

LIVING WATERS NEWSLETTER

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GOD AND THE NATIONS

The Scriptures have much to say about God and the nations of the world. The mistake of Israel in the Old Testament was the fact that because they were the “chosen” they thought God had no concern for other nations. It was prophesied that in spite of the fact that the nations would be in an uproar and the kings of the earth would take their stand, and the rulers would take counsel together against His Anointed, God would give Jesus “the nations” as His inheritance and the very ends of the earth as His possession (Psalm 2:1, 2, 8). Revelation 1:5 states that Christ “is the ruler of the kings of the earth.”

Concerning the nations, Paul states that God “made from one *blood* every nation of mankind to live on the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times, and the boundaries of their habitation” (Acts 17:26) and there is “no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.” (Rom. 13:1). The prophets understood that God’s concern was with all nations (Isaiah 2:1-4; Micah 4:1-4), and the nations that harmed His people would be judged and punished. He would tolerate the evil of nations only so long (Gen. 15: 14-16). Chapter ten of Genesis is the record of God establishing the nations in the world after the flood. The sons of Noah, Ham, Shem and Japheth are listed according to their genealogies and “according to their families, according to their languages, by their lands, according to their nations. These are the families of the sons of Noah according to their genealogies, by their nations, and out of these nations were separated on the earth after the flood” (Gen. 10: 31, 32). After this, because of their sin in building the tower of Babel, God scattered mankind across the face of the earth. This divided mankind into independent, sovereign, language-based nations (Gen. 11:1-9). This illustrates God’s judgment of the nations. The next record of God’s judgment is that of Sodom and Gomorrah, for which Abraham pleaded to God to spare the cities based upon ten people found to be righteous. They were not found and His judgment fell. In the course of the conversation Abraham had with God in pleading for the cities Abraham said “Shall not the *Judge of all the earth* deal justly?” (Gen. 18:25). All the nations are subject to the rule of God.

The prophets speak many times of God’s judgment against the nations. Isaiah warns the following nations of the judgment to come after He is finished judging Israel: Assyria (Isaiah 14:25-27), Moab (15, 16), Damascus (17), Egypt (19), Tyre and Tarshish (23). Actually the whole earth will be judged: “Behold the Lord lays the earth waste, devastates it, distorts its surface, and scatters its inhabitants. And the people will be like the priest, the servant like his master, the maid like her mistress, the buyer like the seller, the lender like the borrower, the creditor like the debtor. The earth will be completely laid waste and completely despoiled, for the Lord has spoken this word. The earth mourns and withers, the world fades and withers, the exalted of the people of the earth fade away. The earth is also polluted by its inhabitants, for they transgressed laws, violated statutes, broke the everlasting covenant. Therefore, a curse devours the earth, and those who live in it are held guilty.

Therefore, the inhabitants of the earth are burned and few men are left” (Isaiah 24: 1-6). The prophet Obadiah warned Edom (the descendants of Esau) of coming Judgment. Nahum warned Nineveh. Zephaniah warned Ammon and Moab (the descendants of Lot’s incest) (2:8-11). He also warned Ethiopia (ver. 12) and Nineveh (ver. 13-15). Jonah also warned Nineveh, and the people believed and repented. Jeremiah warned pagan nations as well as Judah (46-51). Daniel said “He removes kings and raises up kings” (Dan. 2:21). In the New Testament the judgment of God upon the nations (Gentiles) is vividly portrayed in Romans 1:18-32. Their sins that brought the wrath of God upon them were: “they suppressed the truth in unrighteousness” (ver. 18), “even though they knew God they did not honor Him as God” (ver. 21), “they exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures” (ver. 23), and “they did not see fit to have God in their knowledge” (ver. 28). The judgment God sent upon them was: “God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity (ver. 24), God gave them over to degrading passions” (ver. 26), and “God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which were not proper” (ver. 28). This continues to be a judgment of God upon the nations today because, for the most part, all nations of the world are guilty of comparable sins. When the “wickedness of man is great upon the earth” His “Spirit will not strive with man forever” (Gen.6:3,5), the nation’s “iniquity will become complete” (Gen.15:16) then like Israel “until there is no remedy” (II Chron. 36:16), God’s wrath is unleashed. Jim Nelson Black in his book *When Nations Die* quotes Alexis de Tocqueville as saying “If the lights that guides us ever go out, they (nations) will fade little by little, as if of their own accord...we therefore should not console ourselves by thinking that the barbarians are still a long way off. Some peoples may let the torch be snatched from their hands, but others stamp it out themselves.” Then he writes: “Just 140 years after the publication of Darwin’s *Origin of the Species*, the nations of Europe and North America are lost in a sea of doubt and confusion. Millions have seemingly lost their moral compass, and to fulfill their innate spiritual longs, they are turning to a witch’s brew of New Age beliefs, paganism, environmental pantheism, humanistic egoism, and even devil worship. Deprived of faith in the one true Good, men and women will worship anything, even foreign ideologies and destructive beliefs that will destroy society. The pagan beliefs and false ideologies of our day have robbed millions of people of the meaning and value of life. And the tortured humanistic philosophies of America’s social reformers have contributed to deep inner sickness that is destroying the soul of the nation.” God will allow nations to continue in such behavior only so long, then His wrath is unleashed.

A little known and unrecognized fact is that nations (civil authorities) are covenant institutions under God and will be held accountable to Him whether an elected official or the dictatorial tyrant. “Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities for there is no authority except from God and those which exist are established by God. Therefore he who resists

authority has opposed the ordinance of God...it is a minister of God to you for good...the rulers are servants of God" (Rom. 13:1-6). However it is as Charles Colson wrote in *Kingdoms In Conflict*: "Governments, with rare exception, seek to expand their power beyond the mandate to restrain evil, preserve order, and promote justice. Most often they do this by venturing into religious and moral areas. The reason is twofold: the state needs religious legitimization for its policies and an independent church is the one structure that rivals the state's claim for ultimate allegiance." This is illustrated in the governments mandate that legalizes the killing of over one million six hundred thousand unborn babies a year. The Alan Guttmacher Institute reports that this number means one baby is aborted every twenty six seconds and a hundred thirty six babies are aborted every hour. God brought judgment upon Israel for building "high places of Topheth to burn their sons and daughter in the fire" (Jer. 7:31) and "they made their sons and daughters pass through the fire" as an offering to Baal (II Kings 17:17). If God's judgment was upon nations, including Israel, which practiced such heinous deeds as child sacrifice to these gods, how much more His judgment upon the sacrificing of babies today?

Although God punishes nations for their disobedience and evil, His ultimate purpose is to save them. Jesus' commission to the Apostles was to "make disciples of all the nations..." (Matt. 28:19). The New Testament often speaks of the redemption of the "world": "The Father has sent the Son to be the savior of the world" (I John 4:14), "And He Himself is the propitiation of our sins, and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole World" (I John 2:2), "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29), "God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through Him" (John 3:17). Paul applies the reconciling work of Christ to the world: "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself (II Cor. 5:19). The world is made up of nations and God said to His Son: "Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance and the very ends of the earth as Thy possession" (Psalm 2:8). Since His people are "heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8:17), Paul asked "do you not know that the saints will judge the world?" (I Cor. 6:2). Jesus said: "He who overcomes, and keeps My deeds until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of Iron..." (Rev. 2:26, 27). David said: "He will shatter kings in his day of His wrath. He will judge among the nations..." (Psalm 110: 5, 6). The reason for the judgment of the nations is because "To Him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and men of every language might serve Him" (Dan. 7:14). Psalm 72:8-11 states: "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth. Those who dwell in the wilderness will bow down to Him, and His enemies will lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and the isles will bring presents. The kings of Sheba and Seba will offer gifts. Yes, all kings shall fall down before Him. All nation shall serve Him." When John was shown a vision of "the bride, the wife of the Lamb, the holy city, new Jerusalem" (Rev. 21:9, 10), he states: "And the nations shall walk by its light, and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory into it...and they (the kings) shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it" (Rev. 21:24, 25). The nations will be healed because "the leaves of the tree of life were for the healing of the nations" (Rev. 22:2). Again...the nations will be healed.

FROM THE INTERNET

Sometimes from the many e-mails we get on the internet there is something worth passing on. Below is such an item. It is an editorial published in a small Michigan Newspaper.

WHAT HAS AMERICA BECOME?

Has America become the land of the special interest and the home of the double standard? Let's see: If we lie to the Congress, it's a felony and if Congress lies to us, it's just politics; if we dislike a black person, we're racist and if a black person dislikes whites, it's their first amendment right; the government spends millions to rehabilitate criminals and they do almost nothing for the victims; in public schools you can teach that homosexuality is OK, but you better not use the word of God in the process; you can kill an unborn child, but it's wrong to execute a mass murderer; we don't burn books in America, we just rewrite them; we got rid of the communist and socialist threat by renaming them progressives; we are unable to close our border with Mexico, but have no problem protecting the thirty-eighth parallel in Korea; if you protest against President Obama's policies you're a terrorist, but if you burned the American flag or George Bush in effigy it was your first amendment right.

You can have pornography on TV or the internet, but you better not put a nativity scene in a public park during Christmas; we have eliminated all criminals in America, they are now called sick people; we can use a human fetus for medical research, but it's wrong to use an animal. We take money from those who work hard for it and give it to those who don't want to work; we all support the Constitution, but only when it supports our political ideology; we still have freedom of speech, but only if we are being politically correct; parenting has been replaced with Ritalin and video games; the land of opportunity is now the land of hand outs; the similarity between Hurricane Katrina and the gulf oil spill is that neither president did anything to help.

And how do we handle a major crisis today? The government appoints a committee to determine who's at fault, then threatens them, passes a law, raises taxes and tells us the problem is solved so they can get back to their re-election campaign. What has happened to the land of the free and the home of the brave?"

Ken Huber - Tuber City, Michigan

A more important question is: Where is the church in all this? The early church became the target of persecution because it "turned the world upside down" (Acts 17:6), threw cities into confusion, and threatened to destroy the economy (Acts 16:21; 17:6). Today's church has turned itself upside down and crawled into bed with a world that has always been upside down. Instead of being a threat to the world's economy the church is dependant upon it to finance their massive structures and spending programs. Is it any wonder that the church that lets the world determine its music, its method of evangelism and its reason for existence poses no threat to the worldly system? In a few short years the early church had swept across the Empire, confronted a pagan culture, demonstrated to the world a new and living way and made the Roman emperors sit up and take notice. Where is this happening today?

