

THE BIBLE VIEW

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Theme: Trust the Lord!

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An Unreliable Foundation

Bill Brinkworth

The central Italian city of Pisa has many popular tourist sites. Many come to see the University of Pisa, which was first started in 1343. Others flock to the Piazza del Duomo (Cathedral Square) to see the famous white, marbled cathedral, baptistery, and the tilting bell tower. Of all that the city has to show, none is more memorable and curious than the Leaning Tower of Pisa, or as a 1929 Scientific American article named it, the "Sinking" Tower of Pisa.

The tower was begun in August of 1173 A. D., of which they are sure. Many of the other details are vague because they are not documented. Who the architect was is not clear, as at least three different times, the project was resumed and then halted.

Many believe that the tower's tilting had been discovered by the completion of the third story. Because of battles and possibly because of the discovery of its inclination, construction was halted. Soft river valley sediments, sand, and clay did not support its weight, and the building began leaning. A temporary bell was placed on the third story.

There, the semi-finished building lay, year after year, halted before it was completed. I am sure it was a laughing stock for many.

"Hey, Luigi, see that unfinished tower those foolish builders left. Such lack of planning. It was a waste of money and materials, and what an eyesore. If they had only spent the time wisely on a firm foundation on which to build," may have been the conversation of the past.

Some later levels tried to compensate for the five-degree tilt by building them off-center, on the true vertical. Upward the white, marbled structure's construction went. Over the next one hundred years, construction was started and stopped. It is believed the belfry was completed in 1350, as one of the bells in the tower is dated.

Still, the campanile leans. All the planning, ingenuity, and decoration did not solve or even hide the problem that the building tilts more than 17 feet from its perpendicular and continues to tilt at a rate of ¼ an inch per year.

Man still has not given up. Many attempts have been made to stop its leaning. In the 1930's, cement was injected through pipes inserted under the tower in hopes that the foundation would be strengthened and the leaning would cease. The tilting continued.

Attempts were made to tie it together with cables to keep it intact. Numerous restoration projects were begun and then discontinued.

Plans for the structure's righting are vast. Some call for jacking the building up six feet on one side and moving the 14,700 metric tons to a new concrete base. The more sure method would be to dismantle the eight stories and start construction over on a thick, firm foundation.

How many lives in the past have been erected similarly? Instead of building a life on the Rock of Ages, the Lord Jesus Christ and around the firm foundation of the Word of God (our preserved KJV Bible), people try various ways, plans, and fads to live their lives. They spend their entire lives compensating for a life that was not founded on a firm foundation from the beginning. Their efforts are hopeless if they are not in line with God's plan and method.

Lives have been directed by the advice of strangers, family, television talk shows, and even from movies. Newspaper columnists and others' beliefs have probably directed more lives than would ever be known. Man-made unbiblical religion has also misdirected many.

All kinds of techniques have been tried to stop problems. Today, there are drugs to try to solve the issues of weight loss, nervousness, lack of attentiveness, feelings of loneliness, and other of life's problems. The hope is in a pill to fix a problem. Psychologists' and psychiatrists' advice is followed, no matter how extreme or illogical it seems. Man's attempts to right a tilting life usually fail.

Few of these people ever seek to get the advice from their Creator, who has raised millions upon millions of children. Father knows best, but He is rarely sought for direction, or His word followed for guidance. No wonder so many lives are slanting to an inevitable destruction. *"Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it."Matthew 7:24-27*

Sin is usually the "tilting" force in one's life. There is a clear way to reconstruct a sin-troubled life. That way can change one's life. It is the only way that works. Man tries to change a life from the outside, hoping the inside will be altered. God changes it from the inside, and then the outside will be transformed. The amount of renovation is dependent on one's obedience to God's commands found in His Word.

When a man is saved, his life is changed. The inward change is done in the heart. That is why the Bible names a spiritually revitalized person as "born again". A life is started all over again.

He is a new creature. All sins are forgiven and forgotten by God. The new life can begin on a new foundation that will support the load of life's troubles. Guilt from sin will disappear. An eternal penalty for past sins is gone!

This “second chance” can be achieved by admitting one’s sins. The Bible reminds us that we are all sinners. Not one of us has pleased God with our good works or kindness.

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;” Romans 3:23

God certainly knows we are sinners. Our confession of our guilt shows God that we are humbling ourselves and admitting our failure in doing it our way rather than His.

“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” Romans 10:9

Once our sinfulness is acknowledged, one must know that a price has been paid for our sins. God’s only son, Jesus, paid that price. The death He suffered on the cross was not for His sin, as He was sinless. It was for our transgressions. His payment is the only fee God will accept. We cannot pay for our sinning against God by our good works or deeds. Jesus has already paid the price.

“And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.” Hebrews 9:15

Once we are saved, we are then in the family of God. The Father can guide if the “born again” (John 3:3) child obeys Him. A life can be salvaged and restarted. There can be hope. We can compensate and recover from our self-lived lives.

The world’s solutions hardly ever work, and if they do, they often work only temporarily. God can come into a life and straighten the crooked course, and it can stay undeviated.

Build your life around the Word of God. It is as true today as when God inspired its writing. Since then, God has used it to raise, support, and guide millions. It is the firm foundation. It will never let you tilt.

“Life is a long lesson in humility.” — *Barrie*

Give God the Rudder

C. H. Spurgeon

I have heard of a young man who went to college, and when he was there one year, his parents said to him, “What do you know? Do you know more than when you went?”

“Oh! Yes,” said he, “I do.”

Then, after he attended the second year, he was asked the same question, “Do you know more than when you went?”

“Oh! No,” said he, “I know a great deal less than I thought.”

“Well,” said the father, “you are getting somewhere now.”

Then he went to the third year and was asked the same question. “What do you know now?”

“Oh!” said he, “I don’t think I know half as much as I should know.”

“That is right,” said the father; “you will now profit since you say you know nothing. He who is convinced that he knows nothing of himself as he ought to know gives up steering his ship and lets God put his hand on the rudder.”

“The truest end of life is to know the life that never ends.” — *William Penn*