

Absolute Truth & Prophecy

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EARTHQUAKE & AFTERMATH

Pat Robertson's controversial comments set off a firestorm. Were they irrational or based on...hidden truth ?

The earthquake that struck – curiously, - only the Haitian half of the Island of Hispaniola in the Caribbean registered a massive 7.2 on the Richter scale. The damage it did was profound. The Presidential Palace collapsed as did UN headquarters. As of this writing, Red Cross estimates put the death toll at around 200,000 with perhaps 3 million more injured and homeless. Bodies piled in the streets. Looting set in. Money became worthless and the scarce resource of water became currency. A Reuters report spoke of “sobs and wailing” throughout the night and noted how “groups of women sang religious songs in the dark and prayed for the dead.”^{1 2} It was a dark time in the life of that nation.

Enter Rev Pat Robertson, founder of CBN, The 700 Club and no stranger to controversy. Whenever a natural disaster hits like this the question always arises: How can a loving God allow such a thing? Mr Robertson offered a possible explanation for the quake. He offered that it may have been the result of a “pact to the devil.” Speaking during his broadcast, Robertson said, “Something happened a long time ago in Haiti, and people might not want to talk about it,” he said. “They were under the heel of the French ... and they got together and swore a pact to the devil. They said, ‘We will serve you if you'll get us free from the French.’ True story. And the devil said, ‘OK, it's a deal’...Ever since, they have been cursed by one thing after another.”³ The howlings began immediately. Rev Robertson was vilified as a hate monger reveling in the death and destruction of an “anti-Christian” populace. But in fairness, it must be noted that the remarks were made in a lengthy segment on the Haiti quake against the backdrop of prayer and relief efforts.

Pat Robertson was referring to the popular legend that a voodoo priest by the name of Dutty Boukman conducted a ceremony on August 14, 1791 at Bois Caiman in which a congregation sacrificed a black pig, drank its blood and made a pact with the devil. They promised to give the country to that ruler of the underworld in exchange for help in driving the French from the island. Now almost immediately following Robertson's statement, a Haitian minister, Dr Jean Gelin responded. While admitting that the story was widespread, Gelin attributed it all to just rumors with little basis in fact. Further he excused the drinking of the animal blood as just a cultural phenomenon made necessary by the fact that they were undernourished slaves, deprived of proper nourishment. He concluded, “But as for a spiritual pact with Satan, I have not yet seen the evidence.”^{4 5}

What followed the disputed ceremony however was a brutal and bloody civil war. Over time, Haiti went from probably France's richest colony, known as the Pearl of the Antilles, to probably the poorest in the hemisphere. And whether real or imagined, voodoo embedded itself as the bedrock of Haitian culture with its animal (and possibly human) sacrifices intact. The basis of the religion came over from West Africa overlaying witchcraft, ancestor worship and spiritism on a foundation of poorly understood French Catholicism. President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, - (a former Catholic priest, sporting liberation theology and therefore strong Marxist leanings), recognized voodoo as an official religion in 2003, saying at the time that it was “an essential part of national identity.” He even brought over 400 African voodoo priests to promote it. As for Bois Caiman, the site of the alleged ceremony, for over 200 years Haitian witch doctors performed a ritual there on the anniversary of the event to confirm the country's commitment to the covenant.⁶

So what really is the story here? Has Haiti opened herself up for divine retribution for her occult ways? Perhaps the answer can be found in the *THEY KNEW NOT GOD* series that concludes in this newsletter. Perhaps it's the Romans 1 thing, with God turning them over to reap the fruit of their occult ways. Whether or not the original ceremony ever took place at Bois Caiman, we know that Haiti is a nation built upon the spiritual foundation of the occult. As one writer put it: The controversy is "beside the point. it is an important part of Haiti's national mythology and, I would argue, Haiti's national mystique."⁷ Andrew Malone in the UK's Daily Mail describes some of the horrors that that country has been visited with. Ten percent of those under 40 have HIV. They've been ruled by a succession of dictators. Papa Doc Duvalier declared voodoo the nation's official religion in 1957. He collected the skulls of his enemies and sold the blood of those tortured. Decades of trouble continued. The Tonton Macoutes randomly shot passersby, cutting the hearts out of others. Cannibal gangs roamed the countryside. Over \$1 billion in foreign was stolen by one dictator. Malone writes, "Successive dictators have raped, murdered and even reputedly eaten their enemies."⁸ With dripping sarcasm, another writer sums up the case. "How anyone could confuse these charming folkways with devil worship is beyond me."

So is Pat Robertson a hate monger? Hardly! He is speaking from the truth he knows. Perhaps his critics assume that they, - (the culture) – is just a little bit too sophisticated for the likes of that kind of analysis. But the facts are that voodoo is a very dark and occultic belief system. If there is a 'dark side' ruled by Satan, - (and there is) – then its practitioners are surely plugged into it. The religion has evolved into an amalgamation of paganism and Catholicism, complete with spells, animal sacrifices and prayers to the saints and Mary.⁹ A BBC article from 2003 tells of "drumming and chanting [that] go on hour after hour" while a goat and a pig have their throats slit and the blood is sprinkled over those present. This all takes place in a ceremony dedicated to a fertility god and the Catholic Saint James. As one Catholic missionary put it: "Haitians may be 95% Catholic, but they are 100% voodoo."¹⁰ Some voodoo actually taps into black magic replete with "death curses" and "wild sexual orgies."¹¹

Yet the essential question remains. Is this real? And perhaps even more relevant: Is it reasonable to say – as Pat Robertson suggested – that God allowed this earthquake because of some Haitian connection to the occult? I turn here to some friends of mine. Two gentlemen I work with are of Haitian origin having community and relational ties. One actually worked in the country for two years. They both concurred that these are reasonable positions. As one of them put it: "Behind closed doors, we're saying the same things." Both agreed that the dark side is an integral part of Haitian life, expressed the opinion that it was a real phenomena and that there was a price to pay for such involvement. My own Pastor, Randy Smith – who is a sometime contributor to this newsletter confirms the reality and prevalence of voodoo practiced there. Back in the 1980's Randy spent some time in Haiti on his first mission trip. One night he found himself driving on the winding roads, the back of his truck filled with kids from a church youth group. All of a sudden they came around a turn, only to see a giant "Rara fire in the middle of the road. "I slammed on the breaks", Randy recalled. For a time they just took in the scene. "Witchdoctors were in the midst of the flames, jumping up and down on hot coals and shards of glass, screaming, hollering and not getting burned. They were being possessed by the evil spirits there." That is perhaps a good picture of what has happened to Haiti. Real or not, the events at Bois Caiman set the stage for a nation to immerse itself with things of the occult and the devil. They have walked that road for centuries and cannot expect to come out unscathed. Like the 'witch doctors' jumping in and out of the fire, Haiti has dabbled too long and hard with the demon forces. In a sense they've become a nation possessed. But hope is not gone. If they / we will but repent there is hope, there is forgiveness, there is restoration. It is all predicated on a willingness to repent. **"Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that he may send the Christ, who has been appointed for you—even Jesus."** (Acts 3:19-20) (NIV) No, Pat Robertson wasn't too terribly far off the mark. And that repentance is 'the heart of God'. He loves us and wants to bring us home. In 2Peter 3:9 we are told that the Lord is **"not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."** (KJV) Ultimately however, it is our choice to make.

THEY KNEW NOT GOD – PART VI

In Part V we traced the systemic abandonment of God by America and the West. We have had no use for God, and it is becoming the contention of many that He increasingly is having no use for us. That systemic phenomenon has manifested itself in changing the basis of our laws and our morality. It has destroyed the soul of this once great and godly country. Just as Israel did, our nation is finding itself near the bottom of its slide. Now it is time to come out the other side; - to seek the Lord with our whole heart.

THE PROMISE OF REPENTANCE

“You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.” (Jeremiah 29:13) (NIV)

“Except God build the house, they labor in vain that buildeth it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh in vain.” (Psalm 127:1) (KJV)

Aleksander Solzhenitsyn in what became known as his Templeton Address, tragically summarized the state of our culture and our current dilemma. The famous Russian writer gave flight to his thoughts on America and the West. The quote following is in reference to the Communist days of his homeland, early in the 20th century. But his subsequent remarks show how well they applied to America. *“More than half a century ago, while I was still a child, I recall hearing a number of older people offer the following explanation for the great disasters that had befallen Russia: Men have forgotten God; that's why all this has happened. Since then I have spent well-nigh fifty years working on the history of our Revolution; in the process I have read hundreds of books, collected hundreds of personal testimonies, and have already contributed eight volumes of my own toward the effort of clearing away the rubble left by that upheaval. But if I were asked today to formulate as concisely as possible the main cause of the ruinous Revolution that swallowed up some sixty million of our people, I could not put it more accurately than to repeat: Men have forgotten God; that's why all this has happened.”*¹² We find ourselves in the same predicament.

What is true of us today is true of all societies. We grow fat and happy and ignorant and arrogant. We forget from whence we came. The truth of the matter is that like all successful nations, like all empires, America is working its way through what some have called the Cycle of Nations. As we have seen in this series, we began as a people – who were for the most part – dedicated to God and the spreading of the Gospel. As a culture we endeavored to order our lives according to the Divine Purpose. And thus we were blessed. That was the first stage of the cycle. Nations move through stages in their life cycle: - Blessing – Satisfaction – Proud Heartedness – Forgetting God – Judgment – Destruction – Remembering God – Repentance – and finally Return. The Truth Project's Dell Tackett believes that we are at the time of judgment now. And I heartily agree. Hosea 13:6 describes well the pattern as it applied to Israel.

“When they had pasture, they were filled: They were filled and their heart was exalted; Therefore they forgot Me.”¹³

This series has exhaustively made the case that we have abandoned God and that in the process He has turned from us. We are a nation, a culture, sliding into irrelevance and yet we close our eyes and try to pretend that everything is ok and is going to continue to be ok. It is not so! So what is next for this nation of ours? This is the watchman's call: If we do not return to God, we will face His judgment. We cannot ignore the ways of the Almighty for long without experiencing the consequences of our action. As Jesus headed into Jerusalem for the last time; - toward an appointment with a Roman executioner, He spoke of a similar situation that the His own Jewish people were facing. They were a nation that was in the process of rejecting Him, - their God-appointed Messiah. And as Jesus headed into his beloved city for the last time – (that first time around) – He was overcome with emotion - overcome with love for that those that were rejecting Him. In just a short while he would suffer and die for them. It would be a horrible death on a cross. They were blind and they would not see. Luke records how He spoke about a judgment that was guaranteed by their rejection. It came about 37 years later with the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple. **“Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, ‘If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for**

your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation.” (Luke 19:41-44)

And there it is! In the last line of that passage is the very key to the reason for the judgment. They **“did not know the time of their visitation.”** Now, we have seen that even ignorance is a choice. This ignorance was their choice just as our ignorance is the option we have chosen. Theirs was the generation that was in place when Christ came for the first time. Ours is a similar generation. We are living here on the cusp of His return. And the enemy is working his hardest to deceive us. Yet we are ultimately responsible. Recall Joshua 2:10, **“...and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel.”** That is us. Another generation that knew not God! And there is a price to pay as a people for a people that have rejected God. Hosea 4:6 defines that price. **“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; Because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.”** Judgment stark and final!

But you see, this isn't where the story ends. Christ went to the Cross that first time He came. And He bought a forgiveness that only He could. Paying a price that only He could pay, He opened the very gates of Heaven to that generation and to our own, all the way into the very Holy of Holies and the Throne of God. But only if we seek Him with all our heart! As bad as our circumstances are, we are not in a hopeless place. Yes, we have lost sight of God, but He is longing for our return. You see there is a spiritual pattern at work in the history of nations; Rebellion, Punishment, Repentance, - only then Restoration or Revival. It is a pattern for individuals and nations, - personal and corporate. It is a pattern that we seem hardly able to escape. For most of us, it is sadly, only when we have lost sight of God that we are able to realize our need for Him. It is that realization that drives us to repentance. Let's look at the Apostle Peter's Pentecost day sermon that brought the 'Revival' that gave birth to the Church. In his sermon recorded in Acts 2, Peter, beginning in verse 17 quotes the prophet Joel. **“And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh”**. And he rightly saw that these words apply to these last days that began with that Pentecost birthing of Christ's Church. But it was not just the proclamation of the coming of the Holy Spirit with His gifts, - but the fact that Peter allowed himself to be used by God's Spirit to bring forth words that convicted his listeners of their sin and their complicity in Christ's death. That complicity is ours to claim too. We are all sinners in need of that atoning blood. We have all fashioned the nails, and drove them home, and worked the lash, and fashioned the crown of thorns. It is a guilt that has traveled down across centuries and generations to all who have ever sinned. That's me too. I know that's me. And Peter convicted them with his words until they cried out **“Men and brethren, what shall we do?” Then Peter said to them, “Repent”**. (Acts 2:37-38) That is where we are today.

WE ARE CALLED TO REPENT – as a Nation – as a Culture – as a Church! Revival always follows repentance. If we are to be restored as a nation we must repent. Here are the words God gave to Solomon on the subject as found in 2Chronicles 7:13-14. **“When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people, if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”** That is the call: to humble ourselves and pray and seek and turn (repent). It is a call for every age. Then God promises He will: hear, forgive and heal. Such a deal!

Now we in America have reacted in much the same way as ancient Israel; - with arrogance and pride in our own power. That pride is nothing but rebellion. But just as God cannot use a nation that will only trust in itself, he cannot use an individual that does the same. And that pride – or self-sufficiency – in an individual is nothing but rebellion too. We are always faced with the choice – both as a nation and individually. Whom will we serve? Who will you serve?

Now is the time to make that choice. If you don't know Him, if you do not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, the very Son of God, - there is a little piece of business that you must attend to first. As Jesus told Nicodemus, **“You must be born again”**. (John 3:7) He drove the point home with that Jewish scholar of the Scriptures. **“Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”** (John 3:3) You see, we have this sin problem. The Scripture tells us that all are sinners and that we cannot get right with God through our own efforts. So when Jesus says, we “must be born again”, there is no other choice. If you do not know Him as Lord and Savior – commit yourself to Him right now. You can pray something like this. *Lord Jesus. I admit I am a sinner unable to save myself. I am sorry for my sins, but I have no power in myself to come before a wholly righteous God. Yet I believe that you have paid the price for my sin by dying on the Cross. I accept that gift in faith. I accept that payment. I accept you Jesus as my Savior. I accept you as the Lord of my life. So I repent of my sin and ask that you forgive me and wash me clean from my sins. I believe that you are the very Son of God and that you have taken my sins and removed them as far the east is from the west. Thank you Jesus!*

If you have prayed that prayer for the first time, you have become a child of God and the Spirit of the Living God lives in you. Your sins are forgiven. You belong to Him. Now join the rest of God's Church in rejoicing in your salvation and coming to the altar with repentance and prayers for our nation, that He might heal the land.

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WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Want to get a deeper understanding of what you're reading? If you have any issues or questions you'd like us to address – or if you'd like this Newsletter's author, Rob Palaszewski, to come and speak to your church or organization please contact us at rob@atpministry.com

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