

The DEFENDER - January 2018

“... 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: A New Year's Reprieve?

I've often wondered in recent years whether God would be merciful to the United States of America while withholding His judgment, in similar fashion to His offer to Abraham for the lands of Sodom and Gomorrah. Whereas the Lord was looking for 50 righteous people in those lands of sin and iniquity, we don't know how many He was looking for here. But what we do know is that the Lord's people have been lifting our nation up in prayer for a long time, seeking God's mercy on our land. Because of our national sins of abortion and same-sex marriage, we're certainly worthy of His judgment. And unless America repents, I'm certain it's only a matter of when (and not if) until it comes. But with the election of Donald Trump as president, it at least appears as though God has shed His mercy on us yet again. But it's no time for God's people to stop praying.

While our nation was in a spiritual as well as fiscal freefall during the Obama Administration, things look to be turning in the opposite direction under President Trump. Two things that must be pleasing to God are the appointment of pro-life justice Neil Gorsuch to the Supreme Court, and the recent decision proclaiming Jerusalem as the rightful capital of Israel. Both of those decisions are complete reversals of Mr. Obama's policies. Our previous president was no friend to the unborn, as evidenced by his support of Planned Parenthood and late-term abortions. He also was not very supportive of God's chosen people Israel. In addition to saying America was not a Christian nation, Barack Hussein Obama turned his back on the Jewish nation, leaving her virtually helpless and without an ally in the midst of a region full of Muslims seeking to wipe her off the map. Mr. Obama's total disregard and apparent disrespect for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu only served to encourage and embolden Israel's enemies. But it's worth noting that since President Trump's declaration of Jerusalem as Israel's capital, at least 10 other nations have followed suit; Guatemala, Honduras, Paraguay, Romania, Slovakia, and Togo among them.

There are several other accomplishments of Mr. Trump that appear to be turning the country in a positive and encouraging direction, not the least of which was the recently signed tax bill which has given a jolt to a sluggish economy while sending the stock market soaring. So I ask the question again. Has America been given a reprieve? And if so, what's in store for 2018? Only God knows. We do know that righteousness exalts a nation (**Proverbs 14:34**). But are there still enough righteous people in the land to gain God's favor? Again, only God knows. We also know that tomorrow is promised to no one (**Proverbs 27:1**). Today is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it (**Psalms 118:24**). And let the Lord's people in our land strive to follow God's Word today and every day in 2018 while praying for His continued blessings on America.

Rev. David Lewis

Answers for Our Catholic Friends – Part I

By Robert Luthardt, Sr.

Thomas F. Heinze spent over 30 years as an evangelical missionary in Italy, a nation where Roman Catholicism dominates. In his book, “Answers to My Catholic Friends,” he provided a clear understandable path to lead seeking souls to salvation through the one and only way God has provided. That way is the once-for-all-time FINISHED work of the crucified and resurrected Lord of glory, Jesus Christ (John 14:6).

Pastor Heinze pointed out the historic divide between Catholics and Evangelicals is not so much different versions of the Bible, but more so in forms of worship and hierarchal authority in Christianity.

At the Council of Trent (AD 1215) the Mass was declared “a sacrifice of expiation ... of sins ... for the living” and for “souls in Purgatory.” In contradiction to scripture, Christ’s sacrifice is “renewed” at every mass and congregants are to kneel when the wafer (now the actual “flesh” of Christ) is elevated as “God.” Worshipers are taught that once the wafer is ingested, they receive a share of Christ’s merits to contribute to their own good works toward earning salvation. This concept is foreign to God’s Word (Mark 7:8, 13; Matt. 15:2-9; Col. 2:8; Heb. 9:24-28, 10:12).

A definite departure from scripture lies in the teaching that bread and wine miraculously transform into Christ’s flesh and blood. Christ did NOT teach this concept. The bread and wine Christ held in His hands He intended to be symbolic ceremonial substitutes and replacements for the elements of the Passover feast. Now God was preparing to offer the long-sought Lamb of God as the true and final sacrifice that legally atones for man’s sins. Now believers use the symbols of bread and wine at the Lord’s Table strictly in adherence to Christ’s command, “in remembrance of Me.” Christ’s actual flesh and blood are in the only place scripture reports them to be and what we swear in the “Apostle’s Creed” in heaven and not in anyone’s “bread or wine” (I Cor. 11:23-26; Acts 7:55-56).

The apostle, under inspiration of the Holy Spirit, wrote that bread was only bread three times after Christ uttered “this is My body.” After calling wine His blood, Christ called the wine the “fruit of the vine” (Mark 14:24-25).

Christ frequently used parabolic and symbolic illustrations as in “I am the door” and “I am the vine,” etc.

Whenever an authentic miracle was performed by Christ, real verifiable changes were apparent such as restored withered hands, dead raised to life, and water to wine, etc. (John 2:8-10).

Christ nowhere in scripture instructed His followers to reproduce His flesh and blood. Adding to or taking away from Christ’s teachings is expressly forbidden (Deut. 4:2, 12:32; Prov. 30:6; Rev. 22:19).

The Holy Spirit inspired the writer of Hebrews and Paul and Peter to clearly write that Christ's sacrificial death was a once-for-all-time, all-sufficient completed accomplishment. There is NO command to or necessity for a re-sacrificing of Christ (Rom. 6:9-10; Heb. 7:27-28, 9:12, 10:10-18).

The above cited verses indicate why our final controlling authority must be God's Word and not man's. Both liberal Protestantism and Roman Catholicism have made unwarranted additions of "traditions" to worship. Church authorities have contradicted scriptures and even each other by their changeable traditions. Biblical salvation is by grace alone but men teach that man's works must be added, such as penances, pilgrimages and eons of suffering in a non-biblical purgatory. Scripture clearly states that once God forgives a sinner and adopts him into His family through Christ's sacrifice, no further offering is needed or even possible. "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" (Heb. 10:17-18; Eph. 1:4-5, 11-13, 2:8-10).

There is NO scriptural basis for the mythological place called Purgatory. It is derived from a book not a part of the Canon of Scripture. In 2 Maccabees 12:41-45, idolatry is condemned yet even here Purgatory is not mentioned. God promises "unconditional" ETERNAL life (I John 5:13).

There is no middle ground between those lost, dead in trespasses and sins, and those effectually called out of spiritual lostness and deadness by God's grace alone through the newness of life from an indwelling Holy Spirit. God's gift of faith indubitably leads a regenerated person to repentance of sins and new life in Christ (John 1:12-13, 3:15-16; Rom. 8:28-30, 10:9-10; Eph. 2:1-10).

Scripture does not support "masses for the dead" in Purgatory which carries a burdensome expense upon the poor, especially widows. Man's needs spiritually are fully met by God's gift of grace alone for salvation. Once saved we are to "work out" the proof of that salvation earned by Christ alone (Phil. 2:12b).

Any divergence from God's settled Word by man's inventive theologies must be resolved in favor of the verities of Scripture. Bible churches make the pulpit central and scripture accessible. Catholic churches have an altar where Christ is repeatedly sacrificed without scriptural support. Even when scripture is alleged to be "equal" with tradition, the ideas of men rule when there is conflict.

Perhaps the most serious straying from scripture occurs because Roman Catholic beliefs are changeable by men's decisions alone. Once it was heresy for mass to be in the common language of the people but this was discarded. Eating meat on Friday was a sin by man's tradition, but this rule was also eliminated. Man's traditions are malleable but God's WORD is settled, certain, reliable, unchangeable and eternal.

A pagan practice that has permeated Christianity since about the 5th Century AD is the forbidden practice of venerating images. The second of the Ten Commandments forbids adoring worship of anything or anyone but God. In Roman Catholic countries, processions with images of Mary are common (Hinduism is also known for idol adoration). Throughout the Bible all forms of idol-adoration are categorically condemned and forbidden.

The abandonment of sound biblical exegesis to facilitate ecumenical endeavors actually originated in apostate liberal Protestant seminaries. The degrading of biblical reliability by “Higher Criticism” was foundational for an ever-spreading, ever-growing apostasy that has undermined the sound biblical teachings restored to Christianity by the 16th Century Reformation.

As the biblical plan of salvation based on the Gospel of Jesus Christ is founded fully and only on God’s grace, it is NOT dependent upon men’s good works. Sadly, as Christ’s gospel faded from liberal pulpits, it was replaced with a social (and sometimes socialistic) gospel. One result was shrinking congregations and nearly empty sanctuaries becoming financially prohibitive leading to a consolidating unity movement.

Roman Catholic leaders began to make concessions to win these “wandering stars” back to the “one true Church.” Soon Catholic seminaries even began to advocate the same brand of liberalism that had been so notorious theologically in Protestant seminaries. One unforeseen consequence of unexplored ecumenism was the infiltration of a doctrinally superficial charismatic movement into liberal Protestantism and into Roman Catholicism (Jude 12-13).

The Bible remains the single most detested book in human history. It humbles the pride-filled and binds all to God’s Commandments and His exclusive plan of salvation. The recourse of reprobates was to ban or burn God’s Word in dictatorial regimes or lacking that power, to pervert its teachings. Many of God’s saints have been martyred to keep and protect God’s Word. In spite of all Satan’s attempts to suppress it, it is still transforming lives. Peter declared that it is the only writing given to mankind by men chosen by God Himself. Its credibility is enhanced by the literal fulfillment of biblical prophecies (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:16-21; Matt. 5:18; Luke 21:33).

The Holy Bible is the only repository of God’s salvific promises given for the divinely ordained perfecting of all who are saved by grace alone, in the finished work of Christ alone. “I am the bread of life: he that cometh to Me shall NEVER hunger; and that believeth on Me shall NEVER thirst.” “Never” begins the moment one professes Christ as Savior AND Lord by the aid of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Peter, alleged to be the first Pope, pointed to scripture’s transcendence and predominance over men’s traditions as did other apostles (2 Pet. 1:16-21; Matt. 15:3-6, 9; Mark 7:13; Acts 17:11; Col. 2:8-13; 1 Thess. 2:13]

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Mind of Christ --- Humility

By Nancy Long

Phil. 2:5 – *“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.”*

2 Cor. 5:17 – *“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”*

Psalm 42:1 – *“As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God.”*

New Year’s Eve is more than likely the only day of the year in which almost everyone’s thoughts and attentions are focused on the exact same thing. There’s something climactic about counting down the hours then the minutes and even the seconds, as the old year slips away then passes into history, never, to be seen again.

As you’re reading this month’s Defender, we have already moved into the beginning of a fresh new year, 2018. Yes, 2018; can you believe just how quickly we people continue to move through this thing known as “time”?!? We say it often, but there are certain periods, more than others, when hearts and minds grab on to the truth, ***“life is like a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.”*** (James 4:14). Our days on this earth are short, and man is indeed extremely fragile!!

There’s a sense of anticipation and excitement at the birthing of a new year a brand new start, a chance to start over, perhaps. Resolutions, promises, and good intentions are made in abundance!

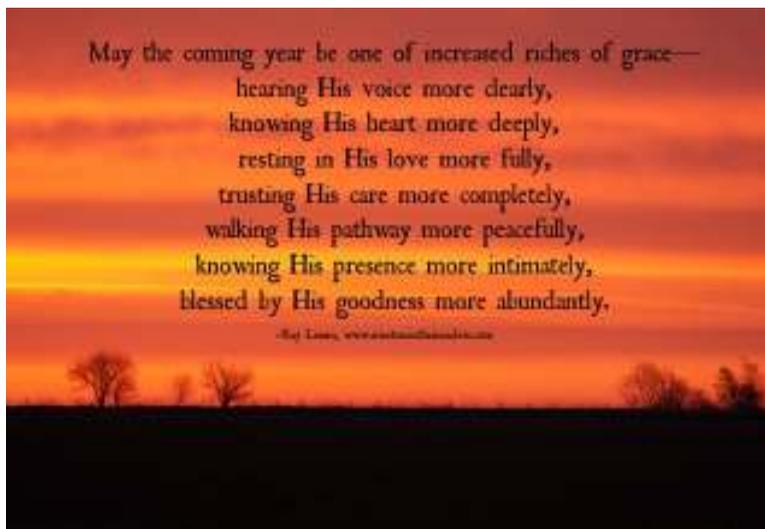
The Lord has brought us through yet another year, and has graciously gifted us with the beginning of a new one, for which we can be grateful! Realizing though, that no one has been **promised** another complete year of life, or even one more moment, for that matter, it’s incumbent upon us all to ***“set our affections on things above”*** (Col.3:2), to think upon and dwell on spiritual matters, and to prepare and lay up in store for that which is to come one day!!

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus”, exhorts the apostle Paul! To me, the mind of Christ is characterized by His humility. ***“..... walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called ... with all lowliness and meekness, with***

longsuffering, forbearing one another in love” (Eph. 4:1-2). **This** is the mind of Christ!! You and I, my friends, cannot do this on our own. It’s not our inclination to be humble! It’s not our tendency to submit! Until our hearts have been changed by the new birth until **“all things are become new”** until we listen to the still small voice of the Spirit who resides within every believer until we cooperate with His urgings until our souls literally pant after God’s will to be done in our lives, then, and only then, can we begin in some small way, to take on the **“mind of Christ”**.

I, myself, will not make any resolutions this year that’s just begun however, I rarely do!! **My** promises, **my** resolves, are fallible and unreliable and really, so are yours. Pray for me please, and I will pray for you as well, that each of us is able to submit more, to trust more, and to accept more of what our sovereign, omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent God has for us. He’s got the bigger picture, and **“all things”** in that bigger picture **“work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose”** (Romans 8:28).

There are many uncertainties and doubtful conditions in our world, but what matters the most stands forever and never changes. **“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever”** (Hebrews 13:8). **“The Word of our Lord stands forever”** (Isaiah 40:8b).



New Year's Moments of Truth

As we close out 2017 and usher in 2018 my prayer for all of you is that in the new year you'll seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all things that you have need of will be provided.

We can't control our politicians. We can't control our enemies. We can't even control what our friends or even we will do next year. The Old Testament prophet Jeremiah said that the heart of man is desperately wicked and cannot be trusted. In addition to the battle that we fight within our own flesh we also have the world and the devil to contend with.

So the only real hope we have then is that God Himself will smile upon us. He controls all things—from the vastness of the universe to the inner workings of our fragile bodies.

So my New Year's wish for all of you is that the Lord bless thee and keep thee. The Lord make His face shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee. The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee and give thee peace.

To all my Christian friends who couldn't bring themselves to vote for Donald Trump, let me tell you what he did without you.

ISIS, on a global scale, has been defeated. The lone wolves will always be out there. The economy is soaring. How does a Dow Jones of 25,000 sound to you? Obamacare has been gutted. China and Russia have been confronted, and soon North Korea will join that list. Neil Gorsuch is on the Supreme Court. Lower courts have been packed with conservative judges. Domestic energy is unleashed and flowing. Jerusalem has been officially recognized as Israel's capital. Appointments are being properly vetted. Fake news has been exposed. Obama's executive orders and unnecessary regulations are being eliminated. The police and the military are being honored once again. The invisible wall has slowed illegal immigration to a crawl. Your paychecks will be getting bigger. Have I missed anything? All this in one year!

Maybe God is answering our prayers for mercy and grace while America begins to repent. That would be my New Year's wish.

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.

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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 & Children's Sunday School	10:15 AM
Sunday Morning Worship & Children's Church	11:00 AM
Tuesday Afternoon Bible Study	1:30 PM
Wednesday Evening Bible Study	7:00 PM