

TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

WATCH

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ENEMIES UNITE



ANOTHER B.R.I.C. IN THE WALL

by Michael Armstrong

BRICS is the acronym for the economic cooperation bloc comprised of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. The term came into use among investors, as those nations were seen as having the most potential for growth. That idea turned into actual cooperation between governments, complete with high profile annual meetings. What it will become remains to be seen.

Many new members are set to be welcomed into BRICS in January 2024. The additions are Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. While this may seem like boring news to the average Westerner, busy with the pressing necessities of life, it has implications that may someday be impossible to ignore.

First, consider the nations which form the bloc. Russia is on the verge of open confrontation with the west over Ukraine. Their invasion was launched just weeks after announcing a “no limits partnership” with China. To believe that is a mere coincidence is a bit too much to swallow. Perhaps they believed

a swift victory was possible, as evidenced by their initial drive towards Kyiv, but to ensure even the silent acquiescence of such a key ally prior to beginning the conflict has proven vital.

Swift victory was not achieved. Punitive sanctions and actual disruptions have profoundly affected food and energy prices worldwide. Many of the changes in supply that have come about, particularly in Europe, are likely permanent. Those who spent time “behind the iron curtain,” like Lithuania, have been the most vocal on opposing Russia. Possibly they fear conflict is inevitable and would prefer to engage before it reaches their soil. Time will tell.

With Europe virtually off limits economically, Russia has found support in other allies. China has been a mainstay. They have absorbed oil production eschewed by Europe and expanded cooperation in many other areas. Seafood is one, having banned imports from Japan after the release of water from the Fukushima nuclear reactor. Pipelines are also being built as

well as physical border crossings and railway connections to facilitate all types of commerce in Russia’s far east.

There have also been high profile meetings between Vladimir Putin and Kim Jong-Un of North Korea recently. Both are happy to flaunt their relationship before disapproving foes. Similarly, China recently hosted Bashar al-Assad of Syria. Both meetings are an open provocation to the West. For North Korea, “defense cooperation” may end up meaning lucrative munitions sales in addition to Russian assistance with its “space program.” Rockets do what rockets do, whichever way you point them, and there is a certain arrogance in Russia flaunting UN security council sanctions it helped put in place. In essence, “What are you going to do about it?”

You can also see the competition for influence playing out in Africa. The recent coup in Niger featured abundant Russian flag waving and slogans such as “France out, Russia in.” It is a repeat of what occurred in Mali and Burkina Faso in recent years.

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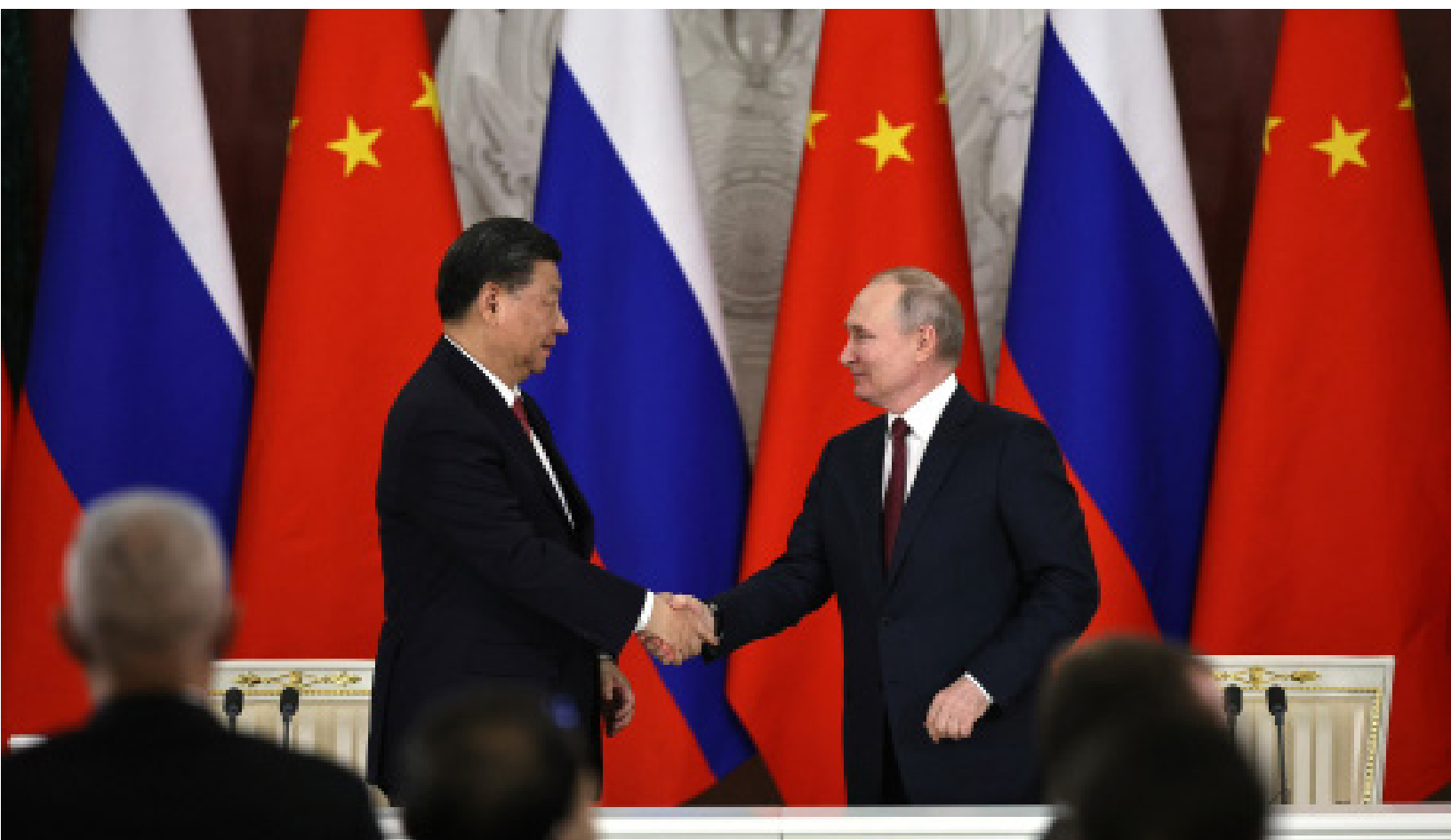


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WATCHING isn't what it used to be...

by Mark Armstrong

Watching what's going on has become irksome to say the least. Seeing part of a newscast is liable to cause all manner of consternation. Television, for the most part, has become unwatchable, lest you have a meltdown from the stupidity on display. It should be avoided late at night. You don't want to ruin a good night's sleep. Two nights ago they showed the border, with agents on one side of curly concertina wire and about 30 "immigrants" on the other side. These people waiting encouraged a small child to crawl through the razor wire. The border patrol (no

offense) cut the wire letting the child out, and the whole crowd walked across. News today is of a woman who managed to get to the top of the 30 ft. wall, falling to her death. It's the wall's fault, and you know who built that.

How many AIDS commercials do we need? Are you telling me that there are enough of these idiots who need to be "undetectable"? What does that even mean? Now it seems they're just trying to irritate the audience. The culture in media is not the culture of the population, at least I hope it's not. No doubt people are talking back and stomping

around mad. Every time you turn around there's some weirdo saying, "Detect this." They're trying to break the stereotype, but not doing a very good job. Unless the real goal is to rub our faces in their weirdness. I think that's it.

So the pretender's son has gone on offense. Can you imagine the discussions behind the scenes? "Nobody likes the IRS, so we'll sue them!" Apparently the bag boy forgot about the laptop he left at the repair shop. He ought to sue himself, for portraying his life as a ridiculous parody of corruption. The damages would be huge!

It seems like everything that should be covered here is horribly upsetting. Some of us have grandkids and want the kind of freedom we enjoyed for them, and the next generation and the one after that. But the government and the media have other plans. They want little health apparatchiks telling everyone what to do. They need somebody you never heard of ordering you around, like you don't know what's good for you. They'll use fear. Maybe you'll obey because you're scared not to. Through the COVID mess, the riots, the looting and burning, nobody seems



Juarez, Mexico: Migrants, mainly from Venezuela, lined up for processing at the Mexico-US border.

to know which end is up. Off balance, forever, that's just the way they want you. That way you're more likely to buy into whatever panic they're selling.

The networks are complicated. The state governments by and large went along (with a few notable exceptions) and tried to scare everybody into staying home, or wearing a mask if you just had to go out.

No question it worked. It nearly destroyed the economy. Kids have an excuse for not knowing anything. When we realize how empty-headed they are, we know what to blame. COVID!!! For years the media and the government tried to make everyone get flu shots. If you read up on them, you know that they weren't very successful in getting us to comply. So they had to scare the stuffin' out of everybody, and that pretty much did it. Want to keep your job? Want to get on a plane? Want to go in a store? Mask up! Some of us never put one on. Fat chance we'll cooperate if they try to replay the scare. They better figure



View of the ruined city of Bakhmut, in Donetsk region of Ukraine.

some way to nail us down. You just can't have people running around and refusing to cooperate with orders from the little doctor.

It looks like they've planned a miserable future for us. Can you believe Zelensky showed up at the United Nations to lecture the world about global warming? He probably agreed to do it as a condition of some donation to the cause. If there's ever an accounting of the money that's been given to Ukraine, that would be interesting. What's this war about, anyway? What convoluted logic is there for us to be forking over

assets and money at many times the rate of the Europeans? This ruckus is, after all, on their doorstep. It's thousands of miles and an ocean away from America. Now we're getting lectured about global warming, and the weather has turned beautiful.

Everything is urgent. It's urgent that we comply with all COVID regulations, for our own good of course. It's important that we jettison our way of life to save the planet. Otherwise... So they've gone there. It's a normal year, weather wise. But, run for your lives! ☐

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EVOLUTION'S LAST GASP

by Garner Ted Armstrong

Evolutionists assure us all life, just as we know it today, evolved ever so gradually. But if it did, how? Here is a baffling creature for evolutionists to gasp over — the ugly Lungfish. He's a fish, and yet he breathes air into a set of perfect lungs, and more than that... he estivates! Read how this strange-breathing creature fogs up evolutionists' glasses!

A lone African probed intently in the dry, cracked mud of the empty lake bed. Stopping suddenly, he grinned hugely, showing white, gleaming teeth. He began digging carefully, removing surrounding mud from a lumpy clod of earth. He placed it in the hide bag at his side, and, whistling cheerfully, begins the long walk back to the village. He would eat well tonight, he thought as he felt the weight of the four blobs of drying, caked mud in his bag.

Whaaat? An African native eating mud? No. Lungfish.

These strange creatures look somewhat like an eel, and

spend their lives in the lakes and mud flats of South America and Africa. They have the remarkable ability to estivate — that is, to lie dormant, for months and even years at a time in dry mud, waiting for the next rainy season to again fill their shallow lake with water. They are sought by natives, dug from their muddy cocoons, and eaten as a great delicacy.

There is also one species of lungfish in Australia, but it cannot estivate. But how could these other five species of lungfish “gradually acquire” such a fantastic ability? How did a fish ever contrive to grow a pair of lungs?

The questions this strange creature evokes breathe a few shadows of doubt over the theories of evolutionists.

THE AIR-BREATHING FISH

Air-breathing fish are not very common. But there are five living species of fish that do it. They're the lungfish of South America and Africa, ranging in size from one recorded giant of six feet in length, and weighing one hundred pounds, to others with maximum sizes of about 2 ½ feet.

They're strange-appearing creatures, with strange habits. The strangest of all is that they “estivate,” which is a long, dormant sort of “hibernation,” except different and more extreme. It is claimed by evolutionists that these fish gradually grew a set of lungs, and gradually acquired the ability to lie dormant in dry ground, for months at a time.

Notice! “Lungfishes belong to the ancient order of the dipnoans — fishes with both gills and lungs. They date back... to the middle of the Devonian, when ponds and streams began to dry up and many fishes died.



A fisherman in Kenya examines his catch. The lungfish is considered a delicacy.

“The lungfishes were not only able to breathe air, but to travel from mud puddle to mud puddle on paddlelike fins. Eventually they acquired the ability to lie dormant in the mud, where they waited for the seasonal rains” (*The Fishes*, F.D. Ommanney and the Editors of LIFE, p. 77, emphasis mine throughout).

But how do such remarkable abilities — such intricate designs — just “evolve” gradually? Again I ask, if our minds are the end product of what evolution insists is a logical process, then shouldn’t our logical minds be able to understand, quite easily, the process by which they came into being? Let’s ask a few logical questions, then, about the lungfish.

WHAT’S SIMPLE ABOUT BREATHING?

Ever study into lungs? Most people never have. Most don’t know much about their own breathing process — and very few try to develop better lungs and breathing habits. We take breathing for granted, until we’re deprived of air!

Almost daily, we might exclaim, “I’m smothering in here — son, open the window!” or, “This room is stifling, and I can hardly breathe, let’s get some air in here!” But most of the time we take breathing pretty much for granted. Witness the millions who daily pollute their lungs with tars, nicotine, bits of burnt paper, and other waste material...

There’s nothing simple about lungs, and breathing. First,

breathing is a combination of voluntary action and INvoluntary action. Most of the time, you’re not really “conscious” of the fact you’re breathing. But, whenever you must, as in swimming, or other activity — you can hold your breath — sometimes even up to a minute or more. But much longer than that, and, unless you’re a trained pearl diver, you will die!

some of the logic that appeals to our minds.

NO INTERMEDIATE SPECIES

Remember, there are no such things as imperfect, or only half-efficient lungs today! No lungfish has a part gill, or one that is functioning imperfectly.

Every creature, whether breathing through lungs, wherev-

Where are the millions upon millions of transitional creatures, all of which would be at various steps in the imaginary evolutionary “trees?”

How could such a marvelous mechanism as the lung, with its millions of tiny globules of thin membrane, or “air sacs,” with the labyrinth of air tubes, sensory nerves, interlocking arteries and blood vessels, bronchial tubes, esophagus, and the like, develop GRADUALLY?

Are there any half-lungs or half-gills around today? Are there any partly functional lungs, and partly functional gills? Let’s dwell on that just a moment.

Evolutionists enjoy asserting their processes cannot be observed in action, because they require such infinite lengths of time. They speculate various human organs, such as the appendix, or tonsils, are “carryovers” from some remote time, and are ever so subtly and gradually on their way out today.

They use prodigious amounts of time to dodge behind when asked why we can’t see evolution in action. But let’s use

er located, and however shaped or arranged; whether “absorbing” through skin, or producing through gills, must exist on oxygen. Somehow, by whatever means, they must “breathe.”

There is no such thing as an imperfect, partly developed, halfway method of receiving that oxygen supply. Each creature, in order to survive, even moments, or minutes, or hours, must continually recharge his supply of life-giving oxygen!

Think again. If evolution could possibly be true, then where are the millions upon millions of transitional creatures, all of which would be at various steps in the imaginary evolutionary “trees,” only part this, or part that? Where is there such a thing as a part feather, part scale? Where is a part gill? Or a part lung? Missing!

There is no such thing as an imperfect, or partly formed, or inadequate, gill. Either it

produces air for the fish, and the fish survives, or it does not. If it does not, then the fish never existed. If it does, then the fish existed and survived, whatever the span of time that survival took.

And, supposing (which is not true) there was such a thing as an imperfect breathing apparatus — and the fish could only live for a certain number of hours or days — which would be easier? To develop better gills? To develop lungs? Still better, why not “gradually” develop a much shorter life cycle; mate, spawn, and die all within a few hours and let the eggs become entrapped in the mud, and hatch when the rains begin once again.

But none of these occur. Yet, in each case, if evolution could possibly be true any of these would be far easier than the guesswork evolution advances about the lungfish.

Any such development (which is impossible) would have to occur immediately — on the split second — on the instant, or the fish perished. If so, then they were surviving. And if they were surviving, and passing along the same characteristics for survival to their offspring, then their offspring would look just like they did, and would be surviving in the same way, and there was NO NEED to change it.

Confusing, isn't it? There are no such creatures living today — nor is there a shred of proof in the prodigious evidence from fossil life that any such creatures ever lived! But think further. If evolution has a gasp of a chance to be true, there would have to be

far more of those halfway creatures than the “more advanced” ones!

If there were such a thing as evolution, then we should have to observe, somewhere in the world today, an august body of men whose duty it was to “decide” who may belong to the human family, and who must remain in the trees! There would be thousands of creatures who would be part this, and part that. They would be even more bizarre, weird, and ugly, in most cases, than some of the creatures that do exist today. But no such creatures exist. Nor did they, ever.

Again, remember — if the “intermediate” species (which are missing in the fossil record) are missing because they were not so well “equipped to survive” then it would naturally follow there would be far more of such creatures in the fossils than the “equipped” or “fully developed” ones. Why? Simply because if they were not equipped to survive, they all died. And if they all died, there would be billions and billions of them, because there had to be enormously more intermediate stages than the “final” or “well-developed” ones.

Therefore, the fossil record would be reversed! Instead of perfectly formed fossils, looking, in most cases, exactly like life on earth today, and no intermediate species, the fossils would abound with “intermediate” species; half this and half that, and would be almost vacant of the “developed species.” As a matter of fact, scientists would be bedazzled, confused, and bewildered in trying

to categorize such creatures, and would not know which would be the “terminal” or “complex” and which would be the “simple.”

Remember, to live at all, is to survive! Whether a tiny insect, surviving for only moments or hours along a stream or lake, and then falling into the water, its brief life cycle finished, or a slithery lizard, lazing in the sun for nearly a millennium, living — for whatever brief or longer span of time — is surviving!

One of the most obvious, simple, and shockingly damaging evidences against evolutionary thought is the total absence of intermediate species — living or dead. But let's go back to the lungfish, and the quote you read from an author concerning his remarkable ability.

IF HE DID — HOW DID HE?

Remember, we read, “The lungfishes were not only able to breathe air, but to travel from mud puddle to mud puddle on paddlelike fins. Eventually they acquired the ability to lie dormant in the mud, where they waited for the seasonal rains.” But how did the ancestors of lungfish first become able to “breathe air?”

Evolutionists tell us they simply began to “gulp air.” The air they swallowed — we are expected to swallow — passed through the intestinal tract and was regurgitated. Or the air may have simply been gulped so that oxygen would be absorbed through the moist skin in the mouth and throat. Later, these pre-lungfish developed this new breathing idea into “lungs.”

But that isn't the end of this fishy story. Some of these fish with lungs, we are told, were the ancestors of birds and mammals by way of the amphibians and reptiles. And for those that decided to remain in water, this "lung" became an air float by which fishes improved their swimming.

One author, realizing the fanciful ring to these notions, apologetically exclaimed, "Even if we could have been on the scene when the fishes developed lungs, we could scarcely have predicted the ultimate significance of the invention" (*The Fishes*, Url Lanham, page 32).

Proof for this? None, of course. But we are assured, lungfishes were "able to breathe air." That's remarkable. So am I. As a matter of fact, I was born with a perfect set of lungs, and, though I don't remember it, began breathing from birth. I've been doing it ever since. I hope to continue for a long time — so long as oxygen is my life's source. But, when you read quickly a sketchy account of how this or that is supposed to have "occurred" in the evolutionary scheme of things, you just sort of pass over quickly some mighty important points. In scholarly "words" it all sounds almost appealing. But when you really focus on the problem, and ask a few logical questions, it's a different matter.

To be able to breathe is a miraculous, fantastic, incredible, intricate, perfectly designed, thought-out, planned, created process. It is a marvel! To simply toss aside in one brief thought that a fish was "able to breathe"

is entirely too simple for the truly marvelous process of breathing. There is no explanation of how the lungfish came to possess his breathing capacity. Nor could there ever be, in evolution.

But this is only the beginning of the problem. We are assured this strange creature was able to travel — over land, from mud puddle to mud puddle on paddlelike fins. All right, how was he?

How did he locate the next puddle? Did he have some built-in navigational equipment?

Did he have super smell? How was he able to tell the next puddle was going to be deeper than the one he left, and therefore would last longer?

And why travel, anyway? If he is able to estivate, which he is, then when his own puddle began going dry, he would simply estivate, and not bother dragging his tail a mile or two over sticks, rocks, moss, dirt, leaves, snakes, and all other objects, to the next puddle, would he? And why expose himself to every sort of predator? Here he is, dragging

A Fish With Lungs

African lungfish rises to surface to gulp air.

- Wells / Ambassador College Photos



Continued next page

himself along over dry land — in search of another puddle.

But, to really create the story, let's try to imagine the trip of the very first lungfish in all history. Remember, if lungfish evolved, then somewhere, sometime, there had to be that very first excursion from puddle to puddle — that very first breathing spell. That very first attempt at estivation.

INTRODUCING "GASPY"

So again, let's go back — WAY, way, way back in time, to the saga of the first puddle-hopping trip. Here he is — breathing in racking sobs. He's a slithery, long, muddy, air-breathing fish, wriggling feebly in a gooey, slimy mud bog. He knows his skin will soon dry out. (Please don't keep asking embarrassing questions through this story, like, "But how did he first begin breathing?" or, "But why not just estivate where he was?" or, "Why not just dry out, and stay on land?" Because you'll only confuse the story!)

So Gaspypy rears his head a full inch and a half, and begins his wearisome journey. He's headed for a deeper puddle. So he paddles, struggles, wriggles to the thickest mud, and begins slowly clawing, er, finning, his way across the cracking edge of the mud bog, onto the dry ground, and across the forbidding terrain.

Have you ever seen what a dry, desert-like environment looks like from about one half inch above it? Even a small twig can be a forbidding obstacle! One to take even a big lungfish's breath! But he crawls along.

How far to go? Which direction to head? How does he know there will be greener pastures, er, wetter water, ahead somewhere? Why does he get the urge to go in the first place? Please! No more questions!

Overhead, a few hours later, an evil shape swirls down, down, in ever narrowing spirals. How about that! There, stretched out on the sand, miles from nowhere — having departed the only dependable mud bog in twenty miles, lies Gaspypy! The buzzard lands — and begins his meal.

So none of the original lungfishes survive. Out of their bog, crawling around on land, some are eaten by predators. Others get lost, and struggle along into the desert, finally drying out completely, and dying of extreme exposure and dehydration. Others return to the bog they left — only to find it dried out, and too hard to burrow into, and, too late to estivate, they die on the bog shore.

Still others decide NOT to go looking for wetter water — but to stay where they are! But, forsooth (or gasp, maybe?), they haven't yet evolved the remarkable ability to estivate. And when the water is all gone, they die!

So, exit Gaspypy, who never existed anyway. You see, the creatures could NOT have known there would ever be another rainy season, anyway! Because if they first existed in such a climate, when yearly patterns were pretty much like they are now, then they had to be doing exactly as they're doing now or they didn't survive!

But if they lived in an extremely wet area, without seasonal drying, and seasonal monsoons, then they would have to have developed the ability to estivate, or to survive the dry seasons when the very first one came along.

That means, in a matter of days or weeks. Did they? Evolution answers this would be impossible! Then did some weird mutation occur? Did some ancient lungfish just happen to give birth to a little one that loved the mud? Did he pass this on to his descendants? Then why didn't they just go ashore, and stay there? Why didn't they just evolve into a snake, or a lizard — and live under a rock?

No — the word "eventually" will not fit when it comes to "acquiring the ability" to lie dormant in the mud, and wait for another rainy season. But this is really only a part of the many problems evolutionists have with Gaspypy!

PERFECTLY EQUIPPED TO DO WHAT HE'S DOING

You see, the lungfish is perfectly designed for his specific job in his own environment. Let's take one of the African lungfish species for example. When the dry seasons come to the Congo basin, or the Gambia river, or the equatorial rivers of East Africa, the fish squirms into the ooze nose-first, and then turns back upward, so his nose can be just below the surface and close enough to breathe, now and then.

But the lake gradually sinks in level, the fish keeps squirming further down into the

thickening mud, until his repeated surfacing for a breath creates a sort of cavity, or little air bubble in the mud, which, as it hardens, is kept open on top by the fish's wriggling and breathing.

As the water dries up completely, the fish can continue to breathe through a little blow hole at the top of the bulb-like cavity, without moving. Meanwhile, it has curled in such a way as to cover its delicate eyes with its slimy tail, with only its nose peeking out. Its body has been specially equipped with a slimy, gooey secretion, like mucous. As the muddy cocoon dries, this slime hardens into a parchment-like, waterproof cocoon that completely encases the body, so that the only opening remaining is a short little funnel where the fish is breathing.

But the lungfish, though he breathes, and estivates in remarkable fashion, is NOT an ordinary "air-breathing mammal." If unwrapped from his parchment-like covering and his muddy cocoon, he will die within only hours.

During his estivation period, the fish lives off his own fat! His whole body metabolism

slows down to a near standstill, with his breathing rate becoming slower and slower. Believe it or not, he may take only one breath every few hours in the deepest part of his estivation period. His little heart slows down to three beats a minute!

Now, in an arid, dry, cracked lake bed, this strange creature is able to remain safely ensconced in his parchment wrapping for up to seven long years. Eventually, the rains come. And, with the rains, the lake bed fills with water. As the water first drains into the blowhole, and fills the bulbous air pocket, the fish is unable to breathe.

The sudden cutting off of his oxygen supply causes him to awaken, and make convulsive efforts to free himself. The tail uncurls from the head, and the fish struggles upward. As the water immediately softens the top of his delicate blowhole, and the fish is now smaller than the size of his original cavity after the long fast, he immediately swims to the surface for air, and then goes about his search for tiny plant and insect life in his lake once again.

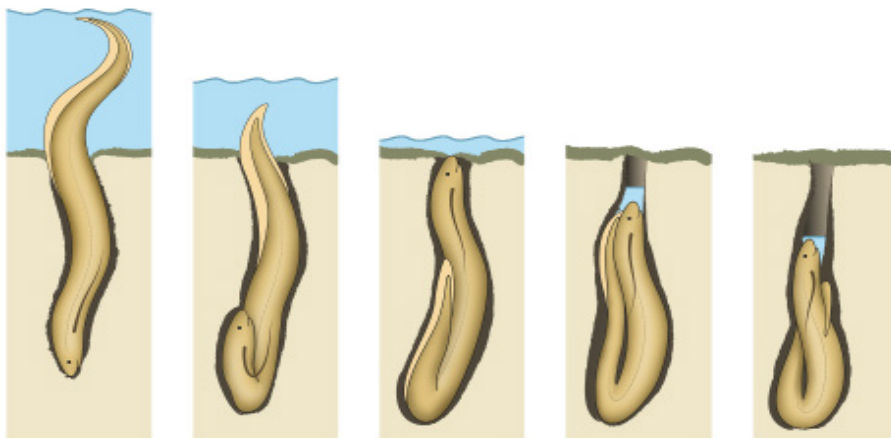
And all this evolved?

Ridiculous! Impossible! No, like any creature you could study, from the tiny gnat to the huge sperm whale, the lungfish is perfectly designed to do exactly as he is doing — designed for a specific environment, a particular place in the delicate balance in what man likes to call "nature."

This strange creature is only one more example among millions of the fantastic thought, the painstaking design, the incredible intricacy, and inter-dependability that goes into every living creature! There exists a great DESIGNER. A Great LIFE-GIVER. A Great CREATOR. He is God — Your God!

And He says: "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (Romans 1:19-20.) That means by looking at what has been created, what has been designed, what lives all around you.

God holds out solid evidence of His existence! He says you can prove He exists — not only by the breathtaking marvels all around you in this complex world, but by the fulfilled prophecies of His word! It's time you began to talk to that God, and find Him in this world of political assassination, sickness, poverty, riot and war. It's time you got on your knees, and worshiped, in awe and love, your own Designer, Life-giver and Creator! □



The burrowing mechanism of the lungfish.

Japan's Origins & Prophetic Destiny

by Craig M. White, FriendsOfSabbath.org

When one traces the various nations listed in Genesis 10 to their modern locations, it seems that many of them mutated into western and eastern branches. This is true of many Hamitic and Japhetic nations as pointed out in the book, *In Search of ... the Origin of Nations*.

Following on this, what can be deduced from history and anthropology, this seems to also be the case for the descendants of Javan as we shall discover below. The one descendant of Javan that I would like to dwell on is Tarshish. Below is the Tarshish ethnic family tree as found in Genesis 10:1-4:

NOAH

- Japheth

- Javan

- Elishah

- **Tarshish**

- Kittim

- Dodanim

What has this to do with Japan? Everything! Because the Japanese, like all peoples, are listed in the mysterious Table of Nations found in Genesis chapter 10. And we can use ancient history, anthropology and linguistics to track their route to their current homeland.

Then, by using historical precedent and Biblical prophecy, we can be reasonably sure what their next move will be on the world scene.

THE WESTERN TARSHISH

The root form of Tarshish is “rasasu” which means “to be smelted.” Tarsisu is derived from this root and means a “smelting-plant” or “refinery” (James Douglas (ed), *New Bible Dictionary*, p. 1239). The inhabitants of Tarshish were called *Tharsians* or *Tarseaiium* in times of old. They founded the city of Tarsus or Tharsos in Cilicia, Asia Minor (see Acts 9:11,30; 11:25; 21:39; 22:3) before one group branched off westwards. The Assyrians called the city Tarzu (Jan Simon, *The Geographical and Topographical Texts of The Old Testament*, p. 89). The peoples of Tarshish have left behind marks of their migration in the Mediterranean. For instance, a monument inscription bearing the name of Tarshish was erected in Sardinia.

The famous Biblical character, Jonah, attempted to flee to Tarshish:

“But Jonah rose up to flee into Tarshish from the presence of the Lord, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish” (Jonah 1:3).

Tarshish was a city-port on the Mediterranean sea-coast. Where was that? Many Bible scholars will tell you it may be found in southern Spain (Edward Blaiklock & Roland Harrison, *The New International Dictionary of Biblical Archaeology*, p. 435). For in Spain lay the city of Tartessus. According to Herodotus (*Histories, Book IV, Chapter 153*) and Strabo (*Geography, Book III, Chapter 2*), Tartessus is where Cadiz now stands. Carteria on the Bay of Gibraltar was also once known as Tartessos (Arthur Custance, *Noah's Three Sons*, p. 95).

The Tarshish of southern and central Spain was noted for its silver, iron, tin and lead (Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, Book IV, Chapter 34. See Ezekiel 27:12). No wonder they were named “Tartessus” (meaning “to be smelted”).

King Ahasuerus (i.e. Xerxes, reigned c.485 - 464 B.C.) “laid a tribute upon the land, and upon the isles of the sea” (Esther 10:1). This may have included Tarshish as his empire probably had interests there at the height of his power (Cyrus Gordon, *Before Columbus*, p. 200). One of his chief counsellors was actually named Tarshish (Esther 1:14). This was done in those times as high-ranking persons were often named after distant provinces (Gordon, *ibid*).

THE EASTERN TARSHISH

The peoples descended of Javan seemingly mutated into two different racial types; one an olive-skinned Caucasian type; the other a yellowish-skinned Mongoloid variation as did the other descendants of Japheth and Ham. Logically the eastern branch of Tarshish, dwelling anciently in Asia Minor, migrated with Kittim, a similar people, into the Far East.

Where did the eastern Tarshish finally put down roots? The Bible provides us with some clues:

“For the king had at sea a navy of Tharshish with the navy of Hiram: once in three years came the navy of Tharshish, bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks.” (I Kings 10:72. See II Chronicles 9:21)

“Jehoshaphat made ships of Tharshish to go to Ophir for gold: but they went not; for the ships were broken at Ezion-geber.” (I Kings 20:48. See the parallel scripture in II Chronicles 20:36-37 where it mentions “ships to go to Tarshish”)

These Scriptures speak in terms of a seaport to Tarshish at Ezion-geber on the Red Sea coast. The *New Bible Commentary* maintains that although these ships went as far as India, they could not have circumvented Africa to get to the western Tarshish (ie Spain) (Donald Guthrie (ed), *The New Bible Commentary*, pp. 335, 386) as this would have taken too long and would have been uneconomical. This Commentary concludes that a careless scribal error must have slipped into the two accounts of Tarshish

in II Chronicles (Guthrie, *ibid*). Two scribal errors of the same nature in the one book? How unlikely. Instead, here is a mention of an eastern Tarshish, a possibility most scholars overlook.

The same *Commentary* admits that there was more than one Tarshish and that there may have been one in the Orient, however it rejects the idea because there is no record of such a port (Guthrie, *ibid*). We shall see. Custance also believes such but admits that it is impossible to think in terms of ships of Tarshish bringing ivory, apes and peacocks from Spain (Arthur Custance, *Noah's Three Sons*, p. 94). However, the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* states that there was a Tarshish accessible from Ezion-geber (p. 734).

Back to the Scripture first quoted. The words used here of apes and peacocks are Indian (*Tamil*), not Hebrew (Ethelbert Bullinger, *Companion Bible*, p. 466). So, it would appear logical that the ships to and from Tarshish stopped over in India on the way back to Ezion-geber with goods then transported overland to the land of Israel. Josephus renders the same verse as “ivory, Ethiopians and Apes” (Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 8, Chapter 7, Section 2). The Hebrew here for “Ethiopians” is “Sukkiyyim” – a people referred to in II Chronicles 12:2-3 (see the article *Who are the Mysterious Sukkiim?* at www.friendsofsabbath.org for details of who they were and their modern location).

There were no black Cushitic peoples in Spain when this was written. They were dwelling only in East Africa and India. Here is further proof that there was an eastern Tarshish. Undoubtedly, as was stated previously, Tarshish migrated with Kittim and dwelt alongside them — this would have been in the ancient Near East and centuries later in northern China (Kitai or Cathay) before branching out. Consider that the Chinese Yuan-Yuan Empire and Yuanan region likely take their names from Javan father of Kittim and Tarshish. The peoples of Persia called those descended from Javan in Asia Minor Yuna or Yauna (Edward Rapson, *Ancient India*, p. 86).

Here is another clue. It is not generally known that the Japanese claim in their traditions to have been led to the island of Japan by a symbolic three-legged



Kumano-hongû-taisha Shrine. The legendary three legged crow, Yatagarasu, can be found throughout Japanese culture.

Below: Emperor Jemmu — Stories from “Nihon Shoki” (Chronicles of Japan), by Ginko Adachi. Woodblock print depicting legendary first emperor Jemmu, who saw a sacred bird flying away while he was in the expedition of the eastern section of Japan.



sun-crow (*Nihon Shoki*, Book III, Section 11). It is interesting that the only other area of the world where one finds such symbols are the regions of southern Turkey. Josephus wrote that “Tharsus [gave his name] to the Tharsians; for so was Cilicia of old called” (*Antiquities of the Jews*, Book I, Chapter vi, Section 1). Therefore it should come as no surprise that the ancient capital of Cilicia was named Tarsus. Is this where the Kittim and eastern Tarshish settled sometime after the tower of Babel incident?

Of further interest is the statement in a Japanese document compiled in 720 AD, the *Nihon Shoki* (*Chronicles of Japan*), that Ninigi, a forefather of their race, had four sons. This may have been Javan who also had four sons. From one son descended the Japanese emperor Jemmu Tenno. This son was named Po-wori which means “FireBender” and may be compared to Tarshish which means “smelter” or “refiner” (*Nihon Shoki*, Book II, Section 27).

THE SPANIARDS OF ASIA

When the Spaniards first encountered the Japanese, they referred to them as “the Spaniards of Asia” — by which they meant the “Tarshish of Asia” (San Augustin’s letter on the Filipinos, s.5; quoted in *The Philippine Islands 1493-1898*, Vol. 40, p. 192). It may therefore be deduced that this is where the eastern Tarshish is located — in Japan. The Spanish seemed to know or theorised that the Japanese were

descended, to a large degree, from Tarshish.

Colin, in his *Native Races and Their Customs*, writes:

“The principle settler in these archipeligos was Tharsis, son of Java, together with his brothers.” (quoted in *The Philippine Islands*, *ibid*, p. 38)

But where does the name Japan come from? From the name Jih-pun which was used by the Chinese of them and later came to mean “rising sun.”

Unknown to most, in Japan today four primary sub-racial groups may be identified:

1. The Okayama: The majority who are taller and fairer than the rest; they have a complexion ranging from yellowish to almost pure white; small mouth, finer features and slender build; they live mainly in the north (Francis Brinkley, *Japan and China Its (their) History Arts and Literature*. (Vol. 1), p. 38). These are the descendants of Tarshish. Buxton adds that they came from Korea and Manchuria originally (Dudley Buxton, *The Peoples of Asia*, pp. 217-19), near where Kittim settled in what became named Kitai or Cathay.

2. The Ishikawa/Chikuzen: A slightly darker strain, related directly to the central Chinese; these have prominent cheek-bones, large mouth, heavily boned physique. They are a mixture of the Chinese and Korean invaders with the original inhabitants (Brinkley, *ibid*, p. 38; Buxton, *ibid*, pp. 217-19). These are descended from Magog mixed with Tarshish.

3. The Satsuma: A darker proto-Malay or south-east Asian strain (Buxton, *ibid*); overall their numbers are few; they probably drifted into Japan via the Kuro-shino (Black Tide) current which sweeps northward from the Philippines; these dwell mainly in the extreme south (Brinkley, *ibid*). They descend from Ashkenaz who populated south-east Asia.

4. The Ainu: These interesting people are a mixture of proto-Nordic, Australoid and Mongoloid (Martin Hurlimann, *Japan*, p. 90; Richard Storry, *A History of Modern Japan*, p. 24); there are probably over 25,000 as of 2023. These remarkable people have such European features as oval eyes, heavy distribution of hair throughout the body, thin lips and well-developed jaws and chin (Harumi Befu, *Japan*, p. 15).

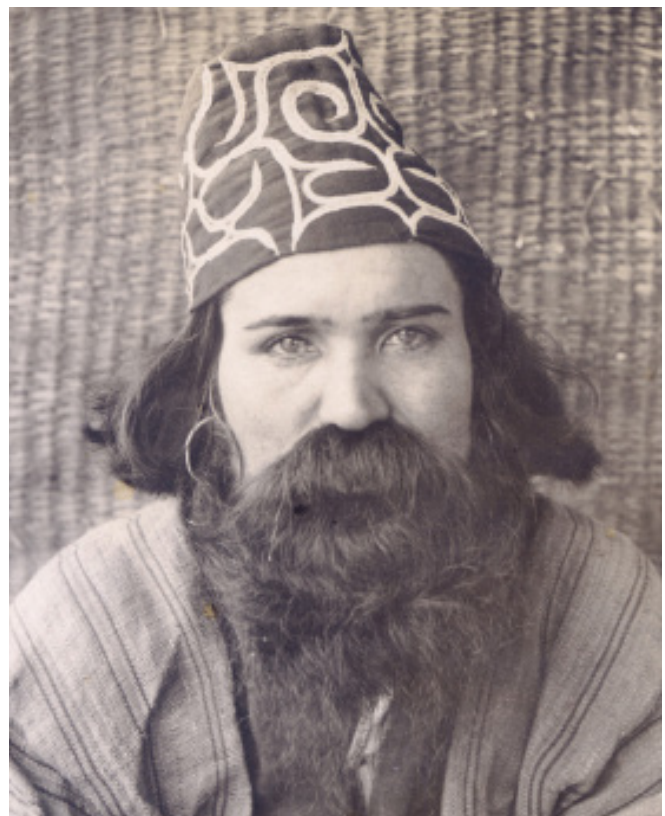
Thus, as Buxton maintains, from a physical anthropological point of view, the majority of Japanese are not a mere offshoot of the Chinese race, but a different stock which are related to the Chinese (Dudley Buxton, *The Peoples of Asia*, p. 215).

The Japanese also have a higher percentage of wavier hair than the Chinese; the length of head is greater and the cranium smaller. The face is narrower and the eye-fold less developed (Maksim Levin, *Ethnic Origins of the Peoples of Northeastern Asia*, pp. 316-17). Also, together with the Koreans, they exhibit a high frequency of blood group A in common with West Europeans (Laurence Snyder, “Human Blood Groups” in Kroeber & Waterman, *Source Book in Anthropology*, p. 160).

JAPAN’S PROPHETIC DESTINY

Now that we have identified the origin of the Japanese, let us explore their prophetic destiny.

We now know with certainty that in World War Two the Japanese imperial plans were to extend their empire through India to Iran; to Madagascar off the shores of Africa (Auguste Toussaint, *History of The*



“Ainu leader.” Department of Anthropology’s Japanese exhibit, 1904 World’s Fair.



Japan's military build-up has been welcomed by their Western allies. Its defense budget ranks among the top ten in the world. For the first time since WWII, they have counterstrike capabilities.

Indian Ocean, p. 239); the whole of Australia (with the exception of Tasmania which they were to leave for German settlement); and the western sea-board of Canada, the United States and Mexico (Louis Allen, *Japan: The Years of Triumph*, pp. 110-11).

World history would have been very different if they had possession of those areas, but a Higher Power had other plans.

Today Japan is aligned with the West and it is beginning to wake up to external threats and being encouraged to re-militarise. There have been a number of headline articles on this program such as: Brad Lendon (et al), "Japan approves long-range weapons to counter growing threats from China, North Korea and Russia," *CNN*, 20 Dec 2022; Christopher Johnstone, "Japan's Transformational National Security Strategy," *Center for Strategic International*

Studies, 8 Dec 2022; Nick Allen, "Japan sets off biggest military build-up since Second World War," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 Dec 2022; Zeleb.es, "Japan sheds pacifist ways and begins major defense buildup," *MSN.com*, 19 Dec 2022.

The build-up of the Japanese in response to China's and North Korea's missile threat is astounding. It may even seem like this is good for Australia and the Anglo-Keltic sphere and other peoples.

But will the eastern descendants of Tarshish remain as allies of the Anglo-Saxon-Keltic powers? What if they become turncoats?

Time can change everything — who says that they will continue as our allies in 5 or 10 years' time? Anything can eventuate and an Asian coalition can emerge that will invade Australia and New Zealand sometime in the future. In fact, several

prophecies indicate that the conquerors of end-time Israel will divide up their lands among themselves. One prophecy in Joel 3:2 speaks of the scattering of Israel and the parting or dividing of Israel's homelands amongst her enemies. Amos 7:17; Micah 2:4 and Daniel 11:39 all seem to foretell a similar fate.

Many students of prophecy have concluded that what occurred to Israel, Judah and Jerusalem in Old Testament times are mere types or precursors of a far worse calamity yet future. Given that the Anglo-Saxon and Keltic peoples of Australia and New Zealand are descendants of Israel, it would behoove them to wake up to this possibility.

Could it be that the biggest double-cross in world history is on the horizon? Jeremiah warns:

"She weepeth sore in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks: among all her lovers she has none to comfort her: all her friends have dealt treacherously with her, they are become her enemies..."

"I called for my lovers, but they deceived me: my priests and mine elders gave up the ghost in the city, while they sought their meat to relieve their souls" (Lamentations 1:2, 19).

The greatest double-cross in world history is indeed prophesied. Ezekiel explains who these "lovers" actually are:

"Thou has played the whore also with the Assyrians ...

"Behold I will gather all thy lovers, with whom thou hast taken pleasure, and all them that thou hast loved, with all them that thou hast hated; I will even gather them round about against thee, and will uncover thy nakedness unto them, that they may see all thy nakedness" (Ezekiel 16:28, 37).

These "lovers" are allies of the House of Israel that turn around, align with Israel's enemies and stab her in the back. From the above we can see that the Anglo-Saxon-Keltic peoples will be destroyed by her "lovers" or former "lovers."

But in the prophecies God warns Japan:

"For the Day of the Lord shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low. And upon all the ships of Tarshish. And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down" (Isaiah 2:12, 16-17).

God will humble the Japanese as He will all peoples. They must learn that it is ultimately God

who has given them their talents and wealth; they must thank Him for it, not be boastful about their achievements, patting themselves on the back. In the book of Psalms, David wrote that God "breakest the ships of Tarshish with an east wind" (Psalms 48:7).

WHAT NOW FOR JAPAN?

But the Good News is that Japan will repent. God says that, during the Millennial reign of the Messiah:

"Those [Israelites] that escape of them unto the nations, [He will send] to Tarshish and Javan, to the isles afar off [not Spain which is relatively nearby Palestine, given the global view of this prophecy], that have not heard My fame, neither have seen My glory; and they shall declare My glory among the Gentiles." (Isaiah 66:19)

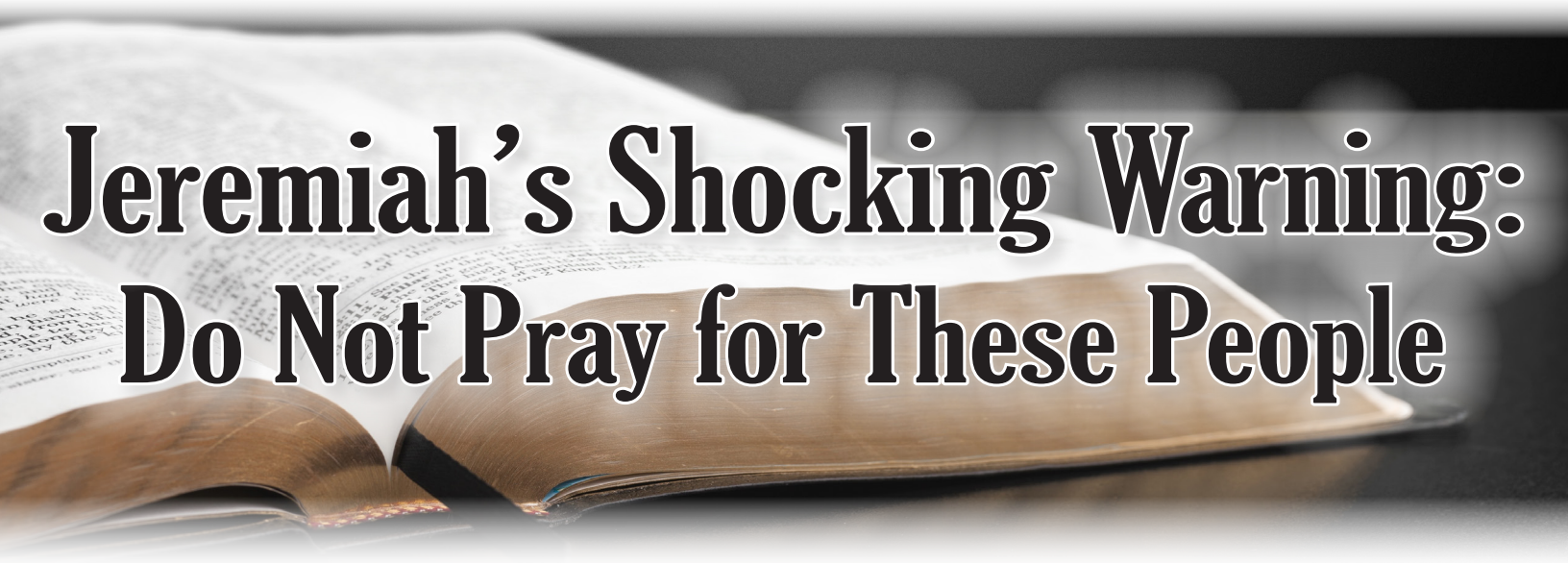
This prophecy probably cannot refer to the Spaniards, for most of them have heard at least something about the God of the Bible. Not so the bulk of the Japanese whose knowledge of the Bible is minimal.

Finally, Isaiah prophesied of the "isles" and the ships of Tarshish which, during the early portion of the Millennium, is seen returning to Israel her wealth and also taking the Israelites on their ships to the Holy Land during the Second Exodus (Isaiah 60:9). Diodorus Siculus, a most reliable historian of the Augustine Age, says that the term "isles" refers to lands which at that time were undiscovered, unlike Spain which was well known (see Iris Sulimani, "All Over the World: The Utopian Idea in Diodorus Siculus," in *Utopias in Ancient Thought*, p. 231).

Japan's and Spain's repentant attitudes shine through clearly in chapter thirty-eight of Ezekiel. In this prophecy, Meshech, Tubal, Gog and Magog et al will attempt to wrest this wealth from Israel a few years after the Messiah's return, but Tarshish will challenge them and take Israel's side (Ezekiel 38:11, 13). In the words of the Psalmist:

"The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents to God. Yea, all kings shall fall down before Him: All Nations shall serve Him" (Psalms 72:10-11).

Japan will, at that time, repent and learn to serve God and live in peace and harmony with the other nations, like all peoples will eventually do. ◻

BIBLE STUDY*by Dr. James & Natalie Ricks*


Jeremiah's Shocking Warning: Do Not Pray for These People

COULD THIS WARNING BE APPLIED TO THE WESTERN CHRISTIAN WORLD?

Jeremiah is the major prophet who warned God's people prior to the first fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple and city. He had been admonishing God's people to reject paganism and decadence for decades, then Jehovah sent him this shocking message:

Jeremiah 11:13-14, "For according to the number of your cities were your gods, O Judah; and according to the number of the streets of Jerusalem you have set up altars to that shameful thing, altars to burn incense to Baal.

"So do not pray for this people, or lift up a cry or prayer for them; for I will not hear them in the time that they cry out to Me because of their trouble."

The nation was inundated with various idols. Pagan peoples had a number of idols, some for weather or prosperity or fertility or success in battle etc. At this point in history, God's people had sunk to this level. They were complete backsliders. Note what God says.

Jeremiah 11:15-16, "What has My beloved to do in My house, Having done lewd deeds with many? And the holy flesh has passed from you.

When you do evil, then you rejoice.

"The LORD called your name, Green Olive Tree, Lovely and of Good Fruit. With the noise of a great tumult He has kindled fire on it, And its branches are broken." (NKJV)

Jehovah is telling them that they now rejoice in evil and lewd behavior. Does the West celebrate sinfulness? Jeremiah's warning is that God, having blessed them in the past, is now threatening to remove His protection and let them be burned down. God hates paganism, which included burning babies to pagan gods out of superstitious fears. They had been called by God "lovely," but no longer.

HAS THE WESTERN WORLD REACHED THE POINT OF NO RETURN?

When a plane flies out over the ocean it reaches a point at which it cannot return to the home base, it must be able to reach the destination or suffer disaster. Jeremiah was telling the nation that they had reached such a point. If a nation, such as Nineveh, repents God can remove all curses and penalties. They will be safe. Jeremiah is warning that the nation has gone too far down the road of decadence to turn back to God. The enemy had now entered the

BIBLE STUDY

land and the suffering had begun (around 597 B.C.).

Jeremiah 14:9-11, “Why should You be like a man astonished, Like a mighty one who cannot save? Yet You, O LORD, are in our midst, And we are called by Your name; Do not leave us!

“Thus says the LORD to this people: ‘Thus they have loved to wander; They have not restrained their feet. Therefore the LORD does not accept them; He will remember their iniquity now, And punish their sins.’

“Then the LORD said to me, ‘Do not pray for this people, for their good.’”

The king and the queen mother had both rejected Jeremiah’s warnings. But America has begun to back away from total abortion — the sacrificing of babies for convenience and finances. Is this a positive sign that America has not reached a point of no return?

Jeremiah 14:12, “When they fast, I will not hear their cry; and when they offer burnt offering and grain offering, I will not accept them. But I will consume them by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence.”

Through Jeremiah and other prophets, God warns them of greater disasters if they do not repent. But other voices in that society were contradicting what the prophet was saying. Progressive clerics, progressive media pundits and a progressive education establishment are also telling us to ignore the Bible and the history of western civilization. Why? So they can steer our society down a very secular pathway. Is a substantial repentance possible?

WE TOO ARE IGNORING IMPORTANT PROPHETIC WARNINGS

The spokesmen for Jehovah warned Jerusalem, but other false messages led them to remain on their unwise, sinful, pagan course. They wanted only positive messages that confirmed their decadence.

Jeremiah 14:13-14, “Then I said, ‘Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, the prophets say to them, “You shall not see the sword, nor shall you have famine, but I

will give you assured peace in this place.’”

“And the LORD said to me, ‘The prophets prophesy lies in My name. I have not sent them, commanded them, nor spoken to them; they prophesy to you a false vision, divination, a worthless thing, and the deceit of their heart.’”

What are the western Christian nations listening to primarily, Biblical moral warnings or progressive license? We know the answer! The pattern is similar to the time of the fall of Jerusalem. During the build up to the final collapse of Jerusalem, Jeremiah warns them of their bad attitude. The leadership is saying, “We are going to continue the course we are on despite the problems.”

Jeremiah 18:11-12, “Now therefore, speak to the men of Judah and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD: “Behold, I am fashioning a disaster and devising a plan against you. Return now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good.’”

“And they said, ‘That is hopeless! So we will walk according to our own plans, and we will every one obey the dictates of his evil heart.’”

They were determined to continue on with the plans and lifestyles they believed in and desired. They also rejected their godly heritage and altered their true history.

Jeremiah 18:13, “Therefore thus says the LORD: ‘Ask now among the Gentiles, Who has heard such things? The virgin of Israel has done a very horrible thing.’”

Verse 15 continues, “Because My people have forgotten Me, They have burned incense to worthless idols. And they have caused themselves to stumble in their ways, From the ancient paths, To walk in pathways and not on a highway,”

America’s strong religious heritage as founded primarily by the Puritans is now being rewritten by academia. America’s heritage of being a mostly godly nation of rugged winners is being erased. The God of the Bible is not pleased. Can we substantially return to God and repent? Are we close to the point of no return? The people of Israel had forgotten Moses who warned them of the dangers of straying away from the true God.

BIBLE STUDY

IF WE IGNORE THE OLD TESTAMENT, WE LOSE VITAL WARNINGS

One of the Parables given by Jesus warns believers of the danger of ignoring any part of the Bible. Remember that when Jesus gave this warning message, the New Testament had not even been written!

Luke 16:29-31, “Abraham said to him, ‘They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.’

“And he said, ‘No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’

“But he said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.’”

A person cannot be saved unless they listen to Moses and the Prophets — like Jeremiah. It is dangerous not to listen to ALL of the Eternal God’s warnings and messages.

Jeremiah 2:9-11, “‘Therefore I will yet bring charges against you,’ says the LORD, ‘And against your children’s children I will bring charges.

“‘For pass beyond the coasts of Cyprus and see, Send to Kedar and consider diligently, And see if there has been such a thing.

“‘Has a nation changed its gods, which are not gods? But My people have changed their Glory for what does not profit.’”

Jeremiah warns Jerusalem that the pagans never alter their false deities, yet they had rejected the true God and His blessings. God says it is unbelievable!

Jeremiah 2:12, “‘Be astonished, O heavens, at this, And be horribly afraid; Be very desolate,’ says the LORD.”

Has America rejected the sound and reasonable laws of God? Discarded true ethics for weird progressive concepts that are worthless if not nearly crazy? They were self-deceived... are we?

Jeremiah 2:35-36, “‘Yet you say, ‘Because I am innocent, Surely His anger shall turn from me.’ Behold, I will plead My case against you, Because you say, ‘I have not sinned.’

“‘Why do you gad about so much to change your way?’”

THE TWO MAIN REASONS FOR PROPHETIC WARNINGS

It’s important that God’s people understand the reasons for horrible punishments and learn to reject the evil ways that produce societal decadence and harm. God does not want people to think that bad results are just bad luck or a coincidence. God wants them to know why He is allowing great curses to occur. Note Deuteronomy 28.

Secondly, God is giving people the opportunity to alter course before future disasters occur. The prophets of God are vehemently warning, “RE- PENT, REPENT!” Further, they are explaining that we must repent with correct knowledge of the true God and His ways.

We ignore Biblical warnings in the Old and New Testaments at our own national peril. However, we can each repent individually. □

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Another BRIC in the Wall

Continued from page 2

Military juntas now control all three of those countries and they have signed a mutual defense pact to help each other retain power. It is a major blow to France, whose former colonies served as bases in the fight against Islamic extremism across Africa. Russian Wagner mercenaries had filled the security void in Mali and Burkina Faso. It is not clear how the situation on the ground will be handled after the “untimely death” of Wagner leader Yevgeny Prigozhin and the disbanding or absorption of his force into the Russian military. Financial interests are also at stake, including significant production of oil, manganese and uranium.

China is deep in trade disputes with both the United States and Europe. Sanctions fly in all directions. Despite its massive manufacturing capacity, Western technology has been necessary for China to produce cutting-edge products. This has been particularly true in the field of semiconductors. Sanctions cut off access to the machines necessary to produce the smallest, most powerful chips. The role these chips play in advancing AI capabilities and data processing is considered vital to our future national security. They have applications in remote controlled or autonomous vehicles, not to mention hyper-sonic missile guidance and defense.

All major nations are investing heavily in these types of

craft, many of which are capable of maneuvers the human body can't even withstand. In this type of conflict the best software or the most computing power might mean victory or defeat.

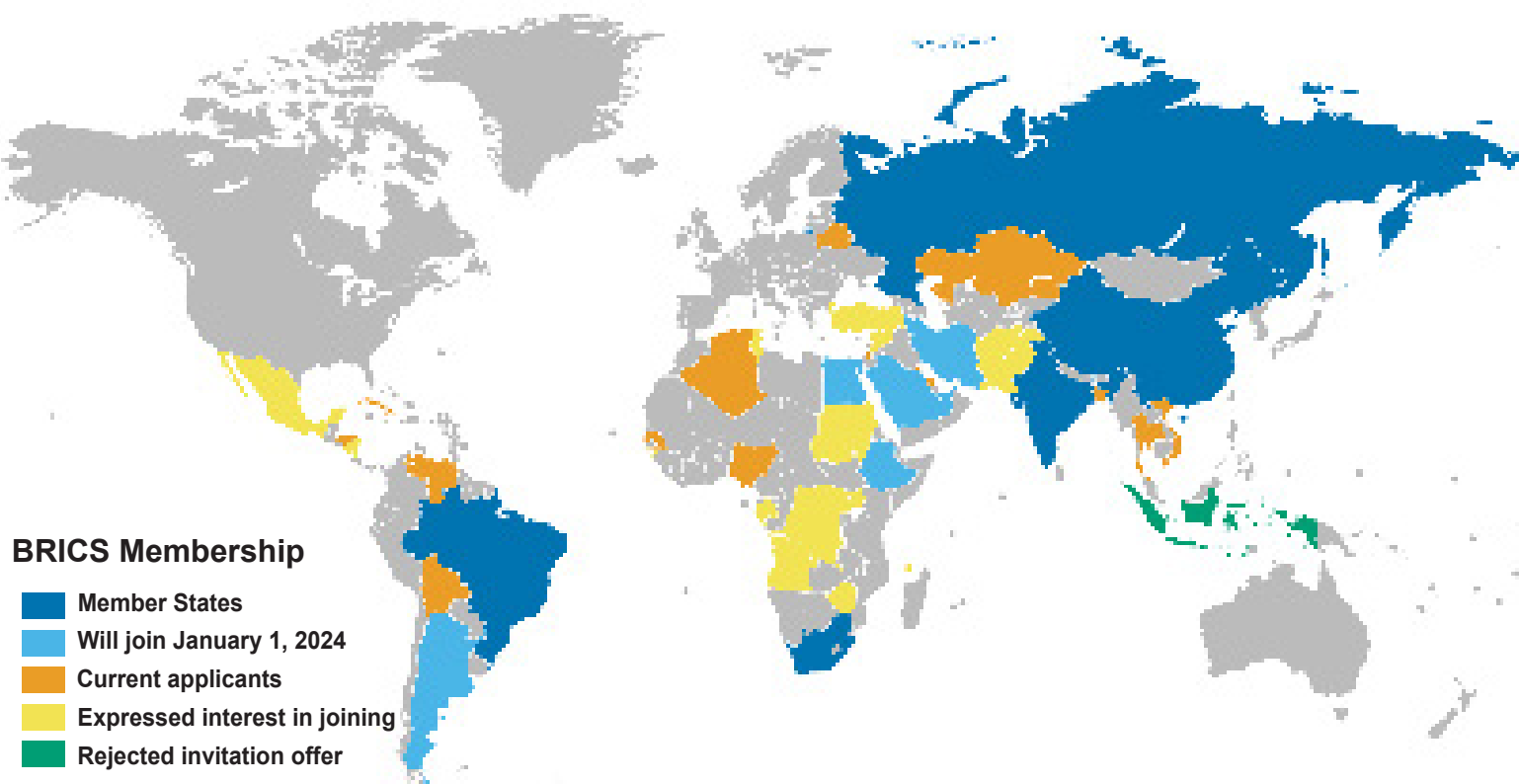
In a recent shock announcement, former Chinese powerhouse Huawei released a 5G capable smartphone it had produced domestically. Security concerns led to sanctions that eviscerated Huawei's handset business. They were denied market access as well as the advanced equipment needed to manufacture 5G equipment. They may have overcome the ban by adapting existing equipment through a painstaking process that results in slower and far less profitable chip production. Nevertheless, it was a victory for them to bring a competitive product to market at all. Never mind one that rivals or surpasses top of the line products from Apple and Google.



A Taiwanese F-16 fighter jet flies next to a Chinese H-6 bomber (top) in Taiwan's Air Defense Identification Zone. China probes Taiwan's airspace almost daily, intentionally taxing Taiwan's pilots and equipment. Photo 軍事新聞通訊社 / Wikipedia

As China weighs its options regarding Taiwan, the value of the BRICS alliance becomes clear. Russia and China's bilateral ties have already proven their worth and there is no doubt that the Western response in Ukraine informs China's thinking regarding Taiwan. Brazil is also empowered by BRICS. Again under the leadership of avowed socialist Lula of the Workers' Party, Brazil seeks a leadership role in forming a coalition of South American countries. They were the driving force in bringing neighbor Argentina into BRICS. Prevailing sentiment in Central and South America can be seen as more nations choose to formally recognize China over Taiwan. The region was once a bastion of support.

Many nations believe they can advance their own agendas through BRICS membership. Saudi Arabia has been incensed at inconsistent US support. They



have purchased Russian oil (a lower and cheaper grade than their own to burn for fuel) despite pressure. Their breakthrough “normalization deal” with Iran was mediated by China. Iran obviously seeks to avoid isolation and allegedly profits by selling drones to Russia. They have also supplied China with oil.

India’s role may be more complex. They have the world’s largest population, an economy in need of development and a complex history of alliances. They have an ongoing border dispute with China, who they see as a primary rival. They also have long-standing arms deals with Russia and have continued to purchase oil from them. However, Prime Minister Modi has also engaged in a flurry of diplomatic activity and deal making ahead of upcoming national elections. He has

visited the White House, negotiated many significant business deals and is currently pursuing a free-trade agreement with the United Kingdom. Taken all together, with their many domestic production initiatives and ambitious space program, we see a nation seeking to take its place among the great powers of the world. But this does not lessen their interest in BRICS; rather it is part and parcel.

What is being built is a counterweight to organizations like the G20 and even the UN. It is an alliance that can offset punitive measures like sanctions by significantly lessening their impact. The benefits of this are obvious to many current and potential BRICS members. In many ways it is setting itself up as an alternative.

President Xi of China attended the BRICS summit, yet

snubbed the G20 in India only a few weeks later. Divided sentiment over Ukraine rendered any statement from the G20, which requires unanimous agreement, nearly impossible. What was produced was quite half hearted. Consensus may have been reached just to avoid embarrassing India.

The UN and the G20 already enjoy limited legitimacy. Security Council members regularly block anything that doesn’t suit them. A competing organization could destroy even the feeble pretense of cooperation. And make no mistake, competition is the name of the game.

It seems that we are experiencing a continuation of the Cold War. While pure communism is out, BRICS is the champion of the “Global South,” a term meaning something between third-world

and anti-colonial. The narrative fits so well with what education has been pushing it could have been designed by academia. Lines between the primary actors are similar to the Cold War, but perhaps with increased competition over nations (or politicians) that can be swayed by economic means.

Economics is key to the entire confrontation. The New Development Bank was founded by BRICS in 2015. Essentially it is a rival to the IMF, though naturally it claims not to be. It is an alternative for financing in member nations and beyond, and naturally a way to keep the profits closer to home. It enjoys a AA+ credit rating, the same as the United States after our recent downgrade.

Most of the BRICS nations have also taken measures to

decrease reliance on the US dollar. While still limited in scope, just figuring out the logistics is a major step. To this end, the recent BRICS meeting called for a study into the potential for a common currency. Real de-dollarization would have dire consequences for the US economy.

Proverbs 22:3-4 reads, “A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished. By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, and honour, and life.” While the sky may not be falling, our nation could use an honest assessment of our past, present and future. Are we humble? Do we fear the Lord? Are we still willing to sacrifice, stand on principle and trust in God to uphold our cause?

Or are we corrupt? Are we addicted to luxury and pleasure

and consumed with vanity? Sadly, our enemies need not stretch the truth to impugn our morals or our leadership. While the population may be too hypnotized by entertainment or busy pondering its gender to notice, it is obvious from the outside looking in.

Changes need to be made before the situation deteriorates any further. This nation needs an education on the source of its blessings as well as the personal and collective benefit of Godly principles. It is our only hope in the face of such determined opposition. We must lead by example, without hypocrisy, being both willing and able to speak up for the truth when necessary. We trust in God no matter what comes. There is no substitute for His protection, but when it looks like rain you bring an umbrella. ☐

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**WORLD NEWS
BRIEF****IN CASE YOU MISSED IT****BELCHING BOVINES**

In the green global crusade for lower emissions no farm animal is left un-prodded. They claim livestock is responsible for well over 10% of global emissions. Front and center is the hated cow and its methane filled burps. To counter this, generations of cows have had their breath tested and been selectively bred to develop the trait of emitting less methane. Since most baby cows are not conceived the old fashioned way, this trait is now commercially available. It may catch on as some nations move to tax livestock emissions. Many remain skeptical, however. The gasses produced are a byproduct of digestion and the trait may actually be unhealthy. Some fear the true impact may not be known for years. Meanwhile, many generations will have been bred, making a course correction all the more difficult.

A NUCLEAR IRAN?

The drama surrounding Iran's nuclear enrichment remains. Who could forget the ill-fated nuclear deal, its cancellation, and the vain attempts to reenter it? Neither the deal nor its termination has deterred our unscrupulous foe from pursuing its radioactive ambitions. The deal relied on voluntary compliance and oversight by the IAEA to ensure enrichment stayed under 4%. It sought to entice Iran into submission with economic benefits. Opaque operations and the stonewalling of those tasked with oversight caused the next US administration to end it, instead hammering Iran's economy with sanctions, hoping to limit their ability to pursue nuclear programs. But sanctions can only do so much if other nations are willing to help Iran work around them. Iran's recent acceptance into the BRICS trading bloc illuminates the willingness of many to do so.

The current administration tried desperately

to bring Iran back into the deal and was snubbed. The contents of the deal are not even relevant any longer. Iran has a large store of uranium enriched to 60%. While 90% is needed for a warhead, what they have (that we know about) at 60% is enough for three bombs. We can only speculate about what they have kept secret. There are sites with traces of uranium that were never part of their official program. Iran has refused to offer any explanation.

THE LAND YOU ARE ON

So reads the extra 1% charge in the tax section at the bottom of a receipt in British Columbia. For the time being, participation is optional for merchants. Many would like to see that change. The funds go to support indigenous peoples. Steps are being taken in many places to entrench such measures like the Indigenous Voice Referendum scheduled for the middle of October in Australia. If approved, it would create an elected panel to "proactively" advise the executive and legislator on the needs of their communities.

UNEXPECTED DIAGNOSIS

Depression... Forgetfulness... Digestive issues... So went the symptoms of a 64 year old Australian. Respiratory problems and fever led to hospitalization. Many tests were run and a scan revealed an anomaly in the brain that prompted surgery. A living roundworm, 3 inches in length, was removed. The species is common in pythons, but both the size and location of such a parasite in humans was remarkable. Having foraged for edible grasses in areas inhabited by pythons, it is thought that the parasitic larva may have been ingested due to improper washing.

DISCOVERIES FROM ANCIENT ROME

Remains of a large, flat bottomed river ship have been uncovered at a coal mine in Serbia. It is near an ancient Roman town named Viminacium. Unlike many other sites, this one is not covered by a modern city. The remnants may date from between 200 and 300 AD. The vessel is nearly 50 feet in length, numerous other artifacts have been discovered nearby as well. An even older cemetery has been unearthed in Gaza. It was discovered during a building project. Some graves are thought to date back to the first century. Most still contain skeletal remains. Some were found with coins in their mouths, an ancient custom, and two decorated lead coffins were also uncovered.

“ADULT HUMAN FEMALES ONLY”

While such a rule might not sound discriminatory to the average citizen, the strange world of LGBTQI+ creates some of its own problems. At least that was the case at a monthly lesbian speed dating event. Trans-women, some shy of a complete transition, were also attending. Certain revealing outfits and awkward bathroom confrontations made the differences clear, leading to the “adult human female” rule being instituted. The outcry against the “transphobic” rule was such that the event was shut down. The venue yielded to pressure and canceled their reservations.

A REVOLUTIONARY GREEN IDEA!

The shipping industry is said to account for over 3% of global emissions. What can be done to lower the amount of pollution spewed by these cargo ships? A revolutionary new green idea is being tested... They are going to harness the power of the wind! That’s right, sails! Albeit not the cloth and rope rigging of yesteryear, but one does not need to dig very far into history to find that this method of propulsion is both tried and true, if somewhat lacking in consistency. Still it may have something to offer as our planet experiences many seasonal and consistent gusts. These experimental sails are more akin to airplane wings than anything your mateys could help hoist. They are well over 100 feet long, made of metal, and are raised and adjusted with motors. Leaving the crew with nothing more to do than put their feet up and dream of even less chartered waters.

VIOLENCE IN CYPRUS

Sentiment against “irregular migration” spiraled out of control on the island of Cyprus recently. A weekend-long rampage led to over 20 arrests. The town of Chlorakas, where the incidents took place, has a small population and many claimed they have been overwhelmed with migrants. The government actually prohibited newly arrived asylum seekers from settling there in 2021. But the island also has issues with human traffickers bringing people in illegally, as recent arrests show. Even rights groups claim that no effort is made toward integration, creating societies within societies that often have little in common. They also say citizens are beyond frustrated by politicians that promise solutions but do not deliver results. Whatever the case may be, tensions continue to mount in a way that can only lead to disaster.

THE FUTURE OF WAR

The conflict in Ukraine has demonstrated what conventional war + modern technology looks like. Soldiers on both sides of the fighting front live huddled in vast trench systems reminiscent of World War 1. This protects them from traditional artillery as well as drones, which have been deployed by both sides in ways never before seen. Cheap and readily available, they provide a relatively disposable means of surveillance and also carry explosives, punishing installations not fortified or underground. High speed drone boats have been used to disable Russian battleships on the Black Sea. Russia has also deployed them widely, including models that resemble miniature fighter jets and are capable of maneuvers no human pilot could withstand. All major nations are racing to develop these remote, and in some cases autonomous, technologies. Think planes, submarines, and everything in between...

TELLING WHOPPERS OR MAKING WHOPPERS

Burger King is facing a class action lawsuit. The charge? Deceiving its customers with depictions of its signature burger that make it seem larger than it actually is. Plaintiffs allege Burger King portrays the sandwich as over a quarter larger, with twice the meat and toppings that protrude beyond the bun. By comparison the product served is a disappointment, they claim. The case will be heard in Florida and seeks \$5 million in damages. □

REMEMBERING ROME'S CHALLENGE

by Michael Armstrong

An event called the World's Columbian Exposition opened in Chicago on May 1, 1893. It had taken many years of planning and an act of Congress to select the location for what is commonly called the "World's Fair." Nearly 50 nations maintained pavilions during the six-month long exhibition and over 27 million people attended.

It was a truly influential event. The recently composed Pledge of Allegiance was first recited there by children en

masse. The fair spawned the first American commemorative stamp set. Well known edibles debuted or were popularized there like brownies, cream of wheat, Juicy Fruit gum, peanut butter and Pabst Blue Ribbon beer.

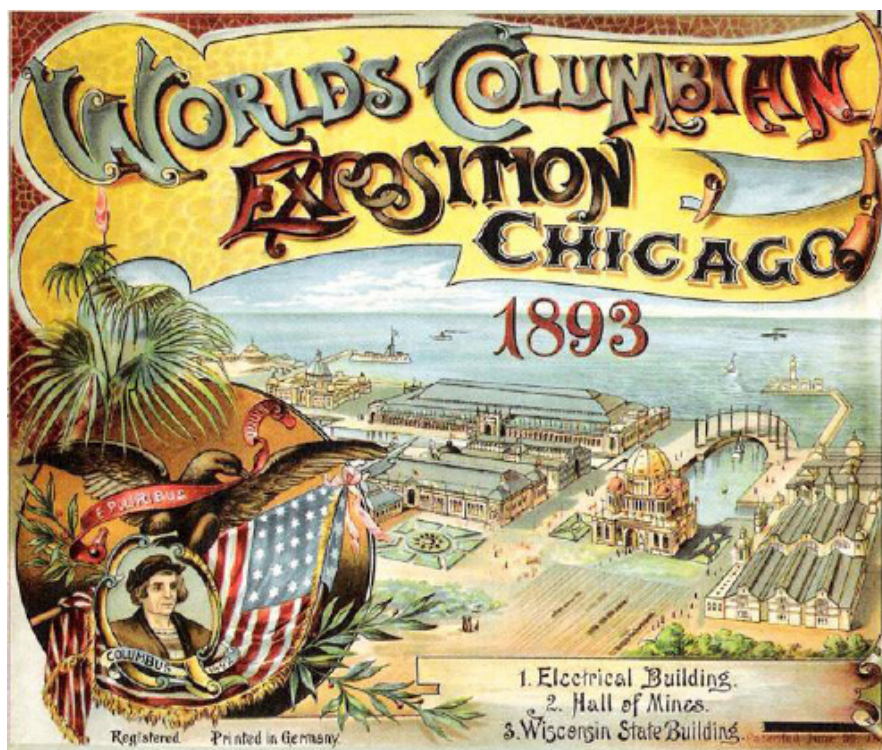
Manufacturing marvels were also on display such as a moving sidewalk, an electric kitchen complete with dishwasher, a prototype of the zipper, the machine that presses a penny into a souvenir and aerosol spray. The first Ferris Wheel was also con-

structed by Mr. Ferris himself. It sought to replicate the success of the main attraction at the Paris fair a few years prior, the Eiffel Tower. Many referred to it as a "Chicago Wheel."

It was altogether another world. Our nation was showcasing its growing strength and prowess. Lavish, ornamental buildings were constructed to receive the millions who flocked by horse and buggy to bask under electric light and see life changing devices we now take for granted. It offers many other insights into our culture at the time as well.

One is found in the controversy surrounding whether or not the fair would be open on Sunday. Initially it was to be closed that day, as much of the population considered it to be the "Sabbath" and observed it as such. Laws restricting business and other activities on Sunday still exist but were far more prevalent in 1893. The Sunday closure had been decreed during the planning of the event by Congress.

This sparked a lively debate. Many argued closing on Sunday would make it impossible for working class people to attend.

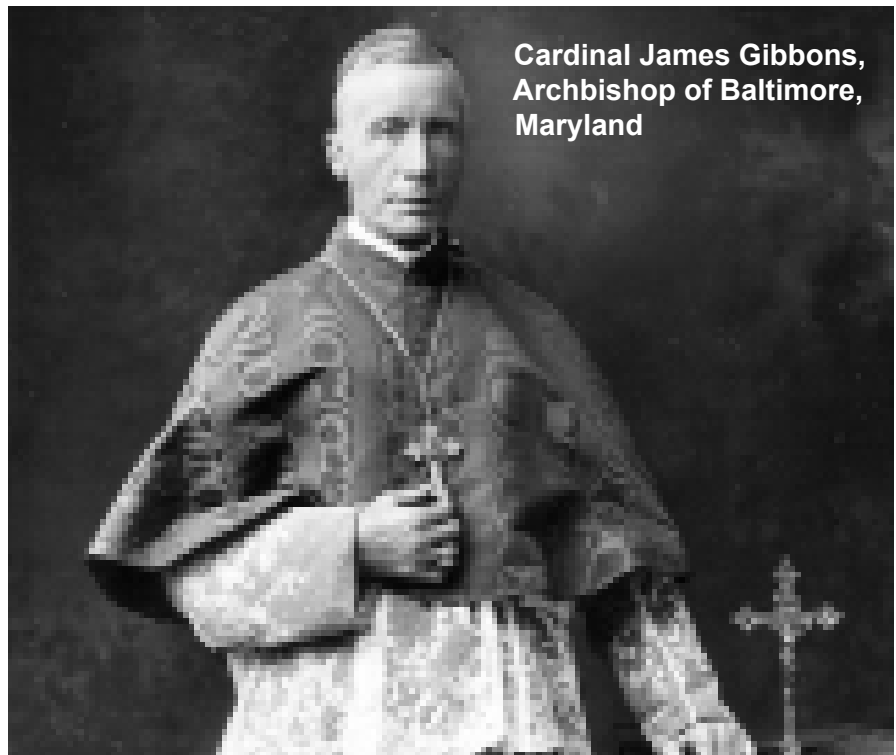


Others, like the Seventh-Day Adventists, contended Congress had no right to enforce a religious observance and that doing so was contrary to our founding principles and a step towards tyranny. The Adventists vigorously laid out their view in a publication titled *Appeal and Remonstrance* that included many examples and supporting quotes from our country's founders. It was ultimately decided the fair would remain open on Sunday.

The backlash turned out to be just as fierce. Pulpits reverberated in condemnation of the perceived desecration. Petitions sought to garner popular support against the change. Some groups even boycotted the event entirely. This outpouring of Protestant fervor in defense of Sunday created a unique opportunity for yet another group, the Catholic Church.

At this time Cardinal James Gibbons was the Archbishop of Baltimore, Maryland. He was considered the most prominent and influential Catholic in America. He was also thought to be utterly in-step with the Papacy. He had attended the First Vatican Council and voted to establish the doctrine of Papal infallibility. He was also a member of the College of Cardinals.

His official newspaper, *The Catholic Mirror*, was published in Baltimore. They had been sent a copy of *Appeal and Remonstrance* and used it, as well as the surrounding controversy, to issue a challenge to the Protestant world. The series of articles they produced was reprinted in a volume titled *Rome's Challenge*.



**Cardinal James Gibbons,
Archbishop of Baltimore,
Maryland**

The arguments advanced are as illuminating and compelling today as they were in 1893.

It begins by asserting the common creed among Protestants, that of basing their beliefs on scripture alone. It asks, "What Protestant pulpit does not ring almost every Sunday with loud and impassioned invectives against Sabbath violation?" It sets up the majority belief, Sunday observance, against that of the minority who observe Saturday. But it is impossible for both views to be the true interpretation of scripture. How the *Catholic Mirror* proceeds to dispense with this problem may surprise you.

"The Protestant world has been, from its infancy, in the sixteenth century, in thorough accord with the Catholic Church, in keeping 'holy' not Saturday but Sunday." Most Protestants would not argue with that. However, if claiming to rely only on God's

word, the *Mirror* says, "...they have been teaching and practising what is Scripturally false for over three centuries..." (*Rome's Challenge*, Page 5) Shocked yet?

The series then sets out to answer three questions. 1. Which day does the Bible say to keep Holy? 2. Has the New Testament modified the original command? 3. Have Protestants been obeying the Bible? And if not, why? The next article dives into the first question.

Scriptures cited include Genesis 2:2, the establishment of the Sabbath day at creation. Exodus 20 is also used, the giving of the Ten Commandments. It cites Exodus 31:15-16 which talks about the Sabbath as a perpetual sign and an everlasting covenant. They write:

"In the Old Testament, reference is made one hundred and twenty-six times to the Sabbath, and all these texts conspire har-

moniously in voicing the will of God commanding the seventh day to be kept, because God Himself first kept it, making it obligatory on all as ‘a perpetual covenant.’ Nor can we imagine anyone foolhardy enough to question the identity of Saturday with the Sabbath or seventh day, seeing that the people of Israel

stance of their scrupulous observance of it after His death, and, whilst His body was yet in the tomb, Luke (23:56) informs us: ‘And they returned and prepared spices and ointments, and rested on the Sabbath day according to the commandment.’” (Page 10)

The Gospels providing no change, the reader is encouraged

could not be effected on the Sabbath, and was consequently deferred to the next convenient day; viz., Sunday, or the first day of the week.” (Page 17)

The next article addressed uses of the phrase “the Lord’s day” or “the day of the Lord,” references to the Sabbath and the first day of the week “having been found not to afford the slightest clue to a change of will on the part of God...” (Page 18) For scriptures they advanced Acts 2:20, 1 Corinthians 1:8, 1 Corinthians 5:5, 2 Corinthians 1:13-14, Philippians 1:10, 2 Peter 3:10, 2 Peter 3:12. All clearly refer to the day of judgment, not just another Sunday.

The last instance remaining is from Revelation 1:10, “I was in the spirit on the Lord’s day...” It is noted that in the Gospel of John, Sunday had been referred to as “the first day of the week” twice, in John 20:1 and 20:19. (Page 19) Added to that, the context provided by the rest of the book of Revelation is undeniable. Nor is it reasonable that inspired texts would differ so drastically in the meaning ascribed to a phrase, “the expression ‘the Lord’s day’ being confined in scripture to the day of Judgement exclusively.” (Page 20)

The *Mirror* concludes, “The Bible and the Sabbath constitute the watchword of Protestantism; but we have demonstrated that it is the Bible against their Sabbath. We have shown that no greater contradiction ever existed than their theory and practice.” (Page 23) It closes with even stronger words, “Their pretense for leav-

“They [Protestants] adopted the written word as their sole teacher, which they had no sooner done than they abandoned it promptly...”

have been keeping the Saturday from the giving of the law...” (Page 8)

After emphasizing how serious Sabbath-breaking was considered, the article moves on to the second question: has the command been modified? Quote, “Examining the New Testament from cover to cover, critically, we find the Sabbath referred to sixty-one times. We find, too, that the Saviour invariably selected the Sabbath (Saturday) to teach in the synagogues and work miracles. The four Gospels refer to the Sabbath (Saturday) fifty-one times.

“In one instance the Redeemer refers to Himself as ‘the Lord of the Sabbath,’ as mentioned by Matthew and Luke, but during the whole record of His life, whilst invariably keeping and utilizing the day (Saturday), He never once hinted at a desire to change it.

“His apostles and personal friends afford us a striking in-

stance of their scrupulous observance of it after His death, and, whilst His body was yet in the tomb, Luke (23:56) informs us: ‘And they returned and prepared spices and ointments, and rested on the Sabbath day according to the commandment.’” (Page 10)

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to search further, on into the book of Acts for evidence. The *Mirror* asserts Saturday is invariably the Sabbath mentioned, offering for scripture, “Acts 13:14, 27, 42, 44. Once more, Acts 15:21; again Acts 16:13; 17:2; 18:4. ‘And he [Paul] reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.’ Thus the Sabbath (Saturday) from Genesis to Revelation!!! Thus, it is impossible to find in the New Testament the slightest interference by the Savior or His apostles with the original Sabbath...” (Page 11)

Mentions of the first day of the week are then dealt with. Few would advance that any of them represent a change in custom or doctrine and are dismissed summarily. Paul taking up a collection on the first day of the week in 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 is treated at greater length. However, “the request of St. Paul to make the collection on Sunday remains to be classified with the work of embalming Christ’s body, which

ing the bosom of the Catholic Church was for apostasy from the truth as taught in the written word.

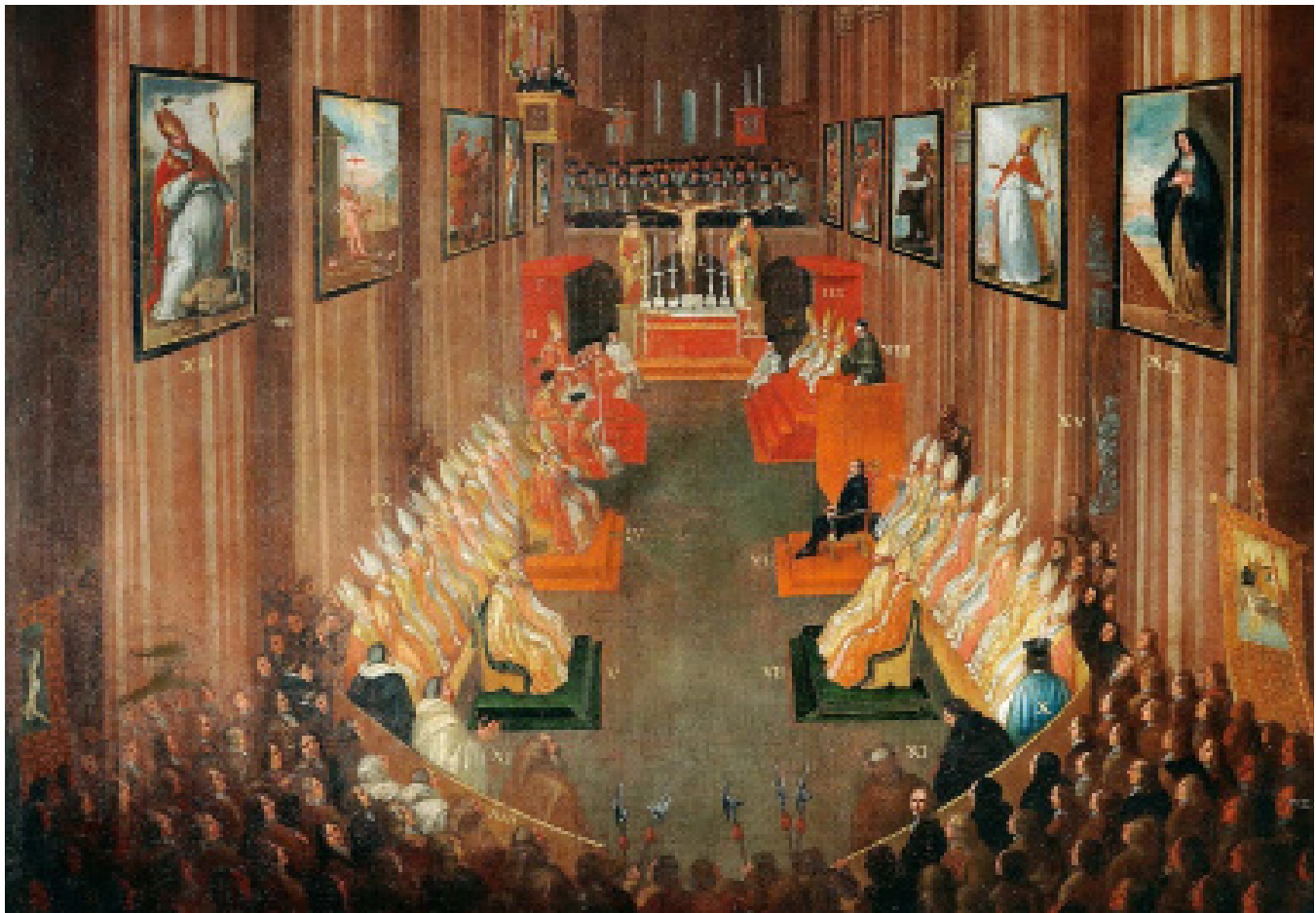
“They adopted the written word as their sole teacher, which they had no sooner done than they abandoned it promptly, as these articles have abundantly proved; and by a perversity as willful as erroneous, they accept the teaching of the Catholic Church in direct opposition to the plain, unvaried, and constant teaching of their sole teacher in the most essential doctrine of their religion, thereby emphasiz-

ing the situation in what may be aptly designated ‘a mockery, a delusion, and a snare.’” (Page 25)

It may seem odd to us that any church could take such pains to prove scripture says one thing and boldly continue doing the opposite. But Catholics DO NOT believe that scripture is binding. Catholicism formally rejected that notion at the very beginning of the reformation. The Council of Trent in 1546 held that scripture and tradition were equal. Though there were Catholics who supported the stance of “scripture only,” arguments about the Sab-

bath were advanced and the part for “tradition” prevailed! To accept “scripture only” would have overthrown Sunday observance!

We would do well to remember *Rome’s Challenge*. The articles published by *The Catholic Mirror* were a brazen attack on the Protestant world, yet they expose a serious weakness still extant in most Christian denominations. It is a haughty mockery, but what argument or excuse can be advanced against it? Do most churches follow the Bible or tradition? On what foundation do you build your faith? □



The Council of Trent, conducted by about 40 clergymen, was held in three parts between 1545 and 1563. These meetings would result in the official Roman Catholic response to the rapidly growing Protestant Reformation. The council made various decrees, enacted sweeping church reforms, and attempted to clarify longstanding questions regarding church doctrine and traditions. Both the Second Vatican Council of the early 1960’s and the “Catechism of the Catholic Church” in 1992 have confirmed for modern times the decrees put forth at the Council of Trent.

TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

WATCH



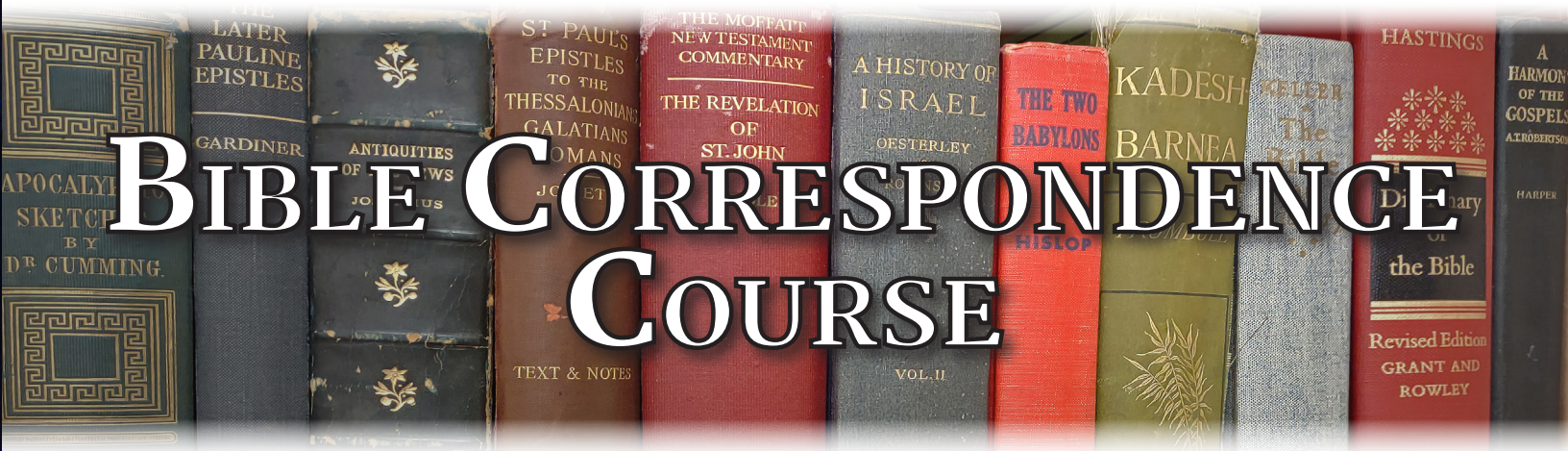
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BIBLE CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

LESSON SIXTEEN: LAW OF GOD, PART TWO

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 IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Old Testament is a collection of diverse types of literature. The first five books, which compose the Pentateuch, are often called the “*Torah*” or “Law.” However, the Hebrew term *torah*, as mentioned in the previous lesson, means “teachings” rather than just “law” in the legal, codified sense. Further, even though detailed regulations tend to be centered in the Pentateuch, they are not limited to that section of the Old Testament, nor is the Pentateuch simply a law code in the strictest sense.

Some laws in the Old Testament clearly encompass broad principles while others are quite specific, minute regulations. The biblical text does not itself always clearly distinguish between the more important and the less important. That is why one finds many admonitions to meditate on the law (e.g. Ps. 119:97, 99). Thus, even though these were all laws originating with God, some are more permanent and spiritual in nature than are others. For example, the whole sacrificial system of the tabernacle and temple were important, even vital, for a certain period of time, but the New Testament shows that these regulations are not for all men at all times. They served a specific function for a certain time and in a particular place, while always symbolically

pointing to deeper spiritual truths.

Old Testament laws can be broken down into various categories:

1) Broad spiritual principles which cover various lesser laws and regulations. The Ten Commandments are the primary example, as is clearly recognized by Old Testament scholars. For example, the seventh commandment — specifically against adultery — is a broad principle regulating human sexual relations. Detailed instructions concerning the types of sexual practices to be avoided are found in Leviticus 18. These latter fall under the category of “civil regulations” (category no. 2 below) but are summarized by the board principle of the seventh commandment.

2) Civil regulations for the Israelite theocracy. These cover a number of different types of regulations. The laws about building a parapet around one's roof, cutting down fruit trees while besieging a city, taking the mother bird with her young, inheritance, cities of refuge, covering an open pit, penning up a dangerous bull, leaving the corners and the forgotten sheaf for the poor, and many other instructions had to do with the proper conduct of a physical society within a national state. Since Israel was a theocracy, many of these regulations had religious

Continued next page

overtone, even while being primarily civil in function, and often pointed toward the broad principle of the law. To these were added the various decisions made by the judges.

3) Laws of cleanliness and ritual purity. These are hard to separate since both are often included under the same instructions. For example, one who touched a dead body had to wash himself. This is the cleanliness part of the instructions. Yet he also remained “unclean” (Hebrew: *tame*) for a certain length of time (Lev. 11:39-40). Thus, both physical cleanliness and ritual cleanliness are included in the same instructions.

4) Laws relating to the sacrificial system and other regulations having to do with the religious liturgy or serving a symbolic or disciplinary function. For example, individuals were to sew blue fringes on their garments as a physical ritual to remind them of God’s commandments (Num. 15:37-40). Circumcision was also a religious ceremony of great importance. Whole sections of the Pentateuch (e.g. Lev. 1-10) give detailed instructions about the conduct of the sacrificial system. The sacrifices were, of course, religious in purpose since they had to do with worship and expiation of sin (Lev. 4: 26,35; 5:16).

One can use the analogy of a modern free country to better understand the various levels of Old Testament law. All instructions were part of that law. None were to be slighted or ignored. The breaking of any law brought some sort of penalty on the violator, though the penalties varied in severity. The same is true with the laws within, for example, the United States. The Constitution says nothing about speed limits, property taxes, zoning, or sexual conduct. Rather, laws are broadly laid out and worded to serve as an overall guide for all generations. All other laws — whether national, regional or local — must conform to the principles laid down in the Constitution. These laws themselves vary in importance. Some cover only a certain state or region or city. They may need to be changed according to the time and circumstances. In addition, a certain body of common law has grown up through individual court decisions (cf. the “judgments” of the Old Testament).

Category no. 1 might correspond to a national

constitution — such as that of the United States — and cover all men at all times. Category no. 2 might be analogous to national laws passed by national legislators. That is, they may incorporate regulations which have permanent value for various human societies. On the other hand, some of the regulations may be culturally bound and require modification or replacement to remain relevant in a changing society. For example, the laws of inheritance were very important for ancient Israel but are less useful today. The seventh-year land Sabbath could be applied in a nation under God’s government but is difficult for all Christians everywhere to apply in today’s society. Thus, the specific law sometimes does not fit the changed situation brought about by the vicissitudes of time and circumstance.

Yet, one should not allow the concept of broad principles to devalue minute and detailed regulations. It would be impossible to run a country only on the broad principles of a constitution. Other laws, statutes and ordinances are also required. Speed limits and obedience to traffic lights may not be the most spiritual or “moral” of laws, but they are nonetheless essential for man in a mechanized society. Such ordinances are the result of applying moral and ethical principles (not running into another automobile does, after all, have ethical consequences); chaos would ensue if they were suddenly stricken from the books. To say that a law is of lesser value or more narrow in application than another is not to say that it is of no concern or that it can be ignored. The same applies to the detailed laws of the Old Testament.

No survey, even a lengthy one, can begin to cover all the examples or details of law in the Old Testament. The basic types of law and their function have been outlined above. Following is a brief historical survey, given to illustrate that outline and to show that law was by no means static during Old Testament times, even during the history of Israel.

The Old Testament, especially the book of Genesis, records the existence of extensive legal principles and legal codes long before the foundation of the nation of Israel. The last hundred years of archaeological discoveries have seen the discovery of legal codes and regulations from various parts of

the ancient Near East. Thus, the particular codification given under the Sinai covenant was hardly the giving of law where none had previously existed. In fact, many of the regulations found in the books of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers were only a reaffirmation of accepted regulations which had been known for centuries.

The account of the Garden of Eden is the first reference on instructions to human beings. Adam and Eve were instructed in the proper use and enjoyment of their idyllic physical surroundings; the one thing expressly forbidden was partaking of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This first simple instruction was given for the good of Adam and Eve, yet they disobeyed and reaped the consequences.

Their sons, Cain and Abel, knew of God and worshipped Him by means of a burnt offering. For a reason not fully specified in the Genesis account, Cain's offering was not acceptable. His jealousy of Abel, whose sacrifice was accepted, produced the first murder. This brief episode shows several important points: worship was permitted through certain ritualistic ceremonies; this worship was regulated by some sort of unwritten code which Cain violated; Cain knew he was wrong to slay his brother and tried to cover it up; two sins — violations of law — are pointed out: murder and lying. It is therefore impossible to refer to the period before Sinai as a time of no law.

Similarly, the flood of Noah came because "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5). Wickedness and evil are capable of existence only when there is a standard against which they can be judged. That standard does not have to be written down or externally codified; it can be a common understanding to which the term "natural law" or perhaps even "common law" could be applied. The point is that law had to exist before actions could be pronounced good or evil.

Throughout the patriarchal period, various statements are made which evidence at least an implicit code or system of law with grave results for violation and great blessings for obedience. Perhaps the classic capsule statement of the situation is

contained in Genesis 26 in a reference to Abraham: "Sojourn in this land, and I will be with you, and will bless you; . . . and I will fulfill the oath which I swore to Abraham your father. . . because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws" (vv. 3-5).

Abraham, Isaac and their descendants were blessed for obedience to well-known laws and commandments. The fact that these are not specifically enumerated does not mean that they did not exist. On the contrary, many of them can be known by the specific examples which presuppose them. The following are examples of implicit laws in Genesis. Adultery being punishable: "What is this you have done to us? One of the people might easily have lain with your wife, and you would have brought guilt upon us" (26:10); homosexuality being drastically punished (chapter 19); circumcision being a requirement for descendants of Abraham as a sign of God's covenant with him (chapter 17); private property being respected (chapter 23); standard weights being used in business dealings (23:16); theft being wrong (31:19, 30, 32). Many other examples could be cited.

Therefore, when God brought Israel out of Egypt, it was no new thing for Him to lay down regulations for them. The first command concerned the institution of the Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread. Between Rameses and Sinai, a number of different commands were given to the Israelites. On Mount Sinai God spoke the Ten Commandments Himself and wrote them on two tables of stone. These two symbolic acts showed that the Ten Commandments were to be considered more fundamental than the other laws. (The Sinaitic covenant included a number of laws besides the Decalogue, Ex. 20-24).

Later, other regulations were added. A significant number of these centered on the sacrificial system at the altar. Sacrifices were not new; they had been offered at least since the time of Cain and Abel. What were new were many of the specific laws about the conduct of the ritual worship. Yet we find that, with the introduction of the temple at Jerusalem centuries later, many of these rules were modified. In fact the rules about building altars in Exodus 20:24-26 were soon changed and no altars except

the one associated with the Tabernacle were allowed (Deut. 12). Deuteronomy covers many of the same basic regulations found in Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers but often modifies them or adapts them to new situations. So it is that in the Pentateuch itself we see a development of the legal code. A change in the administration or the environment often changes the interpretation and application of the law without altering the underlying principle. Rules given at one time for one situation were already being modified because of new situations (such as the change from nomadic desert-dwelling, in Exodus, to agricultural living in the land of Canaan, in Deuteronomy). Thus God's Word establishes from its beginning the responsibility of God's people to apply His laws to their changing, contemporary situations.

Some of the laws arising with Israel were already known in the same or a similar form elsewhere in the ancient Near East, as the book of Genesis and the literature of other ancient peoples show. A code of law was accepted as in any functioning national state today. Even where the word of the monarch was law, a common system of conduct for the average citizen was still very much in evidence. After all, the king could not judge every single case or decide every little matter in the day-to-day life of even a small city-state, much less a huge empire.

It is true that a number of the laws of the Old Testament can seem somewhat less than ideal from our modern viewpoint. They sound strange, indeed "primitive," to our modern ears. For example, slavery is only regulated, polygamy is allowed and women have decidedly inferior position. However, when the instructions dealing with these subjects are viewed against their background in the ancient Near East, many of them are remarkably progressive. That is, they would have been considered extremely liberal, even radical, for that time. These laws appear to have been instituted for the regulation and mollification of previously existing customs. Whether the customs themselves were good or bad was not the point. Rather, since eradication of the bad was impossible, God gave laws to ameliorate the existing situation.

Such accepted institutions as slavery were regulated to help protect the indentured servant and the bondsman. Polygamy was normal for the time,

yet the laws of the Pentateuch saw to it that at least inheritance should be conducted fairly. A rapist normally had to marry his victim, if unmarried, to protect her since she would have had a hard time finding a husband. Of course, if the character of the rapist was clearly depraved — that is, if his crime was not an isolated example of lust getting the better of him, but evidence of a basic flaw of character — the father of the victim could still disallow it. From our modern point of view, the law may look peculiar. For the society at the time, it was a means designed to make the best of a bad situation. Similarly, just because God gave specific laws regarding divorce, it did not mean that He approved the practice (cf. Matt. 19:8). God was simply eliminating the possibility of continuous wife swapping (Deut. 24:1-4).

These examples are again evidence of a progression in the revelation and the understanding of God's ultimate spiritual law. Even in the New Testament the institution of slavery is nowhere condemned outright. Yet the Church today, from its perspective of two thousand more years of history and guided by God's Spirit, clearly recognizes that slavery is contrary to God's purpose for man.

A look at law in the Old Testament would not be complete without examining certain prophetic Old Testament passages which indicate the reinstatement of a temple and regular sacrificial system during Christ the Messiah's reign in the millennium (Is. 66:20-23; Ezek. 40-48; Zech. 14:20-21; Mal. 3:1-4; etc.). Why should such physical rituals have a place when Christ Himself is ruling?

There seem to be three interdependent reasons for a temple and sacrificial system. First is because, in addition to allowing Jerusalem to serve as a religious center, such a system shall enable a restored Israel to serve as an example to the world. The priesthood, which in times past did not consistently execute its duties with the proper care and willingness, shall now show the world how those duties should be carried out (Ezek. 44:5 ff). Israel as a model physical nation shall also have an important part in setting the social, ethical and religious examples.

The second reason is somewhat similar. Christ shall have established His rule over physical, unconverted nations. They must be led gradually to the

place of repenting, being converted and receiving the Holy Spirit. Just as the temple ritual was important to the ancient Israelites without God's Spirit, so the reestablished ritual of sacrifices shall give them a physical means of growing towards a spiritual understanding of God. The necessary education shall take a good deal of time. The temple shall serve as an important part — the center — of religious education.

Thirdly and finally, just as the sacrifices of ancient Israel pointed forward to a coming Savior who was to pay the supreme sacrifice for the sins of the world, so in the millennium the sacrifices will point back to that sacrifice and give people a greater understanding of Christ our Savior (in much the same way as the Passover service does today), the consequences of sin, and the meaning of salvation.

QUESTIONS (ANSWERS BELOW):

- 1) The law of God is only found in the Old Testament. True or False?
- 2) What does our church use as the foundation of its doctrines and teachings?
 - a) Old Testament
 - b) New Testament
 - c) both
- 3) Law in the Old Testament is limited to the Pentateuch, also known as the "Torah." True or False?
- 4) All of the laws of the Old Testament are permanent laws. True or False?
- 5) Which of the following laws are shown to be in effect in Genesis by direct scripture examples?
 - a) law against adultery
 - b) law against homosexuality
 - c) circumcision being a requirement for the descendants of Abraham
 - d) private property to be respected
 - e) standard weights to be used in business
 - f) law against theft
 - g) all the above
- 6) A change in the administration or the environment often changes the interpretation and application of the law without altering the underlying principle. True or False?
- 7) During the millennial reign of Christ which of the following will be reinstated?
 - a) temple
 - b) sacrificial system
 - c) both
 - d) neither
- 8) Old Testament law only focused on what one did, by external conformity to law. It never addressed attitude and intent of the heart. True or False?

LESSON SIXTEEN — ANSWERS:

- | | | | | | | | |
|------------|--------|------------|------------|--------|-----------|--------|------------|
| 1. (False) | 2. (c) | 3. (False) | 4. (False) | 5. (g) | 6. (True) | 7. (c) | 8. (False) |
|------------|--------|------------|------------|--------|-----------|--------|------------|



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