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To Whom Much Is Given

February 2009 Commentary

Commentary 2 of 2

Sometimes I research and think through things, and it does not take a lot of words to report my results. I decided, therefore, I will write a few of them down for you since you may have thought about the same subjects too. Although I have not studied these extensively, I think I will share some of the knowledge I do have.

Do you believe God punishes nations? Do you believe he punishes his children when they sin egregiously? Do you believe he will curse or bless a nation if they do or do not live according to his standards?

If you do not believe these to be true, then you do not believe the Bible, for in Deuteronomy 27-30, God says a nation that does not obey his commandments will be cursed and those that do will be blessed. He then spells out the nature of the curses and blessings.

In the rest of the Pentateuch and the major and minor prophets, we read about how the Israeli's harvested the fruit of his promises. God also predicted end times rather extensively in his word. Much has been written about them, and people have expected them to come ever since Jesus left us and joined the Father. He had promised to come again, and throughout the ages, many have wanted him to hurry up.

Our nation was founded under God and thus shares in the covenant God made with Israel. It has been blessed during most of its existence. From time to time, though, it has suffered the curses. Almost every time things had gone awry, though, there was a return by our nation to a degree of holiness, and we again prospered. These cycles occurred regularly after the great awakening beginning in 1734. God made this possible when he entreated us in Deuteronomy 30 to "Choose life." By this, he meant we should choose to be holy by repenting and asking for forgiveness. Then we can receive the blessings.

Now it is certain the Bible tells us before Jesus returns we will have ultra hard times. All kinds of bad things will happen. Today we have come upon hard times so we have to ask, are we cursed or are we in the end times? In a society that is decadent and highly immoral, we should expect the curses to fall on us. We have dismantled our basic industry, over-spent and accumulated too much personal and corporate debt. We have been remarkably greedy; now we are reaping the consequences of our greed.

We have been sexually immoral. As a result, we have an ever escalating incidence of children born out of wedlock, and an increase in STDs. We have homosexual activists parading and rioting in the streets. Adultery has become commonplace. Rape is frequent. Kids start their sexual careers at the age of 11 and 12 years. The Matachine society wants pederasty to be legalized. Crime has increased. Alcohol and drugs have contributed to the demoralization of our society. They are part of the cause for the escalation of crime.

In addition to the things mentioned above, there is the sacrifice of our children to the god of self. The philosophy of our society is humanism that has its origin in the Garden of

End when Satan told us we could be like gods. We, therefore, do what we want to do. We have aborted 48,000,000 children in the US since Roe vs. Wade because it would be inconvenient to rear them, or as a means of birth control. God has ordered us to be fruitful and multiply and we are not doing it. He also ordered the Hebrews not to sacrifice children to Molech the god of the Ammonites, and also the Philistines and Carthaginians under another name (Leviticus 18:21 and 20:1-5). I am sure that he considers sacrifice to the humanist gods (who are ourselves) just as great an abomination as to Molech. God also demanded that a person be punished if he caused a miscarriage. Finally, he said "You shall not murder," and murder is what abortion is. Life begins at conception so to destroy a fetus is to murder it.

All of this makes some in the Kingdom of God wonder if we are cursed if not in the end times. I wondered too, so I decided to look up some of the statistics that provide evidence. This is what I found.

If we inspect some of the other problems we face in our nation today, we can certainly conclude that we may be cursed. Some of the things that are promised in the curses are happening. First of all, we have weather disasters. Hurricane Katrina, Ike and Gustav were all unusually strong and damaging. They were also part of a trend to more numerous and more damaging hurricanes affecting our continent. There has not been an increase in tornadoes or fatalities from them in the past 50 years though. In a like manner, we have not had an increased incidence of droughts since 1955. Droughts were promised by God in the scripture cited.

God promised economic disasters. Economic disasters seem to be a regular happening in our society. The first one was in 1837-1843; another occurred in 1857-1858. Others

followed in 1873, 1893, 1901, 1929-1939 and most recently in 1978-1979. These always seemed catastrophic, but we weathered the storms – except in 1929 when government intervention prolonged it. This resulted in it being called the “Great Depression.”

I was a boy during that one and remember it well. We never suffered from privation although many of our neighbors did. One amusing event occurred when my father brought home some “rabbits” he bought at a local market. We ate them for dinner all nicely fried with hot biscuits and gravy on the side. The next morning I was reading the paper when I came across an article whose headline read as follows. “Local Butcher Arrested for Selling Cats.”

It seems the butcher had gone out and killed a bunch of cats, skinned them and cut them up to sell as rabbits. I called out to my father who was in the kitchen and asked him where he got the rabbits. He told me it was at the same market where the butcher was selling cats and calling them rabbits. Mother did not take too well to that news. I vividly remember, though, that they tasted as good as domestic rabbits. I do not eat rabbit anymore.

Economic downturns occur about every 10 to 15 years. This one is not unusual; however, the steps the government is taking will likely prolong it. The real cause for the current one is greed on the part of everyone in our society. This is especially true of major banks and Wall Street. Even more perniciously, we have accumulated enormous personal debt that we are unable to pay back. Some people have as many as four or five credit cards that are maxed out. Add to that a mortgage, loans on two cars and very little is left over for health care, food, clothes and recreation. Under these circumstances, personal debt has escalated. One of my patients had 60,000 dollars in credit card debt.

If we add as examples the recent Madoff scandal, Governor Blagojevich's attempt to sell Obama's senate seat, Marcus Schrenker's financial shenanigans, as well as the earmarks that congress attaches to every appropriation bill, and the enormous salaries paid to industry executives and athletes, we can say that the sin of greed is rampant.

In light of the above, we can ask if the moral climate of our nation is what we expect in the end times. In the end times we are told, "There will be gross immorality. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God – having a form of godliness but denying its power . . . They are the kind who worm their way into homes and gain control over gullible women, who are loaded down with sins and are swayed by all kinds of evil desires, always learning but never able to come to a knowledge of the truth. Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so also these teachers oppose the truth. They are men of depraved minds, who, as far as the faith is concerned, are rejected" (2 Timothy 3:1b-8). These accusations seem to apply to our society today.

But what about the prophecies? Before the prophecies are to be fulfilled Israel has to be reconstituted as a nation, and it has been. There is a major effort to destroy it, and this was prophesied. The Temple is to be rebuilt in Jerusalem. It has not been rebuilt. The Aztec calendar ends in 2012, and unless my ears deceived me, Nostradamus predicted the end to come in 2012. Others have interpreted the book of Daniel so that they get a date similar or alarmingly close to 2012. (Others disagree with the dating of his prophecy.) I can go on with other prophecies, but they are too varied to offer much predictive evidence.

Then the Antichrist has to come. He has to take over the world and reconstitute the Roman empire. There has to be a rapture either premillennial or postmillennial, depending on your theology. There has to be a battle of Armageddon. No! None of these things have happened. Jesus is not ready to come back.

Still, people predicted the end times in the past and they have not come. Those of us who are authentic Christians try to be objective and believe that they may be coming, but we do not want to issue jeremiads to that effect. No, the end of the world as we know it is not upon us. Only God knows, (but we are suspicious). The problem we have is not knowing how badly it has to get to signal the coming of the end times. We simply cannot make up our minds. I have to believe, at least, that we have been cursed by God, or that our sin has so grieved the Holy Spirit that he has withdrawn his blessings. If this is the case, we are suffering the consequences of our own wrongdoing.

Well, if the signs are not conclusive, are things just plain bad? If this is the case, what should we do? I believe we have no choice but to persevere in being obedient and looking to the future with confidence. We know God is in charge and he will guide, protect and direct us. We certainly need to be people of prayer, diligently searching the Scriptures, worshiping in the Spirit, and supporting one another in our fellowships. We above all need to repent and pray for revival. Jesus said, "Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man" (Luke 21:36).

I am not an expert on this subject, but I have thought about it and looked at the evidence for the end times. For a detailed recounting of the needed evidence go to:
<http://contenderministries.org/prophecy/endtimes.php>.