

Newsbytes

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“Let us be alert to the season in which we are living. It is the season of the Blessed Hope, calling for us to cut our ties with the world and build ourselves on this One who will soon appear. He is our hope—a Blessed Hope enabling us to rise above our times and fix our gaze upon Him.” Tozer

Hackers stole millions in third attack on global banking system

May 20, 2016

Bangladesh central bank hit by \$101 million heist

If three makes a trend, then it's official: The global banking system is under attack. The methods used by hackers to attack banks in Vietnam and Bangladesh appear to have been deployed over a year ago in a heist in Ecuador.

The January 2015 attack on Banco del Austro is described in a lawsuit filed by the bank in a New York federal court. It ended with thieves transferring \$12 million to accounts in Hong Kong, Dubai, New York and Los Angeles, according to court documents.

The existence of the lawsuit was first reported Friday by the Wall Street Journal, just one week after global banking communications network SWIFT instructed clients to secure their local computer networks.

SWIFT, or the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication, warned customers that two previous attacks against banks in Bangladesh and Vietnam appeared to be "part of a wider and highly adaptive campaign."

The hacks targeting banks in Asia follow the pattern described by Banco del Austro: Attackers used malware to circumvent a bank's local security systems. They gained access to the SWIFT messaging network.

Fraudulent messages were sent via SWIFT to initiate cash transfers from accounts at larger banks. The attacks underscore the vulnerability of smaller banks that can't afford cutting-edge defenses. If hackers are able to break into a weaker bank, they can fabricate transfer requests in order to pull money out of a bigger bank.

"Unfortunately, this risk with SWIFT is nothing new, as technology has evolved, and hackers have gotten more sophisticated," lawyers for Banco del Austro said in a March 31 court filing. A SWIFT spokeswoman said Friday that the network had not been made aware of the Banco del Austro incident.

"We need to be informed by customers of such frauds if they relate to our products and services, so that we can inform and support the wider community," Natasha de Teran said. "We have been in touch with the bank concerned to get more information, and are reminding customers of their obligations to share such information with us." SWIFT said last week that its network and core messaging services have not been compromised by the attacks.

In the case of Bangladesh Bank, hackers used the tactic to transfer money out of its accounts at the New York Fed. Investigators have yet to publicly identify any suspects in the case.

Banco del Austro's funds were being held in accounts at Wells Fargo (WFC). The lawsuit filed by the Ecuadorian bank accuses Wells Fargo of failing to recognize and stop the fraudulent transfers. Wells Fargo rejected those claims.

"Wells Fargo properly processed the wire instructions received via authenticated SWIFT messages and Wells Fargo's computer systems were not compromised in any way," a spokeswoman said.

"Wells Fargo is not responsible for the losses suffered by Banco del Austro and intends to vigorously defend the lawsuit."

MPs warn voters being 'conned' as Brussels keeps plans for EU army secret until after referendum

Ben Riley-Smith, political correspondent
27 MAY 2016 •

British voters are being “conned” by Brussels officials who are keeping plans for a European army secret until after the referendum, leading Tories have claimed.

Liam Fox, the former defence secretary who served under David Cameron, told The Telegraph that the ambitions showed the EU is wedded to the “dangerous fantasy” of creating a single defence force.

Another eurosceptic Tory MP said voters were being “deceived” and “hoodwinked” about the true scale of the EU’s drive to create a single army.

The backlash came as it emerged plans to move towards the creation of a European army are being kept secret from British voters until the day after next month’s referendum.

Drawn up by the EU’s foreign policy chief, the Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy foresees the formation of new European military and operational structures.

This first step towards an EU army is supported by Germany and other countries, The Times reports.

In 2011, similar proposals were vetoed by Britain, although there were concerns that a loophole could allow nine states to group together to bypass opponents.

In an effort to avoid derailing the Prime Minister’s Remain campaign, the policy plans will not be sent to national governments until the day after Britons vote.

Until then, only a small group of EU political and security committee ambassadors, who must leave their electronic devices outside a sealed room, can read the proposal.

Extracts of the text in notes taken by diplomats, seen by The Times, emphasise that “security and defence is where a step change is most urgent”.

The paper warns that “in turbulent times, we need a compass to navigate the waters of a faster-changing world”.

The news comes as figures show a record number of immigrants arrived in Britain last year for work, and net migration reached 333,000.

Head of foreign policy in the EU, Federica Mogherini, has reportedly spent 18 months preparing the defence document to be discussed by European leaders at a summit on June 28.

Mr Fox told The Telegraph: "Those of us who have always warned about Europe's defence ambitions have always been told not to worry, but step-by-step that ever closer union is becoming a reality. We cannot afford to be conned in this referendum as we were conned in 1975.

"The best way to protect ourselves is to stay close to the US. The US defence budget is bigger than the next 11 countries in the world put together. Europe's defence intentions are a dangerous fantasy and risk cutting us off from our closest and most powerful ally.

"We're always told not to worry about the next integration and then it happens. We've been too often conned before and we must not be conned again."

Andrew Bridgen, the Tory MP for North West Leicestershire, said: "This is the way the EU operates. The people were deceived about the aims of the EU in 1975 and they're being deceived again today. For the security of our country we must vote to leave the EU.

"This blows out of the water the Prime Minister's claim that we're being excluded from ever closer union. Voters are being hoodwinked once again."

The One World Religion Cometh: Pope Francis Warmly Welcomes Top Islamic Cleric To The Vatican

By Michael Snyder, on May 23, 2016



When Pope Francis met with Sheikh Ahmed al-Tayeb on Monday, he told him that "our meeting is the message". So precisely what kind of "message" was Pope Francis attempting to convey? Sheikh Ahmed al-Tayeb is the Grand Imam of Cairo's Al-Azhar Mosque, and some have described him as "the highest figure in Sunni Islam".

The Daily Mail said that the meeting between these two men was a "historic bid to reopen dialogue between the two churches", yet this is yet another in a long series of attempts by Pope Francis to build bridges between Catholicism and various other faiths. In the end, what are we to make of all of this? Could it be possible that Pope Francis is laying the groundwork for the "super world church" and the coming one world religion that David Wilkerson and so many others have warned about?

Pope Francis made sure that when he embraced Sheikh Ahmed al-Tayeb there would be plenty of reporters there to document the moment. The following is an excerpt from a Daily Mail article entitled "Pope embraces grand imam at historic Vatican meeting in a bid to bring the Catholic and Muslim churches together"...

Pope Francis today embraced the grand imam of Al-Azhar, the prestigious Sunni Muslim center of learning, in an historic bid to reopen dialogue between the two churches.

At a time of increased Islamic extremist attacks on Christians, Sheik Ahmed el-Tayyib was photographed hugging Francis during a visit to the Apostolic Palace at the Vatican.

This meeting comes in the context of some very curious statements that the Pope have been making about Islam and Christianity lately. If you don't know what I am talking about, here is one example:

"Today, I don't think that there is a fear of Islam as such but of ISIS and its war of conquest, which is partly drawn from Islam," he told French newspaper La Croix. "It is true that the idea of conquest is inherent in the soul of Islam, however, it is also possible to interpret the objective in Matthew's Gospel, where Jesus sends his disciples to all nations, in terms of the same idea of conquest."

The Pope also said he "dreaded" hearing about the "Christian roots of Europe" because, to him, they take on "colonialist overtones" and he called on European nations to "integrate" Muslim migrants into the continent.

"This integration is all the more necessary today since, as a result of a selfish search for well-being, Europe is experiencing the grave problem of a declining birth rate," he stated. "A demographic emptiness is developing."

On another occasion, the Pope declared that "Christians and Muslims are brothers and sisters". Pope Francis seems to have a strong desire to paint Christianity and Islam as two sides of the same coin, and he has taken steps to reach out to Muslims that no other Pope in history has done. To illustrate this point, I want to share an extended excerpt from one of my previous articles.

Very early in his papacy, he authorized "Islamic prayers and readings from the Quran" at the Vatican for the first time ever. And as I documented in a previous article entitled "In New York, Pope Francis Embraced Chrislam And Laid A Foundation For A One World Religion", during his visit to St. Patrick's Cathedral in Manhattan he made it very clear that he believes that Christians and Muslims worship the same God. The following is how he began his address:

"I would like to express two sentiments for my Muslim brothers and sisters: Firstly, my greetings as they celebrate the feast of sacrifice. I would have wished my greeting to be warmer. My sentiments of closeness, my sentiments of closeness in the face of tragedy. The tragedy that they suffered in Mecca.

In this moment, I give assurances of my prayers. I unite myself with you all. A prayer to almighty god, all merciful.

In Islam, one of Allah's primary titles is "the all-merciful one". If you doubt this, just do a Google search. And this certainly was not the first time that Pope Francis has used such language. For example, check out the following excerpt from remarks that he made during his very first ecumenical meeting as Pope...

I then greet and cordially thank you all, dear friends belonging to other religious traditions; first of all the Muslims, who worship the one God, living and merciful, and call upon Him in prayer, and all of you. I really appreciate your presence: in it I see a tangible sign of the will to grow in mutual esteem and cooperation for the common good of humanity.

The Catholic Church is aware of the importance of promoting friendship and respect between men and women of different religious traditions – I wish to repeat this: promoting friendship and respect between men and women of different religious traditions – it also attests the valuable work that the Pontifical Council for interreligious dialogue performs."

Are you starting to see what I am talking about?

There is a very clear pattern developing here. Pope Francis believes that Christians and Muslims worship the same God, and he wants us to know that he considers Islam to be a perfectly acceptable way to seek God.

In a recent video, Pope Francis explains that people all over the world are “seeking God or meeting God in different ways” and that “there is only one certainty that we have for all: we are all children of God”. At about the 20 second mark, leaders from various major religions are shown declaring what they believe. First, a female Buddhist announces “I have confidence in the Buddha”. Secondly, a Jewish rabbi declares “I believe in God”. Thirdly, a Catholic priest tells us that “I believe in Jesus Christ”, and lastly an Islamic leader is shown saying “I believe in God, Allah”.

It has become exceedingly clear that Pope Francis believes that all major religions are completely valid paths to the same God, and there is virtually no uproar over this.

This just shows how late in the game we really are. The one world religion that was prophesied nearly 2000 years ago in the Book of Revelation is starting to come to life, and we are witnessing the events of the last days begin to unfold right in front of our eyes.

Armageddon It

In Defense of the Faith
Monday, May 30, 2016
Pete Garcia

As the beloved, late Jack Kelley was often fond of saying, “I think people should get raptured according to their eschatological view”. Seems only fitting after all...at least the ‘post-toasties’ who think they can weather the storm of the 70th Week with an underground bunker and some survival gear can get their money’s worth. But I fear my prayers for eschatological-justice will most likely proceed no higher than my ceiling. And much to their chagrin, all these vehemently anti-pre-trib Christians are just going to have to settle for being Raptured prior to the start of the Tribulation, whether they like it or not.

I don’t get what the attraction to this view is. That goes for Pre-Wrath and Mid Trib views as well. Any view that places the Church inside the seven year period known as Daniel’s 70th Week, has some major eschatological and ecclesiological issues. Jesus stated that this period of time would be the most horrifying in all of human history, (Matt. 24:21-22) and we have huge swaths of Christians today who think we are either already in it (but they can’t say for sure when it started), or they think we have to go through it (because we deserve it). The good thing about our God is that He is merciful beyond any human definitions of the word. If we all got what we truly deserved, we’d all be doing head stands in the lake of fire.

Look, Pete Garcia didn’t invent the Pre-Tribulation Rapture. Jack Kinsella didn’t invent the Rapture. Hal Lindsey didn’t invent the Rapture. John Nelson Darby didn’t invent the Rapture. The Apostle Paul didn’t even invent it. God put that on Paul’s heart to unveil this mystery that even was hidden from the disciples when they walked with Christ. To believe that the Rapture was just a sly deception put on by Paul, is tantamount to saying his epistles aren’t part of Holy Writ or else we deny divine inspiration. Peter stated that what Paul wrote, was in fact Scripture (2 Peter 3:14-16)...so if Paul was wrong, then so was Peter. You can see how this unravels from here.

But we had pictures (and types) of this in the OT and NT with the likes of Enoch, Elijah, Jesus, Paul, and John, who all experienced their own supernatural catching up. Examples of being supernaturally transported from one place to another would be with both Ezekiel and Philip. All of that to say this...that it is an undisputed fact that God has easily and repeatedly demonstrated His ability to supernaturally move people from one place to another.

One thing I don’t understand, are churches who don’t teach on a Rapture event at all. Either they’re amillennial,

post-millennial, or indifferent either way. If a church purports to be a Christian one, then their belief has to be rooted in something correct? If it is God, then God has to be the Creator, and outside the boundaries of His own creation in order to both create it, and manage its affairs. If that is the case, and God spoke the universe and all therein into existence, then why is it so hard to believe He can also retrieve both the living and the dead in a moment of time? Why is the Creation, the Flood, and the parting of the Red Sea...believable events, yet somehow the Rapture of the Church falls outside the realm of possibility? It would seem to me, that these people put God Almighty, in a mighty small box.

The Cripplegate recently released an article that I thought, was spot on. The author listened and compared 12 different preachers teach on Revelation chapter 6. Six of the preachers were amillennial, and six were premillennial and the difference between the two frankly, was startling. I would encourage anyone reading this, to read that before continuing on with this. Its ok, I'll wait....

Assessment

Ok, so you've read it, and like me, see the glaring issues people have, when they stray from the straight up, literal (not woodenly literal) approach to letting scripture speak for itself. When you stray from what the scripture actually says, you have to go into creative-mode to start filling in what you want the text to say...which is highly subjective. This kind of interpretive approach is also called 'eisegesis' (reading into a text a meaning), and it by far has had the most far-reaching and damaging effects not only upon eschatology but on the unity of the Church. For instance;

-Imagine a business where everyone was allowed to interpret the rules of operation in their own way. How long would that business stay open?

-Imagine a hospital where the healthcare providers and doctors, all got to interpret standard medical procedures in their own way. How long before someone was killed or maimed?

The answer to both is, not very.

Point being is that if we ran our society as we interpreted our Bibles, we'd quickly get to the point where everyone did what was right in their own eyes. There's another name for it, and it is called anarchy. So what we wouldn't tolerate from a hospital or a business, we seemingly make little fuss over with what we believe God's word says. This has allowed for the fracturing and splintering of the Protestant churches.

The opposite of eisegesis, is known as 'exegesis', where the reader pulls from the text what it actually says. The reader could then cross-reference their understanding of that passage with other passages that may be related. While not bringing every believer utilizing this in perfect harmony with each other, it considerably allows for greater harmony and consistency of interpretation. In other words, were all Christians to take a historical-grammatical-literal reading of the scriptures, there would be far fewer denominations and confusion over major doctrines.

So why do so many well-meaning Christians have such divergent views on the Bible? Well, I can tell you with 100% certainty that it's not the Bible's fault, but rather men's interpretation of the Bible. This has a lot to do with our translations and understandings of the ancient languages. There are also things like 'agendas' and 'biases' that have been particularly effective in distorting particular doctrines such as eschatology. But the real question is, why would people even want to change the true meaning of the text?

I think at the root of it, is that people are inherently sinful (no brainer there). Furthermore, when you put sinful men and women in positions of power and authority, it more often than not, corrupts them even more and they begin focusing more on building up their little kingdoms in the here and now, and focusing less on the Kingdom to come. Take for instance, the Roman Catholic Church system.

The RCC dominated Christendom for the better part of a thousand years from the 6th-16th centuries. Roman Catholicism espoused an eschatological belief that the millennial kingdom was not really a 1,000 years, but was figuratively speaking of the eternal and ongoing reign of Christ...IN heaven. They got these views from a North African theologian named Augustine in the 4th century, who initially taught that a physical reign of Christ on the earth was far too carnal to be taken literally.

True to his Greco-Roman philosophical upbringing, Augustine looked for a deeper meaning beyond the plain meaning of Revelation 20 and other passages which speak of Christ ruling and reigning on the earth and through the use of allegorizing the text (eisegesis), he taught that the millennial reign was an ongoing spiritual one. He got a lot of his ideas from a 3rd century teacher named Origen, who was credited with being the first Christian theologian to begin seriously allegorizing scripture.

But if Christ was busy ruling in heaven, then Christ would “need” a man here on the earth to be His representative (according to their logic)...hence the title ‘vicar’ (think vicariously) of Christ was given to the Roman Catholic Pope. The pope was supposedly from the line of ascendancy from the Apostles and was supposed to be the sole representative of Christ here on the earth. If the pope is sitting on his papal throne, he is said to speak ‘ex-cathedra’, which means his words and statements are to be “infallible” and presumably from the mouth of God Himself. Given the historical flip-flopping and anti-Christian nature of more than a few ‘papal-bulls’, we know that they aren’t scriptural, and they weren’t from God. From the RCC we also got the atrocities from the Crusades and the Inquisition, and the profiteering from Indulgences for purgatory.

The Protestant Reformers, although making a well-deserved and long overdue departure from the RCC in the 16th century, didn’t go far enough in righting the wrongs of the interpretative-distortions that had polluted much of Christendom. Although they got things like salvation right (soteriology), they neglected reforming other key doctrinal areas like ecclesiology (study of the Church) and eschatology (study of last things), thus carried over some of the same theological baggage from the RCC they had long sought to escape from. And while having the correct eschatology isn’t necessarily essential to one’s salvation, uncorrected error begets more error.

For instance, if you were a 17th century Lutheran, and you remained an Amillennialist, you would likely not see a distinction between the Church and Israel. At that time, Israel was not a nation again, so the likelihood of a national Israel seemed about as likely to happen, as Atlantis rising from the deep and taking her place amongst the nations again. But if you ignored the distinctions between the two, you either believed the Church superseded Israel, or replaced them altogether as God’s chosen. Out of this error, stems Supersessionism and Replacement Theology. And while not creating the Nazi propaganda, it certainly augmented the flawed logic behind it with the weight of historical gravitas from the likes of Martin Luther and others who grew to hate the Jews. Error begets error.

The rise of Dispensational thought in the 1800’s has been accused of many things as of late by critics who equate its explosion onto the scene with the same sentiments they have for the development of aberrant views such as Mormonism and Jehovah Witness movements. Yet, despite all their cantankerous rancor, all Dispensationalism really is, is a return to the literal, grammatical, historical interpretation without the overlaying of Protestant creeds and traditions (still wet with Catholicism). In so doing, Dispensationalist simply make note of the differing stages man has undergone while serving under an unchanging, and eternal God. Where progressive revelation was the driving force for the writing of Scripture, progressive illumination was the driving force for properly understanding said scripture in light of the totality of scripture and the unfolding of time.

“But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.” Daniel 12:4

Conclusion

Although the Bible has undergone numerous translational transitions (from Hebrew to Greek, Greek to Latin, Latin to German, English, Spanish, etc.) the original languages...Hebrew and Greek, have remained the bedrock of the standard we measure our interpretations from. While not the most captivating aspect of our Christian theology to analyze, hermeneutics (how we interpret the Bible) certainly has the widest and most profound reach in how we understand our faith. Abuses of hermeneutics led to the Dark Ages. It also led to the rising of divisions, schisms, cults, and other aberrant views that have permeated the last two thousand years of Christendom.

It is this very reason, that Christ told his disciples that “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. (John 16:12-13) The Holy Spirit will guide us if we ask earnestly, and He will lead us into all truth. That truth, is not subject to our own private interpretations (2 Peter 1:20), but only that of God the Holy Spirit. Since God is not the author of confusion (1 Cor. 14:33), but the author of communication, He has deemed the scriptures as His manner of

communicating to us. We have neither the authority, nor the knowledge to begin inserting our own interpretations into what God has clearly laid out for us. If God had intended for each of us to cherry pick, wildly speculate, and allegorize His word, He wouldn't have given us the scriptures we have, but something more akin to Nostradamus's confusing Quatrains.

The Golden Rule of Interpretation

When the plain sense of scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense; therefore, take every word at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning unless the facts of the immediate context, studied in the light of related passages and axiomatic and fundamental truths, indicate clearly otherwise. D.L. Cooper

Thus, the standard Christian's must hold to in these waning moments of human history, is that the Bible is inerrant in all its themes and doctrines. It is inconsistent (dare I say double-minded) to say that the doctrine of salvation can be taken at face value, but eschatology cannot. When Jesus said "I am the door", (John 10:9) Christ was using symbolism to convey that He alone, was the entrance to salvation. How then do people struggle when Christ is said to have a 'double-edged' sword proceeding from His mouth upon His return...when Scripture tells us that Word of God is sharper than any double edged sword? (Hebrews 4:12-13)

The abuses of interpretation today by a growing majority of so-called "Evangelical" churches, who are promoting post-modernism, human secularism, political correctness, or other liberalistic ideologies, and so many others are intent on redefining God's word to fit a culture who is in rapid decline. Their version of the Bible is about as accurate as the butchering of biblical stories by Hollywood because they lack the Holy Spirit who gives understanding of our supernatural and divinely inspired Holy Bible.

In their eyes, Noah was no more than an environmentalist; Moses was just a military leader; Jesus was just a good man secretly married to Mary Magdalene, the Bible is just another 'holy book' to be placed on the shelf next to the Koran and Hindu Vedas, and Armageddon is just an earth-killing asteroid. They are the blind leading the blind, and it is growing worse by the day.

And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says:

'Hearing you will hear and shall not understand,
And seeing you will see and not perceive;
15 For the hearts of this people have grown dull.
Their ears are hard of hearing,
And their eyes they have closed,
Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears,
Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn,
So that I should heal them.' Matthew 13:14-15