

# THE EPISTLE

Saint James' Episcopal Church  
Livingston, Alabama

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September 2020



September 2020

## ***This Month's Cover***

Our cover this month is Guido Reni's *Saint Matthew the Evangelist* (September 21). Completed in 1621, it is oil on canvas in the High Baroque style, measuring 2'7"x2'2". It is on display at the Getty Museum in Los Angeles. It depicts Saint Matthew writing his gospel, being advised by an angel.

Before his conversion Saint Matthew, originally named Levi bar-Alphaeus, was a Jewish tax collector for the Romans. As such he would have been considered a traitor to his people and thus a grievous sinner, but also he would have been a man who was attentive to detail and a careful record-keeper. Jesus called him to leave the "seat of custom" and follow him, and he renounced his past life and became one of the Apostles.

Guido Reni (1575-1642) was born in Bologna to a family of noted musicians. He showed only moderate musical ability, but great talent as an artist. His parents wisely allowed him to pursue that course rather than insisting that he follow in the family business, as was the custom. At age 9 he was apprenticed to Denis Calvaert. He studied with him for eleven years along with Francesco Albane and Domenichino Zampieri, and then the three of them defected to the rival studio of Ludovico Carracci (see the July/August *Epistle*). In 1598, because of a dispute with Carracci over unpaid work, they left and followed his cousin Annibale Carracci to Rome. By that time Reni had established a widespread reputation, enhanced by the publication of a series of prints commemorating Pope Clement VIII's visit to Bologna. In Rome his fame spread rapidly, and he gained lucrative commissions from some of the leading Roman families. In 1614 he returned more or less permanently to Bologna,

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where he established his own studio. In 1618 he went briefly to Naples to paint the cathedral ceiling, but he met with vicious resistance from the local painters' guild. Upon learning that they were plotting to poison him, he returned to Bologna, where he remained the rest of his life. There he produced a number of masterpieces, and like his teacher Carracci before him, he trained a great many students who went on to become renowned artists. He died in Bologna in 1642.

*Richard R. Losch+*

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## ***A Word from The Editor***

Lead and gold atoms are very similar, with a nuclear difference of only three protons and ten neutrons. Physically they are similar enough that if you make a counterfeit coin out of a hard lead alloy and plate it with gold, it is very difficult to tell it from a real gold coin. Nonetheless we consider lead to be a cheap, ugly base metal that we use primarily for bullets and radiation shielding, and we prize gold over almost any other material for its beauty and monetary value. Medieval alchemists strove to find a magical way to turn lead into gold. The late John Claypool, in his book *God the Ingenious Alchemist*,<sup>1</sup> points out that the Bible and the history of the Church are full of stories of God turning flawed, fallen and sometimes wicked people into great saints or exemplars of courage and justice. Just consider, for example, Jacob and David. God can turn human lead into gold. Keeping that in mind, we must remember that there is some good even in the worst of men, and some evil in the best of them.<sup>2</sup> The life of every person is checkered with good and evil. Our attention must be constantly focused on enhancing the good that is in us, and on suppressing the evil. God the Ingenious Alchemist will always be there to give us the wisdom,

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<sup>1</sup> Morehouse, 2005, ISBN 0-8192-2180-5

<sup>2</sup> Adolf Hitler was an extraordinarily courageous and highly decorated World War I hero. Thomas Jefferson, the American patriarch, political genius and great proponent of liberty, owned slaves.

strength and courage to turn our lead into gold, but only if we let him. He will not force himself on us.

In the past several years we have seen an increasing tendency to demean our heroes of the past by searching for their flaws, while de-emphasizing the good that they have done. Only the most naïve of us ever believed that these heroes were perfect, but we were willing to focus on the great things that they did, while understanding that like all of us, they also had their weaknesses. When the good far outweighed the bad, we sought to emulate the example of their good deeds. We took note of their mistakes only so that we could learn from them avoid making them ourselves. We also understood that people must be judged by the standards and values of the culture in which they lived, not by those of the present.<sup>1</sup> Sad to say, today there are all too many people who look only for the sins, saying that whatever they are they outweigh the good. Hypocritically failing to see their own flaws, they seek to dishonor any of our forebears who have any flaws at all. As Shakespear has Marc Antony say at Caesar's burial, "The evil that men do lives after them; the good is oft interred with their bones."

I have known many people whom I have admired and wanted to emulate. Not one was without flaws, but nonetheless they had much to teach me, and have therefore enriched my life and made me a better person. We need heroes. As individuals and as a people we need heroes who can hold up to us a higher standard, to whom we can reach up in order to pull ourselves higher. On my bedroom wall when I was a little boy was a framed sign that said, "A good thing to remember, And a better thing to do, Is always join the construction gang, And not the wrecking crew." Look to your heroes from both the past and the present. Forgive them their sins, and learn from their virtues. They are your construction gang.

*Father Rick Losch*

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<sup>1</sup> For example, suggesting 2000 years ago that slavery is intrinsically wrong would have been considered as ridiculous as a modern animal rights activist suggesting that cows should be granted Constitutional rights.

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## ***Suspension of Services***

Bishop Sloan has continued the suspension of all indoor public worship and gatherings to September 6<sup>th</sup> in response to the COVID-19 crisis. Churches will be permitted, but not required, to begin indoor public worship as long as they follow all State and CDC guidelines including the wearing of masks and social distancing. Accordingly, St. James' tentatively plans to resume Sunday services on Sunday, September 13<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 a.m. and resume the monthly service at St. Alban's on Sunday, September 20<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m. (note that from now on St. Alban's will meet at 9:00., not 8:30). These services will be simple said services with no congregational singing, and will be shortened to the extent that the rubrics allow. We will continue to send the Sunday e-mail with the link to Fr. Losch's devotional on YouTube for those who are not comfortable attending services. Please watch for more details in the Friday e-mails.

*Hiram Patrenos*

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## ***Ushers' and Lectors' Schedules***

We will not be scheduling ushers and lectors for September services at this time. The lessons will be read by the priests.

*Hiram Patrenos*

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## ***Altar Flowers***

As we resume Sunday services, volunteers will be needed to provide altar flowers. A signup chart is located in the sacristy. For more information, please speak with Carolyn Patrenos.

*Hiram Patrenos*

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## ***Thank You to Deep South Landscaping***

Thank you to Jason Gordy and his crew from Deep South Landscaping for their work pruning the shrubbery, weeding, and cleaning up the prayer garden at the church. We appreciate their generosity in helping us maintain our grounds!

*Hiram Patrenos*

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## ***All Things Come of Thee***

*“All things come of thee, O Lord, and of thine own have we given thee. Amen”* We appreciate all who have sent their offerings during this time of no formal church services. Checks may be mailed to:

St. James’ Episcopal Church *or*  
 P.O. Box 446  
 Livingston, AL 35470  
 ATT: Treasurer

St. Alban’s Episcopal Church  
 c/o Hiram Patrenos  
 P.O. Box 1422  
 Livingston, AL 35470

*Hiram Patrenos*

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## ***Miracles and Divine Providence***

God is the God of every event in the universe, no matter how great or small. This means that whatever happens in our lives, however insignificant it may seem, God is involved in it. Even so, this does not mean that he controls or destines our lives. He has given us free will, his greatest gift short of life itself, without which we would be nothing more than robotic slaves. He guides us by showing us the way we should go, but we are free to ignore his guidance and go our own way (often to our great peril). He does intervene in our lives, however, in two ways: by miracles, and by Divine Providence.

Miracles can be spectacular, like the parting of the Red Sea, the raising of Lazarus, or the unexplainable sudden remission of an advanced terminal cancer. These are rare. They can also be quiet and often go unnoticed, like the planting of a tiny seed of faith in an unbelieving sinner that eventually leads him to becoming a saint. Miracles are when God intervenes in our lives in ways that seem to defy the laws of nature as we understand them.

Divine Providence is when God inspires (not forces) us to do something that may seem quite insignificant, but through which we do his work. We might often deem these to be coincidences if we even notice them at all. I cannot count the times people have told me of what a profound effect something I said had on them. Most of the time I cannot recall ever saying it or even when I might have said it. Often when I do recall it, it was just an idle comment or it was not what I said at all (but it was what they heard). God put me there and put the right words into my mouth (or into their ears) with no fuss or fanfare. That is Divine Providence, and it is with us always.

*Richard R. Losch+*

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## ***Be Wordly Wise***

### ***World Without End***

In several places in Christian liturgy we find the expression “world without end,” meaning “for eternity.” It is an attempt to translate the untranslatable Latin *in saecula saeculorum*. The best we can do as a literal translation of that is “in the forever of forevers.” The phrase is based on both Hebrew and Latin linguistic idioms. In Hebrew, following a noun with its plural possessive makes the noun superlative, as in “holy of holies” or “king of kings.” In the musical *Fiddler on the Roof* we have the song, “Wonder of wonders, miracle of miracles.” The Latin idiom is a bit more complex.

In Early Latin *saeculum*, which we now normally translate as “century,” has no equivalent word in English. It was originally an Etruscan concept. It meant a very special period of time that could not be denoted in terms of usual time periods such as years or days. Consider the population of a city at a given moment in time. A *saeculum* was the length of time from that moment until every single person that was alive in the city at that moment was dead, so that there was then an entirely new population.<sup>1</sup> The Etruscans and early Romans believed that the gods allotted each nation and culture a certain number of *saecula* to live, after which the nation would fall or the culture collapse. The Etruscans believed that Etruria was allotted ten *saecula*. By the first century BC the Romans treated a *saeculum* as the maximum possible life span of a human.<sup>2</sup> In 17 BC Caesar Augustus specified it as 110 years. In AD 50 Claudius changed it to 100 years so he could celebrate Rome’s 800<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This is reminiscent of the wilderness wandering of the Israelites after the Exodus. God decreed that with the exception of Joshua and Caleb, the Israelites could not enter the Promised Land until there was no one left alive who had lived in Egypt. This guaranteed a wholly new population.

<sup>2</sup> That actually makes sense. If a baby were born at a given moment and eventually becomes the oldest living person in the city, the *saeculum* would end at the moment of his death, because he being the oldest, all the others who were alive when he was born would by then already be dead.

anniversary and claim that it had existed for eight *saecula*. Ever since then then *saeculum* has meant a century. Its plural, *saecula*, literally means “centuries,” but is usually translated “forever.” This also is how the Romans used it unless the context of the sentence actually required the plural of century.

Late Latin not only adopted the Hebrew idiom of a noun and its plural possessive (“Holy of Holies”), but it also added a new meaning to *saeculum*. Anything that could be reckoned in a *saeculum* was of this world, so it was distinguished from spiritual matters and was deemed worldly. The Latin *saecularis* is an adjective meaning “related to a *saeculum*,” and from that we get the word secular, meaning “related to the world.” Because of this, a reasonable interpretation of the untranslatable *in saecula saeculorum* is “world without end.”<sup>1</sup>

*Richard R. Losch+*

## ***El Shaddai***

The Old Testament has many names for God, most pointing to his divine attributes. His two most basic names are El (אל) or Elohim (אלהים),<sup>2</sup> meaning simply God, and Yahweh (יהוה).<sup>3</sup> The name Yahweh in later Jewish tradition was considered so sacred that it was never pronounced. Whenever it appeared in writing, *Adonai* (אדני), LORD, was pronounced in its place.

<sup>1</sup> The whole phrase in Latin is, *Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper, et in saecula saeculorum.* The literal translation is, “As it was in the beginning, and now, and always, an in the forever of forevers.” The traditional translation is, “As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.” Modern translators, with their usual lack of imagination, evade the problem by simply rendering it, “As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever.”

<sup>2</sup> Many Hebrew names contain the syllable El, as in Joel, “Yahweh is God.” In Arabic this is *Al*, and is the root of the name Allah. In Hebrew, Elohim is a plural form, but it is not actually considered plural and should not be translated as such. It is God, not gods. Pluralizing is a Hebrew idiom implying great importance, honor or respect, similar to the “royal we.”

<sup>3</sup> The name Yahweh (יהוה) is believed to be rooted in the name God tells Moses at the burning bush (Ex. 3:14), “I Am” (*’ehyeh*, אהיה).

When God appeared to Abram in his old age and changed his name to Abraham (Gen. 17:1ff), the name he called himself was *El-Shaddai* (אל שדדאי). This is also what Abraham's grandson Jacob called God (Gen. 48:3). The name *Shaddai* appears 48 times in the Old Testament, with 7 of those as *El-Shaddai*. Although this is most often translated God Almighty, the real meaning of it is not at all clear. In the Septuagint it is translated simply as "the God" (*ho Theos*, ὁ Θεός). *El-Shaddai* has also been translated as the God of the Mountain and God of the Heavens, but these are both generally considered very poor renderings. What, then, does the name *El-Shaddai* mean?

The Hebrew text has only one *d* (*Shadai*), but early transliterations used two (*Shaddai*), and for some reason that tradition has stuck ever since.<sup>1</sup> Because of that some translators claim that the word is rooted in the Hebrew verb *l'sh'dod* (לשדד), to destroy or overpower. It does not seem reasonable that God would have presented himself to Abraham in that way. Many linguists propose a different root. The Hebrew word *shad* (שד) means breast. Frequently when a word ends in *-ai* it means a first person plural possessive, often a pair. Therefore *shadai* could be translated "of my breasts." At first this seems like a strange way for God to identify himself, but remember that from time immemorial the breast has been a symbol of nurturing protection and parental love (as in being "in the bosom of Abraham"). Considering this, *El-Shadai* could be translated God the Provider, Protector or Nurturer. Many interpreters propose that the name *El-Shadai* focuses on the feminine attributes of God, while the name *Yahweh* focuses on the masculine. Hebrew has many similar idioms where body parts are metaphors for attributes. For example, when God tells

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<sup>1</sup> Hebrew writing has no vowels and gives no indication of pronunciation, which was transmitted only by oral tradition. In the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD there was introduced a system of "pointing," consisting of dots and lines to indicate vowels and pronunciation. The letter *d* can be hard (as in shadow) or soft (as in the *th* of then). *Shadai* has a hard *d*. This is probably why early translators chose to transliterate *Shadai* with a double *d* as *Shaddai*.

Moses that he is patient and long-suffering (Ex. 34:6), the Hebrew literally means that he has a long nose, which is an idiomatic metaphor for having these attributes.<sup>1</sup>

Since God was approaching Abraham to confirm his Covenant with him, and to assure him of his love, protection and support, it seems reasonable that he would have identified himself as God the Nurturer, not as God the Destroyer.

*Richard R. Losch+*

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## ***Pontius Pilate: Moderate, or Monster?***

The gospels depict Pontius Pilate as a moderately reasonable man who thought Jesus to be innocent, but who caved in to the pressure of the High Priest Caiaphas and the Jewish leaders, and reluctantly condemned him to death anyway. The Jewish historians Flavius Josephus and Philo of Alexandria, on the other hand, depict him as an arrogant, unjust and cruel despot. Archaeological discoveries in the past half century indicate that Josephus and Philo may have been right.

Marcus Pontius Pilatus was appointed Prefect of Judea<sup>2</sup> by the emperor Tiberius. Little is known of him before that, other than that the Pontius family in Rome<sup>3</sup> were originally Plebeians of the Equestrian (knightly) class. By the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD they had risen to great power, wealth and importance, one even holding a consulship. There were only two socially acceptable careers for such a family: politics or the military. Few rose very

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<sup>1</sup> We do the same thing in English. For example, a yellow belly means cowardliness, and a stiff upper lip means courageous endurance.

<sup>2</sup> Tacitus, 100 years later, calls him a procurator, but this is doubtful. A prefect had military authority, while a procurator was mainly a financial officer. We know that Pilate had authority to command the local garrison.

<sup>3</sup> Roman men usually had three names: a *praenomen* (given name, Marcus), a *nomen* (family name, Pontius), and a *cognomen* (descriptive nickname, Pilatus). The *cognomen* was almost like a second family name. In the Republican era most of the Pontii bore the *cognomen* Aquila (“Eagle”), but in the Imperial era they had several *cognomina* among different branches of the family, one of which was Pilatus, meaning “Spearman.”

high in politics if they had not first served in the military. Politicians of powerful families, if they were not yet ready for a provincial governorship, were assigned honored positions under current governors.<sup>1</sup> Pilate was assigned a prefecture in Judea, a place that the Romans considered a godforsaken backwater outpost of the Empire. That indicates that even though he was of an important family and thus merited an appointment, his character or his talents were not highly regarded in Rome. It is clear that he was not happy with his assignment, and that he hated the Jews. Since the conquest of Judea in the first century BC, Rome had recognized that it would be nothing but trouble if they violated the Jewish prohibition of graven images. For that reason they did not erect an image of the Roman eagle over their official buildings as was their custom, and the legions left their standards (totem staffs) outside the city walls when they entered Jerusalem. These standards bore the Roman eagle, an image of the emperor, and images of the legion's tutelary gods. Pilate, probably as an act of defiance and a flaunting of his power, put an eagle over the Praetorium and instructed the legions to bring their standards into the city. Philo said that he also hung shields bearing images of gods on the outer walls of the garrison, in full view of the Temple.

Until recently it was widely accepted that Pilate had been sent to Judea about three years before the trial of Jesus. This was based on statements made by Josephus. New evidence, however, indicates that he may have been there much longer, possibly eleven or twelve years before.<sup>2</sup> During that time he worked closely with Joseph Caiaphas, the longest serving High

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<sup>1</sup> Most rose through the officer ranks in the military before they entered politics. It was extremely rare for a man to attain a high political office in Rome or in the provinces until he had first served in the army. Few upper-class Romans made a lifetime career of the military, but it was not rare for a successful politician to return to military command during a crisis.

<sup>2</sup> Pilate followed the prefect Valerius Gratus. Josephus says that Gratus ruled for 11 years, but we now know that was almost certainly wrong. Gratus had a very short rule in Judea.

Priest in Jewish history, even though he hated him. Caiaphas served for twenty years and cooperated fully with the Romans.<sup>1</sup>

Historians differ as to whether Pilate was a weak man who buckled under the pressure of the Sanhedrin, or was a mean-spirited sadist. The writings of Josephus and Philo definitely support the latter interpretation, although as Jews they were certainly biased. On the other hand, the only evidence in his defense is the biblical account. Why would the evangelists depict the man who ordered the crucifixion of Christ as other than the tyrant that he probably was? There is a good reason. The very fact that they wrote in Greek indicates that they were writing for a worldwide audience, not just for the Judeans. If they were writing just for the Judeans they would have written in Aramaic. The world to whom they were writing was a Roman world that would not have taken kindly to depicting a Roman official as a monster, and there was nothing to be gained by doing so. What was important was to show that Jesus was innocent and was crucified unjustifiably. Having Pilate affirm that supported their claim. If we read the Bible carefully, however, we can see that Pilate was actually baiting the Pharisees and Sadducees, whom he hated. They wanted Jesus dead, so Pilate stood in defense of him. It is likely that if they wanted to release him, Pilate would have demanded his death. When he tired of his cat-and-mouse game he condemned Jesus to be crucified and went in to dinner. It is likely that he could not have cared less what happened to Jesus, one way or the other.

A major act of brutality on the part of Pilate was also his undoing. In AD 39 a group of Samaritans gathered to worship at their holy place, Mount Gerizim in Galilee. Pilate, suspecting an insurrection, slaughtered dozens of people and executed their leaders. They complained to Lucius Vitellius Veteris, the governor of Syria (Judea and Galilee were subdivisions of the Province of Syria). Vitellius sent a report of the incident to

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<sup>1</sup> Caiaphas was deposed very shortly after Pilate was recalled to Rome in disgrace, indicating that the Romans considered him to be involved in the same things that brought about the fall of Pilate.

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Rome, and Tiberius recalled Pilate to Rome to answer for his actions. When the depraved Tiberius complains about your brutality, you know you have made a career of it. After he left for Rome, Pilate disappeared from history. During his journey to Rome, Tiberius died and was succeeded by Gaius Caligula. During the first few months of Caligula's reign, before he went mad, he was very popular and an adequate ruler. It is likely that he did not tolerate Pilate's behavior, and condemned him. We have no record of what actually happened to him, but as a condemned aristocrat he would have been given the choice of exile, execution or suicide. Exile would have meant having to live among the barbarians, with no contact under penalty of death with any Roman. Most Romans considered that to be a sentence worse than death. Execution meant the confiscation of all property, leaving his family destitute and disgraced. Suicide allowed the family to keep its property and honor, so suicide was almost always chosen. There is no record, but very early Christian tradition says that Pilate committed suicide.

In Egypt, among the Coptic Christians, there is a tradition that Pilate's wife became a Christian and converted him, and both died as martyrs and are now revered as saints. Throughout the rest of Christianity, including in Rome where he would have been known, he is deemed to have been a weak and petty man, and the monster that Josephus and Philo describe.

*Richard R. Losch+*

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## ***The Epistle is Online***

The last seven years of *The Epistle* are now online. Go to <http://rlosch.com> and click on the "Epistle" tab at the top. On a mobile device, click on the blue menu at the top right and select the "Epistle" page. You can read it online or download it as a .pdf file. This is an easy way to share articles with others.

*Richard R. Losch+*

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*Women and cats will do as they please. Men and dogs should relax and get used to the idea.*

*—Robert A. Heinlein*

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## ***Pips, Pots, and Plague***

In archaeology, if you want to find out how a people lived, you can often discover far more from their garbage than from their documents. Middens heaps (ancient garbage dumps) contain a wealth of information that can be gleaned from plant and animal remains, fragments of broken pottery, and discarded items that for one reason or another people no longer wanted.<sup>1</sup>

In a recent dig in the Negev Desert archaeologists found relics that opened up a wealth of information about the economic collapse in the Middle East in Late Antiquity. The dig was in the village of Shivta near the Gaza Strip, which was a prosperous wine-growing community that was suddenly abandoned in the late 6<sup>th</sup> century AD. Remember that at this time Palestine was still under the rule of the Byzantine (Eastern Roman) Empire, Islam had not yet arisen, and the region was almost exclusively Christian. Only a handful of Jews and even fewer pagan Arabs lived there.<sup>2</sup> Two concurring events had a devastating effect on the Middle Eastern economy in the 6<sup>th</sup> century: plague and a sudden major climate change.

The 6<sup>th</sup> century world economy was a market economy, and the value of goods and services was solidly based on supply and demand. There was always a demand for good wine, and many communities and individuals grew wealthy on the sale of it. Shivta was such a community. When the Plague wiped out half the population, not only did the demand for wine plummet,

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<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note that until modern times almost every society was extremely frugal, preferring to repair and re-use things rather than discarding them. Today we live in what has been called the “effluent society,” in which we prefer to throw out and replace broken, worn or outdated items rather than repairing them or using them until they wear out irreparably.

<sup>2</sup> In AD 132, after putting down a major revolt, the Romans expelled all the Jews from Judea and replaced them with people from all over the Empire. A few Jews remained, but they were severely suppressed. Most of the population was pagan until the 5<sup>th</sup> century, when Christianity became the official Roman religion and spread like wildfire. Very few Arabs ever lived in Palestine until the Muslim invasions in the 7<sup>th</sup> century.

but the resulting poverty meant that most people could afford only cheap local wine if any at all. The drop in the labor force meant that wages went up. This was a blessing for the poor, but it also meant that the rich employers, who had been the primary buyers of expensive wine, could no longer afford that luxury.

To add insult to injury, a series of eruptions of major volcanoes in the 6<sup>th</sup> century pumped so much volcanic ash into the atmosphere that it lowered the average temperature by 10° for almost a decade. This caused massive crop failure that brought about a devastating famine, starving millions.<sup>1</sup>

All of this is confirmed in the middens heaps of Shivta. Between the 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries the ratio of grape pips (seeds) to cereal grains skyrocketed, showing that grapes came to be by far their primary crop. All of a sudden near the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century that ratio plummeted. For centuries wine was transported in narrow bottomed special jars known as Gaza wine jars. Other products were transported in spherical “bag” jars. From the fragments found, it turns out that the increase and sudden decrease of the ratio of Gaza wine jars to bag jars almost exactly parallels that of the pips and grains. It becomes obvious that there was a catastrophic drop in the wine trade in the late 6<sup>th</sup> century that corresponds precisely with the plague and sudden climate change. The economic blow to the region was so great that the people abandoned it, and in time it reverted to the desert that we now call the Negev. It remained a desert until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century when European Jews, mainly from Russia, returned and reclaimed the land from the desert.

The difference between then and now is that today we have the medical and cultural knowledge to deal with our modern plague, CoViD-19, and we have the scientific knowledge to confront and prepare for climate change. The important question is, will we use them?

*Richard R. Losch+*

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<sup>1</sup> This along with the plague is believed to have been a major factor in the ultimate weakening and fall of the Byzantine Empire, which eventually lost most of its holdings to the Muslims.

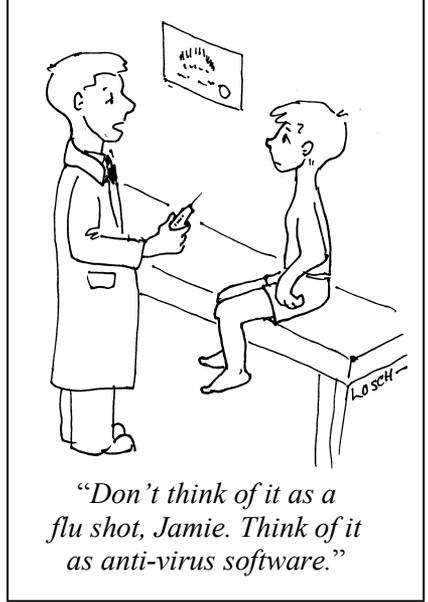
# A Touch of Trivia

One of the most popular shows in HBO history was *The Sopranos*, a fictional series about New Jersey organized crime. According to the FBI, who was listening in on their conversations, real mobsters loved the show and discussed each episode in detail. They were convinced that there was an insider involved in writing the scripts, because it portrayed mob activities and people so realistically and was so true-to-life. They even identified several of the characters with people they knew.

*Richard R. Losch+*

JAMIE

by Richard R. Losch



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