

RESTORED TO IMPERFECTION

For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one *is* given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely. They have healed also the hurt *of the daughter* of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when *there is* no peace. Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore they shall fall among them that fall: at the time *that* I visit them they shall be cast down, saith the LORD. (Jeremiah 6:13-15)

Now Elisha was fallen sick of his sickness whereof he died. And Joash the king of Israel came down unto him, and wept over his face, and said, O my father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And Elisha said unto him, Take bow and arrows. And he took unto him bow and arrows. And he said to the king of Israel, Put thine hand upon the bow. And he put his hand *upon it*: and Elisha put his hands upon the king's hands. And he said, Open the window eastward. And he opened *it*. Then Elisha said, Shoot. And he shot. And he said, The arrow of the Lord's deliverance, and the arrow of deliverance from Syria: for thou shalt smite the Syrians in Aphek, till thou have consumed *them*. And he said, Take the arrows. And he took *them*. And he said unto the king of Israel, Smite upon the ground. And he smote thrice, and stayed. And the man of God was wroth with him, and said, Thou shouldest have smitten five or six times; then hadst thou smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed *it*: whereas now thou shalt smite Syria *but* thrice. And Elisha died, and they buried him. And the bands of the Moabites invaded the land at the coming in of the year. (2 Kings 13:14-20)

Now behold, one came and said to Him, "Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?" So He said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments." He said to Him, "Which ones?" Jesus said, "'You shall not murder,' 'You shall not commit adultery,' 'You shall not steal,' 'You shall not bear false witness,' 'Honor your father and your mother,' and, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'" The young man said to Him, "All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?" Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. (Matthew 19:16-22)

The famous Leaning Tower of Pisa was stabilized with a massive engineering operation that took place in the '90s in an attempt to stop the monument from falling. In fact, by the end of the '80s, the Tower was slowly heading toward its catastrophic collapse.

The monument began to lean in 1178 when the construction works were barely started. During the course of 800 years, the lean constantly increased, so much that it became a cause of concern by the end of the previous century. In the year 1350, the lean was reported to be 1.4°, and it grew over time until it reached an alarming threshold in 1993, passing the 5° marker.

The solution to this problem was then to reinforce the soil under the foundation and to make room for the Tower to compress some of the soil and straighten back up towards the North (the Tower leans to the South).

They did this in the frame of a project launched in 1990. The project's total cost was over 30 million EUR, and it lasted 10 years. This was not the first attempt to fix the inclination of the Tower, but it was the first successful one. There were two previous attempts (in 1838 and 1934), which resulted in increasing the inclination of the Tower.

The project was led by John Burland, Emeritus Professor and Senior Research Investigator at the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering of Imperial College London. Burland led the commission of 13 experts that was appointed to fix the Tower.

The lengthy project went through many different engineering phases, including the placement of counterweights on the base of the Tower, on the North side, to move its center of mass lower and back to the North, slowing down its tendency to lean towards the South. Reinforcing the foundations with concrete (15-meter concrete pillars were inserted into the ground) was also employed.

These engineering solutions proved successful as the stabilization efforts recovered over 50cm of lean, bringing back the Tower around 4° inclination (like it was 200 years ago). The works ended in 2001, and the Tower was proclaimed out of danger of falling. It was then reopened to the Public.

After that, no other stabilization work was performed. However, in the year 2013, engineers who were monitoring the Tower reported that the straightening motion hadn't stopped yet, and the monument leaned back an additional 2.5cm (from 2001 to 2013).

Giuseppe Bentivoglio, an engineer and Technical Director of the body supervising the monuments in the Square of Miracles, declared: "It was expected."

Bentivoglio explained that this spontaneous straightening is due to the works carried out years ago, and we should see the Tower leaning back North for a few more years before it finally settles and eventually starts again falling towards the South.

Bentivoglio believes that future generations will have to carry out more work to keep the Tower safe from falling. It is believed that the Tower is safe for the next 200 years.

He continues by saying: "In theory, it would be possible to straighten it completely, but nobody really wants that! ...the Tower was born leaning and leaning it shall remain".

The Mayor of Pisa, Marco Filippeschi, shares the same point of view, and he declared: "The people of Pisa are delighted that the tower has been restored, but not that it has been straightened."

This is understandable. The Tower draws to Pisa a few million visitors each year (they say 3 million tickets sold yearly + 6 million souls visiting the Miracles' Square). They all come to admire this engineering wonder, to see with their own eyes that it does lean for real, and it does seem to behave against the laws of Nature. With so many tourists pouring in to see a leaning tower... why would the people of Pisa want it straightened up?

So, the famous Tower of Pisa was restored, but was restored to a stage of its imperfection even though it was possible to be restored perfectly!

The young man of Matthew 19, which we call "The Rich Young Ruler," seems to be akin to the people of Pisa. When Jesus offers the young man, so to speak, the chance to be straightened, he chooses instead to remain in his imperfect leaning situation.

It is a pity that the young ruler wasn't more like the blind man Jesus encountered outside Bethsaida (Mark 8:22-26), whom Jesus took outside the town, and after touching him, Jesus asked him if he saw anything. The man replied that he did indeed see, but men appeared to him as "trees walking."

It is evident from the Biblical story that, at this point, the man is no longer blind. That, in itself, is a miracle! However, it also becomes apparent that the man is still "leaning" as his sight is still imperfect. Jesus, therefore, touches his eyes again, and his sight is fully restored, and he "saw every man clearly."

Jesus used this situation as a demonstration as to the blindness of the Jews. In Mark 8:14-21 Jesus had asked his disciples a double question; "Do you still not perceive (see)," Jesus continued, "You have eyes, yet you do not see." Like the blind man, the Jews were "leaning" in their sight imperfection, unable to see Jesus as He truly was—God in flesh—their Messiah. Yet, unlike the blind man, who admitted his imperfection of sight, the Jews chose to remain in their imperfect "leaning" state of blindness!

We must not relegate all the resistance to proper spiritual alignment to the Jews of New Testament times. The world presently is awash with individuals who want restoration but want it to stop far short of perfection. To them, there is too much fame or money (selfish carnality) involved to allow a complete straightening of their towers.

In the realm of the religious, there are false shepherds that "...have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when *there is* no peace." (Jeremiah 6:14). "Healing the hurt slightly," indicates the awareness of a problem but rather than seek after a complete healing they merely band-aid the wound. They have only restored to imperfection!

A ministry that refuses to sanctify a church by employing the Word of Truth and allowing and condoning a vagrant worldly lean in the church is guilty of "healing the hurt slightly." We find ourselves greatly in need of men who, like Paul, cease not to warn every one, night and day with tears!

Paul declared in Acts 20:26-32, "Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I *am* pure from the blood of all *men*. Nor I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall

grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.”

How often we stop short of the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God? Having desired God’s involvement but only to a degree, we become just another Joash. Having received added strength beyond ourselves to draw the bow and seeing the flight of an arrow of deliverance, we fail to strike the remaining arrows sufficiently to obtain complete deliverance! “Thou shouldest have smitten five or six times; then hadst thou smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed *it*: whereas now thou shalt smite Syria *but* thrice.”

We must all “count the cost” for a completely upright tower, lest having begun, we are unable or not willing to straighten the tower fully. Paul administered a stark rebuke to the Galatians; “O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?” (Galatians 3:1-3).

“And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.” (Revelation 3:1-3).

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