

The DEFENDER - September 2016

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

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IN DEFENSE OF TRUTH radio broadcast.



FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK: Where Are The Righteous?

Most nations are not moral stalwarts. No matter who's in charge, godly values are not high on their list. Down through history we've seen empires and governments ruled in various ways: monarchies, aristocracies, dictatorships, democracies, military juntas, even theocracies; many of which did not consider human rights to be a priority. In the world today, most people do not live free. Those with the power and the strength always dominate. In many of these totalitarian regimes the masses are not treated with dignity or respect, particularly the women and children. Glaring examples of this are seen in places like Iran, Saudi Arabia, North Korea, and Cuba. Venezuela is deteriorating right before our eyes as government imposed socialism has sent one of the wealthiest South American nations into an economic, political, and social free fall. The country is collapsing as drug gangs and criminals roam the streets with impunity.

How does the world get like this? We can't expect the ungodly to respect mankind because they don't acknowledge or respect God. **Romans 1:21** tells us that men who don't glorify God become vain in their imaginations and their hearts are darkened. They have no standard of righteousness to follow, so anything goes. Many places today are no better than ancient Israel in the times of the judges: every man did that which was right in his own eyes **Judges 21:25**. But do we really expect anything different than that from the unrighteous?

It's at the feet of the righteous that I lay much of the blame. God's looking for His people to make a difference in the world. But if they're out there they're not being heard. Some live in fear of persecution but many others simply are not looking to please God as much as they are themselves. They're seeking after the flesh rather than after the spirit. Lot is a perfect biblical example of that. He was the perfect example of a carnal Christian while living near the twin sin cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. When given a choice, his first reaction was to think of himself. When faced with decisions, he tended to procrastinate, then chose the easiest course of action. But God wants us to be an influence for Him. When God decided to destroy the evil cities, Abraham petitioned Him to withhold His judgment for the sake of the righteous in the land. God said for the sake of 50 He would have mercy on the entire city. I wonder how many righteous Americans it would take to stay God's hand on our nation? We know what happened in Sodom. Abraham couldn't find 10 righteous people. Again the question must be asked. How many righteous people are even in our land? And if they're here, why are we not hearing from them? Only God knows the answer to those questions. Perhaps the bigger question should be, how long is He willing to wait?

Rev. David Lewis

Back to the Future Again

Part 1 – Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream

By Robert Luthardt, Sr.

King Nebuchadnezzar dreamed a strange and powerful dream in 603 B.C. His kingdom of Babylon was then the most dominant in the world. He ruled from Egypt to India. He had just besieged Judah and crushed the people of Jerusalem, destroyed the walls and the temple and took the sacred vessels for his treasury.

Young men of the nobility, especially of David’s lineage who were educated and healthy, were taken to serve in Nebuchadnezzar’s court. They were now schooled in the Chaldean language to serve the Monarch in the ranks of Advisors, Astrologers, Fortune Tellers, Sorcerers and Pagan Priests.

Nebuchadnezzar fretted over the dream he could not remember. So he called his counselors together to interpret the dream. As with all occultic malpractices, his advisors would have attempted to use ambiguous, cryptic, flowery terms to tickle the King’s fancy. They could not bluff their way because none could divulge the dream’s details. To bring the dream back, they needed absolute accuracy. They dared to tell the King his request was not only impossible, it was also unreasonable. Being a divine rights ruler with illusions of infallibility, Nebuchadnezzar bristled at being told he was in error. He demanded all on his payroll as wise men be executed.

Daniel and the other young Hebrew captives were also slated for death. They did what all who know and love the one true and living God do – they prayed. They asked God for the secret of the King’s dream. God gave the knowledge of the dream to Daniel. Daniel reported to the King that the God who makes all things possible revealed the contents of the dream.

Daniel described the dream (2:31-36). “Thou, Oh King, sawest ... a great image ... whose brightness was excellent ... the form terrible [terrifying]. This image’s head ... gold, his breast and arms of silver ... belly and thighs of brass, his legs iron, his feet ... iron and ... clay” A stone was cut out “without hands [divine action alone] which smote ... his feet ... became chaff ... wind carried them away.” The stone became a great mountain and filled the whole earth – “we will tell the interpretation.”

Daniel saw in his vision the dream that troubled Nebuchadnezzar. At different times and in different places God spoke to certain elect individuals (Heb. 1:1). God spoke to Moses from a burning bush (Ex. 3-4) to Balaam through a donkey (Num. 22), and Joseph through dreams and the ability to give their meaning.

Daniel was divinely given to see and interpret God’s message to all mankind in His oversight of existing and future world empires that lead to God’s final unending kingdom (Luke 1:33).

Daniel reported to the King: “Thou art a king of kings” which “the God of heaven hath given” and “hath made the ruler over all” as the “head of gold.” After thee shall “arise another kingdom,” inferior (silver) and a third (brass), and a fourth (iron); “Thou sawest the feet and toes” part iron and part clay – partly strong, partly broken.

“And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle ... but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay ... God ... shall set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed ... it shall break in pieces ... all these kingdoms and it shall stand FOREVER ... the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands which smote the image upon his feet ... and brake them ...” then the metals, “became like the chaff ... the wind carried them away ... God hath made known to the King what shall come to pass hereafter ...” (Dan. 2).

The interpretation given by God to Daniel pertained only to human governance. The various metals of the dream image are successfully stronger kingdoms and empires. These run from 606 B.C. and continues on until God establishes His kingdom over all the earth.

Babylon, the head of Gold, was the most far-reaching absolutist rulership then known. Nebuchadnezzar ruled with total authority and any who disobeyed forfeited their life. In the vanity of all absolute rulers, Nebuchadnezzar built an image ALL of Gold (Dan. 3) in defiance of God as if the King’s rule would not pass away.

In 536 B.C. however, Babylon fell as Daniel had been instructed to prophecy. Media Persia now ruled as the silver empire and endured for 206 years (536 B.C. to 330 B.C.). The Greek empire of brass came next under Alexander the Great. His kingdom extended from Egypt to India, but was divided at his death under the rule of four of his generals. Now came the Roman kingdom of iron which dated loosely from 25 B.C., under Caesar Augustus, to about 395 A.D. The two legs of iron are represented by the iron kingdom’s two chief cites – Rome and Constantinople. Rome at one time controlled land from England to Babylon. “And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron” and though it would break up, it would remain a kingdom. The seat of authority changed from Spanish, French, British, German and Italian, but remnants of the Iron Empire held sway from 27 B.C. to 1945 A.D.

Daniel informs that this kingdom would “bruise” – it would see constant warfare which intensified. World War I saw 8 million dead. Twenty years later, World War II saw 52 million perish (not counting those killed in Nazi and communist death camps).

At the end of WW II, the European colonial empires slowly lost their foreign holdings and sources of raw materials. By necessity, Europe revived an ancient tradition of a “Common Market.” Today Europe has graduated from a simple market to a vast common economic community, a common parliament, a common president, and a common passport. In the “days of these kings shall God ... set up a kingdom” (2:44).

Who is the Rock? “The Lord is my rock” (Ps. 18:2). Muslims believe their deliverer (the Mahdi) is coming. Jews believe their Messiah is yet to come in the lineage of David as prom-

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Bible honoring Christians know they are watching and waiting for the return of Jesus Christ as He promised (John 14:1-3) to establish His worldwide Millennial Kingdom on Earth (Rev. 20). Now that Israel is again a nation praying for the third temple to come, how long before He returns? Jesus gave an answer (Mark 13:28-29).

Daniel received a prophecy in 555 B.C. "He wrote the dream ... four winds of heaven strove upon the great sea and four great beasts came up ... diverse one from another" (7:13). These four are four kings which shall arise in the future centuries after Daniel's time (vs. 7). Daniel saw winds disturbing the Mediterranean Sea and four beasts (kings) coming up out of it. Daniel records the first beast is lionlike (vs. 4). The British Empire was always symbolized as a lion, and it ruled the Middle East from about 1850-1950. This lion had eagle's wings which is on the Great Seal of the United States. Wings signify protection in the Bible.

The USA lent its protective wings to England in WW I and in WW II. But now that England has moved away from the USA toward the unification movement in Europe – one could reasonably say a "severing of the wings." England is well past the days when it was an independent Empire. Daniel's vision of a lion with plucked eagle's wings fits well with the fact that England lost its colonial holdings after WW II. The lion that arose out of the sea next stood up as a man indicating a significant change.

Many believe scripture tells us we are living in the "last days." We can expect Christ to return for His Bride, the Church, suddenly and at any time (1 Thes. 4:13-18; John 14:1-6). Then nothing prevents the start of Daniel's 70th week (9:24-27) and Israel's latter days (Jer. 30:22-24) and Jacob's trouble (Jer. 30:7). When these things end, the Lord will return with His Bride and establish His millennial reign.

Keep looking up.



His Will, Not Mine

By Nancy Long

Matthew 26: 36a,39,42&44 -- *"Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane And He went a little farther, and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, 'O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt.' He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, 'O My Father, if this cup may not pass away from Me, except I drink it, Thy will be done.' And He left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words."*

Job 2:10b -- *"..... What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips."*

The words of Christ, when praying to His Father in the Garden of Gethsemane, are a supreme and flawless example of accepting the plan of God for one's life a behavior, a pattern, showing total submission. Perhaps second to those words spoken by Jesus, are the words uttered by Job, as written above. I believe we have here a near perfect human example of compliance, yieldingness and acceptance amid what I would consider overwhelming sorrows. Job asks, do we only accept from God what pleases us, and reject that which doesn't? He, of course, pulls back from such thoughts. I ask you, Defender friends, shall we not recognize the fact that God in His infinite wisdom bestows on us what we deem as good, as well as what we perceive as not so good?

Everything was taken from Job, a human being I might add, no different than you or me. God took his wealth, his children, and his health, and yet he still held onto his belief in God's sovereignty, as well as God's goodness, mercy, and love. We, who are children of God, certainly have a relationship with Him, but however, are **not** His "pampered favorites". Therefore, we should expect suffering and loss in this world in which we live, but also know, without any shadow of doubt, that we can have peace in Jesus through it all (John 16:33).

"Through it All," a favorite chorus comes to mind:

Through it all, Through it all

I've learned to trust in Jesus, I've learned to trust in God;
Through it all, Through it all, I've learned to depend upon His Word."

I might ask though, through all what?? 1 Peter 1:7 says: *"the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."* To use a familiar example here: After gold is mined, it is put into a red hot furnace, with the purpose being not to destroy the gold, but to purify it. When the gold is melted, the dross, or waste, is drawn off in order to get the **pure** gold. When God puts us through the furnace of testing today, His purpose is not to harm or hurt us, but to refine us, to cleanse us, to purify us to draw us closer to Himself. This is what helps to develop Christian character. **It's God's method it's God's way!**

This way of teaching though, is not popular in today's world, where we are taught to be self sufficient, and not to lean on anyone or anything. However, this worldly teaching is never, ever going to work. We need to consciously desire and allow Christ to live His life **through** us, and ask Him to teach us in the hard times, to be more dependent and more reliant on Him, our Creator. It's imperative that we be submissive!! We can fervently fight against it with all the human strength and ability with which we can muster, but the only way we'll ever possess His promised "**perfect peace**" is if we do it **His** way (Isaiah 26:3)!! He is the Creator, we are the creature **not** the reverse!

In C.S. Lewis' book, "Mere Christianity", chapter 8, "Is Christianity Hard or Easy?", he states, *"The Christian way is different: harder and easier. Christ says, 'Give Me All'. I don't want so much of your time, and so much of your money, and so much of your work: **I want you.** I have not come to torment your natural self, but to kill it. No half-measures are any good. I don't want to cut off a branch here and a branch there, I want to have the whole tree down. I don't want to drill one tooth, or crown it, or stop it, but to have it out. Hand over the whole natural self, and all the desires you think innocent, as well as the ones you think wicked - the whole outfit. I will give you a new self instead. In fact, I will give you Myself: **My own will shall become yours.**"*

Lewis goes on to say, *"The terrible thing, the almost impossible thing, is to hand over your whole self --- all your wishes and precautions --- to Christ. But it is far easier than what we are all trying to do instead. For what we are trying to do is to remain what we call '**ourselves,**' to keep personal happiness as our great aim in life, and yet at the same time be '**good.**' We are all trying to let our mind and heart go their own way -- centered on money or pleasure or ambition --- and hoping, in spite of this, to behave honestly and chastely and humbly. And that is exactly what Christ warned us you could **not** do. As He said, "a thistle cannot produce figs. If I am a field that contains nothing but grass seed, I cannot produce wheat. Cutting the grass may keep it short: but I shall still produce grass and no wheat. If I want to produce wheat, the change must go deeper than the surface. I must be ploughed up and re-sown."*

Knowing Jesus Christ personally and focusing on Him is the **only** thing that will give us that peace that surpasses all human understanding (Phil. 4:7). The apostle Paul also exhorts us to *"Rejoice in the Lord always. and again I say, rejoice"* (Phil. 4:4). We need to be reminded that Paul penned these words when he himself was a prisoner. Many days of pain, affliction, and suffering were behind him. He had experienced perils on land, as well as at sea hunger and thirst, scourging and stoning. He had been persecuted by those both inside and outside the church, and yes, he still wrote, *"Rejoice in the Lord always*". What was the "secret" of this man's deep centered joy and peace?

Read Romans 8:28. Paul proved by his life that he absolutely knew, and believed, that all things are under the control of, and are regulated by, the Supreme Sovereign of the universe and that Sovereign One has only love toward His own. Therefore the **"all things"** in the 28th verse of chapter 8 in the book of Romans, are so ordered by Him that they are purposed for our ultimate good. This is the reason that it **is** possible to receive and accept with compliance, our situations and *"to give thanks in all things"* (1 Thess. 5:18a).

A.W. Pink in "The Sovereignty of God" says it this way, *Our disappointments are but His appointments. To the one who delights in the sovereignty of God, the clouds not only have a 'silver lining', but are silvern through and through, the darkness only serving to offset the light."*

Jesus prayed to His Father, ***"Not as I will, but as Thou wilt* Thy will be done."** Job too, accepted both the good, as well as the bad, being from the hand of God. I pray, my Defender friends, that we each search our own hearts. Are you willing to give God total control of your life, conform to His will, no matter the cost, no matter the direction in which He leads? Am I? Giving everything totally entrusting and submitting one hundred percent of our being is, I believe, beyond the realm of human possibility, but with God, ***"nothing shall be impossible"*** (Luke 1:37). Indeed then, all things **are possible** with Him (Phil. 4:13). God has the POWER that only He can supply (Phil. 4:19)!!



The Believer's Priesthood and Free Enterprise Opinion Commentary by Kevin Bruffey

A key principle of Christianity that was stressed by the Protestant Reformers and embraced by the Founding Fathers is the priesthood of all believers. This means that all believers can minister in their own right. Scripture support comes from **1 Peter 2:5, 9** which says, *"Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ...But ye are a chosen generation, royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."*

While God's people relied on priests to intercede for them during the Old Covenant, now because of Jesus's one time sacrifice who is the ultimate high priest, they now have direct access to God. Because of their justification they also have equal standing and inheritance rights with Christ, **Romans 8:17**: *"If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together. Furthermore, there is equality amongst believers since each believers' sins have been completely forgiven and each one is just as righteous as the other."*

To further the points in **1 Peter 2:5, 9** and to show the purpose in a believer's salvation we find in **Titus 2:14**, *"Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."* Proof that God designed us with a purpose is also found in **Ephesians 2:10** which says, *"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."*

Whenever the believer's priesthood has been emphasized in areas around the world, literacy and productivity has flourished. People realize their sense of calling, purpose, and duty to God and their neighbor as they take care of what is their own and that of their families while ministering in other capacities. However, in environments where the state attempts to manage resources and the economy as a whole, it essentially undermines God and the worth of His people. Government leaders seek to place value on goods, services, and private activities. As a result, resources are not valued properly which has adverse effects on employment, production, and the quality of life in society.

There's a reason for this. People make best use of resources when they are directly impacted by the outcome. The parable of the talents is a good example. The master gave his three servants talents and rewarded the first two based on their positive productivity and punished the last servant who did nothing with his talent. God wants each individual to make use of his/her resources because each person is in the best position to place value on them which in turn allows the community as a whole to assess value of resources. Planned economies fail because government officials are not directly impacted by the use of resources which means they cannot assess their value.

Planned economies also fail because principles emphasizing fairness as stressed in the Book of James are commonly neglected in civil government. Political leaders often craft policies to advance their personal agenda which includes pleasing outside special interests and turning a blind eye to corruption in the bureaucracy. Consolidated power means that risk of corruption and failure are concentrated in the hands of a few as opposed to being decentralized and spread out. The Founding Fathers understood this which is why they included the 10th Amendment in the Bill of Rights which states: *"All powers not given to the Federal Government are reserved to the states or the people thereof."* Financial planners also understand decentralization, only they call it diversification. They know their investors bear a lot less risk when their money is spread out amongst several securities as opposed to a few. Our economy as a whole bears a lot less risk when decisions regarding resource allocation are spread out amongst many individuals, families, and other private entities as possible.

Centralized planning also has an undertone of privilege. Certain, appointed people make decisions regarding resource allocation and policies affecting the economy. This brings in to question how they obtained their position, how they're held accountable, and what it takes to remove them if necessary. This contrasts with free enterprise, which stresses the power and role of the individual and other private institutions. If poor decisions are made with resources in the private realm, especially if it's by those who earned them, those parties involved will experience consequences. Knowing potential consequences and rewards encourages private individuals and institutions to make wise and careful decisions with their resources. Those in the civil realm simply aren't in an environment with consequences and rewards so they can't be counted on to make wise decisions with resources. Consequently, waste and mishap take longer to correct, whereas in the private realm players take a lot less time to adjust since they are subject to consequences.

What does this mean for our country and communities? Our Federal officials could start by eliminating the tax code and replacing it with a simplified system. Contrary to popular belief, the tax code is not designed to collect revenue but rather for social engineering and manipulation. Through various write offs, credits, and deductions which it permits, the government seeks to place value and manipulate economic activity. Examples include adjustments for charitable giving, interest payments, and costs for things such as solar panels when in fact free markets are perfectly capable of placing a value on these things. Eliminating the tax code would save the private sector roughly \$200 billion annually and would improve resource allocation in our economy.

Another thing states like Maryland could do is eliminate their departments of labor and licensing. Industries such as cosmetology are perfectly capable of determining requirements to serve their customers. Private standards would streamline the current process which would drive down costs thereby saving customers money and would make it easier for new entrants into the industry which would mean increased employment. The increase in employment is especially noteworthy because many struggle or simply can't enter in to industries such as cosmetology due to the burdens the state places on entering the field for things like education and certification requirements. As noted, businesses within the industry are much more capable of determining necessary requirements than the state.

Along the same line of labor would be eliminating the minimum wage. This would mean labor rates would be determined by employers and employees, the two parties that are directly impacted by labor decisions. Too often, over the years, though the minimum wage has been well intentioned by some, its increases have always been followed by increases in unemployment amongst un-skilled labor. The minimum wage hasn't been un-subject to cronyism since high skilled laborers such as those in labor unions have pushed for increases to secure the labor pool for themselves.

God has created us in his own image and since the Garden of Eden has called us to work as he also insists in **2 Thessalonians 3:10**, that those unwilling to work do not eat. Considering His call for property rights as evidenced by His command not to steal, it's clear that the priesthood of His people translates into private use of property. Through wise stewardship as evidenced in the Parable of the Talents and Proverbs **13:11**, ... *"he that gathereth by labour shall increase,"* it is clear that we should look to God for blessings.



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WRITE TO US!

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Tuesday Afternoon Bible Study	1:30 PM
Wednesday Evening Bible Study	7:00 PM
Friday Night Youth Group	7:00 PM
9/11 God & Country Service	3:00 PM