

Resurrection Life of Jesus Church

DECEPTION IN THE END TIMES

RLJ-1411

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PART 10: 400 YEARS OF TERROR

THE FALL OF THE WESTERN ROMAN EMPIRE

The years 400-800 A.D. were filled with destruction and death as millions of people perished with little civility and even less record keeping. In studying this time period, I realized this was the prophetic word spoken to the apostle John.

Revelation 12:13-17

In sermon RLJ-1408, we examined the first pope, Innocent I, who became the bishop of Rome in 402. His power came from the Roman Emperor, and without the Roman government, the Bishop of Rome would have lost his political power.¹

I want to provide you with a brief view of the political and military development that led to the fall of the Western Roman Empire.

THE HUNS

The Huns were a nomadic tribe of people originating on the planes of Mongolia who had been at war with China. They encountered some success but then had been defeated and around 370 A.D. hundreds of thousands of them migrated with their families to an area north of the Black Sea, where they wiped out the local population and created their own kingdom.

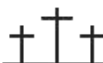
To the west was the Alans kingdom and after the Huns had established themselves, they decided to move westward and conquered the Alans kingdom in brutal battles. Their cruelty became known to other nations as refugees of Alans fled westward. This was the beginning of the largest migration ever seen on the European continent.

THE VANDALS

The Vandals were a Germanic tribe that originated in the area of central Sweden around the modern day city of Uppsala. The English word for "vandalism" comes from this Germanic tribe. They began to leave Sweden around 120 B.C and can be likened to the forerunners of the Vikings. The Vandals migrated in large numbers along with their families into what is today Poland and Germany around 180 A.D. but the pressure of the westward moving Huns influenced their leaders to move west and south. Some of the Vandals had become Arian Christians by 364-378 A.D.

Around 400 A.D. the Huns began to apply pressure on the Vandals and the Alans refugees and so they crossed the Rhine River in 406 A.D. where they met resistance from the Franks, another Germanic tribe. By this time the Vandals

¹ www.eaec.org/sermons/2013/RLJ-1408.htm



numbered in the millions and the Franks were defeated. There was little civility as they plundered, took slaves, raped women and laid waste to the land of Gaul.

In 409 A.D. they crossed the Pyrenees mountain chain and entered Spain.

The Vandals were not benign people; they were just as ruthless as the Huns and showed no mercy to the civilian population that stood in their way. In their migration they absorbed other German tribes and this multi-million strong mob of men, women and children pushed their way through what is today Belgium, France and into Spain.

During their 20 year stay in Spain, they developed a kingdom and gained strength militarily. The Emperor Valentinian III had raised new armies and started to attack the Vandals and the decision was made to cross over the Mediterranean Sea into North Africa, which took place in 429. Under the leadership of their king Geiseric they moved eastward on the north coast of Africa and took city after city, until they were able to take the city of Carthage itself in 439.

Carthage became the capital of the new kingdom of the Vandals and the Alans, and with their great knowledge of building ships, King Geiseric was able to send his navy ships and conquer the islands of Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica and the Balearic Islands.

By 455 A.D. the Vandal kingdom had become so strong that Italy was invaded and Rome was sacked. It was not until 533 A.D. that the Eastern Roman Empire was able to invade North Africa and destroy the Vandal kingdom.

The Western Roman Empire had succumbed and it was the emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire that was finally able to break the power of the Vandals and once again make North Africa a part of the revived Roman Empire.

The Vandals persecuted the Christians who were part of the church system of Rome. Many bishops were killed and churches were burned.

The bishop of Rome and his papacy had very limited power from 455-533 A.D.

THE GOTHIC PEOPLE

The Goths were another Germanic tribe that also originated in Sweden and came from the provinces of Vaster and Ostergotland. The Swedish island of Gotland in the Baltic Sea is named after this tribe.

Members of the Goths started to cross the Baltic Sea from Sweden into the German province of Pomerania between 300 B.C. until 100 A.D. As their numbers multiplied, they expanded their territory all the way to the Black Sea and controlled vast areas of what is modern day Ukraine in 400 A.D.

As the Goths grew in numbers, the tribe was split into two groups; one was ruled by the Balthi dynasty and became known as Visigoths (Western Goths) and the other part ruled by the Amali dynasty, which became known as the Ostrogoth (Eastern Goths).

Just like other Germanic tribes from Scandinavia, the Goths were ruthless, barbaric and bent on subduing other nations, plundering them, taking captives and making slaves of them.

In the third century, they invaded modern day Greece and the coastal land of Anatolia, known today as Turkey. In 267 A.D., the Goth assembled a fleet of 500 ships and began to raid the coasts in the eastern Mediterranean Sea. A Roman navy defeated them and they had to flee into the Aegean Sea. Just like the Vikings some 400 years later would plunder and fight without regard of losing their own lives, the Goth fled northward, burning and plundering on their way.

Around 370 A.D. the Huns began to pressure the Goths and they started to migrate west with their families. In 410 A.D. a large army of Visigoths invaded Italy and were able to take and plunder Rome. In 475 A.D. the Visigoths had moved further west and conquered the area of modern day Spain in 475 A.D.

In 454 A.D., the king of the Ostrogoths was Theodoric the Great, and in a series of battles he attacked the Huns. Theodoric was able to invade Italy in 468 A.D. and the two groups of Goths were united.

The years 541-554 A.D. saw much warfare in Italy between the Goths and forces from the Eastern Roman Empire. The city of Rome changed hands three times. When the Ostrogoths entered Rome for the first time, those who had not fled were slaughtered, including Christians. There were not many survivors. The Ostrogoths grip on Italy was not broken until an army of Franks came and defeated them.

The Roman Catholic Church survived these onslaughts and the bishops of Rome did not yield political power during these years of war.

THE LOMBARDS

The Lombards originated from the southern part of Sweden and were originally known as the Winnili. Like the Goths and the Vandals, they too worshipped the Old Norse gods of Oden, (Wotan in German) Thor, Balder and the female goddess of Frigg.

A group of Winnilis crossed the Baltic Sea around 100 B.C. and landed on the north coast of Germany where the river Elbe runs into the Baltic Sea northwest of the modern city Hamburg. The area was already occupied by the Vandals, who demanded they pay tribute. The Winnilis refused and in the fighting that ensued, were able to overcome them.

Since Oden was described as having a long beard, the Winnili men also grew long beards. The tribe became known as "Langobard," which later as they entered further south into Europe was changed to "Lombards."

The Lombards are first mentioned in Roman historical records in 9 A.D. and are described as a tribe more savage and brutal than the other Germanic tribes.

By 200 A.D. the Lombards had moved further south with their families and come to the Rhineland. From here they migrated to the eastern part of Europe, where they came in conflict with the Huns.

The Lombards were again on the move in 540 A.D. and came back into modern day Germany and from here they entered Italy. By 569 A.D. they had conquered all of northern Italy and taken the city of Milan.

Italy had been ravaged by warfare between the armies of the Eastern Roman Empire and the Ostrogoths, and the remaining forces from Constantinople could not hold back the Lombards, who established their own kingdom in Northern Italy.

The Lombard kingdom of Italy lasted from 568-774 A.D., a rule of 206 years. During these years there was a lot of infighting, warring with the Franks and the Byzantine forces. They dealt with a Slavic invasion from the east and battles with Islamic forces from North Africa.

While the Lombards established a kingdom in northern Italy, different bishops of the church in Rome also established themselves as popes and political rulers over the city of Rome and surrounding areas. The last king of the Lombards was Desiderius, who in 772 A.D. entered Rome with his army. The current pope, Hadrian I, called for help from the united kingdom of the Franks. Charlemagne, was the powerful king of the Franks at this time took an army through Italy toward Rome. He defeated Desiderius at Susa and laid siege to the Lombard capital of Pavia, which surrendered in 774 A.D. As a result, the northern Lombard kingdom was annexed into the Frankish kingdom and Charlemagne took the title, "King of the Lombards."

The Lombards held on to the part of Italy south of Rome until 849 A.D. when it was taken by Emperor Louis II of the Frankish kingdom, which by now had emerged into the Holy Roman Empire.

THE FRANKS

The Franks were another Germanic tribe that invaded and held a territory that today encompasses Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg, France and large portions of Germany.

The Franks were introduced to Christianity through monks, loyal to the bishop of Rome. Thus the different rulers and nobility of the Franks rejected Arianism and became loyal to the bishops of Rome. In time monasteries became learning centers, where monks taught reading, writing, mathematics and a number of other subjects. At the same time, they also worked to convert pagan leaders to their Christian faith.

Charles Martel was the chief ruler of the Franks in 737 A.D. but he did not hold the title of king. In 741 A.D. he was succeeded by his sons Carloman and Pepin. In 743 A.D. the two brothers placed Childeric III on the throne as a symbolic king with no political power. Carloman resigned from his political office in 746 A.D. to become a monk and Pepin wanted to change the constitution of the Franks. In order to do so without a military coup, Pepin sent a request to the bishop of

Rome, who at that time known as Pope Zachary (679-752 A.D.). The pope was asked if he would favor a king over the Franks that had no political power or a king that would be a supreme ruler. Pope Zachary issued his ruling in 749 that it was better to have a supreme king; it would therefore be better for Pepin, who already had the title Mayor to become a ruling king. Pope Zachary decreed that Pepin should dethrone Childeric III and declare himself to be king of the Franks, which he subsequently did.

In 750 A.D., an assembly of the Frankish nobility gave their consent and elected Pepin to become king, who was then anointed by the archbishop of the Franks. Pope Zachary then ruled that Childeric III was a false king and ordered him to enter a monastery and become a monk. All this shows how much power the papacy in Rome had garnered.

Pepin's oldest son was named Charlemagne, who came into power in 768 when his father died.

In order for the Roman bishops to gain more political power, they needed to have the Roman Empire restored. Charlemagne needed the blessing of the papacy and the papacy needed his military power. The bishops of Rome called upon Charlemagne for the next 30 years to remove military threats against Rome. He was crowned the emperor of the revived Western Roman Empire in 800 A.D. by Pope Leo III.

After 300 years of not having an empire or an emperor, the papacy had succeeded in rebuilding a portion of the ancient Roman Empire, which would last for another 800 years.

The ecclesiastical power shifted back to Rome from Constantinople and the Eastern Orthodox Church would lose its political power and become insignificant when the Eastern Roman Empire collapsed later on.

No king could assume a throne in Western Europe unless they had first been approved by the bishop of Rome, who yielded great power through his papal decrees. Any person bucking the papacy would be declared a heretic, arrested and executed.

SUMMARY

In this message we have examined political and church history from 402-800 A.D. Here is what we should learn from this study:

1. Satan unleashed a horrible 400 year reign of terror on the people living in Europe and the Middle East. Savage tribes washed over the Roman Empire and broke it into pieces. When the different tribes began their migration, no mercy was shown to the people living in the land they were attacking. The men were killed or made slaves. Children were often massacred and it was standard policy to brutally rape every woman they could find. As a result, the rumors of savage tribe coming would see the local populations fleeing; Europe and the other affected areas became one big refugee camp where people scrambled to find a safe place. **Isaiah 14:16-20**

2. There was no true Gospel preached. Both the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church taught that salvation came through the church. They taught a heresy that the price Jesus paid on the cross opened the door for pagans to become members of the church and be saved. To be in good standing, a person had to be baptized (sprinkled with water) by a priest or monk, receive the sacrament of communion, attend confession before a priest and receive last rites before they died.

People had no Bibles and were ignorant of what the New Testament actually said.
Amos 8:11-13

3. The Roman Catholic Church emerged as a state church where people in the different nations became members through "conversion." Once a king became a "Christian," he decreed that the subjects in his kingdom were to become Christians and it was common for monks to set up scaffolding and baptize the people with "holy water" as they walked underneath. This was the Roman Catholic way of baptizing a person into Christ. There was no remorse of sins, no preaching of repentance or born again experience; there was just an order to march and declare yourself a Christian. **John 3:1-8**

4. When Satan set up his different kingdoms, there was no justice, mercy, goodness or kindness. There was just brute power, fear and cruel death to those who did not line up with the program. Satan would empower men, put his anointing upon them, and raise them up as leaders. The men would rally people to be appointed leaders (nobility), who in turn would recruit men to become soldiers. The nobility were given the power to tax people and force them into serfdom. Officers and soldiers were given good salaries, the right to plunder as much as they wanted once they had taken an area, rape as many women they wanted, and take wives from among the defeated enemy. **Galatians 5:19-21**

5. The soldiers of the so-called Christian nations were no different than pagan soldiers. They all behaved like their spiritual father – the Devil – because they were unsaved. **John 6:44**

6. The Germanic tribes from Scandinavia worshipped the Norse gods: Oden, Thor, Balder, Frigg, etc. and behind these gods were powerful satanic archons, who have ruled different nations since the time of Adam and Eve. **Daniel 10:12-20**

Europe has been in perpetual war for more than 3,000 years. The only time of general peace has been from 1945 until today, a short time of 68 years. Peace can only be found in Jesus. **Matthew 11:28-30**

7. The only remedy for people in the world is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. **John 1:9-13; Romans 1:16-17; 1 Corinthians 1:17-25;**

Remember, it's not so important how you begin your life after salvation, but how you finish it!

Do you have an ear to hear with?