

The Obligation of Christian Citizens

In the days when the English Channel Tunnel was under construction, 'A Frenchman was saying how wonderful it was that the English were going to such trouble to be united to the mainland of Europe by building the English Channel tunnel. "Oh, that's nothing", says the Englishman. "You should have seen the trouble we had digging the channel in the first place!"'

If nothing else, it most certainly requires enough unity, patriotism, and trust in one's society to be able to build grand monuments and accomplish great feats. History offers lesson after lesson of great civilizations and empires that rose and fell. In broad strokes, it can be said they rose when their people were united and fell when their unity unraveled. So what is it that unites a people? A set of shared beliefs, values and virtues. A common language helps, but isn't essential. Neither is ethnic homogeneity but it can also help. Look at the United States of America. Last I checked, that is the country in which all of us live. What was it that united us in the past? What unites us now? Or, some may argue that we're not at all united, that we're already coming apart at the seams this very moment!

Since we're in the middle of things, as events are happening all around us, with new developments, destructions and tragedies

making the news daily, it's nigh too hard for us to have the perspective to see what's truly transpiring. So we must look at history's lessons. God, in His infinite wisdom and mercy, has given us a Book par excellence that records all of history, even the history that hasn't happened yet! Sometimes in great, minute details and other times in great, broad strokes, He tells us what happened, what's happening, and what will happen! His Word enables us to make sense of and understand these times we're living in right now. And what to do about them. How to live our lives in response, and more importantly, how to steer these times to accomplish the most important thing of all—the unfolding of God's glorious and infinite will: the redemption of all creation!

Look at our readings from Hosea today and the past weeks. Our brother and prophet Hosea was living in some terrible times. On the surface, things seemed to be plugging along. Not perfect, but survivable. The two nations, formerly united as one, but now for hundreds of years divided into two, Israel in the north, and Judah in the south, were mostly stable, mostly at peace with their neighbors, though it was a precarious peace. Constantly playing their big, powerful neighbors off against each other to maintain their own independence and sovereignty can be exhausting on any people. Few civilizations throughout earth history have managed it. For in more recent times, nearly all the world came under the domination of the nations of Europe, the United States and Japan. Back in Hosea's day, contrary to God's instructions, both

Israel and Judah brokered treaty after treaty with powerful Egypt to the south, or the Assyrian and Babylonian Empires in the north. Playing the great powers off against each other to maintain their status and value as friendly border states that would prevent direct hostile border areas from minor incursions from escalating into catastrophic war, seemed to be the wise and prudent course of action. That is what both Israel and Judah did. Ignoring God.

Well, it wasn't too long before Israel's "luck" ran out. King Hoshea who came to power by a conspiracy that assassinated his predecessor, King Pekah, served as a vassal king under the Assyrians, but when he gambled on an alliance with Egypt and stopped paying tribute to Assyria, the Egyptians didn't rush up to defend them. So much for that alliance! The Assyrians summarily marched in and crushed Israel. And Israel was no more. Less than two centuries later, a similar fate and scenario played out with Judah. For God had long, long ago carefully laid out the way for His people to live securely and prosper. But they reneged on their end of the covenant. Over and over and over again did they abrogate God's intended perpetual covenant of blessing. Looking at the world, playing by the world's "rules", seeking the glory of the world and the respect of their neighbors, except for a small, faithful remnant, the people all completely forgot about God. God spoke to them through Prophet Hosea, saying in 5:1 and 6:7, 9-11: "Hear this, you priests. Pay attention, you leaders of Israel. Listen, you members of the royal family. Judgment has been

handed down against you. For you have led the people into a snare by worshiping the idols at Mizpah and Tabor". "But like Adam, you broke My covenant and betrayed My trust". "Priests form bands of robbers, waiting in ambush for their victims. They murder travelers along the road to Shechem and practice every kind of sin. Yes, I have seen something horrible in Ephraim and Israel: My people are defiled by prostituting themselves with other gods! O Judah, a harvest of punishment is also waiting for you, though I wanted to restore the fortunes of My people".'

You see that even here, God so desperately wants to be merciful and bless His people, but they won't have it! Do we find that hard to believe? If so, look at what's been happening in our nation, in our own city, even just this weekend! I simply can't stand to see a sin-saturated, so-called pride parade, snaking through our streets, and the LGBTQA+ "rainbow" flag flying high over downtown! It is more than a disgrace. It's tantamount to proclaiming St. Louis is a city under that demonic, rebellious, God-defying agenda. NO! Despite what these misguided, oppressed, confused, and deceived precious souls believe and assert, St. Louis is not and never will be controlled by the devil! Why? Because we, yes, we, will not allow it!

But many say, what can we do about it? Can not all of you answer that question? It's so simple. Pray! But some will say, what good does prayer do? Those who ask that are either suffering a temporary bout of depression, bitterness and disappoint-

ment, or else don't know the Lord well enough to ask Holy Spirit that question and hear His reassurance that He will work things out in His perfect way. We just need to keep the faith, believe, and *pray*. We need to be obedient to His leading, and keep our eyes fixed on Him. Not on the world. Not like Israel and Judah of old. God's ways are not the world's ways. Thank Heaven! For this world is under the devil's heel. But satan's days are coming to an end. His time is short. He knows that he has to ramp up his assaults on the peoples to infect as many as possible with his lies so they join his band of miserable and despicable rebels.

God's ways are perfect, but all too often, seemingly incomprehensible and counterintuitive to our imperfect minds. But God has promised, as incontrovertibly stated in Psalm 91:1, 4, 14-16: "Those who live in the shelter of the Most High *will* find rest in the shadow of the Almighty". "His faithful promises *are* your armor and protection". The Lord says, "I *will* rescue those who love Me. I *will* protect those who trust in My name. When they call on Me, I will answer; I will be with them in trouble. I will rescue and honor them. I will reward them with a long life and give them My salvation". So, regardless of what happens, even this coming September, God's people will be protected. Stock up on provisions, and prepare yourself for some difficult, trying times!

But what about all the people who don't know Him, but who are still open to coming to know Him? Do we just leave them to fend for themselves, or do we try to present the truths of Christ

Jesus to them, by the way we live our lives and interact with them? Absolutely! For our Lord tells us, in the Gospel lesson which prophesies of our own days, in 10:32-33: “Everyone who acknowledges Me publicly here on earth, I will also acknowledge before My Father in heaven. But everyone who denies Me here on earth, I will also deny before My Father in heaven”. As the Lord tells us in 10:26: “the time is coming when everything that is covered will be revealed, and all that is secret will be made known to all”. Is this not happening right now? Oh, the mainstream news media will keep doing its darnedest to cover up everything, explain it away, blame it on us, or just ignore it completely. Stop listening to their lies! They are all mouthpieces of the devil and his demonic agents. If there were any doubts that Fox News has truly gone to the dark side, we now know it’s no more honest than MSNBC or CNN. I knew it from November, 2020 when it called Arizona for Biden that it had already turned toward evil. A good alternative news source right now is Newsmax on AT&T U-Verse 1220 , DIRECTV 349, DISH 216, and Spectrum 248. Better still are online sources FISM News, and One America News Network.

So get informed by honest sources. Ask us who do the research. Know the truth. And pray, pray, pray. It’s your responsibility and obligation as Christian citizens. America will collapse if we evangelical Christians all forget to pray. But America will be saved if we stay faithful. Don’t be like ancient Israel and Judah. God has promised that America will survive. IF we keep praying.

