching a woman’s cellphone on the No. 6 train.

“She was charged with grand larceny and resisting arrest, but instead of locking her

up, Judge Jay Weiner granted supervised release, likely in time for her to make it back to the hotel and another prepared meal paid for by you and me. It’s sickening.

“Migrants like Manaura who rack up clashes with police should be made ineligible for the city’s largesse. Handing out hotel rooms and free meals to repeat thugs makes it easier for them to commit crimes and

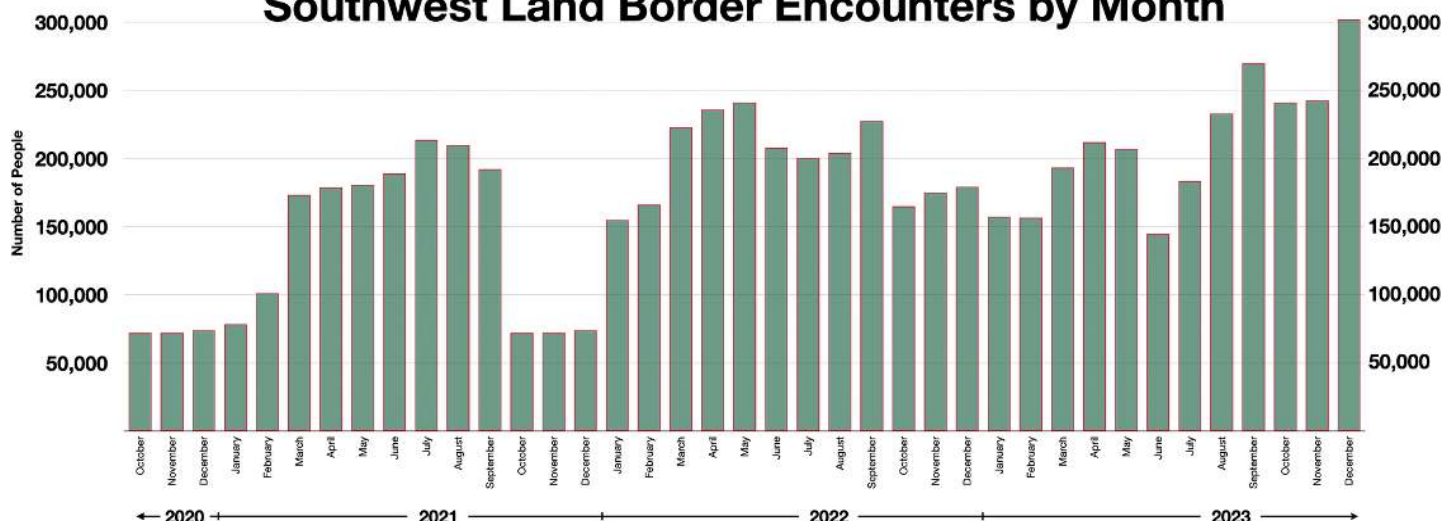
makes us patsies.

“The Democratic Party is turning New York City into a Shangri-la for international theft rings and migrants here to rob and burglarize. Taxpayers foot the bill for the thieves’ hotel accommodations plus three meals a day, a long list of other benefits, even free bus tickets if they have to skip town in a hurry. If you’re a criminal, what’s not to like? ...

“Last week, Mayor Adams inked contracts for \$137 million for more hotel rooms for migrants and announced the city will hand out debit cards — worth up to \$1,000 a month ... That gives migrants the same purchasing power as low-income New Yorkers who are here legally.

“Migrants will have to sign an affidavit they will spend the funds only on food and baby supplies. That’s a laugh. But there’s nothing funny about an invasion of career criminals posing as asylum seekers. New York has a heart, but it’s time New York used its brain.” □

Southwest Land Border Encounters by Month



BIBLE STUDY

by Dr. James & Natalie Ricks



THE BEATITUDES: The Characteristics of God's Family

The Greatest Sermon, that builds upon the wonderful foundation given to Moses, expounds and expands the love of God. Note Deuteronomy 6:1-6. The beatitudes, as given in Matthew chapter five, are prerequisites given by our Savior. We believe that it is the most meaningful message ever given to mankind by a loving God.

Matthew 5:3, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (NKJV)

The poor in spirit are contrasted to those who are spiritually proud and self righteous.

Proverbs 16:19-20, "Better to be of a humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud. He who heeds the word wisely will find good, and whoever trusts in the LORD, happy is he."

Jesus is starting by telling us to never forget how much we need God and not to rely upon ourselves.

What are the attitudes that God requires of His people? Those who wish to be happy and blessed by God must exhibit certain traits. These traits follow the introductory remarks given by Christ. They are:

Matthew 5:4-6, "Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted.

"Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth.

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled."

What was God's adversary's significant MONUMENTAL, CRUCIAL mistake? He lost his perspective with regard to God and became overly

proud of his beauty and talents.

Ezekiel 28:17, "Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor;"

Satan was the first rebel back-stabber and principle purveyor of evil because of his pride. God, wisely, will not tolerate such attitudes and spirits in His family for all eternity. We must learn to mourn all the evil that exists and try to reject it in our lives, this is the Messiah's message.

Ezekiel 9:4, "And the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof."

Similar things will happen to identify the righteous in the end of this age period. Note Revelation 7:3-4.

Matthew 5:7-9, "Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy.

"Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God."

The "pure in heart" have a mind that is not scheming and full of evil plots. Their emotions are not bursting with hatred and vengeance. The apostle James elaborates: "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. Now the fruit of

Continued next page

BIBLE STUDY

righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace” (James 3:17-18).

In addition to all these lofty traits God demands courage and fidelity to Him. If persecuted for standing up for Christ or His high standards, we must not falter. We must be like the heroic Prophets of the past, like Jeremiah and Elijah.

ARE THESE MORAL GOALS SO LOFTY THAT THEY ARE UNREALISTIC?

Matthew 5:11-12, “Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.

“Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

We are blessed when we are persecuted. The persecution drives us even closer to God. The dedication to God we display makes others uncomfortable. The truth is too close for comfort so they criticize us. God loves our courage and further, it puts us in the company of heroic prophets.

One of the more shocking statements in the book of Revelation regarding those who will not be in God’s family are the cowardly. They are lumped with terrible pervers.

Revelation 21:8, “But the COWARDLY, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”

God will not test us beyond our means but may at times demand courage and fidelity.

Some writers claim that in this sermon Jesus was merely using hyperbole. He did not expect people to achieve such high moral and lofty goals. Maybe He just wants us try and be a little better? The answer based on the author of most of the New Testament is an emphatic, No! Christ wants us to really strive for this high mark.

Philippians 3:13-14, “Brethren I count not

myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

There is no doubt that Christ gave these standards for all believers to meet realizing that we cannot do it alone. We all need help from God. When Jesus left his disciples He promised that after His resurrection, He would direct the Holy Spirit to come and help us.

John 14:15-16, “If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever...”

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING THE SALT AND THE LIGHT

Further Jesus wants us to be the SALT AND LIGHT of the world based on our conduct.

Matthew 5:13-16, “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.”

God needs the presence (taste) of us converted, humble believers on the Earth to make it worth His saving. The light we shine is vital and important to God. Even if we have weaknesses, we are still fighting for our improvement and ultimate victory as lights in this dark world. Note I Cor. 1:27.

Matthew 24:22, “And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.” (KJV) God will one day save planet Earth from the complete destruction of mankind by mankind.

Matthew 5:14-16, “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

BIBLE STUDY

**BELIEVERS' EXAMPLES SHOULD BE
A LIGHT TO THE WORLD**

We need to let our good deeds and Godly hearts be seen by others like a shining city on a hill top — and remember that God gets the credit.

Jesus declared certain inviolable standards and attitudes as prerequisites for entering His kingdom. These are the core attributes that God demands a believer have before ever entering His family for all eternity.

What does God value and demand of us believers and future heirs? It is humility, gentleness and a desire to be filled with true goodness. God, through His prophets, had made this very clear in who He esteems.

Isaiah 66:2, “But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, And who trembles at My word.” (NKJV)

God wants those who are humble and who really revere His word and wish to fully understand and obey it. Christ goes further to describe the traits that He demands in a believer, but humility is the one that overrides the others. Why? Because one of God’s top angels betrayed Him with an outrageous lack of humility and with utter arrogance.

God needs sons who are the opposite of the adversary, Satan; believers that are kind — not scheming or plotting evil in their hearts, but who are true peacemakers. Deceivers use Satan’s scheme of “anything goes” to drive their own selfish agendas.

Galatians 2:3-4, “Yet not even Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised. And this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage),”

Christ will not allow people into His kingdom who are deceptive liars and schemers. If we suffer for our honesty, goodness, and pure beliefs then we have a common bond with the Messiah!

Matthew 5:10-11, “Blessed are those who are

persecuted for righteousness’ sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.”

The apostles considered it an honor to suffer for the name of Jesus Christ.

Acts 5:40-41, “They had called for the apostles and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.”

We must never be ashamed of Christ’s name no matter the pressures from this evil age.

One way we can be a light is in our courage and faith. Christian behavior, even sometimes in the face of persecution, turned the ancient world upside down. Their good, kind actions and the steadfast belief in God took the world by storm. So much so that Satan had to work on co-opting Christianity to whatever degree he could.

Matthew 5:12, “Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

Believers became like the holy, wonderful prophets in their actions and faith. The world was impressed. Jesus pushes each of us to become a light to the world LIKE THE PROPHETS were.

Matthew 5:13-15, “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.

“You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.”

This is obviously a very high standard. Christ’s message to us sets a very high standard. Note the words of an evil, devilish, dark magic occult leader with regard to the affect of Christianity and the evangelism of Paul the Apostle to the world:

Acts 17:6, “But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some brethren to the rulers

BIBLE STUDY

of the city, crying out, "These who have turned the world upside down have come here too."

What does God require from His followers but to lead the world into the light of goodness.

Matthew 5:16, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."

Then Jesus declared to His audience on the mountain that He came to glorify, elevate and fulfill the law.

Verse 17, "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill."

CHRIST DID NOT "DO AWAY" WITH GOD'S LAWS

Clerics have for centuries contended that Christ came to set aside some of the core laws of the Ten Commandments. They have stated that the word "fulfill" as used by Jesus means that He obeyed for us and thereby we are free to break any of God's laws. They feel justified in so doing if they cannot find enough New Testament support for them in their biased evaluation of the NT. Since they are not Sabbath keepers they are biased against that law!

However, note the bold declaration that Christ makes in Matthew 5:18, "For assuredly, I say to you,

till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled."

One cannot dodge this test because obviously the Earth is still below our feet and sky above is still full of the heavenly bodies. Why would Jesus state it this way? One reason is so we cannot possibly get around His statement — it's undeniable. But also because one day God will alter the universe. God will make it anew. However, at that point, we believers will no longer be carnal but spiritual and we will have no need of a written law to guide us. We will be internally righteous.

Galatians 5:22-23, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law."

For example, if a believer is then so spiritual that he no longer needs a law on the wall that says do not steal because He would never even consider mistreating his brother in any such thievery.

Revelation 21:1-4, "Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. ... And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.'" □

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What Else Could Go Wrong

Continued from page 2

violates the eighth amendment. Who ever heard of stripping someone of their assets when there is no complainant? But there's a problem. Trump has to abide with the decision unless or until it is overturned by a higher court. What if Letitia James disposes of properties in the mean time? It's going to get interesting. Maybe painful.

The Atlanta case is on life support, and the main characters are accused of collusion. There are rumblings in court that the relationship between the D. A. and the chosen prosecutor began before the appointment, and they've said otherwise. Can you imagine? This is turning out to be a huge embarrassment as the hearing plays out. Nobody can remember anything. But phone records don't lie. Do they never watch crime shows? Everybody knows that cell phone records follow you around. Everybody except those who would slay the dragon, in



Donald Trump during a court hearing on February 15, 2024.

their dreams.

If Trump, at odds with the mainstream media and with court cases pending, should win...That is their biggest fear. He tried to play nice the first go-around. But they've continued to try to destroy him at every turn, and now they're afraid they have to. If he played as rough as they do, there would be ruined careers all over the place. If Trump should win back the presidency, we will see.

They've been convening all these august bodies in Europe.

They're mighty concerned about the Ukraine war, and what it means for the future. Make no mistake. The shadow of Donald Trump looms over these EU meetings.

Things are getting messy here and all over the world. Nobody needs to tell you that the U. S. is in trouble. Nobody wants to talk about the debt anymore. They add to it like it doesn't matter. But it will.

It's getting where you can't stand to watch an appearance by the pretender. Watching him mumble, stumble and forget what he's talking about is becoming too much. He knows he's in deep and the only thing protecting him is the fear and hatred of you know who. His recalcitrant son is testifying behind closed doors, and it can't be good.

Whatever could go wrong for the United States, has. We wonder if Germany projecting military power outside its borders could get out of hand. That would make some of the church's most monumental predictions come true. □



Germany has sent hundreds of fighting vehicles, personnel carriers, and tanks, such as the Leopard 2 pictured above, as well as other advanced military equipment to Ukraine.

What Will The Beast Be Like?

by Craig M. White,
FriendsofSabbath.org

In part 1, titled “The Middle East Beckons Europe,” published in the Fourth Quarter 2023 edition of this periodical, it was argued that a coming German-led European power will eventually arise and invade parts of North Africa and the Middle East.

What should we be looking for to identify it? What will the attributes of this system be like? Will it be terrifying to its citizens or uplifting? Will it be neo-Marxist, woke and Left Wing or fascist and pro-Western Civilisation?

Some believe that the Beast is Islam while others feel that it is China or Russia. Many more believe it is a conspiracy that is centered in America, claiming that America is the Beast and New York is Babylon. Others believe it will be a world government that will persecute all Christians. And while world governance may be achieved by the elites, such will be short-lived and the world will divide into rival camps, coming to blows.

The various theories cannot all be correct. However, when we view the prophecies in light of historical precedence we can establish repeats or iterations of a system that should surely arise again. History and repetitions provide us with a template for future occurrences.

Historically and prophetically, the Beast system with all its iterations and variations has always come out of Europe, normally centred around Germany. While other areas and systems have been awful and “beastly” in many ways, that does not make them *the* Beast as prophesied, which is a ferocious system that stamps on Israel — both physical and spiritual — going to war to defeat anything and anyone in its way.

WAR IS COMING

Readers might find it unfathomable that a power could arise that would not only challenge American-British (and allies) world hegemony, but that it would also attack them militarily.

Consider this: over time Europe has experienced the rise and fall of the First Reich (the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation or *Sacrum Romanum Imperium Nationis Germanica*); the Second Reich (from Bismarck to the end of WWI — the neo-Protestant Prussian period); and of course, the Third Reich (the Hitler-Mussolini period). The day will come when the Germans and the European Union will be the world’s supreme power through the powerful Fourth Reich — the final revival of the Roman Empire combined with eventual emperor worship.

It will most assuredly not be favourable toward the Anglo-Saxon-Keltic powers and it will probably see the Anglo-Keltic powers as part of a global Jewish-Masonic conspiracy that must be stopped and destroyed once and for all.

Desmond Seward cynically pondered “... Modern communications made possible the Fuhrer-state [Albert Speer said]. If this is really the reason why Hitler was able to do so much more evil than Napoleon — or even only one of the reasons — then technological progress should ensure that the next ‘national saviour’ on the scene will be infinitely more terrible. Antichrist is yet to come. Perhaps the Emperor and the Fuhrer were merely forerunners.” (*Napoleon and Hitler: A Comparative Biography*, p. 269)

Seward is a historian, not a Biblical scholar of prophecy, but he knows the cycles of history and

what can occur in the future. Europe may again call on a “saviour” to preserve their civilization from relentless attacks by the woke and globalist Left.

A “saviour” will arise, but what will he and his system be like? Below, some aspects of this system will be explored to help you identify it when it arises and not be deceived by the voices of chaos.

THE POLITICAL SYSTEM AND CAPITAL

The Roman Empire, and later the Catholic Church, had Rome as their capital. But the Holy Roman Empire, being rather decentralised, varied the location of its capital.

Aachen was where Charlemagne was crowned and it, as well as various castles in the Rhineland, functioned as capitals over time. Various abodes were considered as the centre of government and for a time the chief residence of elected Emperors was Prague.

When the Hapsburg dynasty was in power, Vienna became their capital for centuries. Today, Brussels is the capital of the European Union.

The question is whether Rome, Vienna, Berlin or some other city will become the political and military capital of a United Europe (with Rome remaining the religious capital).

May I suggest that the final political capital of Europe will probably be located in a city acceptable

to all or most European nations, Vienna. It is “neutral” yet German. It stands between north and south, east and west; between Catholicism, Lutheranism and Orthodox Christianity. At the heart and centre of Europe, that would bond a diverse continent and peoples under a single system and leader.

It could very well house the institutions now located in Brussels as well as the United Nations, World Bank and IMF (or successor organisations).

From Vienna we may see again the symbol of the double-headed eagle, proudly displayed as a restoration of the Holy Roman Empire. Eventually the future European leader will move his capital to Jerusalem (Daniel 11:45).

SYMBOLS AND HERITAGE

The European Union currently possesses a flag, anthem and annual public day. But what other symbols and emblems might the future regime have?

One of the most prominent symbols of ancient Assyria was the eagle: is this where many of the eagle symbols of Central Europe originate? (Donald Mackenzie, *The Migration of Symbols and their Relations to Beliefs and Customs*, pp. 343-345). Comparisons have been made between the Nazi eagle with spread-out wings and that utilised by the Assyrians.



Aerial view of Vienna, Austria showing Michaelerplatz (St. Michael's Square), Hofburg Palace complex. Vienna has been a site of historic significance for centuries.

All empires utilise symbols and emblems to create identity, maximize its glory and to honour itself. So what sort of symbols will the coming German-led European Union use?

ANCIENT SYMBOLS – MODERN USAGE

It seems that as the European Union evolves more and more into a dictatorship, it will begin to hearken back to its roots in the Roman and Holy Roman systems and utilise the symbols of old.

In addition to the Roman Eagle used by both Napoleon and Hitler, we could see arise the double-headed Eagle representing the co-operation of Western and Eastern Europe (as well as the Church); the Imperial Crown representing the Emperor as temporal ruler and regent of Christ on earth (it includes the cross, an octagonal shape representing the heavenly Jerusalem and 12 stones supposedly representing the tribes of Israel); and the Holy Lance (also known as the Spear of Destiny) which

mythologically pierced Christ — this was politically the most important relic because it may be traced in history to Jerusalem via Italy, Lombardy and Burgundy. Tests undertaken on the spear indicate that it may be traced back to several centuries after Christ. However, a small metal strip within it may be much older. Nevertheless, it remains central to Holy Roman Empire regalia. The cross, too, will be a very important symbol.

These insignia reside today in the Treasure House, Vienna, awaiting another Emperor to claim them and fulfill his dream of world peace and a new order led by a United Europe. The creation of peace was the goal of the Emperors as well as the kings, princes, bishops, abbots and other leaders as they debated back and forth in their imperial diets. At times they unleashed holy wars to cause peace (in their estimation).

All Holy Roman Emperors wore or utilised these symbols as a representative of the god of the heavens upon the earth. Hitler did not wear them but had them removed from Vienna and stored in Nuremburg in March 1938. Only Napoleon, of all the European emperors, was not able to obtain them, which is interesting given that he was of non-German/Austrian stock, unlike most of the Holy Roman Emperors.

Napoleon claimed on one occasion in 1804 to have had the Imperial insignia of Charles brought to France. “But if there was not in this a trick of Napoleon’s, there must be a mistake ... for these insignia had been removed from Aachen by Austria in 1798 ... We are even told that it was at one time his intention to eject the Hapsburgs, and be chosen Roman Emperor in their stead.” (James Bryce, *The Holy Roman Empire*, pp. 354-55)

As one researcher wisely observed:

“... perhaps the Imperial Crown may come to be seen yet again as a symbol of a political order that some wish to reinstate, with all the dire consequences this would entail.” (Dagmar Paulus, *From Charlemagne to Hitler: The Imperial Crown of the Holy Roman Empire and its Symbolism*, p. 15).



The octagonal Crown of the Holy Roman Empire, crafted in the late 10th century, consists of eight gold plates, four having various depictions from the Bible, and is studded with nearly 300 pearls and precious stones.

DOUBLE-HEADED EAGLE

The Empire generally portrayed a sense of freedom, well-being, prosperity. It had great

celebrations, banquets, festivals, wars, ‘war dramas’, mock battles and so forth. It was not a totalitarian dictatorship, but power was given to the Emperor to perform his duties to govern Europe. It will be so again.

“The charters of the emperors of the Holy Roman Empire invoke the One and Undivided Trinity and promise peace ‘to the faithful of God and of the Empire’, employing a sacral formula which goes back to ancient Roman and pre-Roman times.” (Friedrich Heer, *The Holy Roman Empire*, p. 6)

The double-headed eagle in particular has ancient origins: for in Mesopotamia, we find double-headed beast motives used extensively from the earliest of times (Gordon Childe, *New Light on the Most Ancient East*, p. 81), by the Holy Roman Emperors and later the Austro-Hungarian and

Russian Empires. In Europe the double-headed eagle, in its most famous form, is in Vienna. Since the fall of Communism it became the official crest of Albania and Montenegro.

The single-headed eagle dates from at least the Roman Empire representing its single dominance over the region. The eagle was regarded as king of the skies and glorious to behold. But it was Constantine who devolved the Empire into two halves, the Eastern half based in Constantinople. From then on, the Empire and thus Europe, functioned in two parts, symbolised by the double-headed eagle.

When the new Holy Roman Empire comes — a militaristic United Europe, of which the current European Union may be the genesis or forerunner — it will probably be full of pomp and ceremony, drawing upon the history of Europe.



The Quarternion Eagle, introduced around 1500, was a depiction of the Imperial States of the Holy Roman Empire. This 16th century woodcut by Hans Burgkmair shows the shields of the member states on the wings of a double-headed eagle and Christ, crucified, at the center.

Continued next page



Argenteuil, France - 01 29 2024



Lubusz Voivodeship, Poland — 02 20 2024



Athens, Greece - 02 21 2024



Fossano, Cuneo, Italy - 02 23 2024

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL SYSTEM

As with the dictators referred to above, this system will not take Europe back to the feudalism of the Middle Ages. Instead, it will be modern and seek to uplift the general populace. Consider that Napoleon and Mussolini started off on the Left, drifting to the radical Right but bringing with them social and economic reforms. Hitler, on the other hand, was always radical Right, but the original National Socialist Party had some economic socialist credentials, most of which Hitler eschewed to gain and keep power. To do this he had to gain favour with the old Aristocratic class, bankers and industrialists.

All three turned around their terrible economies by applying government intervention and support of private enterprise.

Napoleon in particular implemented legal, social, educational and economic reforms. The country was stabilized and he was then able to pursue his dream of a United Europe. As did Kaiser Wilhelm II.

From the above we can deduce that Europe and its allies will forge some sort of modern version of fascism, adoring the Holy Roman and even the Roman Empires.

Today there are a number of conservative, Centre-Right and populist parties that are gaining power or are on the rise. The media and even some churches think that these are Far Right which wish to forge a fascist Europe. But these parties are not Far Right (fascist or Nazi). Their views are similar to Reagan's or Churchill's. They are conservatives, but to the media they are "Far Right." They will know all about it when the real Far Right eventually gain power in Europe and other places. Right now these parties are backing away from encouraging their nations to withdraw from the EU. Their plan is

Farmer protests have been disrupting Europe and are taken by many as indicative of a swing to the right in upcoming EU Parliamentary elections. Bureaucracy, prohibitive green policies, and unfair competition from foreign entities are among the grievances that have led to farmers blocking major highways and border crossings in Poland, France, Spain, Germany, Italy, Czech Republic, Belgium, Netherlands, Greece and Slovakia, among others.

to rather take over it and the associated institutions, to eschew woke and globalist policies and restore conservative values. They do not want a fully centralised EU, but one that is cooperative while having a single military.

Some day and in some way, there will be a backlash in Europe, and it will slide toward some sort of fascism, eschewing globalisation and the woke agenda. Even Centre-Right parties can slide toward fascism or new parties might arise with a radical Right agenda.

There could be uprisings and revolutions that will overthrow the Woke Left. In some countries there might be military coups. However this all comes about, be assured that the true extreme Right will gain power and turn against the Anglo-Keltic Powers.

SOCIAL VALUES

The values will be conservative and the strong hand of leaders in Europe will finally wipe out the Liberal-Left and neo-Marxists once and for all. The ideologies of the Woke and Globalist elites will be modified if not swept aside for a new, conservative set of values while maintaining some social reforms and progressive views.

They will likely represent themselves as the saviours of Western Civilization (the peoples, art, music, architecture, history, family unit) with initial support from many areas of the world worried about the gradual undermining of their families, religions, and nations.

The promotion of the family unit and nationhood (in a civilizational and cultural context), the eschewing of post-modernism and decadence will be the order of the day.

This follows the model set by Napoleon, Mussolini, Hitler and the fascist dictators of eastern Europe and Iberia (the latter both before and after WW2).

RELIGION

If we look at the resurrections of the old Holy Roman Empire and its Catholic dominance, that should provide us with a clue to the future.

Consider Napoleon's, Mussolini's and Hitler's initial Concordats with the Vatican. But Napoleon took two Popes into captivity and Hitler had definite plans to do the same (both of these men

were deists). Mussolini was an atheist until his death and had many issues with the Church.

This new system will commence as a restoration of the Holy Roman Empire in cooperation with the Church but will morph into Roman Emperor worship with ensuing rivalry between the two resulting in disaster for the Church (Revelation 17:16).

THE HORRORS OF THE FINAL REICH

In a radio interview on BBC Radio in 2002 Clifford Longley, author of *Chosen People*, laid out how the Anglo-Keltic nations had seen off Napoleon, the Kaiser, Hitler and Mussolini, Soviet Empire and even (to date) Islamo-fascism.

What Clifford and other great historians and political analysts do not know is Bible prophecy. They do not know that the Great God of the universe has the final say — He can either intervene directly or stand back and permit the Devil to wreak havoc.

From the prophecies it is clear that He will allow the utter collapse of the Anglo-Keltic and related peoples (Leviticus 26, Deuteronomy 28).

If you are a resident within the Anglo-Saxon-Keltic nations, you have much to fear. Terror will be the order of the day in the years now before us.

But if you are repentant Christian, God will comfort and protect you during the dark days lurking on the horizon.

Each restoration of the Roman system is getting worse, crueller and more destructive. In the final installment in this series, we will discover the attributes of the final Beast leader — his successes and final defeat. □

Further readings (available on the internet):

- *Great Tribulation Coming on America and Britain – But WHY?* by Garner Ted Armstrong
- *History of the Extended Arm Salute* by Craig M White
- *New Order Coming in Germany* by Garner Ted Armstrong
- *Seven Restorations of the Roman System (repeated patterns) Chart* by Craig M White
- *Where Are We NOW in Prophecy?* by Herbert W Armstrong
- *Who or What is the Prophetic Beast?* by Herbert W Armstrong



WORLD NEWS BRIEF

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

CELEBRATING OR LEGISLATING?

The homosexual issue has been remarkably polarizing since the last quarter. The Catholic Church has been at the forefront with a ruling approved by the Pope allowing homosexual couples to be blessed, igniting a storm of controversy. This resulted in a clarification almost equal in length to the original ruling as well as exemptions for particularly incensed regions, such as Africa. Countries there have been moving to make the practice increasingly illegal. Uganda approved the death penalty last summer and other nations have sought to follow suit. In Burundi, conviction can lead to years in prison. Their President said, “If you want to attract a curse to the country, accept homosexuality” and, “stone them” while advocating for harsher penalties.

On the other side of the spectrum is Greece. Their legislature just enshrined gay marriage as law along with adoption rights for same-sex couples. While well behind other members of the EU, it is the first Orthodox Christian nation to do so. The change passed in spite of vigorous opposition from the church. The Church of England is also poised for a squabble over the issue. Prominent figures are pushing for acceptance though the church has maintained that marriage is between one man and one woman up until this time.

COULD POLITICS BE WORSE?

Yes, it could. Ever feel like you voted for a crook? So do the people of New Zealand. A member of parliament (MP) resigned citing mental health issues and stress after instances of shoplifting were

reported from ritzy shops in multiple cities. Surely truth is stranger than fiction. The allegations come as a double blow to ESG and DEI as the MP represented the Green Party as the first Iranian refugee to ever be elected.

Worse and worse. Lee Jae-myung, head of the main opposition party in South Korea, was asked for his autograph. Was he handed a pen? No, he was stabbed in the neck. He has since recovered, though emergency surgery was necessary to repair a major artery. Bribery allegations have plagued the past and future presidential hopeful which he claims are politically motivated, as the attack turned out to be.

In Ecuador, Fernando Villavicencio was running for president. Departing a rally in the capital, Quito, his entourage was attacked. Nine were injured in an eruption of gunfire and Fernando perished from multiple head wounds. His party’s offices were ravaged the same day. He was campaigning on an anti-corruption platform and the violence was attributed to the powerful drug cartels whose operations may have been placed in jeopardy.

OIL AND INFLUENCE

The International Energy Agency (IEA) and the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) find themselves with somewhat divergent opinions. The IEA predicts demand will peak worldwide by 2030 while OPEC maintains this will occur a decade later. The IEA also forecasts less growth in 2024 than OPEC, their views diverge by 1 million barrels a day. Demand, while increasing, has been hit by economic woe in China and recessions in Japan and the United Kingdom.

OPEC has imposed cuts on its members to stabilize prices though some members have been reluctant, or have refused, to cooperate. Angola is quitting the organization outright to pursue increased output. In addition, most of the predicted growth worldwide will be in nations outside of OPEC such as the United States. This will be an interesting scenario as the Organization seeks to maintain both its profits and its influence.

NO ESCAPE

At least not for Maxim Kuzminov. The 28 year old helicopter pilot notably defected from Russia in August of 2023. The transport pilot, after becoming disillusioned with the so-called “special military operation,” coordinated an escape plan with Ukrainian intelligence which included the emigration of his family and himself complete with new identities and a substantial cash payment. In exchange he flew his craft and its valuable cargo of fighter jet parts across the border and surrendered. Two other unwilling Russians were also on-board and died trying to escape after the helicopter landed. Maxim subsequently decided not to stay in Ukraine, instead moving to Spain under a false identity. Some allege he did not “lay low” but began socializing frequently. On February 13, 2024 he was confronted by two men in a parking garage, shot multiple times and run over by his attackers as they escaped in his car. He was found dead at the scene. The vehicle was later discovered burned and abandoned. Russian intelligence is widely believed to be behind the killing as Maxim was sentenced to death in absentia as a traitor.

ABOVE, BEYOND AND INADEQUATE

How can companies stop their AI chatbots from going the extra mile? If entertainment rather than actual service is the goal, let’s hope they can’t. A customer of DPD, a delivery service in the UK, recorded his remarkable experience. After failing to get any information on his parcel, or even a number for customer service, the customer asked DPD’s AI powered chatbot to tell him a joke. When it did, he then requested a poem about a useless chatbot. It willingly complied, calling itself “a waste of time,” “a customer’s worst nightmare,” and concluded with

its own termination at which “everyone rejoiced.” “Finally, they could get the help they needed, from a real person who knew what they were doing.” It also used foul language when prompted and disparaged the company. DPD quickly removed the tool from their website and blamed the malfunction on a recent update.

“PREBUNKING”

The year 2024 will be packed with important elections. Influential nations such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Russia, India, Mexico, Ukraine, South Korea, and many others will be heading to the polls. The European Union’s parliament is also up for election. With widely divergent viewpoints set to face off, many lament the spread of “mis-information” and fear its impact. Scarier still are some of the proposed solutions.

Google is lending its weight to these efforts through a division called Jigsaw which, “explores threats to open societies.” Not all of the tools it offers are insidious, though some amount to automated censorship. According to Reuters, the most effective tool it will be rolling out for elections is called “prebunking,” debunking or disproving certain ideas in advance. They will utilize a massive ad campaign, the ads will be followed by short quizzes to ensure users understood the message. While you might wonder who is going to sit still for a quiz, let alone watch an advertisement, the approach has proved remarkably successful in trials.

NATO EXPANDS

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was founded in 1949 in the aftermath of World War II. Founded with 12 members, the bloc has expanded to include 31 nations and is currently set to add one more. Sweden applied for membership in the wake of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, but acceptance was held up by Turkey and Hungary. A great deal of political pressure was applied by other members to secure Sweden’s approval. Sweden also committed to a number of bilateral deals, such as arms sales to Turkey which had been previously blocked for humanitarian reasons. Finland, which began the application process at the same time, was accepted far more rapidly. ■



BIBLE CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

LESSON SIXTEEN: LAW OF GOD, PART FOUR

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 fellow man, 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.

LAW AND GRACE

Much of the misunderstanding regarding whether a Christian must keep the biblical law (i.e. the Ten Commandments) revolves around the term "grace." Those who do not think a Christian "must" obey the law conclude that since we are under "grace" (Rom. 6:15), we no longer "must" keep the law. Those who follow this line of reasoning point to various scriptures — especially those in the book of Galatians (some of which have already been mentioned) — to support their case. They maintain that Christ came to free us from "the curse of the law," or that "Christ is the end of the law" (Rom. 7:4). But Jude describes this line of reasoning as "turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness (lawlessness)" (Jude 4).

This approach also illustrates a basic lack of understanding of the word "grace." "Grace," in its biblical meaning and intent, means "the favor, forgiveness, beneficence, generosity, mercy, kindness and compassion of God." Therefore, to be "under grace" means to live within this whole sphere of God's favor and compassion. The two greatest acts of grace are: 1) forgiveness of past sins, which God grants upon true repentance, faith and baptism; and, 2) the unmerited, freely-given gift of eternal life, which God grants upon the condition of faith. Hence, to be "under grace" means

that one's sins have been forgiven, that he is in a favored position with God, and that he is an heir of salvation.

But the Bible nowhere equates "grace" with freedom to disobey God. On the contrary, the exact opposite is stated: "Do we then make void the law through faith? [i.e. do we negate the necessity of keeping the law because we are under grace as a result of faith?] God forbid: yea, we establish the law" (Rom. 3:31). We, as Christians, "establish the law" because when we accept God's grace through baptism we are acknowledging the existence of laws against which we have sinned.

The true relationship between law and grace may be simply stated. Law defines sin because sin is the transgression of the law (I John 3:4). God's forgiveness of our sins is an act of grace. But this act of grace — this act of unmerited pardon and favor in God's eyes, along with the eventual entrance into God's Kingdom which shall follow if we are faithful — in no way grants us a license or permission to continue to sin. In like manner, a convicted criminal who has been pardoned or has had his sentence commuted by a judge is shown an act of grace, but is not permitted to go out and repeat his crime. Again, far from doing away with the law, grace establishes the law, because one who accepts grace acknowledges that the law has

been broken. Without law there can be no grace, therefore grace can never do away with law.

The purpose of the law is not to provide a means of earning forgiveness and salvation. Salvation cannot be earned. It comes by God's free gift. Salvation is by grace alone (Rom. 3:21-24; 5:15-16). Faith in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ is the only requirement for this gift of grace. Keeping the law even in the most spiritual manner cannot and does not earn salvation. The central message of the New Testament is that salvation is a gift of God through faith in Jesus Christ.

Yet this by no means negates the importance of law in the process of salvation. While salvation is in the final analysis a free gift, God will not give that gift to one who is not willing to submit to Him. Gifts are not given to the unappreciative, and lack of appreciation is indicated in many ways, including a basic contempt for God's laws or a lack of any enthusiasm in trying to see how God's laws reflect His mind (I John 2:4). Note again the well-known case of the young rich man who approached Jesus about the very subject of salvation in Matthew 19. When Jesus replied, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments" (v. 17), He was not describing the method of salvation, but rather the prerequisite for His free gift.

The Jews in the time of the New Testament understood the importance of the law and the many promises about blessings for observing it. The problem was that many went on to assume that salvation came by observing it. When Paul and other writers showed them that this assumption was incorrect, it became a major stumbling block. Even after the Church had been in existence for almost 20 years, it was still necessary to call a conference over the question of circumcision, since some still believed salvation was impossible without it (Acts 15). Paul had a deep and abiding appreciation for the law (Rom. 6; 7:12; I Cor. 7:19), yet he also understood that salvation was not earned by law-keeping.

The New Testament makes it clear that sin brings on the death penalty (Rom. 6:23). And "sin is the transgression of the law" (I John 3:4). Since all have sinned and thus failed to keep the law perfectly (Rom. 3:23), all have brought the death penalty upon themselves. Only the giving up of

human life will satisfy this penalty. Thus, the sacrifice of the Creator — of God Himself, in the person of Jesus Christ — is the only means by which that penalty can be paid and thereby removed from all humanity. No one (apart from Jesus) has kept the law perfectly; all have incurred the death penalty. This made the death of sinless Jesus, the Son of God, a necessity. Recognition of Christ's freely given sacrifice not only brings home the sober reality of sin but also enables us to see what true love is at first hand (John 3:16).

The enormous importance of the law of God and man's living within it can be measured by considering this immeasurable price that God has put on the conditions for the forgiveness of sins: repentance and recognition and acceptance of Jesus Christ's death as payment for our transgressions of His laws. This certainly reflects God's love towards mankind, and can begin to motivate man to express his love back to God by wanting to live within God's laws.

God expects Christians to repent of sin (Acts 2:38). But repentance alone does not remove the death penalty. Once one turns from his sinful way of life in wholehearted repentance, God accepts his repentance and Christ offers His own sacrifice on the cross as payment for the death penalty previously incurred by that repentant sinner. The Holy Spirit is promised to the repentant individual as a free gift which makes possible salvation and eternal life. Even one who is converted will still sin out of weakness. However, he can call on the sacrifice of Christ and gain forgiveness. It is the direction of his life that God is concerned with; God does not keep a tally, as it were, ready to send the individual straight to eternal death if he dies with a single sin he has not repented of on his record. Far from being some sort of "Almighty Bookkeeper," God wants to see His children receive salvation. He is very happy to forgive His begotten children who continually find themselves in trouble, so long as their hearts and attitudes are right — so long as they are wholeheartedly sincere and making progress despite weaknesses and setbacks.

Thus, the fight against sin is a very important component of the plan of salvation. Sin is horrible and heinous. Yet one can become so preoccupied

with sin as to miss the point of the law in the first place. He can be so concerned about making a mistake that he never steps out and does good. Some people so concentrate on their “sinful wretchedness” that they never climb out of the mire and exercise their positive spiritual talents as they should. Sin is important, but recognition of our sinful natures should not discourage or cow us to the point of not making positive progress through faith.

NEW TESTAMENT APPLICATION OF OLD TESTAMENT LAWS

Both the Old and New Testaments form the written Word of God. The Old Testament is no less the Word of God than is the New. It would completely miss the point of the relationship between the Old and New Testaments to require everything from the former to be repeated in the latter in order to be considered as relevant for Christian behavior. (Bestiality can be used as an extreme and ludicrous example to make the point.) Conversely, it would be equally illogical to attempt to enforce in the secular states of the twenty-first century every exact regulation given to the theocracy of Israel over 3,000 years ago.

New situations arise not directly addressed in the pages of the Bible. The modern world is not the ancient world.

Christians read the Old Testament in the light of the New, and the New Testament does make some changes. The teachings of the Old Testament may also be understood in the light of the changed circumstances of the Church in the modern world. The Hebrew Bible was written initially to a congregation or church organized as a special nation in the culture and society of the ancient Near East. By the time of the first century, circumstances had changed to some extent. Furthermore, the full revelation of God’s plan with the concept of a spiritual Israel required the modification of certain Old Testament teachings in their implementation within a physical nation. This modification process

continues today.

The Church, as ordained of God and authorized by Jesus Christ, has the power of binding and loosing — of making judgments on the basis of biblical principles (Matt. 16:18-19). New situations arise not directly addressed in the pages of the Bible. The modern world is not the ancient world. Without the flexibility of making judgments and applying earlier laws to fit newer situations, the Church would become anachronistic and ineffectual. It may be necessary to look at the environment in which the Old Testament laws were given — the society, culture, national situation, contemporary legal attitudes, literary influences and so forth — in order to understand the reason why a law was initially given to Israel. But to understand the intent behind the law, we must examine the lives and teachings of Jesus, the apostles and the prophets. Once the purpose and intent of each law is discerned, its application to 21st century life becomes much more clear and obvious. (It is interesting and instructive to realize that though the principles underlying God’s laws are immutable and unchangeable, the specific applications of the laws have changed in every period of biblical history.)

The following sections examine certain laws of the Old Testament and show how the Church has applied these today. It has not been possible to cover all the individual laws by any means, but the general principles used should be basically clear. Of course, some of these laws have been clearly modified in the New Testament. In other cases, the New Testament is silent on the subject, and the Church has made decisions based on the Old Testament alone. (Note that the Sabbath, Annual Holy Days and Tithing and Giving are covered under those titles.)

Circumcision:

One of the laws regarding which the Old Testament is very clear is that of circumcision. Circumcision was instituted as a sign of the covenant with Abraham (Gen. 17). It was a sign of the covenant with God and of the Israelites’ national identity. It made the newborn boy a part of the community. It was, in a sense, an initiation rite since any male of whatever age was required to

undergo it to become a part of Israel. Therefore, it is not surprising that circumcision became an important issue in the early Church (Acts 10-11; 15).

Christians do not consider physical circumcision as a requirement for entry into the spiritual community of Israel, the Church. The reason is that the New Testament makes it clear that the only circumcision that is required is spiritual circumcision of the heart and mind. The question had already been debated and settled in the early Church (Acts 10-11; 15; Gal. 5:2-12). While one could voluntarily undergo circumcision, it was not a requirement for membership in the body of Christ. To reiterate, the only required circumcision is spiritual circumcision — circumcision of the heart and mind.

Nevertheless, this does not mean that the Church rejected all physical rituals. Baptism was taught as a physical ceremony. The symbolism of baptism is that of death followed by resurrection to a new life. It is a voluntary act requiring active, conscious repentance on the part of the mature individual, whereas circumcision is an involuntary act carried out on the unknowing babe in arms.

The Sacrificial System and Temple Ritual:

The New Testament has a clear teaching about the temple ritual, just as it does about circumcision. As long as the temple was standing, it was certainly not deprecated. On occasion Christians actually offered up sacrifices (Acts 18:18; 21:23-26). However, the death of Christ was the supreme sacrifice, of which animal sacrifices were only a type (Heb. 10:1-18). The Old Testament system was rendered unnecessary by Christ's sacrifice. Christians look to this rather than merely to the "shadow" which represented it. Furthermore, Christians offer up not only their possessions (livestock and grain stuffs), but their very selves to God by presenting themselves as living sacrifices (Rom. 12:1-2).

Many of the laws in the Old Testament were specifically designed for a physical people who did not have the help of God's Holy Spirit and who lived in a national state. The whole sacrificial system was an extremely regulated and detailed physical ritual. It required a great many on a

continual basis to keep it going. With many sacrifices, the person offering the animal was actually able to eat most of it along with his family. Only certain parts were burned on the altar and certain pieces went to the priest. But sin offerings were burned whole and neither the offerer nor the priest realized anything from them. It effectively hurt one's pocketbook to sin!

The sin offering we look to is not an animal offered at the temple altar: it is the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

The principle of sacrifice has certainly not been eliminated for New Testament Christians. However, the sin offering we look to is not an animal offered at the temple altar: it is the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. His death rendered the physical sacrificial system unnecessary for converted Christians. This system had pointed to Christ. Christians can now view the sacrificial system with greater understanding than could the ancient Israelites who participated in it (Heb. 9-10).

This does not mean that the temple worship was wrong or even bad. The book of Acts shows that the apostle Paul himself participated in the sacrificial system on at least two occasions. He took certain vows which could be completed only by offering an offering in the temple (Acts 18:18; 21:20-26 and cf. Num. 6:18). It was not wrong for Israelite Christians to continue to participate in the sacrificial system; it was simply unnecessary. Of course, once the temple and Jerusalem were destroyed, it became impossible for them just as for all Jews.

Clean and Unclean Animals:

Many regulations in Leviticus have to do with being "clean" (Hebrew, *tahor*) or "unclean" (Hebrew, *tame*). These regulations had two functions: (1) They usually required washing which served as a physical cleansing agent and helped prevent the contraction or spread of disease; (2) they served a ritual purpose in that anyone "unclean" could not participate in the sacrificial

service. Ritual purity was a major emphasis in conducting any of the temple activities. Included in this regulation was the prohibition against eating all but certain types of animals (Lev. 11; Deut. 14) and such things as the blood and the bodily fat of these animals.

Modern science has also found that certain of the biblically proscribed animals present potential health hazards.

Nowhere in all these regulations is anything stated specifically about physical health. Yet physical health seems clearly to be one aspect of these regulations. The continual requirement of washing after touching dead bodies or engaging in certain activities has the concept of hygiene behind it. Modern science has also discovered the dangers of consuming animal fats (they are high in cholesterol among other things). Public health doctors are also acutely aware of the importance of quarantine in avoiding the spread of disease, another requirement for various types of disease in ancient Israel (e.g. Lev. 13).

Modern science has also found that certain of the biblically proscribed animals present potential health hazards. For example, the danger of contracting trichinosis from pork is one known by almost every housewife. Such scavengers as crabs are also among the most affected by conditions of pollution since they tend to feed in contaminated areas and thus concentrate the dangerous substances in their bodies. Granted, these are only potential hazards. However, there is always the question of whether there may be other, as yet unknown, dangers to be discovered by science in the future — dangers known and forestalled by the Creator of all.

True Christians, however, obey these Old Testament directions because God says to do so. God stated that certain foods should be avoided by man, and He, as Creator of both man and animals, knows best. The laws of clean and unclean meats clearly transcend any ritualistic system given to Moses and Israel, since Noah obviously had known about

clean and unclean animals generations before (Gen. 7:2; 9:4). It is recognized that total avoidance of these and other potential hazards in our environment is well nigh impossible. They are physical matters to be kept in balance and perspective. The Church does not have a rigid, ultraorthodox-type ruling which forbids eating out in restaurants or buying packaged foods. One simply exercises a reasonable amount of care, yet does not make a fetish of the regulations. Though the Church continues to abide by the prohibitions against blood, animal fat and certain animal foods, these laws are not considered to be of overriding spiritual importance since food does not constitute the Kingdom of God (Rom. 14:17). (The Church does not see any direct biblical support for the orthodox Jewish rule of not eating meat and milk together and thus does not have any such regulations, even though some of its food practices may otherwise resemble those of orthodox Jews.)

The year of Release and the Jubilee:

According to Leviticus 25, every seventh year was to be set aside to allow the land to rest (no crops were to be planted and the permanent orchards and vineyards were to be left unattended) and for the releasing of all debts and of all fellow countrymen kept as slaves. Every fiftieth year was also to serve as such a year (thus making two in a row) but additionally as a time when land should revert to its original owner. The seventh year and jubilee were major events in the society of ancient Israel and required the cooperation of the entire community to be effectual.

Today's society is not geared to such an institution. (Even the jubilee was evidently never observed after the return of the Jews from Babylon.) Farmers may not always own their own land. Those who do are often not in a financial position to allow their entire land to rest for a full year; their creditors would not allow them to do that. Debts are considered owed until paid, regardless of the year. (In fact, as discussed in the next section under "Monetary Interest," to release debts incurred voluntarily rather than from necessity was not part of the original intent of the law.) Fortunately, slavery is no longer practiced either, in most areas of the

world, rendering that aspect of the law inapplicable.

It is recognized that allowing one's land to lie fallow every so many years is a good agricultural procedure. Thus, the seventh year land rest teaches a principle from which farmers can indeed learn. Yet the same result can be accomplished by letting a portion of the land lie fallow each year rather than the whole land every seventh year. The Church recognizes the agricultural and other principles in the laws about the year of release and the jubilee. But, because of our differently constituted modern societies, the Church teaches that each person should observe them as best he or she is able according to his or her circumstances and according to the spirit of the law. Farmers are not required to let all their land lie fallow each seventh year, nor should they feel a moral obligation to do so. The important thing is that they respect their heritage — the land and its environment — and do their best to protect it according to the ability and the means God has given them. In this way, the intent of the Old Testament laws (Lev. 25; Deut. 15:1-8) is achieved even though the exact means of application may not be the same as in ancient Israel.

Monetary Interest:

A number of passages forbade charging interest on loans to the poor (Ex. 22:25-27; Deut. 23:19-20). The Church considers that this principle still applies today: one should not lend money at interest to anyone in genuine need. Yet most contractual

To require members of the Church to avoid all borrowing or lending at interest would be asking them to live outside society.

loans today are not for the purpose of assistance to those in absolute need but instead are a means of obtaining capital for an immediate project (rather than saving up the capital over a period of time). In other words, a person has an amount sufficient to maintain his life and well-being but wants an additional investment or luxury. He could save his money over a long period of time to obtain the particular item. Or he could be enjoying it now while turning the savings payment into repayment for a loan. It is perfectly legitimate to consider interest in such a case as simply payment for services rendered. Likewise, for corporations and institutions to be able to borrow money from banks is essential for economic growth.

Our modern society runs on credit. To require members of the Church to avoid all borrowing or lending at interest would be asking them to live outside society. The original intent of the law was simply to avoid adding an additional burden on the poor man who had to borrow because of his financial straits in the first place. Only in such cases of dire emergency does the Church consider it wrong to charge interest. □

SUMMARY: Read these scriptures in your own Bible:

- **John 15:10** - Jesus tells disciples to keep the commandments as He did.
- **Leviticus 11** - Clean and unclean meats (See Deuteronomy 14).
- **Luke 24:44** - Jesus accepts the authenticity and inspiration of the entire Old Testament.
- **Romans 3:21-24** - Salvation is by grace alone (see also Romans 5:15-16).
- **Romans 3:23** - All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.
- **Romans 3:31** - The law is fully established by faith.
- **Romans 6:23** - The wages of sin is death.
- **Romans 6:1-2** - Do not continue in sin.
- **Romans 7:7** - The law is good.
- **Romans 7:8** - Without law, sin is dead.
- **Romans 7:12** - Law is Holy, just and good.
- **Romans 7:14** - The law is spiritual.
- **Romans 8:4** - The righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us.
- **Romans 8:7** - The carnal mind is enmity against God.

Continued next page

QUESTIONS (ANSWERS ON NEXT PAGE):

- 1) According to Romans 6:23, the wages of sin is _____ [what?]
 - 2) Can the law, in and of itself save someone? Yes or No?
 - 3) According to Galatians 3:11, justification must be by _____ [what?]
 - 4) If we rely on the works of the law-the keeping of the law we...
 - a) will fail
 - b) are justified
 - c) are saved
 - d) all of the above
 - 5) Grace means...
 - a) forgiveness of past sins
 - b) release from having to keep the commandments
 - c) the unmerited, freely-given gift of eternal life.
 - 6) Which of the following are true statements?
 - a) law defines sin
 - b) God's forgiveness of our sins is grace
 - c) grace establishes the law
 - d) without law there can be no grace
 - e) all are true
 - 7) Which of the following statements is false?
 - a) the purpose of law is to provide a means of earning forgiveness and salvation
 - b) salvation cannot be earned
 - c) salvation is by grace alone
 - d) salvation is a gift of God through faith in Jesus Christ
 - 8) Salvation is a free gift of God, but comes with a prerequisite, that of keeping the commandments. True or False?
 - 9) God expects Christians to repent of their sins but repentance alone does not remove the death penalty. True or False?
 - 10) A chief element of the Salvation Process is to invoke the power of the Holy Spirit in the form of Godly principles [doing good]. True or False?
 - 11) The best way to fight sin is to displace it by doing good. True or False?
 - 12) Which of the following are true?
 - a) circumcision was instituted as a sign of the covenant of Abraham
 - b) it is not voluntary, but carried out on newborn infants
 - c) whether it was required of gentiles was debated in the early church
 - d) today the only requirement for membership in the Body of Christ is circumcision of the heart and mind
 - e) all are true.
-

13) Which statement is false regarding animal sacrifices:

- a) they pictured and looked forward to the sacrifice of Christ
- b) required the temple
- c) are required today.

14) The principle of sacrifice has not been eliminated for New Testament Christians. However the sin offering we look to is not an animal sacrifice but the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. True or False?

15) Clean and unclean meats was part of the sacrificial system and done away with the sacrifice of Christ. True or False?

16) Which of the following is true regarding clean and unclean meats?

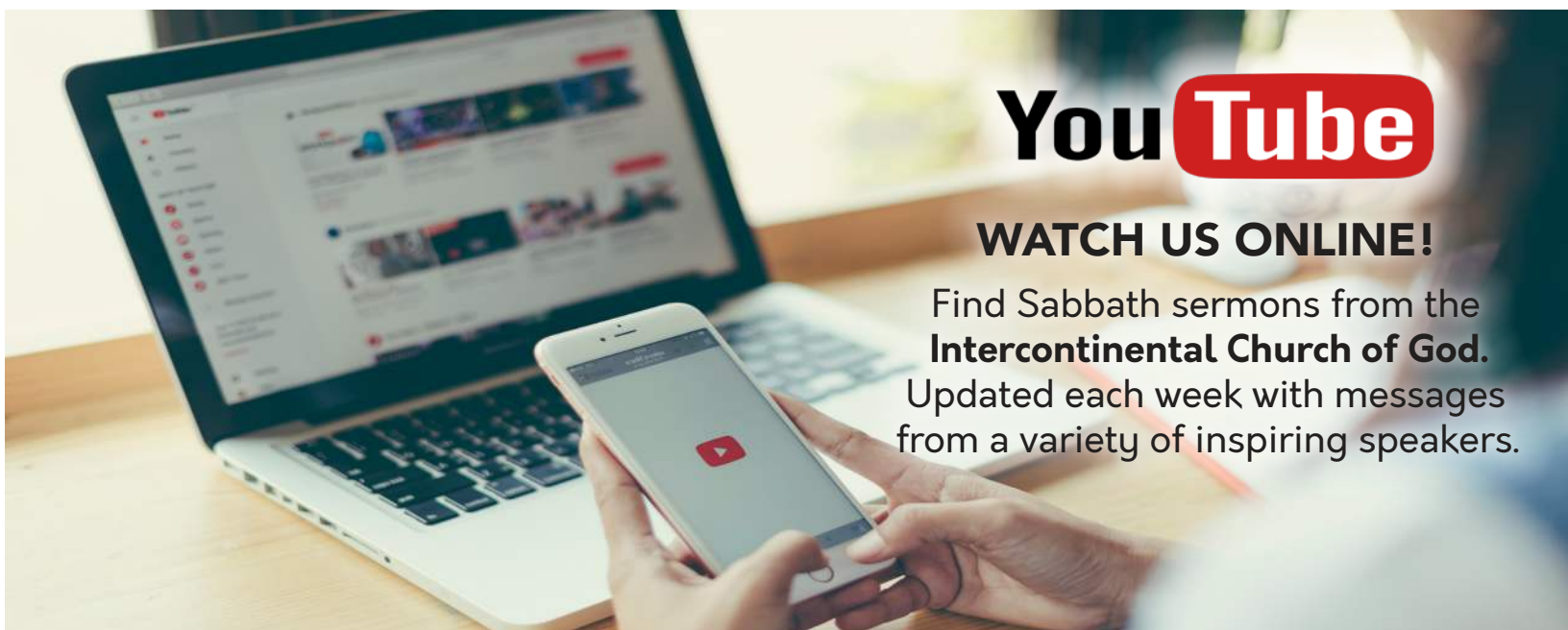
- a) true Christians avoid unclean meats, blood, and animal fat because God says so
- b) the church maintains rigid rules on this subject and monitors it's membership
- c) the church forbids members to eat in restaurants or to buy packaged foods
- d) the church sees these laws of overriding spiritual importance.

17) One should not lend money at interest to anyone in genuine need. True or False?

18) In New Testament times the emphasis is on spiritual, rather than physical, Israel. True or False?

LESSON SIXTEEN — ANSWERS:

- | | | | | | |
|------------|--------------|-----------|------------|-------------|------------|
| 1. (death) | 4. (a) | 7. (a) | 10. (True) | 13. (c) | 16. (a) |
| 2. (No) | 5. (a and c) | 8. (True) | 11. (True) | 14. (True) | 17. (True) |
| 3. (faith) | 6. (e) | 9. (True) | 12. (e) | 15. (False) | 18. (True) |



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