

BOWING THE KNEE TO BAAL (part 4 of 7; next post: tomorrow – 3/27/2021)

It took several centuries for the need of a comprehensive purging to arise, in the historical context of the Roman Catholic Church. Its heretical teachings and corrupt practices eventually prompted a man like Martin Luther to take a stand and refuse to bow his knee to the Baal of his day, the Roman Pope. This is why most historians consider the origin of Protestantism to have taken place in Germany, in 1517, where Luther published his Ninety-Five Theses. The essence of what occurred from that point onward resulted in a reformation of the Christian faith: rejecting man-made traditions as having equal authority to Scripture, renouncing Papal authority as equal to that of Christ and correcting a false gospel of works righteousness, in favor of faith alone in Christ alone and His redemptive work, as the only way of salvation. At the Diet of Worms, Luther was confronted by Catholic leadership and told to recant from his “heretical” teaching to which he responded:

“Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures or by clear reason (for I do not trust in the pope or the council alone, since it is well known that they have often erred and contradicted themselves), I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and will not recant anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience. [Here I stand, I can do no other.] May God help me. Amen.”

In 1521, Martin Luther was excommunicated from the Catholic Church. In the providence of God, he was provided a safe haven by Frederick the Wise, at Wartburg Castle. Luther viewed his time there as equivalent to the apostle John’s exile on the isle of Patmos and took full advantage of the opportunity by translating the Bible from Latin to German; greatly impacting the people of his nation.

In retrospect, how ironic that our Lord and Savior carried out the cleansing of His Church from the corruption of Roman Catholicism, not by the execution of individuals in Elijah’s day, or the extinction of the nation of Israel for rejecting her Messiah, but by means of **a remnant excommunication**. As this distinct minority of courageous men and women took their stand against the degenerate state of Catholicism, they were put out of the Roman Church and the Protestant Reformation became the means for this significant purging of the Christian faith.

Some five hundred years later, I am convinced that yet another purging is both necessary and imminent. It will become our focus of attention, next.