

The DEFENDER - March 2015



“... defending the faith once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3)

A monthly publication of the
IN DEFENSE OF TRUTH radio broadcast.



From the Director's Desk: When Persecution Comes

And it will. If you are a true believer, living your life for Christ, the day may indeed come when you have to give your life for Christ. It may be the ultimate sacrifice of martyrdom, carried out by religious zealots, or the ubiquitous persecution that comes from cultural and media bias, driven by political correctness. Whatever the case, it is the cross we bear for following our Savior, who said the world will hate us because it first hated Him (**John 15:18**).

Christians are being killed around the world for no other reason than that of being Christian. Although ISIS is the current perpetrator of this barbaric evil, the fact of the matter is this has been going on for 2000 years. It started with the stoning death of Stephen, as recorded in Acts 7, and continued with all of the apostles, save John. Death came to believers in the first century by way of the spear, crucifixion, beheading, and being sawn asunder. Others were dipped in oil and impaled on posts where they were set on fire to serve as streetlamps. Still others were fed to wild animals. Very few died in their sleep at a ripe old age. Today the atrocities being carried out by ISIS include being buried or burned alive, as well as being cut in half, crucified, or beheaded. The Islamic jihadists see anyone who is not a Muslim as being an infidel, so no religion is safe outside of Islam. In fact, anything other than radical Sunni Islam is in their crosshairs. But their attacks are of a secular nature as well. They hate all things Western. So Americans are vulnerable just for being American, as well as being a Christian or a Jew. Someone recently commented that we should hit them with an electro-magnetic pulse (EMP) attack, sending them back to their beloved 8th and 9th centuries for good.

Islamic jihad is not new to America. The U.S. Marines were founded, in part, to fight the aggression of the Muslim pirates, who warred against American shipping throughout colonial times. It was during Thomas Jefferson's administration that we fought them in the Barbary Wars off the coast of Libya, giving the Marine Corps hymn the words "...to the shores of Tripoli." Going back even further, persecution against those who follow Christ is not new, either. Around the world the gospel has most often taken root in places that were first prepared by the blood of martyrs.

Being prepared to die for our faith, as Christians, should raise a few questions. How many risks do we take in following Jesus? Are we still willing to live for Christ? And are we ultimately willing to die for Him? Knowing what awaits us on the other side should certainly make those decisions easier, remembering that sudden death is sudden glory for the believer. And by the way, going to heaven is still considered a blessing. Every believer being martyred today is receiving the blessing of heaven.

Understand that the times in which we live will only get worse. Our call as Christians is not to make the world a better place so that Jesus will want to come back. We're to do one thing, and do it often. Share the gospel message of salvation to this lost world so that some might be saved out of it before God unleashes His wrath against it **1 Thessalonians 1:10**. We're on a journey to heaven. Let's get excited about that and see what God will do with us. Whatever it is will be for His glory, and for our benefit.

Rev. David Lewis

A Woman Rides the Beast

Part I – Setting the Stage

By Robert Luthardt, Sr.

“He carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness, and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet-colored beast full of names of blasphemy having seven heads and ten horns” (Rev. 17:3).

The angel was making the announcement in Revelation chapter 17 that advised the Apostle John he would be shown the judgment of the “great whore that sitteth upon many waters: with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication” (vs. 1-2).

John reported that the woman in the vision was “arrayed in purple and scarlet ... decked with gold ... having a golden cup in her hand.” John described the woman as being drunken with the blood of the saints ... the martyrs of Jesus (vs. 4-6).

Scholars who interpret the foregoing verses as descriptive of future events indicate that the woman astride the beast represents a world-wide all-powerful, all-encompassing, unified religious system comprising all major religions. This unified world religion will be closely allied to an equally powerful political system which theologians designate as the Revived Roman Empire. The Woman and the Beast will oppose and persecute the true remnant church of Jesus Christ which will be falsely designated a subversive organization.

Biblical separation mandates the purity of doctrine and worship and the repudiation of false teachings and apostasy. During the whole of the Christian era, believers have refused fellowship with those who teach another gospel. Today, however, we hear of the Emergent Church and left-leaning neo-evangelicals calling for affiliation with mainline denominations known for harboring apostate clergy and their unbiblical teachings. Some neo-evangelicals are in dialogue with New-Agers, Hindus and Buddhists.

Christians who refuse to abandon the belief that the Holy Spirit guided the prophets and apostles to pen the Word of God without error are charged with divisiveness. The liberals act as if the Sixteenth Century Reformation was a mistake and the millions who perished for refusing to participate in unscriptural practices died in vain.

The gospel has never changed and certainly needs no supplementation from New Age or Hindu teachings. Further, none may claim orthodoxy simply by reciting the Apostles Creed. The maintaining of rites and rituals does not excuse apostasy nor offer a shield from God’s judgment (II Cor. 6:14-17; Eph. 5:7, 11; II Thess. 3:14).

Believers, guided by scripture and aided by the Holy Spirit, proclaim the whole counsel of God and an unabridged gospel of Jesus Christ. They declare that Christ’s righteousness covers the sins of all genuine penitents by an unearned, undeserved gift of faith through grace alone apart from man’s ineffective righteousness. Only after God’s regenerating grace creates a “new creature” in Christ Jesus do works of man’s righteousness matter (Prov. 21:4; Rom. 9:15; Eph. 2:8-9).

All humankind fell with Adam so that scripture records that all have sinned and none are righteous. All are stillborn spiritually and are “dead in sins” until being born-again (Rom. 3:10-18, 5:12; Eph. 2:1-5).

No rite or ritual nor anything made by man can atone for a single sin. Only the work of a sinless kinsman redeemer Jesus Christ, by His shed blood on Calvary’s cross, is sufficient and effectual to propitiate the wrath of a Holy God. Acknowledgement of Christ’s title and work and repentance of sin is man’s part (Rom. 10:9-10).

When Jesus shed His blood it was as a man and not as a babe in the arms of the “Queen of Heaven.” The Virgin Mary is neither a queen of Heaven nor the mother of God. Mary gave birth to Jesus of Nazareth but it was the Holy Spirit that effected the conception of Christ, the Son of God, the Second Person of the Trinity. Just as with the Trinity, the two natures of Jesus Christ are beyond man’s finite mind. Fortunately it is not beyond believing for those regenerated by the Holy Spirit. Thus saith the Lord (Isa. 9:6a, 7:14; Luke 1:35).

Furthermore, the title “Queen of Heaven” has a derogatory spiritual connotation and should never be applied to a virtuous woman such as Mary (Jer. 7:18, 44:17-25).

Similarly, the coming one-world religious declension will be characterized by just such non-biblical beliefs and teachings. Unsanctified practices such as prayers for the dead and to departed saints and angels and contemplative or meditative prayer to reach “spirit guides” and familiar spirits will be offered by the woman astride the beast. Jesus warned against praying amiss and gave an outline known as the Lord’s Prayer to assist believers (Matt. 6:7-13, 23:14; Lev. 19:31, 20:6; Isa. 27:7-9).

As early as the times of Christ’s apostles, they were obliged to pen epistles to churches to counter false teachings that were subverting biblical teachings and Christ’s gospel. Paul, Peter, James, John and Jude warned congregations to guard against theological wolves in sheep’s clothing (Matthew 7:15).

Over time, the world was plunged into a long night of spiritual declension and darkness. Not until the Sixteenth Century Reformation era was Christ’s simple biblical gospel restored to prominence. For Christians, the revitalized rallying cries were *Sola Fide* (faith alone) and *Sola Scriptura* (Scriptures alone for faith and practice). Whole countries were restored to the light of scriptural teaching unadulterated by man’s deviations. Missionary efforts were established to properly fulfill the Great Commission to preach the untainted gospel worldwide (Matt. 28:19).

Satan and his minions did not long remain in dormancy. Now that God’s true word has been widely disseminated, the new unholy plan of attack was to discredit the ancient documents at the seminary level. Destructive Criticism (an illegitimate use of critical analyses of ancient documents) turned many hearts against the infallibility and inerrancy of the Word of God in the original autographs penned by the prophets and apostles. The leaven of Destructive Criticism and other theological promiscuity has led to the corruption rampant in seminaries and denominations today.

The prophet Daniel had foreseen a beast with ten horns six hundred years before John's vision on Patmos. Many scholars believe these beasts represent a revived Roman Empire to be ruled by the Antichrist and the woman who rides the beast is a coming religious confederation of apostate Christianity and the world's pagan religions.

Fulfilled prophecies such as those consummated at Christ's first advent speak to the absolute reliability of those yet future. The Bible has been assessed to be thirty percent prophetic making it unique compared with writings in other religions which have no fulfilled prophecies. No surprise since only the Bible is the God-breathed Word of the One true and living God and His prophetic pronouncements are a solid proof of authenticity

No prophecy with minute details as found in the Bible, foretold the coming of Buddha or Mohammad or any coming anti-Buddha or anti-Mohammad. Even Satan knows the only teachings that need counterfeiting are those from God's Word, especially those of God the Son, Jesus Christ.

The Creator Jesus Christ gave mankind the only object to which to direct faith and worship that is authorized. He has in all times raised up men and women of true faith as object lessons for all believers. He chose a patriarch, a people and a nation to receive and preserve the oracles of God and to protect a pure bloodline to the world's Savior. He is still calling out those as part of His church who continue to spread the truth and raise God's standard in the face of unbelief and apostasy.

The woman and the beast may be coming and the time may be very near, but Someone else is also coming. Keep looking up.

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Daylight Savings Time begins on Sunday, March 8th!

More About Jesus

By Nancy Long

"More about Jesus would I know, More of His grace to others show,
More of His saving fullness see, More of His love who died for me.

More about Jesus let me learn, More of His holy will discern;
Spirit of God, my teacher be, Showing the things of Christ to me.

More about Jesus; in His Word, Holding communion with my Lord,
Hearing His voice in ev'ry line, Making each faithful saying mine.

More about Jesus on His throne, Riches in glory all His own,
More of His kingdom's sure increase, More of His coming - Prince of Peace.

Chorus

More, more about Jesus, More, more about Jesus;
More of His saving fullness see, More of His love who died for me.

***"Grow in grace , and in knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."
(2 Peter 3:18a)***

Eliza Edmunds Hewitt, who penned the lyrics to the above hymn, grew up in a Christian home during the Civil War era; in fact she was born in Philadelphia, very close to the war action, in Gettysburg. Eliza had so much love for children, that it surprised no one, I'm thinking, that she went on, after her formal study, to become a schoolteacher. One day while in class, after teaching only a few years, an impulsive and violent student hit her in the back with a heavy slate that resulted in a severe spinal cord injury; after which she became a partial invalid for an extended period of time. She couldn't teach as effectively after this damage to her back, but she was able to write, and that she did, writing many poems, many of which became the lyrics to some of our most memorable and treasured hymns.

Some of her best loved poems, later to be set to music, are: *"Give Me Thy Heart"*, *"Sunshine in My Soul"*, *"Will There Be Any Stars in My Crown?"*, *"When We All Get to Heaven"*, *"Stepping in the Light"*, *"Sing the Wondrous Love of Jesus"*, *"My Faith Has Found a Resting Place"*, and of course, *"More About Jesus"*.

"In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33b). We might ponder, and ask ourselves, just how one can focus and write so many beautiful hymns from a life filled with suffering from days permeated with pain?

Natural, human thoughts for sure, but think about others throughout history, who have developed a love for God and His Word, in spite of, or perhaps even because of, their poor physical

condition. Many of the old hymns contain not only beautiful words and lovely melodies, but carry within each stanza, strong biblical truths as well.

One might make the query again, "Is there a purpose, an objective or aim to one being in a debilitating or fragile condition? The apostle Paul sought the Lord three times that his "thorn in the flesh" might be taken from him. Jesus' answer came, **"My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness"** (2 Cor. 12:9).

With that thought in mind, Eliza Hewitt did some of her best work from a bed of pain. Many of the other hymn writers as well, were faced with disabilities, injuries, weaknesses, and discouragements. Fanny Crosby, blind from infancy, wrote over 8000 hymns only a few of which include, *"He Hideth My Soul"*, *"Draw Me Nearer"*, *Blessed Assurance*, *Near the Cross*, *Saved By Grace* *"Safe in the Arms of Jesus"*, and *"To God be the Glory"*.

George Matheson, Scottish preacher, who began losing his sight at about one year old, and was completely blind by the age of seventeen, penned the words to, "O, Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go" perhaps reflecting on these verses of Scripture? **"For I am persuaded, that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Jesus Christ our Lord"** (Rom. 8:38-39).

Henry F. Lyte composed the words to several hymns, the most well known probably is *"Abide With Me"*. Henry's health had been compromised pretty much his whole life with breathing difficulties asthma, bronchitis, and coughing spasms. About three years prior to his death, he had deteriorated to the point where he developed tuberculosis. It was during this time that he was impressed to write the aforementioned hymn, *"Abide With Me"*.

Charlotte Elliot, besieged with poor health, penned the words to the hymn, *"Just As I Am"* Lydia Baxter, an invalid, and confined to her bed for a good segment of her life, wrote the poem, later to become a hymn, *"Take The Name of Jesus With You"*. She was known by everyone for her sweet and glowing spirit. Apparently her joy had been contagious, infecting blessings to all who came to visit Francis Havergal, suffered with poor health, dying at only 42 years of age, composed the lyrics to many hymns, including, *"Take My Life and Let it Be"*.

"He Keeps Me Singing" was written by Luther Bridges, after learning that his wife and all three of his sons had died in a fire Major Daniel Whittle, lost his right arm in the Civil War, and for a time was held in a prisoner of war camp. His spirit though, was thankful, as he penned the words to *"There Shall Be Showers of Blessings"*.

William Walford, author of *"Sweet Hour of Prayer"*, was blind. He preached from time to time and made it a priority to memorize huge chunks of Scripture, that he quoted in his sermons William Cowper, set forth in words the hymn, *"God Moves in a Mysterious Way"*, even though he struggled with mental illness, primarily depression. Often throughout his life, he would relapse into despair, withdrawing from the world and of course, how could one forget the author of the beautiful hymn, *"It is Well With My Soul"*, written over the place where Horatio Spafford lost his four daughters in a shipwreck.

Hymns in abundance, the world over, have originated because of some extremely difficult circumstances in life. Are we then to conclude that suffering draws us closer to God? Perhaps along with the trials, along with the tribulations, along with the heartaches, comes a fresh, new awareness of God's grace. ***"It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn Thy statutes"*** (Psalm 119:71).

We cannot claim to know, or even begin to understand, the mind of God ***"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts"*** (Isaiah 55:9). What we do know though, is that God is good, and that He loves us, and is providentially working all things together for our good and also His glory (Romans 8:28).

Trusting that God can, and will, take everything we humans might call bad, sad, painful or tragic in our lives here on this earth and as the Master Potter, He will mold and make all of it into a sweet smelling fragrance into something amazingly wonderful, beautiful, and lasting.

***"I will bless the Lord at all times:
His praise shall continually be in my mouth."
(Psalm 34:1)***



Palm Sunday, March 29th

Our mission through the broadcast of In Defense of Truth and the publication of The Defender newsletter is to earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints (Jude 3). Our vision today is just as strong as it was back in 1963 when Dr. John Dekker began this outreach. We pray that you will continue to stand with us as we hold true to God's holy Word.

The Defender is available, free of charge, on audio CD.
Please contact us if you would like to receive a copy by mail.

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Listen Online: <http://www.InDefenseOfTruth.org/broadcast> for details.

We are now on internet radio: www.evangelismradio.com (various times).

Listen also to IDOT's "Moment of Truth"

airing Monday through Friday during morning drive time
on WCBM AM 680 in Baltimore.

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WRITE TO US!

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Upcoming Events!

If you are in or around the Baltimore area, we'd love to have you join us for these upcoming events!

Adult Sunday School	10:15 AM
Sunday Morning Worship	11:00 AM
Tuesday Bible Study	1:30 PM
Wednesday Bible Study	7:00 PM

Rabbi Neal & Kim Surasky will be speaking at our Luncheon & Forum on Sunday, March 8th.