A LESSON FROM OKLAHOMA CITY

BY

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"Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people."

This nation, the United States of America, has fallen to a new low of reproach and disgrace with the bombing of the Federal building in Oklahoma City. Violent acts of cruelty and brutality have been carried out against innocent victims many times in the past. Most of such acts of violence and terrorism have occurred in the Godless nations of the middle east where murder and maiming are an accepted way of life. Most of such acts were committed by citizens of Godless nations with their government's approval.

Even when our New York trade center was bombed in 1993, it was done by middle east terrorist, not by us. The terrorist mentality, that of hate, had reached our shores and wrecked a terrible toll against our peace and security, yet we could lay the blame on foreign nations who condone and accept such brutality. That was "them" not "us". We would not condone, we would not accept, we would not tolerate such acts of violence against our innocent citizens, especially our children. Although we despised and condemned these acts of violence by others, we found a measure of comfort in the knowledge that we were a nation "under God" which was worthy to receive His Divine blessings.

We were well aware that all through Biblical history God was against nations who engaged in such injustices upon the people. The Old Testament prophets warned that nations who permitted such acts would be punished by God. The Bible teaches that God will condemn, that He will forsake, that He will withhold His blessings, that He will overthrow nations who commit such violence against His people and the good earth.

At this point, I would urge the reader to turn to the book of Amos, and read chapters 4 and 8 (in the interest of space, we cannot quote it all). Now consider the conditions that exist in the nations of Africa and the middle east. We can see the fulfillment of the prophecy of drought, famine, suffering, and destruction. Again we, as citizens of the U.S.A. can point out that these were the Godless nations who rejected God's word, and who refused to accept Jesus Christ, and are now paying the penalty of God's wrath.

In the past, we could compare ourselves with those Godless nations, and boast that we were a nation that believed in God, one that was founded on Christian principles, and were thus worthy to receive His blessings above other nations of the earth.

At this point let me make it clear that the United States is not a "Christian Nation". It is not, and has never been. While Christ was on earth, He made it plain that His kingdom was not of this world. The kingdom of Christ is a spiritual, not an earthly nation. Church and State are completely separated. Combined Church and State governments have been tried in the past, and they have failed. It will not work. Christ said to Render unto Caesar the things that were Caesar's, and unto God the things that were God's. We can, and should, be loyal to both civil and spiritual government, but let us not assume that they are the same.

A look back at history, along with a careful study of Bible teaching will show the proper relationship between civil and spiritual government. In the early days of Christianity, the Roman government tried to combine Church and State government, and it did not work. The result was corruption of both. Greed and the lust for power was the downfall of this effort.

Later on the people of England, seeing the graft and corruption of the Church of Rome, separated themselves from them, and set up the Church of England. However, they made the same mistake by combining Church and State, and placing the king of England as head of the Church of England. Again, corruption and oppression was the result. The oppression and abuse was so bad that it resulted in the settlement of America, and eventually the establishment of the United States government.

When the constitution of the United States of America was formed, the founders realized that Church and State government must be kept separate to avoid the abuse of power. For this reason, they declared that this nation was "under God" rightly acknowledging that God was the supreme power and authority over all nations. At the same time, they realized according to scripture that the civil government had the responsibility of protecting its citizens from the evil doers. They also rightly concluded from the scriptures that the citizen had the responsibility to support the government that protected them. The following scriptures prove this point.

I Tim. 1:9-10 "Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for ungodly and sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of mothers, for manslayers. For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine."

I Peter 2:13-14 "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well."

Rom. 13:1-3 "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God, and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou not then be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shall have praises of the same."

From the above scriptures we conclude that our civil government owes us protection from the lawless. We also conclude that we owe loyalty and obedience to our government. This was the conclusion reached by those who drafted our constitution. In exchange for our loyalty and support, our government has promised us freedom of religion. They promise never to pass laws that would conflict with God's laws, or that would force us to disobey God's laws. Here is a clear separation of duties to God and to State. This is as it should be.

No; America is not a "Christian Nation" per se, but it is a nation under God, and Christianity is the conscience of America. The Christian influence in the lives of Americans is such that we, as a nation, set the highest standards of conduct of any nation on earth. We more strongly oppose violence, oppression, and injustice than any nation where the influence of Christ does not exist. Christianity is the conscience of America today, and it cries out at the outrage at Oklahoma City.

Today that Christian conscience, those Christian principles have been challenged as never before, and every American, especially the Christian, must respond.

There has been a steady decline in moral values. There has been a lowering of Christian standards. There has been a lessening of America's conscience. The terrorist mentality, that of hate, has

spread to the land of the free, and is a threat to our security and our peace. There must be a turning point, and that turning must be to God. Our nation must act. Our nation is now on trial before God.

The way that we react to the evil that is among us may well determine the way that God deals with us in the future. God is against nations that allow such atrocities. God will forsake any nation that condones such practices. God will withhold His blessings from those who harbor such evil among us.

Our constitution, our laws, our justice system, and our courts are designed to protect and defend us against such acts of violence and terror. A careful reading of Rom.13:1-6 teaches us that our legal system has the power from God to execute vengeance against those who do evil. We know that we, as Christians, do not carry out vengeance, but the powers that be(our courts) are ordained by God to execute His wrath upon the evil doer, and to be a revenger.

Now we are at the crossroads. Our government which is ordained by God to protect our innocent children and citizens must now act quickly and surely to avenge those innocent victims, and to punish the guilty.

All of our energy and our talents should be directed toward the prosecution and punishment of the guilty. Those who commit such acts of terrorism against the people of this country have no civil rights to be protected by our government. Those who commit such crimes have no civil rights. They have no constitutional rights. They have no legal rights. They have no moral right to be protected by the government and the people against whom they have sinned. People who plan and carry out such acts forfeit all rights to be protected by the government of the people.

It is time for the Christian voice to be heard in the land. It is said that as much as ten thousand pounds of fertilizer and fuel oil were used in making the bomb that snuffed out so many precious lives. Yet the most destructive element used in this atrocity was HATE. We, as Christians, must speak out against hate in all of its forms. Acts of hate and violence offend the conscience of every Christian. It is time for a change.

Christ must rule in our hearts, and not hate. We must seek God's mercy, or face His wrath. God will not continue His blessing if we close our eyes to the evil among us. He will not withhold His wrath if we close our ears to His word. We did not think that such terrible

things could happen in America, but we were farther from God than we thought. We must repent and turn to God or face His wrath in the days to come.

