

# **SECOND CHANCES IN THE LAST DAYS**

## **The End:**

(This is just to save time for readers who like to skip to the end before they start at the beginning.)

You who live in America but deny that you are a Christian: You call yourself an atheist? Or a Buddhist? Or a Moslem? And certainly not a Christian?

You're no atheist! You're no nonChristian!

Do you kill people who never hurt you like people swat flies? Do you lie without a pang of conscience? Do you torture those who criticize you? You say you don't? You say you don't believe in behavior like that? Then you're no atheist! Because in nations founded on atheism, that's what people do!

Do you believe in freedom of speech that even allows us to criticize a church, or a government, without being arrested and tortured to death? Do you vote? Do you think it is a good idea for people to elect their leaders? You say you do? Then you're no atheist, or Hindu, or Moslem! Where do you find a value like that? Only in Christianity! You don't find that in Darwin's "Survival of the Fittest" philosophy of anarchy, or in the B'hagavad Gita's endorsement of the Caste System, or in the Koran's obsession with swordpoint conversions!

If you call yourself an atheist, you lie! You may talk the talk, but you don't walk the walk! You are living like a Christian!

Do you picture "civilization" as a society of free men and women who fight their battles with words and principles rather than bullets and bombs, living in peace and safety, and serving one another with their talents? Is that your idea of real authority: the influence you have because your services to others are sought after? Rather than the influence you have because you are the best gangster at killing all your enemies without getting stopped?

You fraud! You are living like a CHRISTIAN! Admit it! Face it! Those are all exclusively Christian values! You live in a Christian nation living in safety and prosperity because of its foundation in Christian principles, and you have swallowed it, hook, line, and sinker!

Don't let the preachers deceive you who say you aren't a Christian unless you agree with a set of words they have laid out. As long as you say their words, you are a Christian even if you still make babies with strangers and kill them before they can embarrass you, they say. But Romans 2 says its about how you choose to live. Do you love living in America by the principles that made America? Have you passed up opportunities to move to Communist China where you can get a job torturing people who criticize you and call yourself "the law"? Face it: you have sold out!

You protest, "But I killed my baby! I'm even a sodomite! Don't I get some credit for that?"

OK, you aren't totally a Christian. But you're not consistent! You're on the fence!

As long as you deny how you live, and keep spouting all that anti-Christian nonsense, you are in danger of one day actually believing yourself, and starting to live it, which, in America, may land you smack in jail.

Then there is that little matter of what happens when you die. What will you tell God, if you are so much in the habit of hating God Who has provided the principles that shape the society you love, like the

ungrateful child who hates the parents who provide the toys he plays with? When you stand before the gate to a land where honesty is not a virtue but the only option, where you cannot have pleasure at the expense of others, where you must trust God to direct you towards your own goals even when you don't understand how God's directions will benefit you, will you wrinkle up your face and scream "I'm outta here!"?

You say "What makes you think America's values are Christian values? Where does the Bible talk about Freedom or any of those other things?"

Glad you asked! Hang on. It's going to be a wild ride. Not only will I show from which Bible verses America's founders reconstructed the Freedoms we take for granted, but once you recognize these freedoms as Biblical values, I can show you where America is described in Bible prophecy, and what the Bible says about our future.

"The freedom and happiness of man ... [are] the sole objects of all legitimate government."

--Thomas Jefferson

## The Beginning:

Many today look at Satan's advances across America's culture with despair, not based on doubt that God answers prayer, but based on popular theologies that say we are in the last days in which "things only get worse and worse" so we cannot reverse God's Will, based on verses like:

**2 Ti 3:12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. 13 But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.**

Here are seven Biblical reasons to get busy pushing those mountains of Depression in Hope!

Before we get to them, I asked Mary E. Johnson of Des Moines to write about the 2010 election. She put in words the theology that denies Christians permission to push with hope against the largest mountains – a theology that darkened my own hope until recently. In fact, some of the Bible's reasons for hope in this Bible study, I only discovered after Mary's letter prompted me to do this study. Especially notice her two statements which I have put in red. She writes:

"Well, the election outcome was very thrilling, but I see it as temporarily holding back a tide that will eventually lead into a fury of evil when the anti-Christ comes on the scene, but we are admonished to put our shoulder to the wheel.

"We know the outcome. Satan will be allowed to run rampant and will do [what he wants] after the first 3.5 years of the Tribulation, in the Great Tribulation, then he will be chained for 1000 years, then loosed for a season to "try the tribulation saints", and then he will be cast into the bottomless pit.

"You know, in the light of all eternity, this [election] will be worth little; but we are put on earth to be salt and light, for our learning and preparation for the life hereafter with the Lord. We can enjoy the 'reprieves' we experience from time to time before this is all over.

"Is the nation out of trouble?! Because of what I read in Bible prophecy, I don't have a lot of hope that things will turn around for long or much, but I'd be so ever grateful and elated that if in our lifetime we could witness a tide to the right pushing back evil. No, I do not feel we are anywhere near out of trouble. We have fallen so far, decay and immorality has run so deep with 'their conscience so seared', more and more movements are ensuing to shatter the very foundation on which our country has been built, lies about what took place in history with the holocaust, etc., removing any and all references to God they can find to do on our buildings and our currency, from our schools, changing the names of our Christian 'holidays' of Easter and Christmas, and on and on, that I don't see that ever happening in this world. I see a constant effort to destroy what God-fearing forefathers did to lead us into a strong Nation with God at the helm. But we are called here to be salt and light to put our shoulder to the wheel. We will

be judged for the works we are called to do, whether they be wood, hay, or stubble or whether they will withstand the purifying fire.

"I see the returning wicked politicians a part of the bigger plan to let unregenerate man make his choices and face the GWT, Great White Throne Judgment. Man is bent on rejecting God and His plan and would rather be slave to his baser motives; and quite frankly, all of this rampant liberalism must be so very pleasing and exciting to them as little by little the light to reveal the workers of darkness is dimmed. They no longer want to, and have become so hardened they aren't able to, be convicted of their sin.

"This is something I have pondered and been frustrated with. We were just remarking the other day that it's so frustrating that people have no idea that they and their country is on a precipice of total destruction. **America isn't even mentioned in prophecy**. Will it be a judgment against this country with a natural disaster? Will the Americans do it to themselves with their rejection of God whose guidance gave us the great country we have today? And acceptance of the anti-Christ who performs Satan's miracles and appeals to their senses? Abe Lincoln, in a proclamation I read in the newspaper or saw on the Internet, back in 1863 spoke to how bad our country was, back then! Wouldn't he be so ever shocked we're still in existence if he were to observe what's going on today?! This is the proclamation in part where he refers to our downfall:

We know by His divine law, nations, like individuals, are subjected to punishments and chastisements in this world. May we not justly fear that the awful calamity of civil war which now desolates the land may be a punishment inflicted upon us for our presumptuous sins, to the needful end of our national reformation as a whole people? But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us, and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us. - A. Lincoln, March 1863.

"I must say I was shocked to read that, that even by then we were on the decline.

"The only anchor, what will hold people's hearts and minds in the right and God-fearing ways, is God allowed at the helm, shown by those who have seen the light, pointing the way. God coming into men's hearts and then men being led by Him. That's the only way I see this ever happening because without the Holy Spirit, men have no conscience, no understanding of the evil that is befalling them, no discernment.

"I know that there will be people will turn to the Lord, who will see the light, see what's going on; but "narrow is the way and few be that find it" tells me that most will go the way of the world. I see prayer, calling people to come back to their Creator, efforts in whatever we can engage as our putting our shoulder to the wheel and working while it is yet day. One by one, our call is to reach hearts for the Lord who will, then, lead them in the Divine plan He has for each one of us and our nation. It's so sad because we started out as a nation who became so great because of a desire to follow God. He was welcome in the classroom; our flag represented our founding fathers' desire to worship God without oppression and according to the Word of God, God was allowed into the Legislature and Courts. I feel in any way we can make a footprint in the political arena that is our responsibility, not to sit back and give up or become despaired."

### 7 Reasons to Work with Hope!

**1. God's people will "do exploits".** One answer is that endtime prophecies also say "**the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits.**" Daniel 11:32. We can aspire to be "the people that do know their God"!

**2. Righteousness increases too!** Another is that while wickedness increases, so does righteousness!

Daniel 12:10 Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.

Proverbs 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

Job 17:9 The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.

### **3. God promises victory here!**

Another is the multitude of promises of victory throughout the Bible! No other religion promises victory over impossible odds, by walking with God! There are many conditions to victory, which I have explored in another Bible study titled “Rules 4 Miracles”. But these promises, by themselves, at least prove that it is God’s Will for us to discover goals so aligned with His Will that He will help us overcome all obstacles!

There are so many promises about “moving mountains”, etc, that here I will just take space for perhaps the most spectacular promises: that not only will the mountain drown, but we will see it drown before we die!

Proverbs 29:16 When the wicked are multiplied, transgression increaseth: but the righteous shall see their fall.

Psalms 37:34 Wait on the LORD, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it.

Matthew 5:6 Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

Psalms 91:7 A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee. 8 Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked.

Psalms 58:10 The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked. 11 So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.

Psalms 92:11 Mine eye also shall see my desire on mine enemies, and mine ears shall hear my desire of the wicked that rise up against me. (My desire for my enemies is that they be restored to God, first choice; second choice, that they be restrained by the righteous from further oppression of the innocent.)

Psalms 112:7 He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the LORD. 8 His heart is established, he shall not be afraid, until he see his desire upon his enemies.

Revelation 15:4 Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.

### **4. The Bible says many nations will fight Antichrist: we can influence our nation to be among them!**

The Antichrist will be at war. That means we can aspire to be among those who fight Antichrist.

Daniel 11:32 And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries: but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits. 33 And they that understand among the people shall instruct many: yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days. 34 Now when they shall fall, they shall be holpen with a little help: but many shall cleave to them with flatteries. 35 And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end: because it is yet for a time appointed. 36 And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done. 37 Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of

women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all. 38 But in his estate shall he honour the God of forces: and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things. 39 Thus shall he do in the most strong holds with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory: and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain. 40 And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over. 41 He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon. 42 He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape. 43 But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps. 44 But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many. 45 And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.

## **5. America is mentioned in prophecies which indicate America will not fall under Antichrist!**

I have insufficient expertise in prophecy to be dogmatic that it means America will not fall under Antichrist, but this interpretation at least seems plausible enough to call for an end to the despair that nothing we do for America will be limited in its effectiveness by alleged prophecies that America is not mentioned in prophecy, but that everything will get worse and worse, until everyone serves the Antichrist!

I have compared several commentaries in my Logos Bible program with an article by Irwin Baxter in his *Endtime Magazine*, July/August 2009, “United States Discovered in the Bible”. He now sells a book by that name.

Daniel 7:3 And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another. 4 The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it.

Commentaries say this describes Babylon, which other prophecies sometimes describe as a lion because it devours nations, and other times as an eagle because its armies seem to fly – they move so swiftly. In Jeremiah 49:19-22 Babylon is identified by both animals in the same passage. Tyndale (a Bible commentary) says the gate of Babylon was adorned with winged lions.

The plucked wings, followed by being given a man's heart, some suggest describes how Nebuchadnezzar was insane for 7 years, Daniel 4, until his sanity was restored and his kingdom was returned to him.

But Irvin Baxter points out that the lion is the animal associated with England, just as the bald eagle is the national animal of the United States. He says the plucking of the wings represented the Revolutionary War when the United States was “plucked” from England’s worldwide colonial empire.

“A man's heart was given to it.” Baxter compares this with the national personification of the United States: not a wild animal like an eagle, leopard, bear, or dragon, but Uncle Sam.

Two commentaries noted the wild beast-like behavior of human tyrannies. This suggests to me not a competing but an additional interpretation of the giving of the heart of a man: it represents the great body of Christian-inspired founding documents from the Mayflower Compact to the Constitution, in which the wild beast-like behavior of previous human tyrants was displaced by what we today call “civilized” laws and national principles. I see this contrast alluded to in Matthew 5:45-46 which distinguishes between a child of God and a typical pagan: the child of God is fair to the unfair; just to the

unjust; loves the hateful. The pagan loves only those who love him, and even those, not consistently. I have noticed that this characteristic of pagans is like that of animals. Animals have no capacity to love their enemies, but some of them can be “tamed” because they eventually love those who love them.

**Matthew 5:45** That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. 46 For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?

Baxter compares the connection between England and lions with Revelation 13:2, (below), which says the Beast, which prophecy commentators agree means the government of the Antichrist, speaks with the “mouth of a lion”, indicating the worldwide official language will be English – as it is at this day!

Rev 13:2 And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.

It is miraculous enough that God could accurately predict political events 5 centuries into the future. Is it possible that God accurately predicted political events both 5 centuries, and again 25 centuries into the future, *with the same prophecy*??!

Our next prophecy is about the bear:

Daniel 7:5 And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh.

The Bible commentaries, most written at least a century ago, supposed this referred to the Persian empire which replaced the Babylonian empire.

Baxter points to the common knowledge that Russia is identified with a bear. He says an article in the *Indianapolis Star* January 4, 1980, when Russian communism was at its peak and everyone assumed it would terrorize indefinitely, was headlined “After the British Lion, The Russian Bear.”

England “colonized” many other countries for about 3 centuries. Just as Daniel’s bear came after Daniel’s lion, it was after England that Russia “colonized” several other nations, for about 70 years.

Next is Daniel’s leopard:

Daniel 7:6 After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it.

Commentators say this is Greece. The four heads represent the divisions under four generals after Alexander the Great died young. The four wings, compared with Babylon’s two wings, represent how much faster Greece conquered its vast territory: in only four years!

Baxter says this is Germany. Not because there is any association between leopards and Germany, whose national symbol is the Black Eagle. (The national symbol of the U.S. is the bald eagle, the head represented as uncovered, representing receiving its authority from God.) But, Baxter says, because the leopard was given “dominion”, and because Germany was “the aggressor in the last three major wars on earth – the Franco-German War of 1870, World War 1, and World War II”. That isn’t four wars, or four of anything else, but Baxter also sees Germany as a dominant force in the European Union, which appears to have at least one more great war under its belt. “The European Union has become the world’s number one economic power, and Germany is by far the strongest country among the nations of the European Union.”

I wouldn’t have thought that losing the biggest two out of three wars, and losing area as a result, would count in anyone’s vocabulary as “dominion”. However, Baxter reminds us how close the Germans came to defeating the rest of the world. God miraculously saved us through what is called “the Miracle of Dunkirk”, causing the Germans to retreat just when they could have destroyed us, and protecting our retreat with bad weather.

Two nations have the snow leopard as their national symbol: Pakistan and Ossetia. Pakistan has nukes and hosts the Taliban; Ossetia is a small area half way between the Black and Caspian seas,

primarily Russian Orthodox, population about 780,000, area 4,606 square miles, which is less than half the size of Massachusetts.

Ossetia seems an unlikely source of world judgment in the last days, but Pakistan's Taliban is a dead ringer. A new book shows that the Antichrist's federation is of nations which are today Moslem, not European. If there is a leadership pool primed to use Pakistan's nuclear weapons, leading a federation of Moslem nations, it would be the Taliban. Here is the book review:

**The Islamic AntiChrist, by Joel Richardson** After decades of reading popular prophecy books and even best-selling fiction like the "Left Behind" series, millions of evangelical Christians around the world are dreading the day when a beastly figure known as the Antichrist emerges as a global political and religious dictator.

Most expect him to come from a revived Roman Empire, which many have assumed is associated with the Roman Catholic Church and the European Union.

Not so, argues a controversial new book that makes the case that the biblical Antichrist is one and the same as the Quran's Muslim Mahdi.

Meet "The Islamic Antichrist," a book greeted in the Muslim world with the same enthusiasm as Salman Rushdie's "The Satanic Verses." The author, Joel Richardson, is prepared. He has written the book under a pseudonym to protect himself and his family.

"The Bible abounds with proofs that the Antichrist's empire will consist only of nations that are, today, Islamic," says Richardson. "Despite the numerous prevailing arguments for the emergence of a revived European Roman empire as the Antichrist's power base, the specific nations the Bible identifies as comprising his empire are today all Muslim."

(Antichrist's coalition in his last battle is not identified, but the coalition of Gog and Magog is identified. Richardson gives strong reasons why they are the same coalition.)

Richardson believes the key error of many previous prophecy scholars involves the misinterpretation of a prediction by Daniel to Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel describes the rise and fall of empires of the future, leading to the endtimes. Western Christians have viewed one of those empires as Rome, when, claims Richardson, Rome never actually conquered Babylon and was thus disqualified as a possibility.

It had to be another empire that rose and fell and rose again that would lead to rule of this "man of sin," described in the Bible. That empire, he says, is the Islamic Empire, which did conquer Babylon and, in fact, rules over it even today.

Many evangelical Christians believe the Bible predicts a charismatic ruler, the Antichrist, will arise in the last days, before the return of Jesus. The Quran also predicts that a man, called the Mahdi, will rise up to lead the nations, pledging to usher in an era of peace.

Richardson makes the case these two men are, in fact, one in the same.

Daniel 7:7 begins the "fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong..." which all agree describes the kingdom of Antichrist. Notice later it says the Antichrist "made war with the saints"! We can pray and work that those "saints" will be us, here in America! Someone's gotta do it!

Daniel 7:21 I beheld, and **the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them;** 22 Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; **and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.** 23 Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. 24 And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. 25 And he shall speak great words against the most High, and **shall wear out the saints of the most High,** and think to change times and laws: and **they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.**

We – if we are blessed to be those who fight Antichrist – may lose a great battle. But even if we lose, remember that when nations lose battles, they don’t necessarily cease to exist! There are normally survivors!

But we have even greater hope than that we may survive a terrible defeat! Daniel 11:41 lists three nations, including Jordan which is the closest to a “friend” that Israel has in the Middle East, that Antichrist shall never conquer. The U.S. isn’t listed in that verse, but that verse shows that the prophecy that Antichrist “shall devour the whole earth” is a general statement, with exceptions. Israel will also clearly escape Antichrist’s hand. Will Israel’s protector, the “wings of the eagle”, escape Antichrist along with Jordan?

The parallel prophecy in Revelation gives even more encouragement, as Baxter points out:

Revelation 13:1 And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. 2 And the beast which I saw was **like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion:** and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.

In other words, this “beast” is a conglomeration of all the previous animals except one. Suggesting the Antichrist’s government will be composed of all the previously prophesied governments, except one. Which one? Do you remember which one is missing?

The “wings of the eagle”! America! If we are understanding this correctly, Russia, England, and whoever the Leopard symbolizes, will be part of this Antichrist government which the European Union is shaping up to fulfill. But America will never join! What a glorious hope!

Actually there is a possible interpretation other than that English and Russian troops march with the Antichrist. “the feet of a bear” could also describe Russia’s technological support of Moslem armies during these last days. Russia for several decades has been equipping Moslem nations with fighter jets, tanks, nuclear support, and everything in between. As for “the mouth of a lion”, this sounds like a description of the fact that English is a second language, along with Arabic, of Moslem nations. In Sudan, for example, with about 400 native languages, neither of which are Arabic or English, those are the two official languages. Arabic mostly in the North, English mostly in the South. There is no suggestions that England has anything to do with this use of England’s language, other than the fact that until nearly a century ago, England ruled many of these lands.

Baxter points out another verse that sounds like a prophecy of the United States doing the right thing:

Rev 12:13 And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. 14 And **to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle**, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.

Could the “woman” be Israel, (her “12 stars”, v. 1, representing the 12 tribes), which gave birth to Jesus, and the “two wings of a great eagle” be the United States, which has been Israel’s only help since its re-establishment and has already helped with several airlifts of Jewish refugees? Could this refer to the U.S. helping airlift Israeli refugees to Petra, 45 miles straight south of the Dead Sea, perhaps by helicopter?

Dan 11:44 But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many.

As Baxter points out, “Daniel 11:44 actually speaks of wars that will be fought by the Antichrist during the final three and one-half years known as the great tribulation....From this prophecy, we see that the Antichrist will have opposition at a national level – even during the time of the great tribulation.”

Not convinced? You say “but the Bible says ALL the nations will fall under Antichrist and join him in his attack on Jerusalem!”

Let’s look at the verses again:

Zechariah 12:2 Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto **all the people round about**, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem. 3 And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though **all the people of the earth** be gathered together against it.

Zechariah 14:2 For I will gather **all nations against Jerusalem** to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city.

Joel 3:2 I will also gather **all nations**, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land.

Revelation 13:7 And it was given unto him to make **war with the saints, and to overcome them:** and **power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.**

Sounds pretty grim, doesn’t it? “All” does mean “all”, doesn’t it?

Actually, but wait a minute. As I answer that question, please don’t equate me with president Bill Clinton’s famous answer to the prosecutor, “it depends on what the definition of the word ‘is’ is.”

But seriously, “all” doesn’t always mean “all”, in English, Hebrew, or Greek. In fact it usually does not, and usually no one even thinks it does. We usually understand the exceptions from context.

“All is vanity”, says Ecclesiastes 1:2. Is God “vanity”? Of course not. In fact, the word “vanity” comes from the Hebrew for “breath”, so that the very word “breath” implies the existence of The Breather. It says the substance of the universe is to God as our breath is to us.

“All is lost” does not literally mean the whole universe is lost, or is a lost cause. It is understood to apply only to the circumstances of the speaker.

Joel Richardson, in his “The Islamic Antichrist”, says “imagine a speed limit sign that had several various exceptions painted on it: ‘Speed limit 55, except ambulances, fire trucks, police giving chase, etc.’ It simply wouldn’t work. Thus exceptions can’t be ruled out on the basis of exclusive language. ‘...all the peoples and nations of men of every language dreaded and feared’ Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel 5:19. ...Were the native peoples of Papua New Guinea living in dread of Nebuchadnezzar?” Or only the nations which had heard of him?

Richardson says 1 Samuel 15:8 says Joshua “utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword”, referring to the Amalekites, yet a few chapters later there they were causing trouble again! Proving that “all the people” meant all the people on the battlefield.

Not absolutely “all people” will march against Jerusalem, or be overthrown by Antichrist, because:

Daniel 11:41 He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon. (Modern day Jordan.)

The Bible does not contradict itself in saying “all the nations”, and then in another place “except Jordan”. It’s just part of the way language works.

If the United Nations is controlled by Antichrist, and marches against Israel, it would be appropriate for God to have prophesied that Antichrist will subdue “all the nations”, even if the United States and Canada, though still officially members, participate with only a few dozen troops that are stuck in U.N. command, while their armies refuse to participate.

Another possibility is that Antichrist may subdue U.S. forces in battle, but find himself not quite able to institute Sharia Law over very much of the U.S. because of guerrilla action from NRA members. Just as the U.S. overwhelmingly defeated Afghanistan and Iraq – the latter, twice – even though battle has

raged on the streets for years. To be sure, less and less with each passing year, to the extent that in 2010, a general told a critic that there were only half as many casualties in Iraq that year as in Obama's home town, Chicago. But it took 6 years to achieve victory that complete. Antichrist will have only 3-1/2 years, and perhaps only weeks if America is one of his last conquests.

At this point, of course, it is hard to imagine Moslem forces prevailing over U.S. forces in battle over U.S. soil, even with all Moslem nations combined. Even if our civilian population is crippled by an EMP attack or by solar activity in 2012, I think our military is fairly well prepared for that. Moslem nations don't have enough of a navy to project their forces all the way to here. Would the Russian or Chinese navy bring them?

But if Moslems living in the U.S. believe their 12<sup>th</sup> Imam is actually here, "all" of them may become terrorists, overwhelming U.S. intelligence.

Most of our population is already afraid to publicly criticize Moslems, partly out of misplaced courtesy and partly out of fear. This refusal to identify the danger will only be encouraged by an effective False Prophet.

*And we have elected Barack Obama as our Commander in Chief. His admiration of Islam makes the worst imaginable scenarios possible.*

Sent: 10/29/2008 2:57:52 P.M. Central Standard Time

Subj: Arabs: Obama 'One of Us'

Breaking from Newsmax.com

### Arabs: Obama 'One of Us'

While Democratic presidential nominee Barack Obama "has tried to push his origins into the background, his '**Islamic roots**' have won him a place in many Arabs' hearts."

That's the observation of Iranian-born commentator Amir Taheri, whose column in Tuesday's New York Post notes that many Arabs and other Muslims see Obama as "one of them."

They see that Obama has Arabic-Islamic first and middle names: **Barack means "blessed" and Hussein means "beautiful."** His last name is Swahili, an East African language based on Arabic, Taheri writes. His sister is named Oumah, Arabic for "the community of the faithful;" his daughter Malia bears the name of a daughter of the noted Caliph Othman; and his father and stepfather were both Muslims.

Although Taheri did not note it, Obama was raised partially as a Muslim when he lived in Indonesia with his mother and stepfather. While there, he studied at two schools and was registered at both as a Muslim student.

As such he received Islamic religious instruction, studied the Koran, and prayed with other students. He did attend mosque, albeit infrequently, with his stepfather.

Obama's religious upbringing after Indonesia is somewhat of a mystery until his late 20s. At that point, Obama says he converted to Christianity after meeting the Rev. Jeremiah Wright in Chicago.

Still, Obama has maintained strong support from American Muslims, including Louis Farrakhan's Nation of Islam movement. **Farrakhan has endorsed Obama and has called him the "messiah."**

These factors have made Obama a big hit in the Arab world, where he has received wide praise, including:

- The Syrian regime has indicated its preference for Obama. Buthaina Shaaban, an adviser to President Bashar al-Assad, has written: "The change suggested by Obama is essential not only for the U.S. but for the entire human family."
- **Libyan leader Muammar al-Qaddafi called Obama "a Muslim"** and said: "All the people in the Arab and Muslim world and in Africa applauded this man. They welcome him and prayed for his success," although Qaddafi also expressed criticism of Obama's

comments on the future of Jerusalem.

- Hamas political adviser Ahmed Yousef said this year: “We like Mr. Obama and we hope that he will win the election.”
- Hezbollah’s second in command, Sheik Naim al-Kassim, urged Americans to vote for Obama as a step toward peace with Islam, and pro-Hezbollah columnist Amal Saad-Ghorayeb said there is **“no doubt Arabs should welcome an Obama presidency,”** according to Taheri.
- In Saudi Arabia, commentator Hussein Shobokshi wrote that an Obama presidency “would mark an important moral transformation in the superpower and is a healthy indicator of the long-awaited improvement in the international arena.”

Some columnists also have noted Obama’s close ties to several Palestinian radicals, including Columbia University Prof. Rashid Khalidi — former communications director for the Palestinian Liberation Organization — and another Palestinian political activist, the late Edward Said.

The “Arab street” also favors Obama. Recent surveys found that **he is the preferred candidate in Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Algeria, Syria, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.**

<http://atlasshrugs2000.typepad.com>

OBAMA’S INAUGURATION PRAYER WILL BE GIVEN BY TERROR LINKED GROUP PRES

01-14-09

Of all the clergy in America ..... why her?

**Obama invites Hamas and Muslim Brotherhood linked ISNA to offer prayer at inauguration**

ISNA was an unindicted co-conspirator in the same Hamas funding case that named CAIR as a Muslim Brotherhood group in the same Brotherhood document that speaks of its goal of destroying Western civilization from within.

Creeping Sharia has more:

A prayer will be offered at the National Cathedral by Ingrid Mattson, the first woman president of the Islamic Society of North America, according to an official who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to release the information. The Islamic Society, based in [Plainfield] Indiana, is the nation’s largest Muslim group. Source: AP

Avi Lipkim, a Jew who lectures in American churches and Christian radio stations, and writes for *Israel Today*, said the only people who aren’t certain the U.S. has a Moslem president are the American people. The King of Saudi Arabia, to whom Obama had bowed shortly after his election, causing a media scandal, is the world leader of Sunni Muslims. He had said before Obama’s election that America will have a Moslem president. Obama’s Moslem connections are Sunni. (Iran is Shiite Muslim. Sunnis are very sympathetic to invading Iran on any pretext, and Iran’s nuclear threat to Sunnis is as good a pretext as any.) Lipkim says Obama has authorized an additional cache of \$400 of military weapons in Israel, added to \$700 already there, for U.S. use although they could be used by Israel with a U.S. green light. This authorization is for 3 months, and he said there is some other action that indicates preparation for a 3 month war, which I didn’t hear. Lipkim foresees an invasion by the U.S. on Iran, which will flood the world market with oil which Iran is suppressing – people say the only way to get to Iranian oil, which is a quarter of world supply, is to depose Achmadinijab. Then world economies will be saved when oil prices drop, which will cause Obama to be reelected. Then he will invade Israel, leading a Moslem coalition. (He spoke on 12/28/10 at 5 am on KPSZ radio; I didn’t catch the name of the show.)

It seems Biblically and practically impossible for Obama to lead the coalition, and thus be the Antichrist or the Mahdi or the 12<sup>th</sup> Imam.

Biblically: The leadership of the attack on Israel will be headquartered in Magog, which traditional commentaries place in Russia and which *The Islamic Antichrist* places in Turkey. Obama is neither from Turkey or Russia. If *The Islamic Antichrist* is right in concluding that the Ezekiel 38 invasion of Israel is the same event as Antichrist's march on Israel at the end of the 7 year Tribulation, then Obama could not even be commander in chief because there are not 7 more potential years in his term as president. But if traditional interpretations are correct, that the Ezekiel 38 invasion precedes the Antichrist, then the next three months would be a good time for it to happen.

Practically: It is really hard to imagine Obama being reelected. Concern about his nonexistent birth certificate is growing, not diminishing. Voter apathy would have to kick in as never before.

It is hard to imagine U.S. troops going along with an admitted attack on Israel, unless the purpose of orders is covered with a burqa. For example, troops could be told Saudi Arabia is invading Israel so they need to go stop them, and while there they could be given positions which interfere with Israeli movements.

During the first invasion of Iraq in 1990, the U.S. ordered Israel not to fight back as Saddam Hussein, Iraq's dictator, launched several Scud missiles into Israel. The rationale was that if Israel actively entered the war, all the other Arab nations would too. Surely this policy would be ordered in a future war, and perhaps if Israel disobeys, American troops would be ordered to strategically cripple Israel's ability to continue.

Could Obama become dictator and bypass the next election, and the one after that? Many democracies/republics have fallen to dictators. Belated success with the economy would certainly help. A popular False Prophet would help. Attacks on Freedom of the Press and the internet through FCC manipulation would cripple the ability of critics to organize.

Hidden cameras on street corners like in England, where computers using facial recognition software to process a national database could track where everyone goes, would further hinder critics from organizing. This technology already exists: most states have drivers license databases of photos which facial recognition software can process. The Real ID Act of 2005 is law now. It forces states to replace the old polaroid pictures with an image stored on computers, and to combine their records with the Social Security database into a national database. Although that is the law, it slipped through without much explanation. A majority of states have enacted legislation ordering their state officials to not obey that federal law, so in 2007 the Senate refused to fund it, so it has not been implemented.

Bible believing Christians like Iowa Congressman Steve King and Arizona's Tom Tancredo are in the forefront of pushing for this Mark of the Beast technology, in the name of rounding up "illegal aliens". Two name changes later, (Real ID, EEVS – Electronic Employment Verification System, and now "E-Verify"), states are making use of this system mandatory for everyone applying for a job. In 2007 the USCIS attempted to mandate this system through administrative rule after failing to get the Senate to approve it, but it was held up by a California court because the system has 18 million "no match" errors (where the Social Security number doesn't match the name submitted), 12 million of which are for citizens. If millions of citizens are forced to wrestle with bureaucrats to prove they are citizens, many will find themselves deported to countries they never heard of.

But the only thing more scary than mandating use of a national database with 18 million errors, is the existence of a national database with 0 errors!

But even these dangers are not beyond the power of American Christians to neutralize – if we only will. Obama has no birth certificate, disqualifying him from office. All Americans have to do is care. But will we?

Another way of saying this is that this is just one more example of the fact that God's "judgments" for disobeying Him are in reality the natural consequences of such behavior, so that when the consequences fall we not only know we disobeyed God, but that our own choices

Christians can stop pressing for Mark of the Beast technology just so they can go to Hell for the judgment of not "taking in strangers" (immigrants), according to Matthew 25:39-45.

Richardson concludes, “I believe that, while the Bible indeed gives us a general prophetic framework of what will happen in the last days, *many of the specific details have yet to be determined*. God did not reveal every final detail for a reason. He rarely does. If He did, then we would be justified in just waiting for the Antichrist to come and get us. ...But instead, God desires us to actually wrestle with Him in prayer....I believe the lack of, or the presence of, an abundance of prevailing prayer will determine the final chapter in the story of many nations. Every nation will receive its own measure of God’s judgment. Indeed, every person on earth will undergo a deep refining process....”

Richardson reminds us that in Exodus 32:9-14, God emphatically declared His judgment against Israel, but Moses reasoned with God and God “repented of the evil that he thought to do unto His people”.

I will add that the next section, Section 6, tells of more than private, closeted prayer which God looks for as He weighs whether to withhold or cancel Judgment. You will read that in some of the prophecies where Jeremiah told the people what they must do to escape God’s judgment *which had already been pronounced*, Jeremiah said the people needed to stop oppressing their own people. Two specific examples were infant sacrifice, and not crediting debtors for repayments earned, thus enslaving debtors in perpetual debt.

I submit that two examples of oppression in America today, which we must bring to a speedy end if we hope to escape God’s judgment, are abortion of our very own babies, and dehumanization of our immigrants with bureaucratic burdens we would not touch with one of our fingers.

## **6. At every stage of God’s Judgments, He offers Second Chances!**

### **SECOND CHANCES IN JEREMIAH.**

**Background:** How is it possible for God to make all His prophecies come true, and yet to give second chances to those whose Judgment He prophesies? The last 34 chapters of Jeremiah show how He does it. In fact, God offered at least 12 Second Chances in all!

The end of Israel as a nation on its own soil was at hand. Josiah, Israel’s most righteous king, had died in battle because he would not listen to the Word of the Lord spoken by the Antichrist of his day, Pharaoh-Necho, which is a warning to us not to dismiss ANYONE’S rebukes just because the source fails our standards of credibility.

Josiah’s son, Jehoahaz, was crowned king, but he reigned only 3 months before Pharaoh-Necho replaced him with his brother Eliakim, whom Pharaoh-Necho renamed Jehoiakim.

Jehoiakim reigned 11 wicked years before Nebuchadnezzar arrived from Babylon and carried him back home as a prisoner.

His son Jehoiachin, age 8, reigned 100 evil days before Nebuchadnezzar took him back home too, replacing him with Zedekiah, who ruled 11 evil years. Not only did he rebel against God, but also against Nebuchadnezzar.

Which is where our story begins.

Nebuchadnezzar was about to return to Jerusalem one last time; and this time, not to switch kings or take away treasures, but to take away most of the people. The book of Jeremiah is the record of his appeals to Zedekiah and to the people to stop all this

rebellion and save themselves.

The book of Jeremiah is the record of God's immense creativity in offering Second Chances alongside every step of His inevitable judgments. At each stage, God said (for example) "Look, it's too late to save your homes. But if you will finally stop shooting yourselves in the foot now, you can still save your lives."

Zedekiah was like Pilate. He knew Jeremiah was right. He wanted to obey Jeremiah. But he loved the praise of the people more.

The Ultimate Second Chance was that there was a small remnant of the Righteous who lost their homes, their wealth, and their nation, and were carried off to Babylon in chains. But even there, they wound up the rulers of Babylon!

Here is how God tells it:

2 Chronicles 36:1 Then the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, and made him king in his father's stead in Jerusalem. 2 Jehoahaz was twenty and three years old when he began to reign, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. 3 And the king of Egypt put him down at Jerusalem, and condemned the land in an hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold. 4 And the king of Egypt made Eliakim his brother king over Judah and Jerusalem, and turned his name to Jehoiakim. And Necho took Jehoahaz his brother, and carried him to Egypt. 5 Jehoiakim was twenty and five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem: and he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD his God. 6 Against him came up Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and bound him in fetters, to carry him to Babylon. 7 Nebuchadnezzar also carried of the vessels of the house of the LORD to Babylon, and put them in his temple at Babylon. 8 Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, and his abominations which he did, and that which was found in him, behold, they are written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah: and Jehoiachin his son reigned in his stead. 9 Jehoiachin was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned three months and ten days in Jerusalem: and he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD. 10 And when the year was expired, king Nebuchadnezzar sent, and brought him to Babylon, with the goodly vessels of the house of the LORD, and made Zedekiah his brother king over Judah and Jerusalem. 11 Zedekiah was one and twenty years old when he began to reign, and reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. 12 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD his God, and humbled not himself before Jeremiah the prophet speaking from the mouth of the LORD. 13 And he also rebelled against king Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear by God: but he stiffened his neck, and hardened his heart from turning unto the LORD God of Israel.

## **Introduction: How God Fulfills Prophecies, Yet Gives Second Chances:**

**Jeremiah 18** explains God's principle. Just as a potter has every right to reknock a lump of clay out of a pot that came out badly, and start over, even so the Lord is right to reverse His promises of good, or judgments of evil, as the actions of the people make them inappropriate.

A remarkable thing about the chapter is that Jeremiah prays that God will *not* be merciful with those who want to kill the messenger. Is this inconsistent with verses about forgiving? No. There is nothing in the Bible about forgiving people who don't care about being forgiven, or about repenting. In fact Matthew 18 is about a repentant man who was forgiven a huge debt; but when he did not forgive another repentant man in the same spirit, who owed a much smaller debt, his forgiveness was rescinded! Hebrews 12 explains that if you love those who won't respond to love, perhaps they will respond to punishment, which you must administer if you are responsible for them.

### **Jeremiah 19: Israel's judgment, First Installment**

Vs 6 the valley where they sacrifice their children will be called the "Valley of Slaughter" where

they themselves are slain. V. 8 Jerusalem's desolation will astonish people. V. 9 famine will be so great parents will eat their children.

Jeremiah 20:2 Jeremiah was beaten and left in "stocks" overnight, and released the next morning. Stocks had holes for the head, hands, and feet. I think the holes were in a sheet of wood that was in a single plane. Can you contort your body so you could fit in that? An hour in such a device would send any American to the spinal injury specialist of a hospital, or at least to a chiropractor. But Jeremiah was left there all night. It gets cold at night. A man could die of hypothermia. With no toilet breaks, Jeremiah was a stinking mess the next morning. But Jeremiah wasn't intimidated. He unleashed even worse prophecies. Oh, I forgot to mention, before Jeremiah was put in the stocks, he was "struck". This could mean something as light as a slap, or as serious as a beating, but it was probably being whipped with 40 lashes as described in Deut. 25:2-3, since that punishment is given in Moses' law but not the lighter sentences.

v. 4 the man who tortured Jeremiah, Pashur, will watch his friends be slaughtered. The Babylonians will slaughter many, and take away the rest captive. v. 5 He'll take all the "toys" too. The money, the luxuries. Pashur will die a captive in Babylon, for prophesying lies. Pashur means "security on every side", but Jeremiah gave him a name meaning "terror on every side". [According to Jamieson, Robert ; Fausset, A. R. ; Fausset, A. R. ; Brown, David ; Brown, David: *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*. Oak Harbor, WA : Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997, S. Je 20:3]

V. 7-18 Jeremiah's prayer: I hate being hated, but God's Word burns me inside until I declare it. My enemies wait like vultures for me to fall, that they might feast. God will save me from them. But why was I born? May those responsible be cursed! My life is work, sorrow, and shame!

But Jeremiah knew the risk when he took the government leaders to hear his prophecies against them, and then when he went to the Temple to repeat his sermons!

The following commentary is from Warren Wiersbe, "Be Decisive". Wiersbe, Warren W.: *Be Decisive*. Wheaton, Ill. : Victor Books, 1996, c1995 (An Old Testament Study), S. Je 19:1

The east gate was the Potsherd Gate, where the potters worked and the broken pottery was thrown. It overlooked the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, the Jerusalem garbage dump (Gehenna). But Jeremiah turned the gate into a pulpit and declared impending disaster because of what the kings of Judah had done: forsaken God, worshiped idols, desecrated the temple, murdered the innocent, and offered their children in altar fires dedicated to Baal.

This valley had been a center for idol worship, but Josiah had desecrated it by making it a garbage dump. *Topheth* means "a fire pit, a hearth," because the little children had been put through the fires there. After the Babylonian invasion, however, the new name would be "The Valley of Slaughter." The siege would be so bad that the Jews would have to eat their own children to stay alive!

*Jeremiah announces judgment (vv. 10–15).* "I will make void the counsel of Judah and Jerusalem in this place" (19:7). [The verb means "to empty" and is similar to the Hebrew word for jar. Perhaps Jeremiah had put water in the clay flask and then poured it out as he spoke these words. God would empty all the nation's plans and then break the nation that conceived them!]

To demonstrate this, Jeremiah broke a clay jar and said, "This is what the Lord Almighty says: 'I will smash this nation and this city just as this potter's jar is smashed and cannot be repaired'" (v. 11, NIV). The **nation was beyond discipline (2:23), beyond prayer (7:16), and now, beyond repair!** They had so hardened themselves against the Lord that all hope was gone.

In the Near East in that day, kings and generals often smashed clay jars in a special ceremony before they went out to battle, symbolic of their total defeat of their enemies. This image is also used of the Messiah in Psalm 2:9: "You shall break them [the enemy nations] with a rod of iron; You shall dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel" (NKJV). But here it was God smashing His own people!

We can only imagine how angry the elders were who had accompanied Jeremiah to the Potsherd Gate. After all, they and the priests (and Jeremiah was a priest) had endorsed the "peace messages" of the false prophets as well as the political schemes of the civil leaders who hoped to get help from Judah's ungodly allies. But what Jeremiah did next made them even more angry, because *he went to the temple and preached the sermon again!* For a man who was broken before God, he certainly had courage before

his enemies, but he was trusting God's promise of help (Jer. 1:7–10, 17–19), and the Lord was sustaining him.

Can nations and individuals sin so greatly that even God can't restore them? Yes, they can. As long as the clay is pliable in the hands of the potter, he can make it again if it's marred (18:4), but when the clay becomes hard, it's too late to reform it. *Judgment is the only response to willful apostasy*. The Northern Kingdom of Israel refused to repent, and the Assyrians took it captive. Now the Southern Kingdom of Judah was resisting God's truth, and Babylon would destroy the land and deport the people. The Jewish people rejected their King when they asked Pilate to crucify Jesus; forty years later, the Romans did to Jerusalem what the Babylonians had done six centuries before. "There is a sin unto death" (1 John 5:16).

## First Chance

**Jeremiah 21-22** A different Pashur, with a different father, was sent by King Zedekiah to ask Jeremiah what would happen since Nebuchadnezzar was attacking. The seige had already begun, and Zedekiah was fighting back. Jeremiah prophesied destruction for all who fought and stayed behind Jerusalem's walls.

But if the king and the people would stop rebelling, God offered a Second Chance: surrender, and live! And the king would have a secure, peaceful reign!

But they would also have to stop being a terror to each other. The king would have to immediately deliver the oppressed, which a later chapter defines as setting free the debtors who are kept as slaves beyond God's 6-year maximum. The king would have to stop doing "violence to the stranger [immigrant], the fatherless, nor the widow, neither shed innocent blood in this place." [Such as killing their own children.]

### Jeremiah 23: JUDGMENT AGAINST PASTORS!

**Jeremiah 23:1** Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the LORD. 2 Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the LORD. ...16 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the LORD. 17 They say still unto them that despise me, The LORD hath said, Ye shall have peace; and they say unto every one that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, No evil shall come upon you. NET: 30 So I, the Lord, affirm that I am opposed to those prophets who steal messages from one another that they claim are from me. Message: 30 "I've had it with the 'prophets' who get all their sermons secondhand from each other. NIV: 30 "Therefore," declares the Lord, "I am against the prophets who steal from one another words supposedly from me."

## Second Chance

### First Judgment Falls

**Jeremiah 24:1** "Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon had carried away captive Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah, and the princes of Judah, with the carpenters and smiths, from Jerusalem, and had brought them to Babylon." But God said "I have sent (the captives, who are "very good") out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans for their good." v. 5. "They shall be my people", v. 7. But those whom Nebuchadnezzar left in Israel, including King Zedekiah, God will "consume" with "the sword, the famine, and the pestilence", v. 10.

**Jeremiah 25:5-9**, God reminds Judah of the Second Chance, if they would stop their cruel "worship" of idols, which they had rejected.

Destruction of all nations, by Babylon, is prophesied, and then Babylon's destruction after 70 years. v. 29 "I begin to bring evil on the city which is called by my name, and should ye (other nations)

be utterly unpunished? Ye shall not be unpunished".

## Third Chance

**Jeremiah 26** God told Jeremiah to preach at the temple, on the chance that the people will repent, in which case God would also "repent me of the evil, which I purpose to do unto them because of the evil of their doings." v. 3.

If they still ignore God's laws and God's prophets, Jerusalem will become a ghost town. A pile of rubble. Well, that didn't go over very well. That was politically incorrect. The priests and the people arrested him and pronounced the death sentence over him. v. 8. But the princes wanted to hear the evidence. Jeremiah said kill him, and bring innocent blood on the city, because God told him what to say, because if the people will repent, God will spare them judgment. The princes and the people told the priests and prophets not to kill Jeremiah. Some elders reviewed the history of previous prophets who had prophesied against Jerusalem. One prophet was obeyed, by King Hezekiah; another was slain, by King Jehoiakim! Hmm. Which was the wisest precedent? Jeremiah was saved from the mob by Ahikam.

## Fourth Chance

**Jeremiah 27.** In a world without the internet, or even a decent post office, how does one man, despised by most, manage to send messages to all nations? By meeting all the messengers sent from surrounding kings to the king of Jerusalem, and giving them messages to take back to their kings, v. 3!

So with this resource, Jeremiah told all the nations to surrender to Nebuchadnezzar, if they wanted to live, and not be carried away into captivity. Jeremiah even made yokes with chains or ropes, to send with the messages, to graphically illustrate the future for those who disobey. Jeremiah said God had decreed the nations would serve Nebuchadnezzar, his son, and his grandson; and then the Babylonians would serve others. The message noted that the same message had already been given to Judah's King Zedekiah; the implication I think was that Zedekiah had already submitted, and was alive.

Chapter 27 also contains a Fourth Chance for Israel: although the first wave of captives had already been carried off to Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar had left many in Judah, and had left the temple "vessels", which included the huge sculptures made of brass, and the two huge bronze pillars. In v. 18 God offers hope that these will not also be carried to Babylon, if the prophets will "make intercession" with God.

**Jeremiah 28: Judgment.** Apparently the prophets did not make intercession, because now all the vessels have been carried to Babylon. So now along comes a false prophet, Hananiah, promising, in the temple, that God will return all the vessels, along with the former King Jeconiah, who had also been taken captive to Babylon.

Jeremiah said he would like nothing more than for that prophecy to be true, but he'll believe it when he sees it. ("when the word of the prophet shall come to pass, then shall the prophet be known, that the LORD hath truly sent him." v. 9)

All this time, Jeremiah was carrying a yoke on his own neck, to graphically illustrate the fate of all who continued to rebel. So Hananiah came over and took Jeremiah's yoke and broke it, prophesying that within 2 years Nebuchadnezzar's yoke would be broken off Judah. Jeremiah left, having no message at that time. v. 11. God spoke a message to Hananiah in front of the city: you broke yokes of wood, but all the nations shall wear yokes of iron. And Hananiah shall die – this year. He died two months later.

**Jeremiah 29: Hope for the Captives.** Jeremiah sent encouragement to the captives in Babylon: take wives, plant crops, build homes, and pray for the peace of Babylon, because you will be there 70 years, and they will be good years. Don't believe the prophets who say otherwise, for example, the prophets Ahab and Zedekiah. Nebuchadnezzar will burn them alive before your eyes. v. 21-22. As for Shemaiah, who issued orders for Jeremiah's arrest for saying the captivity would be long, he will die shortly in Babylon, leaving no heirs.

**Jeremiah 30.** God promises restoration, peace, and prosperity for the remnant now, and after 70

years, even while the rest of the world suffers as much pain as a woman giving birth.

**Jeremiah 31.** The return after 70 years is graphically described. v. 10 even specifies that Babylon herself, who scattered Israel, will then gather her back to Israel. And not only bring Israel back, but protect them! Which is what happened under Cyrus. 2 Chronicles 36.22.

God gives the remnant a wonderful reason to return to Israel after 70 years: that is where the Son of God will be born! Apparently that is the meaning of verse 21, according to Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Je 31:22). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

God promises to *create a new thing in their land, A woman shall compass a man.*

CALVIN explains this: Israel, who is feeble as a woman, shall be superior to the warlike Chaldeans; the captives shall reduce their captors to captivity. HENGSTENBERG makes the “woman” the Jewish Church, and the “man” Jehovah, her husband, whose love she will again seek (Ho 2:6, 7). MAURER, A woman shall protect (De 32:10, *Margin*; Ps 32:10) a man, that is, You need fear no foes in returning, for all things shall be so peaceful that *a woman* would be able to take man’s part, and act as his *protector*. But the Christian fathers [AUGUSTINE, &c.]. almost unanimously interpreted it of *the Virgin Mary compassing Christ in her womb*. This view is favored:—(1) By the connection; it gives a reason why the exiles should desire a return to their country, namely, because Christ was conceived there. (2) The word “created” implies a divine power put forth in the creation of a body in the Virgin’s womb by the Holy Ghost for the second Adam, such as was exerted in creating the first Adam (Lu 1:35; Heb 10:5). (3) The phrase, “*a new thing*,” something unprecedented; a man whose like had never existed before, at once God and man; a mother out of the ordinary course of nature, at once mother and virgin. An extraordinary mode of generation; one conceived by the Holy Ghost without man. (4) The specification “in the land” (not “earth,” as *English Version*), namely, of *Judah*, where probably Christ was *conceived*, in *Hebron* (compare Lu 1:39, 42, 44, with Jos 21:11) or else in *Nazareth*, “in the territory” of *Israel*, to whom Je 31:5, 6, 15, 18, 21 refer; His *birth* was at Beth-lehem (Mic 5:2; Mt 2:5, 6). As the place of His nativity, and of His being reared (Mt 2:23), and of His preaching (Hag 2:7; Mal 3:1), are specified, so it is likely the Holy Spirit designated the place of His being conceived. (5) The *Hebrew* for “woman” implies an *individual*, as the Virgin Mary, rather than a *collection of persons*. (6) The restoration of Israel is grounded on God’s covenant in *Christ*, to whom, therefore, allusion is naturally made as the foundation of Israel’s hope (compare Is 7:14). The *Virgin Mary*’s conception of Messiah in the womb answers to the “*Virgin of Israel*” (therefore so called, Je 31:21), that is, Israel and her sons at their final restoration, receiving Jesus as Messiah (Zec 12:10). (7) The reference to the conception of the *child* Messiah accords with the mention of the massacre of “children” referred to in Je 31:15 (compare Mt 2:17). (8) The *Hebrew* for “man” is properly “mighty man,” a term applied to *God* (De 10:17); and to Christ (Zec 13:7; compare Ps 45:3; Is 9:6) [CALOVIUS].

Verses 31-34 more clearly prophesy the coming of Jesus. They talk about the coming “new covenant”. These very verses are expounded at length in the New Testament book of Hebrews, and indeed the very phrase “New Testament” means the same as “new covenant”.

v. 29-30 assure Israel that God does not judge anyone for his father’s sins, but for his own.

v. 38-40 even describe Jerusalem’s future expansion.

**Jeremiah 32.** **Seige.** Jeremiah was in prison as Babylon’s armies surrounded Jerusalem, for prophesying that Babylon would win, and capture King Zedekiah, and take him to Babylon.

Interesting, that even Jeremiah “tested the spirits”, whether it was really the Lord speaking to him. v. 6-8. He bought a field, demonstrating his faith that “houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land.” v. 15. But the deed was stored in a clay pot during the long wait. God said the houses would be burned, upon whose roofs incense was burned to Baal – the same folks who sacrificed their children to Molech “which I commanded them not, neither came it into my mind, that they should do this abomination”, v. 35. This was the 10th year of Zedekiah: 18th year of Nebuchadnezzar.

**Jeremiah 33** More prophecies of return after 70 years, as the siege began! v. 17-18, when hope of it seemed bleakest, God repeated His promise that King “David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel”. (As the Bible Knowledge Commentary points out, “God did not promise an unbroken monarchy but an unbroken line of descendants from David who would be qualified to sit on that throne when it was reestablished.”)

## Fifth Chance

**Jeremiah 34.** v. 5, Jeremiah told the king he would die in peace, not by the sword; but he would definitely be taken into captivity and speak face to face with Nebuchadnezzar.

v. 8 Jeremiah got all the people to agree to free their servants whom they had illegally kept in bondage past God’s 6-year maximum. v. 11, but afterward they captured them back. So God prophesied slaughter and deportation. Although the chapter does not explicitly say they would not have suffered this additional judgment had they stuck to their agreement, that is the clear implication.

**Jeremiah 35.** A family which obeyed the austere lifestyle of its ancestor was held up as an example to disobedient Israel which ignored God, her spiritual Father, and promised that it would always have descendants.

## Sixth, Seventh Chance

**Jeremiah 36.** Flashback: Now we are in the 4<sup>th</sup> year of King Jehoiakim. Jeremiah is not in chronological order, but the years of the prophecies are given. v. 3: “It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them; that they may return every man from his evil way; that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin.”

Jeremiah dictated to Baruch the scribe, writing in a roll, and told him to read it to the people. Some there took the news to the king, telling Jeremiah and Baruch to hide. The king did not repent but burned the roll a little at a time as it was read, then sent to arrest Jeremiah and Baruch, but the Lord hid them. Jeremiah dictated another roll, with more added, and prophesied the king’s body would be thrown out to rot in the weather. **This last judgment may be categorized as a Seventh Chance**, in the sense that it would have been avoided by more respect from the King.

Actually the second roll contained more judgments than the first, which also could have been avoided by a more reverent reception.

**Jeremiah 37.** Back in time to Zedekiah, during the first siege. reigned instead of Coniah, Jehoiakim’s son, whom Nebuchadnezzar had made king. Pharaoh came to help Jerusalem against which the Babylonians had laid seige. Zedekiah asked Jeremiah to tell the future. Jeremiah said the Babylonians would leave, which they did shortly, but they would return and burn the city. During the lull Jeremiah went to another city, where he was accused of defecting to the Babylonians and imprisoned. Zedekiah sent for him, but secretly without releasing him. He asked the future, was told he would be delivered to the Babylonians. Jeremiah asked to not be returned to the dungeon. The king ordered him held in the prison courtyard and fed bread as long as any remained.

## Eighth, Ninth, Tenth Chance

**Jeremiah 38.**

38 God gave them one more chance: go out to the Babylonians, and live; otherwise stay and fight, and die. But Israel had little interest in God’s Tenth Chance! “The princes” wanted to kill Jeremiah just for offering it! They said he “weakened” the fighting spirit of the troops.

v. 5 King Zedekiah told the princes “he is in your hand: for the king is not he that can do anything against you.” What? He had just promised to spare Jeremiah, and now he says he’s not in charge? Like Pilate, who “feared the people”. Like politicians today who hold their finger to the wind, more concerned with what will get them support than what they know is best for the nation. For fear of having power taken away, they give it away.

v. 14 **This Eighth Chance could be counted as three chances**, because in this chapter Jeremiah gives the same warning to King Zedekiah: surrender, and live, and save the city from being burned. Zedekiah had a lame objection, v. 19, which Jeremiah disposed of, but Zedekiah hesitated. Each of these three times, it was Zedekiah going to, or sending for, Jeremiah. The only decisive thing Zedekiah did was scheme how to keep Jeremiah's message a secret. Jeremiah remained in the "Court" of the prison until the city fell.

**Jeremiah 39.** In the 9<sup>th</sup> year, 10<sup>th</sup> month of Zedekiah, the siege started; 11<sup>th</sup> year, 4<sup>th</sup> month, 9<sup>th</sup> day, city broken up, burned. All the nobles of Judah were killed, and the sons of Zedekiah were slain before Zedekiah's eyes, and then he was blinded, (one detail Jeremiah hadn't mentioned) and taken to Babylon in chains. Houses were burned, and the walls of Jerusalem broken down. The poor were left, and given land.

v. 12, Jeremiah was freed and given whatever he asked. He asked to go home. (see 2 Kings 25; Lamentations).

v. 16 one noble not killed was the black man (Ethiopian) who had appealed to Zedekiah to save him out of the muddy well. Jeremiah had prophesied then that the man would be safe because he put his trust in the LORD.

v. 14 Gedaliah was put in charge of Judah. Gedaliah's father, Ahikam, had also protected Jeremiah (see 26:24).

**Jeremiah 40.** The captain of the Babylonian guard gave Jeremiah food, money, and permission to go anywhere he pleased. v. 6, he chose to live under Governor Gedaliah's rule, which was so agreeable that refugees to other countries returned to Judah. 13-16 Gedaliah was warned of a plot to assassinate him, but he refused to believe it. He was assassinated less than 3 months after taking office (41:1-3).

**Jeremiah 41** With only 10 men, the traitor Ishmael killed Gedaliah, his staff, and his Babylonian soldiers. The townspeople didn't even know it for 2 days. 80 saints came to worship in the temple. For no reason other than perhaps hatred of godly people, Gedaliah killed most of them, and then proceeded to march the entire town's population, apparently including Jeremiah, back to the country of Ammon which had conspired with him. But the people were rescued by Johanan (who had warned Gedaliah) and his men. But then the people, worried that Nebuchadnezzar would blame them for killing Gedaliah, made preparations to move to Egypt.

## Eleventh Chance

**Jeremiah 42.** All the people asked Jeremiah what to do. They promised to do whatever he advised. Jeremiah prayed for an answer from God, which came 10 days later: stay, and be safe; but you lied when you said you will obey! You are determined to go to Egypt to escape sword, famine, and pestilence, and these will follow you there, and slay you there!

**Jeremiah 43** Sure enough, the people were determined to rebel again, against God and man! The people accused Jeremiah of speaking falsely, in a conspiracy to hand them over to Babylon. So they took everyone, including Jeremiah and his scribe Baruch, to Egypt. In Egypt, Jeremiah hid stones in the clay of a brick kiln by the entrance to Pharaoh's house, and prophesied that Nebuchadnezzar would set his throne on that very spot when he comes to conquer Egypt and take away captives.

**Jeremiah 44** Now they are all in Egypt. Jeremiah says their fathers served the gods of Canaan (v. 1-6), and they are now worshiping the gods of Egypt (v. 7-10). So their judgment will be like the judgment of Jerusalem (v. 11-14). The people unanimously said all their trouble started when they stopped burning incense to their false gods! Jeremiah answers that a small remnant shall escape the coming invasion and return to Israel; they shall be witnesses to whose words are true. (See 46:13-26). "Hophra was deposed and killed in 569 b.c.", according to Wilmington's Bible Handbook," after a serious military defeat. About a year later, Nebuchadnezzar's armies invaded and defeated Egypt."

**Jeremiah 45** Flashback to after Baruch recorded the scroll which King Jehoiakim burned. At the time Baruch had sought "great things for" himself, v. 5. Career advancement, in other words. Until he got

stuck carrying messages for the hated Jeremiah, and is now saying “Woe is me now! for the LORD hath added grief to my sorrow”! Jeremiah had told him to forget about his career. “I will bring evil upon all flesh, saith the LORD: but thy life will I give unto thee....” This was a good time to remind Baruch to look back over his miraculous deliverances, which God had promised.

**Jeremiah 46.** Still in the 4th year, (the 4th year after Josiah died fighting Pharaohnecho who had warned Josiah in the name of the Lord), Nebuchadnezzar conquers Pharaohnecho. Jeremiah’s poetic prophecy of the invasion, and God’s promise to not destroy Israel altogether but “in measure”; proportionate to their rebellion. V. 1-12 described the past defeat, and 13-26 prophesies a future defeat. v. 17 says Pharaoh’s troops will say Pharaoh’s boasting is just “noise”; he is past his prime, so let’s go back home!

47 Prophecy against the Philistines.

48 Prophecy against Moab.

49 Ammon’s and Elam’s judgment. Elam will be restored in the “latter days”.

50 Babylon’s judgment

## Twelfth Chance

**Jeremiah 51** Let us count, as the 12<sup>th</sup> chance God gave Israel as recorded in the book of Jeremiah, the many prophecies of restoration after the 70 years. Here is the final such promise:

v. 5 For Israel hath not been forsaken, nor Judah of his God, of the LORD of hosts; though their land was filled with sin against the Holy One of Israel. 6 Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul: be not cut off in her iniquity; for this is the time of the LORD’S vengeance; he will render unto her a recompence.

52 History. Zedekiah reigned from age 21 to 32, when Jerusalem was besieged. Zedekiah’s sons were slain before his eyes, then his eyes were blinded. He was taken to Babylon where he died in prison. Jehoiakim, after 37 years of captivity, was released from prison, and had supper with the king for the rest of his life.

**7. Two movements are described – one economic, and the other political – of which the United States is the unquestioned leader and even personification: capitalism, and freedom. The future for capitalism is rocky but survivable. The future for Freedom is overwhelming victory!**

Christians have forgotten so much since America was founded that we don’t think either one of these – either capitalism, or (political) freedom – are Biblical values! I have not even heard David Barton – to whom all Americans are indebted for restoring the knowledge of how consciously America’s

Founders based their decisions on the Bible – explain how America is Christian in these two most fundamental senses! We think capitalism came from rich men, and freedom came from the Greeks! And that neither are found in the Bible, but rather the Bible tells us to be poor and to slavishly “submit” to any tyrant that usurps control over us!

So it is going to take a little time, before we are ready for the prophecy about capitalism, to establish that it is an essential of Christianity, and that therefore the prophecy about it is of blessing, and not of judgment.

By the way, America is also distinguished by the magnitude of its “volunteerism”. 4.5% of our Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is charity, *not counting giving or volunteering to churches*. The next most generous country, at something like half that level of giving, is Great Britain, whose social, political, and spiritual structures are perhaps most like ours of any other nation.

(Value of volunteer hours, not counting churches: 2.6% of GDP. 44% of U.S. adults volunteered for a formal organization in 1999. Not counting informal church volunteering. Each volunteer averaged 24 hours a month. Total 15.5 billion hours, with an equivalent value of \$239 billion, which was 2.6% of the U.S. GDP of \$9,216 billion. Now it's \$14.6 trillion. See <http://www.independentsector.org/uploads/Resources/GV01keyfind.pdf>. Cash giving by individuals: 1.67% of GDP. Contributions by U.S. government to other nations: .2% of GDP. 89% of households contributed an average \$1,620 to charity. \$28.67 billion given by US to other countries, .2% of gross national income, or \$14 per citizen. <http://www.cafonline.org/pdf/International%20%20Giving%20highlights.pdf>

1.67% of gdp, UK is second with .73 (individual giving; preceding is gov't giving)

Missionaries from America are sent all over the world (even though in this generation it might seem they are needed more back home, but that's another subject). As we ponder what capitalism is, it will become clear that volunteerism is a facet of capitalism.

## Capitalism.

My BFD (Big Fat Dictionary) defines capitalism:

the economic system in which all or most of the means of production and distribution, as land, factories, railroads, etc., are privately owned and operated for profit, originally under fully competitive conditions: it has been generally characterized by a tendency toward concentration of wealth, and, in its later phase, by the growth of great corporations, increased governmental control, etc.

What a stupid definition, in so many ways! And yet isn't that what everyone, especially Democrats, thinks it means?

An email I received illustrates what's wrong with this definition. It starts off with 13 photos of extravagant rooms and building entrances. The reader is challenged to guess who lives there. One photo looks like the familiar entrance to the White House. Each room looks like it took at least \$1 million to furnish. Finally we get to a photo of the resident: Robert Mugabe, “president” of Zimbabwe. He has been elected president or its equivalent since 1980, but apparently never without charges of fraud and ballot rigging. After the photo of Mugabe are 4 photos of his people, living in poverty. You can see the slide show [here](#).

According to that dictionary definition, the ruthless dictator Mugabe is the poster boy for capitalism. Let me tell you a little about the man, and then you can help me decide if we need to define “capitalism” a little more carefully.

In April 1979, Zimbabwe had its first democratic election in which blacks could vote. Methodist Bishop Abel Muzorewa was elected Prime Minister. But less than a year later another election was held, and won by Mugabe, a communist who had led a guerrilla war in Rhodesia for 7 years. He won, I suppose, but after a campaign of intimidation, violence, and a threat to continue the civil war if he lost!

In 1992 he moved many poor to Harare and ordered them not to build permanent homes because the move would be temporary. So they built out of cardboard and scrap wood. 13 years later, in 2005, he bulldozed their homes, calling them “illegal shelters”. Critics said it was because the inhabitants had

supported the opposition party, Movement for Democratic Change, during the previous election. Mugabe's latest palace, in the style of a pagoda, is a mile from the destroyed shelters.

In 2008 he lost re-election in a 3 way race, getting 43.2% to the winner's 47.9%. Since no one got 50%, the law said there needed to be a runoff election within 3 weeks, although if there is no runoff election in 3 weeks the top vote getter wins. Mugabe began a campaign of violence that killed at least 85, left hundreds missing, thousands injured, and hundreds of thousands driven from their homes. 6 weeks later his opponent, Tsvangirai, withdrew from the race to stop the violence. 7 weeks later the "runoff election" was held. Mugabe, the only candidate left, "won" by 85.4% to Tsvangirai's 9.3%. In 2007, Parade magazine had declared Mugabe 7<sup>th</sup> worst dictator in the world. In 2009, it gave Mugabe top honors. "The Interpreter" is a movie about a fictional African ruler much like Mugabe. Mugabe banned its showing. (Facts about "Robert Mugabe" taken from Wikipedia.)

U.S. presidents live in similar luxury, but are only temporary stewards of it, for 8 years maximum, with the full consent of all the people. Mugabe, by contrast, *owns* his palaces, for as long as he can; if he is deposed peacefully, he will probably take much of it with him. The email characterizes his principal income as our aid money for his poor, but Wikipedia says most of that has been cut off because of international sanctions against him.

My BFD would classify Mugabe as a capitalist! He "privately owns" most of Zimbabwe! He "operates" it for his "profit"! He seized power under "competitive conditions"! His political system tends "toward concentration of wealth"! And "towards...increased governmental control"! And "towards" *lots* of "etc"!

What careless thinking, to say capitalism "tends toward concentration of wealth", when wealth is far more concentrated in the alternative political systems: dictators and kings, and whoever manages to become the managers of socialism. Capitalism creates the greatest *distribution* of wealth, by guaranteeing the greatest *opportunity* to *earn* wealth.

Notice the definition I threw in there: capitalism *guarantees* opportunity for wealth. Those who make the money have no power to offer any such guarantee. It is the government which has the power to guarantee such rights. Therefore capitalism is a political as well as economic system, and the politics of capitalism are part of what we and the world call "freedom". That is, to the extent the opportunities for "capitalism" are not guaranteed by law, people are not "free". (In practical terms, our opportunities are not perfectly "guaranteed", but are imperfectly "protected". Yet we speak of constitutional rights being "guaranteed", meaning those rights are the *goal, purpose, and justification* of our laws.)

Now let us turn to Black's Law Dictionary, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition, to see if we can find a definition of "capitalism" that is more useful in distinguishing Capitalism from every other political system. A "capitalist" is:

One exclusively dependent on accumulated property, whether denoting a person of large wealth or one having an income from investments....The word has no legal meaning.

Phhhpt. (Sound of deflating balloon.) Describes Mugabe, King George, and the Pope. Is that what "capitalism" has always meant? I wonder what it meant to America's founders?

Well, the word didn't exist back then. Webster's original 1828 dictionary didn't include it. It has the word "capital", but all political systems use "capital". "-ism" is a suffix that promises to distinguish something from other "-isms". "Capital" offers no such promise. But Webster defines it:

The stock [money or goods invested] in trade, in manufactures, or in any business requiring the expenditure of money with a view to profit.

A "capitalist" was

a man who has a capital or stock in trade, usually denoting a man of large property, which is or may be employed in business.

"Stock" didn't mean "stocks" in the "stock market", a phrase not found in the 1828 dictionary. Apparently there was no "stock market" in the states. But "British stocks are the object of perpetual

speculation” - 12<sup>th</sup> definition of “stocks”.

In other words, there was no thought, then, of using such concepts to distinguish between the American economy and others, much less to judge whether our economy is, by comparison, good or evil. A “capitalist” is someone who has something invested, whether he lives in the U.S. where his opportunity to earn something to invest is “guaranteed”, under King George where opportunities were governed largely by inheritance, or under Stalin where the possession of something to invest was hazardous to your health.

Doesn’t it seem to you that a definition of “capitalism” ought to describe *how* wealth is acquired? Shouldn’t it point out that capitalists “earn” wealth, while every other system “confiscates” it?

How informative is it to say “capitalism” is the quest for “profit”, as if Mugabe, Hitler, King George, the Mafia, and sometimes the Pope don’t follow that same quest, without pointing out what they all do differently to acquire that “profit”?

The essence of capitalism is what it means to “earn” wealth. Do we send thugs or bureaucrats out to take it by force from those less armed? Socialists do. Capitalists don’t. (The U.S. is teetering between the two systems.)

Or do we do something that makes others want to *voluntarily* pay us? If so, what? What could possibly make others *voluntarily* pay us? Could it be we *serve* each other? Could it possibly be we do not do what we want, but what others want?

These are the details that distinguish between the American system and its predecessors, but these details are left out of dictionaries and out of popular thinking about our economic system and especially about our word “capitalism”.

An economy typified by bureaucrats taking wealth by force from others, partly to redistribute it but mostly to enrich the bureaucrats, we may characterize as an economy of masters. An economy typified by people providing services to each other, we may characterize as an economy of service.

I have found a definition of “capitalism” that succeeds in distinguishing between our system and its alternatives. I found it in no dictionary, but in the Pages of God.

Luke 22:25 And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. [ie. the people were said to somehow “benefit” from having this dictator!] 26 But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. 27 For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth.

Only in Christianity is “love your neighbor” and “love your enemy” a commandment, much less the Second Greatest Commandment! We serve each other because we love each other. You may think, not much! But compared to the rest of the world, yes we do! Look at our orderliness in long lines. Look at police who virtually never take bribes, so that the law-abiding do not fear them. Look at – but rather than me create a list, here is former President Herbert Hoover describing how service epitomizes America’s economy:

For centuries, the human race believed that divine inspiration rested in a few. The result was blind faith in religious hierarchies, the Divine Right of Kings. The world has been disillusioned of this belief that divinity rests in any special group or class whether it be through a creed, a tyranny of kinds or of proletariat. Our individualism insists upon the divine in each human being. It rests upon the firm faith that the divine spark can be awakened in every heart. It was the refusal to compromise these things that led to the migration of those religious groups who so largely composed our forefathers. Our diversified religious faiths are the apotheosis of spiritual individualism.

The vast multiplication of voluntary organizations for altruistic purposes are themselves proof of the ferment of spirituality, service, and mutual responsibility. These associations for advancement of public welfare, improvement, morals, charity, public opinion, health, the clubs

and societies for recreation and intellectual advancement, represent something moving at a far greater depth than “joining.” They represent the widespread aspiration for mutual advancement, self expression, and neighborly helpfulness. **Moreover, today when we rehearse our own individual memories of success, we find that none gives us such comfort as memory of service given.** Do we not refer to our veterans as service men? Do not our merchants and business men pride themselves in something of service given beyond the price of their goods? When we traverse the glorious deeds of our fathers, we today never enumerate those acts that were not rooted in the soil of service. Those whom we revere are those who triumphed in service, for from them comes the uplift of the human heart and the uplift of the human mind.

While there are forces in the growth of our individualism which must be curbed with vigilance, yet there are no less glorious spiritual forces growing within that promise for the future. There is developing in our people a new valuation of individuals and of groups and of nations. It is a rising vision of service. Indeed if I were to select the social force that above all others has advanced sharply during these past years of suffering, it is that of service -- service to those with whom we come in contact, service to the nation, and service to the world itself. If we examine the great mystical forces of the past seven years we find this great spiritual force poured out by our people as never before in the history of the world -- the ideal of service.

- “American Individualism”, a booklet by Herbert Hoover

No wonder the Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled that Christianity is essential to freedom!

**"No free government now exists in the world, unless where Christianity is acknowledged, and is the religion of the country."** Updegraph v. Commonwealth; 11 Serg. & R. 393, 406 (Sup.Ct. Penn. 1824)

Herbert Hoover captures that American Spirit which makes America free and, ironically, prosperous, while other countries, lacking this spirit, are not. The essence of our spirit called “capitalism” is our attitude towards “service”, which parallels Jesus’ Second Greatest Commandment.

The wonderful news is that the American attitude towards “service” is just as strong today as when Hoover described it! Yes, we are STILL a Christian nation!

But that means that yes, we do STILL have much to lose to the extent we deny our heritage of freedom. We as a nation cannot long retain our devotion to the Second Greatest Commandment after we turn against the Greatest Commandment.

Now I’m in the mood for some *prophecy*!

Capitalism in the last days, according to prophecy, has some rocky roads ahead. But freedom in the last days (next section) is poised for overwhelming victory!

**Capitalism in the Last Days.** I need first of all to confess to you that I’m no end times prophecy expert. Over the decades I have listened to prophecy preachers with great interest, admiring the self confidence they expressed that they had figured everything out. But there were so many details we just couldn’t know, that it seemed speculative. But now, decades later, so many events have so many parallels in prophecy that the Bible is looking more and more like tomorrow’s news.

However, my purpose is not to entertain you with bold claims to know a little more than men can know. My purpose is to *encourage* you with a prophetic scenario which is credible enough to at least shake your confidence in prophecies of future Christian failure to move America spiritually forward. I won’t promise you that our work towards American revival will bear fruit according to Scripture. But my goal is to weaken gloom and doom interpretations, so that you can join me in working intensely in heaving the biggest mountains you can see into the seas, in hope!

Not that there is so much hope in prophecy that we can take victory for granted, working half-heartedly since we will win anyway. No, I need you working 110% in the Lord’s Harvest, knowing that those mountains won’t drown unless we have “faith the size of a mustard seed”, meaning, I believe, faith enough to not quit pushing with all our might.

Let's look at what is popularly called the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. The four horses are white, red, black, and a shade of green which might range from grass green to colorless pale.

**White horse:** Rev 6:2 And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.

Interpretation: the Catholic Church is really into white, and into political power. The pope wears white, from his robe to his tiara - triple crown). From about the 4th to the 11th centuries Christian popes basically controlled the armies of Europe, Russia, and the Middle East, and for another half dozen centuries retained Europe. Fortunately the Vatican no longer behaves so ruthlessly. May they never again! But at the peak of their temporal power, their cruel tyranny rivaled any today, surely meriting a mention in Revelation.

I found this interpretation at <http://kenraggio.com/KRPN-GreenHorse.html>, and I think I read it in an article by Irvin Baxter in *Endtime Magazine* but I can't find the copy now.

If this is the correct interpretation, perhaps this is a description of what happened centuries ago rather than what is still in our future. When the Pilgrims came, they believed the Pope was literally the Antichrist, and indeed in those days he acted like it! But if the Catholic Church is once again to be the tyrant it was, it seems to me it is going to have to make more changes in its character than seem possible to me within the short time that appears to be remaining before the Antichrist. *The Islamic Antichrist*, by Joel Richardson (a pseudonym for his protection), says the Mahdi, the 12<sup>th</sup> Imam, which Iran's dictator Achmadinijab looks forward to with such malevolent enthusiasm, is prophesied in Islamic scriptures and traditions to come on a white horse.

In fact, the book details a great number of parallels between the Bible's Antichrist and Islam's Mahdi. They both agree there will be a 7 year treaty with Israel which will be broken after 3-1/2 years, and that the reign will only last the 7 years.

They both agree the primary target of the Antichrist/Mahdi will be Christians and Jews.

"Richardson" notes that he comes with a bow, but no arrows are mentioned; he interprets this as a promise of peace, initially.

Whether the white horse symbolizes Catholicism or Islam, it is in correct chronological order since it preceded the next two horses by centuries.

What about the interpretation of the bow without arrows as an offer of peace? We might be tempted to say that is one thing Islam has never done in all its history! But even the Koran reports and applauds false promises of peace, in order to take victims unawares; and the world will never lack for gullible people so desperate to avoid a conflict that they are anxious to trust the most cutthroat liars.

**Red horse:** Revelation 6:4 **And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.**

Interpretation: **Communism** not only colors its flags red, but calls itself "red", as do other nations. After the Czars were assassinated, communist armies fought each other for dominance, identifying themselves by colors. The red army prevailed. Communism is a top contender for the bloodiest political system of human history. An estimated 120 million killed in 80 years. This could be generalized to include other atheistic governments, except that communism is the only government based on atheism in all of human history! That is, active atheism which openly regulates and restricts all religion, calling religion "the opiate of the people", as opposed to the passive atheism of socialism which professes to ignore religion and only prosecutes criticism of its protection of evil.

**Black horse:** Revelation 6:5 ...And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. 6 And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure [less than a

quart; enough to feed a man for one day] of wheat [grain in general; includes corn] for a penny, [one day's wages], and three measures of barley for a penny; (which the poor mixed with more expensive grains to stretch their budget) and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.

Interpretation: **Capitalism**. A healthy ledger is “in the black”. A pair of balances, or a scale, represents a system of measuring value, which is the engine of capitalism. V. 6 is a commodities report. Unfortunately the report is terrible! We are looking at a grain shortage causing people to have to spend their entire budget on food staples that aren’t even “processed”!

“Wine” means unfermented as well as fermented grape juice. Wine seems like such a small part of our economy that God must have meant a sense far broader than just the juice of grapes. Could milk also remain plentiful? If the promise includes beer, then a significant percentage of our GDP will remain stable!

“Oil” meant, then, olive oil. Olive oil, then, was used largely for light, but also for cosmetics (Ps 104:15), food, healing (Matthew 6:13), and other products. Our cultural equivalent today is crude oil. We use it today for energy, agriculture (nitrogen, for fertilizer), plastic, and a huge variety of products. A TV commercial shows it being used for healing: it shows common medical equipment made out of plastic.

There has often been famine in at least some of the world, as a result of tyranny and war. In those regions, of course, it has always been the case that a day’s wages, if there was work, barely bought a day’s food rations.

As of December 12, 2010, as I am writing this, Gerald Celente, CEO of Trends Research Institute has been an accurate forecaster of economic trends, according to <http://www.bibleprophecyblog.com/2010/11/behold-black-horse.html> by Jack Kelley, GraceThruFaith.com. The record of his forecasts is at <http://www.trendsresearch.com/>.

In the fall of 2008, he was reported as saying:

We’re going to see the end of the retail Christmas. We’re going to see a fundamental shift take place. Putting food on the table is going to be more important than putting gifts under the Christmas tree. [It will be] worse than the great depression. America’s going to go through a transition the likes of which no one is prepared for.

Jack Kelley adds:

While they were pretty astonishing at the time, two years later it seems much more likely that they’ll turn out to be true....The conditions described in [Rev. 6:5-6](#) are infinitely worse than anything we’ve ever seen, and even worse than Celente’s predictions. It will take all of an average worker’s pay for one day’s work to buy enough food just for the day. Conditions are nowhere near that bad now. But unless some drastic changes take place, that’s where we’re heading and getting there by 2012 is well within the realm of possibility. ...And remember, the Black Horse is the third in the series and follows the outbreak of war over 25% of the world ([Rev. 6:8](#)). War is known to disrupt food supplies in affected regions. Add this disruption to world wide food supplies that are already strained and a monetary system that’s been robbed of its value and you can see how it would take everything a person earns just to feed himself.

On December 11, 2010, I heard a guest on Jan Markell’s radio show saying “economists are saying we are moving towards \$60 for a loaf of bread.” I couldn’t find anyone else saying that, during my internet search; I found some talking about \$25, partly because of inflation. The Russian wheat harvest failed this year, causing Russia to cancel all wheat exports, fueling a 10% jump in wheat. But I read other articles saying even that 10% jump was just opportunism, since there is plenty of wheat from other sources.

On the other hand it is far from certain that the U.S. is safe from a single nuclear missile launched from a freighter off the coast of California producing an EMP pulse that shuts down American transportation and energy for months. Then there is the coming solar flares next year, which could fry our

electronics in the same way.

I remember the fears about the Y2K crash – because computers used to record only the last two digits of the year, many programs would crash when their calendars turned over to January 1, 2000. They would read January 1, 1900. The alarm bells served a useful purpose: they scared businesses into hiring enough programmers to repair the codes in time, so that disruption was very slight.

The EMP threat, and the solar flare threat, are likewise repairable, if we dedicate enough personnel to better insulating our electronics. What is alarming is how little effort has gone into that. Will we prepare in time?

All we know for sure is that there are many ways the Black Horse prophecy could come true this year or next. We need to take the warnings seriously.

Although \$60 is less than a day's wages for average Americans, it exceeds the daily wage of almost every other nation, along with my own.

My first impression from reading this Bible prophecy was encouragement. I thought, “the prophecy is of a rocky road, but at least not of a judgment! If it costs a day’s wages for a day’s meals, it will be hard, but perhaps at least survivable!” But looking again, I realize that the prophecy does not say “a loaf of bread will cost you whatever you earn every day”, but “a penny”, which was, then, a good day’s wages. Not everyone earned that much. A Roman soldier got that much, and the generous farmer in Jesus’ parables paid that much. But people who earned less simply starved, and that will be the case in most of the world if bread rises to even \$25 a loaf!

A world suffering worldwide famine will not be politically stable! When people can afford more bullets than bread, they will work with what they have! If war does not precede a famine of this magnitude, it will follow it!

**Green horse:** Revelation 6:8 *And I looked, and behold a pale [greenish] horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.*

(The Greek word is “Chloros”, (χλωρός), the root of our word chlorophyl, the building blocks of green plants. The NRSV, NLT, NET, and HCSB versions translate “pale green”. WUESTNT translates “greenish-yellow”. Mark 6:39 and Revelation 8:7 use the word to indicate the color of grass. In other Greek literature, “Homer applies it to *honey*, and Sophocles to *the sand*. Generally, *pale*, *pallid*. Used of a mist, of sea-water, of a pale or bilious complexion. Thucydides uses it of the appearance of persons stricken with the plague (2:49). In Homer it is used of the paleness of the face from fear, and so as directly descriptive of fear (“Iliad,” x., 376; xv., 4). Of olive wood (“Odyssey,” ix., 320, 379) of which the bark is gray. Gladstone says that in Homer it indicates rather the absence than the presence of definite color.” [Vincent, M. R. (2002). *Word studies in the New Testament* (2:496). Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.] I would think that the Biblical contexts, where the word always means grass-green, are a better indication of what God means by the word (all other factors being equal) than how the Greeks used it in pagan writings, where it meant brown or colorless.)

Interpretation: **Islam** has green flags, green trim on its buildings, and green all over the place; and Islam certainly is a religion of death and Hell; or at least, it is hard to imagine how Hell could pack any more death into any religion!

By the way, here's an interesting bit of news about Israel's need to take military action against Iran's nuclear program, which shows how much goes on “behind the scenes” so far as :

As we end 2010, my sense is that the Stuxnet computer virus which has infected more than 30,000 Iranian computers and brought Iranian enrichment of uranium almost to a standstill for the time being, the recent assassination of a top Iranian nuclear scientist, the near assassination of another top Iranian nuclear scientist, and new economic sanctions are all having a significant impact. Anything is possible, of course, but some experts I'm talking to believe that there is a little more breathing room, and an Israeli strike would be generally unlikely before the fall of

2011, at the earliest. The Iranian threat remains very real. (Email from Joel Rosenberg, 12/16/10)

But if the white horse represents the Mahdi and the green horse represents Islam, why are two of the four horses basically the same threat? Wouldn't we expect each horse to represent something distinct from the others? So shouldn't we expect the white and green horse to be combined into a white horse with a green saddle?

And why does the Mahdi precede Islam? Aren't these horses in chronological order?

But if they are in chronological order, Islamic terror came long before capitalism, communism, and before Catholicism became a persecutor of believers.

How about this: the white horse was given a crown, and it went forth conquering. Death is not mentioned; perhaps they are minimal – perhaps the conquering relies significantly on persuasion and not just on force. I think this would be a fair description of how the Roman Catholic Church maintained its influence over Europe until the reformation.

But let's say the white horse also describes the Mahdi who is yet to come, whose reign will not stand out as dramatically bloody at first.

Then comes the red horse, which does "**take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another**". This is a great description of Communism. It could also describe Russia's technological support of Moslem armies during these last days. This possibility is consistent with the end time beast which has the "feet of a bear". Revelation 13:2. Russia for several decades has been equipping Moslem nations with fighter jets, tanks, nuclear support, and everything in between.

Then after Capitalism's stinky commodities report, comes the Green Horse. "**power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth**". Islam has been around many centuries, but never before has Islam had the power to destroy all life on a fourth of our planet.

I'm not sure anyone has that power, yet. Years ago I calculated how much of the earth's surface could be wiped out if every nuclear weapon in the world were detonated without duplication in the same area. Of course, in any war, not every weapon could get launched. But I calculated that less than 5% of the earth's surface could be destroyed. Of course if the largest cities were targeted that could be over a quarter of earth's population. Even biological Weapons of Mass Destruction have practical limitations. But this coming carnage will draw upon unprecedented resources, if even wild beasts will be somehow harnessed to attack humans on a significant scale!

However arguable the white, red, and green horse interpretations may be, it seems pretty clear that the black horse represents capitalism.

And it is time for Americans, especially Christian Americans, to grasp the truth that capitalism is a Biblical value.

Because by grasping the nature of capitalism, Christians can survive the coming hard times – at least the hard *economic* times.

### **Capitalism: The engines of economy: capital, labor, and service. How Biblical, service-inspiring love makes us prosperous, and hate leaves us impoverished.**

There is a natural limit to how much monopoly can hold wages up.

This is true for the union forcing employers to raise wages by unifying workers so their demands create a monopoly on labor for that company, and using threats, intimidation and violence to drive out "scabs".

This is just as true for a government deporting immigrant laborers willing to work for less, in order to organize U.S. labor into a monopoly that demands higher wages across the nation.

A certain level can be reached just by sheer power of monopoly, but that level cannot be secure if the workers are not also competitive. If there are enough other workers available who can do the job just as well, and are willing to work for less, then no matter where they are in the world, the monopolized

workers will ultimately price themselves out of a job. The key is to do the job better than anyone else can, and then it doesn't matter if you have a union or a monopoly.

In many areas, Americans do have that edge. We lose it when we let greed and laziness enter. We have an edge if only because we are free, and we are rewarded for good work. Our edge is dulled by mind-numbing government regulations which undermine our freedom, and raising taxes which diminish our reward, and government handouts which reward us more for not working.

Besides quality, another factor that gives America an economic edge is a service mentality. What was it like, when an economy thrived without money, but only service?

*Acts 4:32 And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.*

Gold, silver, barter, paper. Gold isn't very valuable by itself. Most of us have little practical use for it. It's what you can buy with it. We can buy the services of others. Paper isn't valuable at all! Yet we think our economy will collapse if we run out of it! Why? Why do people expect to stop serving one another, if they can't have paper? Today we often don't even bother with paper! We ask only a milliwatt or two of electronic pulses into our electronic bank account from our employers! Yet we think we cannot keep working if we do not have another watt! Is it possible that capital is a little overrated?

Civilization is the personification of cooperation: it consists of each of us sharing our specialties with others, as opposed to each of us hunting, planting, building, etc only for our own private needs. How necessary is money to this process of sharing our talents with each other?

For our secular economy, barter works when people have services of equal value to trade, but money has the wonderful ability to trade services that are unequal in value, and with the involvement of third, fourth, fifth, etc. parties.

Obviously people could, if they would, trade services just as freely without worthless paper. It is the services which are valuable, not the paper. The practical problem is that if I provide my service to you, you might be a stinker and decline to return your service to me. In which case I would be hungry and angry. Money, even paper, is a guarantee that if I provide my service, the money you repay me will enable me to buy your, or another's service, whether you remain willing or not.

But God's system worked, according to the Bible, without money. Why? How? To the extent people are willing to serve others, with or without pay, this trading of services can proceed without capital. If all within a community are willing to reciprocate, again without money, then to that extent, money is actually useless.

What does that have to do with America today? America is a land where the Christian value of "service", or self sacrificial service to others, is honored. Businessmen are not honored, here, for their wealth, but for their "service", which we define as service given beyond what the mere pursuit of money can account for. Americans are not purely self-serving, but are fairly service-oriented, compared with the rest of the world

Here in America, if we see a need someone else has, and we are able to meet it, we have the freedom and disposition, more than elsewhere, to go ahead and meet it even if the person in need cannot repay. For example, we spend great sums on the disabled and the poor. And what do we find? Many of the disabled become productive! They serve us in ways others could not! They enrich us far more than we could have imagined!

I agree that capital is great if you have it. But it is not an absolute bar to prosperity if you do not. Lack in capital can be made up for by the "free enterprise spirit", which is a combination of a spirit of service, set free by political freedom. The willingness of immigrants to do just about anything has created work for them which did not exist before. Set them really free, and their opportunities will be even greater.

Prem Pradhan, founder of the modern Christian movement in Nepal, described Christians there as the first with the crops in, the first with their thatched roofs finished, etc. Why? Because they helped each other. When the crops were ready, the non farmers helped the farmers. When a roof leaked, the others helped. In other words, instead of putting in their normal hours serving themselves, and going home to

stare at a wall, they put in extra hours for each other, and all prospered. They created capital, with their labor. Not only that, but unskilled laborers acquired new skills, in the process of learning from the neighbors they were helping.

The opposite of a service attitude is a criminal attitude. Have you thought about the tremendous amount of capital destroyed because of crime? Shoplifting raises prices for everyone. Shoplifting has been controlled by new technology, but the new technology is expensive, again raising prices for everyone. Gamblers experience an average net loss, but not a predictable loss; rather, a roller coaster of losses, and they generally plan their budgets around the climbs and never the drops. So of course they push the level of bankruptcies, which means the stores they owe (like mine) suffer loss, and have to raise prices.

Worse than the roller coaster budgets are the seared hearts. In order to even want to gamble, you have to want to take money from people to whom you provide no service. Would you take all the money of your wife and children, leaving them unable to pay their bills, making them homeless, and call yourself “lucky”? Of course not. You love them. How about the neighbor across the street? How about the kid at work that your daughter may marry? You have to dehumanize all of them, to want to take from them. Once your heart is hard enough for that, hating your creditors is an easy step. Hating your employer is an easy step, as your work quality drops to the minimum. Hating your customers is an easy step, as your business slowly drowns down the toilet.

Then there are taxes, raised beyond any reasonable purpose by bureaucrats who just like to spend other people’s money. Over 30% of our incomes are eaten alive by taxes, a great deal of it corruption and waste, with services provided which harm as much as they help. Then somewhere on the list we must include the violent criminals – the holdups, the rapes, the murders. What tragic loss of life and property, and most of it wasted – not even transferred to the criminal! To break into a store and steal \$50, a thief breaks a \$1,000 window. To take \$30 from a man walking home, a thief kills a man who owns a company that hires 100 workers. Waste! Sin is wasteful!

Shall we mention divorce? Divorce (or “living together” and “breaking up”) hits over half our population. Lovers turn into haters, family expenses double, and people who had great opportunities now live in poverty.

We could mention the army of inspectors of homes and businesses who enforce vague and incomprehensible regulations with heavy fines for violations that are in the eye of the beholder. You are fortunate if you lose only your home or business, and not your child. It is common for child abuse inspectors to tell a parent they must divorce their spouse in order to keep their child, because the inspector has decided the other spouse is abusive. And then after the divorce they take the child anyway!

The point of bringing all this up? There is something we can do about the hard hearts of Americans that cause all this tragic waste of the capital with which God has blessed us. We can appeal to each other to stop dehumanizing each other. If your heart is hard enough to kill your own baby, how can it soften enough to respect the merchant who is trying to collect for the TV set you took from him, for which you now will not pay as you promised?

Do you see how abortion directly destroys capital, by preparing hearts for every level of crime, by hardening hearts enough to see nothing wrong with taking from others without providing service? That is why the prolife movement is actually preserving our prosperity, to the extent Americans respond.

And how about the immigration issue? The Scriptures tell us that when nonviolent immigrants come, willing to obey the same laws by which we ourselves live (as opposed to unconstitutional laws which restrict only them but not us), we had better let them remain with us, and we had better treat them as fairly as we treat each other. By the standard set by these verses, Americans’ hearts are exceedingly cold. That means, doesn’t it, that our immigration rhetoric is destroying our capital, through increasing every level of crime and greed.

So what is the solution? To call for hearts to return to God, to “love the stranger, for ye were strangers”. Can you see that a softening of hearts towards immigrants would reduce crime and corruption, freeing up capital?

It seems simplistic to say the Biblical economy only worked with completely pure hearts, but for

our impure hearts, we must have huge capital and expect no service without a price tag. It seems closer to reality to acknowledge that the purity of hearts is relative. Hearts get blacker, or cleaner, and our economic opportunities decrease or increase proportionately.

Service orientation is relative, and can be increased in a nation by national revival, which among other things increases available capital, so that an appeal to the hearts of Americans to love their neighbors is the best hope of creating work for all who desire it. Conversely, dubious rationales for exporting nonviolent immigrants, in violation of God's laws and the noblest phrases of our Constitution, are the direct cause of waste of capital, and refuting them is our best hope of increasing capital.

Another way capital is increased through benevolence is that the more people help people, the more their skills increase. Another way is that when capital is shared, its usefulness multiplies. For example, normally I do not let others use my equipment. But when someone in need of it is trustworthy, and knows how to use it without destroying it, I can lend it so that the same capital is practically doubled.

How does the Gospel make people prosperous – a connection found throughout Proverbs? (Generally speaking, that is, as opposed to the individual who chooses not to be prosperous because he places more value on saving souls, for which he is persecuted, in ways that reduce income.)

The Gospel brings prosperity, in general, by making people benevolent. How does this work?

People can dramatically change from selfishness to benevolence when either of three things, or some combination of them, happens: (1) when one is loved more than he had expected, or (2) when one finds himself so much less deserving of the love he receives than he had expected, or (3) when he chooses to let down his walls (cynicism, grudges, etc) long enough to acknowledge it. Being brought to a point of despair by the challenges of life can facilitate #2.

Some version of this formula is such common knowledge among authors, and especially among movie script writers, that they employ it as a literary device at will to get viewers to "cry" during "happy endings".

That helps explain why the Gospel of Jesus Christ is such a powerful agent of dramatic change. The news that God loves us so much that He came down among us, so close that He let Himself be vulnerable, able not only to literally feel our pain but able to be hurt, even to sacrifice life itself, is more than anyone could logically expect. The news that when He did that, our ancestors hated pure love so much that they killed it, is a wake-up call to the potential for wickedness within our own hearts; and, once awakened, and especially once awakened by learning of God's Standards, we recognize tendencies farther in that direction than we had expected, that makes the persistence of God's love even more unexpected.

That is why the message of how far immigration policy falls short of God's standards, and even of the standards set by noble phrases in our Constitution, is so crucial to the kind of national revival which will accomplish so much more than merely the restoration of squandered capital.

Why do U.S. factories move overseas? In other words, why do we export jobs? Cheaper labor overseas is part of the answer. Is their education better? Well, our graduates rank 10<sup>th</sup> or so in the world, in math, but our engineering and medical schools are still the schools that attract the brightest students from all over the world.

Why does innovation usually begin here? Much of our overseas competition is because we have taken our technology and tools there and shown them how to compete with us. The bright side of this is that should we become dependent upon an item which we no longer produce here, and the foreign producer stops selling to us, it will be a small matter to resume production of it here. What the U.S. work force lacks in willingness to work cheap, it makes up for in creativity. That is what continues to make us winners in world competition.

We export jobs because we export immigrants. We send our equipment where labor is cheaper, rather than allow cheaper labor to come here. Immigration keeps our jobs here.

You say, "what have we gained by keeping our jobs here if we just give them to immigrants?"

What we gain is the portion of the exported business or factory which requires skilled, expensive labor. When we export a factory, almost all the jobs go to foreigners. When we keep a factory here, and

man it with cheap immigrant labor, we get to keep the good jobs in it for ourselves.

I'm not making these arguments because I am personally motivated by keeping top salaries for me and mine. If money were my life's motivation, I would have spent my decades doing far different things. I am making these arguments now to show that even for people motivated by greed, immigrant hatred makes no sense. You are shooting yourself in the foot.

There are other important reasons we export jobs. At least five of them: T, A, X, E, and S. That, and red tape requiring expensive staff to fill out government forms. These burdens which we impose on businesses here but which we of course do not impose on our businesses which we export, are like a tariff against ourselves. Replacing these IRS burdens with a National Sales Tax, called the "Fair Tax" by Republican candidates, will eliminate the tax advantage which we give foreign producers.

I'm not your enemy, if cheap labor seems a great travesty to you. Reality is. Cheap labor is going to compete with us, whether we hire cheap here or export our factories overseas. The reason I propose NOT exporting jobs, but hiring cheap here, is because then at least the good high paying jobs that go with the factory, which would leave the states if the factory leaves, would stay here.

Not that I personally care. I care about obeying God, and stopping the hatred, and the lame excuses for it. I offer you the way to stop shooting yourself in the foot, in case you are greedy. I don't care if you get paid more, but I care if you tempt God. I appeal to your greed to get you to back away from God's judgment. But if you are so angry with God and your neighbors that you are determined to keep shooting yourself in the foot, pressing for an economic policy that achieves the opposite of what you say it does, I can't stop you, and God, who can stop you, may see no reason to.

The link between sin and economic ruin – and between spiritual and economic revival – was a theme of Billy Sunday, the great early 20<sup>th</sup> Century evangelist whose sermons shut down all the saloons in town within a week of his crusades, culminating in Prohibition which lasted from 1920-1932. Here is an excerpt from one of his famous sermons. Similar economic statements would be just as true today regarding drinking, gambling, divorce, pornography, or abortion:

"And say, my friends, New York City's annual drink bill is \$365 million a year, \$1 million a day. Listen a minute. That is four times the annual output of gold, and six times the value of all the silver mined in the United States. And in New York there is one saloon for every thirty families. The money spent in New York by the working people for drink in ten years would buy every working man in New York a home, allowing \$3,500 for house and lot...That is what the people in New York dump into the whiskey hole in one year. And then you wonder why there is poverty and crime, and that the country is not more prosperous....

"Kansas City is a town of 100,000 population, and temperance went into effect July 1, 1905. Then they had 250 saloons, 200 gambling hells and 60 houses of ill fame. The population was largely foreign, and inquiries have come from Germany, Sweden and Norway, asking the influence of the enforcement of the prohibitory law.

"At the end of one year the president of one of the largest banks in that city, a man who protested against the enforcement of the prohibitory law on the ground that it would hurt business, found that his bank deposits had increased \$1.7 million, and 72% of the deposits were from men who had never saved a cent before, and 42% came from men who never had a dollar in the bank, but because the saloons were driven out they had a chance to save, and the people who objected on the grounds that it would injure business found an increase of 209% in building operations; and, furthermore, there were 3 times as many more people seeking investment, and court expenses decreased \$25,000 in one year.

"Who pays to feed and keep the gang you have in jail? Why, you go down in your socks and pay for what the saloon has dumped in there. They don't do it. Mr. Whisky Man, why don't you go down and take a picture of wrecked and blighted homes, and of insane asylums, with gibbering idiots. Why don't you take a picture of that?

"At Kansas City, Kansas, before the saloons were closed, they were getting ready to

build an addition to the jail. Now the doors swing idly on the hinges and there is nobody to lock in the jails. And the commissioner of the Poor Farm says there is a wonderful falling off of old men and women coming to the Poor House, because their sons and daughters are saving their money and have quit spending it for drink. And they had to employ eighteen new school teachers for 600 boys and girls, between the ages of 12 and 18, that had never gone to school before because they had to help a drunken father support the family. And they have just set aside \$200,000 to build a new school house, and the bonded indebtedness was reduced \$245,000 in one year without the saloon revenue. And don't you know another thing? In 1906, when they had the saloon, the population, according to the directory, was 89,655. According to the census of 1907 the population was 100,835, or an increase of 12% in one year, without the grog shop. In two years the bank deposits increased \$3,930,000.

"You say, drive out the saloon and you kill business – Ha! Ha! 'Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord.'

"The saloon comes as near being a rat hole for a wage-earner to dump his wages in as anything you can find. The only interest it pays is red eyes and foul breath, and the loss of health. you can go in with money and you come out with empty pockets. you go in with character and you come out ruined. you go in with a good position and you lose it. you lose your position in the bank, or in the cab of the locomotive. And it pays nothing back but disease and damnation and gives an extra dividend in delirium tremens and a free pass to Hell. And then it will let your wife be buried in the potter's field, and your children go to the asylum, and yet you walk out and say the saloon is a good institution, when it is the dirtiest thing on earth. It hasn't one leg to stand on and has nothing to commend it to a decent man, not one thing."

When you look at the poorest countries of the world, don't you see other reasons besides a lack of skills or capital? Like a lack of freedom, peace, or religions like witchcraft built upon ruining others rather than serving others? In an environment where there is freedom, peace, and religious influences generating qualities like mutual respect, compassion, love, service, and cooperation, people who do not have the skills they want can acquire them.

For these reasons, I struggle with the concept of "oversupply of unskilled labor". Immigrants have limited skills only temporarily. They learn, and earn.

But to whatever extent immigrants truly lack skills, they are not competing with Americans who are skilled, but only with Americans who are as lacking in skills. And this competition is unchanged whether the unskilled foreigners competing with unskilled Americans are living among us or living on the other side of the world. But having them here keeps our factories here.

I get emails from a couple of investment companies – a hilarious waste of their money – and am struck at how shamelessly they counsel pulling investment dollars out of the U.S. and putting them in China because our dollar is falling and theirs is being subsidized by the Chinese government! Isn't that treason, to invest in a nation guilty of that much "sabre rattling"? (Threatening to go to war with us?) No one seems to mind, though.

It's not just jobs and factories we export! Our investment capital too! This really is a global economy. No government can control it. We can't control it. The unchangeable fact is that we are already competing with labor all over the world. It is useless to sit here and think that by restricting a flow of people across our border we can give ourselves less competition. If you could drive every immigrant meat packing employee into Mexico, would that bring back the 1950's? No. Transportation efficiency which we have now, that we didn't have then, will bring Mexican beef here, and your neighbor will buy it, leaving both our citizen meat packers, and our citizen farmers, unemployed.

I propose that we keep doing what Americans are best at: such high quality work that even with our high wages, our work remains in demand.

Owning your own business puts you under different rules. The self employed, while sometimes poorer than the employed, sometimes do very well, in either country. Working for yourself means not only providing valuable services, but persuading people that your services are valuable to them.

The higher demand for skilled labor is acknowledged in Proverbs, much of it written by apparently the richest man of all human history (relative to the economy of his time). He spoke of the prosperity associated with “wisdom”, which in those days meant skills ranging from music to construction as well as Bible understanding and discernment of human nature. For example, Proverbs 10:21 “The lips of the righteous feed many: but fools die for want of wisdom.”

The assumption that cheap labor coming here drives down wages is so embedded in the American Imagination that it is taken for a fundamental economic principle, right up there with gravity. Categorically, inexorably, increased population causes wages to fall, we assume.

A C-Span special about President Truman, 9/21/7, stated that Truman struggled to do away with quotas and greatly increase immigration, especially from war-torn areas. He thought we needed the new blood and the immigrants needed peace. But Congress refused, fearing that a wave of immigrants would take away jobs and return us to Depression conditions.

If more workers means running out of jobs, please explain why there is so much more prosperity, in every country across the world, now, than there was 200 years ago when world population was so much smaller? Even to countries without freedom, peace, or commerce-friendly religions, luxuries have trickled down.

*Civilization is the personification of cooperation, and it can only exist to the extent that we share our talents with one another.*

If no one helps anyone else, we have a caveman economy. The more we help each other, the richer we become.

A psychological study confirms the connection between a charitable, trusting spirit and prosperity: “How good news makes us good”, *Psychology Today*, by Holloway, S.M. and H.A., Dec. 1976; 76-78, 106, 108

In this amazing study, wallets were dropped in New York City to see how many were returned! From popular prejudices about New Yorkers, I would have expected “zero”, but about half were returned with the money still in them. Until one day when suddenly none were returned. Gradually the rate of return resumed normalcy in succeeding weeks.

Researchers wondered if that zero day had anything to do with the fact Robert Kennedy’s (brother of the assassinated president John F. Kennedy; Senator Ted Kennedy is their kid brother) assassination was the news that day. So they followed up with studies where subjects were in a waiting room for an experiment (subjects get paid to participate). They didn’t know that part of the experiment was the fictitious news broadcast in the waiting room. Two stories were used: one of some respected artist who raped someone, and the other was of some unlikely Good Samaritan.

After listening to the story, the subjects came into the experiment room. They were paired with each other and had to decide whether to trust, and cooperate, with their partner, or distrust, and not cooperate. They were paid according to their choices. The most pay was if you cooperated and it turns out the other cooperated; not quite as much pay if you distrusted and did not cooperate; and no pay if you cooperated but the other wouldn’t. (Sorry if my memory misrepresents any of the details.)

Very true to life! In my business, if I want business, I have to trust that the customers who rent our instruments will pay for them or return them. Not all do. The decision to trust, enough to cooperate, with our customers, has no science about it. Collection agencies don’t have any higher success rate than we do with bad accounts. Legal action has limited benefit with small accounts, although sometimes it is helpful. But I choose to trust, cooperate, and serve, rather than sell everything and apply for Social Security Disability (I could tell them I believe the Bible).

Naturally, the researchers found that those hearing the bad news story were distrustful, and those hearing the good news story were very trusting.

Since civilization is the personification of cooperation, this study shows that the spin on our news is a very important influence on our economy.

The application to immigration? There are wonderful events and statements in our history which inspire Americans to pride, patriotism, and cooperation even more than current news stories: things like

“all men are created equal”, or the Equal Protection Clause, or the majestic poem by Emma Lazarus now on the base of the Statue of Liberty (there is actually a movement to remove it)! Then there is the Bible. Then of course there are many inspiring current missionary stories that inspire American generosity. The “save a child” ads are a small example.

These things inspire the noblest part of us, positively impacting our economy. Immigration paranoia, and the “figures” of “liars” that justify it, dredge out the basest part of us, negatively impacting our economy.

Do we really want revival of our economy? We need not only the inspiration of our Constitution, but the inspiration of our Bible.

## Freedom.

No other religion places such value on Freedom as does the Bible. Yet

Christians today think encyclopedias are correct which say political freedom, where people vote for their own government, was invented in Athens and is nowhere mentioned, much less recommended, in the Bible. Completely forgotten is the fact that the Pilgrims created a vote for all heads of household, even women, and freedom of speech to criticize either church or state, by studying the pages of God, in a world where the exercise of such freedom got you burned at the stake.

We have a lot of ground to cover before it will become clear that God’s prophecy of a stone cut from a mountain, without hands, growing and displacing a world history full of tyranny, is a perfect description of the freedoms and legal systems instituted by Moses, duplicated in the New Testament Church structure, and growing in maturity over the centuries, the seed of a new culture quietly germinating under the surface of Hell’s old culture, nurturing Freedom habits until it was ready to break the surface during the reformation, flower in 1620, begin splitting rocks in 1776, and begin spreading across the world in 1918 as President Woodrow Wilson took the occasion of World War 1 treaty negotiations to preach self determination, leading to the end of monarchies over the next few years and the end of colonial rule by the end of World War II.

When Jesus came the first time, the people tried to make Him their dictator, but Jesus declined. Now, for the first time in world history, Freedom is almost widely enough respected and desired that when Jesus returns the people of the world will be ready to accept Him, not as a dictator to pretend to “judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles”, as Israel explained to God when they begged to trade in their freedom for a dictator in 1 Samuel 8:20, but as an elected administrator who delegates responsibility to humans, as God did with Moses only after a series of unanimous votes of approval by the people.

You haven’t heard talk like that before, have you?

If you wouldn’t object to believing that the freedom-protecting , rights-protecting democratic Republic we take for granted today is and always was God’s model form of human government, just read a few more pages and you will have the evidence for it.

Before getting to it, here is the prophecy of the Stone, in Daniel 2. After the prophecy I will mention some problems with the traditional interpretation of it.

Daniel 2:31 Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness *was* excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof *was* terrible. 32 This image’s head *was* of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, 33 His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. 34 *Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces.* 35 Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. 36 This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king. 37 Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given

thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. 38 And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou *art* this head of gold. 39 And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. 40 And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all *things*: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. 41 And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. 42 And as the toes of the feet *were* part of iron, and part of clay, *so* the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. 43 And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay. 44 And ***in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.*** 45 Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream *is* certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.

If something replaces tyranny, ending all tyranny, would that something be another tyranny? Will the tyrannies of men be replaced by a tyranny of God? Is that the great goal God has been working towards all these centuries? Is that God's style? Are the subjects of God's Millennial Reign "Doomed to be Saved", like the title of a 19<sup>th</sup> century tract arguing that everyone will eventually wind up in Heaven?

Bible commentator Matthew Henry (1706) said the stone is "the kingdom of Jesus Christ, which should be set up in the world in the time of the Roman empire". But Daniel 2:44 had said "*in the days of these kings* shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom...." Not in the days of the last king only.

Henry said:

This is *the stone cut out of the mountain without hands*, for it should be neither raised nor supported by human power or policy; no visible hand should act in the setting of it up, but it should be done invisibly the *Spirit of the Lord of hosts*. This was *the stone which the builders refused*, because it was not cut out by their hands, but it has now become the *head-stone of the corner*.

I would like to tell you if I agree with this but I am not sure what it means. By calling the "stone's" establishment "invisible", is Henry saying we cannot sense it? Is he saying the stone is Jesus Christ Himself, but no man could see him? Or that we have no idea what happened, or when? But Amos 3:7 says "Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets."

The things God does for man, that He tells us about in His Word, He prefers to do *with* man. And *through* man. Like setting up Israel. Or setting up The Church. Or even writing His Word. Therefore it would be a mistake, without Scriptural authority, to spiritualize this Stone into something that doesn't involve man, or require man's participation, or is done without man's knowledge.

Later Henry says "The gospel-church is...a kingdom not of this world, and yet set up in it; it is the kingdom of God among men."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary [Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (1:1336). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.] Says

**The time of those kings** may refer to the four empires or, more likely, it refers to the time of the 10 toes (v. 42) since **the first four kingdoms were not in existence at the same time as apparently the toes will be.**

In other words, the authors (who were all seminary professors at Dallas Theological seminary) assume this kingdom was set up during a very narrow slice of mankind's timeline, so that it could not

have been set up during the reigns of all four of the kings in Nebuchadnezzar's dream. But Daniel describes a stone growing into a mountain over time. They also say:

Amillennialists hold that this kingdom was established by Christ at His *First Advent* and that now the church is that kingdom. They argue that: (a) Christianity, like the growing mountain, began to grow and spread geographically and is still doing so; (b) Christ came in the days of the Roman Empire; (c) the Roman Empire fell into the hands of 10 kingdoms (10 toes); (d) Christ is the chief Cornerstone (Eph. 2:20). Premillenarians, however, hold that the kingdom to be established by Christ on earth is yet future. At least six points favor that view: (1) The stone will become a mountain suddenly, not gradually. Christianity did not suddenly fill "the whole earth" (Dan. 2:35) at Christ's First Advent. (2) Though Christ came in the days of the Roman Empire, He did not destroy it. (3) **During Christ's time on earth the Roman Empire did not have 10 kings at once. Yet Nebuchadnezzar's statue suggests that when Christ comes to establish His kingdom, 10 rulers will be in existence and will be destroyed by Him.** (4) Though Christ is now the chief Cornerstone to the church (Eph. 2:20) and "a stone that causes [unbelievers] to stumble" (1 Peter 2:8), **He is not yet a smiting Stone as He will be when He comes again.** (5) **The Stone (Messiah) will crush and end all the kingdoms of the world. But the church has not and will not conquer the world's kingdoms.** (6) **The church is not a kingdom with a political realm, but the future Millennium will be.** Thus Nebuchadnezzar's dream clearly teaches premillennialism, that Christ will return to earth to establish His rule on the earth, thereby subduing all nations. The church is not that kingdom.

Where do they come up with the idea that the growth of the stone into a mountain will be sudden? It was clear even to Nebuchadnezzar that the statue itself represented kingdoms over several centuries, and the kingdom set up by God was in the "days" of all those empires, before it destroys them.

I don't believe the professors understand the nature of this "destruction". Freedom has not "destroyed" monarchies physically! Yet hardly a trace of any monarchy can still be found today, because monarchies have become unthinkable to most of the world. They have not been "slain" by any sword of steel, but by the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. Rather than blood shed by their demise, their demise has ended wanton shedding of blood.

"The church is not a kingdom with a political realm", the authors say, and I sense most Christians would agree. But check out my Bible studies at [www.Saltshaker.US](http://www.Saltshaker.US). Every single one of the Examples of Faith in Hebrews 11 was either a political figure, or someone who corrected political figures, often at the cost of their own lives. You can hardly find anyone mentioned in the Bible who was not either a world leader, or a great political figure, or who was in the Bible for his communication or association with political figures. Jesus, King of Kings, gave most of his teachings to the representatives of the Sanhedrin, whose laws, police, courts, and authority to execute by stoning, mark them as a political system. What dictator has not treated Christianity as a political threat? The Christians who founded America certainly didn't think the Bible is apolitical! The Separatists (Pilgrims) thought they were founding "a city on a hill". Not a Bible study in a closet.

**Matthew 5:14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. 15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.**

The truth about Biblical "politics" is that Christianity is the Gold Standard for human relationships at every level. 1 Peter 2:13 literally says "rearrange yourselves under the human relationships instituted by God. Whether ruler/ruled, 1 Peter 2:13...employers/employees, 1 Peter 2:18...husbands/wives, 1 Peter 3:1... elders/younger, 1 Peter 5:5...everyone/everyone, same verse.

In other words, if the person in authority over you is not following God's standards, exhort him, accepting the risk of persecution because his authority includes the power to hurt you. This interpretation is consistent with much of the history of the Bible, which is prophets rebuking rulers who respected no

guarantees of Freedom of Speech to criticize either church or state.

The truth is that this Gold Standard of human relationships was growing, maturing, strengthening, even during the centuries when Christian minorities were persecuted by pagan majorities. The Pilgrims did not need to see a free government in existence to understand how to operate one. They read how to do it in the Bible, and they had years of experience practicing it within their assembly.

It may be objected that the interpretation of the Stone as representing the growth in human hearts of the yearning for Freedom offered and defined by God, in all human relationships, cannot be what God means since the end of this process is clearly Jesus' reign over the earth as a dictator whose sword of steel, proceeding from his mouth, slays all his enemies so that he can rule by force, just like Napoleon, King George, Hitler, Stalin, Mugabe, and like Antichrist himself will.

No, I have never heard Jesus' reign described with the negative comparison with despised human tyrants, which has always puzzled me since people commonly describe Jesus' Millennial Reign as the same political system as these tyrants presided over, the only difference being that Jesus will be the dictator so he will be a "benevolent dictator". Actually these are only the *implications* of popular notions of Jesus' reign. I have not seen people try to spell out these implications, perhaps because people would quickly run into trouble. I can say more precisely that I have not heard anyone distinguish what is different about the political structure they expect under Jesus, from the political structure we see under common dictators – other than the Person at the top.

Certainly Jesus' reign, as commonly understood, as being that of a King who installs "saints" to serve under him regardless of what the masses under them think about it, is incompatible with, and therefore cannot be the culmination of, the centuries of maturation of political freedom that we take for granted today.

No one calls Jesus' future reign a "dictatorship" because of the word's negative connotations. So we call him King, which doesn't have negative connotations since it's in the Bible, even though a king is far more secure in his dictatorship than dictators today.

Of course we can cover any embarrassing comparisons by saying "of course we can't imagine what it will be like". Except that the Bible says it will be the culmination of a process that has already been going on for centuries. God has not exactly left us clueless! Although that clue is regularly overlooked.

Here is how the Dallas Seminary professors describe Jesus' coming reign, as prophesied in Daniel 2's mountainous Stone:

So Daniel explained that the four empires which would rule over the land and the people of Israel would not be destroyed by human means, but rather by the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, the striking Stone. When He comes He will establish the messianic kingdom promised to Israel through David (2 Sam. 7:16). At His return He will **subjugate all . . . kingdoms** to Himself, thus bringing **them to an end** (cf. Rev. 11:15; 19:11-20). Then He will rule **forever** in the Millennium and in the eternal state.

This impression of a dictator-like "subjugation" which cannot be the culmination of centuries of development of political freedom is supported by an out-of-context reading of the verses cited in blue above. Here are the verses:

Revelation 11:15 And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, **The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.** ...19:11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. 12 His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. 13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. 15 And **out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule**

**[Greek: literally, “shepherd”]** them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. 16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. 17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; 18 That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. 19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. 20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

**King Jesus.** I called this passage “out-of-context” because although it uses the word “king” and describes the use of force, it leaves out the Biblical context of how Jesus redefines the role of King, and for what limited purposes He uses force which are nothing like the use of force employed by Kings as we know them.

Dictators use brutal and lethal force to seize other’s wealth for their own pleasure, to drive others to do what the dictators want, and to seize territory containing additional people and wealth for their rapacious appetites.

Jesus is depicted in the Bible as using lethal force only once in the entire Bible, and that is to protect the innocent from criminals so bloodthirsty that even when they see the innocent protected by God in the Flesh, that only makes them want to come charging even more furiously!

When God says Jesus will “rule the nations with a rod of iron”, the Greek word translated “rule” is primarily defined as “shepherd”. A shepherd’s staff, with its classic hook capable of reaching around a sheep’s neck, is for bringing back wayward sheep. His rod is a weapon against wolves. This verse does not say Jesus will subjugate the “nations” by brutal force, but that Jesus will protect the nations from their enemies (presumably, foreign and domestic) who do not submit to Jesus’ rule and who try to attack those under Jesus’ protection.

Studies below will list several ways Jesus redefines “king”.

### **God’s Rule is for those who consent to it.**

God does not seize power or take power over people for granted, but insists on being unanimously elected before He will assume His Throne over them.

Exodus 19:7 And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the LORD commanded him. 8 **And all the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken we will do.** And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD.

Exodus 24:3 And Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD, and all the judgments: **and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the LORD hath said will we do.** 4 And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. 5 And he sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto the LORD. 6 And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basons; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. 7 And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of **the people: and they said, All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient.** 8 And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words.

5:1 And Moses called all Israel, and said unto them, Hear, O Israel, the statutes and

judgments which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep, and do them. 2 The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. 3 **The LORD made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day.** 4 The LORD talked with you face to face in the mount out of the midst of the fire, 5 (I stood between the LORD and you at that time, to shew you the word of the LORD: for ye were afraid by reason of the fire, and went not up into the mount;) ...

Joshua 24:14 Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD. 15 And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD. 16 **And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the LORD, to serve other gods;** 17 For the LORD our God, he it is that brought us up and our fathers out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and which did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the people through whom we passed: 18 And the LORD drove out from before us all the people, even the Amorites which dwelt in the land: therefore will we also serve the LORD; for he is our God. 19 And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the LORD: for he is an holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins. 20 If ye forsake the LORD, and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good. 21 And the people said unto Joshua, Nay; but we will serve the LORD. 22 And Joshua said unto the people, Ye are witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen you the LORD, to serve him. And they said, We are witnesses. 23 Now therefore put away, said he, the strange gods which are among you, and incline your heart unto the LORD God of Israel. 24 **And the people said unto Joshua, The LORD our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey.** 25 So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem. 26 And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God, and took a great stone, and set it up there under an oak, that was by the sanctuary of the LORD. 27 And Joshua said unto all the people, Behold, this stone shall be a witness unto us; for it hath heard all the words of the LORD which he spake unto us: it shall be therefore a witness unto you, lest ye deny your God. 28 So Joshua let the people depart, every man unto his inheritance.

**God Judges by Consensus!** Of all that I have found in the Word of God which I have heard no man preach, this may be one of the most startling: there is abundant evidence that God will not judge unilaterally (acting alone, without anyone's consent) but will judge by consensus. (We're not talking about God's day-to-day decisions how to handle us, but the great future judgments.)

The following verses say we sit with Jesus in His throne, and apparently God is sitting there with us! They say that the Apostles will judge the 12 tribes of Israel, which itself undermines the notion that God will judge everybody unilaterally, but they even say that ordinary saints shall "judge the world", and even judge angels! But are we not ourselves judged? If we ourselves are judged, yet we judge everybody else too, the only way I can think of that this is possible is that God will judge by consensus!

(After these verses I will suggest a scenario that makes sense of this.)

Revelation 3:21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

Matthew 19:28 And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, **ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.**

Luke 22:29 And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; 30 That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and **sit on thrones judging the twelve**

tribes of Israel.

1 Corinthians 6:1 Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? 2 **Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?** and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? 3 **Know ye not that we shall judge angels?** how much more things that pertain to this life?

These indications that God will judge by consensus is consistent with the fact that God wants *us* to judge by consensus, *here on Earth*. Should we need to excommunicate somebody, God's way is not by some church official acting unilaterally (dictatorially), or some church body deciding by a 51-49% vote, but by the whole church agreeing unanimously:

Matthew 18:15 Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. 16 But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. 17 And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: **but if he neglect to hear the church,** let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

(Jesus had to be winking at Matthew when He said that, since Matthew had been a publican. That fact assures us that the door to reconciliation remains open, even for the excommunicated.)

A final clue that God judges by consensus:

Isaiah 45:22 Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. 23 I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, **That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.** 24 Surely, shall one say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength: even to him shall men come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed.

Romans 14:10 But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. 11 For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, **every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.** 12 So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

How is it possible that every soul will bow to God? Will Satan bow too? Will Satan also acknowledge that “in the Lord is righteousness and strength”? Actually yes. James 2:19 “Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.”

But there is a difference between knowing, and publicly admitting. Will Satan admit what he knows? Or will angels stand over everyone and slam them down to the ground if they kneel too slowly? Will God be satisfied with forced worship?

Perhaps an analogy is the video cameras police now use to record arrests. When the videotape is shown in court, the accused gives up trying to lie his way out of it. There’s the evidence.

It’s only a theory, but what if God has even better technology than we do?

What if, on Judgment Day, God plays back everything that each of us has done, said, and even thought. So that everyone sees it for everyone. And for each, God states His judgment, but then asks everyone, “so what do you think? Is that right?”

Now suppose one stands up and says “Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people”, and give reasons – maybe not even that the person didn’t deserve it? How do you think God would react? Seems pretty unlikely God would respect that, doesn’t it?

That’s what I would have thought. But when Moses said those words to God, with a few reasons, when God was about to exterminate Israel, (Exodus 32:12), “the LORD repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people”. v. 14.

**God honors Freedom of Speech not only to correct the wicked, but even to correct the righteous – even pastors – and even God Himself!**

Freedom of Speech, to the extent of freedom to criticize the leadership of either church or state, that we take for granted today, was recreated by the Pilgrims from Bible study in a world where exercising such speech got you burned at the stake. They even institutionalized such speech in a Prophesying Service on “Sabbath” (Sunday) afternoons, where any man could speak. Even women could speak on limited subjects.

It is important to establish not just that I personally think the Freedoms we take for granted really are modeled in the Bible, but that the blueprints for these freedoms were clear enough for the Pilgrims to recreate them in the real world, just as we experience them today.

Surely the most controversial feature of God’s Worship Model, as practiced by the Pilgrims, was the subjection of even the pastor to scrutiny, as if he were no more infallible than the Pope. Whom, by the way, they understood as literally the Antichrist foreseen in Revelation. In those days popes were about that bloodthirsty. The reason they are not, today, has a lot to do with Robinson’s legacy.

Today we have Freedom of Speech to criticize either church or state, but only outside church. Our government does not prosecute us in any place (well, all freedoms are everywhere under attack, creating tragic exceptions around its edges) but today’s church leadership tolerates little public dissent, no matter how sincerely held. Since churches today have no police or prisons, the worst punishment they have is to unwelcome you.

But when the Pilgrims recreated freedom, had they not instituted it during their church services, according to the model they found in 1 Corinthians 14, we would not have Freedom anywhere today. Because their church was half of their community, and because if not even believers could muster enough love to pull it off, how would unbelievers outside the church manage?

John Robinson said occasional “disputes” were to be expected during Separatist Prophesying Services, but there is no evidence in Robinson’s writings that they were contentious or argumentative.

Here is how their pastor, John Robinson, addressed the scenario of Christians correcting each other, and sometimes disputing with one another, during worship services as part of the process of prophesying:

[In our Prophesying Service we are] briefly to speak a word of exhortation as God enableth, and ... **questions also about things** delivered,

[preached] and with them, **even disputation**s, as there is occasion, being part, or appurtenances of that exercise. Acts xvii. 2 and xviii. 4. (*Book 3, Chapter 8, “On the Exercise of Prophecy”, Argument Tenth.*)

“Things delivered” is an idiom meaning “preached”. Today we say a pastor will “deliver” a sermon. In other words, Robinson said questions, including disputes, about the morning sermon, were part of the afternoon Prophesying Service.

Robinson’s citations in Acts show Paul’s participation in Jewish verbal interaction. The context shows Paul definitely “provoked” them, a few of them actually to love and good works, as Hebrews 10:24-25 exhorts.

*Acts 17:2 and Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days disputed with them by the scriptures, [Geneva translation]*

*Acts 18:4 And he disputed in the synagogue every sabbath day, and exhorted the Jews, and the Grecians. (The footnote for this verse in the Geneva translation - which the Pilgrims used - says Paul set us a good example:) “The truth ought always to be freely uttered, yet notwithstanding the doctrine may be so moderated, as occasion of the profit that the people take thereby, shall require. [Paul] Exhorted so that he persuaded, and so the word signifieth. 21:3-7.” [Geneva translation]*

The KJV says not that Paul “disputed”, but that he “reasoned”. The Greek word is διαλεγομαι (dialogomai), the root of our word “dialog”. Its *purpose* is to reason. It *looks* like, especially to women, apparently, a dispute.

Although Robinson does not write about it, it may be possible that the disputes rose to the level of “intense argument, sharp contention implying exasperation, i.e., an intense (unreconcilable) difference of opinion”, since that is the Strong’s definition of the Greek word for “provoke” in Hebrews 10:24-25, the verses every Pastor knows because it tells people to go to church. Hebrews 10:24 says what we should do when we get there. It says we should “provoke [each other] unto love and good works”. “Exhort” can be a pretty emotional confrontation too, according to the Greek lexicons.

Hebrews 10:24 And let us consider one another, to provoke unto love, and to good works, 25 Not forsaking the fellowship that we have among ourselves, as the manner of some is: but let us exhort *one another*; and that so much the more, because ye see that the day draweth near.

Are “disputes” in church as Biblical as Robinson says?

The smallest dispute would set off the diplomatic sprinkler systems in almost any church today. Any dispute of any kind, of any magnitude, is “controversial”, which is expressly forbidden, as everybody knows, by 2<sup>nd</sup> Controversies 7:77. Anyone who disputes will be invited to leave his church and perhaps go start his own church if he likes, in order to avoid disunity, in conformity with the Seven Pillars of Politeness recorded in 1<sup>st</sup> Denominations But Robinson said there was a kind of dispute which belongs in church, according to God. What kind? And where did he read God saying any such thing?

Big brawls weren’t what Robinson was talking about. But he was determined not to censor sincerely held and respectfully expressed disagreement. Or as he put it, in the following quote, “disputations, questions, and answers modestly had and made.”

Below he lists the benefits of such discussion. We could more easily ignore his list, if he didn’t follow it with Scriptures showing that very same kind of animated discourse was the habit of Jesus, Paul, and Apollos.

**Separatist pastor John Robinson’s summary of the Biblical Benefits of Discussion:** [We all prophesy to each other so] that things **doubtful** arising in teaching may be **cleared**, things **obscure opened**, things **erroneous** convinced [**refuted**]; and lastly, that as by the beating together of two stones fire appeareth, so may the light of the truth more clearly shine by **disputations, questions, and answers modestly had** and made, and as becomes the church of saints, and work of God. Luke ii. 40; iv. 31, 32; Acts xvii. 2; xviii. 24, 26, 28.

Here are the verses Robinson cites, from the Geneva translation [last edition, 1599] which the Pilgrims used rather than the more recent King James Version of 1611:

*Luke 2:46 And it came to pass three days after, that they found him in the Temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them **questions**: 47 And all that heard him, were astonished [astonished] at his understanding and answers.*

*Luke 4:31 And came down into Capernaum a city of Galilee, and there taught them on the Sabbath days. 32 And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with authority.*

*Acts 17:2 And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days disputed with them by the scriptures,*

*Acts 18:24 And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, came to Ephesus, an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures....26 And he began to speak boldly in the Synagogue. Whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly....28 For **mightily he confuted publicly** the Jews, **with great vehemency**, showing by the Scriptures, that Jesus was that Christ.*

Is anyone too “holy” to be corrected publicly, and to repent, when God isn’t? God publicized His own repentance in the world’s most widely read Book.

*Exodus 32:9 And the LORD said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people: 10 Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation. 11 And Moses besought*

the LORD his God, and said, LORD, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand? 12 Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? **Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people.** 13 Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever. 14 **And the LORD repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people.**

But dare we humble ourselves to the degree God has? “Matthew 5:48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”

Once a woman’s logic turned Jesus’ emphatic “no” into a “yes”.

Matthew 15:22 And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. 23 But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. 24 But he answered and said, **I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.** 25 Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. 26 But he answered and said, **It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs.** 27 And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. 28 Then Jesus answered and said unto her, **O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt.** And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

Josiah was the king most dedicated to God.

2 Kings 23:21 And the king commanded all the people, saying, Keep the passover unto the LORD your God, as it is written in the book of this covenant. 22 Surely **there was not holden such a passover** from the days of the judges that judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel, nor of the kings of Judah; .... 24 Moreover the workers with familiar spirits, and the wizards, and the images, and the idols, and all the abominations that were spied in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, did Josiah put away, that he might perform the words of the law .... 25 And **like unto him was there no king before him**, that turned to the LORD with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; **neither after him arose there any like him.**

It seems Josiah was even more righteous than King David. He may even have been more righteous than any of us.

God gives us two amazing lessons through him. First, what made him righteous: his ruthlessness towards traditional theologies that got in the way of obeying the Word of God, despite the chorus of voices saying “that won’t work in today’s culture”. Second, how severely he was punished, and his nation plunged into sin, for not seriously considering whether God might actually be speaking to him through the unlikeliest prophet on the planet!

Josiah was called “righteous” because when he learned what God commanded, he turned tradition upside down to obey.

2Ki 22:8 And Hilkiah the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD. And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it. .... 10 And Shaphan the scribe shewed the king, saying, Hilkiah the priest hath delivered me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king. 11 And it came to pass, **when the king had heard the words of the book of the law, that he rent his clothes.** 12 And the king commanded ... saying, 13 Go ye, enquire of the LORD for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that is found: for **great is the wrath of the LORD that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book**, to do according unto all that which is written concerning us

Perhaps the king LEAST dedicated to God – the least likely spokesman for God, was the Egyptian Pharaoh.

Isaiah 30:1 Woe to the rebellious children, saith the LORD, that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin: 2 That walk to go down into Egypt, and have not asked at my mouth; to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt! 3 Therefore shall the strength of Pharaoh be your shame, and the trust in the shadow of Egypt your confusion. ....7 For the Egyptians shall help in vain, and to no purpose: therefore have I cried concerning this, Their strength is to sit still. [Like today's joke "He seemed very intelligent. But then he opened his mouth."] ...31:3 Now the Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses flesh, and not spirit. When the LORD shall stretch out his hand, both he that helpeth shall fall, and he that is holpen shall fall down, and they all shall fail together

Yet righteous Josiah died because he ignored God's warning through wicked Necho

2Ch 35:20 After all this, when Josiah had prepared the temple, Necho king of Egypt came up to fight against Carchemish by Euphrates: and Josiah went out against him. 21 But [Necho] sent ambassadors to him, saying, .... I come not against thee this day, but against the house wherewith I have war: for God commanded me to make haste: forbear thee from meddling with God, who is with me, that he destroy thee not. 22 Nevertheless Josiah would not turn his face from him, but disguised himself, that he might fight with him, and hearkened not unto the words of Necho from the mouth of God, ... 24 and he died, and was buried. And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah. 25 And Jeremiah lamented for Josiah:

Which warns us not to dismiss ANY critic as unqualified to speak for God! From clergy to layman, we had better be vigilant to evaluate ANY warning or correction, offered by ANYONE, on its merits, and not just "consider its source"

**Did Jesus really tell Pilate that he is a King?** Most Bible translators say He didn't, but some say He did. Here is the passage:

John 18:33 Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews? 34 Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me? 35 Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done? 36 Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. 37 Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. [Or, those aren't the words I would use.] To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.

Interesting, how little translators agree on whether Jesus agreed with Pilate that Jesus was a king. (Although all 12 of my commentaries on my Bible program assume He did.)

The grammatical issue is: when Jesus said "for this I was born", what did He mean by "this"? Becoming a king, or witnessing to the truth?

The Greek is no help. Grammatically, it could go either way. But can it go both ways? Can the antecedent of "this" be both what precedes it, and what follows it? Can Jesus mean "Not only AM I king, but I was BORN to be king, oh and also to be a witness to Truth"?

So translators line up in three groups: (1) the 5 who emphatically have Jesus saying he was born to be king, AND to witness to the truth; (2) the 3 who emphatically have Jesus saying only that He was born to witness to the truth, and (3) the 11 whose punctuation indicates He was born to witness to the truth but a careless reader who doesn't follow the punctuation might read Him saying He was born to be king. However, the punctuation in 5 of them says it more clearly than in others. Commas (in 6 of them) say it

least clearly; dashes are stronger, and colons say it most clearly.

*Translations saying Jesus was born to be king AND to witness to the truth:*

Message: "You tell me. Because I am King, I was born and entered the world so that I could witness to the truth."

NASB95: "You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth."

NlrV: "You are right to say I am a king. In fact, that's the reason I was born. I came into the world to give witness to the truth."

NIV: "You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth."

YLT: "Thou dost say it; because a king I am, I for this have been born, and for this I have come to the world, that I may testify to the truth;"

*Translations clearly only saying Jesus was born to witness to the truth:*

NLT: "You say I am a king. Actually, I was born and came into the world to testify to the truth."

TNIV: "You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth."

WUESTNT: "As for you, you are saying that I am a king. I for this purpose have been born and for this purpose have come into the universe, in order that I might bear witness to the truth."

*Translations whose punctuation says Jesus was born to witness to the truth but which would be ambiguous without the punctuation:*

Darby: "Thou sayest it, that I am a king. I have been born for this, and for this I have come into the world, that I might bear witness to the truth."

KJV: "Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth."

ASV: "Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth."

NKJV "You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth."

NRSV: "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth."

RSV: "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth."

*Translations whose punctuation says it more clearly:*

ESV: "You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth."

HCSB: "You say that I'm a king," Jesus replied. "I was born for this, and I have come into the world for this: to testify to the truth..."

ISV: "You say that I am a king. I was born for this, and I came into the world for this: to testify to the truth."

NET: "You say that I am a king. For this reason I was born, and for this reason I came into the world – to testify to the truth."

WUESTNT, RSV, TNIV,

NCV ("You are the one saying I am a king. This is why I was born and came into the world: to tell people the truth...")

Perhaps a **little common sense**, added to the grammar, can clarify Jesus' meaning.

Jesus said "You say that I am a king." Actually, Pilate didn't say that! Pilate only *asked* if that were so, or if that is what Jesus thought. The Greek grammar supports that translation, but perhaps a translation should reflect the fact that Pilate didn't say what that translation says he said.

In acknowledging only that Pilate used the word "king" to describe Him, Jesus expresses hesitation to choose the word Himself. A translation should reflect that fact. Saying "That's what YOU say" simply

isn't quite saying it yourself. That's why, even though a dozen commentators and 5 translators say Jesus said what Jesus said Pilate said, I will side with the 14 translators who say Jesus did not.

Here's my stab at translating the passage:

**"You use the word 'king'. You want to know if I plan to rule as a 'king'. My focus is on witnessing to Truth. That is why I was born. That is why I came to Earth. Everyone who loves in deed and truth will listen."**

(Actually I got part of that last sentence from 1 John 3:18-19. John 18:37 says "Everyone who is of the truth will hear my voice"; 1 John 3:18-19 defines someone who is "of the truth" as someone who "loves in deed and in truth".)

Although all the commentaries on my computer think Jesus was answering "yes" to Pilate's question whether He is a king, several explain that Jesus defined "king" differently than Pilate.

The Bible Exposition Commentary focuses on the kind of king Jesus articulated:

But then Jesus added a question of His own: "Are you saying this on your own initiative, or did others tell you about Me?" (John 18:34, NASB) What was our Lord really asking? "What kind of a king do you have in mind? A Roman king or a Jewish king? A political king or a spiritual king?" Jesus was not evading the issue; He was forcing Pilate to clarify the matter *for his own sake*. After all, it was not Jesus that was on trial; it was Pilate!

.... It is interesting that Pilate called Jesus "king" at least four times during the trial, and even used that title for the placard he hung on the cross (John 18:39; 19:3, 14–15, 19).

...Graciously, Jesus consented to explain Himself and His kingdom. Yes, He admitted that He is a King; but His kingdom (reign) does not come from the authority of the world. The Jews were under Roman authority, and Pilate was under the authority of the emperor; but Jesus derived His authority from God. His kingdom is spiritual, in the hearts of His followers; and He does not depend on worldly or fleshly means to advance His cause. If His kingdom were from the world, by now His followers would have assembled an army and fought to release Him. **Jesus did not say that He had no kingdom in this world, or that He would never rule on earth. He does have a kingdom in this world, wherever there are people who have trusted Him and yielded [ie. by election, or choice] to His sovereignty.** One day He shall return and establish a righteous kingdom on earth (Dan. 7:13–28). Pilate's concern was the source of this kingdom: where did Jesus derive His authority?

In John 18:37, Jesus explained who He is and what kind of kingdom belonged to Him. Pilate probably did not grasp the significance of these profound words, but we today can discern some of the meaning Jesus had in mind. He was "born," which indicates His humanity; but He also "came into the world," which indicates His deity. The fact that Jesus came "into the world" means that He had existed before His birth at Bethlehem; and this is an important and repeated truth in John's Gospel (John 1:9–10; 3:17, 19; 9:39; 10:36; 12:46; 16:28; 17:18).

But Jesus not only told Pilate of His origin; He also explained His ministry: to bear witness unto the truth. His was a spiritual kingdom of truth; and **He won people to His cause, not through force, but through conviction and persuasion.** He spoke the truth of God's Word, and all who were His people would respond to His call (see John 8:47; 10:27). Rome's weapon was the sword; but our Lord's weapon was the truth of God, the sword of the Spirit (Eph. 6:17). [Wiersbe, W. W. (1996, c1989). *The Bible exposition commentary*. "An exposition of the New Testament comprising the entire 'BE' series"--Jkt. (Jn 18:33). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.]

Other commentators (New Bible Commentary, Matthew Henry) say Jesus was assuring Pilate that His kingdom was no threat to Caesar's. But as a later commentary will show, nothing could be farther from the truth! The Truth, to which Jesus witnessed, includes the facts that He, not Caesar, is the only legitimate Savior, Lord, God, and King. It may be that this Truth is not defended by the sword of steel but by persuasion, but Truth is more persuasive than steel, and once people are persuaded, tolerance of tyranny fails, and tyranny founded on that tolerance crumbles.

Wiersbe skates over the sense in which Jesus' kingdom was a threat to tyrannies, and which Pilate might have crucified Him with more enthusiasm had Jesus been more direct: although Jesus' Kingdom was authorized, or took its authority over souls, through the choice, or election of those souls, inspired by persuasion, tyrannies are physically displaced to the extent that happens. It could have happened when Jesus came the first time, but for the unwillingness of people to prefer His rule.

In other words, Jesus' position was the highest treason in the heart of any king or emperor: that at such time as the people are ready to worship God alone and tolerate no pretender, they have a God-given right to do so! Here is how Wiersbe said it:

Christ explained to Pilate the spiritual nature of His kingdom but did not explain His statement "My kingdom is not of this world." Had the Jews received Him, He could have established His *[political]* kingdom on earth. But they rejected Him, for His kingdom is of a spiritual nature, within people's hearts. One day when He returns, He will establish His *[political]* kingdom on earth. How we long for that blessed day. [Wiersbe, W. W. (1997, c1992). *Wiersbe's expository outlines on the New Testament* (262). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.]

But how can it be said that the people were not ready to receive Jesus as their king? they tried to make Him king "by force"! John 6:15!

Actually, they were not ready to submit to Jesus' rulings and laws, as the rest of the chapter makes pretty clear! Their allegiance dissipated at the first whiff of a ruling they didn't understand! Here are some more observations by commentators:

...a crown on his head, and an army at his foot; such a king as this they would make him, which was as great a disparagement to his glory as it would be to lacquer gold or paint a ruby. Right notions of Christ's kingdom would keep us to right methods for advancing it. *Secondly*, It was excited by the love of the flesh; they would make *him* their king who could feed them so plentifully without their toil, and save them from the curse of *eating their bread in the sweat of their face*. *Thirdly*, It was intended to carry on a *secular* design; they hoped this might be a fair opportunity of shaking off the Roman yoke, of which they were weary. If they had one to head them who could victual an army cheaper than another could provide for a family, they were sure of the sinews of the war, and could not fail of success, and the recovery of their ancient liberties. Thus is religion often prostituted to a secular interest, and Christ is served only to *serve a turn*, Rom. 16:18. *Vix quaritur Jesus properter Jesum, sed propter aliud*—Jesus is usually sought after for something else, not for his own sake.—Augustine. Nay, *Fourthly*, It was a tumultuous, seditious attempt, and a disturbance of the public peace; it would make the country a seat of war, and expose it to the resentments of the Roman power. *Fifthly*, It was contrary to the mind of our Lord Jesus himself; for they would take him *by force*, whether he would or no. Note, Those who force honours upon Christ which he has not required at their hands displease him, and do him the greatest dishonour. **Those that say I am of Christ, in opposition to those that are of Apollos and Cephas (so making Christ the head of a party), take him by force, to make him a king, contrary to his own mind.** [Henry, M. (1996, c1991). *Matthew Henry's commentary on the whole Bible : Complete and unabridged in one volume* (Jn 6:15). Peabody: Hendrickson.]

Ouch! Did you catch that last barb? It is a reference to 1 Corinthians 1 where the Corinthians are thinking of splitting into 4 denominations, for which Paul unloads on them! Here Matthew Henry says anyone who splits a church, in the name of better serving Christ, is like those who "take Him by force" to pretend to be His subjects!

The crowd intended to force him to become king. He knew that this offer of kingship was superficial, motivated by a desire for bread rather than as a result of true recognition of his person. They wanted bread for physical life and independence for political life. But Jesus offered himself as the foundation for a new spiritual and eternal life. [Hughes, R. B., & Laney, J. C. (2001). *Tyndale concise Bible commentary*. Rev. ed. of: New Bible companion. 1990.; Includes index. The Tyndale

reference library (472). Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.]

Kings rule, they are not ruled by their people. The very intent of the crowds to force Jesus to become king shows how weak their allegiance was to Him. Don't come to Jesus intending to use faith for your own purposes. Come to Jesus as a subject, willing to let Him rule in your heart. [Richards, L. O. (1991; Published in electronic form by Logos Research Systems, 1996). *The Bible readers companion* (electronic ed.) (683). Wheaton: Victor Books.]

It is likely that the crowd's main purpose was to secure through Jesus a constant supply of free food, rather than any careful summing up of his Messianic potential. [Carson, D. A. (1994). *New Bible commentary : 21st century edition*. Rev. ed. of: The new Bible commentary. 3rd ed. / edited by D. Guthrie, J.A. Motyer. 1970. (4th ed.) (Jn 6:1). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Ill., USA: Inter-Varsity Press.]

### A New Kind of Authority: “King” Redefined.

God simply isn't interested in serving in a political relationship with us anything like what we recognize as a “king”. Here is the kind of Leader God wants to be:

Luke 22:25 *And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. [ie. the people were said to somehow “benefit” from having this dictator!] 26 But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. 27 For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth.*

Jesus is saying more than just that a “king” ought to “serve” in the sense of providing a benefit to those to whom they dictate. As Jesus says here, kings throughout history have been said to provide a benefit to those they rule. To “serve” in the sense of the “servant” who “serves” a meal rather than being served, is to take orders. To be dictated to. Isn't that what God does when He promises to answer our prayers, without telling us *what* to pray for, but only warning us about our motives in praying? Isn't that what a parent does, who “takes orders” from the child about what kinds of toys to choose now, and what kind of career to enable in the future, and who only restricts the child from self destructive behavior for the child's own benefit?

Can it be that Jesus would articulate such disdain for a human relationship we recognize as a “king”, who takes orders from no one and benefits virtually no one, and yet plan to become one?

Plato's reverence for kings, to the point of superstitious, is a window to the mind of a population dumb enough to thank their dictators for usurping their freedom:

“There arises the ideal figure of the benevolent king moving god-like above men and sustaining them as the shepherd his sheep. He knows no law but the personal one of his own will, which is not subject to a social order; and his will is the norm, not merely of a particular land or state, but of all things in general. The nature and task of the king may be summed up in the fact that he is a benefactor to the whole world.” [*Theological dictionary of the New Testament*. 1964-c1976. Vols. 5-9 edited by Gerhard Friedrich. Vol. 10 compiled by Ronald Pitkin. (G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley & G. Friedrich, Ed.) (electronic ed.) (1:565). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.]

Aristotle pictured an ideal ruler who can't be set under the law because he himself is the law.

People had the same reverence for kings that Catholics do for the Pope. Perhaps attributing superhuman benevolence and wisdom to dictators was a requirement of logic, since to acknowledge that kings are as corrupt and dumb as anyone else would be to raise the question why are we supporting this jerk – why don't we retire him and govern ourselves? Which would be unthinkable because it would require too much thinking.

### The Servant Becomes Like the Master? That's what Matthew 10:24-25 says:

Matthew 10:24 The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. 25 It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called

the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?

All translations agree that this verse says it is possible for the disciple to become “as his master”, except The Message, which says what all of us would be more comfortable having it say:

25 Be content—pleased, even—when you, my students, my harvest hands, get the same treatment I get. If they call me, the Master, ‘Dungface,’ [what, *The Message* translators can’t bring themselves to acknowledge the existence of Satan? *The Greek* reads “Beelzeboul”, the name of Satan. It says nothing about “dung” or “face”!] what can the workers expect?

But the statement in verse 24 is given as a stand-alone truth which then is the basis for the dose of reality in verse 25. The only thing startling about the everyday experience described in verse 24 is Jesus applying it to Himself.

And yet students do become like their teachers in knowledge and skill. God calls Himself our “Father”, and we His “sons”. Sons become like their fathers in knowledge, experience, and authority, although their fathers continue to surpass them in experience, and in knowledge if they remain active, and in authority only in the sense that their sons continue living by at least some of the principles learned from their parents, needed for their physical and spiritual survival.

Servants even become like their masters, under Moses’ law. Moses imposed a 6 year maximum on how long someone must serve another to pay off even a huge debt, after which time the servant was no longer a servant but could become an employer, or a master.

The Parable of the 10 Talents in Luke 19:12-27 tells us God expects us to double our talents during our lives. If we do we will be entrusted with huge new responsibilities. If we don’t we go to Hell. How is it possible for consciousness to do anything other than either grow, or die? If this is God’s expectation for us, can it be that God Himself cannot grow?

Not that we will ever be able to sense how much more God has “grown” at any point in history compared with any earlier point, any more than a dog can sense how much more intelligent his master is as a young man than he was as a toddler. To the dog, even the toddler was omnipotent, and how do you go up from omnipotent?

But if consciousness must always grow, and if we live forever, will not our consciousness eventually become, at least to us present “dogs”, “infinite”? While God’s continues growing infinitely greater than infinite? Can God mean anything else, in calling us “sons” and Himself “Father”?

**Then why did God use the word “King” to describe Himself, in three verses? Why not something like “friend” or “teacher”? Why not just “shepherd”?** Although there are several verses where Jesus refuses to accept the commonly understood authority or even title of “king”, the following study shows He accepted other titles to whom emperors claimed the exclusive right. And there are three verses, written of Him after He was crucified, which name Him “king of kings”.

1 Timothy 6:15 Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords;

Revelation 17:14 These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.

Revelation 19:16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

Wuerst’s Word Studies in the Greek New Testament, quoted below, shows how political the Gospel was, in using the same words to describe Jesus as the Roman armies demanded be reserved for Caesar.

Christians today think Jesus and God didn’t “get involved in politics”. But by asking His people to use the very titles claimed by human emperors, and asking His people to *not* apply those titles to human emperors and kings, Jesus struck at the very legitimacy of their rule.

Suppose God had created a word meaning “president”. Suppose God had limited Himself to any words other than the words emperors demand for themselves. Then couldn’t God have peacefully coexisted with tyrants? After all, Jesus said “my kingdom is not of this world”. Doesn’t that mean Jesus has no interest in the kingdoms of this world?

I hope the preceding study of that answer to Pilate will satisfy you that Jesus did not mean that. Jesus wanted people to be free just as soon as they were willing to accept Freedom’s responsibilities.

Given that goal, what good would it have done to use language of peaceful coexistence with tyranny? God’s goal was not to create a new kind of authority that could peacefully coexist with the old tyranny. God’s goal was to end tyranny. So God had to take each of the names emperors reserve to themselves, and call Himself each of those names, and for each of those names, calling Himself the greatest kind of that thing.

Not for His ego. But for us, to deliver us from tyranny. God wants His children to realize that an emperor who is invited into the hearts of His people after standing at the door and knocking has a greatness unmatched by a tyrant who just breaks down the door.

God wants His children to realize that an emperor who calls himself “god”, who rules by deceit and fear, is no ruler at all next to our God who rules by truth and love.

Therefore it was necessary to use words that said that, clearly. It was necessary to openly defy human emperors who demanded worship, claiming to be not mere tyrants but benevolent Gods! Anything less would have just confused people about Who God is.

Even though that created the additional responsibility of clearly redefining those words.

Here is Wuerst’s Commentary on the names of emperors which Jesus claimed for Himself:

### I. The Imperialism of Christianity

CHRISTIANITY came into a world dominated by the Cult of the Cæsar, a religious system in which the Roman emperor was worshipped as a god. The empire, made up of many widely different peoples with their own distinctive languages, customs, and religions, was held together not merely by one central ruling power at Rome which was supported by the military power of its legions, but also and probably more efficiently so, by the universal religion of Emperor-worship. Political and military ties are strong, but religious ties are stronger. Rome knew this and guarded jealously its Cult of the Cæsar. Its policy was to allow its subjects to retain their own religions as long as they accepted Emperor-worship in addition to their own system of belief. But Rome would not countenance a religion that set itself up as unique and as taking that place in the hearts of men which was occupied by the Cult of the Cæsar. Into this atmosphere Christianity came with its unique and imperialistic claims. It was inevitable that there would be a clash between these two imperialisms, that of Heaven and that of Rome. It came in the form of the bloody persecutions hurled against the Christian Church by Rome during the first three hundred years of its existence. What an unanswerable proof of the divine origin of Christianity do we have in the fact that by A.D. 316, Christianity had displaced Emperor-worship as the predominating system of belief in the Roman world and that the Emperor Constantine at that time made it the state religion.

The inscriptions which archeologists have unearthed give us some information regarding the Cult of the Cæsar which throws an abundance of light upon some passages in the New Testament. They reveal a parallelism between Christianity and the imperial cult with reference to the position of the Lord Jesus in the system called Christianity and that of the Roman emperor in the system called the Cult of Cæsar, and the official titles held by each.

For instance, the term *kurios* (*κυριος*) meaning “Lord” was used as a divine title of the emperor. It was also an official title of our Lord Jesus. This Greek word *kurios* (*κυριος*) is the translation in the Septuagint of the august title of God in the Old Testament, “Jehovah.” The term “Lord” was understood to be a title which included within its meaning of “master” the idea of divinity. It was a divine title. These facts throw a flood of light on Paul’s assertion (I Corinthians 8:5, 6), “For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many,

and lords many,) but to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.” These words are set in a context in which Paul is pleading for separation from the pagan Greek mystery religions. He cites the example of the Christian’s separation from the Cult of Cæsar, arguing that if the Corinthian Christians have thrown off their allegiance to the Cæsar so far as worshipping him is concerned, they ought also to separate themselves from any participation in the Greek religious practices. Here the chief exponent of Christianity is throwing out into the arena of the imperialistic contest the imperialistic challenge of Christianity, namely, that while the Greeks may people the heavens with deities, and the Romans may worship the emperor on earth, yet so far as Christians are concerned, they do not recognize these, for they are monotheists, worshipping the absolute God, and His Son Jesus Christ who Himself is God.

Our Lord referred to this practice of the deification of the emperor when He said (Luke 22:25), “The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them.” The meaning of the word “lordship” here is not merely that the emperor rules as an absolute autocrat, but that he rules as an emperor-god. In answer to the question of the Herodians (Matt. 22:15–22), “Is it lawful to pay taxes to Cæsar, or not?” He said, “Render therefore to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s.” The question was fully answered. The words, “and unto God the things that are God’s,” is a protest against Emperor-worship. Taxes should be paid to Cæsar, but no worship should be accorded him. To be worshipped is the prerogative of God alone.

“There went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus that the whole inhabited earth” i.e., the Roman Empire, “should be enrolled” (Luke 2:1). The Greek word is not “taxed” but “enrolled.” Taxation was probably one of the purposes of this enrollment, but it was the imperial census that was being taken. The inscriptions furnish instances of other enrollments, showing that such a thing was neither unreasonable nor impossible, the destructive critics notwithstanding. Joseph and Mary in obedience to the imperial decree go to Bethlehem where the prophecy of Micah (5:2) is fulfilled. Now comes the imperialistic announcement, brought by an angel from heaven (Luke 2:10, 11), “Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour which is Christ the Lord.”

Here was heaven’s King coming to dispute the claims and position of the Cæsar who arrogated to himself the title of “lord,” and who was worshipped as a god. No wonder that Herod and the Jews were agitated at this news (Matt. 2:1–8), the former because of the imperialistic challenge which would present new problems of administration to him in addition to the ones he already had in connection with troublesome Israel, the latter because, entrenched in their ecclesiastical sin, they did not want to be deprived of their lucrative positions. But while heaven’s King came in humiliation the first time and did not displace the world empire of the ruling Cæsar but only found a place in a few hearts, He will some day come in exaltation to dethrone Antichrist, the then ruling Cæsar, and, occupying the throne of David, rule over a world-empire as King of kings, and Lord of lords.

It was Thomas who exclaimed (John 20:27), “My Lord and my God.” This was enough to involve him in serious trouble with the Roman authorities had they known of it, for he was acknowledging Jesus of Nazareth as his Lord and his God instead of Cæsar. Polycarp, who lived A.D. 156, was confronted with the question by the Roman official, “What is the harm in saying ‘lord Cæsar’?” And because he refused to acknowledge Cæsar as lord, he was martyred. Festus (Acts 25:26) said regarding Paul, “Of whom I have no certain thing to write unto my lord.” His lord was Cæsar, “lord” in the sense that Festus recognized Nero, who was then Cæsar, as the emperor-god to whom worship was due.

But see the imperialistic challenge of Christianity in the words of the apostle Paul (Phil. 2:9–11), “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him the Name which is above every name, that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus

Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

The terms *theos* (θεος), “god,” and *huios theou* (υιος θεου), “son of god,” were both used in the Cult of the Cæsar and were titles of the emperor. Our Lord claimed oneness in essence with the Father (John 10:30). He said (John 8:58), “Before Abraham came into existence, I am.” He claimed to be the Son of God (John 9:35–38) and accepted worship as the Son of God, thus demonstrating the fact that His position as Son of God made Him a co-participant in the essence of Deity. All this was in startling contrast to the claims of the then ruling emperor, and our blessed Lord knew it. Luke 22:25 shows His accurate knowledge of the customs, political practices, and happenings of His day, when He speaks of those who exercise authority over the people as being called “benefactors.” The term “benefactor” was an honorable title given to princes and other eminent men for valuable services rendered to the State.

The emperor was also given the title “overseer.” He was the “overseer” of his subjects in that he was charged with the responsibility of caring for their welfare. The same term “overseer” is given God the Father in I Peter 2:25 where the word meaning “overseer” is translated “bishop.” Peter, in writing his epistle, must have been conscious of the imperialistic challenge of Christianity when presenting the God of Christians as the Overseer of their souls, refusing to acknowledge the overseeing care of the emperor-god.

Another title given the emperor was *basileus* (βασιλευς), “king.” Some monarchs used the title “king of kings.” Our Lord claimed this title in relation to His distinctive position as the Messiah of Israel. The Jews recognized this as directly opposed to the imperial position of Cæsar as king. Not that there were no kings in the empire ruling under the authority of the world-Cæsar. But the Jewish leaders understood Old Testament truth well enough to know that our Lord’s claim to the position of king over Israel involved world-dominion, which at once struck at the throne of Cæsar. They tried to use this as a means of involving Him in difficulties with Rome, for they said to Pilate (John 19:12), “If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar’s friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar.” They had accused Him of forbidding them to pay taxes to Cæsar, which was a lie, and of claiming to be the Anointed of God, which was the truth (Luke 23:2). Upon our Lord’s acknowledging the fact that He was a king, Pilate turned to the Jews and said, “I find no fault in this man” (Luke 23:3, 4). One look at Jesus was enough to convince Pilate that he was not a dangerous character, and he dismissed from his mind any disposition to treat our Lord’s claim seriously. Had Pilate taken our Lord’s claims at their face value, his position as a representative of Cæsar would have demanded that he deal with the case before him in no hesitant manner. When Pilate said to them (John 19:14, 15), “Behold your king,” the Jews who hated and despised the Roman yoke and the emperor who ruled them, cried in a false patriotism, “We have no king but Cæsar.”

Paul, after he had faced Nero as the prisoner of the Roman empire and had been liberated, wrote the following to Timothy (First epistle 1:17, 6:15), “Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be glory and honor for ever and ever. Amen.” “Which in his times he shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honor and power everlasting. Amen.” Again the great apostle, having been snatched from the jaws of death at the hands of Rome, puts himself within reach of the long arm of the empire when he denies the supremacy of the emperor in things spiritual.

But not only did the emperor have the titles of lord, son of god, god, overseer, and king, all of which were titles of our Lord also, but he was given the title *soter* (σωτερ), “saviour.” At least eight of the emperors carried the title “saviour of the world.” They were hailed as the saviours of the people. For the most part, the Roman world was well governed and policed, Roman law was administered in equity, the Roman roads caused travel and commerce to

flourish, and the Roman peace made living conditions bearable and in some instances pleasant. Thus the emperors were the world-saviours. Now comes Christianity with its imperialistic announcement (Luke 2:11), “For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.” But this Saviour’s name was Jesus, one who would save them from the sins which they loved and from which they did not want to be separated. What motive would they have in transferring their allegiance from a world-saviour who gave them the comforts of life and at the same time allowed them to go on in their sin, to the Lord Jesus, especially when allegiance to this new Saviour could very well result in their crucifixion by Rome? And yet for the first three hundred years of the Church’s history, tens of thousands willingly embraced this new Saviour and went to a horrible death. How explain this? The only answer is that the supernatural power of God was operative in their hearts. The Samaritans said (John 4:42), “We have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.” It took grace to say that, for they realized that should this come to the ears of Rome, they would be charged with treason.

In I Timothy 1:1, Paul refers to “the commandment of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ,” coupling the titles “God” and “Saviour” together as they are in the Cult of the Cæsar. In the same epistle (4:10), he speaks of God as the Saviour of all men. The context, which brings in the idea of faith, seems to indicate that the idea of salvation from sin and the impartation of eternal life is the function here of God as Saviour. He is Saviour of all men in the sense that our Lord is “the Saviour of the world” (John 4:42). He is the actual Saviour of those who believe, and the potential Saviour of the unbeliever in the sense that He has provided a salvation at the Cross for the sinner, and stands ready to save that sinner when the latter places his faith in the Lord Jesus. The Emperor was the Saviour of the world. No wonder that Rome recognized in Christianity a formidable rival. No wonder the Roman writer Tacitus says of Christianity, “This destructive superstition, repressed for awhile, again broke out, and spread not only through Judæa where it originated, but reached this city also (Rome), into which flow all things that are vile and abominable, and where they are encouraged.” Paul uses the words “God our Saviour” in Titus 1:3, here the Saviour of believers in a spiritual sense. Peter applies the title “Saviour” to our Lord in his second epistle (1:11), adding the title “Lord,” which also was claimed by the emperor. Jude closes his book with the words, “to the only wise God our Saviour,” again a conscious assertion of the preeminence of God over all the claims of earthly sovereigns.

Another term found in the Christian system and which was used by Roman emperors was *archiereus* (ἀρχιερεὺς), “high priest.” The emperors were called “Pontifex Maximus” in the east, the name being the Latin translation of the Greek *archiereus* (ἀρχιερεὺς). In contrast to the arrogance, cruelty, and wickedness of the Roman emperor who was recognized not only as lord, son of god, god, saviour, but also as high priest, we have the words of Paul, “Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession, for we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities: but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb. 4:14–16). The primary contrast here is undoubtedly between the Aaronic high priest and our Lord as High Priest, but the background of Roman imperialism seems to be in the picture also. The Roman emperor was Pontifex Maximus, a high priest upon the throne of the Cæsars. But our Lord Jesus is a high priest who, now seated upon a throne of grace, will some day as High Priest in the Messianic Kingdom occupy the throne of David in Jerusalem, as Zechariah says, “He shall be a priest upon his throne” (Zech. 6:13).

Turning now to words used in a technical sense in the Cult of the Cæsar with reference to the people instead of the emperor, we have the expression, “friend (*philos* (φίλος)) of the emperor,” which was an official title in the imperial period. What a flood of light this throws

upon our Lord's words, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not bondslaves, for a bondslave knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends" (John 15:14, 15). As our Lord knew of the Roman custom of calling a servant of the State a Benefactor (Luke 22:25), so He knew of this custom of certain ones being called "friends of the emperor." There was real point to His words and they were not lost upon His disciples. Think of what faith this involved on His part and theirs. The King of kings was on His way from the upper room where they had celebrated the Passover together for the last time, to His crucifixion and death, the rejected King of Israel. Yet in all the dignity of His royal position as King of the Jews in the Davidic dynasty, He said, "I have called you friends." Yes, they were friends of the Emperor who would be raised from the dead, ascend to heaven, and some day come back to this earth to reign as King of kings and Lord of lords.

Another official title was "bondslave (*doulos* (*δουλος*)) of the emperor." There were imperial slaves all over the Roman world. There was an honor in even being a bondslave of Cæsar. Paul must have been conscious of the analogy when he wrote, "Paul, a bondslave of Christ Jesus" (Rom. 1:1). If it was an honor in the Roman world to be a bondslave of the emperor, what an exalted privilege it was to be a bondslave of the King of kings.

In II Corinthians 5:20, Paul calls himself (editorial "we") an ambassador for Christ. The Greek word is *presbeuo* (*πρεσβευο*), a technical term used of the emperor's legate, namely, the one who speaks for the emperor. Paul was a spokesman on behalf of Christ. The word is used also in Ephesians 6:20 and in Luke 14:32, in the latter text appearing in the translation as "ambassage." The word clearly refers to the imperial service of Cæsar, and in the Scriptures to the imperial service of Christ in which the saints are engaged. Thus did Christianity parallel the imperialism of Rome.

The imperial secretary used the technical expression *pepisteumai* (*πεπιστευμαι*) which meant "I am entrusted," the qualifying word being added which would designate the matter with which he was entrusted. Paul as an imperial secretary of the Lord Jesus entrusted with the writings of the epistles which bear his name, uses the same technical phrase current in the Roman world at that time. The word is used in Galatians 2:7, "committed;" in I Corinthians 9:17, "committed;" in I Thessalonians 2:4, "put in trust;" I Timothy 1:11, "committed to my trust;" and in Titus 1:3, "committed."

The correspondence of the imperial secretary was designated by the technical expression, *hiera grammata* (*ἱερὰ γραμμάτα*), "sacred writings." It was used of Imperial letters and decrees. The expression *theia grammata* (*θεῖα γραμμάτα*), "divine writings" was used of imperial letters. Imperial ordinances were referred to as "divine commandments." This shows clearly how completely the religious or ecclesiastical position of the emperor made its influence felt throughout the affairs of state. Alongside of all this we have Paul using the same expression, *hiera grammata* (*ἱερὰ γραμμάτα*), in II Timothy 3:15 in the words "holy scriptures." Here the writings of the Old Testament are put over against the imperial decrees of Cæsar, which latter had not only governmental but also religious significance. New Testament writings were looked upon by the early Christians in the same way.

Finally, the word *euaggelion* (*εὐαγγελιον*) "good news" or "good tidings" was used in a profane sense of any piece of good news. But it also had a sacred connection as when it was used to refer to the good news of the birthday of the emperor-god. At the accession of a Cæsar to the throne, the account of this event was spoken of as *euaggelion* (*εὐαγγελιον*) "good tidings."

See the parallel in the imperialistic announcement by the angels, "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:10, 11). How all this gives further point to Paul's words "I am ready to preach the good news to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the good news: for it is the power of God resulting in salvation to

every one that believeth.” Paul was expecting to come to Rome where the “good news” of the emperor found its reality, that emperor who was called lord, son of God, god, king, saviour, and high priest, and he was to announce the true Lord from heaven who was the Son of the eternal God, yes, very God Himself, coming King of kings, Saviour of the believer, and High Priest who by His atoning death on Calvary’s Cross paid for sin and put it away. He was to announce this good news, this gospel, for that is what the word “gospel” means, right in the stronghold of Emperor-worship. But he was not afraid to do so, for he knew that it was of divine and supernatural origin and would accomplish that whereunto it was sent. [Wuest, K. S. (1997, c1984). *Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament : For the English reader* (Bypaths in the Greek New Testament: p.20-32). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.]

### **What Happened to “The Divine Right of Kings”?**

Can dictators today allow Christianity, and still rule? It doesn’t seem possible, to dictators. I know of no dictators who do not maliciously persecute Christians. Why?

Yet kings peacefully coexisted with Christianity for centuries. What changed?

What changed was that before the Reformation, the Bible was unavailable to the people. The only snippets of Scripture they ever heard was whatever the Roman Pope decreed they should hear, and the Pope had alliances with kings in which the Pope in effect promised the people’s allegiance to kings who “cooperated” with Rome.

Rome created the doctrine called “the Divine Right of Kings”, that said that although kings are not gods, God has established each and every one of them, and authorized whatever cruel deed they fancy to be called the Will of God, not to be protested by any Christian.

The doctrine survives, though somewhat tattered by reality, today. It is based on Romans 13:1, which tells us to obey the “higher authorities”. We are not supposed to notice that when the “higher authorities” disagree, such as when a government disobeys God, that we are challenged to choose whether to obey our government or God. In other words, the verse, by its grammar, is limited to obeying government only to the extent government obeys God. It is meant to shame criminals who obey neither in the name of rebelling against a corrupt government.

We are also not supposed to notice the Examples of Faith throughout the Bible, and summarized in Hebrews 11. Almost all God’s heroes challenged governments where they were wrong.

We are allowed to notice Acts 5:29, “we ought to obey God rather than man”, but only so long as we interpret that narrowly, as saying we will only disobey where government directly orders us to disobey God. And only so long as we do not study the magnitude of how much God has to say about how government ought to operate, so that we remain unable to discern how often and how profoundly governments disobey God.

We are not supposed to notice that when the apostles said that, there was no Scripture telling them to go right into the Temple, which was the seat of authority of the Sanhedrin with all its police and political alliances with Rome, Pilate and Herod and executions by stoning if not by crucifixion, and to proclaim withering criticisms of that government!

When Christians today do *that*, they find themselves continually arrested and having to defend themselves in courts, even right here in the USA! I’m referring to the Street Preachers who hold up the photographic evidence of what abortion does to babies on streets and college campuses.

All of them have to learn enough law to continue their witnessing in the face of police who threaten them with arrest, sometimes because the police don’t know the law and other times because they just don’t like the witnessing and hope bluffing will scare the preachers away. And when ignorant police arrest them anyway, they have to be prepared, by knowledge of the law and hopefully with video evidence, to defend themselves without a lawyer, which they can’t afford because it happens far too often for any lawyer to be willing to help for what the preachers can afford.

Universities punish students with expulsion for Biblical statements about sodomites. The impact of the punishment is far more devastating than being arrested and jailed, since it destroys an investment of

tens of thousand dollars.

U.S. society has many more creative ways to marginalize critics of government and of comfortable familiar social practices.

But back to the Divine Right of Kings, as applied to legitimizing kings: the Reformation made the Bible available to average Christian laymen. Leaders like Calvin wrote about the freedom to choose leaders practiced in the New Testament churches, and the “lesser magistrates” document with Scriptural precedent for lower government officials organizing against higher authorities who have become abusive, including kings. Calvin’s successor, Beza, argued from Scripture for a constitution which limits the power of kings, balancing their powers with those of “lesser magistrates”. He said “The People were not created for the sake of the rulers but the rulers for the sake of the people.” Over a century later, Locke argued that not just lesser magistrates, but the people, had a right to revolution when a ruler violated the terms of the social contract and became a tyrant.

When American colonial legislatures remonstrated against British abuses and met in formal "congresses" like the Stamp Act Congress and the congress that adopted the Declaration of Independence, they were behaving in good Calvinist fashion.

Second, Beza offered a theory of inalienable rights, such as free exercise of religion, freedom to educate one's children, freedom to emigrate, freedom of speech and petition, property, and family, ingeniously derived from the Ten Commandments and based on the idea that individuals must necessarily have the rights necessary to carry out prescribed duties to God and our neighbor. [Book review: “Calvinism and Liberty, Reformed influences on America's founding principles.” by Michael W. McConnell, Friday, February 6, 2009, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/bc/2009/janfeb/17.28.html>]

Even before Democracy emerged, the Bible weakened the power of kings. But although kings became less dictatorial, more subject to the Rule of Law, from which not even kings were exempt, monarchies did not die, yet. After all, these were new untested theologies. No one for a thousand years had actually seen a Republic work. But when the United States were created, free from Britain, and rose to a power among the nations, defeating world powers in World War I, monarchies could survive no longer.

After that, the only way a dictator could maintain power, was by censoring God and His Witnesses, just like during New Testament times.

**Jesus will Never Rule as Dictator!** The word “king” means “ruler”, without specifying the nature of the rule. Although the King James translators, and even modern translators, still call Him “King of Kings”, it is obvious that His rule bears little resemblance to what anyone recognizes as a “king”, and has much more in common with a kind of political authority we recognize as an elected President, which Josephus says was the system Moses created with the system of elected judges. (More about that later.)

As Jesus redefines the role of “king”, there is no lack of continuity between the centuries of development of political freedom and His millennial rule, as Daniel 2 describes the growth of the “stone” cut not with hands.

But what about Revelation 19:15? It sounds pretty ruthless:

Revelation 19:15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule [Gr: “shepherd”] them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

Revelation 12:5 And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule [Gr: “shepherd”] all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.

Psalm 2:8 Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. 9 Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.

Revelation 2:26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him

will I give power over the nations: 27 **And he shall rule [Gr: “shepherd”] them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers:** even as I received of my Father.

For whom is Jesus’ “wrath”?

Hebrews 12 says God’s wrath is the proof of His love, and is for correction. No correction proves no love, even though “our God is a consuming fire”.

For whom is Jesus’ “rod of iron”?

Remember, the shepherd’s “rod” is not for His sheep who “elect” Him their savior, but for wolves.

The shepherd protects His sheep, so self sacrificially that He gives His life for theirs. He protects them from ravenous wolves. He leaves the wolves alone unless they are attacking His sheep, but He seeks wolves who will convert into sheep and join His flock.

Notice in the following passage about God’s Wrath, the occasion of it is not to attack wolves who are minding their own business, but to “help”, v. 5, those under the wolves’ attack. Also notice that coming to save Israel with the armies of Heaven is not Jesus’ first choice but is a judgment; men should have done it! Who are these puny nations marching against Israel? Why even the U.S. could have stopped them, but why didn’t they? v 5 I looked for others to do it and marveled that none were coming! So I came Myself!

Isaiah 63:1 Who *is* this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this *that is glorious* in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. 2 Wherefore *art thou* red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? 3 I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people *there was* none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. 4 For the day of vengeance *is* in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come. 5 **And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold:** therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me. 6 And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth.

Even now Jesus has appeared to countless Moslems within Moslem nations and converted them into His sheep.

King David was anointed (the meaning of the title “Christ”) king as a young man, and waited many years for the people to receive him. Even after Saul died and Judah crowned him their king, he waited another 7 years for the other tribes of Israel to accept his rule. He did not instigate or orchestrate their acceptance, but waited patiently.

Today Islam is a religion of irrationality. They accuse Israel for self defensive actions of war, determined not to acknowledge a single word about the Moslem terror from which Israel was protecting itself. That irrationality has rubbed off onto the United Nations.

The Koran itself says some of its own verses are “abrogated”, meaning revealed as authored by Satan instead of by God, (called “the Satanic verses”), and in addition when two verses conflict Moslems are told to understand that the later verse replaces the earlier verse, yet both are “true”, even if they are absolutely contradictory.

But Moslem nations today consist of irrational, violence-loving, hard-hearted, cruel Moslems, living side by side with self-sacrificing Christians joyfully risking their lives to save their neighbors. When the Moslem armies rise up in war against Jesus Himself, and are destroyed, the Christian minorities in Moslem nations will become majorities.

But will some Moslems remain? How then will those nations unanimously elect Jesus their ruler, without Jesus destroying dissenters?

Even without imagining new conditions which do not operate already, we need only observe Moslems living in the United States. They profess obedience to our laws, even though most never condemn acts of terror while many are glad for them. That was probably the condition of many hearts in the wilderness when God asked their unanimous consent to submit to His laws. Once people consent to a

system of laws, then if they are prosecuted for violating them, they are prosecuted for violating laws to which they consented.

Proof that Israelites then were as ambivalent as Moslems in the US today:

Deuteronomy 5:26 For who is there of all flesh, that hath heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived? 27 Go thou near, and hear all that the LORD our God shall say: and speak thou unto us all that the LORD our God shall speak unto thee; and we will hear it, and do it. 28 And the LORD heard the voice of your words, when ye spake unto me; and the LORD said unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken unto thee: they have well said all that they have spoken. 29 **O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!**

Quick review of verses about Jesus being King:

Matthew 27:11, “Thou sayest” that I am king; in other words, that isn’t the word I would choose.

Also John 18:37.

Matthew 27:37 Pilate wrote on a sign that Jesus is king of the Jews. Also John 19:19.

John 6:15 Jesus wouldn’t let the people “take him by force, and make him a king”.

Acts 17:7 Jason accused of receiving people who “say there is another King, one Jesus.”

Luke 1:32 Angles say “He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David; 33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.” “Throne” means power. That doesn’t mean Jesus has any intention of using power like a human dictator. Kingdom means rule. That doesn’t mean Jesus will rule by the sword of steel, by force, slaying nonaggressive ideological opponents, like a human dictator.

The Bible says Jesus will have a throne, but in Revelation 3 it says we will sit in it with Him! That doesn’t sound very dictatorial!

Daniel 7:14 And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom *that* which shall not be destroyed.

Sounds like a dictator, except for:

Daniel 7:27 And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, **shall be given to the people of the saints** of the most High, whose kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom, and all dominion se shall serve and obey him

Sounds like God wants to rule by consensus!

Micah 4:7 And I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast far off a strong nation: and the LORD shall reign over them in mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever.

What kind of government does God count as God reigning over the people? We can find out in 1 Samuel 8:

1 Samuel 8:7 And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.

The rest of the chapter is about the demand of the people of Israel to change their form of government to a king, from a government much freer:

Jdg 21:25 In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes.

In other words, the previous form of government, without a king, in which “every man did that which was right in his own eyes”, was characterized by God as a government through which “I..reigned over them”.

We also know that the Israeli government prior to the kings introduced in 1 Samuel 8 was a system of judges instituted by Moses at the suggestion of his father-in-law Jethro, described in Exodus 18 and

Numbers 1. Israel was divided into groups of one thousand families, with a judge for each thousand. The thousands were subdivided into hundreds, fifties, and tens, with a judge for each.

## When Freedom Was Born

It's time to review the Scriptural evidence that the very freedoms which Separatist Pastor John Robinson resurrected are unequivocally embedded in the Pages of God.

Let's read about the world's first government in which every man had a voice and a vote. It wasn't Greece in 500 AD, as encyclopedias allege, where only 1/8 of the men could vote – the rest were slaves – and they could only vote for their military commander; all other offices were decided by lottery!

It was 700 years before that.

It was in the Arabian desert between Egypt and Palestine.

Inspired by his father in law, Moses coordinated elections across Israel of 78,600 judges. Israel's government is simplistically called a "theocracy", but even God would not enact laws for Israel until after the people had elected Him. [Title: **Exodus 19:8** *And all the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken we will do....* Also Exodus 19:8, 24:3, 7, Deut 5:27-28, Jos 24:22.] This vote was no rubber stamp but a real vote, because God had expressed genuine reluctance to assume jurisdiction over the people until they voted.

The election of human judges is stated in DeuterONomy 1:13. [Title: Deuteronomy 1:13 **Take you wise men, and understanding, and known among your tribes, and I will make them rulers over you.**] It was the people who took candidates from among themselves, and Moses confirmed them, the way a Supreme Court judge today confirms a President after the people elect him. The candidates were "known" by the people, a word meaning an intimate working relationship.

Josephus supports this interpretation.

[Title: *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 3, Chapter 4, Section 1. "[the leaders were] such as the whole multitude have tried, and do approve of, as being good and righteous men".] (Read italics, while title displays it)

These judges were called captains of hundreds and thousands. Even while kings reigned, 400 years later, much of the government was by elected captains of hundreds and thousands.

In fact, the system of hundreds and thousands continued long after Israel was scattered. A dictionary used by lawyers defines the same kind of "hundreds" as the form of Saxon government in England. [Title: "...each county...comprised...hundreds, each hundred containing ten...groups of ten families...had its own court...its most remarkable feature was the corporate responsibility of the whole for the crimes or defaults of the individual members." Black's Law Dictionary, 4<sup>th</sup> edition]

Regina: Remnants of the system continued for centuries after the Saxons were defeated. So English masses had experienced a voice in their government long before 1215 AD when the Magna Carta was signed, thanks to the Freedoms pioneered by Moses in 1200 BC.

Kitty: Just as the *Old* Testament featured leaders elected by all the people, the New Testament featured *church* leaders elected by all in their congregations. A footnote to Josephus' account of the origin of the "hundreds" was added by the translator of Josephus' works in 1828. [Title, read: Footnote: *This manner of electing the judges and officers of the Israelites by the testimonies [campaign endorsements] and suffrages [votes] of the people, before they were ordained by God, // or by Moses, deserves to be carefully noted, because it was the pattern of the like manner of the choice and ordination of bishops, presbyters, and deacons, in the Christian church.*]

Regina: Further evidence is found in Acts 14:23, and the *note* on that verse in the Geneva Bible – which is the Bible the Pilgrims used.

[Title: ] When the Bible says elders were ordained, Geneva translators explain that the apostles confirmed the choice made by each congregation.

Moses from 1200 BC, the Christian Churches from 30 AD, the Pilgrims in 1620 AD: it **appears**

that a Republic was God's pattern from the beginning. It *appears* that the only time in world history that all the people had a voice in their government was when men modeled their laws after God's.

Coincidence? (4:54)

NonChristians certainly don't need Scripture to persuade them to help recreate the robust verbal dialog that shaped America. Hopefully you will join us simply because it is a good idea which once worked and will work again. A system which offers you freedom and opportunity, without any requirement that you agree with – or even know about – the theology that preserves it.

But before *Christians* will get on board, they need to know not only that the Pilgrims did it, but that God *says* to do it. Fortunately the “Prophecy” services were so embedded in Separatist theology, that not only did Pastor Robinson publish scores of pages about it, but he summarized it in their catechism. (10:18) 25:21 so far

[Title: Q. 29. *Who are to open and apply the Scriptures in the church?* A. 1. [Besides leaders, laymen] in the exercise of prophecy.]

Question 30: “*How is that exercise proved in the Scriptures?*”

[Title: A. 1, *By the examples in the Jewish Church, where men, though in no office, [not ordained], either in temple or synagogue, had liberty publicly to use their gifts.* Luke ii. 42, 46, 47; iv. 16 —18; Acts viii. 4, xi. 19—21, xiii. 14—16, xviii. 24 —26.]

[Title: 2. *By the commandments of Christ and his apostles.* Luke ix. 1, x. 1; Rom. xii. 6—8; 1 Pet. iv. 10,11; 1 Cor. xiv. 1.]

[Title: 3. *By the prohibiting of women, not extraordinarily inspired, to teach in the church:* herein liberty being given unto men (their husbands or others). 1 Tim. ii. 11, 12; 1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35.]

[Title: 4. *By the excellent ends which, by this means, are to be obtained: as 1. The glory of God in the manifestation of his manifold graces,* 1 Pet. iv. 10, 11. 2.

[Title: *That the gifts of the Spirit in men be not quenched,* 1 Thess. v. 19. 3. *For the fitting and trial of men for the ministry,* 1 Tim. iii. 2, 4.] I must add that debating your ideological opponent in a fair forum does more to prepare you to defend your positions than years of academic study. It's like the difference between reading a book about how to fly an airplane, and flying an airplane.

[Title: *For the preserving pure of the doctrine of the church, which is more endangered if some one or two alone may only be heard and speak,* 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25. ] I must add that any pastor can slide farther, the less he allows anyone to publicly correct him. Not only that, but where discussion is limited, a layman can sit in church for years without the pastor knowing what errors stifle his heart.

[Title: 5. *For debating and satisfying of doubts, if any do arise. 6. For the edifying of the church, and conversion of others,* Acts ii. 42; Luke iv. 22, 23.]

Here is where “prophecy” is defined. Robinson takes his definition right out of 1 Corinthians 14:3.

[Title: Q. 31. *Who is a prophet in this sense?* A. *He that hath a gift of the Spirit to speak unto edification, exhortation, and comfort.* 1 Cor. xiv. 4, 24, 25.]

[Title: Q. 32. *What is the order of this exercise?* A. *That it be performed after the public ministry by the teachers, and under their direction and moderation, whose duty it is, ...]*

[Title: ...if anything be obscure, to open it; if doubtful, to clear it; if unsound, to refuse it; if unprofitable to supply what is wanting as they are able. 1 Cor. xiv. 3, 37; Acts xiii. 15.] (2:43; 28:04 so far)

As Rev. Jeanne Linderman said, the prophesying services had many benefits on many levels. (Excerpts) But I want to close with the benefit to America.

Voters have the power to change politics. But not if all they do is vote. Voters need to vote intelligently. But all is lost if they educate only themselves, and not each other. Voters have much to learn from each other about issues, but if all voters understand is issues and not which candidates support which issues, what is gained? And what is gained if voters wait until the only two choices are equally bad?

Voters need to go out early and find those really good candidates who have no chance while voters remain disengaged, and help them. Early, when a little help makes a big difference.

All these things happened naturally when neighbors met regularly across denominational lines, in meetings called “prophecy services” or “town meetings”, to discuss issues of community concern, where they were free to appeal to the highest principles they knew.

Their understanding of issues was razor sharp. They understood issues far better than voters today whose information comes from 30 second TV commercials. Or from news reporters laboring under 500 word limits and bias too thick to give more than lip service to opposing views. The forums attracted the most informed newsmakers in the community who were glad to educate each other.

Their understanding of candidates was intimate. They had conversations every week with the brightest bulbs in the community. They knew who thought clearly, and who cared about more than their own self esteem. And they knew early, when it mattered.

America is not yet boxed in as tightly as Israel was, when the Egyptian army was on one side, anxious to slaughter them all, and the Red Sea was on the other side, ready to drown them all. But God protected them on both sides. God held back the Egyptians on one side, and the Red Sea on the other side, long enough for Israel to pass through the Red Sea without drowning, so that the Red Sea drowned only the Egyptians.

God offers America a way today, also. To the extent American neighbors begin reasoning with one another again, the political calamities and scandals of today will soon be the memories of yesterday. But to the extent not even Christians will follow this path out from between the frying pan and the fire which God offers, well, maybe they will still go to Heaven, but America could still go drown.

I hope that's not what Christians want. I hope that's not what Americans want. That's not what God wants. (3:13; 31:17)

### Pilgrim prophesying services

**2:44-45a.** Daniel then focused on the overthrow of those kingdoms. **The time of those kings** may refer to the four empires or, more likely, it refers to the time of the 10 toes ([v. 42](#)) since **the first four kingdoms were not in existence at the same time as apparently the toes will be** ([cf.](#) comments on the 10 horns of the fourth beast, 7:24). Nebuchadnezzar had seen a **rock** hit and smash the image (2:34). The statue was destroyed by the rock, **not by human hands**. In Scripture a rock often refers to Jesus Christ, Israel’s Messiah ([e.g.](#), Ps. 118:22; Isa. 8:14; 28:16; 1 Peter 2:6-8). God, who had enthroned Nebuchadnezzar and would transfer authority from Babylon to Medo-Persia, then to Greece, and ultimately to Rome, will one day invest political power in a King who will rule over the earth, subduing it to His authority, thus culminating God’s original destiny for man (Gen. 1:27).

In Nebuchadnezzar’s dream the smiting rock became **a mountain** that filled the whole earth (Dan. 2:35). In Scripture a mountain is often a symbol for a kingdom. So Daniel explained that the four empires which would rule over the land and the people of Israel would **not be destroyed by human means, but rather by the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, the striking Stone**. When He comes He will establish the messianic kingdom promised to Israel through David (2 Sam. 7:16). At His return He will subjugate **all . . . kingdoms** to Himself, thus bringing **them to an end** ([cf.](#) Rev. 11:15; 19:11-20). Then He will rule **forever** in the Millennium and in the eternal state.

[v.](#) *verse*

[cf.](#) *confer, compare*

e.g. *exempli gratia*, for example

vv. verses

Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (1:1336). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

**The king's dream explained (2:36–45).** The image represents successive kingdoms to dominate the Middle East, including Judah, until the Messiah comes to set up God's eternal kingdom. The basic prediction is repeated in visions reported in Dan. 7–8 (see chart, Daniel 7-8). For an explanation of why God's kingdom has not yet been established, despite the passing of these ancient kingdoms long ago, see Daniel's prophecy of the 70 weeks (Daniel 9) and the calculations on associated chart (Daniel 10). Richards, L. O. (1991; Published in electronic form by Logos Research Systems, 1996). *The Bible readers companion* (electronic ed.) (514). Wheaton: Victor Books.

**44. in the days of these kings**—in the days of these kingdoms, that is, of the last of the four. So Christianity was set up when Rome had become mistress of Judea and the world (Lu 2:1, &c.) [NEWTON]. Rather, “in the days of these kings,” answers to “upon his feet” (Da 2:34); that is, the ten *toes* (Da 2:42), or ten kings, the final state of the Roman empire. For “these kings” cannot mean the four successional monarchies, as they do not *coexist* as the holders of power; if the fourth had been meant, the *singular*, not the *plural*, would be used. The falling of the stone on the image must mean, *destroying judgment* on the fourth Gentile power, not gradual evangelization of it by grace; and the destroying judgment cannot be dealt by Christians, for they are taught to submit to the powers that be, so that it must be dealt by Christ Himself at His coming again. We live under the divisions of the Roman empire which began fourteen hundred years ago, and which at the time of His coming shall be definitely *ten*. All that had failed in the hand of man shall then pass away, and that which is kept in His own hand shall be introduced. Thus the second chapter is the alphabet of the subsequent prophetic statements in Daniel [TREGELLES].

**God of heaven ... kingdom**—hence the phrase, “the kingdom of heaven” (Mt 3:2).

**not ... left to other people**—as the Chaldees had been forced to leave their kingdom to the Medo-Persians, and these to the Greeks, and these to the Romans (Mic 4:7; Lu 1:32, 33).

**break ... all**—(Is 60:12; 1Co 15:24).

**45. without hands**—(See on Da 2:35).

Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Da 2:44). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

**35. broken ... together**—excluding a contemporaneous existence of the kingdom of the world and the kingdom of God (in its *manifested*, as distinguished from its *spiritual*, phase). The latter is not gradually to wear away the former, but to destroy it at once, and utterly (2Th 1:7–10; 2:8). However, the *Hebrew* may be translated, “in one indiscriminate mass.”

**chaff**—image of the ungodly, as they shall be dealt with in the judgment (Ps 1:4, 5; Mt 3:12).

**summer threshing-floors**—Grain was winnowed in the East on an elevated space in the open air, by throwing the grain into the air with a shovel, so that the wind might clear away the chaff.

**no place ... found for them**—(Rev 20:11; compare Ps 37:10, 36; 103:16).

**became ... mountain**—cut out of the mountain (Da 2:45) originally, it ends in *becoming a mountain*. So the kingdom of God, coming from heaven originally, ends in heaven being established on earth (Rev 21:1–3).

**filled ... earth**—(Is 11:9;

<sup>9</sup> They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

*The Holy Bible : King James Version.* 1995 (electronic ed. of the 1769 edition of the 1611 Authorized

Version.) (Is 11:8-9). Bellingham WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

Hab 2:14).

<sup>14</sup> For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

*The Holy Bible : King James Version.* 1995 (electronic ed. of the 1769 edition of the 1611 Authorized Version.) (Hab 2:14). Bellingham WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

It is to do so in connection with Jerusalem as the mother Church (Ps 80:9; Is 2:2, 3).

### 36. we—Daniel and his three friends.

Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments.* On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Da 2:35). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

In what sense could an event centuries after a particular empire, shatter that empire? Only in the sense of shattering everything that empire represents: the very concept of tyranny, or the very tolerance of tyranny.

This interpretation has often led to the understanding of the *rock* as Christ and its growth as a reference to the advance of the kingdom of God. There may be allusions to this interpretation in Lk. 1:33 and 20:18. **It should, however, also be noted that the stone shatters all of the kingdoms signified by the statue.** In a more general sense, therefore, the message of the vision is that while the kingdoms people build give way to one another in a process of the survival of the fittest, it is the hand of God that ultimately destroys them as he builds his own kingdom, one that will endure.

Carson, D. A. (1994). *New Bible commentary : 21st century edition.* Rev. ed. of: The new Bible commentary. 3rd ed. / edited by D. Guthrie, J.A. Motyer. 1970. (4th ed.) (Da 2:24). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Ill., USA: Inter-Varsity Press.

(2) Of the stone (2:44–45): It represents God’s kingdom, which will someday destroy pagan power. Willmington, H. L. (1999). *The Outline Bible* (Da 2:36-45). Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

Of course, the final “human kingdom” on earth will be that of the Antichrist during the last part of the Tribulation. How will it all end? Christ, the Stone (Matt. 21:44), will **suddenly** appear and smite the nations of the world, setting up His own worldwide kingdom of power and glory.

This image, then, is a picture of world history. You can see that the materials in it decrease in *weight* (from gold to clay) so that the statue is top-heavy and easily pushed over. Men and women think that human civilization is so strong and enduring; really it is resting on brittle feet of clay. Note too that the *value* decreases: from gold to silver to bronze to iron to clay. Is mankind getting “better and better” as time goes on? No! Human civilization is actually getting cheaper and weaker. There is also a decrease in *beauty and glory* (gold is certainly more beautiful than iron mixed with clay); and there is a decrease in *strength* (from gold to clay) as we approach the end of human history.

Each of the successive kingdoms had its own strengths, of course, and Rome exercised a tremendous military power, **but through history civilization will become weaker and weaker. This explains why the Antichrist will be able to organize a worldwide dictatorship: nations will be so weak they will demand a dictator just to be able to survive.**

**Each of these kingdoms had a different form of government. Babylon was ruled by an absolute monarch, a dictator (see 5:19). The Medo-Persian empire had a king, but he worked through princes and established laws (see 6:1–3—and remember the “law of the Medes and the Persians” in Esther 1:19). Greece operated through a king and an army, and Rome was supposed to be a republic, but it was actually a rule of the military through laws. When you come to the iron and clay, you have our present governments: the iron represents law and justice, the clay represents mankind, and together they make up democracy. What is the strength of democracy? Law. What is its weakness? Human nature. We are seeing today that lawlessness comes when human nature**

## **refuses to be bound by God's order and laws.**

This entire picture is not a very optimistic one. Nebuchadnezzar saw that his own kingdom would fall one day and be replaced by the Medes and Persians. This happened in 538 B.C. (Dan. 5:30–31). The Medes and Persians would be conquered by the Greeks about 330 B.C.; and Greece would give way to Rome. **The Roman Empire outwardly would disappear, but its laws, philosophies, and institutions would continue until this very day, taking us down to the “feet of clay.”** The only hope for this world is the return of Christ. When He comes to the earth, it will be to conquer the nations (Rev. 19:11ff) and to establish His own glorious kingdom.

We shall meet these same kingdoms again in chapter 7. There they will be pictured as wild beasts, because that is what God sees when he looks at human history. God is not impressed with gold, silver, and bronze. He sees the human heart, and he knows that the kingdoms of the world are full of violence and sin. From humanity's point of view, earthly kingdoms are like metal—durable and strong; from God's point of view, they are ferocious beasts that must be slain. Daniel had perfect confidence and peace because he knew God's plan for the future. The Christian today who knows God's Word and believes it will also have peace.

Wiersbe, W. W. (1993). *Wiersbe's expository outlines on the Old Testament* (Da 2:1). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Luke 17:<sup>20</sup> And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with<sup>a</sup> observation: <sup>21</sup> Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you<sup>b</sup>.

<sup>a</sup>with....: or, with outward shew

<sup>b</sup>within you: or, among you

*The Holy Bible : King James Version.* 1995 (electronic ed. of the 1769 edition of the 1611 Authorized Version.) (Lk 17:20-21). Bellingham WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

<sup>4</sup> (For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) <sup>5</sup> Casting down imaginations<sup>c</sup>, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

<sup>c</sup>imaginations: or, reasonings

*The Holy Bible : King James Version.* 1995 (electronic ed. of the 1769 edition of the 1611 Authorized Version.) (2 Co 10:3-5). Bellingham WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

Not that the prophecy of the stone, according to this interpretation, has been completely fulfilled. It has grown into a mountain, but it doesn't completely fill the earth, leaving no trace of history's monarchies and dictatorships. But it is close. China is about the last developed nation to have one.

As late as 1776 dictatorships (which monarchies are) were so normal, so respected as the only possible form of government, that even when people revolted under their dictator, it was only to try another one. People were even loyal to their kings, taking pride in their dictators. As Jesus said, people called their kings “benefactors”. Being a king then was more secure than being a Supreme Court judge today! Not only did you get to keep your job no matter how poorly you did it, but you didn't have to wait until you were an old man before you got it (usually), and you got to pass it on to the son of your choice even if he was more of an idiot than you were! And all that while the people you tyrannized, and indeed people all over the world, admired you!

There were stirrings of change, unleashed by the Reformation. John Calvin, and John Robinson who pastored the Separatists (Pilgrims), wrote about the selection of leaders by the people in the New

Testament Church. But it was all theoretical. Untested in government. The Netherlands and England had dabbled in letting people vote, but it had never been given to more than a few percent of the population.

Even a century ago, before World War I, American military strength had never been projected much beyond its borders, so it was still seen as somewhat experimental as a stable political system, although America had taken in many immigrants seeking freedom and opportunity. But after World War I admiration for perpetual dictators fell. American strength, projected around the world, had passed its test with flying colors. President Woodrow Wilson even entered the war with the stated goal of breaking the stalemate and then being in a position of strength to broker peace in a way that encourages "self determination" in all countries. (According to an autobiography by the later President Hoover, whom Wilson put in charge of relief for Germans devastated by the terms of the treaty imposed by France and England.)

Now, only a century later, England's monarchy still has all the respect and much of the wealth but no political power. Only a couple of lifetime-tenured genuine kings remain in the whole world: in the Moslem nations Jordan and Syria. Maybe we should count North Korea although Kim Jong Ill doesn't call himself a king, but merely God. Most of the remaining dictators have little job security, and so little worldwide respect that they find the need to pretend to be elected presidents.

Now dictatorships are associated with third world, undeveloped, half-civilized nations which are economic messes. Other than the oil-rich Moslem dictatorships, the rest are typically taking orders from the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank because of their huge debts.

Commentators say the prophecy of the Stone hasn't yet begun to be fulfilled, even though the Scripture says the stone will grow during the reigns of all four world kingdoms, beginning back in 500 BC. Certainly when Jesus returns and takes the helm of world government, this stone will display a glory we do not see yet! But the idea that Jesus will slam bang impose His heavenly government upon unprepared, unwilling people simply is not God's style.

God refrained from taking the helm of Israel until Moses had conducted a series of votes. Several times, the people unanimously voted for God to be their ruler. There is no reason to imagine that will not be God's pattern when Jesus comes again. Which would explain why Jesus rejected Satan's offer of "all the kingdoms of the world" and rejected the people's desire for Him to be their dictator, 2,000 years ago, before the people of the world wanted freedom.

God has never been interested in being a dictator, micromanaging disputes and laws. He delegated authority to a system of elected judges under Moses, and will delegate authority to the saints in the Millenial Kingdom to saints, who will be elected according to much Biblical evidence in the next few pages.

It would be simplistic to say America *is* the Stone of Daniel 2.

America's freedom, not her wickedness, is the latest flowering of the Stone. But it is not only political freedom, as if the stone never existed before freedom flowered in government. Way before Christianity became the majority, even before Jesus came the first time, the Stone was growing in the hearts of God's people learning how to interact with one another in free relationships with freedom of speech and cooperation without lording it over one another. Jesus came and sprayed churches all over the world in which people lived free, even practicing self government (1 Corinthians 6). Human tyrants sensed the threat and tried to stamp it out but had about as much success as a man kicking roses barefoot.

With that introduction, let's consider the Stone of Daniel 2. God prophesies victory for this stone! God prophesies that a stone cut from a mountain, without hands, will grow, and roll down and displace a world history full of tyranny.

What would displace tyranny, that would be different than tyranny? Wouldn't it have to be as different from tyranny as, say, a Republic?

Wouldn't something that +

displaces all previous political systems, have to have some political structure? Verse 44 says the stone grows “in the days of those kings”. Doesn’t that mean, starting with the days of Nebuchadnezzar?

That is the impression I get of the common view of what Jesus’ reign will be like, for 1,000 years after the Antichrist is defeated. That seems to be the common interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream. All earthly tyrannies will be crushed by force, by the sword of Jesus’ mouth! The “sword” of truth, the Word of God, Ephesians 6:17, will devolve into a mere sword of steel in Jesus’ mouth (Revelation 19:21) as Jesus rules by slaughter! “Every knee shall bow” to Jesus (Isaiah 45:23, Romans 14:11) is because angels will be standing over the wicked pushing them down to their knees by force!

One problem with that interpretation is that Daniel’s “stone cut not with hands” does not slam down out of Heaven in a moment, but grows over a period of time. Given that the time frame of the rest of the dream covers nearly 3,000 years, the time of the growth of this stone would appear to be several centuries.

That would seem to limit the interpretation of the stone to something God created several centuries ago. Like Christianity.

But in order for the Stone to displace the world’s political systems, it would appear to require some political structure. But a political structure whose essence is Christianity. Does such a system exist today?

Is the essence of Freedom, as we know it today, Christianity? f

upon this stone I will build my church

Although not spelled out in such unflattering details, that seems to be the popular concept of Jesus’ millennial reign!

Let’s explore an alternative interpretation. What if the “stone” which displaces a world history full of tyranny does so because it is different than tyranny?

We could say it represents Christianity, and it does; but not just the simplistic “Romans Road” tract, a “salvation prayer”, and then go live like the devil because your Ticket to Heaven is already stamped.

If it replaces political systems, it must be, itself, a political system.

If it displaces tyrannical political systems, it must be a free Republican (the U.S. is a Republic, not a Democracy in any strict sense) political system.

The United States is such a political system. It is today’s epitome of

What displaces tyranny? Freedom.

Consider the theologies of freedom only in the Bible: (1) *all* human life is sacred, created in the Image of God, Gen 1:27!

*Genesis 1:27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.*

(2) God’s Heroes of Faith, Hebrews 11, included ordinary praying civilians, James 5:17, who gave their lives criticizing their governments - inspiring our First Amendment Freedom of Speech!

*Hebrews 11:4 By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh. ...23 By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment. 24 By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; 25 Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; 26 Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward. 27 By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. ...31 By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace. 32 And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: 33 Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, 34 Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. 35 Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: 36 And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: 37 They were stoned, they were sawn asunder; were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; 38 (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.*

(3) The Bible condemns slavery as we know it, making the stealing of a man a capital offense, Deut 24:7; *Deuteronomy 24:7 If a man be found stealing any of his brethren of the children of Israel, and maketh merchandise of him, or selleth him; then that thief shall die; and thou shalt put evil away from among you.*

capping contracts to repay debt by servitude at 6 years, Deut 15:18;

*Deuteronomy 15:18 It shall not seem hard unto thee, when thou sendest him away free from thee; for he hath been worth a double hired servant to thee, in serving thee six years: and the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all that thou doest.*

and not allowing harsh physical treatment, Ex 21:26.

*Exodus 21:26 And if a man smite the eye of his servant, or the eye of his maid, that it perish; he shall let him go free for his eye's sake.*

Philemon, a book of the New Testament, is a plea for a Christian to free his slave.

*Philemon 1:1 Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy our brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellowlabourer; 2 And to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellowsoldier, and to the church in thy house: 3 Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 4 I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers, 5 Hearing of thy love and faith, which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints; 6 That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus. 7 For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother. 8 Wherefore, though I might be much bold in Christ to enjoin thee that which is convenient, 9 Yet for love's sake I rather beseech thee, being such an one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ. 10 I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds: 11 Which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me: 12 Whom I have sent again: thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own bowels: 13 Whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel: 14 But without thy mind would I do nothing; that thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly. 15 For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him for ever; 16 Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh, and in the Lord? 17 If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself. 18 If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account; 19 I Paul have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it: albeit I do not say*

to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides. 20 Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord: refresh my bowels in the Lord. 21 Having confidence in thy obedience I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt also do more than I say. 22 But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you. 23 There salute thee Epaphras, my fellowprisoner in Christ Jesus; 24 Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellowlabourers. 25 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Written from Rome to Philemon, by Onesimus a servant.

1 Cor 7:21-22 urges servants to become free if they can.

*1 Corinthians 7:21 Art thou called being a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather. 22 For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant. 23 Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men.*

Col 3:11 topples theologies of inferiority with U.S. civil rights law in a sentence: “*there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.*”

God’s Stone has slowly spread, building hospitals and schools, preserving libraries, mitigating really barbaric cultures, and purifying itself along the way until Bible study dared the Pilgrims to create a government in which *all* participated in elections, with freedom of speech to discuss their corporate vision without coercion to agree with their leaders! Their Freedom spread across the U.S., whose light began toppling Earth’s tyrannies!

What will that alternative to tyranny be? Will it be Jesus, ruling as a tyrant? Ruling by force? That seems to be the common interpretation! But is that God’s style?

But if not just another tyranny, then what? How about, freedom?

Before you can believe that prophecy describes a Republic which is epitomized, so far, by America, we need to show a few other facts which have been forgotten by most Christians today:

\* The Republic we enjoy, including a vote for all adults, and freedom of speech to criticize both church and state, was the system Moses established for Israel;

\* The same freedoms were established for the New Testament churches, where Christians voted for their pastors, and had freedom to correct or criticize them during services. Their community was also an economic system and a civil government, resolving its own disputes with its own courts, creating the DNA of our Republic;

\* The same system of church and civil government was copied by the Separatists (Pilgrims) from Scripture and modeled at Plimoth, Massachusetts from 1620 to 1692 when the English king forced Plimoth to merge their government with the Puritans. However, the freedom recreated by the Pilgrims spread across America, and from there across the world!

\* Jesus instituted a new kind of “authority” through serving, instead of dictating;

\* Jesus was offered “the kingdoms of the world”

Then

Wilmington’s Bible Handbook says the “stone” represents Jesus Christ.

Matthew Henry says “Perhaps” the stone means “the abolishing of idolatry out of the world in due time” since the entire statue looks like an idol (although a very strange one).

2. The stone *cut out without hands* represented the kingdom of Jesus Christ, which should be set up in the world in the time of the Roman empire, and upon the ruins of Satan’s kingdom in the *kingdoms of the world*. This is the *stone cut out of the mountain without hands*,

for it should be neither raised nor supported by human power or policy; no visible hand should act in the setting of it up, but it should be done invisibly the *Spirit of the Lord of hosts*. This was *the stone which the builders refused*, because it was not cut out by their hands, but it has now become the *head-stone of the corner*. (1.) The gospel-church is a kingdom, which Christ is the sole and sovereign monarch of, in which he rules by his word and Spirit, to which he gives protection and law, and from which he receives homage and tribute. It is a kingdom *not of this world*, and yet set up in it; it is the kingdom of God among men. (2.) The *God of heaven* was to set up this kingdom, to give authority to Christ to execute judgment, to set him as *King upon his holy hill of Zion*, and to bring into obedience to him a willing people. Being set up by the God of heaven, it is often in the *New Testament* called the *kingdom of heaven*, for its original is from above and its tendency is upwards. (3.) It was to be set up in *the days of these kings*, the kings of the fourth monarchy, of which particular notice is taken (Lu. 2:1). That Christ was born when, by the decree of the emperor of Rome, *all the world was taxed*, which was a plain indication that that empire had become as universal as any earthly empire ever was. When these kings are contesting with each other, and in all the struggles each of the contending parties hopes to find its own account, God will do his own work and fulfil his own counsels. *These kings* are all enemies to Christ's kingdom, and yet it shall be set up in defiance of them. (4.) It is a kingdom that knows no decay, is in no danger of destruction, and will not admit any succession or revolution. It shall *never be destroyed* by any foreign force invading it, as many other kingdoms are; fire and sword cannot waste it; the combined powers of earth and hell cannot deprive either the subjects of their prince or the prince of his subjects; nor shall this *kingdom be left to other people*, as the kingdoms of the earth are. As Christ is a monarch that has no successor (for he himself shall reign for ever), so his kingdom is a monarchy that has no revolution. The kingdom of God was indeed taken from the Jews and given to the Gentiles (Mt. 21:43), but still it was Christianity that ruled, the kingdom of the Messiah. The Christian church is still the same; it is fixed on a rock, much fought against, but never to be prevailed against, by the gates of hell. (5.) It is a kingdom that shall be victorious over all opposition. It shall *break in pieces and consume all those kingdoms*, as the *stone cut out of the mountain without hands* broke in pieces the image, v. 44, 45. The kingdom of Christ shall *wear out* all other kingdoms, shall outlive them, and flourish when they are sunk with their own weight, and so wasted that their place *knows them no more*. All the kingdoms that appear against the kingdom of Christ shall be broken with a *rod of iron*, as a *potter's vessel*, Ps. 2:9. And in the kingdoms that submit to the kingdom of Christ tyranny, and idolatry, and every thing that is their reproach, shall, as far as the gospel of Christ gets ground, be broken. The day is coming when Jesus Christ shall have *put down all rule, principality, and power*, and have made *all his enemies his footstool*; and then this prophecy will have its full accomplishment, and not till then, 1 Co. 15:24, 25. Our savior seems to refer to this (Mt. 21:44), when, speaking of himself as the *stone set at nought by the Jewish builders*, he says, *On whomsoever this stone shall fall, it will grind him to powder*. (6.) It shall be an everlasting kingdom. Those kingdoms of the earth that had *broken in pieces* all about them at length came, in their turn, to be in like manner broken; but the kingdom of Christ shall break other kingdoms in pieces and shall itself *stand for ever*. His throne shall be as the days of heaven, his seed, his subjects, as the stars of heaven, not only so innumerable, but so immutable. Of the *increase of Christ's government and peace* there shall be *no end*. *The Lord shall reign for ever*, not only to the end of time, but when time and days shall be no more, and God shall be *all in all* to eternity. Henry, M. (1996, c1991). *Matthew Henry's commentary on the whole Bible : Complete and unabridged in one volume* (Da 2:31). Peabody: Hendrickson.

The “rock” (2:45) image is used often in the Old Testament to refer to the Messiah (cf. Ps. 118:22; Isa. 28:16; Zech. 3:9). It becomes one of the most important figures used for Christ throughout the New Testament (cf. Matt. 21:42; Acts 4:11; Rom. 9:33; 1 Pet. 2:6–8).

Hughes, R. B., & Laney, J. C. (2001). *Tyndale concise Bible commentary*. Rev. ed. of: New Bible companion. 1990.; Includes index. The Tyndale reference library (316). Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

Assumption: that the growth of this stone will be during a single generation.