

“Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” — John 12:21

Where Is Religion Headed?

Victor White

In the book of Jeremiah we find the prophet being commanded by the Lord in Ch. 36:2-3 to write down the words that God had spoken to him in a book that through the reading of those words the people might turn from their evil ways. Jeremiah did exactly what the Lord commanded him. This book, with its condemnation of Israel and Judah, eventually ended up being read in the presence of king Jehoiakim. After just a few pages had been read, the king became so infuriated he cut the book into pieces with a penknife and threw the pages into the fire. This account is found in Ch. 36:20-24. The concluding verse of that passage notes of the king and his court, “Yet they were not afraid nor rent their garments.” Certainly a sad state of affairs when the leaders of the people so violently reject the word of God that they become enraged at its reading and seek to destroy it.

Many today are concerned that our leaders have rejected God’s word in a similar fashion. No, we do not see them cutting up the scriptures and casting them into the fire, but rather we see in the laws they enact and the lifestyles they embrace actions that speak just as loudly regarding their attitude toward the word of God as those of king Jehoiakim. Because of this apparent forsaking of the precepts of God by many of our leaders, some have come to fear for the future of the church and our freedom to worship and teach the truth as we do now. Well that very concern should cause each of us to strengthen our faith in the Lord and, as many before us have done, serve the Lord our God regardless of the consequences that may come our way.

But consider what occurred following king Jehoiakim’s book burning. In Ch. 36:32 we see that Jeremiah took another book and wrote all the words the Lord had spoken to him and added many more besides those. The king’s rejection of the word did not stop its proclamation. The powerful may reject it, those in authority may oppose it, but the word of God continues to work for good in the lives of men.

Many years after the life of the prophet Jeremiah, we find the account of the Apostle Peter’s sermon on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2. Following the crowd’s plea of “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” we find Peter answering that question in v.38. The results are seen in v.41, “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.” The word of God cannot be thwarted by a king’s knife. They cannot be burned by any leader of man, legislated away by any government, or declared archaic by changes in societal norms. Those have all occurred before but the word of the Lord continues to be proclaimed and accepted by good and honest hearts.

So where is religion headed? Well that depends on us. Just as Jeremiah and the prophets suffered rejection and often punishment for preaching of the word, we should be prepared for the same treatment. Just as Jesus demonstrated in speaking the words of the Father regardless of the consequences, we must follow that same example. And just as Peter overcame the ridicule of the crowd on Pentecost to proclaim the good news that saves men’s souls, we must have that same courage knowing that our efforts to teach and live by God’s word will ultimately lead to an eternal home with God, not only for us but for those who hear us.

Religion, as it has been described in the Bible, is all about the people. The greatest obstacle to where religion is heading in our time is the same as it has been in the past. The people must know God’s word. Many today “have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge” (Rom. 10:2). Many “know God, but glorify him not as God” (Rom. 1:21). Some are “tossed

(Continued on pages 2)

to and fro, and carried about by every wind of doctrine." People have been this way in the past and these problems still exist today. How have these exist today. How have these difficulties been overcome in the past? By the word of God being "heard among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (II Tim. 2:2). By heeding the exhortation to "study to show thyself approved unto God"(I Tim. 2:15). By "desiring that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding." That is the future of religion just as it has been since the days of Jeremiah.

Where is religion headed? It all depends on you.

Behold Your God!

Bill Moseley

On the tableland of God's inspired volume, the Bible, there is one book that has always to this writer risen as a towering monument to the greatness of God – the great prophecy of Isaiah. It is there – lofty, majestic, issuing great promises to the remnant under the Messiah, and at the same time threatening judgments to the enemies of Jehovah. It was this great prophet who called upon Judah to "behold your God!" (Isa. 40:9). Yet an ungrateful nation had rejected God, even as the world by and large has today. It is high time that people, especially those that are His, again begin to "behold our God."

The prophet begins to show God's greatness by setting beside Him the universe which He created. This is the God that "measured the waters in the hollow of his hand" (v. 12). He is the one who "meted out the heaven with the span" (ibid.). Here is a picture of God, holding forth the "span," which was about nine inches, reaching from the tip of the thumb to the tip of the little finger of outspread hand. When God made this world, it was almost as if was saying, "here is my span; my world shall be as this to me." And so it was. He is pictured holding a vessel, and in it is the dust of the earth, and he knew every grain. The prophet shows us Judah's God with a scale in his hand, weighing the very mountains! Truly, we serve no puny God!

Isaiah then shows man's insignificance compared to this God. What man is there that is in a position to tell God anything (v. 13)? There is not a one! When God set about His great creative work, to whom did He have to go for advice? Who had knowledge about this process that God did not have? Not a one. Here is a God possessed of omnipotence

and need not ask advice of any man.

Every nation is subject to the decrees of God (v. 15). All through Old Testament history the nations were moved at the decree of God. If he decided to use them to achieve his purpose, they achieved it. If, because of their wickedness, God destroyed them, they sat there – immobile and impotent while the stroke of his fury reduced them to nothing. Truly, the nations are "as a drop of a bucket" compared to him. All the earth and all that it contains is not sufficient to give Him what He truly deserves. "Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering" (v. 16). If every cedar was hewn down from Lebanon; if every beast was brought as a sacrifice, they would still far short of a truly sufficient sacrifice. And so in His mercy, God allows man to make the sacrifices that he can make – and God will accept them if they are what he has asked for.

God is far superior to the idol-gods of man (v. 18f). Their gods of sticks and stones, yea even of gold and silver, are nothing compared to Him. The workman may make them, but when they are finished, there they sit – they "shall not be moved" (v. 20). Whatever idol; whatever "god" a man may have will not benefit him. They are merely the work of men's hands and will be destroyed.

And so, "have ye not known? have ye not heard ...?" (vv. 21, 28). Here is a God that never wearies; never grows faint, and will bear those up who will worship and serve Him as the God of the universe. He "hath given power to the faint" (v. 29), to the extent that they "shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint" (v. 31). This is probably an allusion to the joyous times when the captive nation would return from bondage of Babylon. But can we not enjoy this promise today? As we seek to leave one day what Ronald Reagan once called "the surly bond of earth" and "touch the face of God," do we not realize what a God we have at our disposal?

Yes, "Judah, behold your God!" But also to God's people today, "behold your God!" Serve him; worship him and enjoy his blessings. Fail to recognize his greatness at your own risk and eternal peril.



Read your Bible daily

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

2Tim 2:15 KJV