

“Issachar’s Burden”

“understanding the times...to know what to do”

11/06/08



HAVE WE MADE THE RIGHT CHOICE?

In the past few months I have been discussing the purpose of Christians in relation to the political arena and how we are to be a part of seeing God returned to His proper place in America. We have determined that God is neither Democrat nor Republican. There are Christians in both parties. Elections reveal the will of the people. Have we made the right choice?

This morning, like every other morning, the sun came up. I'm being facetious, but, it seems we are overrun with pessimism in light of the news. The headline at cnn.com read, "Change Has Come to America". We in the church have been hearing a sound of a new era for some time now, thus, this is not a new sound to our ears. We have been shifting in our thinking in relation to the kingdom of God, and now we must shift in our thinking in how we relate to our nation. If we don't, we risk becoming a non-player in a game with much higher stakes than how our life is affected by an election of a president.

Yesterday America elected a new president, a governmental leader, not a spiritual leader. Although some of the brethren are convinced that this is a sad day for America, I cannot share the same sentiment. I still believe that the hope for America is not in who is elected to the highest office of our land, but, who we as Christians choose to put our trust in and bow our hearts to in obedience and love. Individually, you may or may not have voted for the man who was chosen, but, as Americans who cherish our republic, our democracy, we must acknowledge that America as a nation has made a choice. Does this choice reflect a choice for what our God wants for America? I was recently asked a question, "Would God allow a man to be elected president that He did not want to be the president, and if so, why? My response was, God allowed Saul to be king against His wishes for the nation of Israel. Why? It was the desire of the people. Not all the people, but, enough of the people to cause Him to give them their desire, but, as the scriptures say, it only produces "leanness to their soul". Even before the votes were cast, it was obvious that our nation is on a downward spiral in a desire for the restraints of morality to be removed. It was already a given that if one man was elected, it would be a slower descent into immorality, and the

other, a quicker descent. Our choice as His people is whether or not we will respond as Americans or as His sons.

As Christians who are Americans, will we now fulfill our duty as instructed in the Bible, will we pray for and support our president? For many of you who voted, our new president may not be your choice, but, he is the president that God gave us. Do we believe Psalm 75:6-7 which says, "promotion comes not from the east, west or south, but God is the judge: He puts down one and sets up another"? Will we obey the admonition of 1 Timothy 2:1-2 which says, "I exhort that first of all, prayers and giving of thanks should be made for all men, for kings, and for all that are in authority..."? Will we react to our disappointment in who was elected, or, will we respond to the Holy Spirit by submitting our hearts and tongues to "the apostle and high priest of our profession", going before Him to hear His heart for all the nations, and then bringing that before Him in prayer for them? Or, will we continue to spew out of our mouths that which does not "hold forth the word of life" in a day when we should be manifesting to the "principalities and powers in heavenly places the manifold wisdom of God".

My real concern for America is if we as the church fall into the same posture we had the last time a Democrat was elected. I remember how we failed in our responsibility of being "salt" and "light" in a time most of the church considered to be darkness. We allowed the darkness to overwhelm us and in the midst of that darkness, instead of "doing all things without murmurings and disputings", we become those that were creating strife and division simply because we could not support a man we considered to be an "unrighteous" president. Whether or not our new president "stands for righteousness" or not, we nonetheless, are required to "stand for righteousness", and that requirement extends from the votes we cast yesterday, and into the next four years as we who must "be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom we shine as lights in the world".

If our next president is everything we fear he could be, then, we have an incredible opportunity in the next four years. And what is that opportunity? We, the people who acknowledge the one true God, Yahweh, the sons of the Everlasting Father, those who submit to the only true King, our Lord, Jesus – we can prove once and for all that we will "humble ourselves, and pray, and seek His face (not His hands and what He can do for us), and turn from our wicked ways (any way in us that is not in submission and obedience to the will of our Father)", and that we will do it not so we can have what we desire, but, so that we can "stand in the gap and make up the hedge" for the future, not only for America, but, for all the nations of the earth, for which He died.

I recently read an article by Francis Frangipane in which he stated:

"As violence, new age religions and witchcraft flourish in our schools, **ASK GOD FOR THIS NATION**. While all restraint is removed from the entertainment industry, **ASK GOD FOR THIS NATION**. While perversity dresses in normalcy,

ASK GOD FOR AMERICA. While abortion remains protected by laws, **ASK GOD WITH CONFIDENCE, WITH BOLDNESS AND WITH FAITH FOR OUR LAND.** Where you see injustice in any form, **ASK GOD FOR HIS KINGDOM TO MANIFEST ON EARTH.** Put away fear and discouragement, repent of fretting. The more we accept our place in the divine plan, the more we shall laugh at the enemies' plans. The faith that relentlessly asks God, pleases God. Now, as the fullness of times unfolds, as the world around us clothes itself in prophetic fulfillments, let us put away unbelief, let us repent for withdrawal. It is a time to boldly ask of God. As He has promised: He will give the nations as an inheritance to Christ! **WHAT SEEMS TO BE SATAN'S HOUR, FULL OF DARKNESS AND REBELLION, IS SIMPLY THE OPPORTUNITY FOR GRACE TO ABOUND TO THE GLORY OF GOD IN THE CHURCH!"**

A few years ago, in Gettysburg, PA, there was a move to bring gambling to the city. As news spread of this intention, the church began to mobilize in a grass roots effort politically to thwart the purpose of those involved with this process. At the same time, many of the local pastors began to form prayer groups among themselves and within the local churches in the city and county. I was walking with a group of pastors at the time and we convened a prayer meeting to pray that gambling would not come to the city. I will never forget the encounter I had with God that evening as we turned our hearts toward heaven to petition Him on this matter. As I made my way to a place of prayer, I first felt the resistance of the Holy Spirit as I began. When I questioned Him, His response to me was a firm rebuke on my life for waiting until something like this came up and being moved by how it might affect my life and my city. I was stunned. His correction on my heart that evening has left a lasting effect. I trust I will never be the same. His expectation of me as a local church leader in my city was that I should have already been in prayer on a consistent basis for my city, county and region. He was adamant that I had not been fulfilling a very serious duty He expected of me in "standing in the gap and making up the hedge" in an ongoing ministry to Him for the people in the realm of my influence. I had failed Him and the people by only becoming concerned when it seems that my life would be affected, not because of the eternal destiny of the people of my region.

I wonder if we've not done the same thing in relation to America. We become heavily involved in our prayer for our nation when election time rolls around. But, what are we doing in the interim? What will we be doing in the next three years? What will it take for us to be awakened to our high calling of prayer? Will we choose to ask of God, or will we continue to look to a political party or our government for the changes that are needed, not only in America but in all the nations? Will we finally be moved by the Holy Spirit into the posture and practice of becoming what we're destined for being, "a house of prayer for the nations"?

In Daniel 3:3-19, Daniel prayed a prayer for the nation that I believe is a good place for us to start in our prayer first for ourselves and then for our nation and president. I have substituted a few words in the desire to make it personal:

Dan 9:3-19

3 And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes:

4 And I prayed to the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love Him, and to them that keep His commandments;

5 **We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from Your precepts and from Your judgments:**

6 **Neither have we hearkened unto Your servants the prophets, which spoke in Your name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land.**

7 O Lord, righteousness belongs to You, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day; **to the men of America, and to the inhabitants of America, and unto all the Church, that are near, and that are far off, through all the countries where You have driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against You.**

8 O Lord, **to us belongs confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against You.**

9 To the Lord our God belongs mercies and forgivenesses, though **we have rebelled against Him:**

10 **Neither have we obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in His laws, which he set before us by His servants the prophets.**

11 **Yes, all the Church has transgressed Your law, even by departing, that they might not obey Your voice;** therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because **we have sinned against Him.**

12 And he has confirmed his words, which he spoke against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil: for under the whole heaven has not been done as has been done upon America.

13 As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us: yet **made we not our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand Your truth.**

14 Therefore has the LORD watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us: for the LORD our God is righteous in all His works which he does: for we obeyed not His voice.

15 And now, O Lord our God, that has brought Your people forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and has gotten Yourself renown, as at this day; **we have sinned, we have done wickedly.**

16 O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, **We beseech You, let Your anger and Your fury be turned away from Your church, Your holy mountain: because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, America and Your people are become a reproach to all that are about us.**

17 Now therefore, O our God, **hear the prayer of Your servants, and their supplications, and cause Your face to shine upon Your church that is desolate, for the Lord's sake.**

18 O my God, incline Your ear, and hear; open Your eyes, and behold our desolations, and the Church which is called by Your name: for we do not present our supplications before You for our righteousnesses, but for Your great mercies.

19 O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for Your own sake, O my God: for Your Church and Your people are called by Your name.

Like Daniel, will we continue to swept up into the deluge of lies being spewed forth by the media, which is nothing more than a manifestation of the “false prophet” of Revelation? Will we allow ourselves to be distracted by a man being elected as president, and all the while the spirit of antichrist is arising in our midst, even in the hearts of the people of God? Or, will we turn our hearts to the Lord, as Daniel, and turn from our sins, confess our moral failure, and ask Him to forgive us and cause His face to shine upon us? This is our choice today. This is a “vote” we must all participate in. If we don’t, we won’t stand before our King and blame a president or a government. It’s within our sphere of responsibility and influence to make a difference and to be the true agents of change in a time of change.

Our president is a man. Our King is the Lord, our only true refuge in these perilous times. No matter where we stand positionally on eschatology, these are our “end times”. This is our generation. This is our kairos moment. We must pray to our King for our president and this nation, and not only this nation, for “the nations”. As Americans and as Christians, we must support our president, irregardless of how we voted, whether we agree with his policies and agenda, and lastly, whether or not we believe he is a “true Christian”. Like it or not, we cannot be found looking to him or our government as the solution to the world’s problems. We have a Father who is the One we should be looking to and asking ourselves, “How can I more fully cooperate with Him to bring about the change He desires, first in us, His church, and for His kingdom’s advancement, in these uncertain days?”

It is a time for Christians to set the pace and to take up the mantle of responsibility to example to all of America what it means to live our life as sons of God in expressing the heart and nature of the Father to a generation that is in desperate need of “fathers”. We will not change this nation by electing the “right” president, nor any other elected official. Many Americans believe today that we have made a choice for “change we can believe in”. Others believe the wrong choice was made for “change we cannot endure”. Yet, the needed change for all the nations is only found in giving our heart to the Lord, Jesus Christ, our one true King, allowing Him to change us from within, and then, from within, we live our lives without in a way that declares His glory and extends the kingdom of God into the lives of those we encounter as we engage our fellow man around us. Then, and only then, will we see a government that we can all hope in, that of the kingdom of our God.

Richard

