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January 2011 - Newsletter

Dear Family and Friends,

Welcome to our first newsletter for the year 2011. We want to wish you all a very good and prosperous New Year. May you have good health but most important of all, a good relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ!

You will notice a new address above. The Post Office changed our address. We also have a new website address. Check it out.

Dear Reader: It is not our purpose to bash any church or religion, but some of our subjects may be different than what you have been taught. What you or I think about a subject is not important, but what God says about it is vitally important. Please don't take what we say personally, we love you and we are morally obligated to tell you truth.

Our subject this month is: The Birth and Death of Protestantism.

To Be Caught Was to Die

Our story comes from a northern mountain valley of Italy several hundred years ago. During what is sometimes referred to as the "Dark Ages."

The Bible was outlawed because it was thought to be dangerous for common people to read. It was easier to maintain control of the people if they did not have access to information. People risked and often sacrificed their lives in order to obtain copies of the Scriptures

From the 6th into the 18th century, Europe suffered the torments of totalitarian religious rule. It is estimated that over 50 million or more people were martyred by being burned at the stake, pulled apart by torture racks, encased in dungeons, or by some other method of torture. People fled to America so they could worship as their conscience dictated.

Religious freedom is one of the teachings of the Bible. Stephen, Paul, and the disciples were martyred in the first century. It was the bigoted religious leaders and pagan Roman rulers who martyred them. But during the Middle Ages, the power swung from the Pagan Romans to the Christians. This should have been good, but somehow, once Christianity became popular, it became degraded.

Constantine, around A.D. 325, professed to be converted to Christianity. He wanted his whole army to be the same religion that he was, so he marched them through a river and declared them all Christians. Of course, they still worshiped their images. They still kept their pagan holidays (now with Christian names).

The Romans believed they should control the consciences of everyone else. When they were pagans, they tried to force everyone to be pagans. When they became Christians, they tried to force everyone to be their kind of Christian. So pagan intolerance permeated Christianity during the Middle Ages.

However, the Bible condemns religious intolerance. Jesus said, "You know that the Gentiles lord it over them. . . . Yet it shall not be so among you. . . just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:25-28).

One time two of Jesus' disciples wanted Jesus to send fire down from heaven to destroy those who didn't accept them. Jesus strongly rebuked them, and said, "The Son of man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them" (Luke 9:56).

This was Jesus' example. A religion that kills those who do not recognize their dogmas is called a "Babylon" religion, or a "harlot" religion, in Revelation.

The Christian religion in power during the Dark Ages was opposed to religious freedom, but the

Bible upholds religious freedom and condemns religious persecution. So what could they do? The answer is simple, in a totalitarian environment just outlaw the Bible. Declare that only a very few religious superiors can understand it. That is exactly what was done during the Middle Ages. Not only was the Bible "outlawed," it became a death penalty to own or read it. At times, it was worthy of death just to know of someone who had a Bible if you didn't turn him or her in.

For hundreds of years, through ages of persecution, the Waldenses secretly had Bibles hidden. They read and memorized them, and secretly distributed them to those who could read throughout all Europe. Many of the Waldenses were caught and martyred. At times, crusades were sent out to destroy all the Waldenses, but God always preserved a remnant. It was the seeds from their witness and from the Bibles they distributed that eventually helped to bring about a reformation and religious freedom.

Katrina was a Waldensian living in one of the Piedmont valleys of northern Italy toward the end of the Middle Ages. Although it was a death penalty to own or read a Bible, Katrina had one. It was her most precious possession. To her it was worth more than life itself, for it contained the key to eternal life.

Katrina, like other Waldenses, spent long hours with her Bible. She did not know if she would always have it. She spent evenings by the light of the fire, with the shutters closed, memorizing large portions of its sacred messages. The stories of Jesus were her favorite sections. She committed totally to memory the gospels of Matthew and John, as well as several of the books of Paul.

Katrina knew that she could not marry anyone who did not have the same love for the Bible that she did. In the providence of God, He directed her to a Waldensian young man who shared her faith and convictions. Soon a little girl, whom they named Amanda, was added to their home.

As Amanda grew, her mother carefully instilled within her the treasures of the Bible that she herself had learned at her mother's knee. Amanda's earliest recollections were of family worship, reading the stories from the Bible.

When very young, she had already memorized large portions of Scripture. She was also drilled in the importance of secrecy, and of the danger of owning such a book. To be caught was to die, but to read it and obey it was to have eternal life. She knew of Jesus' words: "He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it" (Matthew 10:39).

Amanda was growing up. Then one day, so suddenly and unexpectedly, it happened. Father was gone and Mother was kneading the bread dough, getting ready to put it into pans for the oven. Mother, as usual when no one was around, had her Bible open upon the table while kneading her bread dough. This was a time when she often memorized. Amanda was sure if she kept memorizing that someday she would know the whole Book by heart.

It was at that instant that Amanda heard hoof beats coming around the trail to their valley home at the foot of the mountains. They were almost upon them before she heard the sound. She just had time to peek out to find two soldiers jumping off their horses in front of the door! "Mother!" she screamed in a whispered yell for the soldiers mustn't hear, "Mother, they're soldiers!" That is all she needed to say. She knew they were caught, for the soldiers did not wait to knock, they simply knocked the door open and walked in, looking for the Book. To be caught was to die, and Amanda knew they were caught! The Bible was right there and there was no time to hide it!

"Where is the Book!" they demanded. "You have been reported as having a Bible. Turn it over to us now." Amanda was shocked, surely they could see the Bible lying open right there upon the table. She looked at her mother, but the Bible was not there! Where was it? All she saw was Mother calmly putting the last pan of bread into the oven as though this was an every day occurrence and she couldn't be bothered until her bread was safely baking.

Then turning around, Mother simply said, "I don't know who could have reported such a thing. You won't find a Bible in this house. You can search if you like."

"Why, Mother!" Amanda thought to herself, for she had been taught never to lie. Now, of course, if the soldiers *could not find* the Bible, her mother had not lied, but how could she be

so sure they wouldn't? How could she be so calm? she wondered. How could Mother have hidden it so quickly? and where? She hadn't moved from where she had been standing while kneading the bread. It was a mystery too great for her to ponder.

So the soldiers began to look. One kept a careful eye on Katrina and Amanda while the other began to ransack the house. Amanda wasn't too worried when the one started in the tiny loft where she slept, although she cringed as he overturned her bed and few belongings, even poking holes in some of her things to see where it might be hidden. He searched where Mother and Father slept. Would they ever be able to straighten out the house again?

Amanda watched with amusement as he went from corner to corner, not missing a nook or cranny. He tested all the boards of the floor and the timber of the walls to see if there might be a secret hiding place. Obviously he has done this before. Now he came to where Mother had been making her bread. Surely he would find it now! He opened the firebox to see if there were any remnants of a burnt book inside.

The soldier opened the cupboards and emptied them out. He opened the oven door, but all that was there were loaves of bread baking.

"I told you that you wouldn't find a Bible in this house," reminded mother. Finally, in frustration, they left. Evidently it was a false report that they had received.

Amanda held her breath until they could no longer hear the horses. Then, still whispering from fear, and beginning to shake from the stress, Amanda said, "Mother, wherever did you put the Bible?"

Mother calmly said, "Let me take the bread out of the oven first, I was afraid it might get too done before they left." "There now, doesn't that look fine?" she said, holding up the first loaf. "Isn't it wonderful how the Lord always provides for our needs? Dear, we must thank the Lord for protecting us, for surely if He had not sent His angel we would have been caught."

"But, Mother, where is the Bible? Did an angel really take it?" "Not exactly," Katrina answered. "But an angel did tell me what to do. Come, let us kneel and thank God for His protection." So

there within that humble home, their prayers ascended in thanksgiving for God's merciful protection.

"We must let the bread cool before taking it from the pans. As you see, they are extra done since the soldiers were here for so long. We will have supper when Father comes, then you'll find out what happened to the Bible."

Amanda watched for Father. Upon seeing him, she ran to give him the exciting details of the day. "Wherever Mother put the Bible I don't know," Amanda said breathlessly. "Surely, as the good Word says, 'The angel of the Lord encamps all around those who fear Him, and delivers them Psalm 34:7. He delivered us today. Father I'm sure it was a miracle.'"

The table was set. Mother said they would eat first and straighten the house later. All Amanda and Father were interested in was where was the Bible? In the middle of the table was a loaf of bread. It wasn't the prettiest loaf of bread, as Mother had evidently not had time to smooth it out when the soldiers came.

After grace, Mother cut the bread. How carefully, almost reverently, she cut through the crust, as though this loaf of bread was the most precious thing on earth.

"Mother! There is the Bible!" Amanda screamed again in her whisper-like yell. Father leaned over wide-eyed to see the wonder also. Carefully, Mother peeled the bread away from the precious Word. It seemed unhurt, as though miraculously preserved. It was totally intact!

"So that is what happened to the Bible, exclaimed Amanda in wonder. "You wrapped it in the bread dough and stuck it in the oven. Surely, if you had not been studying the Bible while making your bread, you could not have hidden it and the soldiers would have found it."

"That's right," said Mother. "When the soldiers came, I didn't have time to think. It was as if an angel spoke to me and my hands immediately complied. I wrapped the Bible in the bread dough, put it in the last loaf pan, and put it into the oven. I would never have been able to think of it so quickly. Surely the Lord has protected us."

HEALTH NUGGET

PROTEIN

A balanced diet is one that takes no more than about 10% of its calories from protein, no more than 15-20% of its calories from fats, and the rest in carbohydrates.

Too much protein causes harmful amounts of ammonia to accumulate in the body. Ammonia has the quality of slowing the growth of cell cultures. It appears clear that in a given tissue, ammonia will slow the growth of normal cells, but hardly affects the growth of cancer cells. It may be that the ammonia production from a high protein diet is the very thing that increases the risk of cancer from a diet high in protein.

It can be understood that a high protein diet for an elderly person may easily lose bone matrix, resulting in osteoporosis, the thinning of the bones that causes pain and much discomfort in elderly individuals. In addition to loss of calcium, there is also loss of iron, zinc, and phosphorus from the urine during a high protein diet. It is known zinc is needed to balance other minerals in the blood.

The best diet is a very simple one, fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Apart from these three food groups, all other foods should be used sparingly, such as salt. The recommend salt allotment each day is around ½ teaspoon. Oils should be severely restricted, as they may cause an increased susceptibility to cancer and heart disease. No added protein should be used, and the very high protein foods such as animal products should be used very sparingly or not at all.

We advocate not using any animal products. However, if you do, use them very sparingly!

FROM KATIE'S COOKBOOKS

BAKED OATMEAL

2 cups oats
2 oz unsweetened pineapple juice
¼ cup coconut
¼ cup nuts
¾ cup raisins
1 Tbsp vanilla flavor (opt)
1 tsp salt
4 cups water
1/8 tsp coconut flavor (opt)

Combine all ingredients in a bowl. Pour into an oil-sprayed casserole dish. Cover and bake 350 for 60 minutes. (Rodney doesn't care much for regular cooked oats but he loves the Baked Oatmeal and the Millet Cereal.) Times of Refreshing/Diane Flemons

MILLET CEREAL

1 cup dry millet
1 cup dry or fresh apple chopped
1 cup raisins
½ cup unsweetened shredded coconut
4 cups water
1 tsp salt

Add all ingredients to a 2 or 3 quart saucepan. Bring to a boil for 3 minutes. Reduce heat to simmer. Cover and simmer for 30 – 45 minutes. Times of Refreshing/Diane Flemons

See you next month. Much love to you all and Happy New Year!

Remember, God loves you and so do we!

Rodney and Katie

