



CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF GOD NEWSLETTER

Volume 20, Issue 6 July/Aug 2012

Hello Brethren,

Having just celebrated Independence Day, America's 236th birthday, we are reminded of the incredible gift of freedom and exceptionalism bestowed upon us by our Maker. As I shared with the Amarillo congregation in my Independence Day sermon, we have no guarantee that the freedoms we enjoy will continue endlessly. How long can America turn it's back on the God who made us great and expect His continued blessings?

Raging wildfires, sometimes a 100 foot tall walls of fire, have wreaked havoc and devastation in Colorado, New Mexico, Montana, Wyoming and Utah this summer. Thousands of acres scorched, hundreds of homes and businesses reduced to ashes (including the famous Flying W Ranch so many of us enjoyed while at the Festival of Tabernacles in Colorado Springs) and loss of life have been the costly toll of these devastating fires.

I find in the raging wildfires a lesson to be learned about the spiritual state of our nation, for in scripture we find wickedness compared to fire and it's a powerful analogy. Isaiah used just such a comparison. Look at Isa. 9:18-20, NKJV:

*18 For wickedness burns as the fire; It shall devour the briers and thorns,
And kindle in the thickets of the forest; They shall mount up like rising smoke.*

19 Through the wrath of the Lord of hosts The land is burned up,

And the people shall be as fuel for the fire; No man shall spare his brother.

*20 And he shall snatch on the right hand And be hungry;
He shall devour on the left hand And not be satisfied;*

Every man shall eat the flesh of his own arm.

America is losing it's way, morally adrift, blown about by the winds of immorality and an acquiescence to sin. The wildfires of wickedness are burning across America, threatening our homes, our independence and our way of life. How long can this continue? If we stay on our present course, what is our destiny?

Back to the prophet Isaiah. He had witnessed the corruption and degradation of the Israelite people. He had seen evil sink her teeth into this great people. As he witnessed her downfall he described what he saw as raging fire. I believe that the same fires which destroyed Israel may well be flickering in America. Scripture was inspired by God, not merely for info, but for guidance and warning; so let's dig into God's word and learn from history lest we be destined to repeat it. I want to share something I read about four conditions that were present when God judged the nation of Israel. These ignited the fires of judgment in Israel.

The first condition Isaiah identified was a people filled with pride.

Isa 9:9-10 *All the people will know — Ephraim and the inhabitant of Samaria — Who say in pride and arrogance of heart: 10 'The bricks have fallen down, But we will rebuild with hewn stones; The sycamores are cut down, But we will replace them with cedars.*

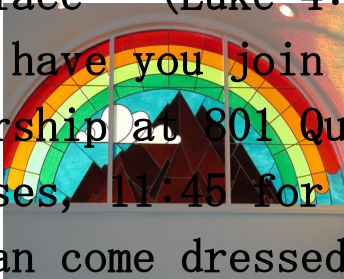
God was sending judgment on the Israelite people for their two mistakes. First, they ignored the cause of the calamities. Second, they arrogantly boasted that they would rebuild, acting as if they thought they did not need God.

"Pride goeth before destruction,

|CONT PG 6>

Jesus: “My house was designated a house of prayer for the nations”₂ (Mark 11:17, MSG). / “[Jesus] came to Nazareth where he had been reared. As he always did on the Sabbath, he went to the meeting place” (Luke 4:16, MSG).

We would love to have you join us each Saturday for study and worship at 801 Quail Creek Drive – 11 a.m. for classes, 11:45 for singing and preaching. You can come dressed to the ‘nines’ or more casual if you choose. What we really like to see is a spirit of friendliness, an attitude of sincerity, and a willingness to ‘search the



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EMAIL:
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OUR SERMONS BROADCAST
ON
KGRO RADIO 9:05 AM
SUNDAY.



Prayer Requests

3



“ . . . The prayer of faith shall save the sick and the Lord shall raise him up; . . . Pray for one another that you may be healed.”
— James 5:15-16.



IF YOU HAVE UPDATES OR NEW REQUESTS PLEASE INFORM THE EDITOR. jerrydalemc@sbcglobal.net

Amber & Dylan Clark: Grandchildren of Betty Clark, cerebral palsy.

Betty Clark: Dealing with pulmonary & heart difficulties.

Vickie Crevoi: Sister of Linda Booth, Chronic Progressive MS. She is hospitalized for extensive rehabilitation.

Mary Jo Flatt: James Bailey's sister. She is still undergoing treatment for bladder cancer and is dealing with the side effects of the procedures.

Velvet Green: Suffers from schizophrenia and is having a hard time right now.

Joe Kirkpatrick: Underwent surgery to remove a number of bladder tumors and has completed chemo treatments.

Vanessa Lawrence: Has been suffering from a painful episode of gout.

Anna Law: In need of a kidney transplant; she has dialysis three times a week. Her condition has worsened and she is in a very weakened and frail state.

Keith McAlister: Weldon's brother underwent surgery for colon cancer. He is improving and full recovery is expected.

Dollie Meil: She suffers with cerebral palsy and lung problems. Has been moved to Grace House Bldg. 3 Room 3, 6502 4th Street, Lubbock, TX 79416

Ted Rankin: MS; he is trying alternative treatments.

Ben Vorhries: has RETURNED from his second deployment to Afghanistan. PRAISE GOD!!!

Angela Kirkland had a malignant tumor removed and will be undergoing chemo and radiation treatments

Birthdays:

J.R. Hamilton	7-03
Teresa Cryer	7-10
Jo Beth Vines	7-10
Shannon Stephens	7-16
Julie Ford	7-23
Gary Green	7-27

Anniversaries:

Mr. & Mrs. Gary Green	7-07
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Celebrations

Birthdays:

Reba Bailey	8-10
Ken Hamilton	8-09
Savannah Sellers	8-18

Anniversaries:

Candace & James Sellers	8-15
Trish & Ken Hamilton	8-15
Jody & Joe Kirkpatrick	8-15
Jerry & Martha McClenagan	8-26

I Hear America Singing

Walt Whitman (from *Leaves of Grass*, first published in the 1867 edition)

I hear America singing, the varied carols I hear;
Those of mechanics—each one singing his, as it should be, blithe and strong;
The carpenter singing his, as he measures his plank or beam,
The mason singing his, as he makes ready for work, or leaves off work;
The boatman singing what belongs to him in his boat—the deckhand singing on the steam-
boat deck;
The shoemaker singing as he sits on his bench—the hatter singing as he stands;
The wood-cutter's song—the ploughboy's, on his way in the morning, or at the noon inter-
mission, or at sundown;
The delicious singing of the mother—or of the young wife at work—or of the girl sewing or
washing—
Each singing what belongs to her, and to none else;
The day what belongs to the day—
At night, the party of young fellows, robust, friendly,
Singing, with open mouths, their strong melodious songs.



Happy
Independence
Day!

Chuckles

5

A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a broken spirit saps a person's strength. ~ Prov 17:22 (NLT)



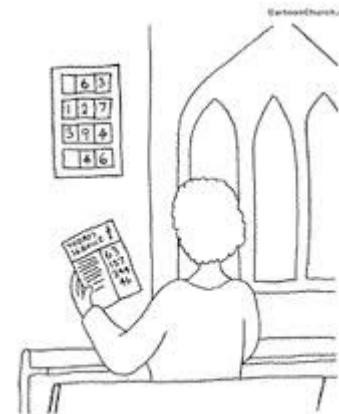
"Is it worth a buck for some refreshing new insights on the vow of poverty?"



"Remember son, tonight we're playing legalists. There is no mercy rule."



"Forgive us our debts as we forgive those who call to harass us about our debts..."



SHE COULD HARDLY BELIEVE SHE HAD WON ON HER FIRST VISIT TO CHURCH



Financial Funnies #166 © www.kluth.org/cartoons.htm

and a haughty spirit before a fall" (Prov. 16:18). We take too much credit for the blessings of God that have made our country exceptional, ignoring the source of our country's greatness.

Abraham Lincoln had this to say almost 150 years ago. *"We've grown in numbers and wealth and power as no other nation has grown...We've vainly imagined in the deceitfulness of our own 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..., too proud to pray to the God that made us."*

A second condition was internal confusion. Look at verse 16 of Isaiah 9:
"For those who guide this people are leading them astray; And those who are guided by them are brought to confusion." (NASV)

There was poor leadership from their national leaders that resulted in confusion and anarchy among the people. Dr. James Dobson has said *"We are involved in nothing less than a civil war of values---a collision between two ways of seeing life. This is not an issue of two alternatives from which to choose, but a life and death struggle. One value system is going to predominate. One is going to rule the country."*

Ignoring warning signs constituted a third condition. When fire danger is high for a forest fire or wildfire, our forestry local officials will issue warnings concerning the fire danger. They will discourage people from burning trash, building camp fires and invoke fire bans. When people neglect the warnings and build fires in dangerous conditions, they are flirting with danger.

Look at verse 13. *"For the people do not turn to Him who strikes them, Nor do they seek the Lord of hosts."* We have gotten to the place where we, especially our leaders, do not heed the warnings of God's judgment. Luke 21:34 (NKJV), *"But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. 35 For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. 36 Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man."*

A fourth condition was a progressive worsening of wickedness. Notice verse 18.

"For wickedness burns as the fire; It shall devour the briers and thorns, And kindle in the thickets of the forest; They shall mount up like rising smoke". (NKJV)

Marriage is under attack as an institution. Man is redefining what, from creation, was holy matrimony between a man and a woman. More and more Americans denigrate the sacred institution by choosing to just live together. And the rapid rise of easy "faultless" divorces are making marriage a sham. God's Word is ridiculed in the name of pluralism. Other gods are worshipped and we call it multiculturalism. Morality is laughed at and sexual perversion is presented as an "alternate lifestyle". The helpless unborn are killed and we call it "choice". God is evicted and man has become an authority to himself.

We can get involved in reshaping our nation. Richard Hogue said it better than I can.

"If our country survives---and I realize that's a big IF---it will be because there is an awakening in the lives of committed Christians across our nation who finally begin to realize that it is not only their opportunity but also their absolute responsibility to (be intricately) get involved in the political process of our country and to use that involvement to turn this nation once again to the Lord. For much too long we have allowed our government to grow father and farther away from the direction that God has always demanded our nation take. At the same time we have yielded the control of our country to a godless, secular, humanistic philosophy that has absolutely sapped the strength and spiritual vitality America has always had. Never before, in the history of Christendom, have so many believers been willing to forfeit their liberty and freedom without even putting up a struggle."

Let us work for and pray for the healing and restoration of our country so that once again ours will be one nation under God, indivisible with liberty and justice for all! This should be our prayer.

Ps 85:4 (KJV), *"Turn us, O God of our salvation, and cause thine anger toward us to cease. 5 Wilt thou be angry with us for ever? wilt thou draw out thine anger to all generations? 6 Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee? 7 Shew us thy mercy, O LORD, and grant us thy salvation."*

In His Service,
Jeff Booth

A MORAL COMPASS

7

Directional Principles for Right Living

Give me your lantern and compass, give me a map, so I can find my way to the sacred mountain. (Psalm 43:3, MSG) O people, the LORD has told you what is good, and this is what he requires of you: to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God. (Micah 6:8, NLT)

As we celebrate Independence Day our thoughts turn to freedom in every sense. A major aspect of our freedom is Religion. Much has been written about what our Founding Fathers believed and said, and though there was often a lack of basic faith in Jesus Christ, there was certainly a moral foundation in their expressed thoughts.

When our freedoms are threatened we look back on our forefathers with appreciation for their foresight and direction. Even with their imperfections they showed great wisdom. One can show wisdom without being 'religious.' But we certainly don't like wise advice if spoken with arrogance. Paul put it well: "Be not wise in your own conceits" (Rom. 12:16c).

Job speaks to this in his answer to Zophar:

² "I'm sure you speak for all the experts, and when you die there'll be no one left to tell us how to live. ³ But don't forget that I also have a brain—I don't intend to play second fiddle to you. It doesn't take an expert to know these things. ⁴ "I'm ridiculed by my friends: 'So that's the man who had conversations with the man who never did wrong!' their fingers in blame, for the glers. ⁶ Crooks reside safely in ers live in luxury; they've them. ⁷ "But ask the animals the birds tell you what's going the basics. Listen—the fish in ⁹ Isn't it clear that they all that he holds all things in his breathing creature? ¹¹ Isn't this the sense of taste? ¹² Do you dom, that you have to grow old before you understand life? “ (Job 12:2-12, MSG).



All mankind will one day acknowledge the Source of all true Wisdom. Job continues: ¹³ "True wisdom and real power belong to God; from him we learn how to live, and also what to live for. . . ¹⁶ Strength and success belong to God; both deceived and deceiver must answer to him. (Job 12:13,16, MSG)

Our Creator God provides the best Moral Compass for life: "There's nothing like the written Word of God for showing you the way to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ Every part of Scripture is God-breathed and useful one way or another—showing us truth, exposing our rebellion, correcting our mistakes, training us to live God's way" (2 Tim 3:15-16, MSG).



Wings of Freedom

The gift of freedom, is what one seeks,
To search the lands, the seas, the skies.
Just for this gift longed by all.
The gift of Wings to fly and soar.

Worlds are combined once again.
United at last, for the gift of Freedom.
Wanting to taste this gift,
One may die, . . . or even kill.

Only when voices are unanimous,
Only when worlds are united,
Only when humans no longer envy,
Only then will we truly procure the Wings of Freedom.
by Sora Power Keeper

Dr. Ben Carson, renowned surgeon, appeared on Fox & Friends July 4, 2012, talking about his new book, *America the Beautiful: Rediscovering What Made America Great*. He said, “The Bible says, ‘ without a vision the people



Heartbeats

Editorial
Jerry McClenagan

Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life. Prov 4:23 (NIV)

My most memorable July 4th was as a teenager when I, with my father and older brother, placed firecrackers under tin cans and lit them. That was the year I lost my hearing from a firecracker that spun through the air and detonated next to my right ear ("bombs bursting in air").

Fun turned to tragedy.

There was no fun involved in 1775 when people in New England began fighting the British for their independence. On July 2, 1776, the Congress secretly voted for independence from Great Britain. The Declaration of Independence was first published two days later on July 4, 1776. The first public reading of the Declaration of Independence was on July 8, 1776. Delegates began to sign the Declaration of Independence on August 2, 1776. In 1870, Independence Day was made an unpaid holiday for federal employees. In 1941, it became a paid holiday for them.

The first description of how Independence Day would be celebrated was in a letter from John Adams to his wife Abigail on July 3, 1776. He described "pomp and parade, with shows, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires, and illuminations" throughout the United States. However, the term "Independence Day" was not used until 1791.

Interestingly, Thomas Jefferson and John Adams, both signers of the Declaration of Independence and presidents of the United States, died on July 4, 1826 - exactly 50 years after the adoption of the declaration.

As we look back to that July 236 years ago,

the question remains, What have we done with that freedom?

Many good things have resulted. But sadness accompanies our joy when we see that freedom challenged in new ways as the decades rush by. How shall we respond? [The answer is given in The Pastor's Pen beginning on page 1.]

The words of Psalms 33:12b stand out as our hope: "Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD." To neglect this is to turn fun into tragedy.

And Proverbs 14:34 states that "Righteousness exalts a nation, But sin is a reproach to *any* people." Or, as Peterson puts it: "God-devotion makes a country strong; God-avoidance leaves people weak."

I pray, as I know you do, that we will see America stronger. This can only happen when our hearts are turned Godward.

May God bless America!





Wars & Freedom

10

WARS HAVE BEEN FOUGHT for centuries with the goal of achieving freedom. And there is a spiritual warfare ongoing with the same goal.

“Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. ¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. ¹⁴ Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵ and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; ¹⁶ above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. ¹⁷ And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; ¹⁸ praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, ...” Ephesians 6:11-18 (NKJV)

Be strong with the Lord’s mighty power, verse 10 tells us. Without strength from God we are not able to win this war. God’s strength and power are imperative if we are to overcome.

God not only empowers his people, Paul says, but expects us to **put on all of God’s armor** (which is also dubbed the “armor of light” in Romans 13:12). The *panoplia*, or full armor, means complete equipment, head-to-toe protection, both defensively and offensively. This gear was for hand-to-hand combat.

Paul wrote this letter while chained to a Roman soldier. His metaphor shows us how to **stand firm against all strategies and tricks of the Devil**. The Devil rules the world of darkness, the kingdom opposed to God. “Stand against” was a military term meaning to resist the enemy, hold the position, and offer no surrender. The Devil will not fight fair; he uses subtle tricks and schemes. Our ability to stand firm depends on our use of the armor.

Christians are **fighting** against evil—describing hand-to-hand combat. But we are not in an earthly military campaign—our battle is not **against people made of flesh and blood**. Instead, we battle the demons over whom Satan has control. Demons work to tempt people to sin. They were not created by Satan because God is the Creator of all. Rather, the demons are fallen angels who joined Satan in his rebellion and thus became perverted and evil. The descriptive words reveal the characteristics of these enemies as well as their sphere of operations. **Rulers** and **authorities** are cosmic powers, or demons. These spiritual beings have limited power. They are invisible to us, operating in **the unseen world**. The **mighty powers** refers to those spiritual powers who aspire to world control. They are evil (of the **darkness**) and they currently **rule this world**. The **wicked spirits in the heavenly realms** refers to the demons’ dwellings, planets and stars, from which the demons control the lives of people. Paul used the names of groups of evil powers not so much to establish classes or distinguish demonic powers as to show the full extent of Satan’s warfare.

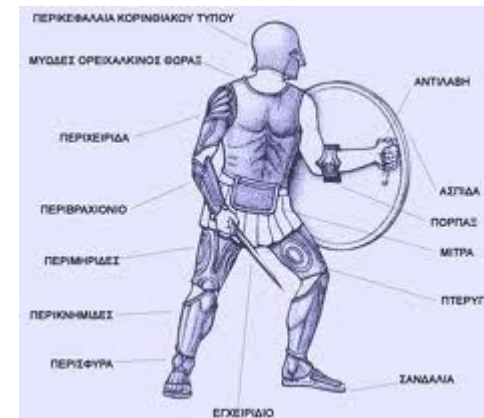
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[cont. from pg. 10]

Here is a host of spiritual forces arrayed against us, requiring us to use God's full armor. These are real and powerful beings, not mere fantasies. Believers must not underestimate them. The Ephesians had practiced magic and witchcraft, so they were well aware of the power of the darkness. We face a powerful army whose goal is to defeat Christ's church. When we believe in Christ, the satanic beings become our enemies, and they try every device to turn us away from him and back to sin. Although believers are assured of victory, we must engage in the struggle until Christ returns because Satan constantly battles against all who are on God's side.

Believers' response to the reality of this warfare should be to **use every piece of God's armor**. The armor is available, but the believer-soldier must use it. We would be neglectful to do otherwise, for the battle is real, and we are Satan's targets. Only with the armor will believers be able to be **standing firm**, a word describing standing against great opposition; indeed, it would be impossible to stand on our strength alone. Christian soldiers must be able to hold their ground and not flee or surrender under Satan's attacks. **The time of evil** refers to the hours of trial that have within themselves the seeds of the last and greatest trial. Christians must be prepared for every day's conflicts with the forces of evil.

—Taken primarily from Life Application Concise NT Com.





Christian Church of God

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