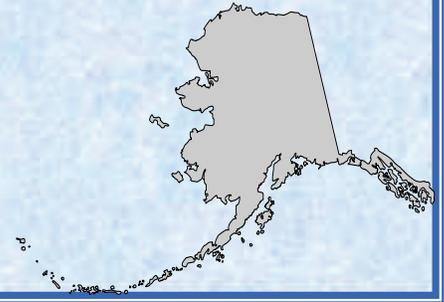


# Hidden Hills *Missionary* Baptist Herald

“Preaching Jesus Christ crucified, buried, and risen to a condemned world”



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## The Excellence of Marriage

Arthur W. Pink  
(1886-1952)

As God hath knit the bones and sinews together for the strengthening of our bodies, so He has ordained the joining of man and woman together in wedlock for the strengthening of their lives, for “*two are better than one*” (Ecclesiastes 4:9); and therefore when God made the woman for the man He said, “*I will make him a help meet for him*” (Genesis 2:18), showing that man is *advantaged* by having a wife. That such does not actually prove to be the case in all instances is, for the most part at least, to be attributed unto *departure* from the Divine precepts thereon. As this is a subject of such vital moment, we deem it expedient to present a fairly comprehensive outline of the teaching of Holy Writ upon it, especially for the benefit of our young readers; though we trust we shall be enabled to include that which will be helpful to older ones too.

It is perhaps a trite remark, yet none the less weighty for having been uttered so often, that with the one exception of personal conversion, marriage is the most momentous of all earthly events in the life of a man or woman. It forms a bond of union



## Americanism contrasted with Biblical Christianity



A few months ago, someone gave me a copy of an article written by Jon Zens and Cliff Bjork entitled “*God & Country or Christ’s Kingdom?*” The article was subtitled “The Dangers of Contemporary Christian Americanism.” These men did a great job putting together truth that needs to be in the hands of God’s people in this land. There is a vast difference between being an American and being a Biblical Christian. They are not synonymous. I have been preaching that for many years. No, I am not an advocate of anarchy—far from it. More than twenty years of my adult life were spent in service to the country in the United States Army. I am a patriot—but not a blind patriot. I love my nation—but

I love the Lord and His church far more. You and I, who are God’s children, have a myriad of brothers and sisters in Christ in almost all (if not all) nations on earth. Wherever these people of God exist on earth, they are bound by the same commandments of their Lord. They are to obey every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake. They are to submit themselves—even to bonds if necessary. Many live under dicta-

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which binds them until death. It brings them into such intimate relations that they *must* either sweeten or embitter each other's existence. It entails circumstances and consequences which are not less far-reaching than the endless ages of eternity. How essential it is, then, that we should have the blessing of Heaven upon such a solemn yet precious undertaking; and in order to this, how absolutely necessary it is that we be subject to God and to His Word thereon. Far, far better to remain single unto the end of our days, than to enter into the marriage state *without* the Divine benediction upon it. The records of history and the facts of observation bear abundant testimony to the truth of that remark. Even those who look no further than the temporal happiness of individuals and the welfare of existing society, are not insensible to the great importance of our domestic relations, which the strongest affections of nature secure, and which even our wants and weaknesses cement. We can form no conception of social virtue or felicity, yea, no conception of human society itself, which has not its foundation *in the family*. No matter how excellent the constitution and laws of a

country may be, or how vast its resources and prosperity, there is no sure basis for social order, or public as well as private virtue, until it be laid in the wise regulation of its families. After all, a nation is but the aggregate of its families, and unless there be good husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, sons and daughters, there cannot possibly be good citizens. Therefore the present decay of home life and family discipline threaten the stability of our nation today far more severely than does any foreign hostility.

But the *Scriptural* view of the relative duties of the members of a Christian household, portrays the prevailing effects in a most alarming manner, as being dishonoring to God, disastrous to the spiritual condition of the churches, and as raising up a most serious obstacle in the way of evangelical progress. Sad beyond words is it to see that professing Christians are themselves largely responsible for the lowering of marital standards, the general disregard of domestic relations, and the rapid disappearance of family discipline. As, then, *marriage* is the basis of the home or family, it is incumbent on the writer to summon his readers to a serious and prayerful consideration of the revealed will of God on this vital theme. Though we can hardly hope to arrest the awful disease which is now eating out the very vitals of our nation, yet if God is pleased to bless this article to a few individuals our labor will not be in vain.

We will begin by pointing out *the excellency* of wedlock: "Marriage is honorable:" says our text, and it is so first of all because God Himself has placed special honor upon it. All other ordinances or institutions (except the Sabbath) were appointed of God by the medium of men or angels (Acts 7:35), but marriage was ordained *immediately* by the Lord Himself — no man or angel brought the first wife to her husband (Genesis

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2:22). Thus marriage had more Divine honor put upon it than had all the other Divine institutions, because it was directly solemnized by God Himself. Again; this was the *first* ordinance God instituted, yea, the first thing He did after man and woman were created, and that, while they were still in their un-fallen state. Moreover, *the place* where their marriage occurred shows the honorableness of this institution: whereas all other institutions (save the Sabbath) were instituted outside of paradise, marriage was solemnized in Eden itself! — intimating how happy they are that marry in the Lord.

"*God's crowning creative act* was the making of woman. At the close of each creative day it is formally recorded that 'God saw what He had made, that it was good.' But when Adam was made, it is explicitly recorded that 'God saw it was *not* good that the man should be alone.' As to man the creative work lacked completeness, until, as all animals and even plants had their mates, there should be found for Adam also an help, meet for him — his counterpart and companion. Not till this want was met did God see the work of the last creative day also to be good. "This is the first great Scripture lesson on family life, and it should be well learned... The Divine institution of marriage teaches that *the ideal state* of both man and woman is not in separation but in union, that each is meant and fitted for the other; and that God's ideal is such union, based on a pure and holy love, enduring for life, exclusive of all rivalry or other partnership, and incapable of alienation or unfaithfulness because it is a union in the Lord — a holy wedlock of soul and spirit in mutual sympathy and affection" (A.T. Pierson).

As God the Father honored the institution of marriage, so also did God the Son.

**First**, by His being "*born of a woman*"

(Galatians 4:4).

**Second**, by His *miracles*, for the first supernatural sign that He wrought was at the marriage of Cana in Galilee (John 2:9), where He turned the water into wine, thereby intimating that if Christ be present at your wedding (i.e., if you "marry in the Lord") your life shall be a joyous or blessed one.

**Third**, by His *parables*, for He compared the kingdom of God unto a marriage (Matthew 22:2) and holiness to a "wedding garment" (Matthew 22:11). So also in His teaching: when the Pharisees sought to ensnare Him on the subject of divorce, He set His imprimatur on the original constitution, adding "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matthew 19:4-6).

The institution of marriage has been still further honored by the Holy Spirit, for He has used it as a figure of the union which exists between Christ and the Church. "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the Church" (Ephesians 5:31, 32). The relation which obtains between the Redeemer and the redeemed is likened, again and again, unto that which exists between a wedded man and woman: Christ is the "Husband" (Isaiah 54:5), the Church is the "Wife" (Revelation 21:9). "Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord, for I am *married* unto you" (Jeremiah 3:14).

Thus, each person of the blessed Trinity has set His seal upon the honorableness of the marriage state. There is no doubt that in true marriage each party helps the other equally, and in view of what has been pointed out above, any who venture to hold or teach any other doctrine or philosophy join issue with the Most High. This does not

**Excellency of Marriage — Continued**

lay down a hard and fast rule that every man and woman is obliged to enter into matrimony: there may be good and wise reasons for abiding alone, adequate motives for remaining in the single state — physical and moral, domestic and social. Nevertheless, a single life should be regarded as abnormal and exceptional, rather than ideal. Any teaching that leads men and women to think of the marriage bond as the sign of bondage, and the sacrifice of all independence, to construe wifehood and motherhood as drudgery and interference with woman's higher destiny, any public sentiment to cultivate celibacy as more desirable and honorable, or to substitute anything else for marriage and home, not only invades God's ordinance, but opens the door to nameless crimes and threatens the very foundations of society.

Now it is clear that marriage must have particular *reasons for the appointment of it*. Three are given in Scripture.

**First**, for the *propagation of children*. This is its obvious and normal purpose:

"So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him: male and female created He them" (Genesis 1:27) — not both males or both females, but one male and one female; and to make the design of this unmistakably plain God said, "Be fruitful and multiply." For this reason marriage is called "matrimony," which signifies *motherage*, because it results in virgins becoming mothers. Therefore it is desirable that marriage be entered into at an early age, before the prime of life be passed: twice in Scripture we read of "the wife of thy youth" (Proverbs 5:18; Malachi 2:15). We have pointed out that the propagation of children is the "normal" end of marriage; yet there are special seasons of acute "distress" when 1 Corinthians 7:29 holds good.

**Second**, marriage is designed as a *pre-*

*ventive of immorality*: "To avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband" (1 Corinthians 7:2). If any were exempted it might be supposed that *kings* would be given dispensation — because of the lack of a successor to the throne should his wife be barren; yet the king is expressly forbidden a plurality of wives (Deuteronomy 17:17), showing that the endangering of a monarchy is not sufficient to countervail the sin of adultery. For this cause a whore is termed a "strange woman" (Proverbs 2:16), showing that she should be a stranger to us; and children born out of marriage are called "bastards," which (under the Law) were excluded from the congregation of the Lord (Deuteronomy 23:2).

The third purpose of marriage is for the *avoiding of the inconveniences of solitude*, signified in the "it is not good that the man should be alone" (Genesis 2:18: as though the Lord had said, This life would be irksome and miserable for man if no wife be given him for a companion: "Woe to him that is alone when he falleth, for he hath not another to help him up" (Ecclesiastes 4:10).

Someone has said, "like a turtle which has lost his mate, like one leg when the other is cut off, like one wing when the other is clipped, so had man been if woman had not been given to him." Therefore for mutual society and comfort God united man and woman that the cares and fears of this life might be eased by the cheer and help of each other.

Let us next consider *the choice of our mate*.

**First**, the one selected for our life's partner must be outside those degrees of near kinship prohibited by the Divine law: Leviticus 18:6-17.

**Excellency of Marriage — Continued**

**Second**, the Christian must wed a fellow Christian. From earliest times God has commanded that “the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be numbered among the nations” (Numbers 23:9). His law unto Israel in connection with the Canaanites, was, “Neither shalt thou make marriages with them: thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son” (Deuteronomy 7:3 and cf. Joshua 23:12). How much more, then, must God require the separation of those who are His people by a spiritual and heavenly tie than those who occupied only a fleshly and earthly relation to Him. “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers” (2 Corinthians 6:14) is the clarion order to His saints of this dispensation. *Partnership* of any kind of one who is born again with one in a state of nature is here prohibited, as is evident from the terms used in the next verse — “fellowship, communion, concord, part, agreement.”

There are but two families in this world: the children of God and the children of the Devil (1 John 3:10). If, then, a daughter of God marries a son of the Evil one she becomes a daughter-in-law to Satan! If a son of God marries a daughter of Satan, he becomes a son-in-law to the Devil! By such an infamous step an affinity is formed between one belonging to the most High and one belonging to His arch-enemy. “Strong language!” yes, but not too strong. O the dishonor done to Christ by such a union; O the bitter reaping from such a sowing. In every case it is the poor believer who suffers. Read the inspired histories of Samson, Solomon, and Ahab, and see what followed *their* unholy alliances in wedlock. As well might an athlete attach to himself a heavy weight and then expect to win a race, as for one to progress spiritually after marrying a worldling.

Should any Christian reader be inclined or expect to become betrothed, the first ques-

tion for him or her to carefully weigh in the Lord’s presence is, Will this union be with an unbeliever? For if you are really cognizant of and heart and soul be impressed with the tremendous *difference* which God, in His grace, has put between you and those who are — however attractive in the flesh — yet in their sins, then you should have no difficulty in rejecting every suggestion and proposal of making common cause with such. You are “the righteousness of God” in Christ, but unbelievers are “unrighteous”; you are “light in the Lord,” but they are darkness; you have been translated into the kingdom of God’s dear Son, but unbelievers are under the power of Belial; you are a son of peace, whereas all unbelievers are “children of wrath” (Ephesians 2:3); therefore “be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean; and I will receive you” (2 Corinthians 6:17). The danger of forming such an alliance is *before* marriage, or even betrothal, neither of which could be seriously entertained by any real Christian unless the sweetness of fellowship with the Lord had been lost. The affections must first be withdrawn from Christ before we can find delight in social intimacy with those who are alienated from God, and whose interests are confined to this world. The child of God who is “keeping his heart with all diligence” will not, cannot, have a joy in intimacies with the unregenerate. Alas, how often is the seeking or the accepting of close friendship with unbelievers the first step to *open* departure from Christ. The path which the Christian is called upon to tread is indeed a narrow one, but if he attempts to widen it, or leave it for a broader road, it must be in contravention of the Word of God, and to his or her own irreparable damage and loss.

**Third**, “married... only *in the Lord*” (1 Corinthians 7:39) goes much further than prohibiting an unbeliever for a mate. Even among the children of God there are many who would not be suitable to each other in such a tie. A pretty face is an attraction, but

**Excellency of Marriage — Continued**

O how vain to be governed in such a serious undertaking by such a trifle. Earthly goods and social position have their value here, yet how base and degrading to suffer them to control such a solemn undertaking. O what watchfulness and prayerfulness is needed in the regulation of our affections! Who fully understands the temperament that will match mine? that will be able to bear patiently with my faults, be a corrective to my tendencies, and a real help in my desire to live for Christ in this world? How many make a fair show at the start, but turn out wretchedly. Who can shield me from a host of evils which beset the unwary, but God my Father? "A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband" (Proverbs 12:4): a pious and competent wife is the most valuable of all God's temporal blessings: she is the special gift of His grace. "A prudent wife is from the Lord" (Proverbs 19:14), and He requires to be definitely and diligently *sought unto*: see <Genesis 24:12. It is not sufficient to have the approval of trusted friends and parents, valuable and even needful as that (generally) is for our happiness; for though they are concerned for our welfare, yet their wisdom is not sufficiently far-reaching. The One who appointed the ordinance must needs be given the first place in it if we are to have *His* blessing on it. Now prayer is never intended to be a substitute for the proper discharge of our responsibilities: we are ever required to use care and discretion, and must never act hurriedly and rashly. Our better judgment is to regulate our emotion: in the body the head is placed over the heart, and not the heart over the head!

"Whoso findeth a wife (a real one) findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favor of the Lord" (Proverbs 18:22): "findeth" implies a definite *quest*. To direct us therein the Holy Spirit has supplied two rules or qualifications.

**First**, *godliness*, because our partner must

be like Christ's Spouse, pure and holy.

**Second**, *fitness*, "a help, meet for him" (Genesis 2:18), showing that a wife cannot be a "help" unless she be "meet," and for that she must have much in common with her mate. If her husband be a laboring man, it would be madness for him to choose a lazy woman; if he be a learned man, a woman with no love of knowledge would be quite unsuited. Marriage is called a "yoke," and two cannot pull together if all the burden is to fall upon one — as it would if one weak and sickly was the partner chosen. Now for the benefit of our younger readers, let us point out some of the *marks* by which a godly and fit mate may be *identified*.

**First**, the *reputation*: a good man commonly has a good name (Proverbs 22:1), none can accuse him of open sins.

**Second**, the *countenance*: our looks reveal our characters, and therefore Scripture speaks of "proud looks" and "wanton looks," — "the show of their countenance doth witness against them" (Isaiah 3:9).

**Third**, the *speech*, for "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh:" "the heart of the wise teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips" Proverbs 16:23); "She openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness" (Proverbs 31:26).

**Fourth**, the *apparel*: a modest woman is known by the modesty of her attire. If the clothing be vulgar or showy the heart is vain.

**Fifth**, the *company* kept: birds of a

**Excellency of Marriage — Continued**

feather flock together — a person may be known by his or her associates. A word of warning is, perhaps, not quite needless. No matter how carefully and prayerfully one's partner be selected, he will not find marriage a perfect thing. Not that God did not make it perfect, but man has fallen since, and the fall has marred everything. The apple may still be sweet, but it has a worm inside. The rose has not lost its fragrance, but thorns grow with it. Willingly or unwillingly, everywhere we must read the ruin which sin has brought in. Then let us not dream of those faultless people which a diseased fancy can picture and novelists portray. The most godly men and women have their failings; and though such be easy to bear when there is genuine love, yet they have to be *borne*.

A few brief remarks now on *the home-life* of the wedded couple. Light and help will be obtained here if it be borne in mind that marriage pictures forth the relation between Christ and His Church. This, then, involves three things.

**First**, the attitude and actions of husband and wife are to be regulated by *love*, for *that* is the cementing tie between Lord Jesus and His Spouse: a holy love, sacrificial love, an enduring love which naught can sever. There is nothing like love to make the wheels of home life run smoothly. The husband sustains to his mate the same relation as does the Redeemer to the redeemed, and hence the exhortation, "Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church" (Ephesians 5:25): with a hearty and constant love, ever seeking her good, ministering to her needs, protecting and providing for her, bearing with her infirmi-

ties: thus "giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered" (1 Peter 3:7).

**Second**, the *headship* of the husband. "The head of the woman is the man" (1 Corinthians 11:3); "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the Head of the Church" (Ephesians 5:23). Unless this Divine appointment be duly heeded there is sure to be confusion. The household must have a leader, and God has committed its rule unto the husband, holding *him* responsible for its orderly management; and serious will be the loss if he shirks his duty and turns the reins of government over to his wife. But this does not mean that Scripture gives him license to be a domestic tyrant, treating his wife as a servant: his dominion is to be exercised in love toward the one who is his consort. "Likewise ye husbands *dwell with them*" (1 Peter 3:7): seek their society after the day's labor is over. That Divine injunction plainly condemns those who leave their wives and go abroad on the pretext of a "call from God."

**Third**, the *subjection* of the wife. "Wives *submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord*" (Ephesians 5:22): there is only one exception to be made in the application of this rule, namely when he commands what God forbids or forbids what God commands. "For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands" (1 Peter 3:5): alas, how little of this

**Americanism — continued**

spiritual “adornment” is evident today! “Even as Sarah *obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, so long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement*” 1 Peter 3:6): willing and loving subjection to the husband, out of respect for the authority of God, is what characterizes the daughters of Sarah. Where the wife refuses to submit to her husband, the children are sure to defy their parents — sow the wind, reap the whirlwind. We have space for only one other matter, which it is deeply important for young husbands to heed. “*Prepare thy work without, and make it fit for thyself in the field; and afterwards build thine house*” (Proverbs 24:27). The point here is that the husband is not to think of owning his own house before he can afford it. As Matthew Henry says, “This is a rule of providence in the management of household affairs. We must prefer necessities before luxuries, and not lay that out for show which should be expended for the support of the family.”

Alas, in this degenerate age so many young couples want to start where their parents ended, and then feel they must imitate their godless neighbors in various extravagancies. Never go into debt or purchase on the “credit system:” “Owe no man anything” (Romans 13:8)! And now for a final word on our text. “Marriage is honorable *in all*” who are called thereunto, no class of persons being precluded. This clearly gives the lie to the pernicious teaching of Rome concerning the celibacy of the clergy, as does also 1 Timothy 3:2, etc. “And the bed undefiled” not only signifies fidelity to the marriage vow (1 Thessalonians 4:4), but that

the conjugal act of intercourse is not polluting: in their unfallen state Adam and Eve were bidden to “multiply;” yet moderation and sobriety is to obtain here, as in all things. We do not believe in what is termed “birth control,” but we do earnestly urge *self-control*, especially by the husband, “But whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.” This is a most solemn warning against unfaithfulness: those who live and die impenitently in these sins will eternally perish Ephesians 5:5).

[From “Marriage 13:4” in *An Exposition of Hebrews*]

**Americanism — continued**

tors or ruthless kings. Each of God’s children, in whatever nation they are citizens, are enjoined to “*pray for all those in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.*” (1 Tim. 2:2).

— Leon King

Here are some excerpts from the article:

“In recent years, a very vocal element within mainstream Christianity has been promoting a “nationalized gospel” — a gospel wrapped in an American flag. Unbiblical notions about patriotism and America’s “special” place in God’s plan abound in books, magazines, radio and TV programs produced by these religio-political zealots, as well as from their pulpits.

To equate nationalism, American or any other, with faithfulness to the gospel is a misguided perspective that can only serve to weaken our witness to the saving grace of God through Jesus Christ. When such nationalistic

**Americanism — continued**

battle cries dominate our agenda, the true message of the gospel will be inevitably compromised, if not forgotten altogether. It is time for us to "test the spirits" urging us to "turn America back to God and traditional 'Judeo-Christian' values."

This is not what Jude meant when he urged us to "contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints" (vs. 3). We must not permit our minds to be "led astray from our sincere and pure devotion to Christ" (2 Cor. 11:3) by this biblically unwarranted call to promote a "God and Country" civil religion.

Christ did not call us to reform our *country* but to spread the only message that has the power to change *lives*. If we truly believe in the power of the gospel, we must not let it be weighed down by such unbiblical baggage.

**It Goes Like This . . .**

The proposition that *America as a nation* occupies a special place in God's earthly purpose (with the implication that America is better than other nations) is generally based on arguments much like those expounded in the following excerpt:

The United States is a blessed nation, founded on Godly principles by devout God fearing men and women. From the personal writings of the authors of our constitution, we learn that they looked to God for the wisdom to guide our country's affairs. God has a blueprint for keeping our country great and it's found in 2 Chron. 7:14 . . . As we approach the coming elections, we have a responsibility before God to pray for the candidates and to vote. As a citizen of the United States, it is up to us to make choices based upon what He has already said in the Bible concerning the issues that face our nation. No candidate is perfect, but Jesus said that you would know a tree by its fruit. Do our choices for leaders have track records that could be considered God fearing fruit? Do they support and uphold traditional Christian values? Do their lifestyles exude strong moral character? Do their choices point us to the ideals that made our country

**There is a vast difference between being an American and being a Biblical Christian...**

great? Let's stand up for what's right even if it's not politically correct. God's not through with our nation yet. We can still accomplish mighty things and see our country's problems turn around because "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord (Psalm 3:12).

This is typical of the kind of reasoning that is common to most of the advocates of such agendas. The problem is that it is based on alleged facts that simply are not true. It is repeatedly maintained, for example, that God's blessing upon America as a nation has its roots in the "godly" perspectives and objectives of its founding fathers. To make such an assertion demonstrates either a complete ignorance of America's early history or, worse yet, an act of deliberate revisionism.

The truth is that a majority of our country's founders were non-evangelicals and many were Masons. They may have indeed used numerous references to "God" in their writings, but most of them knew nothing of the grace of God in Jesus Christ. Thomas Jefferson, for example, the man who contributed more to the framing of our constitution than anyone else, was a deist and hardly a model of moral rectitude. Accounts of his philandering and marital infidelity are well documented. And the so-called "Jefferson Bible," assumed by some to provide evidence of his commitment to Christian principles, was actually a bible lie had cut up with a pair of scissors to remove all references to such things as the shedding of blood for the remission of sins. He wanted nothing to do with the cross, and by the time he had finished with his "bible," all that remained was a collection of platitudes he could use to add an apparent "godly" air to his political postulations. Benjamin Franklin, another major contributor to our founding literature, was a Rosicrucian who had no interest whatsoever in the truth as it has been revealed in and through Jesus Christ.

**Is Any Nation "Better Than Another?"**

The notion that America has been blessed more than other nations because of her alleged

**Americanism — continued**

“godly” beginning is not only without foundation, but it has spawned other errant teaching as well. Building on that false premise, we are told that the divine “blessing” America has enjoyed will be replaced by “judgment” if Christians do not do their part to bring about a *national* moral reform. God measures nations by their adherence to the Ten Commandments, we are told, and blesses or curses accordingly.

One well-known preacher has gone so far as to declare that God will even bless the unsaved if they faithfully tithe. That may be an effective fund raising tactic, but as a supposed biblical teaching, it is seriously flawed. The Scriptures teach that blessing comes upon people by grace alone through faith in Jesus Christ, not by works, so that no one can boast (Ephsians 2:9). Contrary to the idea that God blesses any sinner who renders partial obedience to the law, the Bible clearly teaches that “cursed is everyone who does not continue to do *everything* written in the Book of the Law” (Gal 3:10). And that is a requirement that no fallen descendent of Adam can meet apart from  
C h r i s t .

To apply Psalm 33:12 to the United States, therefore, is totally inappropriate. It is typical of biblical interpretation that fails to take New Testament revelation into consideration before making such an application. Prior to the gospel age, the nation of Israel alone was the undeserving, yet divinely chosen recipient of God's special favor and blessing. All others were foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world (Eph. 2:12). God had surely promised Abraham that through your offspring *all nations* on earth will be blessed . . . (Genesis 22:18), but until Christ appeared the means to that blessing had not been fully revealed. Not until the dividing wall of hostility (Ephesians 2:14) between Israel and all other nations was removed at Calvary was God's promise to Abraham fulfilled. And even then, the promised blessing to all nations was not realized in a geopolitical sense, but rather in the outreach of the gospel to God's elect from every tribe and language and people and  
n a t i o n ( R e v e l a t i o n 5 : 9 ) .

There is indeed a “blessed” nation whose

God is the Lord, but it is no longer an entity defined by geographical boundaries. It is the aggregate of believers who have been called out by the gospel from all nations who are now identified as a chosen race, a royal priesthood, *a holy nation*, a people for God's own possession (1 Peter 2:9). These words, cited by Peter from Exodus 19, were originally addressed to Israel as a geographical nation, but in the gospel they now find their ultimate fulfillment in the spiritual house (1 Peter 2:5) made up of believers from all over the world. Since the death and resurrection of Christ, the only “nation” on earth whose God is the Lord is Christ's body, the church. And the only “people” entitled to God's blessings are those who by grace have been accepted in the Beloved (Ephesians 1:6). *All others remain under God's wrath and curse.*

In the New Testament, therefore, the only holy nation is the people belonging to God — redeemed sinners whom God has called out of darkness into his wonderful light (1 Peter 2:9). Spiritually, no country on earth — including, if not especially the United States — is a “godly nation.” Nor can any geopolitical entity claim divine preference over any other. With the end of the Old Testament era came the end of all such national dealings in God's redemptive  
p u r p o s e s .

Once, Israel enjoyed God's special favor over all other nations, not because she was more righteous, but because she had been chosen to serve as a type of what was to come, and to provide a lineage that would produce the Messiah. When Christ appeared, however, the type was replaced by the reality. The prophetic significance of Israel came to full realization in a new community wherein there would be neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:28). That new community is the holy nation cited above, and its citizenship is not based on political alignment, but on a saving union with Jesus Christ.

**Looking For Live Fruit From Dead Trees . . .**

To use Jesus' “good tree/good fruit vs. bad

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**Americanism — continued**

tree/bad fruit" principle as a standard for choosing politicians is also a serious misuse of Scripture. Jesus gave us those criteria to provide a way to identify true believers, not to select an acceptable slate of political candidates. If we were to actually apply Jesus' analogy as a standard for selecting our leaders, we would have to conclude that any politician — Republican, Democrat, Whig or Tory — that is not a believer is a "bad tree," incapable of producing "good fruit." This would effectively rule out most candidates for political office. It would often make it impossible to vote for either candidate, regardless of his or her political alignment or legislative accomplishments.

Even more to the point, the very premise that believers have some kind of spiritual duty to actively participate in human campaign and voting processes begs closer scrutiny. Are we, as disciples of Jesus Christ, somehow obligated to join forces with those who are trying to oust the bad guys and replace them with leaders who supposedly share our "values"? The popular notion that political activism is God's appointed means for bringing "moral" reform to our country certainly has its zealous advocates, but their zeal is not based on knowledge (Romans 10:2). For the most part, such teaching is gleaned from Old Testament passages that have not been properly filtered through a New Testament lens. When the OT is not re-interpreted under the greater light of New Testament revelation, it can be a veritable mine of "proof texts" providing apparent justification for all kinds of sociological, political, or even military actions aimed at combating evil. Why stop at merely deposing "ungodly" leaders? Using the Old Testament as our national "moral" guide, let's advocate stoning to death our unruly children, adulterers, Sabbath breakers, worshippers of false Gods, those who seek the counsel of demonic spirits, and even those who blaspheme by taking the Lord's name in vain. These are also "moral" laws included in the OT canon and their execution would certainly have an impact on our society.

**Are we, as disciples of Jesus Christ, somehow obligated to join forces with those who are trying to oust the bad guys and replace them with leaders who supposedly share our "values"?**

**Political Confrontation or Peaceful Coexistence?**

There is also no New Testament warrant for the kinds of political activism and disruptive protests in which believers are often encouraged to participate. As followers of Christ, we better have a pretty solid biblical reason for refusing to comply with our government's ordinances and laws, for we are specifically commanded to Submit [ourselves] for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men . . . (1 Peter 2:13). We have no business taking part in acts of "civil disobedience," or in refusing to pay taxes — no matter how poorly our government may use its revenues. All such actions often do is to bring unnecessary reproach to the precious Name of Jesus Christ.

Rather than to rail against the alleged abuses of our leaders, we are commanded to humbly pray for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives. . . (1 Timothy 2:2). Unless compliance with our government's laws would result in an action specifically identified in the New Testament as sin, we should be the very model of obedience. The only recorded instance of civil disobedience in the book of Acts was when the disciples were commanded to stop telling others about Jesus Christ (cf. Acts 4:16-20).

**Who Really Places Presidents and Kings in Power?**

Those who have been influenced by the advocates of this "nationalized" gospel are often led to believe they will fail their God if they do not participate in campaign and voting processes and an "ungodly" candidate should happen to win. The implication, if not the actual teaching, is that it is always God's plan to have leaders with the right kind of "values" in power, and when his people fail to get them elected, his perfect will for that nation cannot be accomplished. Dear believer, the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will (Ephesians 1:11) is not so easily thwarted, and that includes the

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**Don't build your house on the sand!**

**Americanism—concluded**

role world leaders play in the unfolding of his eternal purposes in Christ.

It may have been hard to convince the oppressed Jews that it was God who placed Pharaoh on his throne. And yet, God proclaimed, I have raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth (Romans 9:17). Nebuchadnezzar boasted, Is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my might and power and for the glory of my majesty? (Daniel 4:20), but the proud king was forced to eat grass like an animal to teach him that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes (Daniel 4:25). The lesson Nebuchadnezzar had to learn the hard way is one you and I should humbly accept:

The Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes and sets over them the lowliest of men. (Daniel 4:17).

While elections and other political mechanisms are the secondary causes involved in placing leaders in power, it is ultimately God

himself who sets up kings and deposes them ( Daniel 2 : 21 ) .

Whether a champion of good, or the very embodiment of evil (e.g., Hitler, Idi Amin), no nation — including the United States — has ever had a president, dictator, king or emperor who was not placed in power by God's sovereign hand. And no such leader, good or evil, has ever been removed from power except as it has served God's eternal purpose in Christ. This is why the NT not only fails to endorse human efforts to overturn wicked governments, but commands instead that everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God ( Romans 13 : 1 ) .

**Whether a champion of good, or the very embodiment of evil (e.g., Hitler, Idi Amin), no nation — including the United States — has ever had a president, dictator, king or emperor who was not placed in power by God's sovereign hand.**

This command is all the more interesting when we take into consideration that a wicked and insane Nero was in power when Paul penned those words."

[Editor's Note: You can access this article in its entirety on the internet at:

<http://www.searchingtogether.org/articles/zens/americanism.htm>

**Schedule of Services**

Sunday Worship.....12:00 PM  
Wednesday Prayer..... 7:00 PM  
Our meeting house is located at 50130 S. Caswell Loop just south of the intersection of Bendapole Road and Passthebaite Avenue