



A NATION DIVIDED



Let us be ready...



... "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand."

—Jesus Christ (Matthew 12:25)

If anyone should be aware of what is happening on the present political scene, it should be those who read the UPLOOK, since we have already discovered America in prophecy, and explored its projections.* Nevertheless, living prophecy out is often more traumatic than simply studying the matter

In the past, when watching persons become elected with views seeming the opposite of our own—most have simply adjusted to the fact that the nation will move on, while others celebrate. Even when underlying principles that “made America great” seem violated, the One who makes anything great (indeed, Who makes everything truly *possible*) yet reigns above and beyond the affairs of men. As the saying goes, “Your arms are too short to box with God.” He is above our transitory problems and, even when issues would seem to terminate life, itself—they often seem smaller, when deferring to what the Greater One has done for us, on the Cross.

Yet many no longer see life in this way, and it had

not occurred to me that persons working so hard to secularize everything our country now does: our manner of educating our children, for example, so that they no longer feel comfortable with our young declaring a dependence upon God. (“One nation, under God, with liberty”) —and therefore erupt in disgust at the prospect of a rollback: a revisiting of our nation’s founding principles . . . while many who call ourselves Christians, simply take this wonderful land very much for granted: not realizing that faith cannot exist within a vacuum, nor light shine without displacing the Night; for true Christian faith must *always* push against the darkness. It is not just the “gay agenda” or abortion that is at issue: but the very concept of life and truth itself that is now in question

* See <http://www.maranatha-min.net/TheUPLOOK/Uplook2016-9-web.pdf>

(continued . . .)

(remember Jesus, before the governor Pilate, being asked, "What is truth?"—before crucifying Him. As with our national school system repeatedly insinuating, "There is *no* absolute truth: no true God, is there? —All must be *relative*: inconsequential: therefore shut up the faithful. We will muddle through, somehow, in spite of "the Man Upstairs," they may reason. He understands. We need not commit ourselves . . . to *Him*.)

Even our politicians seem to be loosing their grip: I can remember when things were slipping in a prior election, wherein the governor running against that President was quizzed on the greatest existential threat to our land—and he responded that Russia was our greatest geopolitical threat, and was practically laughed off the stage.¹ We had, after all, just seen the fall of the Berlin wall several years before. We had actually *cooperated* once more, with Russia, in an international conflict (Operation Desert Storm) and we were hopefully disarming each other for a Nuclear Free World. Our international voice ("The Voice of America") would no longer have to negate the "fake news" outlets of enslaved peoples living behind the iron curtain of Communism. Communism, we believed, was dead.

The world was safe.

Therefore truth no longer had to be broadcast "over the wall" (or curtain) to inform citizens of foreign countries of what Truth is. They had embraced it, themselves . . . until this last election when the information came in reverse order, and Russia began assisting us in realizing that something was amiss within *our own* house (perhaps?) by aiding in the release of emails unveiling corruption within *our* halls of government. Now, it seems, those across the aisle have forgotten the "friendship" earlier proposed.

We care not (or perhaps, too much?) what the big bad Bear thinks: how advanced her weaponry is, or antiquated our sleepy nukes have been, creaking in our silos. No, we will build bigger and better ones, and . . . make America great, again. Maybe.

Is it only a new leader (an "outsider") that is needed to make America great, again? Or happy, united, and free? If that be our feeling, recent events have only exposed a huge festering sore, at our nation's core! Yes, our core values are being compromised, and the Christian community must help us find our "soul" again: first, by considering the world's #1 true Outsider [first article]. Then we will be ready to truly apply what founder of Christianity came to earth to give us, by personal application, through a life of repentance that clears ourselves before the living God. [Why Repent?? — second article]



⁹ Then Jesus said to them, "I will ask you one thing: Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy?"¹⁰ And . . . He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he did so, and his hand was restored as whole as the other.¹¹ But they were filled with rage,

Luke 6:9-11

IF ever there ever were an outsider skilled in addressing the powers that be, it was Jesus. True, Rome hardly took notice, but the underworld from which the channels of earthly power flowed knew their Enemy, and it was embodied in the Christ. For His part, Jesus knew what His weapons were to be as He modeled the consummate *Outsider* for all who would affect the world for good, forever (Eternity): He marshaled the power of prayer into a weapons grade quality, and launched His ministry without apology.

THE “OUTSIDER”

As we now enter the arena, and observe a man with a withered hand. We know not what occasioned his malady, or if he was born in this way. We do know, however, that it was his *right* hand: the hand with which he might sustain a livelihood, or (within some cultures) the one given as an indication of solemn agreement. Our left hand may bear a wedding ring, for example, but the enforcement of agreements is made with the right (through gainful employment).

There were times when Jesus seemed to go out of His way to accommodate those in need of such assistance, being slow to anger while exhibiting great understanding, and tolerance. Although often reprimanding the religious leaders of His day yet, when Nicodemus approached Him in the night hours to avoid detection by the others; afraid to fully associate with this young Rabbi about whom the crowds were swirling—Jesus yet took the time to explain what a true disciple is, in careful terms not given to any other: terms so descriptive that the most famous verse in all the Bible is found encapsulated in that very personal discussion (John 3:16).

Although living a perfect life, the powers that be still found their reasons to resist, abuse, and eventually crucify Him. Jesus was blowing the whistle on the System, and instead of those holding the reins of power re-evaluating their approach to God, or of their way of doing business in Israel, they chose to make use of that very system to punish this whistle blower.

This is not to say that “tearing up the system” is, in and of itself, something to be desired. As Jesus Himself answered the leaders of His day (in a response many wish He had never uttered) “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and to God the things that are God’s” (Matt. 12:21). Scripture does not promote disrespect for the authorities (~“Render to all their honor” Rom. 13:7), resisting lawful authority, or even the abolishing of capital punishment—for the government “bears not the sword in vain” (Rom. 13:4). In fact, it is interesting to note that when Christians are instructed concerning the kind of society we are to aim for, it is not one of constant friction, animosity, or chaos but instead, one of peace and tranquility. We are to actually be told to cooperate when possible, and even pray for the existing government (1 Tim. 2:1-4).

Although often popular, the stand some would take as they seek to rectify, clarify, and correct all that is

wrong within our world by a constant stream of protest and (even) riot may actually be maligned. Scripture clearly admonishes Christians to honor those within authority, for vengeance belongs to the Lord, He will repay (Romans 12:19). This is true for all Christians, although within this favored land we have been privileged to enjoy a high degree of personal free exercise and self-government—even before the Revolutionary War.

The Great Awakening, wherein the Protestant Reformation reached new heights of personal engagement and commitment as preachers pricked the American conscience—so troubled Thomas Jefferson, that he would agonize over the failure of the nation to grant liberty to all (even slaves)—yet this country, while the “iron was still hot” was still able to forge a Constitution and Bill of Rights that would eventually pave the way for a more perfect union, after the Civil War years (at great cost).

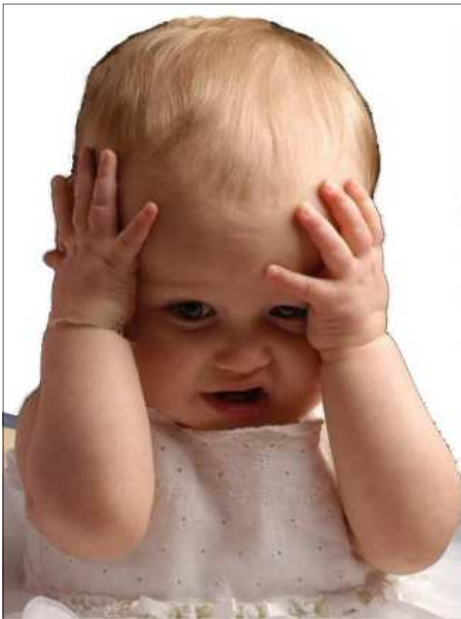
Yet it is not the vision of the true Christian, to fully realize life that vision of the “shining city on the hill” at this point in time. I know begrudgingly acknowledge our great prosperity that our erstwhile respect for God has brought upon this land (and it *is* God Who has brought us prosperity, and Who yet wants for us to prosper *even as our soul prospers* (3 John 1:2))—That many would now ignore all that we *do* have, while fretting over that which is *still lacking* of that golden Paradise, upon these earthen shores—and make all men equal: in pay, livelihood, and achievement(?)

No matter, for as Christ said to Pilate, “My kingdom is not of this world,” and those who think to create a Paradise from the ashes of this fallen world will only meet with increasing frustration and (ultimate) destruction as more victims are thrown into Gulags and even beheaded within their socialist dystopia, on the way to Armageddon.

Further, just so we understand what underlies our opening illustration, let us notice what it was exactly, that really disturbed the Pharisees of that first century, as Jesus performed the healing of an infirmed man in our opening text. For Christ would clearly explain why He performed these healings on the Sabbath, since it was evident that they all understood that the very *first* (and second) Commandments were to first love God, and then to love our neighbor as ourselves (Matt. 22:38). His purpose was neither to defraud man or defame God, but to bless the needy.

Thus, under normal circumstances the issue would have been merely academic: their opinion against his. Yet when Jesus commanded the invalid to stretch out his hand, something else came into play: the manifest will of God. For when Jesus commanded the man to

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WHY REPENT??

²⁴ *Then Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice.*

²⁵ *Now therefore, please pardon my sin, and return with me, that I may worship the LORD."*

1 Samuel 15:24-25,

A young boy playing baseball in the street or parking lot, hits a home run—straight through the neighbor's kitchen window (or windshield) and must now "pay the piper" for his actions. He did the deed, got caught, and now must live with the consequences . . . so, *why should he repent?*

His teenage brother goes on a date, over stays his "welcome" finds out that he is now a father, and must (for what seems forever) now pay child support. He "over played" his hand, got caught, and must now pay the piper. So why should *he* repent?

His father has a good job managing his boss's money, gets sticky fingers and embezzles the company. Now he must spend time in an unwanted "hotel" for a number of years. He betrayed a trust, got caught, and must now pay his debt to society. Why should he now repent?

Most often persons think of repentance as King Saul did, as a means of assuaging a hurt, lessening the pain of discovery, or simply as a way of escaping the consequences of one's wrong doing. Yet, such was of no use to this

king. Even though he had confessed his wrong to the prophet Samuel, some key element was missing that disqualified his ultimate request. Yes, Samuel *did* grant the king's immediate request, by helping him to correcting an immediate wrong: eliminating the enemy of their people in Saul's presence, and steadying the political climate of Israel (by honoring the king in public). Yet, at the end of the day (literally) Scripture says,

³⁴ *Then Samuel went to Ramah, and Saul went up to his house at Gibeah of Saul. ³⁵ And Samuel went no more to see Saul until the day of his death. Nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul, and the LORD regretted that He had made Saul king over Israel.*

1 Samuel 15:34-35

If you are deep into Bible doctrine, and have a grasp of some core Bible concepts, you might consider the above passage a paradoxical statement. For, since God knows all things, and can never make a mistake—how could He *regret* having made Saul king? Not important, you say? OK, try this one for size:

Saul made a commitment to follow the Lord, and the Spirit of God even descended upon his life—so much so, that when he turned from his first encounter with Samuel, "God gave him another heart" and he prophesied among the prophets (1 Sam. 10:9,10). Only after this conversion experience (and that is what it was, for a *conversion* involves a change of heart) was he made king. Yet, something happened along the way

that caused God to ultimately reject him. Now do you see the seriousness of what we are addressing? Perhaps not. Let us try again, this time from a New Testament perspective derived from latter part of the Bible (the book of Hebrews). We will ignore denominational preferences and simply turn to Scripture itself and consider a passage that speaks of a believer on the cusp of being corrected by the Lord. Again, let us acknowledge the context of our discussion: the ones now being addressed are those who have actually had their lives touched by God in the past. They know God. Now they have “hit the baseball through the window” (they have sinned and are aware of it). Fine, now God has come on the scene and is giving them instruction regarding the right and wrong of what has happened.

Yet the child refuses to acknowledge that breaking their neighbor’s glass window is wrong. So Daddy must drive the point home more forcefully. Punishment is administered (Johnny is “chastened”) in some way. Now, the child’s response is observed, and we pick up the narrative:

⁵ . . . : *“My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; ⁶ For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He re- ceives.”*

Hebrews 12:5-6

Fine, Daddy⁸ admonishes the delinquent to “take his licking” like a man, and own up to the need to be corrected. The paradox is this: if we humble ourselves like a little child, we win: if we decide to go our own way (“grow up” on our own) we lose. We need to agree with the Father’s correction.

⁷ *If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chas-*

ten? ⁸ But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons.

Hebrews 12:7-8

The King James Version is a bit more graphic in its rendering of the last sentence, noting that failure to agree/assent makes this delinquent a “bastard” and not a son. Do you see the seriousness of the matter, now?? It may be that we, like Saul, wish to simply pull down the trousers, take the licking, and walk off into the sunset, unchanged—as King Saul would have had it. The Lord is not content with that. Remembering another “delinquent” from the Old Testament the above writer to the Hebrews drives the point home by reminding us of Esau, who made light of God’s call upon his life, and simply “cashed it all in” for a bowl of stew one afternoon when his appetite got the best of him. Warns the writer to the Hebrews: such an attitude will breed a bitter harvest that ends in ultimate and eternal consequences. Be careful, he says,

... lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled; ¹⁶ lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. ¹⁷ For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears.

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Hebrews 12:15-17 [emphasis added]

Perhaps you noticed that part about tears . . . the writer has just upped the ante. Notes the writer, if we miss out on (what we are now beginning to understand *is*) true repentance—we will find that the day will come when even crying bitter tears will not suffice. We will enter Eternity, and find ourselves standing on the outside, like the foolish vir-

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gins crying, “Lord, Lord, open to us!”

Yet from within the Lord will answer, “Assuredly I say to you, I do not know you.” (Matt. 25:11,12).

So, let us look more carefully at what it was that King Saul lacked, and what it is that we should be seeking, when engaging in *real* repentance.

REPENTANCE IS A GIFT OF GOD:

²⁴ And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, ²⁵ in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, ²⁶ and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, . . .

2 Tim. 2:24-26 [emphasis added]

I know, the above quote is one answer you did not expect to encounter within this discussion. We do not generally think of God’s correction, or of His invitation to repent of sin (1 John 1:7-10) as a *gift*. Nevertheless, this is true. Mere sorrow is not the stuff that godly repentance is made of. Mere sorrow, grief, or remorse alone, will not produce repentance any more than a bank thief caught red handed, will be excused when telling the arresting officer, “I’m sorry!”

Even if such sorrow drives us to *suicide* such does not qualify:

¹⁰ For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.

2 Corinthians 7:10

Therefore, when you or I sense that *God Himself* is “putting the finger” on us, and pricking our hearts to convince us that we are departing from the favor of the Lord (Heb. 12:15) *that is the time* to drop everything, and “come clean” with the

Lord! Do not make excuses, do not delay, do make it an *absolute priority then and there* to get things right with the Lord. Such an awareness most often occurs when a person has a history of walking with God and their heart is usually tender towards Him, after encountering godly correction (during a sermon) or simply . . . when engaging in extended Bible reading; for faith comes by hearing (Romans 10:17) and repentance is actually a springboard—to experiencing greater faith.

REPENTANCE AS AN ACT OF FAITH:

. . . I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught

The purpose of true repentance is not to grind us into the ground . . .

you publicly and from house to house, ²¹ testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

Acts 20:20-21 (see also Col. 2:6)

True repentance towards God is always accompanied by faith. The purpose of repentance is not to grind us into the ground: not to make us “pay” for our sins and grovel before God. None of such activity will ever pay the price for our sin. No, as heinous as sin against God is, it cannot be atoned for by any act of contrition or penance. If our purpose for repentance is to “come clean with God” it must be accompanied not only by sorrow, but by an absolute dependence upon the price God Himself has paid for our sins when sending Christ

to die for us, on the Cross. For He [God, the Father] made Him [His Son, Jesus Christ] . . . to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” (2 Cor. 5:21)

This is the “big deal” about Christ going to the Cross for our sins: — so that when we are given the opportunity to repent—we can grab hold of the absolute gift that Christ offers to us, from the Cross. It is as if, when Jesus cried out to the Father: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they are doing” (Lk. 23:34)—He is praying this very thing for us, today.

And King Saul? What about those in the Old Testament? In those days they had to sacrifice a lamb or other animal in their place, as a stop-gap measure under the Law of Moses, looking forward to the day when the Messiah would come (Galatians 3:24,25). So when the prophet showed him his sin, Saul’s proper response should have been immediate—as King David’s was, when being fingered for murder and adultery, by another prophet, years later. Said David, in his psalm of repentance:

Have mercy upon me, O God, According to Your lovingkindness; According to the multitude of Your tender mercies, Blot out my transgressions. ² Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin. ³ For I acknowledge my transgressions, And my sin is always before me. ⁴ Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done this evil in Your sight-- . . .

Psalm 51:1-4

Do you sense God calling you to repentance, today?

Do not delay! Offer up your prayer of repentance *now*, while you have the opportunity, so that He may receive you into His arms of forgiveness.

Be blessed in Jesus.

(Continued from page 3)

=the “Outsider”=

be well (“Stretch out your hand!”) the healing actually occurred, and something else was suddenly evident: God’s will.

What was God’s will? That the man be healed!

Instead of celebrating the miracle, however, the rulers had another reaction: extreme distress.

And they were filled with madness; and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus.

Luke 6:11

They wanted to protest, and throw a hissy fit. This healing was not politically correct!

It was not that Jesus had really done anything wrong, just that He wasn’t getting permission from their first century religious bigwigs. He had not given assent, or even a nod, to their persistent hijacking God’s laws for the accommodation of personal self-elevation (“self” esteem). As Jesus commented, from the prophets:

⁷ *Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: ⁸ ‘These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me.’*

Matthew 15:7-8

Seen in the above light, one begins to wonder if we, ourselves, would be inclined to now start joining with the mob that would soon bring Him to trial in just a few short weeks beyond these statements. “Who does He think He is, telling us what is right, or wrong?” For we now live in the day of “maybe”—*Maybe this or that is right—for you* (if not for me). Further, if we have all agreed that a par-

ticular activity is to be performed in a certain way, and our highest leaders assent—who are You to tell us we are wrong?

Yes, we often focus on the miracles of Jesus, but what was He saying beyond the miracles? Of course people were being helped, and healed, but what was Christ’s agenda? If He was a prophet (or the Prophet) what was His message and, why were the religious leaders so afraid of Him? How would we relate to Him, today, if He were walking our streets? Are we much different from the people of Jesus’ day?

***One wonders if
we too, would .
. . . join the mob***

Say, here’s an event that would get our hackles up; on the subject of marriage. Divorce in that day was running rampant: they had found a loop-hole in the law and were driving their donkey carts (and whole households) through it. Jesus was obviously a holy man, “Let’s hear what he says. After all, his comments often go against the grain: maybe we can codify this exception by Moses and settle it once and for all. Let’s ask this young rabbi: he will understand.”

⁴ *And He answered and said to them, “Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning ‘made them male and female,’ ⁵ and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, . . . Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.’”*

Matthew 19:4-6

Not so fast, Jesus. We know the Law too, you know: Why did Moses instruct us to give a writing of divorce?? (You aren’t going to go against *Moses* are you?)

⁸ *He said to them, “Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. ⁹ And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery.”*

Matthew 19:8-9

Even the disciples were put off by this commentary (two thousand years, and the challenge of alternate lifestyles hasn’t changed the landscape much, has it?). So they questioned whether celibacy was what Jesus was getting at: He was not (Matt. 19:10-12). *Truth* was what Christ was aiming at: Divine Truth. Said Jesus; when we know the truth *it will set us free!* (John 8:32). When we stretch forth our hand (in agreement) and give our word to be faithful until death (in this life) we are to fulfill our commitments before God.

When we find that the hand that we have given in marriage, has become “withered” we too should seek the Healer from Galilee to heal our withered hand. Then it will be that we too may yet become free in our hearts, marriages, homes, and our country.

We too, do need to stretch out our hand, so that we may be healed by the Savior from Galilee.

We need no longer be an outsider—to Heaven.

†

What Must I Do?

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved."

Acts 16:31

How?

... If you will confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

For with the heart man believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Romans 10:9,10

In Other Words

Acknowledge: your need

—as a sinner (Romans 3:23, II Cor. 5:14-15)

Accept: His work on the Cross —to be your Savior

Confess: your acceptance of His lordship over you.

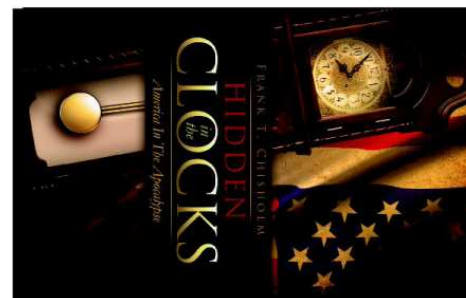
Live for Him: with your new life.

For the scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be ashamed."

Romans 10:11

This Month's Features:
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**America, America,
You haven't much Time!**
Hear me read its introduction online @
HiddenInTheClocks.com

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ENDNOTES;

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[§]Scripture states that born again Christians identify with God, as their personal Father—even "Abba-Father" ("daddy" in Aramaic—Romans 8:15).

