

# LIVING WATERS NEWSLETTER

HARRY BOWERS, EDITOR

7844 GRIMBSY CIRCLE, HARRISBURG, N.C. 28075

MAY 2007

## GODS HOLY WAR

We live in a world at war. Our parents went through the First World War. Many of us witnessed the Second World War and Korea. The Viet Nam War, the Cold War and Desert Storm are fresh in our minds. We are now witnessing the war in Iraq and the war against terror. Various conflicts around the world are dominating the news. Our nation is at war today. We are in a verbal war, a war of words, a clash of ideologies both politically and culturally. For example the word “compassionate” to some means helping a poor unmarried woman have an abortion or rescuing a seal from ruthless Eskimos and whales from being destroyed. To others being compassionate requires we block abortion clinics and prevent a murder, and let Eskimos and whalers provide for their families. To some people “freedom” means the right to display graphic photographs of sexual immorality in magazines, movies, the internet and even in prominent museums at taxpayer’s expense. To others “freedom” means the liberty to do what is right.

There is a war being fought in education. Battles are fought over curriculums, sex education, drugs, condoms, safety, vouchers, dress codes, illiterate graduates, sports, school funding, teacher capabilities and various other subjects too numerous to mention. Other wars are being fought today over the family resulting in radical feminists and gay rights advocates making the traditional family obsolete. A culture war is being fought over movies, television., music videos, internet pornography, modern fashion and discipline of children. The 90’s emerged as the “green” decade and birthed an environmental war in which “global warming” has become the up to date topic of discussion.

Fundamentalist preachers assign the reason for these wars to the fact that we are living in the “end times” when the power and activity of Satan, preparing the world for the anti Christ, will be so great that nothing can save us except the so-called “rapture” which will take us out of it all. It is my opinion that both the political and cultural wars have been brought about because we are a people under the judgment of God. In Scripture “judgment” means more than punishment. In judgment God comes near to discriminate and make distinctions. Judgment is pictured as a winepress (Lam. 1:5; Isa. 63:3; Rev. 19:15) also as a winnowing fork (Mt. 3:12). When God judges He separates the wheat from the chaff, the sheep from the goats. II Peter 3:10 teaches that in judgment the earth and its works will be “discovered” (literal translation). Times of judgment reveal the hearts of men and forces them to a crisis of choice. When people make choices they are drawn into conflict with those who make different choices. To live in a time of judgment is to live in a time of conflict. There is no doubt we face vicious attacks from powerful enemies in high places. As Erich Sauer points out in his book *The King of the Earth*: “A mighty struggle between opposing powers fills the history of the universe. It

is the gigantic battle between good and evil, light and darkness, Satan and God! And man destined for kingship and nobility, has become a combatant.” However, in the midst of battle we are blessed, despite war we give thanks. We constitute the greatest nation on earth. We are the greatest empire that ever existed. We are the last great hope of mankind. We enjoy justice, liberty, prosperity and peace despite the present conflict and turmoil. We will overcome our enemies and our nation will endure forever. Other nations, like birds seeking refuge in a spreading tree find security in our branches. We are the nation that will defeat all our enemies within and without in this warfare. *This is not a description of the United States, but a description of the church!* which is God’s holy nation (I Peter 2:9).

Matthew 21:23 records the fact that the kingdom of God would be taken away from the Jews and given to a nation producing the fruit of it. In I Peter 2:9 this nation is said to be the church. There are but two kingdoms (nations) in the world, the nations of the world representing the kingdom of darkness and the church representing the kingdom of His Dear Son. The kingdom of darkness was established by Satan when he lied, deceived man and brought sin and death into the world. The kingdom of God was established by Christ in His life, death, resurrection and ascension. This is a new order of things that is experienced by His church now and experienced fully at his return. We already feast with Christ at His table (I Cor. 10:16) although we hunger and thirst after righteousness. We already are citizens of heaven (Eph. 2:6) although we live in this world. We have already come to Mount Zion, the New Jerusalem, the City of the Living God (Heb. 12:18-24) although we groan for the redemption of our bodies (Rom. 8:24). We are already new creations in Christ (II Cor. 5:17) although we have not yet put on immortality (I Cor. 15:50-57). The ministry of Christ has opened the way into heaven for us and by the Holy Spirit we can now enjoy all the blessings of God’s presence. Christ’s work completely revolutionized the whole world and ushered in a radical reversal of humanity’s way of living. He achieved a revolution in three ways. First, he achieved a revolution in the heavens. Satan once had access to heaven (Job 1 & 2) and was in a position of power. Now Christ has been exalted and is now reigning (Eph. 1:19-23) and will reign until the last enemy, death, is defeated (I Cor. 15:25). Second, He achieved a revolution in the sanctuary by opening the true heavenly sanctuary. Leviticus shows man’s exclusion from God’s presence, but now the veil has been rent (Mt. 27:51) heaven, the true tabernacle, is opened to us (Heb. 9 & 10). Third, He achieved a revolution on earth. In the Old Testament God’s work centered on one nation, Israel. In the New Testament God has created a new man (Eph. 2:14, 15) who is to make disciples of all nations. All this means that in this mortal conflict we have adequate means to win the victory. We, the church, represent the Almighty upon the earth as His Holy nation. We are God’s answer to the world. A fact unknown by the world, and the church as

well, is that the church is God's primary agent in history and whatever He does in the world He does it through the church. The church, then is the Holy army of the Lord engaged in struggle so eloquently described by Eric Sauer. Again we quote from his book *The King of the Earth*: "In the midst of this mighty conflict between light and darkness the position of man in God's plan for the world takes on a special significance for us. [Man] not only is the royal representative of God on earth, called in his kingdom to joy in nature, to the investigation of nature and control over nature, and to cultural progress, but also the instrument in God's hand for the liberation and transfiguration of nature. Indeed, it is just from His dwelling place, the planet called earth, so small in the vastness of the universe and yet so important, that the triumph of the Divine revelation is to spread abroad throughout the universe, until finally there shall be not only a new earth but also a new heaven. Therefore man, conscious of his nobility, should walk worthily of his high calling."

The sad fact we are facing today is that the church, not being aware of its high calling and failure to realize the paramount aspect of this Holy War, for the most part is obsessed with trivialities. We have permitted the idolaters of power and mammon to set our priorities and convince us that the really big issues confronting the world are political and can be solved on a social level. We haven't understood that faithfulness of God's people is more important than a hundred pieces of legislation. As Charles Colson in his book *Kingdoms in Conflict*, in describing the overthrow of Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines states: "What is remarkable about the story of the Philippines is that millions of people believed more in the power of prayer than in the power of politics; they believed the message 'repent, be converted, and trust in Jesus' could topple even an authoritarian leader. They believed their deliverance was spiritual." The proper observance of the Lord's supper will have a more profound effect on the world than the next assembly of congress and the Sunday school class and Wednesday night service are more important than any meeting of the heads of state.

At this point we may ask: "Could not an omnipotent, all powerful, all knowing God, creator of the universe, accomplish His will upon the earth without the church, why did He have to send Christ to die, why go through all the troublesome adversity and distress of the Old Testament history to redeem man, why give weak and frail people the commission to change the world?" To understand this, and many other questions, go back to Genesis and read about God's purpose in the beginning (Gen. 1:26-28). We must first understand that man was put in charge of the earth (Psalm 115:16). The earth has been given a bad press by the prophecy preachers who have given it over to Satan to be destroyed, neglecting the promise of Romans 8:21 that the earth will be redeemed. In Hebrews 2:5-8 in the context of the "great salvation" the writer quotes Psalm 8 and shows that all things have been put under the subjection of man. This echoes the beginning chapters of Genesis, that man was put in charge of God's creation. He goes on to speak of Jesus "tasting death" and "bringing many sons into glory" which

has to do with "all things being subjected to man". But, he declares, we do not yet see this happening. Why? If it were God's intention that man be in charge of His creation why do we not see this happening. The answer is again found in Genesis. The purpose of creation was to give glory to God (Rev. 4:11, Isa. 43:7, Rom. 1:20). Man's sin corrupted not only himself but all creation (Rom. 8:19-23). But Christ in His ministry "rendered powerless he who had the power of death, that is the devil" (Heb. 2:14) and He "cast out the ruler of this world" (Jn. 12:31). This, then, means that the church is fully equipped to engage in the battle which is destined to fulfill God's purpose in the creation of the world. Yet there is much teaching today that says there is not much hope that the gospel will influence and change society until the return of Christ, at which time He will begin to rule the nations. Then and only then will we see society changed. This is not just the view of a few fundamentalist preachers. Dr. Jim Nelson Black, acclaimed as a noted research scholar at the University of Paris, in his book *When Nations Die*: states: "There is not much hope that the gospel will influence and change society until the return of Christ, at which time he will begin to rule the nations". Evidently we have missed the message of the New Testament's most quoted passage from the Old Testament, Psalm 110. "The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies the footstool of your feet' The Lord will stretch forth your scepter from Zion saying, 'Rule in the midst of your enemies'". God speaks to Jesus and informs Him that He will sit at His right hand until His enemies are conquered (the last enemy to be conquered is death, I Cor. 15:26). God's throne is in Heaven. This is where Jesus will remain until He comes again in final judgment. Jesus sits at God's right hand while His people (Zion) extend His rule. He is now reigning and we have part in this reign.

If our "entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings being made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority" can enable the kings and authorities to so rule "in order that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity" (I Tim. 2:1.2) are we not sharing in His reign? Proverbs 16:7 says "if a man's ways please the Lord, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him" (what an answer to church fights). This verse shows how it is that the church governs the world, how she controls the governments of the nations. When the church is faithful God changes men. This is further illustrated in Acts 5:11-14. The church is always in charge of culture. We don't have to take over the government, we already have it. We just have to start using it aright. Christ is ruling "in the midst of His enemies". The world is not aware of His rule, and neither are many church people, yet the most exciting thing that is going on today is what He is doing "in the midst of His enemies". This is what the church is all about.

Another thing people are overlooking is that "the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Hab. 2:14). It was in Israel's darkest hour of unbelief that God said "All the earth will be full of the glory of the Lord" (Num. 14:21). The gospel is still the power of God unto salvation and God is still in charge.



