

Effectual Homeland Security

January 27, 2002

...Unless the Lord guards the city, the watchman stays awake in vain. Psalm 127:1

Psalm 2:10-12; 94:20-23: The Peril

- September 11, 2001 is a date that we will never forget. We are Americans, so all of our lives were changed and impacted that day, for all of us were under attack even as we enjoyed the peace and serenity of that sunny Seattle day. Soon after that infamous day, the enemy was identified, and the war against terrorism began. While domestic patriotism soared, the Afghanistan Taliban regime was quickly eliminated. Meanwhile, the international hunt for al-Qaida terrorist cells continues, while we continue to track down the masterminds behind this terrorist network. And so, the question at this point in the war is: Are we winning? To answer that question, we must turn to the Word and believe it, versus turning to the world and believing what we see there.
- To answer that question, we need to ask ourselves some more: As a nation, are we kissing the Son? As a nation, are we serving the Lord with fear and trembling, and are we putting our trust in Him? Do we devise evil by law, and condemn innocent blood? God's Word declares that the nation which rejects the Son and codifies evil in its laws, is a nation which will perish in the way and be cut off.
- On the brink of national disintegration, our only hope is repentance and a return to the Biblical antithesis. But we pervert the antithesis and reveal our rejection of the Son by calling evil good and good evil. We don't just commit evil, we institutionalize it. Are we good? By law, we have said that the dismemberment of an American child in the womb is a morally legitimate, good, and righteous thing to protect. By means of law, we exalt and protect sodomy, offering help to the morally narrow and unenlightened through diversity training and sensitivity programs.
- The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven upon this nation in the handing of us over to our vile passions and lusts of the heart. It has pleased God to cast us into this moral vortex, judging our nation by giving us over long before September of 2001 ever came around. And when the commonly understood judgment occurred that day in September, did we repent and kiss the Son? No, our polytheistic nation fled to our idols for deliverance. On the mantle of our devotion, the Son was but One of many whom we sought for help.
- How did this happen? It has happened through the discipling of this nation by the Church. But we have not taught this nation to observe all that Jesus commanded. Instead, we have taught this nation that individualistic, autonomous choice is the highest virtue. We have told them how to make a written document living and breathing. Our prohibitionist morality has instructed the nation on how to favor the traditions of men versus the commandments of God. Idolatry we promote under the name of ecumenical unity, and male abdication in church leadership we reclassify as contemporary and relevant egalitarianism. We have taught them that their choice is paramount, their entertainment our objective, and their polytheistic faith acceptable before god, whomever he, she, it, or they might be. We are the problem.
- So what is the solution? Is there any hope for this nation? While the Church currently is the problem, the Church most assuredly is the solution. But we must fight not with the weapons of this world. We must repent, regardless of what God chooses to do with this nation. We must worship the Living God. For if there will be deliverance, it will be by means of assembly, the corporate gathering of the saints to worship the Triune God of Scripture. Corporate worship is the formal response to all unbelief, including terrorism. Worship is used by God to define the antithesis, scatter His enemies, and destroy those who hate Him. And He does this through worship of Him by His people, drawing the nations unto Himself. Apart from worship that is pleasing to God, there is absolutely no hope for this nation, or any nation for that matter, for we the Church are the ones who must first kiss the Son before the nations will stream to the presence of God.

Zechariah 8:20-23: The Pilgrimage of the Nations

- The presence of God in our corporate midst has been the evangelistic hope of God's people under the Old Covenant (Zech. 14:16-20; Is. 2:1-4; Micah 4:1-3; Hag. 2:6; Mal. 1:5) and under the New (1 Cor. 14:25; Heb. 12:26; Rev. 15:4). Assembly

was our hope in the past, assembly is our current hope, and assembly is our hope for the future. While we as individuals have responsibilities to proclaim the gospel, the cornerstone and foundation for Christ's dominion to be manifested in the world is what occurs each Sunday morning when the saints gather. Worship defines the Church, is the goal (all nations) of the Church, and worship is integral in achieving that mission. It is the chosen weapon of God to bring the nations under His dominion. It is not only a celebration of victory, but also the means to achieve that victory.

Ezekiel 14:1-8: Repentance From Our Idols

- Our temptation is to see the idolatry in the Church or in the nation today and excuse ourselves from culpability. But, we are organically linked with the Church and our nation. The issue is not of kind, but of degree. The "us/them" dichotomy is false. All minds, truly, are forges that never cease creating idols. Our first step in repentance, and towards victory over our idolatrous enemies, will be repentance from our own idols. Jesus summarized the first four commandments in the Decalogue when He instructed us on the greatest commandment: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind" (Matt. 23:37). There is no room for the Christian to have divided or partial devotion towards God. But idolatrous minds and hearts lie to us, and tell us that we can love God with *most* of our being. What are your other loves that seek the devotion and worship of your heart, mind, and soul? Idolatry is pervasive today, and not some problem bound only to third world nations or to God's people under the Old Covenant. John appropriately concludes his first epistle with the words, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen"

Worship As An Instrument Of War

- **2 Chronicles 20:1-22:** In response to a hostile military coalition, Jehoshaphat gathers Judah into assembly for the purpose of deliverance from God. Worship is the response to this political and military threat. The worship assembly begins with prayer, with Jehoshaphat appealing to the covenants made to Abraham and Solomon, appealing to the promises made by God therein, and confession of Judah's utter helplessness in bringing about their own deliverance. The Word of God is then declared through Jahaziel, and God responds by agreeing that He is all-powerful, and they are completely powerless. He declares that He will fight the battle, that He will be present in their midst, and that they need only to stand still. In response to God's Word, the people praise and worship the Lord, and the Lord defeats His enemies. This is a paradigm for the Church. The corporate assembly on Sunday morning is not a retreat or safe haven, but is the fundamental way we engage the world. We gather to confess our utter helplessness, to ask God to act on our behalf as Ruler of all nations, rulers, principalities, powers, and dominions. Nations fall when we gather to worship and adore the Triune God of Scripture. They are destroyed not by the sword, but by the gospel, the power of God unto salvation.
- **1 Samuel 7:3-12:** In the context of national declension, Samuel speaks to the people. Their first act in repentance is to repent from their idolatry, to put away their idols (v. 4). Once God's people have obeyed this, the second act of repentance is to gather, to assemble for covenantal renewal as the collective people of God. There is fasting and confession, and though there is fear, their eyes are on the Lord and their trust is in Him for deliverance. Israel faces an invader, and their response is to assemble and worship the Lord of Battles, and the Lord defeats their enemies. This paradigm can also be studied in the Exodus, at Jericho, and throughout the period of the Judges. The helplessness of God's people expressed in assembly, and the power of the Living God to deliver His people.
- **Hebrews 12:18-24:** Might this paradigm only apply to the theocracy of Israel? Actually, the New Testament teaches that this principle has not disappeared, but instead has been fulfilled and expanded under the New Covenant. The principle has grown, not diminished. Why? Because we are in a different assembly. In the New Covenant assembly, we do not have just an earthly assembly, but the earthly joins with the heavenly assembly. Under the Old Covenant, they gathered at the temporary Mt. Sinai assembly which was shaken. Now we gather (note the past tense used) with the eternal Mt. Zion assembly, which cannot be shaken. When we assemble on Sunday morning, we assemble with the angels, the departed saints, and with the powers of heaven. If assembly of God's people to worship Him under the Old Covenant provoked God to fight for Israel, how much more will assembly under the New bring about the defeat of God's enemies as we ask Him to visibly manifest his dominion on earth. Therefore, let us "not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much more as you see the Day approaching" (Hebrews 10:25).

Conclusion

- God may choose to have mercy on this nation, and He may not. Regardless, our duty is to gather and worship God, the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. The hope of America is the hope of all nations, that the Church would assemble to worship and God would be pleased to inhabit our praises, scattering His (and our) enemies. When the Church does, and someday it will, the

nations will stream to the presence of God in the corporate assembly of His people. Our prayer is that this nation will stream, and the enemies of this nation will be the enemies of our God and King.

“Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify your name? For You alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship before You, for Your judgments have been manifested.” Revelation 15:4