

Pope Francis Builds a Wall against Scripture

By JOHN VINSON

Pope Francis seems to have a low opinion of walls and Donald Trump. In response to Trump’s proposal to build a wall on the Mexican border to stop illegal immigration, the pontiff proclaimed that “A person who thinks only about building walls, wherever they may be, and not of building bridges, is not a Christian. This is not the gospel.... I would only say this man is not a Christian if he said things like that.”

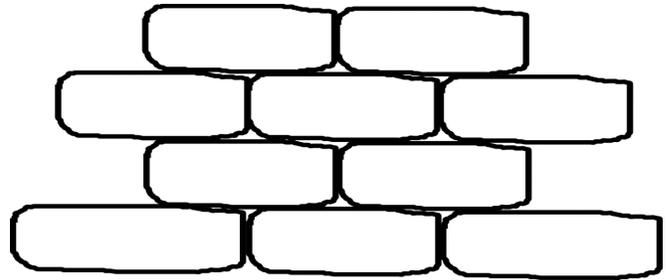
Be that as it may, one wonders what Pope Francis might have to say about the faith of various men recorded in the Bible who had an affinity for walls. Take for example an Israelite named Ezra who returned from exile to help rebuild the ruined city of Jerusalem. As he records in Ezra 9:9, “For we were bondsmen, yet our God hath not forsaken us in our bondage, but hath extended mercy...to give us a reviving, to set up the House of God, and to give us a wall in Judah and Jerusalem.”

Someone else who joined that building project was a man named Nehemiah. He stated, “Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem.... The God of heaven will give us success.” (Nehemiah 2: 17, 20) The purpose of wall-building was defense against foreign encroachment. The words of God recorded in the Book of Isaiah declared that “Violence shall no more be heard in the land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise.” (Isaiah 60:18)

A number of Israelite kings, with divine prompting, thought quite often of building and maintaining defensive walls. One was King Asa, who the Bible states, “did what was good and right in the eyes of the Lord his God.” Among those activities, “he built fortified cities in Judah. . . and there was no one at war with him during those years, because the LORD had given him rest. For he said to Judah, ‘Let us build these cities, and make about them walls, and towers, gates, and bars... because we have sought the LORD our God... and he has given us rest on every side. So they built and prospered.’” (2 Chronicles 14: 2, 6-7)

Another king who “did that which was right in the sight of the Lord” was Jotham. Among his accomplishments, “He built the upper gate of the House of the LORD.... Moreover he built cities in the hill country of Judah, and he built fortresses and towers on the wooded hills.” (2 Chronicles 27:3-4)

Of these examples, some will reply that they are no longer relevant to Christians because they are from the Old Testament. In that book, God was a God of wrath and law, but in the New Testament God became a God of love. This notion in varying degrees pervades popular thinking, but it has no basis whatsoever in orthodox Christian theology.



Orthodoxy teaches that Christ, as a member of the Trinity, is God with an unchanging divine nature. (Hebrews 13:8) In the Gospel of John Christ specifically identifies Himself as the God of the Old Testament. (John 8: 58) Both Testaments declare that God divided nations and set boundaries among them. (Deut. 32:8 & Acts 17:26) Thus, the nations—like the nation of Israel—may enforce their boundaries.

Also, the Bible affirms that walls and nations will continue to exist in the heavenly New Jerusalem, which “[will have] a great and high wall [where].... the nations shall walk in its light.” (Rev. 21:12 & 24) Excluded outside the wall will be “dogs and sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices lying.” (Rev. 22:15)

Nowhere does the Bible command the “building of bridges” to facilitate the blending and demise of nations. The project of Babel, the godless unity of all mankind, is the gospel of liberal humanism, not Christianity. The Scriptures and the Source of their inspiration (Christ) show endorsement of national walls and wall-builders. If Pope Francis disagrees, that could be a reflection on his Christianity. ■

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