

FUNDAMENTAL TRUTHS

By Jim Jess

This article and others like it are intended to educate citizens about government from the perspective of God's Word. Christian believers will appreciate the work of the Foundation for Constitutional Education, but others can learn from our research as well. As an educational organization, we endeavor to honestly instruct people from the accuracy of the Bible, God's Word, and the historical record. Special attention is given to the founding documents of our nation, particularly the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States. Contemporary sources are also used from the fields of civics, economics, and current affairs. Our only source for truth, however, is the Word of God. It alone is the foundation of freedom and the foundation of our study and teaching.

LIVING A GODLY LIFE

The Bible has something to say about every area of life.

II Peter 1:3:

According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness...

The word "life" in this verse is the Greek word *zoe*, which means "life in all its fullness." Certainly this includes information about how to live abundantly and prosperously in a world ruled by civil authorities, or governments, as well as principles concerning the successful operation of such authorities.

Proverbs 1:7 says, "The fear [respect, reverence] of the Lord *is* the beginning of knowledge." For the believer, knowledge starts with a reverence of God, putting God first.

Matthew 6:33:

But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

When man or woman gives God the appropriate place in their life, all areas of life prosper. God's will for man today is quite clear. He wants all men to love Him first, to have an accurate knowledge of Him and His Word, to be born again of His spirit, and to walk in fellowship with Him.

I Timothy 2:4:

Who [God] will have all men to be saved, and to come unto a knowledge of the truth.

Romans 10:9, 10:

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

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

Colossians 2:6:

As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:

When a man or woman is instructed in the Word, puts God first, and walks in fellowship, he or she is like the man of Psalms 1:1-3.

Psalms 1:1-3:

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

But his delight is in the law of the Lord [the Word of God]; and in his [God's] law doth he meditate day and night.

And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

These scriptures contain keys for a believer's individual success, or for the success of a group of believers. As we shall see from careful study, the Scriptures also contain keys for the success of nations.

The man who walks according to the counsel of God's Word produces fruit, something of substance in his life. He earns eternal rewards. The man who rejects God's Word walks by his senses, his own ways. He receives the consequences of his rejection of God and His Word.

Psalms 1:4-6:

The ungodly *are* not so; but *are* like the chaff which the wind driveth away.

Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

For the lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

The individual who walks in fellowship with God is a blessing to those around him, and therefore a blessing to the nation in which he lives. Of course, in any nation, some people will choose to believe God and His Word, and others will not. Even in biblical Israel, many times everyone didn't believe; but there were times when nearly everyone did. In those instances, Israel experienced great prosperity, military dominance and freedom.

TWO SPIRITUAL KINGDOMS

God set the true standards for a successful and abundant life in the Scriptures. Man receives the positive results when he lives according to these standards. Just as each individual is blessed now and in eternity by obeying the Word of God, nations are also blessed when their people and their leaders correctly apply the teachings of the Scriptures. The truths of the Bible should be the basis for the policies and actions of governments, and should be correctly applied. The most favorable scenario would be for those who make the decisions in government to be believers who understand the truth of God's Word. But that will seldom be the case.

The reason for this is rooted in the spiritual competition between the two spiritual kingdoms: the kingdom of the true God, the father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the kingdom of His archenemy, the Devil or Satan. When the Devil tempted Jesus Christ in the wilderness, he revealed a great truth about his kingdom that must be understood to understand government. This is the truth of who has dominion over this world.

Luke 4:5-7:

And the devil, taking him [Jesus] up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.

And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them; for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it.

If thou therefore wilt worship me, all will be thine.

Jesus Christ refused this temptation, as he did a number of temptations, but the principle is quite clear. The Devil does have the dominion of the kingdoms – the political and economic systems – of this world. He controls them because most of the people that have authority in these systems unknowingly serve him.

Psalms 24:1 says that the earth belongs to God, but that doesn't mean God controls the systems of this world. When Adam and Eve disobeyed God in the fall of man, they lost the dominion over the earth

that God had originally given to man. The governments of this world continue to be dominated by evil men to this day. The Devil said the power and glory of the kingdoms had been delivered to him, and he was not lying on this point. He gives them to “whomsoever” he chooses. Obviously, he chooses those that are loyal to him or those he can influence and control.

The Founding Fathers of the United States set up a system of government that had the potential to serve the people in a way as never before. By establishing a stable political system based on the consent of the governed, the founders gave citizens the opportunity to allow their chosen representatives to exercise the power of government for a designated period of time, as opposed to placing a tyrant in power for life. Uniquely, the system of government established in our Constitution gave the “God-fearing” people that comprised the majority in our nation for many years the opportunity to give the control of government to other God-fearing men if they were wise enough to do so. Instead of being saddled with a corrupt monarch, the people could choose righteous men to circumvent the dominion of Satan, the god of this world.

JOSEPH IN EGYPT

One of the greatest examples of a man who walked for God and broke the adversary’s dominion is the record of Joseph in the Bible. In the Book of Genesis, chapters 37, and 39-50, we find the account of Joseph and how he rose to second in command – second only to Pharaoh – in Egypt, the greatest civilization at that time. In this position, Joseph followed God’s instructions, saved the nation, and saved his own family from extinction. Of course, Joseph’s brothers were the patriarchs of the nation of Israel and part of the “Christline,” the ancestral lineage of Jesus Christ.

Joseph was sold into slavery by his envious brothers in the land of Canaan and taken to Egypt. There he became a servant in the house of one of Pharaoh’s military officers. But God was with Joseph, as the Scriptures teach. In time, the officer made Joseph steward, or manager over his house. Later, the officer’s wife unjustly accused Joseph of wrongdoing and Joseph was sent to prison. But even in prison, God was with Joseph and “gave him favor” in the eyes of the keeper of the prison. (Genesis 39:21) One day, Joseph was given the responsibility of two prisoners who were Pharaoh’s officers. They stayed for a period of time in the prison. One night they each had a dream that Joseph was able to interpret. Joseph gave one of them, the chief butler, good news about what his dream meant – that he would be released. Joseph asked this man to speak to Pharaoh on his behalf in order to obtain Joseph’s own release from prison. Even though the butler was restored to his office as Joseph had foretold, he forgot about Joseph. (Genesis 40:1-23)

Two years later, Pharaoh had a dream that none of the wise men or magicians of Egypt could interpret. The chief butler remembered Joseph at this point and told Pharaoh of him. Pharaoh had Joseph brought from the prison to interpret his dream.

Genesis 41:15, 16:

And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I have dreamed a dream, and *there is* none that can interpret it: and I have heard say of thee, *that* thou canst understand a dream to interpret it.

And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, *It is* not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace.

Pharaoh proceeded to recount the dream to Joseph and Joseph told Pharaoh what it meant: After seven years of great plenty, a famine would afflict Egypt for seven years. Joseph also told the Pharaoh what preparations should be made for the people – how much of the harvest from the years plenty should be stored and where it should be stored. God showed Joseph all of this by revelation. And Pharaoh and his advisors liked what they heard.

Genesis 41:37, 38:

And the thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of all his servants.

And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find *such a one* as this *is*, a man in whom the Spirit of God *is*?

That's quite a statement for a pagan king to make.

Genesis 41:39-41:

And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, *there is* none so discreet and wise as thou *art*:

Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou.

And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt.

In the space of one day, God opened a door for Joseph to move from a dungeon in Egypt to the top administrative job in the nation. He was second-in-command to Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, and he functioned in that capacity for a number of years. Because Joseph operated revelation manifestations of holy spirit, God was able to "outflank" the adversary, Satan, and Joseph was free to exercise the dominion normally reserved for the Devil's people. And the end result had eternal ramifications.

Do you think this means that God wants His most faithful and committed people to be in the top political positions in nations? Not necessarily. There was a very specific reason that God had moved his man, Joseph, into this position. It was a spiritual reason, not a political one. The famine that overtook Egypt for seven years also affected the land of Canaan, where Joseph's family lived. His father was Jacob, also called Israel, and his brothers were eleven of the patriarchs of the twelve tribes of Israel. From the bloodline of one of these men, Judah, would come the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. At this time, Satan brought a famine to these lands for the express purpose of wiping out the Christline, which would produce the Promised Seed, the Lord Jesus Christ. But God knew, in His foreknowledge, that the famine would come. He moved Joseph into the position in Egypt because Joseph was the man who would be responsible for distributing the food in the years of famine. When his brothers came to Egypt to buy food, Joseph recognized them and eventually told them who he was. Because of his position, he was able to nourish his father and brothers, their families and their servants. He even helped move them to Egypt to be near him. They prospered during the famine while many were starving or losing their lands to feed themselves.

The importance of the spiritual works we do cannot be underrated. Joseph rose to his position by staying faithful to God, believing God, and listening to and obeying what God said. Specifically, Joseph operated the manifestations of word of wisdom and word of knowledge to reveal to Pharaoh what was going to occur. That's not the way men usually rise to the second most powerful governmental position in a country, let alone the second most powerful position in the most powerful nation in the world in a given era. But Joseph knew that God was with him. He knew how to follow God's instructions, and that's what he did. In doing so, he not only preserved the Christline, but he removed Egypt from Satan's control and dominion for a period of time in Egypt's history.

REBUILDING ON GOD'S FOUNDATION

One of the reasons that the U.S. political system functioned as well as it did for many years to protect the rights of citizens was the basic goodness of the people themselves. By this I do not mean that these men and women did not have a sin nature or never made mistakes. But for many years, a large percentage of the American people were devoted to many sound principles of truth because the people were "God-fearing." There was a respect for righteousness and justice among the men and women who formed the early colonial settlements in our nation, and many of the leaders in these communities worked hard to apply God's Word in their governmental decisions. The result was that Satan's dominion was circumvented and the people had the awesome privilege of being able to choose righteous men to serve in government.

The actions of the early colonists set the course of freedom for at least the first century and a half of colonial development on this continent. The Founding Fathers, the men who framed the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States, set the course for the first century or so of the American republic. God's Word was the foundation for American freedom. And it still is today. Even though we have drifted from our principles as a nation, many of our basic freedoms are still intact and protected.

Early in the twentieth century, we as a nation began to lose our moorings. Bit by bit, our leaders forsook our founding principles to follow crooked pathways. These ways led to the welfare state, the erosion of our freedoms, and war. The initial arguments to provide for the poor, make the world a safe place, and pursue humanitarian objectives seemed appropriate and harmless enough. But many of the well-intentioned actions of our government in the twentieth century did not make us freer or more prosperous. The buildup of governmental power in the twentieth century led to a situation in which we were more addicted to government than ever before. The sad result is that our politicians and bureaucrats are more powerful than ever before. We are less insulated from the power of evil men who may come to power in our government because we have allowed them to make more and more decisions that affect our lives. Many in our nation have continued to prosper and succeed in spite of many shortsighted decisions, abuses of power, and just plain treachery on the part of some of our leaders.

While there are honest, justice-loving men and women who work in positions of responsibility in government, some lack the authority to make the positive changes that would advance our freedom. In some cases, those in political office who must make decisions lack the wisdom or courage to make the right decisions. And at times, some of our political leaders are simply misguided. They resemble those in biblical Israel as described in the book of Isaiah.

Isaiah 59:9, 10, 13, 14:

None calleth for justice, nor *any* pleadeth for truth: they trust in vanity, and speak lies; they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity.

Therefore is judgment far from us, neither doth justice overtake us: we wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, *but* we walk in darkness.

We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if *we had* no eyes: we stumble at noon day as in the night; we are in desolate places as dead men.

In transgressing and lying against the Lord, and departing away from our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood.

And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter.

The only way to defeat such spiritual darkness is to introduce spiritual light.

Psalms 119:130:

The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding to the simple.

The purpose of the teaching offered by the Foundation for Constitutional Education is to put the light of God's Word – the principles of God's Word – into our political discourse. The Bible is not simply a book for public officials to swear on when they take their oaths of office. The Scriptures are a pattern by which to live as well as a blueprint for sound governing. I John 3:8 says Jesus Christ came to destroy the works of the Devil. In order to follow in the steps of Jesus Christ and destroy the Devil's works today, we must apply the knowledge of the truth. That is the only way to dismantle the components of a governmental system that has departed from true character of our republic. The process begins with spiritual deeds.

Acts 26:18:

To open their eyes, *and* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan unto God, that

they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

Once the light of God's Word has begun to shine into a field of endeavor that has been as dark as the political and governmental area, the dismantling can begin. But the spiritual awakening – brought about by the actions of believing men and women – must occur first. Without it, there is no foundation for sound decisions in policy.

A great verse in Psalm 11 asks a monumental question.

Psalms 11:3:

If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?

The righteous would have to lay a new foundation. But we have no need to do that. The foundations laid by America's Founding Fathers can – through some simple investigation – be uncovered quite easily. We must simply take the time to rediscover the foundations they laid. When we do so, we will discover that the strength of our nation's edifice is sustained by the biblical principles that make up its foundation.

The material the Foundation provides will show you our nation's biblical foundations. Our focus is on the fundamentals. We offer you a framework for understanding the actions of our public officials. Once you master the fundamentals, you will be able to look at our government in an informed manner and make sound, logical judgments based on your knowledge of God's Word and the principles of the Word applied in the area of government policy.

As we dismantle the works of our adversary, the Devil, we can begin to rebuild. We can do this because we have the foundation of God's Word. It doesn't matter that others have forsaken the foundation. We *can* rebuild our nation by rebuilding with the principles of the Word of God as the foundation.

Isaiah 58:12:

And *they that shall be* of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.

Let the restoration begin.

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