

...for this must take place ...

By Bill Johnson



The Bible makes it clear that God is sovereign. God is in control. Nothing surprises Him!

That is meant to be comforting, and it is. Nonetheless, when I put myself in the place of families constantly on the run, from those who would rape, mutilate and destroy, I recognize that even as a Christian it would be hard for some - if not most - of us to readily and easily voice those words, "God is sovereign. He is in control. Be at peace knowing that the battle belongs to the Lord."

It is difficult not to give thought to such possibilities even in our beloved America. There are so many things unfolding at such a rapid pace right before our eyes. I know that most of you reading this agree.

Alarmist? Is that me? Perhaps. But perhaps not. I obviously don't think that I am an alarmist and certainly don't want to needlessly alarm anyone. At the same time, God calls us to be watchful, for the hour is late. Here are a few verses that come to mind, Jesus' words from Matthew 24:3-8:

As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?" And Jesus answered them, "See that no one leads you astray. For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and they will lead many astray. And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet.

For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are but the beginning of the birth pains.

Wars and rumors of wars? Kingdom against kingdom?

"To the non-Muslim world, ISIS is a metastasizing cancer, a maniacal barbarian horde, a brutal, Nazi-like terror army that revels in beheading infidels, enslaving women and threatening to take over the entire world. Its rapid recruitment of fighters, including many Western nations, and its call for terror-cell and lone-wolf attacks around the globe make this a dangerous time.

But despite recently commenced military efforts to neutralize the threat, the West has yet to come to grips with its enemy." [Taken from Whistleblower, David Kupelian, October 2014]

Meanwhile under the leadership of our President, the federal government continues to cut back our military.

Why?

Why does President Obama obfuscate the truth regarding the threats posed by Islamic forces advancing brutality around the world and in our own country? For example, President Obama declared recently that ISIL is not Islamic. Why does he make such declarations when a group of Muslims defines itself an "Islamic State?"

And lest we think it is a partisan attempt to obscure the truth, remember that Republican President George W. Bush regularly stated that "Islam is a religion of peace."

This to me is one of the most concerning statements that any person can make in these days of the advancement of terrorism.

Though many are weary of America being, in a sense, the "policeman of the world," it was widely known by foe and ally alike that America would be there in times of crises of various kinds - from humanitarian needs to natural disasters. Americans are often first to offer food, shelter, medical supplies, volunteers, or military arms and forces if necessary.

By this I don't mean to imply that America has always been pure in motive or that we have been a perfect country. We cannot be naive to America's wrongdoing.

Nonetheless, over the years the United States has held back nations, dictators, tyrants who were bent upon advancing evil - Nazi Germany and Communist Russia to name just two.

Under the current administration, however, there has been a concerted effort to purposefully neutralize American military forces which has emboldened our enemies and placed our allies at great risk.

"... for this must take place ... "
continued on page 2



From the desk of Bill Johnson

“... for this must take place ...”

[continued from page 1]

Take note of the points below from Tommy Sears, Breitbart.com - October 20, 2014

- The abandonment of Iraq despite the warnings of top military officials that a premature departure would result in needless degradation and the immense loss of national and international security as ISIS would take control of the country.
- Savage beheadings paraded over the Internet including American beheadings.
- Terrorists entering the nation illegally due to gross negligence in border policy and action.
- The spread of Ebola in the U.S. from foreign travelers.
- China proceeding with a break-neck military build-up on land, air and sea.
- American weakness has not gone unnoticed. Russia brazenly annexed Crimea from Ukraine earlier this year with no consequences.
- Iran’s continuation of its nuclear program and sponsorship of terrorists, uncontested.
- Obama and his Majority Leader Harry Reid, shrinking our military forces to levels not seen since before World War II.
- The All-Volunteer Force has been transformed into a social-engineering laboratory with the repeal of the law on gays in the military and forcing women into combat positions.
- Obama trading away terror leaders in Guantanamo for a deserting soldier.
- Benghazi. Deaths of four Americans in Benghazi, Libya on the anniversary of 9/11 two years ago. Personnel on the ground as well as other sources in the region that night have said assets were either left unmobilized or delayed in assisting Americans under siege.

There is vast reason to be concerned. No

matter what happens in the coming election (and shame on us if we don’t exercise our right to vote) we will yet have two years to endure through the present season.

In addition, it is well-documented that some of our most conservative and spiritual leaders are vilified by our nation’s influence shapers: media, politicians, educators, corporate leaders, etc. Think U.S. Rep. Michelle Bachmann, U.S. Rep. Louis Gohmert, and U.S. Senator Ted Cruz.

As our nation has been substantially weakened economically, ethically, medically, morally, and militarily, we have become increasingly vulnerable to forces from within and without: Shariah, EMP, (electromagnetic pulse), cyberwarfare, federal and state courts which do not rule according to the Constitution, and a government that has little to no inclination to protect our borders.

There are those who make comparisons between America and Israel of old, God’s chosen people.

God richly blessed His people by His presence, His law, prophets, priests, and kings, but they turned their back upon Him repeatedly. With merciful patience, still God blessed them over and over again. Still they rejected their Creator and God’s ways.

Though America is not Israel - nor God’s chosen people - yet God has overwhelmingly blessed America for nearly 250 years. Despite the many evidences of God’s hand upon us, America has turned its back upon God time after time. Shamefully, America is largely marked by godlessness: abortion, pornography over American airwaves, the legitimization of homosexuality and now most recently same-sex marriage, little to no regard for the Lord’s Day, etc.

We have been shocked to observe how quickly President Obama has been able to build a team of czars, cabinet members, spokespersons, military leaders, jurists who would lead us far afield of U.S. Constitutional standards largely esteemed and observed since our founding.

Is this just happenstance? Does this mark the beginning of the end for Constitutional America - *Government of the People, by the*

People, for the People?

Indeed, there are many strong voices throughout the world fighting for America’s demise: a post-constitutional America, secular and socialistic, with Christianity confined within its own four walls and penalized if God’s word is preached on matters relating to same-sex marriage and/or homosexuality.

But there are strong Christians who do seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness knowing that God is not dead - trusting not in the provision of man, but rather in the providence of God.

What is God doing? What is His timetable? The sovereignty of God.

*But to the wicked God says:
 “What right have you to recite my statutes or take my covenant on your lips?
 For you hate discipline,
 and you cast my words behind you.
 If you see a thief, you are pleased with him,
 and you keep company with adulterers.
 “You give your mouth free rein for evil,
 and your tongue frames deceit.
 You sit and speak against your brother;
 you slander your own mother’s son.
 These things you have done, and I have been silent; you thought that I was one like yourself.
 But now I rebuke you and lay the charge before you. “Mark this, then, you who forget God, lest I tear you apart, and there be none to deliver!
 The one who offers thanksgiving as his sacrifice glorifies me;
 to one who orders his way rightly
 I will show the salvation of God!”
 Psalm 50:16-23*

This commentary from the Reformation Study Bible on the Final Judgment reminds us: **“In a world of sinners, where God has ‘allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways’ evil is rampant, and doubts arise about how God, if He is sovereign, can be just, or, if He is just, can be sovereign. But God will be glorified in rendering just judgment, and the Last Judgment will answer every suspicion that He has ceased to care about righteousness.”** (Rev. 6:10, 16:5-7; 19:1-5)

5 Key Implications If Baghdad Falls to ISIS

by Patrick Poole



The article below was written by national security expert Patrick Poole - one of the featured speakers at our recent October 11 conference in Lansing (“ISIS, ISNA, CAIR: Separate or Similar? Terrorist or Peaceful?”).

This article and the first two pages of our newsletter are indeed very sobering. However, we believe it is worth keeping in mind as events unfold in the Mideast and around the world. It is important to remember the words of Jesus from Matthew 24: *“See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet.”*

5 Key Implications If Baghdad Falls to ISIS

... The possible fall of Baghdad could be the most significant development in the War on Terror since 9/11. ...

So what happens if such a situation comes to pass? Here are five key implications (by no means limited to these) if Baghdad falls to ISIS:

1) ISIS will not be claiming to be the Islamic State, they will BE the Islamic State

Symbolism doesn’t matter much to your average post-modern Westerner, but it still does in the Islamic world and the capture of Baghdad will hold enormous value. For 500 years Baghdad was the seat of the Abbasid Caliphate, and falling to ISIS would allow them to reclaim that mantle. Such an event will electrify the Middle East and beyond...

2) The Great Reconciliation between jihadist groups will begin

... We are already seeing jihadist groups gravitating towards ISIS, such as the

announcement by Pakistani Taliban leaders pledging their allegiance to the Islamic State. Other groups of younger jihadis are breaking away from Al-Qaeda franchises in North Africa and defecting to ISIS. ... If Baghdad falls, jihadist groups, some of whom have been openly hostile or remained neutral, will quickly align behind ISIS. ...

3) What of US personnel in Iraq?

The US Embassy in Baghdad is the largest embassy on the planet. ...[T]here are more than 1,100 US service members in Baghdad protecting the embassy and the airport. That doesn’t include embassy personnel, American aid workers, reporters, etc. also in Baghdad. ... If flights can’t get out of Baghdad, how will the State Department and Pentagon evacuate US personnel? An image like the last helicopter out of Saigon would be of considerable propaganda value to ISIS and other jihadist groups. ...

4) If ISIS captures Baghdad, it will be with weapons provided by the US to the Iraqi Army and “vetted moderate” Syrian rebel groups

Since their push back into Iraq this summer, ISIS has regularly paraded captured weapons and vehicles that have been provided by the US to the Iraqi Army, which rapidly collapsed in the face of the ISIS advance. ISIS has subsequently used these US-provided weapons to repel attacks by Iraqi forces. ... The potential propaganda value of ISIS capturing Baghdad with US weapons will be enormous.

5) The Fall of Baghdad will herald an unparalleled sectarian war in the Middle East and wide scale regional instability

The fighting in Syria and Iraq has been part of the regional sectarian competition between Sunni Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States against Shia Iran and its allies in Iraq, the Assad regime in Syria and Hezbollah. ... If Baghdad falls to ISIS, it will be all-hands-on-deck across the entire Middle East, with a sectarian war not seen since the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s and sectarian/ethnic cleansing not seen since the Balkan wars. We are already seeing Shiite

militias killing Sunnis indiscriminately in Iraq and widespread ethnic and religious cleansing by ISIS in Northern Syria and Iraq. Meanwhile, our NATO ally Turkey is now bombing the same Kurds who are fighting ISIS. ... The potential humanitarian disaster from the dislocation of millions in the region could be without parallel.

If, in fact, Baghdad falls to ISIS and the Sunni-Shia sectarian war in Syria and Iraq metastasizes across the Middle East and North Africa, the U.S. will likely find itself an ancillary player. War-weary Americans have no appetite for boots on the ground (fueled in no small measure by the Obama administration’s stoking anti-Iraq war sentiments as part of their political strategy).

And yet one remarkable feature I personally witnessed last month while in Washington, D.C., briefing members of Congress on the proposal to fund more training and weapons for Syrian rebels, is the absence of any acknowledgement by the political and media elite that we lost the Iraq war. The fact is that we left, and ISIS stayed. Our options are increasingly limited in Iraq and the region, and most of those options are horrible options. We don’t even have lesser-of-two-evils options because of our reckless bipartisan foreign policy.

The U.S. will also face a dilemma: at the very same time this administration has been sidling up to Iran and trying to strike a deal over its nuclear weapons program, we very well may be faced with calls from our longtime allies in the region, almost all Sunni, for assistance. And then we have Turkey, which, as a NATO partner, we have treaty obligations to honor.

And faced with a nuclear Iran amidst a growing sectarian war, many Sunni countries will start their own crash nuclear programs in response, leading to the regional proliferation of nuclear weapons....

The coming days and weeks in the fight for Baghdad are fraught with enormous implications for the U.S. And yet our ability to influence those events is rapidly waning.

Hallmark & Kohl's

by Lisa Van Houten



From Hallmark Hall of Fame movies to heartwarming Hallmark card television commercials, the name Hallmark is seemingly synonymous with “family.” Yet Hallmark’s definition of family is not what it seems.

Last May, Hallmark debuted “Mother’s Day” cards for lesbian mothers. One card stated: *“... When it comes to big hearts, moms are second to none. How does anyone ever get by with just one?”*

Now Hallmark gay wedding cards are appearing across the country in stores which sell Hallmark cards. Here is a letter we recently received from one of our supporters:

I want to tell about a very upsetting incident I had recently at our Kohl's Department Store here in Grand Blanc. I was shopping for a 50th anniversary card for friends when my eye caught the images shown on the photos I've enclosed. [see above] My initial thought was “oops” someone made a big printing boo-boo on these cards. But then I noticed the white labels on the card dividers, “Two Grooms” and “Two Brides!” This was a very disturbing discovery for me. This is just another incidence of forcing the gay marriage lifestyle down the throats of God-fearing people. Now shoppers, and their children, will believe if Hallmark sells gay greeting cards, that lifestyle must be normal and acceptable behavior. If that lifestyle is not being promoted, a traditional wedding card for any “couple” would do. But, when “Mr. & Mr.” or “Mrs. & Mrs.” is on the front of the card, there is nothing subtle about the not-so-hidden agenda. We are certainly becoming more and more desensitized to a lifestyle that

must be grieving our Lord greatly. I am very disgusted and so disappointed that Hallmark would succumb to the pressure of the gay pride population and profit by pushing that agenda on greeting cards! How sad

I went to the customer service department at Kohl's that day and asked to speak to a manger. I took him back to the greeting card section and pointed out the objectionable cards to him. He was not aware that they were in the card rack and seemed surprised and saddened by it. He told me that Hallmark vendors fill the racks and Kohl's has no control over that process. I asked him to please discuss this problem at their staff meeting and see if something could be done about it. He assured me that would happen. But, as of last week, the cards are still in the rack. ...

These Hallmark “Two Grooms” and “Two Brides” cards were even stocked recently at the Brigham Young University bookstore. BYU is affiliated with the Mormon church. However, after discovering the cards, which had been placed in the bookstore by a Hallmark vendor, BYU pulled the cards from display and made it known to the supplier that cards promoting same-sex “marriage” wouldn’t be accepted by the store.

According to BYU spokesperson Carri Jenkins, the outside vendor stocked the shelves without realizing the school wouldn’t want to sell the cards marketed to buyers celebrating unions between two brides and two grooms. “We’ve been able to work with them,” she said.

Even though this example is from Brigham Young University, it demonstrates that retailers do have the right to refuse certain merchandise. The Kohl’s claim that they have no control over the merchandise they stock is nonsense. They could easily communicate to Hallmark that they do not wish to carry the gay “marriage” cards.

I checked my local Wal-Mart which offers Hallmark cards, but I did not find any “two grooms” and two brides” cards. So, obviously, not all stores which carry

Hallmark cards are required to sell gay “marriage” cards.

The writer of the letter above concluded her note to us with these words: *“sadly the battle for good wages on.”* Indeed, it does. Will you join that battle?

Check out the Hallmark cards in places where you shop. If you find stores promoting homosexual “marriage” do what this dear lady did and courteously speak to the store manager, urging that they not carry cards promoting same-sex “marriage.” Don’t accept the excuse that the store has no control over the cards Hallmark vendors stock.

Also, contact both Kohl’s and Hallmark to express your concern. See below for contact information.



Attn: Donald Hall, Jr - President & CEO
Hallmark Cards, Inc.
P.O. Box 419034
Mail Drop 216
Kansas City, MO 64141-6580



Attn: Kevin Mansell - President & CEO
Kohl's Department Stores
N56 W17000 Ridgewood Drive
Menomonee Falls, WI 53051

American Decency Frontline
Vol. XXVIII, Issue XI
Published monthly by
American Decency Association

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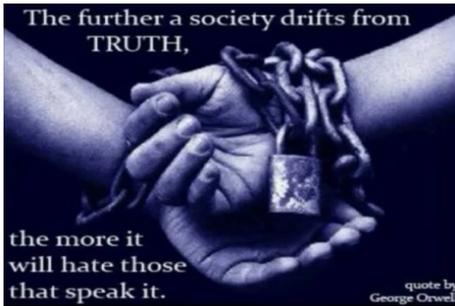
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Orwellian Orders to the Church

by Lisa Van Houten



“Big Brother is watching you” wrote George Orwell in his fictional account of governmental tyranny and totalitarianism in the novel “1984” (published in 1949) wherein Orwell chillingly predicted citizens would be prosecuted for, what he described 65 years ago, as “thoughtcrimes.”

Thirty years past the titled date in 2014 America, “Big Brother” is not just watching but is issuing subpoenas to pastors demanding copies of all sermons and pastoral communications be handed over to the local government. Yes, you read that right. In Houston, Texas the city government has unleashed the “thoughtcrimes” Gestapo against local churches.

As Todd Starnes writes, ***“The city of Houston has issued subpoenas demanding a group of pastors turn over any sermons dealing with homosexuality, gender identity or Annise Parker, the city’s first openly lesbian mayor. And those ministers who fail to comply could be held in contempt of court.”***

This comes after the city council, led by their lesbian mayor, enacted a so-called “non-discrimination law” which, among other things, allows people to enter the public bathroom of the gender with which they choose to identify. The Houston City Council, bent on giving special status to those who practice bi-sexuality, did nothing to protect women and girls from men - claiming to be transgender - who can now legally enter women’s bathrooms or store dressing rooms.

Joe LaRue, an attorney with Alliance Defending Freedom, spoke last May before the Houston Area Pastors Council where he warned that this Houston law would force

a church having 50 or more employees to hire homosexuals and transgendered individuals. He also listed 46 examples where women and children had been sexually abused in cities having these ordinances. The Houston city attorney has also acknowledged that the ordinance can be used to prosecute photographers and other business owners who, due to their strongly held religious beliefs, choose not to participate in same-sex “marriage” ceremonies.

This transgender bathroom law, which was passed by the Houston City Council last June, was not enacted without a Texas-size fight. City council meetings were packed with widespread opposition. And from the Houston Area Pastors Council a whopping **400 local pastors** joined together to speak out against the ordinance! Black, White, Hispanic, and Vietnamese pastors from all kinds of denominations joined together to voice opposition.

Yet in spite of the public outcry, the city council voted to enact the law. That did not stop the opponents of the ordinance who gathered more than 50,000 signatures from Houston residents – far more than the 17,269 needed – to place the issue on the ballot for voters to decide.

The secretary for the City of Houston, who by law must examine the petitions, certified the petitions as sufficient. Yet, in an act of true lawlessness, the mayor and city attorney defied the law and rejected the certification and threw out the petitions.

In response, the citizen opposition group has now brought a lawsuit against the city regarding the rejection of their certified petitions for a ballot referendum.

Now, the City of Houston has countered by issuing subpoenas to five local pastors, demanding copies of sermons and other communications with their church members regarding this issue. Incredibly, the pastors weren’t even part of the lawsuit filed by the citizen group, but that didn’t stop city officials from sending a message to these pastors and the community at large that dissent will not be tolerated.

Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) attorney Christina Holcomb stated: ***“The city council and its attorneys are engaging in an inquisition designed to stifle any critique of its actions. Political and social commentary is not a crime; it is protected by the First Amendment.”*** ADF, who specializes in defending religious liberty, is representing the five Houston pastors targeted by these Orwellian tactics.

Pastor Steve Riggle, of the Houston mega-church Grace Community, was one of the pastors subpoenaed. As Todd Starnes reported, Pastor Riggle was ordered to produce all speeches and sermons related to Mayor Annise Parker, homosexuality and gender identity, and hand over “all communications with members of your congregation” regarding the non-discrimination law.

Pastor Riggle warned: ***“This is an attempt to chill pastors from speaking to the cultural issues of the day. The mayor would like to silence our voice. ...”***

Rev. Dave Welch, executive director of the Texas Pastor Council, who also received a subpoena, told Todd Starnes:

“We’re not afraid of this bully. We’re not intimidated at all. ... We are not going to yield our First Amendment rights. This is absolutely a complete abuse of authority. ... This is the place where we stop the LGBT assault on the freedom to practice our faith.”

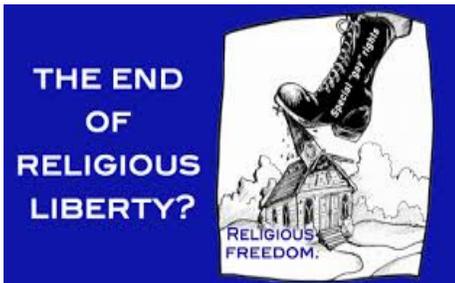
Family Research Council’s Tony Perkins is calling out pastors and Christians to stand together against this brazen attack against our constitutionally guaranteed religious freedom.

“The state is breaching the wall of separation between church and state. Pastors need to step forward and challenge this across the country. I’d like to see literally thousands of pastors after they read this story begin to challenge government authorities – to dare them to come into their churches and demand their sermons.”

[Continued on page 6]

Orwellian Orders to the Church

by Lisa Van Houten



[Continued from page 5]

Eric Metaxas, author of the best-selling biography of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, tweeted: *“In Bonhoeffer’s day, the church waited too long to stand up -- & then it was too late. Americans need to stand up NOW for religious freedom.”*

Now Mike Huckabee, former Arkansas governor who is also an ordained Baptist pastor, is calling on pastors around the country to stand in solidarity with the pastors targeted by this flagrant abuse of power from Houston Mayor Annise Parker. Governor Huckabee is asking pastors across the country to send copies of sermons to the Houston mayor. As Huckabee stated on his Fox News show: *“Obviously she could use a few.”*

Other Christian leaders are also calling for people to send a Bible or sermons to the Houston mayor. Eric Metaxas wrote: *“When you send your Bible or sermon to the Houston Mayor’s Office, please pray over it, that God would change her heart. But send something TODAY. The government of this country must know that believers answer to a HIGHER AUTHORITY and can do no other and will do no other, by God’s grace.”*

Here is the contact information for the Houston mayor if you and/or your pastor would like to join the growing call to take a stand for religious liberty.

Mayor Annise D. Parker
City of Houston
901 Bagby Street
Houston, TX 77002
Email: mayor@houstontx.gov
Phone: 713-837-0311

As Metaxas also stated: “Never in our history has religious freedom been so brazenly defied. A bold red line has been crossed. The Houston mayor’s inexcusable demand to see the sermons of pastors is an outrageous and shocking affront to all Americans and to liberty itself. If the American church does not rise up and stand against this, there is no American church.”

The attack upon religious liberty, and specifically Christianity, is growing by the day. We are on the brink of losing our religious freedoms. God’s people must stand against those who would silence our voice of biblical Truth. Now is the time to rise, to speak out, and to pray.

And Now This...

If Christians don’t stand now in defense of religious liberty, having sermons subpoenaed will be just the tip of the spear.

Just days after the report of Houston pastors having their sermons subpoenaed, news broke that two ordained Christian ministers were threatened with 180 days in jail and up to a \$1,000 fine after declining to perform a same-sex “marriage” ceremony at their Idaho wedding chapel.

Alliance Defense Fund Senior Legal Counsel, Jeremy Tedesco, who is representing the pastors, stated: “Many have denied that pastors would ever be forced to perform ceremonies that are completely at odds with their faith, but that’s what is happening here — and it’s happened this quickly.”

“The government has no business compelling ministers to violate their beliefs and break their ordination vows or risk escalating jail time and fines,” said Tedesco. “The government exists to protect and respect our freedoms, not attack them. The city cannot erase these fundamental freedoms and replace them with government coercion and intolerance.”

Subway: Selling Sex or Sandwiches?



Perhaps you’ve seen the latest Subway television commercial. As two women and a man eat lunch together, one of the women berates the other woman for eating - gasp! - a hamburger! She exclaims: *“Bikini season may be over ... but Halloween is coming, you’ve got to stay in shape for all of the costumes.”*

The costumes to which she’s referring are a series of sexy costumes. As the commercial continues the Subway-eating woman is shown provocatively in each skimpy outfit such as Hot Devil, Sassy Teacher, Spicy Red Riding Hood, and Foxy Fullback.

Subway has been getting a lot of flak for the sexist ad – and not just from conservative commentators.

An NBC report opined: *“Eating healthy is something everyone should do year round, but an ad playing on women’s concern for their weight, coupled with an overabundance of very adult costumes (for a night that’s traditionally about children) is causing controversy.”*

And a Time magazine article, entitled “Subway Wants Women to Stay Skinny So They Can Wear Sexy Halloween Costumes” also bashed the restaurant chain.

Other viewers took to Twitter to take Subway to task for their demeaning, sexualized ad with comments such as:

“Appalling. I don’t need a restaurant to tell me to keep it slim for slutty costumes.”

“Boo of the day: In one fell swoop Subway ad objectifies women and fat shames.”

“Subway, was there a hormonally challenged teenage boy taking over your ad campaign?”

Enclosed in this newsletter is a postcard so that you can let Subway know that sexy imagery isn’t the way to sell sandwiches.

The Supreme Court's Latest Ruling on Marriage

by Chris Johnson



On October 6, the Supreme Court declined to hear arguments on "same-sex marriage" cases from Utah, Oklahoma, Virginia, Indiana, and Wisconsin, thus inactively upholding the lower courts' decisions and legalizing "gay marriage" for those states and, most likely, the states in their appeals court circuits.

The Supreme Court may be waiting for two other cases moving through the appeals courts to possibly uphold a state marriage amendment in a split decision, but if the highest court is to make a ruling on marriage this term, it has only until January.

Until and unless that happens, the number of states allowing "marriage" between same-sex couples has effectively grown to 30. If, in fact, the Supreme Court has no intention of hearing those cases, they have sent a clear message to the lower courts.

As Albert Mohler explains, *"The remaining federal courts were put on notice that same-sex marriage is now the expectation of the Supreme Court and that no appeal on the question is likely to be successful, or even heard."*

Without making a ruling, it appears that the justices have legalized "homosexual marriage" by default.

Writing for the Daily Signal, Ryan T. Anderson of the Heritage Foundation explained the implications, *"This is an unfortunate setback for sound constitutional self-government and a setback for a healthy marriage culture."*

"The truth of the matter is that the marriage laws in these five states—as in many states across our nation—are good laws that reflect the truth about marriage. Frequently

they were passed with overwhelming democratic support. The Supreme Court should have reviewed these cases and should have upheld the authority of citizens and their elected representatives to make good marriage policy. Instead, the Supreme Court left standing bad rulings from lower federal courts that usurped authority from the people by striking down good laws."

He goes on to explain how it affects what he calls "a healthy marriage culture."

"A comprehensive union capable of uniting children with their mom and dad is something only a man and a woman can form. So enacting same-sex marriage would not expand the institution of marriage but redefine it. Finishing what policies such as no-fault divorce began, it would finally replace the conjugal view with a revisionist view of marriage as fundamentally an emotional union."

As we said a few weeks ago, however, the best argument for marriage is not tradition, but the Bible. And, as Russell Moore articulates even more clearly, *"Our vision of marriage is not the equivalent of a church constitution and by-laws, adaptable by a majority vote. Marriage is not simply a cultural or legal practice, but is instead an icon of the union between Christ and his church, embedded in the creation (Eph. 5:22-31). Without a Christian vision of marriage, we have no Christian vision of the gospel."*

So what do we do in the shadow of this court decision? We can guess that the "homosexual marriage" juggernaut will keep pushing; we can assume that our culture will grow less and less tolerant of Christianity; we can foresee that our freedoms of religion and speech will likely be stunted; and we can wonder if we will be persecuted for faithfulness to the scriptures. But what can we do?

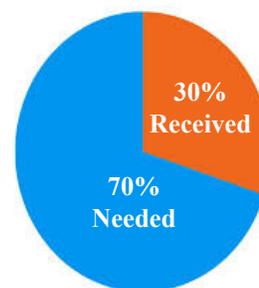
Let's be for something. Let's celebrate God's gift of marriage. Let's resist the "revisionist view of marriage as fundamentally an emotional union" - that idea that as soon as the butterflies are gone, the marriage might as well be over. Let's show the world what

sacrificial love for our spouse looks like.

Dr. Moore says it like this, *"Let's hold fast to what the gospel reveals about the meaning of marriage and the gospel behind it. Let's articulate a Christian vision of what marriage should be, and let's embody that vision in our churches. Let's love our gay and lesbian neighbors. Let's move forward with persuasion and with confidence. This is no time for retreat or for resentment. This is a time for mission."*

Match challenge:

\$20,000!



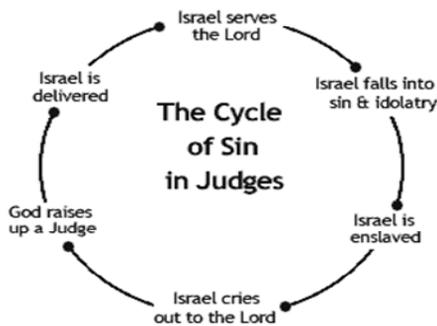
Please prayerfully consider giving toward our match grant. Your support enables us to continue to be a voice for truth and righteousness.

As you review the details of the match challenge below, please call our office at 231-924-4050 with any questions you may have.

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God's Microphone: Pain in Politics

by Chris Johnson



I think that too often as Christians we can give too much credit to our leaders for the effect that they have on our nation. It's easy to fall into the trap of believing that if we only had a different president, or better representatives, or a Supreme Court Justice that cared about the rule of law, the United States would be filled to the brim with milk and honey and we could pave our streets with gold. With the right leadership, abortion would be illegal and the fight against "gay marriage" would be over. I know that I have fallen into that mindset, especially with elections looming and with the amount of emotional capital that I have invested in certain candidates.

And certainly, our leaders have the ability to make huge differences, for better or worse, in our daily lives. That's why voting is so important - not just so that the country can be run the way it should be, but for the good of our neighbors. It is also for that reason, I think, that we can often stand to be reminded that God is sometimes using those poor, or downright awful, leaders - and the chaos that comes with them - to bring His people back to Himself.

I stumbled across a blatant example of this recently in Isaiah 3:4, where the prophet is proclaiming judgment on Judah and Jerusalem, "I will make boys their princes, and infants shall rule over them," or as the note in my Reformation Study Bible explains, "The nation will be ruled by people without experience and unable to govern wisely." Hmmm.

Of course, that is only one example. The whole book of Judges is about this very topic. If you've spent some time in the church, surely you've heard of the "cycle" of judges.

Israel rebels, God sends an oppressor (or an evil ruler), Israel repents, God sends a judge to save them, Israel serves God for a while and then rebels again; same story, over and over.

Of course, the United States can hardly be equated with God's chosen nation in the Old Testament, but the amazing part is that we don't even have to draw that parallel, because Isaiah gives us an example of another gentile nation which God draws to Himself using hardship.

For the sake of space, I will condense the relevant text, which is found in Isaiah 19:16-25:

"In that day the Egyptians will... tremble with fear before the hand that the Lord of hosts shakes over them.... And the Lord will strike Egypt, striking and healing, and they will return to the Lord, and he will listen to their pleas for mercy and heal them."

The Lord strikes Egypt, they turn to Him, and he heals them.

It has been interesting, as I've been reading through Isaiah, to read C.S. Lewis' The Problem of Pain along with it. I have thus had the opportunity to read about the destructive and violent judgment of Israel and her neighboring countries alongside passages like this from Lewis, *"God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pain: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world."*

A little later he says, *"No doubt Pain as God's megaphone is a terrible instrument; it may lead to final and unrepented rebellion. But it gives the only opportunity the bad man can have for amendment. It removes the veil; it plants the flag of truth within the fortress of a rebel soul."*

...Everyone has noticed how hard it is to turn our thoughts to God when everything is going well with us. We 'have all we want' is a terrible saying when 'all' does not include God."

One more interesting passage from Isaiah will help me make my point. In which God replaces Hezekiah's apparently evil

steward, Shebna, or, in His words, He whirl[s] him around and around, and throw[s him] into a wide land." Shebna is replaced with Eliakim who is a "father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem"; he receives the "key of David" and becomes "a throne of honor to his father's house" and a "peg in a secure place."

Then what happens? "The peg that was fastened in the secure place will give way, and it will be cut down and fall, and the load that was on it will be cut off, for the LORD has spoken."

In this passage, God removes a wicked leader with a great leader, but even so Israel is destined for judgment before they are restored to God.

When we throw around the phrase that Christians so often do, "God is in control," how firmly do we believe that? When we elect the representatives we deserve rather than those we campaign for, do we despair or do we realize that God knows what's best for us? Do we look with hope for the future? Do we wonder what lesson it is that God would have us learn and seek to learn it? Do we understand the call for repentance that God is shouting through his megaphone?

What then do we have to repent of? Will we shout reflexively 'abortion' and 'homosexuality' and leave it at that? Or will we search the scriptures for what it means to live a Godly life and realize that we fall so far short of it ourselves.

Let us recognize with G.K. Chesterton that when faced with the question, "what is wrong with the world?" the correct answer is, "Dear Sirs, I am."

So absolutely, vote in the upcoming election. It is your Christian and civic duty to "seek the good of the city where you have been exiled," so do so. Find the best candidates and get to work.

But remember that in the end, the Christian is not primarily called to be a campaigner, but *"to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with your God."*