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SAKER

Friends, I (badly) need a moderator for a few hours a week – please help!

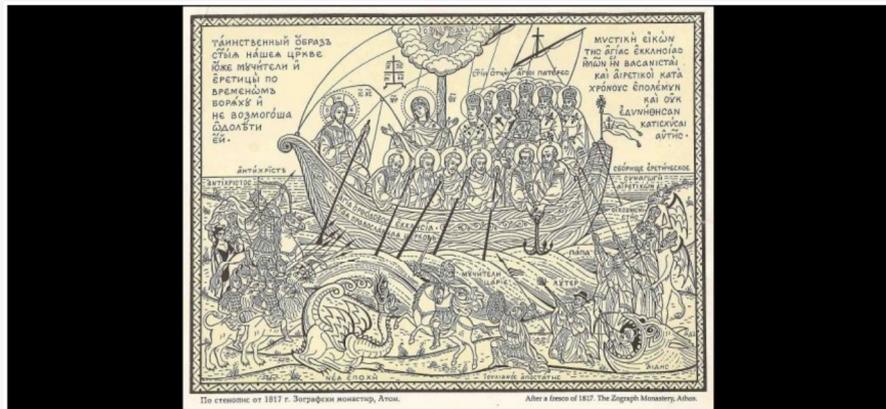
MESSAGE:

Orthodox Faith: Yvonne Lorenzo interviews the Saker

6863 Views

October 04, 2019

88 Comments



C.S. Lewis, in his preface to St Athanasius' *On the Incarnation*, urges us to study the classics. He lamented how today (his "today," but equally if not more importantly our own) people are more interested to read about the great figures of the past rather than the works themselves. He emphasized the need to return to the classic texts of the past, both to expose our own all-too-often hidden presuppositions and to open ourselves to ways of thinking other than our own. This cannot be done, he points out, by reading the works of our contemporaries, for they too share our assumptions. "The only palliative," Lewis wrote, "is to keep the clean sea breeze of the centuries blowing through our minds, and this can only be done by reading old books."... When approached in this way, he concludes, we will find *On the Incarnation* to be a "masterpiece" and be astonished that "a master mind could, in the fourth century, have written deeply on such a subject with such classical simplicity."

From the forward, written by Archpriest John Behr, D. Phil., to *The Orthodox Way* by Metropolitan Kallistos Ware.

I recall a saying of the twentieth century that neither religion nor politics are to be discussed in polite company. Catholic himself, Lew Rockwell posted a link in his Political Theater blog on his website to an article about the Pope's proposed revision of The Lord's Prayer to change "[And lead us not into temptation](#)," which spurred me [to email correspondence with The Saker](#) that was the genesis of this piece.

As followers of my writings know, although I am myself no authority, I've written about Russia and

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About the Saker

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her relationship with Washington and the West. My interest in the Orthodox Faith was piqued by listening to a recording of sacred songs by Dimitri Hvorostovsky, *The Bells of Dawn*, discussed in my article "[Zhuravli](#)", and learning from the liner notes of the album that in Russian sacred music, instruments are not allowed, just the human voice. In addition, a website, [Russian Faith](#), posts several articles on the gradual resurgence of Christianity in formerly Communist Russia. (Please note that as The Saker explained to me, there is no "Russian Faith," for there is only the Orthodox Faith.) One of the greatest conductors of the Twentieth Century, [Yevgeny Mravinsky](#), was a "secret Christian" in the time of the [Bolsheviks](#) in the Soviet Union.

Perhaps best known for his writings as a (former) military analyst and historian, now posted to his website at [TheSaker.is](#) and as a frequent [contributor to the Unz Review](#), The Saker has also written frequently and with in-depth knowledge about the [Orthodox Christian Way](#). In addition, he has founded this website, [Project HOP, History of the Orthodox Peoples](#), which has texts and information available on line, especially for those on a budget who cannot afford the referenced books.

In what has frequently been described, and rightly so I believe, as "post-Christian" America, Christians are under attack. In this extremely hostile environment, one would think despite differences in interpretation of scripture and ritual, Christians would try to learn more about one another and become mutually supportive, no matter their background. (Although I've never communicated with a "Christian Zionist" (which might be discussed here in the Orthodox Wiki as [Dispensationalism](#)) as in the mold of Mike Pompeo or vice-president Pence and suspect any such interaction would be for naught, yet if individuals reading my words have such beliefs, I want them to know I respect their exercise of free will but I am concerned that their misinterpretation of Scripture and trying to bring about "End Times" will lead to disaster, recently detailed by investigative journalist Whitney Webb [to the point Mike Pompeo scared the CIA!](#)

Again, in the spirit of reaching understanding and just for the joy of learning (How many Christians have studied or learned about Buddhism, for example?), I present my interview with the Saker. He has also kindly informed me about Orthodox religious texts, which will be cited below. (Please note these hyperlinks to Amazon.com to those books, and also the pictorial "widgets" to Amazon.com, might not display if the reader uses ad blocking software. I disable UBlock origin using the Brave Browser. I will also include below the title of what I believe are the best books for those who choose not to patronize Amazon and wish to support a local or more amenable retailer or check their local library for availability.

The single most important book, in my opinion, that The Saker introduced me to about Orthodox Theology is *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology*, Fr. Michael Pomazansky (Author), Fr. Seraphim Rose (Translator) published by St. Herman Press. The second I recommend contains a new translation of the Septuagint and commentary, *The Orthodox Study Bible, Hardcover: Ancient Christianity Speaks to Today's World* by St. Athanasius Academy of Orthodox Theology, published by Thomas Nelson. Internet resources include [Orthodox Wiki](#) and less accurate translations of the Septuagint, including the [Brenton Translation](#) and [E.C. Marsh's translation](#).

Yvonne Lorenzo: Saker, let me ask about your background first, if you don't mind discussing it. How did you come by your in-depth knowledge of Orthodox Christianity?

The Saker: I have [written about myself here](#). My knowledge of the original Christianity came from the fact that my spiritual father was a Russian Orthodox Archbishop whom I considered as my real father from age seven to age twenty-seven when he passed away. Furthermore, since Geneva had a superb Orthodox cathedral with plenty of good experts I learned how to read Church Slavonic, I often sang and read the Psalter in church during services. Finally, in 2016 I finally completed by Licentiate in Orthodox Theological Studies (a graduate degree in Patristics, really) from the Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies at the Saint Gregory Palamas Monastery in Etna, CA. The truth is that whether formally or informally, I have been studying Orthodox Christianity pretty much most of my life.

This being said, I am just a rank-and-file sinful layman whose sincerity should not be confused with any authority to speak on these matters. I will share only my private opinions and understanding of these matters.

Yvonne Lorenzo: Let me provide a little of my own background, not out of a desire of obtaining dopamine inducing narcissism from using Social Media like Twitter or Facebook, but to explain my exposure to Christian teachings. I'd rather not get in depth into the details of my experience in Church as a child; suffice it to say that the particular priest (now long deceased) in religious classes had a fondness for describing in graphic detail the horrors of the torture the Apostles and Saint endured (being skinned alive was certainly memorable, if not factual), and he was a most unpleasant, cruel man in my dealings with him; he certainly didn't believe "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her" and I wouldn't mind so much if I was his target, but it

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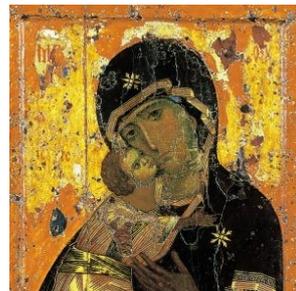
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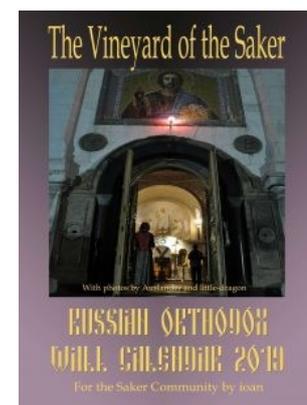
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BOOKSHELF



was my ill mother, while my father's family were the ones with money and influence in the church, which I believe was the reason for his conduct.

Decades later, at the same church for a celebration that an aunt who was married to a late paternal uncle invited me and my brother to attend (and that priest was long since dead), an Archbishop was introduced in glowing terms due to his proximity to and friendship with prominent politicians and I recall in his speech at the end of the dinner, his describing how he pled with the Rockefellers for funds for Syrians (victims of the war), while evidently oblivious or willfully blind to the fact the elites in Washington with whom he cultivated his amicable relationships were the ones who initiated ISIS and the war on Syria.

In addition, I've noted that most Christians I've encountered in life are no different from anyone else. I don't mean to come of as misanthropic, nevertheless. Of course, there are exceptions but I'd describe these people as either "Churchians" or "Christian Pharisees" in that they observe various rituals, but they are all too often as vicious and treacherous as Darwinian atheists, that is, in their avarice, cruelty, greed, meanness and rudeness.

On the other hand, I've found Christians who were devout, no matter their particular faith—Orthodox, Catholic, Pentecostal, for example—who could be especially kind and generous, compassionate and the like. I recall you yourself writing that secular Jews were kinder to you than Christians. From a historical framework, the only time Western Christians truly followed the Way of Jesus Christ—in my opinion—were those few martyred individuals in World War One, who during the Christmas Truce stopped killing each other.

And in relatively recent history, if the majority of Germans were true Christians, I believe they'd never have followed Hitler or willingly committed atrocities, not only against Jews, but against brother Christians in Greece, Russia, and other nations they invaded and occupied. Classical Greek scholar Edith Hamilton has written that Christians in their conduct "have failed the world." I'd appreciate your perspective on my observations and your thoughts, as an Orthodox Christian, what does it mean to be Christian truly, that is to be a follower of "The Way" of Jesus Christ? Of course I understand you have to simplify for reasons of time and space; I'm sure whole books are available on the topic, but I propose getting to the core, which I suspect has simplicity at its heart.

The Saker: Yes, [regarding the kindness of secular Jews] that is absolutely true. I don't think that way and I don't use racial/ethnic categories myself, but if I had to say which ethnicity/tribe has been most kind to me in my life, I would certainly reply "secular Jews" who, at least in my strictly personal experience, have not only been kind, but also very generous!

As a fatherless kid, I was pretty poor and my mother had a very hard time buying me stuff. I had a close personal friend who was not only 1-2 years older than me, but also a few centimeters taller. So he would always give me his used stuff, including used bicycles, diving suits, records, CDs, guitars, etc. His small family (mom, grandma and him) was small for a very specific reason: **all the rest of his family (Jews from Holland) was murdered by the Nazis.** Fifteen people if I remember correctly.

After that, this ultra-religious family become hardcore atheistic since they could not imagine that God would allow such people (simple, innocent and deeply pious) to be murdered en masse. Honestly, I have no idea where the notion that Jews are greedy came from. Possibly envy. In my experience Jews are very "money aware" and skilled at making money (I wish I had that skill!), but they are also typically very generous. At least I never met a greedy Jew in my 55 years of life in this planet, and I've met A LOT of Jews in my life. Furthermore, my childhood pattern was repeated over and over again: Jews were very often kind and generous towards me (and my family members) and in some of the darkest hours of my life, secular Jews showed my **far more** kindness than my supposed Christian brothers. The same goes for Muslims, by the way. I am sad to say this, but the truth is the truth, even if it shames me.

Now I think of these secular Jews as my "good Samaritans".

As for Christians, the real ones are typically rather poor. I cannot explain why this is the case here, but I will recommend these two books on anybody wanting to understand the real, original, pre-urinary times Christian views on wealth:

- [Saint John Chrysostom On Wealth and Poverty](#)
- [Saint Basil the Great On Social Justice](#)

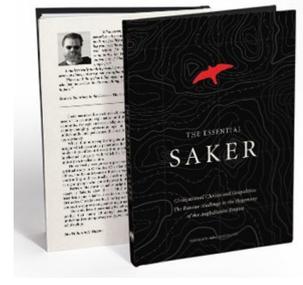
These are small booklets, written in modern English, an "easy read" by any standard, and if you read them you will immediately realize that what [the] so-called "Christians" are saying, doing and even teaching today has nothing in common with the original Christianity.

As for the (very few) rich AND pious Orthodox Christians, they are just as generous as the Orthodox poor. Wealth is not always bad, it can be God-pleasing, but as we know from the Gospels, it is **almost** impossible for a wealthy person to be saved, yet all things are possible to

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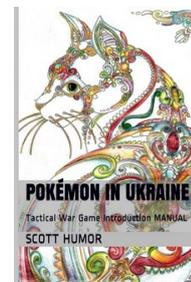
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God.

See what Saint Basil the Great wrote to those with wealth: *“Oh mortal, recognize your Benefactor! Consider yourself, who you are, what resources have been entrusted to you, from whom you received them, and why you received more than others. You have been made a minister of God’s goodness, a steward of your fellow servants. Do not suppose that all this was furnished for your own gullet! Resolve to treat the things in your possession as belonging to others”*.

What is certain, however, is that **Christ’s Kingdom is NOT of this world** and we, Christians, are called to *live* in the world, but not be *of the world*:

“For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.” Christ even told us that, **“If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you.”**

Modern “post-Christian pseudo-Christians” do not understand that. They somehow manage to delude themselves with the notion that capitalism can be compatible with Christianity. Truly, it is “either, or”. As Christ Himself said, *“No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon”* (Matt 6:24). Ask yourself, what is capitalism at its core, as a worldview? Simply put, it is an worldview and ideology which claims that the sum of our greeds will result in an optimally organized society. What folly! Imagine what Christ or the Fathers would have to say about such demonically inspired nonsense!

Some modern self-described Christians think that Christ’s True Church must be the one with most members or most money. Other modern “post-Christian/pseudo-Christians” believe that Christ’s Church is the one with the holy places (cathedrals, beautiful churches, monasteries), or the one which the regime in power happens to find politically more useful. This is how many of our clueless contemporaries think. The Apostles and the Fathers knew better. And there are still a few relatively small traditionalist Orthodox communities which live by these ancient but truly Christian rules. But you are unlikely to find them where the Powers That Be are.

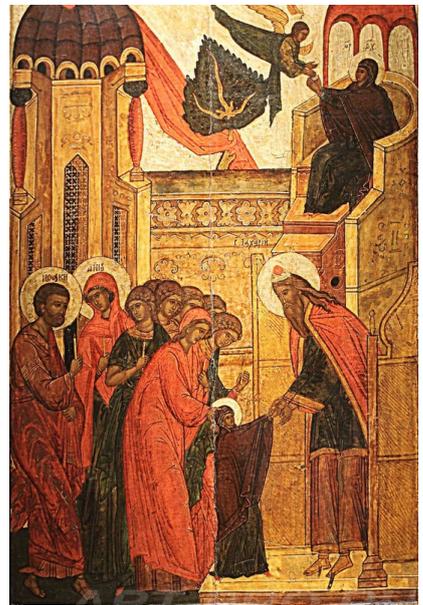
You wrote *“I’ve noted that most Christians I’ve encountered in life are no different from anyone else”* and you are absolutely correct. The Church is not and has never been an “exclusive club for saints.” Quite the opposite: **the Church is a hospital for sinners!** There is no over-stressing the importance of this fact. Let me repeat, the Church is a hospital for sinners and you could even say that if you are a sinner, you qualify! Yes, of course, there are also “saints” in this Church, you can think of them as the “treating physicians” who having found the “cure” (*theosis*) now help other heals. I strongly recommend that anybody not knowing what “theosis” is carefully read this article: <http://orthodoxinfo.com/general/theosis.aspx>. (It is available in 10 different languages!)

Saint Athanasius of Alexandria taught that *“For the Son of God became man so that we might become God”* (by uniting with God’s uncreated energies, not His Essence!). He was just summarizing a very ancient Patristic teaching on “theosis” which all the other major saints (Saint Gregory of Nyssa, Saint Cyril of Alexandria, Saint Maximos the Confessor, Saint Gregory Palamas, etc.) fully agreed with this teaching and expanded upon it. It is not easy to find good sources on Christian ecclesiology online, especially in English, but here is what I found: (in no special order):

- Saint Cyprian of Cartage “[On the Unity of the Church](#)”
- Saint Metropolitan Philaret “[Will the Heterodox Be Saved?](#)”
- Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Fili “[And Who Is My Neighbor?](#)”
- Alexei Khomiakov “[The Church is One](#)”
- Archbishop Hilarion (Troitsky) “[Christianity or the Church](#)”
- Right Reverend Photios, Bishop of Triaditza, “[Orthodox Unity Today](#)”
- Protopresbyter Michael Pomazansky “[On the Church](#)”
- St. Justin (Popovich) “[The Attributes of the Church](#)”
- Dr. Alexander Kalomiros “[Orthodox Ecclesiology](#)”
- Saint John Chrysostom “[The Character and Temptations of a Bishop](#)”
- Archpriest Georges Florovsky “[The Catholicity of the Church](#)”
- Archpriest Georges Florovsky “[The Limits of the Church](#)”
- Archpriest Georges Florovsky “[On Church and Tradition](#)”
- Hieromonk Seraphim Rose “[The Royal Path: True Orthodoxy in an Age of Apostasy](#)”
- Bishop Artemije of Raška and Prizren “[Deification as the End and Fulfillment of Salvation According to St. Maximos the Confessor](#)”

Finally, there is a wealth of excellent article on this website: <https://www.fatheralexander.org/page6.htm> and a very authentic and traditional “*Confession of Faith of Genuine Orthodox Christian*” here: <https://www.hsir.org/pdfs/2015/10/29/E20151029aOmologiaPisteos/E20151029aOmologiaPisteos.pdf>

The above is a mix of very different authors and texts, but between them, you have a good primer



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for the study of Christian ecclesiology (along with a few names of good modern theologians).

Yvonne Lorenzo: Regarding my studies of the Bible at a liberal arts university now over forty-five years ago, I recall the Professor stating the text of the Hebrew “Old Covenant,” as he described it, made no mention of a virgin regarding the “virgin birth,” but instead referenced a young girl and how Jesus when saying during the loaves and fishes to “eat of my flesh” wanted to make the Jews vomit—along those lines. In addition, the assumption also was taught that the resurrection was added later, as were the prophecies of the destruction of the temple and I recall an odd remark, that the Pharisees were anachronistic, being from a later era. To the contrary, you made me aware of the [Septuagint](#) that contradicts the “scholarship” I was introduced to; and I found this excellent article posted on the website Russian Faith (although you informed me “Russian faith” is a misnomer; there is only the Orthodox Faith) titled [“Russian Bibles Are Very Different from American Ones. Here’s Why”](#). Below is an important excerpt from that article, which also provided evidence from the Dead Sea Scrolls:

Indeed, I used to believe the Masoretic Text was a perfect copy of the original Old Testament. I used to believe that the Masoretic Text was how God divinely preserved the Hebrew Scriptures throughout the ages.

I was wrong.

The oldest copies of the Masoretic Text only date back to the 10th century, nearly 1000 years after the time of Christ. And these texts differ from the originals in many specific ways. The Masoretic text is named after the Masoretes, who were scribes and Torah scholars who worked in the middle-east between the 7th and 11th centuries. The texts they received, and the edits they provided, ensured that the modern Jewish texts would manifest a notable departure from the original Hebrew Scriptures.

Your response was to my posting on your website of an English translation of the Second Psalm which was my own response to a comment by a Russian who cited it on a piece on your site on the depravity of the elites; I used the New International Version, not as beautiful as the King James but perhaps more comprehensible to readers in the Twenty-first century. I have become aware of a more modern translation of Septuagint by Oxford University Press in “modern language” and although the British to me—at least in their power circles and government—are unreliable, from my review I think the scholarship presented is sound (they use the word “Anointed” in the Second Psalm and that means the Messiah). I will post after we finish our conversations the King James version, The New International version, and the Septuagint translations by Sir Lancelot C.L. Brenton of the Second Psalm, which you sent me, and finally Oxford’s N.E.T.S. Please elaborate for our readers.

The Saker: [I’ve discussed the Septuagint](#) on my website and I quote:

In answer to whether the Scripture was corrupted: Yes and no. Yes it was, but never *successfully*. Let me explain why.

First, if you accept that God did communicate with mankind by means of prophecy and that the prophets did put down the prophecies which they received, you would wonder why then God would let men distort or otherwise corrupt the message He sent us. Of course, all man can err, we are all sinful, and either by mistake or deliberately man have corrupted the Scripture, no question here, the pertinent question is rather *could these men have gotten away with that?*

In the Third book of Esdras we have an interesting episode. Esdras tells God that the Scripture has been burned and asks, *“If then I have found favor before thee, send the Holy Spirit into me, and I will write everything that has happened in the world from the beginning, the things which were written in thy law, that men may be able to find the path, and that those who wish to live in the last days may live.”*

To which God replies *“Go and gather the people, and tell them not to seek you for forty days. But prepare for yourself many writing tablets, and take with you Sarea, Dabria, Selemia, Ethanus, and As’iel—these five, because they are trained to write rapidly; and you shall come here, and I will light in your heart the lamp of understanding, which shall not be put out until what you are about to write is finished.”*

And, sure enough, Esdras tells us, *“So I took the five men, as he commanded me, and we proceeded to the field, and remained there. And on the next day, behold, a voice called me, saying, “Ezra, open your mouth and drink what I give you to drink.” Then I opened my mouth, and behold, a full cup was offered to me; it was full of something like water, but its color was like fire. And I took it and drank; and when I had drunk it, my heart poured forth understanding, and wisdom increased in my breast, for my spirit retained its memory; and my mouth was opened, and was no longer closed. And the Most High gave understanding to the five men, and by turns they wrote what was*

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dictated, in characters which they did not know. They sat forty days, and wrote during the daytime, and ate their bread at night. As for me, I spoke in the daytime and was not silent at night. So during the forty days ninety-four books were written. And when the forty days were ended, the Most High spoke to me, saying, "Make public the twenty-four books that you wrote first and let the worthy and the unworthy read them; but keep the seventy that were written last, in order to give them to the wise among your people. For in them is the spring of understanding, the fountain of wisdom, and the river of knowledge." And I did so.

Sorry for the long quote, but I want to illustrate a point: when needed God can command his faithful to restore even the full Scripture provided a) that they are worthy to receive the guidance of the Holy Spirit and b) that they receive the "drink like fire" which God gives them (note that this book was written long before the times of Christ!). What is certain is that the notion that God would grant a revelation through His prophets and then allow that revelation to remain corrupted for centuries is rather ludicrous.

There was, indeed, one grievous attempt at falsifying the Scripture. It occurred after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD. At that time the Jewish people were separated into two sects: those who believed that Christ was the Messiah and those who did not. The former become known as Christians, while the latter—mostly Pharisees—created their own group which developed a new spirituality which switched focus from the Old Testament to the Talmud, from the Temple to assemblies (synagogues), from priests to rabbis and from the original Scripture to a new "corrected" text. This texts had the official *imprimatur* of the rabbis who declared that it has been corrected by their sages, the scribes and scholars. Needless to say, what they really did is cut out or alter those parts of the Scripture which were inconvenient to them. At the time there was a great deal of hostility between the two groups and disputations centered around the Scripture, of course. The issue at hand was simple: did the prophesies about the Messiah in the scripture match what actually happened in the life of Christ or not? Could the followers of Christ prove their case by using the Scripture? Well, the "guardians of the tradition", or "Masorettes" as they became known, "corrected" the Scripture as much as possible to produce a forgery known today as the "Masoretic text" (abbreviated MT).

Christians immediately saw through that and denounced the text as a fake. One of the earliest documents we have showing that Christians at the time were fully aware that the Jews produced a forgery is the "Dialog with Trypho" in which Saint Justin Martyr (2nd century) explicitly makes that accusation. The latter Fathers have also confirmed that.

You might wonder which text is the original and what happened to it. We only have parts of the original Hebrew "Old Testament" (which is, of course, not what they called it). Following the conquests of Alexander the Great much of what is today the Middle-East was "Hellenized" and the language of the elites and the international language of the time was Greek. About two centuries before the birth of Christ, at the request of the local (Greek) ruler, Ptolemy II Philadelphius, a translation into Greek of the Hebrew text was made for the famous Library of Alexandria by 70 translators from the twelve tribes of Israel. This text is called the Septuagint (abbreviated **LXX**) in memory of these seventy translators. This is the **only** text ever considered authoritative by the [Orthodox] Church. Following the Latin schism, the LXX was almost forgotten in western Europe where the Latin Church used a translation made by Saint Jerome called the Vulgate. Because the Latins believed that only the "learned" clergy should read the Scripture and then teach and explain it to the "simple" folks, this text was not very widely circulated.

In contrast, Luther wanted each Christian to have access to the Scripture. Luther, who was opposed to the Latin clericalism and who suspected that the Latins might have corrupted the text, decided to base his teaching on what he apparently sincerely believed was the "original" Hebrew text, the Masoretic forgery. As a result, the vast majority of Bibles available in the Western World are based on a text deliberately forged by Christ-hating rabbis, including the (otherwise beautifully written) King James Version. More recently, newer "corrected" versions of the MT have been made, but there is still only one, rather bad, translation of the LXX in English, the so-called "Brenton translation" (I hear that a new one is being worked on). But until very recently the West was simply too proud and too ignorant of Patristic thought to remember that only the LXX was the true text of the Old Testament.

I am going into all these details to illustrate a point: yes, Holy Writ can, and has been, corrupted both deliberately (Masorettes) or by ignorance (western Bibles). But **God never allows the original true text to simply vanish**.

I would also note that what the rabbis attempted is first and foremost a substitution: LXX by MT. They never claimed that the MT was the LXX. In fact, some Jewish holidays (such as Hanukkah) have no scriptural basis in the MT but only in the LXX (in the book of Maccabees in this case). Unlike the West, the Jews never forgot about the LXX—they simply did not want to grant it authoritative status, for quite obvious reasons.

Свети Владика Николај: Пчелару М. А.:

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[9/11 consensus](#)



There are some sources which claim that an attempt to corrupt the LXX was also made by Jews, but I have seen no good evidence of that. For one thing, the LXX was simply too widely circulated (not as one text, but as a collection of books) to suddenly substitute another text. Really, the creation of the MT was for "internal consumption" and to beat back Christian polemicists.

So here is my main point: there is **zero** historical evidence to attest to the corruption of the original Holy Scripture. The only known case is the one I outlined above. We also know from the Scripture itself that God would never deprive his faithful from His Word, the example of Esdras (aka Ezra) above also shows that. Furthermore, simple logic suggests to us that it is impossible to corrupt a text which is both 1) widely circulated **and** 2) very closely analyzed and held [as] sacred.

Let me conclude here by saying that I personally believe that the Prophet Muhammad did hear about the Masoretic forgery and that this inspired him to look at the Christian Scripture with a strong suspicion that the text had been forged. Obviously, like Luther, he was not aware of the LXX. It is also possible that Muhammad might have had another reason to declare that the Christian scripture was corrupted: the so-called Old Testament has absolutely no prophecy speaking of any figure like Muhammad, this is why some Muslim scholars have had to declare that the "Comforter" mentioned by Christ to His disciples was a reference to Muhammad and not to the Holy Spirit, an interpretation which even a superficial reading of the New Testament immediately invalidates and which not a single Church Father or theologian between the first and seventh century endorsed.

Whatever may be the case, the Muslim theory that the Scripture has been successfully corrupted is both illogical and a-historical. One can, of course, chose to believe it, especially if one accepts that everything, including the historical record, has been forged, corrupted or lost, but at least to me faith and common sense should not contradict each other.

I think that it is undeniable that Christianity grew out of the religion of the Jewish people before the birth of Christ. Christ Himself constantly makes references to the books the Church has united into one volume called the "Old Testament". If the topic is of interest to you, see all the texts on [this](#) page, especially [this](#) one and [this](#) one. In contrast, Islam has no other scriptural basis that itself or, rather, the book it produced: the Quran. We are dealing with a typical circular validation, a logical fallacy.

In conclusion I want to say that a closer look at history shows that the notion of "Judaeo-Christian" is simply at least as nonsensical as speaking of a White-Black or a Dry-Wet. As for the so-called "Abrahamic religions" they truly have nothing in common. Modern Judaism is really nothing else but an "anti-Christianity" while Islam is a faith which appeared *ex-nihilo* and has no basis in either Jewish or Christian scripture or oral tradition.

I hope that I have not offended anybody here, especially not my Muslim friends and readers, but I felt that it was important to lay out here the **original** Christian understanding of these issues. As any other Orthodox Christian I strongly feel that it is my personal obligation to preserve that which has been passed on to me (the "corporate memory and awareness" of the Church, if you want) and to share it with others if or when it is appropriate. As (I hope) intelligent and considerate people, we can "agree to disagree", but to do that, you need to be made aware of the nature of what we might disagree on, right?

Yvonne Lorenzo: The popular personality Jordan B. Peterson writes in his multi-million copy selling book *12 Rules for Life* about Scripture. I don't know if he's ever read even any work of scholarship, much less an Orthodox one. He differentiates between the Old Testament God, whom he describes as "harsh, judgmental, unpredictable, and dangerous" and as a person who doesn't care what people think. "It was the realists who created, or noticed, the Old Testament God." The "New Testament God" he describes as "master craftsman and benevolent father. He wants nothing for us but the best. He is all-loving and all forgiving. Sure, He'll send you to Hell if you misbehave badly enough." In addition, he writes, "Who but the most naïve among us could posit than an all-good, merciful Being ruled this so-terrible world." Regarding the Fall, he wrote, "The Biblical narrative of Paradise and the Fall is one such story, fabricated by our collective imagination, working over the centuries...After much contemplation, struggling humanity learns that God's favour could be gained, and his wrath averted, through proper sacrifice—and that bloody murder might be motivated among those unwilling or unable to succeed in this matter."

Even Moody's commentary on The Bible using the Masoretic text of Genesis points out Petersen's grave errors; I refer to his writing because he has a following on YouTube numbered in millions and I'm sure more people in America have read his book discussing Christianity than studied the Bible.

On a personal level, when I've written about Christian matters on LewRockwell.com, I've received angry emails, one of which stated in effect that only a monstrous god would demand the blood sacrifice of his son as payment for his wrath. Please address not only the Fall but the Orthodox perspective on these key issues, which I realize are critical: human nature, indeed the world itself,



Nature itself, is not what it was supposed to be. I've also read [Surprised by Christ: My Journey From Judaism to Orthodox Christianity](#) by Rev. James A. Bernstein who discussed these matters from an Orthodox perspective.

The Saker: This silly notion is what is left over from the western scholasticism. To make a very long story short, [Augustine of Hippo](#) (4th century) had, among very good and valid ideas, a mistaken notion about the dogma of the [Original Sin](#). His mistakes were picked up and further developed by [Anselm of Canterbury](#) (12th century) and by [Thomas Aquinas](#) (13th century). As a result, the West acquired a **completely legalistic notion** of the dogma of redemption which can roughly be summarized like so:

“Man offended God, so God punished man, but the suffering of man as a result of the Original Sin was not good enough to appease God’s anger. But when His Son was crucified for the sins of man, then God was satisfied because the sufferer had an equal “value” as the offended party, God Himself—that is Christ.”

This obsession with the suffering of Christ and the suffering of man (on earth or in the so-called “purgatory” also invented by Western theologians) is typical of Western Christianity.

The East has a mystical understanding of the Dogma of Redemption which can again, very roughly, be summarized as such:

As a consequence of Adam’s original sin, suffering and death have entered the previously perfect soul of man who, being the nexus between the material world and spiritual world also ‘infected’ all of Creation with decay, suffering and death. Christ ‘emptied Himself’ to become God-Man, the theanthropos, and fully assumed man’s nature. Thus, while through the actions of the First Adam mankind lapsed, through the actions of the Second Adam mankind can be saved. On the Holy and Life-giving Cross Christ, even though He Himself was sinless, voluntary took upon himself the two most horrible consequences of Adam’s sin, suffering and death, and then He defeated ‘death by death.’ Thus by His Resurrection Christ made it possible for the new and renewed man to become a ‘little Christ’ by uniting with the uncreated energies of God.

I apologize for the summary/simplification above, but to explain this dogma fully and correctly a full lecture would be necessary.

So no, God is not a bloodthirsty God and all the blood sacrifices in the Old Testament are but a mystical prefiguration of the Eucharist.

Of course, the God of the Orthodox/Haredi Jews is a hateful, vengeful, racist and generally maniacal God. But we all know what Saint John wrote about the “Synagogue of Satan” composed of Jews who pretend to be Jews, but whose father is the devil.

Yvonne Lorenzo: LewRockwell.com recently published this piece on the evil of the so-called “elites” titled “[Jeffrey Epstein and the Spectacle of Secrecy](#),” in which its author, Edward Curtin, writes the following:

Those of us who oppose these criminals – and there are growing numbers all over the world – must avoid being sucked into the establishment narratives and the counter-narratives they spawn or create. We must refuse to get involved in pseudo-debates that are meant to lead nowhere. We must reject the language created to confuse. If revolutionary change is to come, we must learn to tell a new story in language so beautiful, illuminating, and heart-rending that no one will listen to the lying words of child molesters, mass murderers, and those who hate and persecute truth tellers. As John Berger said, “In storytelling everything depends on what follows what. And the truest order is seldom obvious.”

His conclusion is more, to me, of an amorphous conception “humanist” perspective of coping with evil. I’ve written on the “Occult Elite” as well in “[Epstein & Q-Anon: A Match Made in Cyberspace](#).” How does an Orthodox Christian respond to the “powers” in this world? Do you have advice?

The Saker: Yes, and the first most obvious piece of advice is “do **NOT** ask for *my opinion*” or, for that matter, the opinion of anybody currently living (there are exceptions, but most people are unaware of them). Can you guess what you could have asked instead? **What would THE FATHERS advise us in our situation?** That would make it an “Orthodox question.” What would the Fathers say? They would urge you to immerse yourself in the following:

- The writings of the Church Fathers (this is absolutely crucial!!!) starting with the [Philocalia](#) (which you can download by clicking here: [Volume 1](#), [Volume 2](#), [Volume 3](#) and [Volume 4](#).)
- The Lives of the Saints, including [Western saints](#), and the [real thing](#) (also see [here](#)) of



course, not the syrupy nonsense written by the Latins (including the liturgical canons associated with their feast days!)

- Books on the history of the Churches (except those written by modern historians and “theologians” which, with a few notable exceptions, are typically worthless since their authors are much more concerned with making a name for themselves in western academia rather than with conveying through their books the true Orthodox mindset or “spirit of the Fathers” (*phronema ton pateron*) or, for that matter, the “consensus of the Fathers” which expresses the “general conscience of the Church” (*he genike syneidesis tes ekklesias*). Stay away from those “brilliant” “theologians”!)

Specifically, they would remind you that the Prophets, Christ, the Apostles, the Fathers and the Church all gave us a very big body of revealed knowledge about the End Times. They all warned about mass apostasy, about materialism, about persecutions, about heresies, about the “stars falling from the heavens” (which the Fathers understood as referring to **apostatizing bishops** and not as an astronomical event!). They will all tell you that the True Church of Christ will be persecuted and will shrink to a very small, but very spiritually strong, entity. They finally tell you that Evil will prevail and that only the Second Coming will defeat the Antichrist (a belief we share with the Muslims, by the way!).

A decade ago or more, one Russian theologian wrote a rather controversial article he entitled “*The ecclesiology of a retreating Church.*” His article was all in all okay, but the title I find especially brilliant. Yes, we Christians love life, and we don’t seek death (even if we are told to be ready to accept it joyfully and gratefully should we become martyred by the *theomachs* (enemies of God, all the many categories included) or should we give up our lives in defense of others). But neither are we under any illusion about what “the world” has in store for us. After all, in order to “imitate Christ” we have to also accept Golgotha, should that end be God’s will for us.

Yvonne Lorenzo: I'd like to ask you for the Orthodox interpretation of (King James Translation) [Romans 13](#) :

1 Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

2 Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same:

4 For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.

5 Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.

6 For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.

7 Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.

A commentator and writer named The Bionic Mosquito wrote in “[Christians and Government](#)” that if we interpret these authorities as government, “then I am sure that what Paul meant by this was that Mary and Joseph should have turned the newborn Jesus into Herod’s grasp.”

He also wrote:

One has to view Romans 13 in isolation if one wants to make of it Biblical support for any and all earthly government authorities. But it is even worse than this:

Whereas some English translations use the word “governing” in verse 1, the Greek text does not. It reads “Let every soul be subject to the superior powers.”

Who, or what, are these “superior powers”? The Romans? Or God? Paul seems to answer this implicitly, certainly if one respects the context provided in the preceding chapter of Romans: “Do not be conformed to the world...” Instead, conform to God’s will.

There is nothing in Romans chapter 12 or 13 to suggest that the beginning of Romans 13 be interpreted as unconditional support for earthly government. There is little, if anything, in all of Scripture that supports such an interpretation.

When Paul has written about submitting to leaders in other books of the Bible, he has referred to Church authorities. Is it possible that in Romans 13, he was writing of earthly authorities – the same authorities that were persecuting members of the faith?



In Romans 13, Paul writes of those wearing the sword, do we not elsewhere read of putting on the armor of God?

Please provide the Orthodox interpretation of Romans 13.

The Saker: First, I think the first step is to ignore what insects (bionic or not) have to say about the Scripture and turn, where else, to the Fathers (especially those insects who refer to the holy, glorious, all-laudable Apostle Paul simply as “Paul” as if talking about a buddy of theirs).

See [here](#). Most people are spiritually sick. Our condition, after The Fall, is one of a fallen creature. Thus we believe that life is a type of pathology and the ‘cure’ for it is the Church; see [here](#).

In addition, Romans 13:1-7 states:

Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.

Romans is one of the most complex books of the Bible and a full discussion of Patristic commentaries on Romans should be a semester long seminar. The systematic thing to do would be to collect as many Patristic commentaries as possible, then see not only the letter of these commentaries, but also the spirit. We cannot do that here, so all I can offer is a few very simplified and summarized thoughts on this topic.

The first thing we need to remember here is Christ's words: “Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.” (Matt 22:21). This makes sense, since we know that Christ's Kingdom is not of this world. However, what is in this world are the Church and the members of that Church. The second thing we can clearly note is that, using the terminology of modern-day libertarians, Christ and the original Church were most definitely “statists” meaning that they believed not only that having a state is *acceptable*, they believed that it was fundamentally *needed*. The Fathers believed that the state, as such, is a God-ordained element of a healthy human society. In fact, they saw that the state can even play the role of the “restrainer” or “the one who restrains” meaning that the state is what stands between chaos and order or even that the state can create the conditions in which the Church can safely and freely exist or even be protected. Of course, each case is different and the Church, which is a living organism, assesses the posture on a case by case basis.

The Church does not promote one political order over another. Still, there are roughly three main possible categories of state:

- 1) The state with an Orthodox ruler/government which proactively protects the Church and tries to create as truly Christian a society as possible. No, this is NOT a “theocracy” or some kind of “Caesaropapism” (these are categories mostly used by clueless modern wannabe “theologians”). Typically, this would be monarchy. But not just any monarchy (monarchies are like democracies or people's republics — they come in all sorts of flavors) it would have to be a truly Christian monarchy (a minority in history) which would create the conditions of a “symphony” between the state and the Church.
- 2) A state in which state and Church are completely separated. Well, if they are **truly** separated, then this is still acceptable to a Christian who has the direct obligation to respect the laws of the state he/she lives under. However, in many (most?) cases the state which is supposed to be totally separated from the Church ends up *actively promoting anti-Christian ideas and values*. Even in this case, the Christian cannot defy the state or breaks its laws (at least not without a very strong and compelling argument).
- 3) And then there is the state of “enemies of God,” militant atheists which persecute the Church and all true Christians. Enemies of the Church are referred to as “*theomachs*” (in Greek) or “*bogobortsy*” in Russian. The best example I can think of is the Bolshevik state which seized power from the short-lived Masonic Kerensky “democracy” (in reality: total, abject chaos) and



immediately embarked on a massive, truly genocidal, persecution of all religions but especially the Russian Orthodox Church which the Bolsheviks (mostly rabidly Russophobic atheistic Jews) hated with a burning, truly demonic passion. This kind of state is not a state which the Orthodox Christian “may” obey. This is the kind of state which the Orthodox Christian is **obligated** to oppose, even at the risk of his/her life because doing anything else would be an act of apostasy, especially if the lapsed Christian begins actively supporting that teomachic state.

I will use the example of the Bolshevik state to illustrate this point.

When the Bolsheviks took power the Russian Orthodox Church split into roughly 4 groups:

- 1) Those who openly rejected the submission of the Russian Orthodox Church to the Bolshevik state. They are often referred to by the name of their leader, Metropolitan Joseph or Petrograd: the “**Josephites**.”
- 2) Those who did not openly reject the submission of the Russian Orthodox Church to the Bolsheviks state but who practiced their faith clandestinely. They are often called the “**Catacomb Church**.”
- 3) Those who decided to flee from these persecutions and go into exile. They were called the “**Russian Orthodox Church in Exile**.” See [here](#) for a summary history.
- 4) Those who decided to accept the submission of the Russian Orthodox Church to the Bolshevik’s state because they believed that by collaborating with the state the bishop and priests were actually “saving the Church” from total destruction. These folks often explain that the clergymen who did agree to collaborate with the theomachs by denouncing true Christians to the Soviet secret police, by saying that the Christian Church and theomachic state are in full solidarity with each other and by saying that the only people the state persecutes are class enemies and counter-revolutionaries. These are often referred to by the name of their leader, Metropolitan Sergius: the “**Sergianists**.”

[Note: Since the Communist regime collapsed in Russia, Sergianism *per se* has been mostly replaced with its ugly offspring **Neo-Sergianism**. The difference between the two is that under the Bolsheviks Christians were **forced** to submit to the state and declare their full union with it. Nowadays, the Neo-Sergianists do **voluntarily** submit themselves to the secular authorities to seek their support (in the form of money, riot police making sure that they control all the main historical cathedrals, churches, monasteries, etc, and, most importantly, to bestow upon them the illusion of legitimacy. This is true not only in post-Communist countries, but also in the rest of the world. I discuss this issue in more details in my articles “[Why Orthodox Churches are still used as pawns in political games](#)”, “[A negative view of Christianity and religion in general](#)” and “[The abomination of desolation standing in the holy place](#)”]

Finally, all those who were massacred or persecuted by the Bolsheviks are referred to as “[The New Martyrs and Confessor of Russia](#).” This is a image of this icon of these new saints:





The stances taken by the three first groups are all equally pious options. The proof of that statement is that **the first three groups all remained in communion with each other and rejected the communion with the Sergianist even when threatened with torture and death!** The stance of the fourth group is, however, diametrically opposed to original, Patristic, theology. Let me give you one small example:

During the 3rd century AD the [Decian Prosecution](#) demanded that “everyone in the Roman Empire” (except for Jews, who were exempted; in fact, they often egged on the Romans to persecute the Christians they hated so much) perform a sacrifice to the Roman gods and the well-being of the Emperor. The edict ordered that the sacrifices be performed in the presence of a Roman magistrate, and a signed and witnessed certificate be issued to that effect. Some Christians lapsed and agreed to perform the sacrifice. Others did not do that, but secured documents (called *libelli*) which certified that they had done so ([see here for a pretty decent summary](#) of this situation). Well, even the latter were considered “lapsed” by the Church and one of the Church’s most remarkable hierarchs: [Saint Cyprian of Carthage](#) . They were eventually reunited with the Church, but only after their public confession and condemnation of their actions!

Twenty-seven centuries later, the same truth was reaffirmed in the beautiful Service to the New Martyrs and Confessor of Russia written by His Eminence Archbishop Anthony (Medvedev) of San Francisco, who was the first ruling bishop of the Western American Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia. He served as bishop of San Francisco for thirty two years. He was the last bishop of the Russian Church who was born and raised in per-revolutionary Russia ([source](#)). In one of the *stichera* of this service we can read:

“People do not save the Church, and collaboration with Her enemies yields no benefits, but it is the Church which saves people by the power of Christ, as your spiritual feat has shown. Oh steadfast New Martyrs of Russia, you who are truly the glory of the Church, fervently pray for Her that God may keep Her steadfast”
(my own, rough, translation from Church Slavonic).

Keep in mind that the pagan Romans usually did NOT ask Christians to give up their faith. They “only” asked that the Christians “respect” the pagan gods. Yet that is clearly an apostasy, at least in the teachings and ethos of the Fathers.

The Bolsheviks, in contrast, demanded much more: not only did you have to commit a clear apostasy, they also wanted Christians to submit to an illegitimate (lapsed) bishop, they wanted Christians to prove their loyalty by denouncing others, they demanded that priests break the secrecy of confession and denounce true Christians to the Secret Police, etc. Compared to Lenin, Trotsky and their gang of Russophobic murderers, the Roman pagans were rather minimalists in their demand. Yet the Bolsheviks clearly demanded something which belongs to God (spiritual matters) and the Sergianists agreed to hand it over to their Bolshevik Caesars.

For an Orthodox Christian, there cannot be any obedience outside the obedience to God. For details, see my essay “[Obedience in Christianity: a reply to an important question.](#)” Let me just clarify some terminology: when a Christian agreed to even sparkle a few charcoals on a pagan god’s fire, or just gets a piece of paper saying that he did that that already makes him a “lapsed” person. If a Christian joins an illegal (by canon law) bishop he becomes a “schismatic.” If he develops a theological justification for that lapse or schism he becomes a “heretic.” These words are not slurs or insults, at least not in the context of a theological discussion: they are *diagnostic*



concepts.

The bottom line is this: ***there is no need whatsoever to reinvent any “theological wheel.”*** Truly, there is nothing new under the sun, and most definitely not persecutions and heresies. The latter have always existed in the past two thousand years. So when something happens, we don't need to think long and hard about it or, worse, consider what modern theologian X has to say about it. All we need to do is see what Christ, the Apostles and the Fathers have always been saying about that. If we do that, intensively, we might shed the secular and scholastic mindset of our times and replace it with the “spirit of the Fathers.”

Yvonne Lorenzo: Although Andrei Martyanov, the Russian military analyst and historian is not a believer, he wrote this piece, “[A Dramatic And, Sadly, Expected Data](#),” in which he discusses the increased suicide rate in the United States, its highest since World War II. He writes, and with sympathy for the victims, since he lives and works in America:

The secret? How about I go out on a limb here and name three main causes:

1. Alienation due to lack of meaningful future, hence drugs, among other things;
2. Radical atomization;
3. Mental decline due to social media and degenerate art and culture.

Here is [an] interesting fact: in Russian, mentally unstable people (and suicide often, not always, is a result of such instability) are still called, even in medical practice as **Душевнобольной** (Ill with soul, or sick soul), which, I think, is a good description. No amount of material possessions can make one happy unless one's life is filled with purpose and love. Some, revert to religion—this seldom helps, others—they do develop deep faith (I hope you understand why I separate these two: religion and faith). Some have faith in God, whatever God is for them, others have faith in inherent good, beauty and order which must prevail universally, others have faith in dream—but it is always faith. Even militant atheists have faith, however misguided it is sometimes. Life has to be filled with meaning, without it—no amount of material valuables will suffice.

Looking at the modern West in general and US in particular today, one cannot fail to notice this increasing stench of nihilism and depravity which permeates the atmosphere—from mass media to human relations. Moreover, the future for many (in their view) doesn't look bright at all—it is one [showing] signs of a serious crisis in society. People lose [the] desire to live, they don't see the value in living—their souls die before physical death occurs.

As an Orthodox Christian, please explain “*Душевнобольной*” from your perspective, the causes and perhaps a solution, if there is any.

The Saker: Yet another very complex and interesting question requiring a lengthy reply. The good news is that this reply was already given, and by somebody eminently qualified: the late and the Most Reverend Chrysostomos, Metropolitan Emeritus of Etna, CA, who, amongst his [many academic titles and awards](#) also completed an M.A. and PhD. in Psychology at Princeton University, where he taught for three years as a Preceptor (assistant instructor) in the psychology department. He later went on from Princeton to accept a professorship at the University of California, Riverside. I highly recommend his book “[A Guide to Orthodox Psychotherapy: The Science, Theology, and Spiritual Practice Behind It and Its Clinical Applications](#).” Another interesting couple of books are “[The Theology of Illness](#)” and “[Mental Disorders & Spiritual Healing: Teachings from the Early Christian East](#)” by Jean-Claude Larchet.

All I will say here is that the notion of completely separate body, mind and soul is not a Patristic one. Yes, the Fathers use these categories, just like they used ancient Greek philosophical categories, but they always re-defined/re-interpreted them; thus you cannot just snatch some quote from Saint X and Saint Z and say that, indeed, body, mind and soul are completely separated. In fact, the original vocabulary of the Platonists and has been deeply re-worked and transformed in the Patristic context. This is why it is also so silly to declare that Church Father X or Y are “Neo-Platonists”: yes, the words they use are the same, but their **meanings** have been profoundly reworked.

To truly understand disease and its role in our lives you need to familiarize yourself with the basics of Patristic dogmatic anthropology.

I am sorry, but this is the best answer I can give without going into a lecture.

Yvonne Lorenzo: Regarding satanists, I've read how when doing evil something demonic takes place; if we can trust a repentant satanist murderer, his testimony was that in killing he felt united to what I'd call demonic or the devil, another consciousness and felt power, not just what you said



about “forbidden fruit”, that is to stay there is an alternated consciousness and receiving of the demonic. Given what Orthodoxy states about the nature of man being changed after the “fall” what are your thoughts?

The Saker: My thoughts on that is this: God is merciful and “*He does not want the death of the sinner*”, right?

So while satanists will try to kill, defile and destroy everything, God restrains them and only allows the suffering which we can bear and which we need for our own spiritual growth. Yes, the End Times are inevitable, but our resistance to Evil and our prayers can delay that, maybe by many, many years. So maybe mankind will fry in a nuclear holocaust very soon and maybe not; maybe through the intercession of the Mother of God and the saints, he will allow us to live in relative peace for a while. It is all in His will.

I want to add the following: there is NO sin, NO crime, NO evil deed which would truly irrevocably separate you from God. Many of the greatest saints in history began their lives in terrible sins, including one of my most revered saints, Saint Mary of Egypt whose life you can read [here](#) (I “highly” recommend this text!). Furthermore, we know from the Psalter that “*Sacrifice to God is a broken spirit: a broken and humbled heart God will not despise*” (Ps. 50:17 LXX). Thus any and all truly repentant sinner will be forgiven and, if they ask to be reunited with the Church, they will be accepted. Finally, while there are sins which would prevent a person from joining the clergy, even the worst of sinners can become a monastic since, by definition, a monastic is somebody who repents and seeks to emulate the existence of the angels.

Yvonne Lorenzo: What does it mean to be Christian, that is to follow the Way of Jesus Christ?

The Saker: Well, in modern parlance, anybody calling himself a Christian is a Christian. Fair enough for our post-Christian society. But originally, a Christian was a person who a) had a Patristic understanding criterion of truth and b) who was united with the Church. Let’s take them one by one.

What is the Patristic criterion of truth? It is well summarized in the following three quotes:

The faith “***which the Lord gave, was preached by the Apostles, and was preserved by the Fathers. On this was the Church founded; and if anyone departs from this, he neither is nor any longer ought to be called a Christian***” (St. Athanasius)

and (literally, as an addition, in the sense of the mathematical sign “plus”)

That “***which has been believed everywhere, always and by all***” (St. Vicent of Lerins).

and (literally, as an addition, in the sense of the mathematical sign “plus”)

“As the Prophets saw, as the Apostles taught, as the Church has received, as the teachers expressed in dogmas, as the whole world has agreed, as the grace has illuminated”
(Synodikon of Orthodoxy)

The first quote explains that every truly Christian teaching has to be “upward-compatible” with what was taught by Christ, the Apostles and the Fathers.

The second quote explains that every truly Christian teaching has to be “upward-compatible” with that which was accepted by all Orthodox Christians (geographical criterion: all over the world, in all the regions, by all local Orthodox Churches) and by everybody (personal criterion: truly by everybody, not just clergy, even the laity).

The third quote adds a crucial criterion: *the truth is received through illumination*, not scholastic theorizing.

Furthermore, unity in the original Christian ecclesiology is not achieved by overlooking differences, finding commonalities or by simply communing from the same Cup with no regards to “obscure theological topics” (to use a modern expression). For us, **FIRST** comes the unity in faith (*doxa*) and practices, only AFTER than can the unity at the Cup of our Lord be fully celebrated.

In Western denominations, it is the polar opposite: all of them are poisoned by scholasticism and all of them place the so-called “inter-communion” before of a real unity of faith.

I want to add something extremely important here: there is one more meaning of the word “Christian”: that is a person who, while not united to the Church, seeks with all his might to live according to the precept of Christ and His Apostles. These are people who know almost nothing about the original, One Church of Christ, who often have completely erroneous ideas about what the Church really is or what Christ really taught, but by no fault of their own. By the way, such righteous people can be found in all religions. I would like to share with you a recent example of such true Christian love and desire to truly follow Christ and His teaching in the following video which shows the brother of a murdered victim forgive and even declare his (Christian) love for the women who pulled the trigger. See for yourself and, while watching, ask yourself what Christ



would have to say to this young man:

'I forgive you': Botham Jean's brother hugs Amber Guyger after sh...



So, okay, this man is not a traditionalist Orthodox Christian, but he sure puts a lot of us, including myself, to shame!

While theology is important, even crucial (a sick person needs to *correct* medicine!), Christ did not ask us to become theologians, instead, He said:

Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal. (Matt: 25:34-46)

These are frightening words for those Orthodox Christians who mistake the holiness and perfection of the Church with their own and whose hearts are sometimes much harder than the hearts of righteous non-Orthodox people.

Finally, even theology, the real thing, not the scholastic substitute invented in the West, is inseparable from true love and righteousness. Do you know what the original Church considered to be a real theologian? The answer can be found in the Beatitudes: "Blessed are the **pure in heart**: for they **shall see God**" (Matt 5:8).

From the original Christian point of view, sinning is NOT about "angering" or "offending" God. Sinning simply means "missing the target", "not realizing your full potential" to use a modern expression. We know that God "*Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness*" (Gen 1:26). The "image" here means that we were created with the potential to become perfect, Christ-like. The word "likeness" refers to our actual condition. When we sin, we keep that potential, that image, but we lose our likeness. Thus, when we sin, we only hurt ourselves and others, never God. Most importantly, when we sin we darken our inner "heart" and that makes it impossible for us to realize our full potential or even to have a correct perception of vital spiritual issues.

The Fathers were superb theologians, that is true, some of them were amongst the most brilliant theologians and philosophers which ever lived (I think of Saint Maximos the Confessor or Saint Gregory Palamas). Yet, first and foremost they were SAINTS!

This is why modern (pseudo-)theology is so vapid, arrogant and, frankly, ridiculous: it is almost always the product of maybe well-intended, but completely clueless people. Of sure, they got their PhDs in "divinity studies", but their hearts are clouded by sin and heresy, and they truly like the citizens Nineveh: they can't tell their right and left hands apart (Jonah 4:11)!



True theology comes from a clean heart and from the illumination which a person which such a heart receives, not from original, novel or otherwise book-selling intellectual speculations. As one of my priest friend likes to say “the Fathers were not sipping cognac or smoking cigars while theologizing: they were praying, especially the [Jesus Prayer](#), and they were humbly repenting for their sins” (even if they had very few, in fact, the less sins a person carries, the more he/she becomes of them).

True Christianity was always found first and foremost in monasteries, not secular learning institutions, and this is still true today.

By the way, you said, “I’ve also read [Surprised by Christ: My Journey From Judaism to Orthodox Christianity](#) by Rev. James A. Bernstein who discussed these matters from an Orthodox perspective.” I have not read this book, but I HIGHLY recommend this short essay of his: [Which Came First: The Church or the New Testament?](#)

Yvonne Lorenzo: Finally, a question regarding Russian history. With such a strong Orthodox heritage, who was responsible for the murder of Christians in the Russian revolution and also for the Gulags?

The Saker: Short answer: mostly Bolshevik Jews, at least until Stalin’s purges of the Party.

Longer answer: yes, originally, most top commanders of the Soviet Secret Police (called ChK) were Jews. But a lot of the rank and file came from other nationalities. I don’t think that Bolsheviks had a national consciousness. In that they were just like transnational capitalists. Sure, the first generation of Bolshevik Jews did have a specific identity, but in most cases their ideology was *not specifically Jewish*. All they inherited from the Rabbis was their sense of racial superiority and rabid hatred for everything Christian, especially Orthodox Christians. But beyond that, they were more secular Marxists than Talmudist. On the issue of why such an orgy of evil took place after the 1917 Revolution I want to quote Alexander Solzhenitsyn: ([source](#))

In the 18th, the country was shaken by Peter’s forcibly imposed transformations, which favored the economy, the state, and the military at the expense of the religious spirit and national life. And along with this lopsided Petrine enlightenment, Russia felt the first whiff of secularism; its subtle poisons permeated the educated classes in the course of the 19th century and opened the path to Marxism. By the time of the Revolution, faith had virtually disappeared in Russian educated circles; and amongst the uneducated, its health was threatened.

Imperceptibly, through decades of gradual erosion, the meaning of life in the West has ceased to be seen as anything more lofty than the “pursuit of happiness,” a goal that has even been solemnly guaranteed by constitutions. The concepts of good and evil have been ridiculed for several centuries; banished from common use, they have been replaced by political or class considerations of short lived value. It has become embarrassing to state that evil makes its home in the individual human heart before it enters a political system. Yet it is not considered shameful to make daily concessions to an integral evil (...). Western societies are losing more and more of their religious essence as they thoughtlessly yield up their younger generation to atheism (...) When external rights are completely unrestricted, why should one make an inner effort to restrain oneself from ignoble acts? Or why should one refrain from burning hatred, whatever its basis—race, class, or ideology? Such hatred is in fact corroding many hearts today. Atheist teachers in the West are bringing up a younger generation in a spirit of hatred of their own society. Amid all the vituperation we forget that the defects of capitalism represent the basic flaws of human nature, allowed unlimited freedom together with the various human rights; we forget that under Communism (...) the identical flaws run riot in any person with the least degree of authority; while everyone else under that system does indeed attain “equality”—the equality of destitute slaves. This eager fanning of the flames of hatred is becoming the mark of today’s free world. Indeed, the broader the personal freedoms are, the higher the level of prosperity or even of abundance—the more vehement, paradoxically, does this blind hatred become. The contemporary developed West thus demonstrates by its own example that human salvation can be found neither in the profusion of material goods nor in merely making money (...). We must first recognize the horror perpetrated not by some outside force, not by class or national enemies, but within each of us individually, and within every society. This is especially true of a free and highly developed society, for here in particular we have surely brought everything upon ourselves, of our own free will. We ourselves, in our daily unthinking selfishness, are pulling tight that noose...

This is all very important, every word.



The theological answer with three scriptural quotations:

“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Eph. 6:12), *“My name is Legion: for we are many.”* (Mark 5:9)

And *“Trust not in princes, nor in the children of men, in whom there is no safety. His breath shall go forth, and he shall return to his earth; in that day all his thoughts shall perish.”* (Psalm 145:3-4 according to the LXX).

It is not about “groups” (races, classes, denominations, etc.) **it is always, always, a struggle against demonic powers**, irrespective of what ideology or leader the demons will use for their own purposes.

This was true 2000 years ago, and it is still true today.

I would like to add one more thing: I have tried to answer your questions as best I can, but if in any of my replies I have erred from the Truth, I repent for it and ask for forgiveness.

Yvonne Lorenzo makes her home in New England in a house full to bursting with books, including works on classical Greece and theological works. Her interests include gardening, mythology, ancient history, The Electric Universe, and classical music, especially the compositions of Handel, Mozart, Bach, Haydn, Tchaikovsky, Wagner, Mahler, and the Bel Canto repertoire. She is the author [Son of Thunder](#) and [The Cloak of Freya](#).

The Second Psalm in four translations:

Note that the Septuagint translations clearly reference “The Christ” or “The Anointed” and “My Son.”

(New International Version © Biblica)

1 Why do the nations conspire[a]
and the peoples plot in vain?
2 The kings of the earth rise up
and the rulers band together
against the Lord and against his anointed, saying,
3 “Let us break their chains
and throw off their shackles.”
4 The One enthroned in heaven laughs;
the Lord scoffs at them.
5 He rebukes them in his anger
and terrifies them in his wrath, saying,
6 “I have installed my king
on Zion, my holy mountain.”
7 I will proclaim the Lord’s decree:
He said to me, “You are my son;
today I have become your father.
8 Ask me,
and I will make the nations your inheritance,
the ends of the earth your possession.
9 You will break them with a rod of iron[b];
you will dash them to pieces like pottery.”
10 Therefore, you kings, be wise;
be warned, you rulers of the earth.
11 Serve the Lord with fear
and celebrate his rule with trembling.
12 Kiss his son, or he will be angry
and your way will lead to your destruction,
for his wrath can flare up in a moment.
Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

Footnotes:

[a] Psalm 2:1 Hebrew; Septuagint rage

[b] Psalm 2:9 Or will rule them with an iron scepter (see Septuagint and Syriac)

King James Translation:

1 Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?
2 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD,



and against his anointed, saying,

3 Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.

4 He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.

5 Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.

6 Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.

7 I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.

8 Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.

9 Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

10 Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth.

11 Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.

12 Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

Septuagint translation by Sir Lancelot C.L. Bretton:

1 Wherefore did the heathen rage, and the nations imagine vain things?

2 The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers gathered themselves together, against the Lord, and against his **Christ**; (emphasis added)

3 saying, Let us break through their bonds, and cast away their yoke from us.

4 He that dwells in the heavens shall laugh them to scorn, and the Lord shall mock them.

5 Then shall he speak to them in his anger, and trouble them in his fury.

6 But I have been made king by him on Sion his holy mountain,

7 declaring the ordinance of the Lord: the Lord said to me, Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee.

8 Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the ends of the earth for thy possession.

9 Thou shalt rule them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces as a potter's vessel.

10 Now therefore understand, ye kings: be instructed, all ye that judge the earth.

11 Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice in him with trembling.

12 † Accept correction, lest at any time the Lord be angry, and ye should perish from the righteous way: whensoever his wrath shall be suddenly kindled, blessed are all they that trust in him.

N.E.T.S. Translation taken from *A New English Translation of the Septuagint* © 2007 by the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies, Inc. Used by permission of Oxford University Press, all rights reserved.

Psalm 2

1 Why did nations grow insolent, and peoples contemplate vain things?

2 The kings of the earth stood side by side, and the rulers gathered together, against the Lord and against his **anointed**.

3 "Let us burst their bonds asunder and cast their yoke from us."

4 He who resides in the heavens will laugh at them, and the Lord will mock them.

5 Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and in his anger he will trouble them.

6 "But I was established king by him, on Sion, his holy mountain,

7 by proclaiming the Lord's ordinance: The Lord said to me, 'My son you are; **today I have begotten you**. [Emphasis added]

8 Ask of me, and I will give you nations as your heritage, and as your possession the ends of the

9 earth. You shall shepherd them with an iron rod; like a potter's vessel you will shatter them.'

10 And now, O kings, be sensible; be instructed, all you who judge the earth.

11 Be subject to the Lord with fear, and rejoice in him with trembling.

12 Seize upon instruction, lest the Lord be angry, and you will perish from the righteous way, when his anger quickly blazes out. Happy are all who trust in him.

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<https://www.amazon.com/Orthodox-Way-Kallistos/dp/0881416282/>

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<https://www.amazon.com/New-English-Translation-Septuagint/dp/0195289757>

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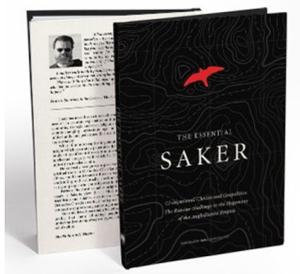
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88 COMMENTS



PokeTheTruth on October 04, 2019 · at 11:14 am EST/EDT

We mortals are flawed in thought and deed from the very beginning of life until the end. Thankfully we have been given a spiritual compass the Holy Spirit, to rely upon and guide us back to the correct path to God.

We sin multiple times everyday; the sins become part of us and we give little thought to what we say or do but they greatly offend the Lord. Silent prayer said in humility is acknowledgement of the wrong and that we wish to seek forgiveness in earnest.

I am in my final years and walk the last path to the garden at the end; my soul now has become more important to me than the body. I can only enter paradise if I pray often for I fear God and love him at the same time. How I wish to look up and see the magnificence of all creation and with Christ's permission I will make it. I want not to fail God but my human frailties hold me back.

I am apprehensive and afraid; the material world ruled by Satan is powerful. He is the Caesar and demands obedience and worship. I resist the temptations he puts before me but he is relentless right up to the last glimpse of light seen through my eyes and wants possession of what belongs to God; my soul. I cry out, "Leave me be, Prince of Darkness!" but he laughs with wicked pleasure at my emotional suffering. He is pure evil no matter how he cloaks himself to hide his malevolence. What shall I do, what shall I say to ward off his pursuit and deny me eternal peace?

"Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner."

Those holy words simple as they may be, are what saves me every time. Lucifer cannot go where divine love exists; he cowers when he hears that prayer for he knows his power is limited and bound only to Earth.

We have to endure a brief time together here below the firmament; in most cases it's less than 100 years, think of a tiny tittle or a small jot in relation to God's eternal timeline. If we turn ourselves to the Lord when despair enters the mind, when faced with doubt, when hope seems impossible to reach we will be blessed for God does not fail those who are resolute in prayer.

[Reply](#)



Dimitar on October 05, 2019 · at 1:22 am EST/EDT

"I am apprehensive and afraid..."

<https://www.eckankar.org/Video/play.php?name=Miracles+in+Your+Life>

The syllable/word HU; pronounced like the word 'hue', has been used to bring upliftment to human beings for millenia. Though the significance of this most beautiful prayer/mantra to our Creator, is largely lost today, it's presence still remains in all languages, for example in the English language; Hu-man Being – a God-Man Being; Hu-manity, Humility, Humour, Posthumous, etc. Sung with a feeling of love, the HU is one of the most profound and effective ways to awaken the spiritual self within man. To free ourselves from fear, we must replace it with love. The HU is non-denominational and is a divine gift to humanity, to people of all faiths, walks and stations of life.

[Reply](#)



Dimitar on October 05, 2019 · at 4:21 am EST/EDT

Apologies, that link again;

<https://www.eckankar.org/Video/play.php?name=Miracles+in+Your+Life>

[Reply](#)



Larchmonter445 on October 04, 2019 · at 1:29 pm EST/EDT

I have limited time today to deal with this enormous subject/interview.



So, I'll focus on one statement of Saker:

"Ask yourself, what is capitalism at its core, as a worldview? Simply put, it is an worldview and ideology which claims that the sum of our greeds will result in an optimally organized society. What folly! Imagine what Christ or the Fathers would have to say about such demonically inspired nonsense!"

Focus on "the sum of our greeds". If capitalism is only thus, greed-seeking, then the statement is true.

However, capitalism is more than one framework of development of society and individuals. We see that in China, and in a smaller different model in Russia. Private enterprise, joint private-public enterprises, small and medium enterprises are varietal. There is no one capitalism.

Individual entrepreneurialism is clearly driven by "dreams and ego", not greed.

I believe greed is a product of imbalance in some people, not the capitalist system.

Corporate greed is unique in that it requires corruption of government regulations and legislation.

So, in short summary, if we want human social development, raising billions of people from abject poverty, freeing humans to create, innovate, invent products and services, only capitalism with all its flaws produces the results. It requires good regulations, rules, laws, enforcement, public accountability and non-corrupt governance.

I see capitalism (done with the above restraints, Rule of Law) as the sum of our efforts and imaginations, not the sum of our greed.

Reply



sean the leprechaun on October 04, 2019 · at 3:04 pm EST/EDT

@Larchmonter445

I can only concur with what you wrote, except with good rules, regulations, laws, enforcement and accountability, any system would work, would it not? Or are there no rules in the other isms? I guess the question may be, can those rules not apply to any system as long as everyone sticks to them. A huge challenge in and of itself. And the word Capitalism, maybe a different name for some new system should be in order, because there is just so much corporate negativity associated with that word.

@Saker, really enjoyed the interview. Lots to digest. Solzhenitsyn seems to imply that secularism is a bad thing, or am I reading that wrong? At least in relation to the seperation of state(public affairs) from religion. It's almost like we humans need a system reset. Preferably not back to the stone age.....

Cheers, M

Reply



Larchmonter445 on October 04, 2019 · at 4:01 pm EST/EDT

Capitalism is the natural development of the investment of idea + labor + money. Marx wrote that labor is as much capital as money and/or land, factory, machinery, or office.

So, then we have other economic systems which really only are ideologies. Some are malignant, some are kind. Socialism is an ideology attempting to be a system of use for development of a society. It always ends as a mess, strangled on bureaucracy and mediocrity.

Capitalism has been contrived into an ideology by some people (greedy, power-seeking), but at its core mechanics it has nothing to do with an ideology.

If I want to go into business selling nuts and herbs, I don't require any ideological component in what I need to do to set up the business and grow it as a food service.



I need some money, my labor and some other people I hire, and persistence to succeed.

I don't see any ideological component in that enterprise. (By the way, I have owned several small businesses. Capitalism didn't motivate me. An idea I had motivated me.)

Reply



ioan on October 04, 2019 · at 4:18 pm EST/EDT

...and you need a state that endorses your initiative and protects you with proper rules.

Reply



Yvonne Lorenzo on October 04, 2019 · at 4:35 pm EST/EDT

Larchmonter445, I debated The Saker on this and the comment you responded to was not in his initial reply and I am only reading it for the first time today.

The reference he makes however is the writings of Saint Basil and Saint John Chrysostom on wealth; great wealth accumulated in the eyes of Jesus Christ is a sin, a "missing the mark."

If one is not motivated by greed, but earning a living and shows humility and does not have great wealth for his or his family's enjoyment at the expense of others, there's nothing wrong but it is difficult. Does the My Pillow Christian live modestly or have a mansion? On the other hand, he provides jobs to people and they are not poor in working for him. I think one has to use common sense. But charity isn't just giving one's wealth to strangers it is showing, I think, in the case of Lazarus and the Rich Man that you see the human being suffering before you, not in the abstract, and can use your wealth to help. Even a kind word. But the wealth made the Rich Man think he was superior to Lazarus, he showed no mercy or pity.

This is to me the point, although Saker may disagree.

And for those lacking in wealth, be not lacking in humanity, but show kindness and forgiveness, to your Christian brothers and sisters and others in need. Even a kind word to someone not at the top of your "cubicle plankton" hierarchy can mean a great deal.

But Mises who in a pamphlet said that the rich man is superior to the one who failed in business, wealth is a measure of success is of course anti-Christ.

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Reply





Larchmonter445 on October 04, 2019 · at 5:56 pm EST/EDT

Wealth as a topic is important. It's in the news, in the election campaign, in Congress (high tech companies being investigated for anti-trust, censorship, monopoly of the Internet.

I think wealth as we see it in recent decades is grossly cancerous. A founder of a company that might not even be profitable or project to have significant cash flows, has stock which is part of an IPO, overvalued by the market makers on Wall Street, sold to the public, and enriches the founder by tens, hundreds of millions, sometimes billions of dollars. This is the evil side of wealth.

There is other wealth of a smart businessman or family that works over the years, accrues profits, reinvests, expands, franchises or licenses the IP or business model, and results in accrued wealth. Nothing but persistence and hard work and timely luck.

Now how do we evaluate the difference?

Should wealth have a social limit, beyond which the person should surrender a tax?

Is there some hard line beyond which no one should own such wealth?

I have been thinking about wealth that comes from finance (IPOs especially).

Most of it is so not connected with work, labor, the business model, etc. It is a product of a finance system which is cancerous. It takes a company that may have a market value of X dollars and blows it up with a helium-effect to be valued at X to the thousandth value. The Wall Street people reap gargantuan fees, the founder is suddenly a "wealthy, ultra wealthy" person, and an inflated investment pushes up the stock market.

This is the zone of capitalism that seems "unfair, rigged, crooked, evil".

Confronting the outcomes of this part of the system is a moral and ethical challenge.

Should wealth be limited. (eg., a ceiling of X dollars and no more)? Should the millionaires and billionaires have their wealth confiscated?

Why have regulators allowed today's IPO game go unregulated?

Where are the ethical firms that don't participate in this way? It seems all have joined in the orgy of greed.

Is reform possible?

It is in this region, this zone of capitalism that the challenge of evil presents us with a call to rectify the greed game.

It is a great dilemma because it has produced a great evil that seems to have no end. It feeds more greed.



[Reply](#)

Serbian girl on October 05, 2019 · at 10:11 am EST/EDT

Hi Yvonne,
Your link does not contain the particular quote that you attribute to Mises. It is a link to his book, which has hundreds of rave reviews...where and in what context was the quote made?

You mentioned that you are a contributor to Lewrockwell.com. Are you aware that Lew Rockwell is one of the founders of the Mises institute in the US?

Mises did hang out with some controversial people. I believe both Mises and Marx were ambiguous characters. One defended entrepreneurs, the other defended workers but neither derived their income from entrepreneurship/employment....(Both were sponsored by wealthy individuals, Engels and Fertig.)

[Reply](#)

Anonius on October 07, 2019 · at 8:59 am EST/EDT

Even though, this may not seem like it relates to Christ, but it does, and I will not dwell on the reason why.

In ancient Sparta collecting wealth and usury were punishable by death.

Unfortunately they also did not believe in writing things down, their laws were passed on verbally, yet contrary to popular belief Sparta was much more advanced and much earlier than Athens. In many areas including arts.

There are beautiful pre-3000BC gold sculptures and jewellery to prove it., including primitive figurine, yet representing a classic Spartan woman. The figurine was dated to be from before 6000BC and it has scribed Greek letters, the same letters used in current Greek alphabet.

[Reply](#)

The Saker on October 04, 2019 · at 5:26 pm EST/EDT

Dear Larch445

I respectfully disagree. Here are further elements of proof, in my opinion, which prove that capitalism is anti-Christian.

FIRST AND FOREMOST: it is based on usury.
Second, capital always end up being concentrated in a few hands (compare that with what Saint Basil wrote!)

Third, capitalism is unsustainable since it is based on infinite growth in a finite environment. God did not create Adam for him to destroy the planet.

QED.

But we can agree to disagree.

Kindest regards,

The Saker



[Reply](#)

Yvonne Lorenzo on October 04, 2019 · at 7:00 pm EST/EDT

But Saker, aren't you earning a living working? Is that wrong? Let's agree on a definition of "capitalism" because if it means offering what you create in humility out of your God given talents and share with others, and share the money you earn, how is that bad?

Again America is not a capitalistic society but one in which a power elite engages in "mercantilism." Ordinary people to me are a different matter: when you sell your book here you're a "capitalist." That's what I mean.

[Reply](#)

farmerbraun on October 04, 2019 · at 7:11 pm EST/EDT

To me , capitalism is an agreement to allow the accumulation of capital, of various stripes , by any individual (or capita).

[Reply](#)

amarynth on October 04, 2019 · at 8:33 pm EST/EDT

Selling the fruits of one's labor is not capitalist. There is a great misunderstanding here, that any other system cannot sell, trade and work together in a financial system. Or, if people sell, trade and work together, it is by definition capitalism. It is not. By definition us humans work and sell or trade our labor and our product.

The spiritual issue here is usury (there are more but usury is the one that capitalism stands on). There are very good reasons to not get involved in usury. There are practical (as apart from spiritual) reasons as well.

In my view, investment capital is not usury, unless the initial investment or investment fund is based on usury but the lines get thin and one has to be scrupulous. There are different systems and the one that can be looked at, that is different, is the Islamic Financial system – there is no usury there at all.

[Reply](#)

The Saker on October 04, 2019 · at 10:09 pm EST/EDT

I really don't want to dwell on this. If somebody thinks that capitalism is "Orthocompatible" – fine. I read Saint Basil and Saint John. It's pretty clear to me. Hugs

[Reply](#)

Craig Mouldey on October 05, 2019 · at 12:47 am EST/EDT

Me too. Capitalists are those who control capital.



That is the point of it. As John D. Rockefeller said 'competition is a sin'. The idea is do dominate and control rather than to share. this has nothing to do with a person holding a job. And this leads to control by an oligarchy, expressed likely as fascism, the joining of corporate power and the state.

[Reply](#)



Larchmonter445 on October 04, 2019 · at 7:10 pm EST/EDT

Not all capital is linked to usury. Investment capital is rarely tied to interest bearing.

Capital does seem to go to few, but if you look at stock ownership, hundreds of millions of people can own stock in thousands of companies. That's capitalism.

Infinite growth parallels the growth of the human race. So it isn't all that "unnatural". Finite environment is about to go cosmic with the Moon and Mars in the sights of nations for economic reasons and colonization, with the human race splitting from Earth-bound to brothers in Space who will never return and procreate out there.

God created the Universe and mankind is programmed to explore it. Thus, capitalism befits the cosmos.

We disagree, agreeably, my friend. As often we do, though few know.

[Reply](#)



Alabama on October 04, 2019 · at 7:50 pm EST/EDT

They might be programmed, but if you believe that anyone on Earth is going to survive any time in space, you havnt checked in to your gravity and human mechanics classes. What you are describing is mechanically impossible for mere mortals to achieve.

Gods on the other hand, can roam the heavens and inspect their new crop of humans, abilities, to so much as live together.

Peak humanity (human insanity) was a pitiful site, and it only gets worse from here on out.

[Reply](#)



Юродивый on October 05, 2019 · at 12:16 am EST/EDT

Larchmonter,

You are on to something. There are too many knee-jerk reactions to what people label "capitalism" without adequate definitions or thought.

A fundamental problem is that we do not have a "just weight and balance", which is how the Bible refers to honest money. Giving a small coterie of people the power to create money out of nothing



and then charge the world interest to use it is fundamentally oppressive. Until the rot of dishonest fiat money is addressed, the distortions to normal honest economic activity will continue as will all the abuses that are commonly attributed to “capitalism”.

Usury is certainly a problem for a Christian grounded in the Christian tradition. The Old Testament talks about it in the context of making a loan to a poor neighbor in need for basic necessities of life—there it is forbidden. Does that same prohibition apply to a well-off man who wants to borrow to start a business? I’m not sure.

An equally great if not greater problem is our dishonest money, that “false weight and balance” which God hates and is used by the few to plunder the many. Inflation is theft. Whom does it benefit? Somebody benefits. This, and preferential laws, work to concentrate capital.

It is intellectual laziness to condemn “capitalism” without being more clear about what we speak. The Saker has mentioned his three objections. I tend to agree with him. But whether these three are inherent in THE one and only capitalist system, every possible capitalist system, or some but not all is not at all clear. Further, harder thought is necessary on this matter rather than hurling categorical denunciations and vaguely identified foes.

How shall we live? By plundering one another? By each of us working diligently and doing something useful in service to our fellow humans to earn a living? Private ownership and a free market certainly can fuel greed, but even the poorest man in an abjectly poor country can be greedy. Other evils flourish amidst poverty. We pray against some of them in the Liturgy when we asked to be delivered from “necessity”, that condition in which we are so desperate that we are willing to do wrong to save our lives. Should we avoid abundant production of goods and services because someone might get greedy? If the money is honest, if the law enabling the existence of the corporation as a legal person is revoked, if banks are not given the control they now have, and if people not able to fuel excessive consumption by debt generated by banks with their funny money—would that be so bad? Would that need to be roundly condemned as capitalism? It is well worth more thought that it is usually given.

[Reply](#)



Serbian girl on October 05, 2019 · at 12:47 pm EST/EDT

“Giving a small coterie of people the power to create money out of nothing and then charge the world interest to use it is fundamentally oppressive. Until the rot of dishonest fiat money is addressed, the distortions to normal honest economic activity will continue as will all the



abuses that are commonly attributed to
"capitalism".

Spot on!

[Reply](#)



Mark McBurnett on October 07, 2019 · at 10:03
am EST/EDT

Get back with me on how that works out.

[Reply](#)



Dobrotolubiye on October 04, 2019 · at 9:00 pm
EST/EDT

Capitalism is sinful because it is a worship of Mammon instead of a modus vivendi of, "Seek(ing) ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness; and then all these things shall be added unto you." And not because it is based on usury. Usury, as with Capitalism, is an abomination because, amongst other vices, it is opposed to true Christian Charity: a sin against The ('New') Second Commandment, "like unto the First," that, "thou shouldst love thy neighbour as thyself." Usury– or "interest", the euphemism bequeathed to us by John Calvin– is certainly one of the primary and dastardly means employed by Capitalism, but it is not its prime mover: Greed for worldly gain at the expense of "My Kingdom (which) is not of this world," is the sine qua non of Capital's "pursuit of happiness." Nor is Capitalism sinful because great wealth invariably ends up by being concentrated in a few hands. This is not in itself an evil, but rather, as with all other 'exceptions'– whether it be the possession of athletic, artistic or other talents–, these 'embarrassments of riches' are by the nature of things concentrated in the hands of a few. Besides, the opposition to these neutral facts makes one think rather of the fable of the fox and the grapes, than it does of the parable of the bits of food from the rich man's table. Nor yet again is Capitalism an evil because it threatens ecology. Planetary degradation is as nothing compared to the horrors of planetary extinction, the which is the sole province of nuclear war; and this latter, the evil consequences of technocracy, is but the bitter fruits of modern science, the sole sacred cow of the West (and yes, Russia, being European, is also part of the justly decried West, neither more nor less– witness, precisely, the lack of criticism, by both the western and eastern Europeans of that 'civilisationism' which has supplanted Christianity). All of which of course does not diminish the evils of planetary degradation. But here, as elsewhere, one has to retain a sense of proportions. Again while usury and despoliation of the planet are damnable in themselves, the concentration of wealth in the hands of the few, is only damnable if it is acquired at the expense of others (if it sins against the principle of, "first, do no harm!"). This, despite the dangers which, being rich, poses to the attaining of "the one



thing needful.”

One last thing, about poverty. There is poverty and then there is poverty. While it is incontestable that “poverty breeds unbelief,” as Islam teaches, yet is it no less true that, “the poor you will have with you always.” So, all this talk about “lifting the poor out of poverty,” or about “eradicating poverty,”— no doubt by marshalling this or that 5-year plan— is disconcerting, not to mention, unrealisable. History nowhere offers us proof to the contrary. And lest we forget, poverty is not just the fact of having less than my neighbour; even much less...

Thank God for the example of St. Mary of Egypt!

[Reply](#)



Dimitar on October 05, 2019 · at 4:35 am EST/EDT

Related; Re: the saying, “it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than it is for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven”... If we consider for a moment, the wider meaning of “wealth”, it would mean “those rich in the human state of consciousness”, ie. the passions of the mind, and not merely in coin.

[Reply](#)



Craig Mouldey on October 05, 2019 · at 12:40 am EST/EDT

Bingo and exactly. Well said.

[Reply](#)



Anonymous on October 06, 2019 · at 5:09 am EST/EDT

“Thank God for the example of St. Mary of Egypt!”

I never heard of this Saint before, and find she was a nymphomaniac, or used sex for power, and then found redemption and became a holy ascetic in the desert, thereby also exhibiting a form of spiritual power.

Christ drove the money changes out of the temple, and in no uncertain way :

John 2:15

When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers’ money and overturned the tables.

If one considers these words as not only self explanatory, but regards the temple as the human body, as Christ Himself referred to the human body, then the lust for money and power are inseparably embedded in physical illusion, and have corrupted the spirit, and stolen the place of the soul and spirit.

The whip of cords, and the overturning of tables is totally uncompromising and decisive, the uncompromising and decisive power of thought and knowledge to speak truth freely and unhindered, they are the example we need !



Reply



Yvonne Lorenzo on October 06, 2019 · at 2:40 pm EST/EDT

The book is available as a free Adobe Acrobat download from Mises.org.

<https://mises.org/library/anti-capitalistic-mentality>

Yes, I used to be more tolerant of the position of Mises but in this pamphlet, page 13 he writes:

"If a man's station in life is conditioned by factors other than his inherent excellence, those who remain at the bottom of the ladder can acquiesce in this outcome and, knowing their own worth, still preserve their dignity and self-respect. But it is different if merit alone decides. Then the unsuccessful feel themselves insulted and humiliated.

"Hate and enmity against all those who superseded them must result.*

"The price and market system of capitalism is such a society in which merit and achievements determine a man's success or failure. Whatever one may think of Moser's bias against the merit principle, one must admit that he was right in describing one of its psychological consequences. He had an insight into the feelings of those who had been tried and found wanting.

"In order to console himself and to restore his self-assertion, such a man IS in search of a scapegoat. He tries to persuade himself that he failed through no fault of his own. He is at least as brilliant, efficient and industrious as those who outshine him. Unfortunately this nefarious social order of ours does not accord the prizes to the most meritorious men; it crowns the dishonest unscrupulous scoundrel, the swindler, the exploiter, the "rugged individualist." What made himself fail was his honesty. He was too decent to resort to the base tricks to which his successful rivals owe their ascendancy. As conditions are under capitalism, a man is forced to choose between virtue and poverty on the one hand, and vice and riches on the other. He, himself, thank God,



chose the former alternative and rejected the latter.

"This search for a scapegoat is an attitude of people living under the social order which treats everybody according to his contribution to the well-being of his fellow men and where thus everybody is the founder of his own fortune. In such a society each member whose ambitions have not been fully satisfied resents the fortune of all those who succeeded better. The fool releases these feelings in slander and defamation. The more sophisticated do not indulge in personal calumny. They sublimate their hatred into a philosophy, the philosophy of anti-capitalism, in order to render inaudible the inner voice that tells them that their failure is entirely their own fault. Their fanaticism in defending their critique of capitalism is precisely due to the fact that they are fighting their own awareness of its falsity."

End quote.

Is that observation of what human beings live under and how they measure their worth not anti-Christian.

I believe Christians should read the cited references above by The Saker

Perhaps in reading The Saker's replies, and not just about faith, Rockwell, for whom this piece was originally composed and he was provided with Saker's response to Romans 13, but then rejected it, might explain his rejection although I can only speculate.

An irreparable breach formed between us and should I continue to write, I'll write for The Saker and Unz.

[Reply](#)



Michael Martin on October 07, 2019 · at 9:06 pm EST/EDT

It is important to remember that Mises was just as explicitly anti-Christian as Ayn Rand ever was. Mises was simply more cultivated and elegant about it. However, he did write denunciations of Christianity in more than one place.

What I cannot understand is how anyone calling himself a Christian can possibly think that Mises' ideology is in any way compatible with the Christian faith, when even Mises himself said that it was not. Former Rep. Paul Ryan calls himself a Roman Catholic, yet he used to have



all of his staffers read Rand's *Atlas Shrugged*.

John Michael Greer, author of *Twilight's Last Gleaming*, did a blog post on this:

[A Christmas Speculation](#)

Among other things, he points out that Rand's philosophy (and by extension Mises') is point-for-point identical with the tenets of Anton LaVey's Church of Satan.

Go figure!

[Reply](#)



The Real History on October 06, 2019 · at 8:23 pm EST/EDT

I think the way we use (or the meaning we apply) to the words such as "capitalism", or "socialism" is not the same as the way it used by the "elites"; for them, these are just different forms of control. I know, we can exist very happily outside of those false systems.

I live in a rural area. I create certain value for my co-habitats here, and they respond in kind. We don't have any mediators, we're not a commune, and we're mostly a small group of people who agreed on some basic understanding of ethics. It feels very much sustainable. I have no name for this system, and wouldn't want to define it. It just works.

[Reply](#)



ioan on October 04, 2019 · at 3:43 pm EST/EDT

I enjoyed this lecture from the top till the bottom. Thank you very much !

[Reply](#)



amarynth on October 04, 2019 · at 8:18 pm EST/EDT

For me too ioan. I read a few times and went to the links and looked at the books suggested and just loved it all.

Thank-you both to Yvonne and The Saker for this wealth of information and truth.

(and no, using the world 'wealth' here is not intended to be capitalist :-)

[Reply](#)



Bro 93 on October 05, 2019 · at 10:37 am EST/EDT

Important discussion, but may I observe that it is entirely possible for most persons to argue almost interminably over the same words.....with entirely different meanings in mind.

[Reply](#)



sean the leprechaun on October 07, 2019 · at 10:12 am EST/EDT

Why not look at the gross malease of capitalism. How many companies, corporation, and regular old business owners disengeniously, report on the millions they lost.....market share, economic downturn, etc, and expect to be bailed out in a 'too big to fail world'. I see the reports, lost 5 mil lost 2 bil, they never tell you they made 10 times that, all focus is on imaginary market loss. And as ioan mentions, who checks the balancers and who balances the checkers when the game is rigged.



Reply



Craig Mouldey on October 04, 2019 · at 5:49 pm EST/EDT

I enjoyed that interview and the essential advice: what did the Lord, His apostles and the Church Fathers say about it? This is so far superior to the Protestant view of scripture alone through faith alone which results in huge confusion and huge division. It was this confusion that moved me to search for the ancient Church. I was presented with two choices: Rome or the east. I finally chose to look east. I used to hold views similar to evangelical Zionists. That totally disappeared during a one-hour discussion with my priest. And other silly ideas such as God poured out all his burning wrath on His Son on the cross. This is quite impossible, but this is the sort of foolish teaching that comes from a legalistic understanding. Of course, there is just one faith which incorporates all, from all nations. I see the web site name Russian-Faith as simply indicating that this is the faith Russia is really noted for. It has never been a country dominated by the Vatican, though they surely have tried. Thanks especially for all the very good links to resources.

Reply



milan on October 04, 2019 · at 8:41 pm EST/EDT

@ Saker

"I want to add the following: there is NO sin, NO crime, NO evil deed which would truly irrevocably separate you from God. Many of the greatest saints in history began their lives in terrible sins, including one of my most revered saints,":

I respectfully must disagree for are there not 2 scriptures which say otherwise:

Mathew 12:31

And so I tell you, every kind of sin and slander can be forgiven, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.

Fulfilled in the life of Annaias and Sapphira

and Revelation 14: 8-13

A third angel followed them and said in a loud voice: "If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives its mark on their forehead or on their hand, 10 they, too, will drink the wine of God's fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath. They will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb. 11 And the smoke of their torment will rise for ever and ever. There will be no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and its image, or for anyone who receives the mark of its name."

These are the two unforgivable sins in Holy Scripture.

Further, if I'm correct there does come a time in some peoples lives where a sin has so totally corrupted the person that as St. Paul said in Corinthians 5:1 regarding incest:

or when you are assembled and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, 5 hand this man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved on the day of the Lord."

I think there comes a time in some peoples lives that sin reaches a point of such damage to the human mind and physical that the only hope is in the after life really? This is the true danger of sin really and it gets even more serious which I do not want to get into here since it would take us all into the world of the sexual deviates.

I recommend you do not take Scripture as self-explanatory but, instead, take a good Patristic commentary on these two passages.

The Saker

Reply



Anonymous on October 04, 2019 · at 9:40 pm EST/EDT

@originally, a Christian was a person who a) had a Patristic understanding criterion of



truth and b) who was united with the Church

A Christian nowadays is still what originally a Christian was. I.e. a person who proclaim his adherence to "The faith "which the Lord gave, was preached by the Apostles, and was preserved by the Fathers. On this was the Church founded; and if anyone departs from this, he neither is nor any longer ought to be called a Christian" and is united with the Church.

Saker correctly stressed the a) necessary condition, but for some reasons neglected to fully explain what the 'union with the Church' was and how it is obtained and that can lead to confusions about what the Church is.

"The true aim of our Christian life consists in the acquisition of the Holy Spirit of God.

As for fasts, and vigils, and prayer, and almsgiving, and every good deed done for Christ's sake, they are only means of acquiring the Holy Spirit of God" and attaining salvation, 'the life of the age to come', the Kingdom of God who 'shall have no end', immortality.

One becomes a Christian by being baptized in the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Ghost by an ordained in the Apostolic chain priest of the Church. It is a condition sine qua non to be a Christian. It is a commandment of the Christ: "He said unto them [the Apostles], Go ye into all the world, and announce the Good News [that the Kingdom of God is at hand] to all creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned", "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen".

Now, the 'criterion of Truth' is the Creed that the postulant recites three times after confirming three times that he renounced Satan and he had united with Christ and affirming that he believes in him. He reiterates three times that he had united with Christ. After that the postulant is immersed by the priest three times in sanctified water, anointed with the Holy Chrism and partakes of the Body and Blood of Christ. Only then is he united with the Church. Baptism in water 'forgives sins'. Through Chrismation he acquired "the Grace of the Holy Spirit, conferred by baptism in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, [which] still shines in our hearts with the inextinguishable light of Christ". The Baptism is called in Greek (i.e. in the 'original' Church) 'fotismos'- illumination. Jesus Christ is 'Light of Light'.

Many people may display Christianlike 'good deeds', but that does not make them Christians, especially when they like to boast that they don't belong to 'traditionalist' Church, or to 'organized religion' (to put the 'traditionalists' to shame!). But 'Extra Ecclesiam nulla salus'.

[Reply](#)



milan on October 05, 2019 · at 9:20 am EST/EDT

@ Anonymous

"Baptism in water 'forgives sins'."

Yeah, I have always had a problem with this I'm afraid. Water baptism is really just an outward sign on an inward work. Salvation is all about recognizing what Christ did for us in paying the due penalty upon us. Repentance and confession is what forgives sin and saves the sinner ultimately.

Romans 10:10

For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.

more importantly though it is these words that truly do it for the Christian:

And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. Mathew 7:23

what does this mean "I never knew you?"

For me it means thisDoes Jesus know what sins he had to die for in your life and do you know that He knows it!



It should be an intensely personal experience that one confessing his sins to Christ the remorse of the heart which should ultimately be affected sorrowfully through true repentance, remember the words circumcise the heart which is what ultimately occurred with the apostles in a very serious blow upon seeing the lamb upon the cross.

This is the sum and substance of everything for the Christian believer and following up this internal cleansing is seen by way of water baptism unto repentance. If all one has is water baptism and nothing else one has nothing in Christ nothing and even sentencing water baptism as forgiving sin is wrong it is just plain wrong.

So the true horror of the cross is this the punishment due us was fully paid by God's own Son and this is what again truly blew away the apostles.

To have this then followed up by Pentecost is the sum and substance of everything for the believer absolutely everything.

Reply



Anonymous on October 07, 2019 · at 12:08 am EST/EDT

@If all one has is water baptism and nothing else one has nothing in Christ

But he doesn't. Consider this:

"I confess (omologoo, ispoveduyu) One Baptism for the remission of sins"

"I* baptize you with water for repentance, but after me will come One more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. 12His winnowing fork is in His hand to clear His threshing floor and to gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."...

"Verily, verily, I** say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. 4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? 5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit".

"And while they were gathered together, He** commanded them: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift the Father promised***, which you have heard Me discuss. 5For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

Only Jesus can forgive sins and those to whom He transmitted the power to forgive: "And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: 23 Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained". "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned".

"Thomas be not faithless, but believing".

* John the Baptist and Forerunner

** Jesus Christ

***"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: 27 And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from



the beginning".

Reply



milan on October 07, 2019 · at 9:22 pm EST/EDT

@ anonymous

Okay iron sharpens iron!!!! Proverbs 27:17 make me a believer!

I'm sorry but nothing in your reply teaches that water baptism forgives sin? It begins the process yes but to say it forgives sin I can't see it.

I spent most of my life working with Greek Orthodox people so I am well acquainted with the faith and have often said too myself if I had a choice of joining any church in the world it would be the Orthodox however, God called me into a different path. I have even attended a Greek Orthodox church on a number of occasions and enjoyed immensely though at a loss to understand since I do not speak Greek. This however, hasn't left me and a dear friend Greek extraction of having many interesting talks over the years. Anna loved theology and was taught early in life the scriptures and we had many wonderful conversations. Actually some heated conversations as well to the point that her husband with an expression of fear looked at me and said do you know what you are doing? In any case when she learned that in the denomination I belong we do not believe in baptizing babies well she couldn't believe that. She started saying all kinds of things in horror actually about that and how our children would never make it into heaven etc etc etc? As I told her it is our custom to dedicate the child and teach them in the way they should go and at the age of accountability they need to step up and make the choice. She then told me what if the baby dies before getting baptized? I said my dear do you really believe that God would send babies even children to hell? Further as I said, one has to believe first and then comes baptism both through water and through the Holy Spirit. To baptize children parents are making the choice which is not bad in any way however, does it not take away something from the child's own clear conscience toward God? One makes them Christian but it is not their own doing? Their own confession. their own repentance and cleansing from sin? Sure that comes later through catechism and such but it takes away something from the child by thinking that they because they were baptized in water they are Christian automatically? It just doesn't follow for me, I can't see it.

Our conversation finally ended one day when she asked me point blank does water baptism forgive sin? I said Anna if that is all you have is water baptism you have nothing. Her reply was a smile understanding what I was saying.

So anonymous to see here the same sentiment in your comment sent me back all those years ago and it puts a smile on my own face



accordingly. I can only sum up with the one scripture I guess that confuses:

1 Peter 3:21

and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a clear conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand—with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.

the word symbolize and the words pledge of a clear conscience is the important issue here yes? So like I said earlier it is an outward sign of something that takes place in the heart and fulfilled by the Resurrection.

It is an act of faith that one is baptized in water because the sinner is saying yes to both Christ's rulership, his death, ones missing of the mark, and continued faith.

This is the way I see it. But please if I am wrong help me to understand my failings.

Ultimately, it just may be the way that sentence was phrased that bothers me really.

"Baptism in water 'forgives sins'.

[Reply](#)



milan on October 04, 2019 · at 9:48 pm EST/EDT

money and capital

I think we can sum it up this way. In 1 John 2:16 we find the words:

For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world.

If Capitalism is all about fulfilling these three things the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride that comes with it all then you have taken a the wrong turn at the Y in the road of life.

Beyond this I love at my age anyway this wonderful scripture:

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. 1Timothy 6:10

People pursue the million dollars thinking that will finally give them peace and rest and all the wonderful things but if diaries could be read about them piercing themselves through with many sorrows what could be told really.

Lastly, what about orphans and widows? Pure religion says the bible is nothing except looking after widows and orphans and keeping one self from being polluted by the world. James 1:27

It reminds me of the Old Testament too where God warned the nation "do not let the cry or the widows or orphans reach my ears!"

When a capitalist system turns its back on the widows and orphans for their own pleasure and gain like the ancient Egyptians did I'm afraid its demise is all to near.

Laughingly, or maybe horrifyingly when I first heard about and then looked closer into that 700 hundred million dollar monstrosity of a park they built in Tennessee dedicated to Noah's Ark I was dumbfounded as to why anyone would do such a bizarre thing? That's the American way I guess amusement parks?



He who built it I suppose had good intentions really and from the sale of millions of books had the capital to pursue such nonsense really. I however tend to think that God looking at something like this will be saying to Himself what He said to a nation:

I had better not hear the cry of the widows and orphans reaching my ears.

Tennessee had better not have one widow or orphan going either hungry or homeless. Further to this I figure no one related to this Noah's Ark should be opening their mouths with well that's the governments problem not ours!

Right???????????????? Or did you already forget the scripture above? I've been told that we are now down to a 7 second attention span lol?

[Reply](#)



Harry_Red on October 05, 2019 · at 1:17 am EST/EDT

There is nothing wrong with trade and commerce as it has functioned for thousands of years as a major pillar of human history. I don't believe the Saker is referring to this point as "capitalism".

However, the current usurious economic monetary system that has engulfed the entire planet, especially in the last 100 to 150 years, is something unprecedented in human history. It is unsustainable and it comes from a very evil place, and this is what I think the Saker is referring to.

See my first comment in this previous Saker blog article:

<https://thesaker.is/u-s-economic-warfare-and-likely-foreign-defenses/>

[Reply](#)



milan on October 05, 2019 · at 11:15 am EST/EDT

@Harry_Red

Trade and Commerce?

And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself.

And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth,

That I will not take from a thread even to a shoelatchet, and that I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich:

Save only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men which went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion.

Its a shame a progeny didn't take a cue from this fellow Abram? Yes?

[Reply](#)



Harry_Red on October 05, 2019 · at 1:04 pm EST/EDT

Sorry, whats your point ?Trade and commerce are evil ?

*trade & commerce != capitalism
just saying,
The Saker*

[Reply](#)



milan on October 05, 2019 · at 1:47 pm EST/EDT

@ Harry_Red

No trade and commerce are not evil. My point is simply that of the trade in people and how a certain someone saw through their evil schemes. The king of Sodom placed more value in the people than in things which given what finally happened to them speaks volumes.

[Reply](#)



Harry_Red on October 05, 2019 · at 2:56 pm
EST/EDT

Thanks for pointing that out Saker :-).

I guess my point is that trade and commerce is part of human history prior to existence of the word "capitalism". Now I believe capitalism needs to be well defined, whether it is meant by all types of trade and commerce throughout human history or the Western ideological sense and its relation to the modern Western "sovereign" nation state and the economic monetary system.

All Abrahamic religions have ordained trade and commerce to be lawful within certain boundaries ordained by All Mighty God.

In Islam, Muslims are taught that wealth is a pleasure of this life and that one can be distracted by this pleasure. The true believer is the one that deals with his wealth as if it is merely a worldly matter. Muslims are warned in the Quran not to hoard their wealth and to be aware of greed. Wealth isn't supposed to be preserved but spent towards those who are in need of it.

Muslims wealth must be earned in a lawful way. God advises them against unlawful ways:

"O you who have believed, do not consume one another's wealth unjustly but only [in lawful] business by mutual consent." [Quran 4:29].

The faith of Muslims is built on the five pillars of Islam. One of those pillars is giving wealth to charity, or Zakat. One example of that is:

"[True] righteousness is [in] one who believes in God, the Last Day, the Angels, the Book, the Prophets and gives of their wealth, in spite of love for it, to relatives, orphans, the needy, the traveler, those who ask [for help], and for freeing slaves; [and who] establishes Prayer and practices regular charity..." [Quran 2:177]

In the time before Islam, the pagans would kill their children in fear of poverty. Muslims learned that, after Islam was introduced, the companions who used to practice this tradition would abstain from it.

"[D]o not kill your children out of poverty; We will provide for you and them," [Quran 6:151].

God is the provider of all so therefore a true believer should not fear poverty because a believer is firm in their belief that God will provide for them. It is generally believed by Muslims that a fear of poverty equates to having a bad opinion of God. Obviously, you cannot expect that God will save you from poverty by sitting at home all day :-).

Islam teaches the middle-ground, the balanced life:

And do not make your hand as chained to your





neck or extend it completely and thereby become blamed and insolvent.” (Quran 17:29).

“And [they are] those who, when they spend, do so not excessively or sparingly but are ever, between that, justly moderate” (Quran 25:67).

[Reply](#)



Alabama on October 05, 2019 · at 4:10 pm EST/EDT

On the flip side, you can not expect God to save you from insanity, if you don't sit at home all day.

Its damned if you do and damned if you dont world, and even God has no say about it.

[Reply](#)



Anonymous on October 05, 2019 · at 4:05 am EST/EDT

The title 'On Social Justice' given to a collection of Saint Basil's homilies suggest rather a modern agenda than the real intentions of the Great Saint. Saint Basil was not a 'social activist'. He does not condemn 'wealth', but the lack of charity of the wealthy. Neither does the Christ condemn lending at interest (see the Parable of the Talants). Neither did the Church, except for clerics.

[Reply](#)



Dimitar on October 05, 2019 · at 4:53 am EST/EDT

A true religion would minister first and foremost to the emancipation of Soul, and not to social activism. However, those organisations that concern themselves with social activism are still doing good, of course.

[Reply](#)



Ewan on October 05, 2019 · at 8:14 am EST/EDT

Can I thank you for this. It is going to repay a great deal of study, not least for an ignoramus like me brought up in the Calvinist Kirk, for whom the early Church is visible only through later interpretation.

Can I ask:

The Dead Sea Scrolls contain texts from most of the “Old Testament”. They agree remarkably closely (given the centuries that separate them) with the masoretic texts. There are significant differences between Greek translations and the masoretic texts. Might these not indicate a complex textual history – of which the Scrolls, the Greek translations and the masoretic texts are surviving clues – only partly retrievable – and the differences need not all be malicious or ideological? The Latin Church would not knowingly adopt an anti-Christian text, would it? Your comments will have me scurrying to the history books to try to work out why the Latin Church would persist in the mistake of relying on the Vulgate (its scholars in recent centuries have made a study of the texts).

Who are the very few Western historians you think worth studying?

There is a thriving discipline in academia editing and analysing ancient texts. It finds many errors, frauds and interpolations in surviving texts of Scripture, some hypothesised to be ideologically motivated. Do you think commentary on Scripture has to include such textual analysis, or repudiate it? (Textual corruption or evolution appears to be a feature of other ancient religions.) I suppose I'm asking whether applying the methods of history and textual analysis to the historical and textual evidence of early Christianity is a waste of time (or worse)?

Did the early Church risk being “used” when Constantine adopted Christianity as the state religion, or do you think the Roman Empire of the time one of the states compatible with the Christian faith? What history of this crucial period do you think trustworthy?



Thank you again for yet another inspiring piece.

Reply



amarynth on October 05, 2019 · at 11:09 am EST/EDT

On your first question, this was a start for me and referenced in the written article. Of course, much work needs to be done. Sorry, cannot help with the other questions :-)

<https://russian-faith.com/explaining-orthodoxy/russian-bibles-are-totally-different-american-ones-heres-why-n1470>

Reply



Ewan on October 05, 2019 · at 12:03 pm EST/EDT

Thanks. I'm just starting in on all the references in the article. This one is a great help. I still get the impression that the various texts are clues and remains of a very complex process over the centuries. I also get the impression that scholars in other traditions, not just Orthodoxy, have been trying to tease out what happened with the texts (indeed, the reference talks about one or two of them). I have the Oxford commentaries, which are intended to be ecumenical. As someone brought up on the Authorised Version, I'm still very puzzled why we were never taught this textual history (just as I regret our teachers never taught us about Orthodoxy – too busy explaining why the Church of Rome was an abomination!)

Reply



chimmy on October 05, 2019 · at 11:23 am EST/EDT

Not sure if the dead sea scroll are not another pitldown man. What concerns me is the fact that the scholarship seems to be tightly controlled as if some kind of narrative/myth is being managed. Getting the “correct” version of the bible seems to almost be a kind of fetish to some –as if we are not sinners, but rather consumers of the latest most correct version of **the truth**. Those who go without priests, but have a direct line nevertheless defer to a priesthood of experts.

Reply



Anonymous on October 06, 2019 · at 1:00 am EST/EDT

To figure out the trustworthiness of Scriptural texts used by the Church you must get rid of the false meme of ‘Constantine adopted Christianity as the state religion’.

The fact that despite the falsity of this meme (established for centuries by applying the ‘methods of history and textual analysis to the historical and textual evidence of early Christianity’), it is repeated over and over again shows that it serves the purpose of Jews and Judaizing sects (Protestantism is a Judaizing sect), mahomedans, neo-pagans, atheists, scientists, anarchists, communists (the basket of truly ‘deplorable’ petty antichrists) of attacking the claim of the Church that is the only legitimate custodian and transmitter of the Words that the Christ entrusted to her, and the Christian ‘Empire’ as protector of the Church. They accuse Constantine in fact of subjugating the ‘original’ millenarist-messianic and revolutionary Judaic ‘Christ movement’ to the Roman pagan state against which this ‘movement’ was supposed to fight, obliging it to falsify its ‘true message’ by imposing falsified ‘Bibles’, ‘imposing the dogma of the divinity of Christ’ and persecuting the ‘true Christians’ (i.e. those heretics that deny the divinity of Christ). This meme is popularized constantly in the anti-Christian pop-culture, buzz-words meant to provoke the Pavlovian reaction of derision and rejection of the brainwashed ‘know it better’ (e.g. ‘The Da Vinci Code’: “The fundamental irony of Christianity! The Bible, as we know it today, was collated by the pagan Roman emperor Constantine the Great.”).

The texts of the Dead Sea Scrolls are remarkably closer to the



Septuagint than to the masoretic text. When this inconvenient fact became too obvious 'theories' that they are modern fakes ('pilt-down man') started to circulate.

The Vulgata was not translated from the 'masoretic' text, but certainly from texts closer to the Dead Sea Scrolls. Anyhow, Jerome wouldn't have introduced texts at variance with the 'official' doctrine and the Church couldn't have sanctioned them. The masoretic text falsified the texts that prophesied the Incarnation of the Son of God.

[Reply](#)



Ewan on October 06, 2019 · at 5:43 am EST/EDT

Is the history of the Roman Empire to be re-written? Is Eusebius unreliable on this matter? On what evidence do you dismiss the "meme"? (By the way, a meme need not be false.)

In what way are Protestants "judaizing"?

As I understand, the Scrolls do show the masoretic texts surprisingly accurate. Scribal errors accumulate over time – after ten centuries that is quite impressive.

I'm beginning to realise quite how little I know about the sources of the Authorised Version. But is the argument here not that the Vulgate repeats deliberate distortions that found their way into the masoretic texts?

[Reply](#)



Anonymous on October 06, 2019 · at 8:52 am EST/EDT

It's not that the history of the Roman Empire should be re-written, but read correctly. Constantin did not 'adopt Christianity as the state religion'. It was Emperor Theodosius I who on 27 February 380 issued the decree "Cunctos populos", the so-called Edict of Thessalonica, recorded in the Codex Theodosianus xvi.1.2. This declared the 'Nicene' Christianity to be the only legitimate imperial religion and the only one entitled to call itself Catholic. Other Christians he described as "foolish madmen". He also ended official state support for the traditional polytheist religions and customs.

Constantin only stopped the persecution of Christians by the Edict of Milan in 313 which stated that Christians should be allowed to follow their faith without oppression removing penalties for professing Christianity, under which many had been martyred previously, and it returned confiscated Church property. The edict protected all religions from persecution, not only Christianity, allowing anyone to worship any deity that they chose. Constantine became a Christian on his death bed.

[Reply](#)



chimmy on October 06, 2019 · at 8:57 am EST/EDT

thanks, I was not aware or of the origin of the pilt-down rumors.

[Reply](#)



Seward on October 05, 2019 · at 10:57 am EST/EDT

I'm not sure if this is the right link to an excerpt of recent Congressional testimony a



friend sent me. It's the one I tried to copy. If it's right, you'll see for yourself. It's devastating example of how the U.S. is ceasing to be a Christian, or even Deistic country in any way, one where people can express a belief in God:

cid:6860A5BA-7A5C-4FCC-ABEE-558E6BAF94CC/F374BA63-3E13-4CD8-B1A2-03128F820169@hds1.md.comcast.net

In essence, witnesses are sworn before one of the impeachment committees in the House, without the traditional ending "So help me God." When the ranking minority member objects, the chairman says some witness may not believe in God. When the ranking minority member propose letting witnesses that chose to do so add the phrase, a vociferous majority member objects that that would be a religious test for witnesses, and the chairman sustains him. Evidently references to God are no longer accepted in the House, or at least some of its committees.

The link above is invalid – Might want to try this: <https://thehill.com/homenews/house/459932-house-democrat-calls-it-unconstitutional-to-cite-god-in-hearing-oaths>
Mod

Reply



Seward on October 05, 2019 · at 6:32 pm EST/EDT

Thanks. That's the right link.

Reply



Hajduk on October 05, 2019 · at 11:34 am EST/EDT

Thank you very much Saker for this video. I was cheering and shouting when he went to hug the woman who had taken his brother from him. Such incredible strength of character.

In my opinion the problem is 'modern thinking'. For my part, I will happily prostrate to holy monks and relics, and I believe in every kind of miracle. So I am just like the simplest peasant in my faith, and I am deeply thankful for it. In my view one must shed 'modernity' and retrogress to the medieval period or earlier in one's mind (but still retain the ability to use a laptop :-)

Reply



Serbian girl on October 05, 2019 · at 12:16 pm EST/EDT

First of all, thank you so much for this interview, dense with lots of ideas. I have often wondered what type of governance is compatible with Orthodoxy. Byzantium may have come close..they engaged in lots of trade and commerce, they had a centralised education system which taught ancient Greek classics and Christian theology but also eastern sciences such as astronomy, they managed the price of agricultural commodities to ensure noone would starve, they had a strong military..

Regarding money however, the Byzantines were very conservative. Money was issued in form of gold and silver coinage. They did not articially inflate the money supply, and unlike the Western Roman empire, they never debased their coins (the western Romans towards the end, added base metals to their precious metal coins but kept the face value unchanged...)

Regarding this latter point, (the money supply) is where we can learn from libertarians who have a lot material on central banking and money supply, the root cause of inequality in today's society.

Reply



The Saker on October 05, 2019 · at 1:00 pm EST/EDT

Agreed.

Besides, what most people do not understand is that is is wrong to conflate the argument of efficiency with the argument of morality. Yes, capitalism is more "efficient" than, say, Socialism, but only for the SHORT term (since it is not sustainable). But let's assume for a second that capitalism would be sustainable. And then, let's try this thought experiment:



We lock up in an empty cell a human being and a hyena. No food, no water. Then watch what happens: the hyena will eventually attack the human and eat him.

Does that make the hyena “superior” or “more efficient”? A capitalist would have to say yes.

But we, as Christians, cannot think that way.

Factoid: Under Stalin inflation was going DOWN by the way, and the price of good was getting cheaper. I am NOT defending Communism or Stalin, but this should give us pause to reconsider things we simply assume as inevitable (inflation for example).

Finally, **modern capitalism is ALWAYS based on banking and modern banking is ALWAYS based on usury**. Which God and His Church have declared sinful and evil.

Look, at the end of the day, it is a simple choice: we chose the “wisdom of this world” or we chose to live as real Christians.

The rest is just words.

For me, it is really simple: what is good enough for the Fathers, is good enough for me.

Kind regards

The Saker

[Reply](#)



Ralph on October 05, 2019 · at 2:10 pm EST/EDT

By definition, pure capitalism – unlike socialism – cares absolutely nothing for humans, except insofar as to how it can extract maximum profit, regardless of the will or feelings (including pain) of humans. This is its fatal flaw, especially when combined with or done by, evil humans.

[Reply](#)



The Saker on October 05, 2019 · at 3:42 pm EST/EDT

I entirely agree!
Socialism, for all its other possible faults, at least aims at bettering the welfare of all people.
Capitalism is completely value-free and morals-free and places a dollar value on *everything*.
The Saker

[Reply](#)



Sourpuss on October 06, 2019 · at 10:28 pm EST/EDT

https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Damnatio_ad_bestias

Well? Remember Androcles! Life is always more interesting than any thought experiment.

[Reply](#)



milan on October 05, 2019 · at 7:53 pm EST/EDT

In his chapter man-made solutions: Communism and the UN Cantelon says this:

“Why, I asked myself repeatedly, did so many American leaders, both in church and in the classroom of the college, speak strongly in favor of world socialism? E. Stanley Jones, in his *The Choice Before Us*, declared,

God reached out and put his hand on the Russian Communist. Communism is the only political position that really holds the Christian position.



In one sense, I found it very difficult to comprehend a man like E. Stanley Jones writing lines that seemed to endorse Communism.

On the other hand, I reminded myself of the years that he spent in India. In 1953, speaking for many days on the club grounds of Lucknow, I saw the results of this man's work in that city of north central India. Undoubtedly Jones was moved by the scenes of squalor and poverty that plagued the masses of that great nation. He must have contrasted the poor and hungry with the abnormal wealth of such men as the Nizam of Hyderabad, a descendant of the Mogul emperors, who ruled over 15 million poverty stricken subjects for decades. Reputedly, he had more wealth than any other man in the world, with a net income of 15 million annually. Much of his wealth came from the fabulous valley of Golconda, one of the world's richest diamond mines. The Nizam had 500 wives, and he gave his favorite one a gold Rolls Royce. He ate all of his meals off golden plates, and boasted that the English displays 24 golden plates in London, while he had golden place settings for 150 guests. One of his favorite diamonds was the 182 1/2 carat diamond that he used for a paperweight. He sat in chairs and relaxed on couches of solid gold, and had a carriage of gold built that was not usable because of its weight.

If Stanley Jones endorsed socialism, it was perhaps because he had stood among the beggars and hungry children in the shadow of the Taj Mahal. It was without doubt the most beautiful tomb in the world. It was built by the Indian ruler, Shah Jahan, as a memorial to his favorite wife, Mumtaz-i-Mahal, which means "Bride of the Palace." It took 20,000 workmen 21 years to erect the Taj, and when the workmen finished the delicate tasks of carving their marble and alabaster into a 70 foot dome rising 150 feet high, they undoubtedly gazed at the slender minarets, supposedly built as towers for prayer, mirrored in the reflecting pools beside the tomb, and then turned to Shah Jahan for their reward. Did he give them a smile of appreciation or a hand of gratitude? No, the payment they received for their creating one of the beauties of the world was the ugly point of the soldier's knife that pierced their eyes. Shah Jahan wanted to make sure no other monarch would ever again have a Taj as beautiful as his.

While in the Alps of Southern Germany, I visited the beautiful palace built by Ludwig of Bavaria. He was a genius, said our guide with a touch of German pride. I walked through another castle the Neuschwanstein. In order to build his dream castles, he had taxed the Bavarians so unmercifully that they scarcely had money for food."

From years of travelling abroad, I turned my thoughts again to my homeland where so many were preaching the doctrine of socialism. The American public, according to H.R. Gross was in debt to the tune of 1.7 trillion, which means every child born a U.S. citizen inherits the equivalent of a personal debt of \$8500.

Some pointed to the weakness of Capitalism and declared that communism was preferable. Some uninformed speakers and writers suggested that the lenders and founders of Communism had a love for the labourer and were seeking to build a wonderful world of brotherly love. Was this true? There was only one way to find out: examine the records.

So there you have some interesting history.

Cheers

[Reply](#)



Anonymous on October 06, 2019 · at 8:57 pm EST/EDT

What a coincidence! Few days ago I woke up with these words resonating in my head: 'Taj Mahal is a monument to stupidity'. What strange associations take place in one's brain!

Ludwig II of Bavaria was a dreamer to the point of insanity, but he did not maim the builders of his palaces or Wagner (who would have deserved it as punishment for the turgidity of his 'Tetralogy').

[Reply](#)



Internal Exile USA on October 07, 2019 · at 10:09 pm EST/EDT

Silent film goddess Louise Brooks:

"To me, Wagner is a series of magnificent passages



connected by long dull crap.”
[B. Paris, LB, p. 351]

Then again, most of those original riff-meisters had their off days.

[Reply](#)



Bro 93 on October 06, 2019 · at 11:45 am EST/EDT

Especially for Юродивый, L445...Vot Tak..... and his “gold” (and 30 pieces of silver lol) but also for others not content with buttonholing everything into simple words of faith or moneywords like “capital”

(it's organic...its how plants using photosynthesis and then storing savings, energy, capacity for for further development in potatoes, beets, carrots ...further develop the biosphere.....is a slightly different, more positive way of looking at it.....and how the farmer cooperates to feed more of us.....so that we have the time, this leisure we now enjoy..... to discuss these things!) that have different meanings and implications for every single different speaker, writer, reader, listener....)

The key point is that Above ALL is Spirit.....which we could, we should have a limited spark (of the Unlimited) in us and the fact that Materialism, which does not have the above constantly in mind.....and the Negative implications of the existence of MON- (One) EY (Eye) can easily become an obviously False.....**Religion!**

However, this does not mean back to the caves to hunt and gather! This does not mean return to the primitive inefficiencies of barter!

It means keeping things in perspective!

My crypto-friend and occasional collaborator amarynth and I ought to be able to educate a few people about the potential of an immutable public ledger to make Money More Honest. Not 100% Untopia Honesty....but hugely disincentivizing dishonesty....fraud.

But people are passionate, (Religiously so!) talk past each other with different meanings for the very same words and so forth and she “believes” I am seeking in this man (with a Doctorate in Theology as well as Phd in Computer Science, mind you!)my ...”Messiah!”:

<https://youtu.be/MD6Ei3DdkKc?t=169>

Not so.

I discuss CSW because what he discusses COULD....just might possibly...no probably bear very much on these matters, deeply, rigorously, scientifically.....I strongly suspect.

But I investigate and overcome my prejudices.....and investigate furtherI do not “believe”and stop digging into it any further, emotionally satisfied with where I sit today.

Which Is why I would like to resume my examination of the remaining chapters of.....

A Short History Of Bitcoin Myths....(3 chapters down....5 to go in the Cafe..... after my current week of training ends.

It would be nice to have those myths addressed.....rigorouslyone by one....rather than encounter the stone wall..... of different “belief”. Or prejudice. Sound familiar??? LOL.

[Reply](#)



Bro 93 on October 06, 2019 · at 10:10 pm EST/EDT

A few add-on points, concerning Nominalism....Names of things...which always fools a majority of people.

A thing that does not scale globally (only single or very low double digit



transactions per second) and is called "Bitcoin". (ticker symbol BTC..is NOT the Bitcoin invented with the 2009 Whitepaper, which was intended to surpass Mastercharge and VISA combined.....in scaling globally.

A thing called "Bitcoin" BTC whose developer group Bitcore Main asserts that it is "not for people who make two dollars a day" is not needed by most of this world, nor is it really needed even by very many millions of geeky persons in this world, actually, and such a thing does not need to scale beyond a few rich people or crypto hobbyists transferring the BTC "Digital Gold" (so long as it holds its value and does not suffer Chain Death.....or abandonment by its "miners" because of mining earnings drying up) or Store of Value.....for large sums, quite infrequently..... between each other.

There is a subtle distinction between the concept of Pseudonymous Identity (like many here use) and total Anonymity ... (which a few here use) in terms discussed in the 2009 White Paper.

Pseudonymity preserves privacy within the LAW....as I understand it....while attempts at Anonymity or mixing of transactions together en masse (Monero...Dash....ZCash) are futile attempts at untraceability of transactions for the opportunity to attempt to evade LAW.

Someone in this thread spoke of the debasement of currencies including silver and gold coinage millenia ago...and the need for "Honest Money".

All money is....is a measuring stick of value.....not value in and of itself ...and what the real Bitcoin design is for is **an immutable public blockchain ledger that may endure for several centuries before needing replacement, where everything is recorded for fraud prevention and disincentivizing crime (court orders can access the ledger.....willy nilly snoopers cannot) but ordinary lawful peer to peer transactions on the ledger are only accessed by the peers involved. Such information is valuable.**

In that sense the Bitcoin design is for a new kind of Commodity (Information) Money that has superiority over older types of commodity money such as silver or gold.

I seriously doubt Bitcoin has enough time to return to its original design and protocol by next year before the excrement (debt defaults en masse or chain reaction meltdown mess) hits the rotary airflow apparatus....and play an enormously significant world political role in any 2020 or by 2021 Reset.....in any sort of comparison to the remonetization of gold by Russia, China, Iran and possibly USA. My hunch is that it is far too new and undeveloped for an early role like that....but 3-5 years???.....10 years???

The potential for it to level the playing field globally in favor of the citizen and to the limitation of the criminality of private central banks and their frauds...should begin to be understood by 100 times as many people as understand it today.....maybe 1000 time as many....is my hunch.

But the guy that gave it to the world and saw the world nearly wreck it....and is back, publicly now, for about the last 12 monthsprobably has a better idea...of the schedule.....and the anti-fraud intent imbedded in his invention:

No more multiple sets of books enabling Grand Larceny:

<https://youtu.be/EQDiJ92Val>

Craig Wright shares how Bitcoin can change the world at CoinGeek Seoul

1,659 views • Oct 3, 2019

Short and to the point.

Reply





amarynth on October 07, 2019 · at 6:39 am EST/EDT

Bro, I'll pick up your comments Cafe side in a few days. At the moment, for this interview, I'm looking at these two things, and don't want to give offense ..

The Saker on October 04, 2019 · at 10:09 pm EST/EDT

I really don't want to dwell on this.

If somebody thinks that capitalism is "Orthocompatible" – fine.

I read Saint Basil and Saint John.

It's pretty clear to me.

Hugs

<http://thesaker.is/orthodox-faith-yvonne-lorenzo-interviews-the-saker/#comment-703212>

and the short Saker comment on here: <http://thesaker.is/orthodox-faith-yvonne-lorenzo-interviews-the-saker/#comment-703212>

trade & commerce != capitalism

just saying,

The Saker

So, I'm borrowing from Poverbs here and in order to 'seem to be sensible or wise', I will hold my tongue :-)

More generally, it is quite amazing to find so many people seeking the honest and the right way to deal with the financial systems here in our modern times.

[Reply](#)



Patrick Donnelly on October 06, 2019 · at 10:04 pm EST/EDT

Most religions were instituted to guide a confused survivor population in a radically changed world. One world in a Universe of trillions of worlds!

Hu are sage, but only compared to animals. Their very plasticity causes misunderstanding, based upon words: The Babel problem.

To know truth we must use silence. Hu voice music creates community, but not awareness of the Universe. Towards one.

In Heaven, we may merge with others: $1+1=1$. This creates a greater soul that means teaching others is automatic when it reincarnates.

Sanskrit means Holy Writing. It is based upon Hu understanding that everything has a sound that resonates with its essence or nature. Words can then be composed from the sounds and rendered into writing which is after all, meant to be read ALOUD!

[Reply](#)



Anonymous on October 07, 2019 · at 12:25 am EST/EDT

I recall reading about "selflessness" versus "selfishness" and how "fear of death" and desire to prolong life and have material successes in the world is used by the Satan entity to enslave humankind.

But I think great evil is perpetrated by ones who have no fear of death and who selflessly sacrifice themselves. Consider the example of the suicide bomber. That is an action of selflessness and without any fear of death. However, who or what really benefits? Not the person who kills self. Not the targets whom he kills or maims. Not even very much his so-called cause, residing in imagination, the motive for the suicide bombing. The only thing done is creation of great rage energies and fear energies as ends in themselves, and some have said that such rage energies and fear energies are nourishment for the predatory entities we often call demons. There is spirituality and selflessness which are evil.

And as aside, google "zombie animals" to see certain phenomena in nature all around. About manipulations into "selfless sacrifice" for someone else.



[Reply](#)

Anonymous on October 07, 2019 · at 12:37 am EST/EDT

What about the Didache, the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles to the Nations. Where should this document stand. Its description is as follows: “The Didache was highly regarded by many early Christian authors and theologians. Athanasius of Alexandria (†373) recommended it to converts, and it had a great influence on the Apostolic Constitutions (375). Before the New Testament canon was formally settled in 692, a number of Biblical canons included the Didache; John of Damascus (†749) was also a noted supporter.

The text disappeared and was lost for centuries, until it was rediscovered in 1873 by Philotheos Bryennios, Metropolitan of Nicomedia. Today it is usually included among the second-generation Christian writings known as the Apostolic Fathers.” Is that the way it should be regarded?

[Reply](#)

Anonymous on October 07, 2019 · at 12:43 am EST/EDT

When “passions” are spoken of in theological discourses, as something to avoid and resist, this generally means sexual thoughts, feelings, desires and the “falling in love”. —Right or wrong?—Or any intense emotions?

There is after all “righteous anger” as a passion, and even “righteous fear”—but no such thing as “righteous sexual feelings or desire or love” according to the “church fathers”?

[Reply](#)

ioan on October 07, 2019 · at 2:08 pm EST/EDT

It has to be clarified first, where lives the passion : it resides in the body, together with the mind and heart. This body is the First Adam (as Saker said in the article above) who has fallen. Although, this body has mind and heart, thus intelligence, is hardly capable to reach a higher intelligence through its mind and a higher understanding of its own heart. Therefore, the second Adam, through Jesus Christ, has descended in such a human body like ours, to show us The Way with His example. That means each of us has to have its own personal struggle in letting the second Adam rule over the first Adam. Without struggle, without effort, nothing can be done. The presence of this second Adam is being proved by your internal struggles, had you accepted everything, you'd be much easier in this world, yet you are here, you search for many answers for so many questions and, if you find an answer you look for another and so on it goes, that's the proof that your higher Adam is here, he wants to save you from your sins by opening your mind, opening your heart, bringing light into your entire being. That's the message, that's the truth Gospel of Jesus, the son of man and the Son of God, cause we need to recover what we lost : the peace and happiness in love, forever.

[Reply](#)

Anonymous on October 07, 2019 · at 8:28 pm EST/EDT

@we need to recover what we lost : the peace and happiness in love, forever.

We need to stress that the 'recovery of peace and happiness in love' happens in the 'Kingdom of God' which is not of this world.

[Reply](#)

Anonymous on October 07, 2019 · at 2:23 am EST/EDT

There is a computer program called The Word, created by one Costas Stergiou, and its feature is that when one mouses over English text the underlying original Hebrew or Greek words appear along with their definitions.

It is remarkable, because these original textual words are mostly written like hasty



shorthand notes, never much regard for precise grammar or complete sentences, or tenses, or singular-plural forms. Even in the Greek, it looks like the text was written by persons for whom Greek was not their native language at all.—But I have always been curious, and always failing, to ascertain the source of the underlying text, is it Masoretic for the Old Testament Hebrew, and what source for the Greek of the New Testament. Is anyone familiar with this program?

Does anyone know the sources? Does any program like this exist for the Quran so that the original underlying Arabic words and their definition can be ascertained even while going through English translation.

So one thing therefore noted is how much the current accepted English translations have “filled in gaps”.

[Reply](#)



Anonymous on October 07, 2019 · at 2:43 am EST/EDT

Another matter, from history, involving the First Crusade which is dated 1096 to 1099.

Why did the Byzantine emperor turn West to the Latins for help against the Muslim Seljuk Turks rather than turning north, to the realm of Kyivan Russia where the faith was Orthodox like in Byzantium? At that time the great king in Kyiv was Sviatopolk II Yaroslavych ruling from 1093 to 1113.—Any ideas and comments?

Certainly, by drawing from the hinterland of Kyivan-Ukrainian Russia, the disaster of the Fourth Crusade for the Byzantine Empire would have been avoided. Or was there actually historically the first feelings of Russophobia by the Greek elites, because of the history of many wars between Byzantium and Kyiv dating to the 800's?

[Reply](#)



Anonymous on October 07, 2019 · at 5:24 am EST/EDT

Russians were too busy fighting among themselves and with the nomadic Polovtsy.

[Reply](#)



Anonymous 2 on October 07, 2019 · at 7:21 am EST/EDT

Many questions and interesting. What I have noted during the last few years are the restrictions on information concerning Russian history, and the persistence and ingenuity needed to find these...

So purely from general interest, and perhaps worth sharing is the following :

The History of the Russian State, in 12 volumes by Mikhailovich Karamzin (1766-1826), that maybe available still online as PDF History Of Russia From Earliest Times, bySergey Mikhaylovich Solovyov (1820 -1879), Available in 30 different editions by diferent translators. Also, The Tale of Igor's Campaign (Old East Slavic: Слово о плъку Игоревѣ, Slovo o pŭlku Igorevĕ, and that was conveyed orally long before it was written down.

Regarding Karamazin, is his connection to the poet Alexander Sergeyeovich Pushkin 1799 – 1837, that is interesting, and may link to the questions you posed. Both Solovyov and Karamazin were subject to censorship as was Pushkin The poet however, concealed historical truths in his plays, only recently published in their original version. It is more than likely he did the same occasionally in poems, but I am unfamiliar with these.

[Reply](#)





Joshua on October 07, 2019 · at 7:15 am EST/EDT

If one could not read or write, and had never heard of a church, would God (the infinite living being which created the entirety of the universe and everything in it) be somehow less real? I rather doubt it.

[Reply](#)



Joshua on October 07, 2019 · at 9:06 am EST/EDT

Where, in truth, is our faith? Is it alive, inside our heart, where it is supposed to be? Or, is it in some book, on some piece of paper, somewhere, or something?

[Reply](#)



Anonymous on October 07, 2019 · at 4:07 pm EST/EDT

“Twenty-seven centuries later, the same truth was reaffirmed in the beautiful Service to the New Martyrs and Confessor of Russia“

Saker, isn't this a mistake? You meant “Seventeen centuries later”?

[Reply](#)



Layman on October 07, 2019 · at 4:09 pm EST/EDT

Hey guys, how come comments critical of The Saker don't get posted? Not allowed to criticize The Founder? Good luck!

Note quite. See here: <https://thesaker.is/submissions-policy/>

But yeah, bitching about moderation will get your comment removed too.

Good thing I saw yours :-)

And good luck to you too, my friend!

The Saker

[Reply](#)



amarynth on October 07, 2019 · at 5:32 pm EST/EDT

I have a feeling that The Saker meant to post this link and not the submission guidelines one.

<http://thesaker.is/moderation-policy/>

Whichever, based on your question, the moderation policy would be applicable to read.

[Reply](#)



Anonymous on October 07, 2019 · at 4:31 pm EST/EDT

There may be a correction needed regarding the question about the First Crusade which began in 1096 A.D.

The great king ruling Kyivan Rus at that time was Sviatopolk II Iziaslavych not Yaroslavych. And why the Byzantine emperor did not turn to him who was also Orthodox for help against the Muslim Seljuk Turks instead of turning to the Latin church and kings in the West, thus beginning crusades which ended in disaster for Byzantium during the so-called Fourth Crusade.

[Reply](#)



Anonymous on October 07, 2019 · at 5:01 pm EST/EDT

“Saint Mary of Egypt whose life you can read here (I *highly* recommend this text!).”

I read that story, and it struck me as a rather tragic story, about a “woman gone wild” to a “woman gone crazy”??

Because I am very suspicious concerning any visions, visitations, revelations which prompt someone to begin some bizarre practices of rather extreme self-torture and self-affliction supposedly imitating Lord Jesus suffering crucified on the cross, and this is supposed to be a path to better “spirituality”. Not all so-called spirituality is good.



There are also spirits and spirituality which are evil. Which path did the soul and being of that poor woman really take in the end after her death?

Historically it appears to me that the spiritual and physical asceticism of self-affliction were first pioneered among assorted Hindus and Buddhists in India, long before advent and incarnation of Lord Jesus. And these practices of seeking some union with the divine through self-sacrifice, self-denial, self-affliction and imitating of sufferings of Jesus, manifest in hermit-life and monasteries, came into early Christianity from those Hindu and/or Buddhist influences, as actually early corrupting influences.—Lord Jesus did not live an ascetical monastic lifestyle according to the records we have of Him. His example should be paramount.

It would have been much better for that woman to simply repent, by stopping “being wild” and then accept the grace of the fruits of the Holy Ghost dwelling within her:—“love/affection “agape” – cheerfulness/calm delight – peace – patience – usefulness/moral excellence – goodness/virtue/beneficence – trust/firm persuasion/confidence/ constancy – mildness/humility – self-control/temperance – self-control “egkrateia”. See Galatians 5:22-23, and also unfold, develop whatever talents given her by God, and all this freely in liberty not by forcing, and in overall love-harmony-peace within herself and with others around her, and marry, have family, raise good children and be a blessing to her community. Thus for sure going the way of the kingdom of heaven.

[Reply](#)



Anonymous on October 07, 2019 · at 11:10 pm EST/EDT

@Lord Jesus did not live an ascetical monastic lifestyle

This is a typical Protestant argument against monasticism based on the false doctrine of ‘Sola Fide’ and the exclusion of ‘works’ as non-necessary.

If the Lord Jesus did not live an ‘ascetical monastic lifestyle’ (although this is a gross misrepresentation), it’s because He was not a mere human who needed to work for his salvation. The fallen humans do need to work for their salvation and for the ‘activation’ of the ‘grace of the fruits of the Holy Ghost’.

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ABOUT THE EDITOR

The European Saker In his own words:



“I am a 'legal alien' currently living in the Imperial Homeland”

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