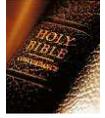


The DEFENDER - May 2019



“. . . defending the faith once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3)

A monthly publication of the
IN DEFENSE OF TRUTH radio broadcast.



FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK: Let the Games Begin

Never underestimate religion in America. Especially those on the religious left. Just as politics has a left and a right—a liberal and a conservative—so does religion. Now make sure that you understand I said religion and not Christianity. There's a distinction there. Even though some folks will claim to be part of the Christian Left, that label is nothing more than an oxymoron. A true Christian follows the tenets of the Christian faith, not the left or right leanings of a man-made religion. And true Christianity is a faith in Christ, not someone's interpretation of rules or ethics. Yet the religious left, like the political left, will forsake facts for fiction if it helps them achieve their goals. Truth is cast aside in order to achieve an agenda. But only by knowing the truth can anyone be truly free. We're not allowed to make up our own version of Christianity.

Nowhere in America is there more division than in political circles. And the multitude of candidates from the Left who have tossed their hats into the 2020 presidential ring will reveal no shortage of worldviews. One of the first salvos to be fired was in the area of religion, as Mayor Pete Buttigieg of South Bend, Indiana called out Vice President Mike Pence for his perceived intolerance. Mr. Pence rightly pointed out that same-sex marriage is a violation of God's Holy Word (**Leviticus 18:22**). Mayor Pete, as he likes to be called, and who is openly gay, took issue with that. He proudly told the Vice President, “if you have a problem with who I am, your quarrel is with my creator.” Many on the Left have said that it's groundbreaking for Mr. Buttigieg to use his marriage to another man to illustrate his personal relationship with God.

Scripture tells us that we are made in God's image (**Genesis 1:27**), not the other way around. Yet sinful man, in an effort to justify his ungodly behavior, has created a god that legitimizes his actions, giving him no cause for repentance. It's bad enough to transgress God's Word; to do so presumptuously is beyond the pale. So I'm not quite sure what kind of a relationship Mayor Pete thinks he has with the God of the Bible. He obviously feels quite at ease with the god of his own making. I can't help but wonder what he thinks of Paul's warning to the Galatians to “...be not deceived. God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting” (**Galatians 6:7-8**).

The war of words will intensify in the coming months. Agendas will be exposed, but truth will prevail, as God's Word will stand forever (**Isaiah 40:8**). For those keeping score: Christian Right—1, “Christian Left”—0.

Rev. David Lewis

Bible Basics for Christians

Part III – The Importance of God’s Sovereignty

By Robert Luthardt, Sr.

At the time God created the universe and all that lives, He called everything “very good” (Gen. 1:31). Even when Lucifer was created, he was called “son of the morning” (Is. 14:12). But God, as Creator and ultimate cause of all that comes to pass, including everything past, present and future (Is. 46:9-10) who knows and reveals secrets (Dan. 2:28, 44) and what to mankind is yet future (vs. 45), also knew that Lucifer would appear as a serpent and work disaster upon God’s greatest creation: mankind (Gen. 3:1-19). To understand, consider the words of Joseph (Gen. 50:19-20).

It can be disquieting to read that God created other than the good. “I am the Lord and ... there is no God beside me ... I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create EVIL: I the Lord do all these things ... woe unto him that striveth with his Maker .. shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, what makest Thou?” (Is. 45:5-9). Also disconcerting is that God used and directed wicked men to accomplish His purpose as He used the sinfulness of Joseph’s brothers (Gen. 45:5-8; 50:20) and the apostate Jews and evil gentiles that crucified Christ (Acts 2:23; 4:27-28), but was so ordained by God BEFORE the world or we were ever created (1 Pet. 1:18-20; Rev. 13:8).

“I have made the earth and created man ... I will direct all his ways” (Is. 45:12-13). God ordains and gathers together the unregenerate for His purpose and even names some (2 Chron. 36:22; Acts 4:27-28), proving He calls whom He will (John 6:70-71). God even ordained the use of lying spirits; “And the Lord said, who shall entice Ahab ... that he may fall [die] at Ramoth-Gilead? ... Then came out a spirit ... I will be a lying spirit ... in all his prophets. And the Lord said, ... go out and do so” (2 Chron. 18:18-22). Thus spoke the faithful prophet Micaiah for the Lord. God is sovereign (Dan. 4:35).

“The Lord hath made all things ... even the wicked for the day of evil” (Prov. 16:4). “Hear these words; Jesus ... approved of God ... by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and FOREKNOWLEDGE of God, YE have taken and ‘BY WICKED HANDS’ have crucified and slain” (Acts. 2:22-24).

God sometimes works His sovereign will through wicked men and women for His purposes by what could seem to be mere coincidences, but that prove to be the providential outworking of His divine will. Joseph’s brothers decided to kill him (Gen. 37:18-20). But just then, came by Midianite traders, so that the brothers sold Joseph to them as a slave for twenty pieces of silver. Their plan and deed were for evil; the same act was God’s plan for good (Gen. 20:50).

Our finite minds struggle to understand that God created everything (omnipotence) and knows everything (omniscience) and is everywhere (omnipresent), and so He is ultimately the cause of everything and thereby uses the sinfulness of wicked men and fallen angels to bring to pass His ultimate purpose. Yet God did not create or commit the sinfulness or the evil deeds.

is the ultimate cause of everything, it is fallen men that are alone the immediate or proximate cause of sin. God does not sin (Deut. 32:4; Job 34:10-12; Ps. 145:17; Dan. 4:35; Rom. 9:18-23; Matt. 5:48; Heb. 2:10, 5:9; Titus 1:2).

Quite the contrary, God is perfect in holiness and glory in His Word and in His unfolding plan. Holiness brings God glory and us paradise [heaven] (Ps. 119:140; Ex. 15:11; Luke 23:39-43). God's power can frighten (Matt. 17:1-7; Luke 2:9) or be awe inspiring (Acts. 7:55-56), as with creation (Ps. 19:1; Rom. 1:20). Jesus told of the Father's glory, His own glory and ours (John 17:5, 22-23). Holiness and glory are indivisible; "For of Him are ALL THINGS: (the good and the bad) to whom be glory forever" (Rom. 11:36). Christ is glorified in making God's enemies, God's adopted children (Rom. 8:14-17; Rom. 5, 10,17) for all the ages to come (Ep. 2:7).

What is man's duty? "Whatever you do, do ALL to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31; Matt. 5:16) with no exceptions (1 Pet. 1:15). Is there work man must do to be saved? The jailer at Philippi asked that very question: "What must I DO to be saved?" He was given nothing to do but simply to "BELIEVE on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:30-31). Jesus informed the religious teacher Nicodemus, "For God so loved the world that He gave (a son is given, Is. 9:6) His only begotten Son that whosoever BELIEVETH in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). Jesus announced, "I am the resurrection and the life: He that BELIEVETH in me, though he were dead, yet shall He live (Ep. 2:1) and whosoever ... BE-LIEVETH in me shall never die" (John 11:24-26).

Once the Holy Spirit imputes Christ's perfect righteousness to us (Rom.4:6-8) and opens our hearts to believe Christ's Gospel, we are declared righteous (Rom. 3:21-22, 26). The Bible is the infallible record of God's words and works that assure us that we are in Christ once we are drawn to Him (John 6:44, 65) by the gift of faith to believe (Ep. 2:8-9), we have life eternal (John 20:31, 1 John 5:13), never to be lost (John 6:39-40).

God resurrects the spiritually dead (Col. 2:13) by removing the heart of stone (Ez. 36:26), the Holy Spirit purifying it (Acts 15:8-9) by His love (Rom. 5:5; 2 Cor. 3:3). Those whom God chose He will call (Acts 2:39). They hear the gospel and cry out to the Father (Gal. 4:6) exhibiting their newly received sonship by God's will alone (John 1:13). They gladly confess to whomever will hear (Rom. 10:10) their duty and joy to share their hope (1 Pet. 3:15) and God's light (Matt. 5:16).

Salvation springs from God's sovereignty alone: "If Abraham were justified by (HIS) works, he hath whereof to glory; but NOT before God ... to him that ... believeth ... his FAITH is counted for righteousness" (Rom. 4:2-3). When God calls the one chosen before the world's foundation, it is by the gift of faith (2 Tim. 1:9). All man's works are considered repugnant (Is. 64:6; Rom. 4:6). God alone ordains the spiritually dead to eternal life by His sovereign will alone (Acts 13:48), and the required belief in Christ's finished work (John 17:4, 19:30; Heb. 4:3) is also given by God (Phil. 1:29) for His sovereign purpose (Rom. 8:28).

Since the fall (Gen. 3:1-6) and the curse (vs.15-19) the natural heart in mankind is hopelessly sin-filled (Jer. 17:9; 2 Tim. 3:1-5, 4:3-4). God in His sovereignty chooses to leave some in their preferred depravity; and none have standing to question or challenge Him (Rom. 9:13-23).

Satan is very willing to enslave fallen mankind in their inherited spiritual blindness and death (John 12:37-40; 2 Cor. 4:3-4; Jude 10-13). Children of disobedience in their very nature (Col. 3:6) take pleasure in all manner of wickedness (Rom. 1:32) but it only lasts for a short season (Heb. 11:25). All born of Adam are in the same eternal danger since all have sinned (Rom. 3:10-23) and all need PERFECTION to stand in God's presence (Matt. 5:48).

To others, chosen before the foundation of the earth (Ep. 1:4) whom God has foreordained and predestinated, He called, justified and glorified (Rom 8:28-30) and none can charge anything against God's elect (vs. 33) nor separate us from the love of Christ (vs. 39).

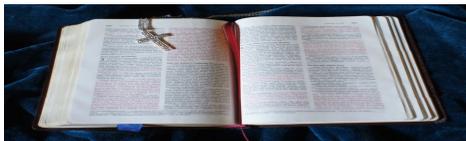
God's sovereignty in salvation is exclusively granted by the "workmanship" of Christ (Ep. 2:10) to believers by the imputation and indwelling of the Holy Spirit into the heart of a called child of God (Rom 8:11) who covers us with Christ's righteousness (Titus 3:5-7). While we are at first to come as little children (Matt. 18:1-4) we are NOT to remain in that stage (Heb. 5:12-14). We are to study God's Word (2 Tim. 1:15).

Having been born unrighteous we cannot save ourselves by law keeping (good works) for law magnifies sin (Gal. 2:16; Rom. 5:20), but God grants to those He justifies the grace to live by faith (Gal. 3:11) and deliver us out of bondage (4:3-7) and condemnation (Rom. 8:1). God's grace has abolished the enmity between our sinfulness and His holiness. The law, 400 years after Abraham (1 Tim. 1:9-11), made nothing perfect (Heb. 7:19). Some may plead the "greatness" of their ministries and their "wonderful works" but will be cast out (Matt. 7:22-23) for "by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified ..." (Rom. 3:20). The righteousness of God is not by the law but "... is manifested (vs. 21-22) by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that BELIEVE." By MERCY He saved us by the "regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Titus 3:5) and by HIS SOVEREIGN WILL ALONE (John 1:12-13).

History and scripture indicate that many have risen up "against the Lord and against His Christ" (Ps. 2:2), and the past century witnessed some of the most evil dictators of all time yet the most evil is yet to come. But from the creation to the flood, to the parting of the Red Sea, from the successive kingdoms of Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, to the first advent of Christ to earth and His defeat of Satan by an empty cross and an empty tomb and an occupied throne in heaven, to the coming rapture of the church and the victorious return of a conquering Christ and the defeat of the armies under the Antichrist, will finally be our "blessed hope" and the "glorious appearing" of that great God and our savior Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13).

So, as we "work out" our God-given salvation (Phil. 2:12) we have the Almighty Creator (John 1:1-3, 14) as our surety (guarantor – Phil. 1:6) so while we were "yet God's enemies (Rom. 5:10; Col. 1:21), He saved us, and called us with a holy calling: NOT according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus BEFORE the world began" (2 Tim. 1:9). Rejoice that your name was written in the Lamb's Book of Life BEFORE the world began (Rev. 3:5, 21:27). In this blessing our Lord Jesus Christ COMMANDED us to rejoice (Luke 10:20).

Keep looking up.



Lord, Search Me

By Nancy Long

Psalm 139: 1, 23-24 – *“O Lord, Thou hast searched me, and known me.
Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and
know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way
in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”*

Ezekiel 11:19-20 – *“And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new
spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh,
and I will give them an heart of flesh: That they may walk in
My statutes, and keep Mine ordinances, and do them:
and they shall be my people, and I will be their God.”*

Search me, O God, and know my heart today!
Try me, O Savior and know my thoughts, I pray,
See if there be some wicked way in me;
Cleanse me, from every sin, and set me free.

I praise Thee, Lord, for cleansing me from sin;
Fulfill Thy Word and make me pure within.
Fill me with fire, where once I burned with shame;
Grant my desire to magnify Thy name.

Lord, take my life, and make it wholly Thine;
Fill my poor heart with Thy great love divine.
Take all my will, my passion, self, and pride;
I now surrender, Lord, let me abide.

O Holy Ghost, revival comes from Thee;
Send a revival, start a work in me.
Thy Word declares Thou wilt supply our need;
For blessing now, O Lord, I humbly plead.”

Words – James Edwin Orr -1912-1987

Music – Maori melody

In my Defender article for March, I used three verses that clearly describe the heart of man, how absolutely filthy, degrading, and disgusting that heart actually is so much so, that we humans are not even capable of adequately discerning our own motives or intentions.

However though, God knows!! God is omniscient, and omnipresent!! Nothing escapes Him! He knows our innermost thoughts, even before they roll off our tongues to become words. (Psalm 139:4). God knows us better than we are able to know ourselves and yet, Christ died for us yes, even while we were yet sinners, He died for us (Rom. 5:8). You see, God loves us in spite of who we are. We were comfortable in our “misery”, as strange as that sounds, not even realizing, the depths to which we had fallen. None were seeking after God (Rom. 3:11b). We were unhappy, troubled, sick, and miserable, but didn’t know, and didn’t even care!!! This knowledge is too high for us, say the Scriptures. We cannot fully understand!!

However, God, being rich in mercy, took away our stony, hardened, despicable, dead, and cold heart, and gave us a new heart, one that is pliable moldable a heart of flesh!! This change takes place in an instant, in the twinkling of an eye, so to speak. The rebirth, being born again, happens in a flash, and **only** by the irresistible grace of God **More than amazing!!**

Knowing the truth, as it's clearly expressed in the Word of God, causes me to realize, over and over again, just how easily one can get caught up in the "things of this world". Scripture plainly teaches that we're to "*Set our affections on things above, not on things on the earth*", and mortify the deeds of the flesh (Col. 3:2 and 5a). Put on the new man!!

But for the grace of God who removed our stony hearts and replaced them with ones of flesh we are who we are!! May we be ever mindful of this sad and awful truth! May we be ever grateful to God, who "looked beyond our faults and saw our needs"!!!

The words to the hymn, **Search Me, O God**, were penned by a young man, James Edwin Orr, at a revival meeting in Ngaruawahia, New Zealand, taking him less than five minutes to put them down on paper. He was just 24 years of age. He was ordained a Baptist minister in 1940, and served as a chaplain in the US Air Force in WWII. He became a professor in the School of World Missions at Fuller Theological Seminary, all while writing a number of books and composing several more hymns. Despite these life long accomplishments though, James Orr will likely be most remembered as the author of this simple, but extremely meaningful hymn, based on Psalm 139, verses 23 and 24 "*Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*".

I have a friend who stresses that we, as Christians, keep our sin accounts short with God. Confess them as soon as we recognize we've fallen short, knowing and believing "**He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness**" (1 John 1:9). It's imperative we catch these, what we might call, little sins, before they take root, embedding themselves deep within, becoming stumbling blocks to ourselves, and also to others.

"Help us, Lord, to consciously, and intentionally, walk in the path You've set before us. Search us Try us Know us and Lead us. In the precious name of Jesus, I pray. Amen!"





From Our Mailbag

It's all Going to Burn

By Michael Anthony

The concern over the loss of a religious building would be funny if it were not symbolic of the fire that is to come. The hypocrisy is simple. There is more angst over the loss of an old building than over the loss of a fiery eternity.

The dead bones and stained-glass from a time long ago seem to be more revered than the words spoken by the One who said, "Sky and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away." Religion itself has become a relic of a time when paganism choked out the voice of the Creator.

The worry over the condition of a physical structure while ignoring the plight of a perishing soul, is the true issue to lament. Our focus must be on the eternal and not on the cares of this world. The fire in Notre Dame Cathedral is just another reminder of the future that Jesus prophesied: It's all going to burn.



A Blessing

By Inga Abraham

Such a small frame
It brings much joy
A delicate thing
No bigger than a toy
Depending on arms of warmth
To love and to keep safe
The cry at night
Melody raging for support
Only to snuggle in delight
As mother whispers
"My baby, a blessing"
While darkness
Breaks to daylight

Our mission through the broadcast of In Defense of Truth and the publication of The Defender newsletter is to earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints (Jude 3). Our vision today is just as strong as it was back in 1963 when Dr. John Dekker began this outreach. We pray that you will continue to stand with us as we hold true to God's holy Word.

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WRITE TO US!

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Upcoming Events!

If you are in or around the Baltimore area, we'd love to have you join us for these upcoming events!

Adult & Children's Sunday School	10:15 AM
Sunday Morning Worship & Children's Church	11:00 AM
Tuesday Afternoon Bible Study	1:30 PM
Wednesday Evening Bible Study	7:00 PM
Friday Night Youth Group	7:00 PM