

## The DEFENDER - February 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: Where is the Love?

In the secular world, February is the month of love. Valentine’s Day is celebrated with flowers and candy, and lots of money is spent on expressions of love and romance between all the lovebirds. It’s a day of celebration in which even people of faith can participate, and many Christians do.

But the expression of love that I’m most interested in right now is the feelings that born-again people should have for God’s other chosen people—the Jews. Down through history it’s been a matter of record that many of Jesus’ followers have not been particularly enamored with the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Martin Luther may be the most well-known of history’s believers who disdained the Jewish people. There have been others, including many who claimed to be aligned with the Christian faith. Pope Pius XII was known for his outspoken warnings against the abuse of human rights, yet he was silent about the holocaust. During the Crusades of the Church of Rome, Pope Urban II and Pope Paul IV were instrumental in persecuting and killing Jews. Roman Catholics were taught that they had replaced the Jews as God’s chosen people. The land of Israel, promised to the Jews, now was seen as belonging to “Christian” Rome. She became the “new Zion,” the “Eternal City,” and the “Holy City,” titles which God had given to Jerusalem alone.

Of course, evangelical Christianity is not much better, with their acceptance of Replacement Theology. In lockstep with Rome’s cry of “Christ killers” (regarding the Jews), many evangelicals today believe that the Church has inherited God’s promises to the Jewish people because of their rejection of the Messiah. Again, I ask, where is the love? The apostle Paul was explicit in explaining that God still has His eye on Israel. In answering His own question about the Jews, in **Romans 11:1** Paul said “Hath God cast away His people? God forbid.”

One thing that may signal a change on this front, however, is the recent decision by President Trump to move America’s embassy to Jerusalem, the capital of Israel. During Vice-President Pence’s recent trip to the Holy Land, he spoke before parliament of the many biblical references emphasizing the shared elements of the Jewish and Christian faiths. At a time when the Israelis understand that their beleaguered country has no abundance of friends, this should be a cause for celebration.

To bring this article full circle, and beyond the political implications, true Christians need to take seriously the exhortation of David in **Psalms 122:6**. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem—a peace between God and His people that can only be brought about by their acceptance of Jesus as Messiah. And the promise to those who truly love the Jewish people (Jerusalem) in this way? You shall prosper. May the love of Christ be in and with you all.

*Rev. David Lewis*

## **Answers for Our Catholic Friends – Part 2**

**By Robert Luthardt, Sr.**

Some depreciate the effectual transforming power of God's Word by asserting that it does not record every statement or every deed of Jesus Christ or His Apostles. Be that as it may, the Holy Spirit guided "holy men of God" to provide truth to allow sinners to be "thoroughly furnished" with the saving "gift of faith." Since the Holy Spirit also forbid any to "add to" or "take away" from the revealed Word of God, it is all the more imperative to shun man's philosophical inventions and "traditions." The light circumscribed by scripture is our best protection against false teachings (John 20:30-31; Mark 7:3-13; Eph. 2:8-10; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:21; Rev. 22:18-19).

Divergences between Reformation teachings and Roman Catholic traditions exist from different interpretations of various scriptures, but the greatest divide is what constitutes the final authority in Christianity. Bible-believing churches practice "sola scriptura," the Bible alone. God's Word determines faith and practice and worship and should never be marginalized by man's traditions attributable to Synods or Councils or Clergy no matter their exalted status in men's eyes. All traditions must always be in conformity to and subservient to the teachings found in scripture (2 Thess. 2:15, 3:6).

The conscience-stricken jailer at Philippi pleaded, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Most people today, Catholic or Protestant, would reply, "Be good, don't sin and live by God's commandments." Scripture, however, teaches nothing that supports man's own efforts to gain his salvation (Rom. 3:10-12, 18-20; Gal. 3:10; 2 Tim. 3:16-17)).

Jesus alone met God's requirement of perfect holiness and only Christ's sinless perfection, imputed to believers, allows them to stand safely before Omnipotence. Without God's unmerited, undeserved gift of saving faith, men remain lost and destined for the Lake of Fire (Matt. 5:48; Rom. 6:5-12, 17-18, 22-23, 8:1, 29-30, 38-39; John 3:16).

God sent His Only Son to seek and to save those He chose for adoption into His own family (Eph. 1:4-13; Matt. 1:21, 18:11; Luke 19:10; John 1:12-13; Rom. 4:24-25, 9:15-16).

The grant to sinners of faith from God the Holy Spirit yields resurrected spiritual life to those "risen with Christ" who were formerly "dead in trespasses and sins." Salvation is nowhere in scripture stated to be a reward or a payment for good works performed by man, but rather is solely based on Christ's finished work alone and to His glory alone (Acts 4:12; Rom. 5:9-10; Eph. 2:1-10; Gal. 2:16, 3:10-13).

A convicted criminal may receive a pardon, but he cannot free himself. If a sinner could save himself, then God the Son died to no purpose (Gal. 2:20-21).

Christ willingly served our sentence which is the spiritual equivalent of an eternity in hell. He suffered torment, shed His blood and died on a cross of crucifixion for undeserving lost sinners (Rom. 3:23-28; Heb. 9:12-22, 10:12-14).

Since we ALL are guilty condemned sinners whose “good works” are what scripture labels “filthy rags,” we can contribute nothing toward our redemption. We do, after receiving the gift of faith, testify to our complete trust in Jesus Christ and HIS righteousness alone. “Whosoever believeth shall not perish.” John wrote, “the blood” of Christ cleanses us from ALL “our sin” so that there are none left for man’s vain attempts to contribute to his “self-redemption” (Isa. 64:6; John 10:27-28; 1 John 1:7).

Catholic theologians teach that man must atone for his sins in Purgatory. Even popes are said to suffer there. The problem is this belief clashes with God’s grace which is what scripture teaches.

The doctrine of Purgatory is not found in the Canon of Scripture. It is found in pagan religions and ancient writings not a part of God’s Word.

God graciously expunges our record of sin and grants us eternal life the moment we are indwelt with the Holy Spirit. This eternal gift is granted a new believer wholly separate from human works of “righteousness.” Salvation’s foundation is our God-given spiritual willingness to believe and to declare our allegiance and our love for our Savior Jesus Christ (John 3:1-8, 15-18; Rom. 10:9-10,13).

Once regenerated, the Lord no longer sees us as alienated sinners but rather as children of His own household. We are now invested with and covered by the earned righteousness of Jesus Christ. We are the recipients of what Jesus promised, the “peace which passes all understanding,” an eternal possession (John 1:12-13; Rom. 5:12; Phil. 1:6, 4:7).

A self-worshipping, pride-filled race finds it humanly impossible to abandon trusting in a perceived righteousness to totally transfer trust to Christ’s righteousness alone. Life before salvation is one the Bible calls “dead in trespasses and sins” (Col. 2:13; Eph. 2:1-3). Spiritually, the unsaved are likened to living in a “house built on sand” that eventually falls. Self-reformation merely cleans the outer man but a nature at enmity with God remains and continues under condemnation. Our responsibility and opportunity is to come to Christ who takes “no pleasure in the death of the wicked” (John 6:37).

Human works salvation plans are deadly side-paths leading away from the grace of a sovereign God; a simple gospel that allows none of man’s traditions. Membership in no organization, church or denomination can of itself guarantee eternal life for even one lost soul. God alone can forgive sins (no clergy have such power) and then only for those He calls (Matt. 9:1-8; John 1:12-13, 3:16, 6:44, 65, 10:27-28).

Though incomprehensible to natural men, the Holy Spirit abides in the heart of saved souls (John 14:17, 20; Rom. 8:9-11; 1 Cor. 3:16; Eph. 3:17-19; 2 Tim. 1:14).

The Bible clearly teaches that each soul drawn to Christ by the Father has a living intimate family relationship with the Creator (John 6:44, 14:6; Rom. 6:9-11; Eph.1:4-12; 1 Tim. 2:5-6; Heb. 9:12-14, 28, 10:10-18, 25-27, 13:20-21).

A proper teaching of the Ten Commandments causes Christians to understand the sinfulness of image adoration. Even the Roman Catholic version of the Bible properly reads, “Ye

shall not make images ... ye shall not bow down to them or worship them.” Adoration IS worship and idolatry in ANY form is forbidden by God (Exodus 20:4-6).

The Roman Catholic catechism alleges that the prohibition is only for images of God or any god. Scripture (God’s Word) gives no freedom for image adoration of saints, angels, Mary or Christ. The commandment is to make NOTHING in the shape of anything on earth (including wafers of bread) to be adored or bowed down to. What God has expressly forbidden should never appear in a worship service whether in a church or in personal devotions (Deut. 4:15-16, 5:8, 7:25, 27:15; Ex. 20:4; Lev. 26:1).

Scripture frequently commands idol destruction (Ex. 23-24, 34:13; Lev. 19:4, 26:30; Num. 33:52; Judges 10:13-14; 1 Kings 14:9, 22-23; 2 Kings 18:3-4; Ps. 78:58, 97:7, 115:4-9; Isa. 10:10-11).

Also in the New Testament God continues to warn against image adoration (Acts. 7:39-42, 17:16, 29; Rom. 1:23; 1 Cor. 6:9, 10:7, 14; 1 John 5:21; Rev. 2:14, 9:20, 21:8, 22:15).

While the early church did use the fish as a logo of the mission – statement of Christianity for all to be “fishers of men,” it was never worshipped or adored nor bowed down before. It was not until the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> century AD that images began to be prominently displayed. Other interventions also began to appear that were not part of Christ’s gospel. This is not surprising considering that most of the New Testament epistles were written to wrestle against error already creeping into the church in the first century (Matt. 4:19; Eph. 6:12).

At the Councils of Nicea (AD 787) and Trent (1562) images were made acceptable for “veneration.” Scripture contrariwise, makes this a forbidden practice. God alone is to receive adoration (which is worship) and He shares His glory with no other person or “carved image” (Ex. 20:3-5; 2 Chron. 33:7, 34:3-4).

A doctrine not found in scripture suggests we are entitled to a power to enlist dead saints to petition God on our behalf and also that we may “borrow” from the surplus of their “merit” with God. These notions are completely foreign to Biblically-based Christianity.

Our Lord Jesus Christ taught His disciples (and us) to pray directly to God, “Our Father which art in Heaven....” There is ONE mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ alone. We have the freedom to speak directly to the Father and to petition Him in Jesus’ name – only! (Matt. 6:9, 7:7-11; Luke 11:2; John 15:16; Eph. 3:12; Heb. 4:15-16).

Keep looking up.

**Main Source:** Answers to My Catholic Friends.

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# Pray Without Ceasing

By Nancy Long

Psalm 1:1-2 – *“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful, But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.”*

Phil. 4:6 – *“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.”*

Luke 18:1b – ..... *men ought always to pray, and not to faint”*

Col. 3:2 – *“Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.”*

Col. 4:2 – *“Continue in prayer, and watch in the same, with thanksgiving.”*

1 Thess. 5:16-18 – *“Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”*

What does it mean to “pray without ceasing”? Head bowed, eyes closed, hands folded, on one’s knees, perhaps, or laying prostrate, in a physical position of praying? Is this what the apostle Paul means when He exhorts us believers to “pray without ceasing”? This can be confusing to some, to say the least ..... how can one be expected to do this?

John Bunyan, celebrated English author and Puritan preacher, probably best remembered for writing the Christian allegory, “The Pilgrim’s Progress, quoted: *“Prayer will make a man cease from sin; or sin will entice a man to cease from prayer.”* Prayer is crucial, wouldn’t you agree? Another quote from Charles Haddon Spurgeon, who was an extremely influential Baptist preacher in England: *“Prayer is not the least we can do, it is the very most we can do!”* It seems as though these two men would concur, and be in harmony, with Paul’s admonition, *“Pray without ceasing!!”* Again, is this expectation even possible?

Delight yourself, take pleasure, and find contentment, in God’s Word! Meditate on it day and night (Psalm 1:2-3)! Ponder it, savor it, immerse and saturate yourself in it!! Be in a constant, and uninterrupted, disposition of thankfulness to God!!! An attitude of prayer ought to permeate all we do!

How does one maintain an attitude of prayer and thanksgiving? Memorize portions of Scripture, using some of what you’ve learned in prayers, before retiring at the end of a long day. Pray when God awakens you in the morning, or even if He does so in the middle of the night.

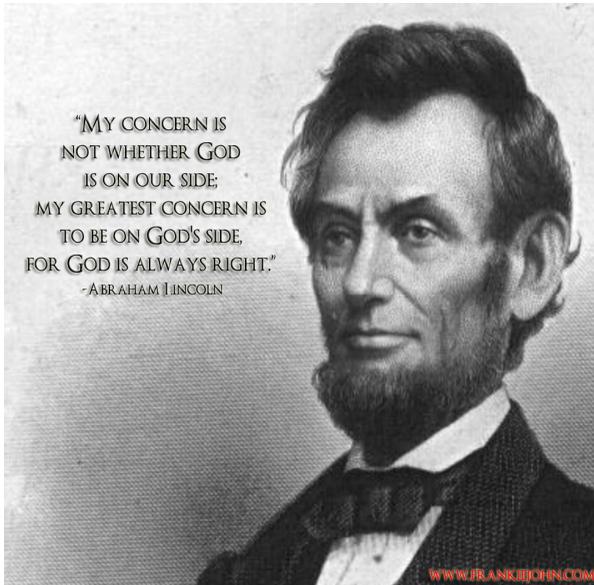
Pray at the dawning of a new day. Pray for your family, your neighbors, your unsaved, as well as your saved, friends. Pray while brushing your teeth .... while getting dressed, before meals, after meals, while cleaning the house or changing the baby, while driving ..... prior to witnessing to someone, or really before speaking to anyone, that the name of Jesus might find its way into conversations. Pray before responding to one who might've just spoken harshly to you. Pray during, and through, your trials, maintaining a grateful spirit *in* them.

Do you see what I'm trying to express here? Prayer is not only an activity. Prayer is to be a way of life. Prayer is a heart attitude. Prayer is a relationship with Jesus Christ, the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, the Master Potter, the One who has a specific and unique plan for your life ..... and for mine (Jer. 29:11)!! Therefore all thoughts, all words, all deeds ..... **everything** in life becomes an opportunity to commune with God ..... thus praying without ceasing!!

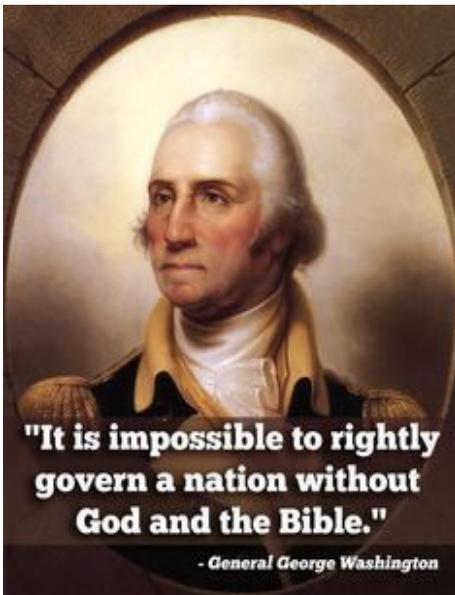
We humans naturally, without thinking, breathe all day and all night long. For Christians, prayer should be a bit like physical breathing ..... a vital, and essential part of our lives. Continual, constant, steadfast, and fervent prayer, coming from the mouths and/or the hearts of God's children is, I'm sure, sweet music to the Father's ears, and is as well, of extreme value to the one who prays (James 5:16b). Once again, my Defender friends, I pray for you, as I ask you to pray for me, that each one of us keeps that desire to delight in His Word, setting our minds "**on things above**", and focusing on ever being in tune to the leading of the Holy Spirit.



Presidents with February Birthdays



February 12th

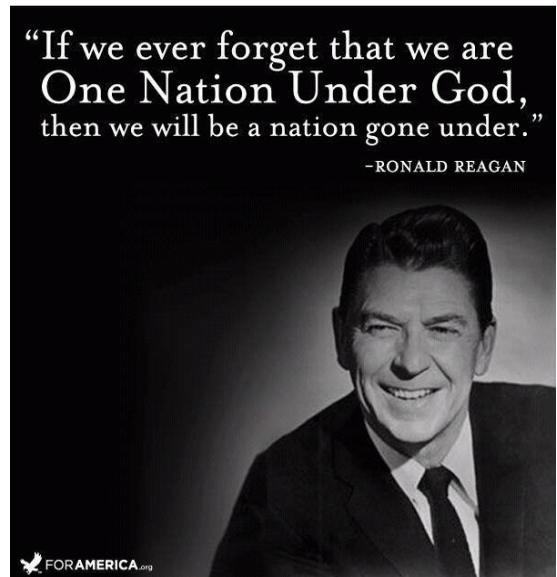


February 22nd



William Henry Harrison—February 9th

*"I deem the present occasion sufficiently important and solemn to justify me in expressing to my fellow citizens a profound reverence for the Christian religion, and a thorough conviction that sound morals, religious liberty, and a just sense of religious responsibility are essentially connected with all true and lasting happiness."*



February 6th

*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
Friday Night Youth Group	7:00 PM