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HISTORICAL PERSECUTION OF BELIEVERS – LESSON 11

THE INQUISITIONS

The Roman Catholic church (RCC) formally instigated Inquisitions continually, covering approximately the time period of 1200 to 1800 A.D. Courts of Inquisition were established in every country where the Pope held influence. Officers called Inquisitors were established to judge these courts.

Any person who believed differently from the RCC was brought in to be tried. This included those who dared even to speak negatively about a single practice of the church. In fact, it only required “suspicion” without any evidence of such. All were condemned as heretics, and they were judged and punished.

The “prisoner” was not allowed to make a defense or to have representation on his behalf, nor allowed to even see the face of his accuser. The fact that he was accused by anyone made him automatically guilty. The condemned person would be either whipped, violently tortured, sent to the galleys (hard labor for life), or sentenced to death. The tortures themselves were so violent that most succumbed to death even without the death sentence.

Each Court of Inquisition consisted of three inquisitors (the judges), a fiscal (money) proctor, two secretaries (to keep record of properties and such) a magistrate (to oversee the court hearing) a court messenger, a receiver (to receive confiscated properties), a jailer, an agent to dispose of (transmit title) confiscated properties, several assessors (to determine values), counsellors (lawyers), executioners, physicians and surgeons, and door keepers (security). All were sworn to secrecy, including any “familiar” or visitors.

Nobody was untouchable, whether they were poor or rich, common or noble, civilian or government. Even Kings feared the Courts of Inquisition. If a condemned person owned any property, whether real estate or chattel (physical items), the court would take it from them and distribute it as it seemed fit. Since these courts were under authority of the Pope, anything of value, be it real estate, gold, silver, jewels and so forth were given to the church, thus continually adding to its wealth.

Nobody could challenge the process since the Pope used the wealth to maintain an army of trained soldiers that was feared by Kings despite having their own armies. Thus, the Roman Catholic Church was the most powerful political ruler in Europe. It was also the most brutal and the most feared.

The frequency of these Inquisitions increased with the emergence of the Protestant Reformation in the 1520's and 1530's. Tomorrow we will consider the Inquisition encounters of a few of the most well know individuals whom you may have heard about.

It is history of which we must be aware. It speaks much of understanding why our United States Constitution was designed the way it was, so as to (hopefully) avoid such abuses of power by those in authority.

There is a true saying that says, "Absolute power corrupts absolutely." History has proven it. Our founding fathers had learned that from history. Our present-day liberals and the "cancel culture" movement wishes us to forget those lessons.