

UNDERSTANDING THE TIMES

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“... understood the times and knew what Israel should do.”--1 Chronicles. 12:32

A NEW DAY FOR AMERICA?

Not too long ago, before the last presidential election I was preaching a warning that this nation had gone beyond the tipping point in its rebellion against God, and would see judgement the same way Israel experienced God’s judgement by being taken into captivity by the Babylonians because of their rebellion. We were following the same path.

Today I have good news.

God heard our prayers. In His mercy He has spared us from a Hillary Clinton presidency which would have been the death knell of this great land of liberty. She would have doubled down on the unbiblical progressive agenda of the Obama administration. Remember, she said publicly that religious people—talking about you and me—would have to change their views when she became President. Thank God for His mercy.

But we are not out of the woods. There have been many questions about Donald Trump as President and I want to address some of those very valid concerns.

I confess, Donald J. Trump was not my first choice for President, but I’ve learned to defer my will to God’s trusting that He knows better and His ways are higher.

“As the heavens are higher than the earth so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts.”-- Isaiah 55:9

Ultimately, God was the One who put Donald Trump into office. Yes, the people vote, and that is our responsibility in this government of the people, but it is God himself, who has the final word.

“He changes times and seasons; he deposes kings and raises up others. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning.” --Daniel 2:21:

Why else do you think that while all the experts predicted Hillary would win, against all odds, a man with no political experience, no government experience, a man who was crude and sometimes even vulgar in his personality and lifestyle would win the election?

Doesn’t God tell us in His word that *“... God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly and despised things of the world, and the things that are not to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast in His presence.”*?--1 Cor. 1:27-29:

Because he is so unlikely, that in itself qualifies him to be used by God to usher in an age of revival in our land. By all reports he is a believer, but even if he weren’t, God could still use him as he used others in times past like King Cyrus of Persia.

When Israel was taken into captivity by the Babylonians according to the Scriptures they remained in captivity for seventy years until God raised up King Cyrus, not a believer, but yet raised up by God to set the Israelites free to return to Jerusalem to build their temple.

The first-century Jewish historian, Josephus, relates the historical record in his book, “Antiquities of the Jews,”

The Bible also records it, “*In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah, the LORD moved the heart of Cyrus king of Persia to make a proclamation throughout his realm and also to put it in writing: “This is what Cyrus king of Persia says, ‘The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah. Any of his people among you may go up, and may the LORD their God be with them.’*”--2 Chronicles 36:22-23

It is just like God to choose the least likely, because then no one can take credit. Everyone will know it was a work of God. Throughout history God has repeatedly chosen the least likely.

He called Abraham –Fascinatingly, God commands Abraham to leave his country, his birthplace and his father’s house and a pagan land to travel to the unknown land of Canaan (Israel) without any mention of a previous connection with God.

He called Moses – a man who spent forty years hiding from the law talking to sheep. God now calls him to go speak to Pharaoh to let his people go. Moses even confesses that he can’t even speak. He was such a poor speaker that he had to call his brother Aaron to speak for him. I would say, not the most qualified for the job.

He called David – the runt of the litter—to be King over Israel. Never mind that he was a murderer, and an adulterer. Not exactly the best resume for a national ruler.

He called Gideon -- who confessed he was the least of his tribe.

He called Samson – a rebellious son and a womanizer.

He called Peter-- a hot-headed, Christ denying fisherman to start the Christian Church

And the most illogical of all was God’s calling of the Apostle Paul, a Pharisee among Pharisees who was bent on hunting down and persecuting Christians. God called Him to establish His Church in the world. Can you imagine the ISIS leader, Al Baghdadi suddenly announcing that he had become a Christian and will now work to build the Church of Jesus Christ in the Middle East. That’s exactly what it was like!

That’s the way God works. Look at the most qualified, and scratch him off the list! Find the least qualified, and there you may have a candidate. It is the invisible hand of God that confounds the devices of men.

The same hand that brought the Pilgrims to miss their intended destination as they came to this new world, only to land in probably the only place on the East Coast where they could have landed safely without being massacred by the Indians, because the area they just happened to land on had been previously abandoned by the Indians and considered cursed because of an epidemic that destroyed their tribe on that piece of ground.

The same hand that brought victory to an army of farmers, tradesmen and young kids fighting against the greatest army in the world during our War for Independence through a series of miraculous events, like the escape from Brooklyn, George Washington’s first real battle with the British. They called it the battle of Long Island. The English soldiers, under the Command of General William Howe, landed in Brooklyn overwhelming the Colonials pushing them all the way to the East River at Brooklyn Heights. All the British had to do was to continue to attack when the colonials were trapped between them and the East River, and the war would have been over almost before it started. But for some unknown reason, General Howe decided to put off the attack until the morning, since after all, with their backs against the river where the British Navy was patrolling, the Americans had nowhere to go. However, Washington, just happened to have among his troops, expert seamen from Rhode Island. So they rounded up all the boats they could find and started across the East River through a dense fog that just happened to fall over the river keeping them

hidden from the British Navy. The record says they crossed “without the sound of a wash.” As the last boat reached Manhattan’s shore the fog began to lift. Another coincidence? Washington’s army was spared to fight another day and ultimately win our independence.

The same hand that allowed cigar wrappers to determine who would win the Civil War.

A Union soldier just happened to find three cigars left by the Confederate Army in an abandoned Frederick, Maryland camp wrapped in paper. When he unwrapped the cigars he just happened to look at the wrapper which just happened to be Special Order 191, Confederate General Lee’s detailed plans and instructions for his assault against the North. This strange “coincidence” may very well have been the difference between victory and defeat for the Union.

It’s been said that a coincidence is simply a miracle in which God chooses to remain anonymous. If it were not for this string of “coincidences”—these miracles—we would not have a United States of America. No reasonable person can study the history of America without recognizing that invisible hand of God that has sustained us throughout.

God’s grace has been shed on this nation as long as we have acknowledged Him, as President Lincoln told us,

“It is the duty of nations as well as of men to own their dependency upon the overruling power of God and to recognize the sublime truth expressed by the Holy Scriptures and proven through all of history that those nations are blessed whose God is the Lord.”

President Lincoln and Donald Trump

Speaking of President Lincoln. He was the Donald Trump of His day. Today, we think of Lincoln as one of our greatest presidents, but to his own generation he was hated and despised even more than Trump.

Donald Trump won with only 46% of the popular vote but when Lincoln took office in March 1861, he entered the presidency with only 39.8 percent of the popular vote. Reactions from the public were so negative that on the eve of his inauguration he had to be smuggled into the capital during the dead of night in a disguise. He was looked down upon for everything from his humble beginnings and lack of education to his awkward appearance and high pitched voice. Even the commanding general of his armies, George McClellan, called him the “original gorilla.” Yet, today we see Abraham Lincoln as one of our greatest presidents.

Andrew Jackson and Donald Trump

Trump identifies with our 7th President, Andrew Jackson, because like Trump Jackson was a man of the people, certainly not part of the political elite, and thoroughly hated by the establishment of his day. On his inauguration day he opened the White House to his friends and the common folk, and they surely came. In fact, they partyed so hard that they literally trashed the place. The President himself had to be whisked away to a hotel room because the party got so out of hand.

So then, what is our responsibility now.

I said from the very beginning that Donald Trump could be one of the very best presidents we’ve ever had, or he could be one of the most terrible depending on...the prayers of the church (2 Chronicles 7:14)

God has given us a window of opportunity.

When Jonah finally went to Nineveh (Present day western bank of Mosul, Iraq) to preach God’s word they experienced revival, but Jonah’s preaching only delayed the hand of judgement for one generation. Look at the

judgement that has come on Mosul today. Every day in the news you see what's left of Mosul—that's Nineveh. Don't dare think it could never happen here.

So we have a window of opportunity for the sake of our children, our grandchildren and generations to follow. You know it was Ronald Reagan who told us that,

“Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same.”

So it is up to us to be faithful stewards of the gift of liberty.

We are a people who are doubly blessed. As American Christians we have the Cross of Calvary to remind us of our eternal liberty from the consequences of sin, and we also have the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor to remind us of our civic liberty. We are doubly blessed. With that double blessing comes a double responsibility.

We must above all, be surrendered to the One who gave His life for us and be purposed in our hearts to become men and women of integrity so that the world will see a representation of Christ in us, that they might be drawn to Him through the Holy Spirit at work in His Church. Holiness is not a bad word. We must pursue holiness despite current trends.

We must forsake everything that divides us. Abraham Lincoln repeated the Gospel truth that a house divided cannot stand. We must not be divided by religious styles, denominations, by race or ethnicity. We must respond to the cry of our Lord's heart expressed in John 17, where he prayed that we would be one, that the world might know that He was sent by the Father. We must repent of the sin of factions and dissensions and come together as one new man in the Name of Jesus Christ.

We must pray like it all depends on God. Revivals have never come but by fervent prayer. We must continue to pray individually, while organizing prayer meetings on a continual basis until we experience a genuine revival, characterized by a supernatural flood of repentant souls at the altars of our churches.

We must work like it all depends on us. The Bible tells us that "...faith without works is dead."—James 2:20. Our faith in Christ, and in His command to occupy until he comes must motivate us all to do all that we can with all that we have to be effective stewards of the gift of liberty—God's grace shed on us.

At the very least we must remain educated about the issues at hand, and know where our representatives stand on those issues and support those representatives who will advance a Biblical agenda, and work to replace those who do not.

Thomas Jefferson gave us a clear warning when he said, "If a nation expects to be ignorant and free...it expects what never was, and never will be."

And God tells us in His Word, "My people are destroyed for a lack of knowledge." (Hosea 4:6)

Pray about running for office. In 2016 I felt prompted by the Lord to run for State office. I didn't win the election but I certainly gained much knowledge and I was able to sow seed in soil I never would have access to otherwise. God tells us that His word does not return void, so I have comfort in knowing that in my obedience I impacted the culture in ways beyond my understanding. The government and political arena is a mission field that must not be neglected by the Church. God's people must occupy the seat of counsel to insure the preservation of liberty for the next generation. God may be calling you to run for local or state office. Don't worry about your qualifications. Remember, he often calls the most unlikely. If he calls you he will equip you. Be open to the calling. Seek counsel from spiritual

elders. Don't worry about the outcome. When I ran for state office I knew in my spirit that I was called to run, not necessarily to win. The outcome is in God's hands. Knowing that takes all the pressure off. Adopt this philosophy for life: "Duty is mine; results are God's." Be available for God. He may choose you to be His witness, his voice at "the City Gates."

Mark Twain told us,

"At the beginning of a change the patriot is a scarce man, brave hated and scorned. But when his cause succeeds then the timid join him, for then it costs nothing to be a patriot."

With the election of Donald Trump we are at the beginning of a change. Our national drift away from God has begun to be reversed, and we will be once again one nation under God as the Church prepares for an end-times revival. So it is time to be part of this new move of God, by praying like it all depends on God and working like it all depends on us. Our children, and our grandchildren will thank us for preserving the gift of liberty for them, while giving God all the glory.