

“For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 3:11, NKJV)

# New England Christian Bulletin

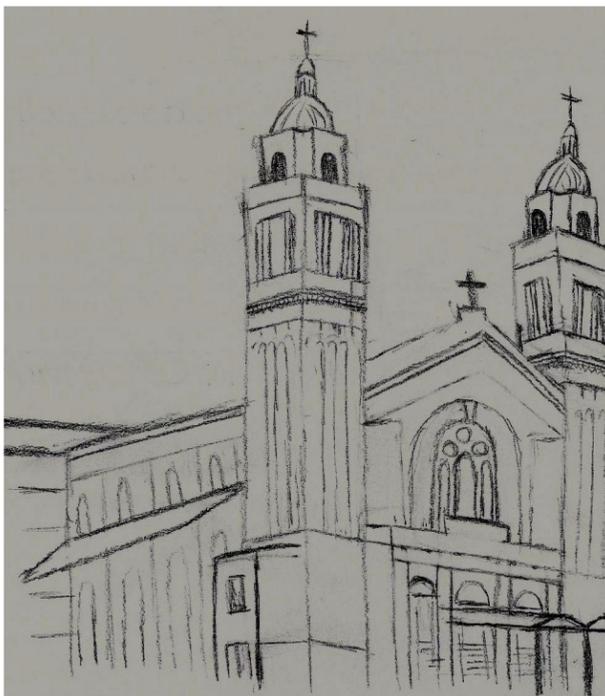
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## The Providence of God in History By Eric Correia

God is sovereign over His creation, “which He will manifest in His own time, He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen” (1 Timothy 6:15-16). The whole created universe is subject to sin, but God has provided hope of deliverance. “For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God” (Romans 8:19-21). The sovereignty of God demonstrates His supreme control over all the world. “The earth is the LORD’s, and all its fullness, The world and those who dwell therein” (Psalm 24:1). The Providence of God is God’s light and direction over the nation and the world. “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; Because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children” (Hosea 4:6). A nation must recognize that what you do not know can hurt you. We should be pursuing and valuing true spiritual knowledge, and be careful not to neglect God’s word. “And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and boundaries of their dwellings” (Acts 17:26).  
(Continued on Page 6)

## Attention Christian! Stop Living in Fear and Get Back to Church! By James Moriello

(Artwork By Alexandra Hay)



“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind” (2 Timothy 1:7) Control what you can, and trust the rest to the Almighty. “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6-7). Too many Christians have been living in fear. Fearmongers have had great success in convincing folks that two places where you are most likely to fall ill are polling places and churches! Anyone who has wanted to has gotten the vaccine. Now unless there is some serious reason otherwise, it’s time to get about the business of attending the services at the local Bible-believing church, “not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching” (Hebrews 10:25). This is a command, friends. How has Zoom been working out with you so far as the fellowship and the communion table go? These things are also commands (Acts 2:42). Let’s not make excuses, but rather, let’s get back to church this Sunday!

## An Urgent Warning for Sinners to Wake Up! By Susan Moriello

Having recently read the sermon “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God”, by Jonathan Edwards, I was impressed by many sobering thoughts. In the 1700’s, this sermon sparked a Great Awakening. It certainly got my attention, and impressed upon me how awful it is that so many people choose to go to a place called hell, not fully understanding how terrible a place it is, living in pride and sin, or making light of all these things. God can do anything He wants. He is very angry that sinful men do not come to Him. The All-Powerful God can cast men into hell anytime He wants to. Furthermore, man in his sinful nature deserves the wrath of God, and the devil stands ready to devour men who choose to stay unrepentant in their sinful ways. Satan leads many astray by sinful means and/or to sinful ends, such as love of money, lust, vanity, property, gambling, drugs, alcohol, abuse, murders, stealing, and so forth. These souls need a Savior. But lost souls think that they can live forever in good health, and they never think of dying. All men have heard of hell, and they think they can somehow escape apart from Jesus Christ, but they cannot. God has made no promises to keep evil men from hell, nor has He made promises apart from faith in Him through His Son to give them eternal life with Him. God’s promises are for believers, but His fury over the rejection of Him by unbelievers is fierce and powerful. He is the “King of kings” and His wrath is dreadful. This misery that will consume the heathen will last forever, and there is no way out. The fires of hell are red-hot and everlasting. Let us pray that men awake and flee from the wrath to come, and from the power of hell and of Satan.  
(Continued on Page 3)

## America, A Nation Chosen By God, By Tanya Hay

America is not the same as the elect nation of Israel (Exodus 4:22). However, the USA has made herself a client nation of God by virtue of appealing to the Living God from her foundation. Israel is God's first born child, chosen by God, not America. However, America, a land given to the people by God, is subject (in principle) to the same rules, guidelines, and promises. We read in Leviticus 26 of God's promises of blessing and retribution. We also read in Deuteronomy 28 that a nation receives blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience.

Our founding fathers' believed in the providential view of history, and included and recognized God's hand in history. The Declaration of Independence reads, "And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the Protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our Sacred Honor." During Benjamin Franklin's address at the Constitutional Convention, he recognized God's divine protection over our nation. He said, "...I have lived, Sir, a long time and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth-that God governs in the affairs of men.-And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without His aid?" In George Washington's Thanksgiving Proclamation in 1789, he said, "It is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the Providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and humbly to implore His protection and favor."

Psalms 33:12 tells us, "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people He has chosen as His own inheritance." By reviewing the words of the forefathers mentioned above, it seems that they did put their trust in God, and hence the United States of America was blessed. They led our nation righteously in that they kept God alive in their words and actions. Proverbs 14:34 tells us that, "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people."

Psalms 75:6-7 reads, "For exaltation comes neither from the east Nor from the west nor from the south. But God is the Judge: He puts down one, And exalts another." We are all accountable, nationally and individually. He will exalt those who follow His ways, and will not bless those who shun Him.

Today, our nation's leaders fight not for preserving God in all things, but to exclude Him. They don't fight to preserve life. Rather, they fight for more rights to carry out free will desires and sinful behavior. They introduce ideas to remove God from historical documents, and to remove statues that honor the roots of our nation. They seek to erase history, which is to erase God. America is a sinful nation, and we are experiencing God's judgment. There are riots in the streets, fires are being set, and people are being killed senselessly. None of these things correlate with God's plan for us, or any nation. God instructs us to love one another as He has loved us, not to destroy each other (John 13:34).

In addition to removing God physically, during the pandemic, leaders have also sought to eliminate our worship with our church families by deeming it non-essential. The importance of our spiritual wellness wasn't considered, because those making these decisions are not spiritually well. To them I say to expect what we are told in Leviticus 26:38, "You shall perish among the nations, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up." The demise of our country is like a ticking time bomb. With every undoing and removal of our historical past, and of God Himself, we are likely to experience His retribution on our nation. May God bless our leaders, and may they recognize and welcome His providence over our nation once again.

## Publication Information, Contact Information, and an Invitation to Firm Foundation Church

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Firm Foundation Christian Church meets at 84 Cumberland Street, Woonsocket, RI. We meet every Sunday for Worship Service at 10 am, and also every Friday for Bible Study and Prayer at 7 pm. We are a Soul Winning, Great Commission, Christian Bible Church. In addition to an active evangelistic ministry, we host tent revivals, do street evangelism, and offer beginner to advanced level independent study classes, all free of charge. All of our preaching and Bible Study is directly from the Word of God. We invite you to stop by and visit us.

We believe in the inspired Word of God which is without error in all that it affirms. Scripture (The Bible) provides the basis for our Christian faith (2 Timothy 3:16).

We believe in the Divine Nature of the Trinity: God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Deuteronomy 5:6; John 1:1-3; 1 Corinthians 2:10-11).

All men and women are sinners by nature in need of a Savior. We need God's grace and mercy (Romans 3:10-23; Isaiah 45:22).

That Savior is Jesus Christ, who paid for all our sins at the cross (Hebrews 10:12).

Those who trust in Him in faith (believe upon His work and promises) attain to eternal life (John 3:16; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4).



## An Urgent Warning for Sinners (Continued from Page One)

Christ has opened the door to sinners by His blood and by His mercy. What are you waiting for? Come to His Kingdom now. Repent, leave your sins, and find forgiveness at the foot of the cross. We are not promised tomorrow. So come, come now! Will you wake up in everlasting torment, or will you choose the Lord's Kingdom, and wake up in Paradise? Please make your decision now. Tomorrow may be too late (2 Corinthians 6:2). Are you Satan's child, or are you God's child? The Bible says that you are either a child of God or a child of the devil, one or the other (John 8:42-44). Choose God! Choose eternal life! What can compare to everlasting happiness with the Lord? Nothing!!

## Quotes from "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God"

"All wicked men's pains and contrivance which they use to escape hell, while they continue to reject Christ, and so remain wicked men, do not secure them from hell one moment. Almost every natural man that hears of hell, flatters himself that he shall escape it; he depends upon himself for his own security; he flatters himself in what he has done, in what he is now doing, or what he intends to do. Every one lays out matters in his own mind how he shall avoid damnation, and flatters himself that he contrives well for himself, and that his schemes will not fail. They hear indeed that there are but few saved, and that the greater part of men that have died heretofore are gone to hell; but each one imagines that he lays out matters better for his own escape than others have done. He does not intend to come to that place of torment; he says within himself, that he intends to take effectual care, and to order matters so for himself as not to fail."

"And now you have an extraordinary opportunity, a day wherein Christ has thrown the door of mercy wide open, and stands in calling and crying with a loud voice to poor sinners; a day wherein many are flocking to him, and pressing into the kingdom of God... many that were very lately in the same miserable condition that you are in, are now in a happy state, with their hearts filled with love to him who has loved them, and washed them from their sins in his own blood, and rejoicing in hope of the glory of God."

## Christian Versus Humanistic Philosophy of Education By Brian Chevalier

The difference between the two can be broken down in three areas: (1) Purpose of Education, (2) Content of Education, (3) Control of Education.

(1) Purpose of Education from the Christian standpoint is primarily as a benefit to God and student. It promotes learning to be Christ-like. "For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren" (Romans 8:29). As Christians, we are commanded to teach our children the good news. "Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). "And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). The humanistic view is that "the state" public school system is primarily a benefit to the state, as it instructs the student to behave, obey, and learn to submit to the government. A former Superintendent of Public Instruction for the State of Pennsylvania states "if the welfare of society and the state depends upon an educated citizenry, and if the state possesses the legal authority to tax the property of all its citizens for the accomplishment of this result, then the state must also possess and must exercise the authority to compel the children who are to become its future citizens, and upon whom its welfare in the future depends, to attend upon the instruction provided for them" (Encyclopedia Americana, 1954, Volume 9, Page 601).

(2) Content of education as a Christian views it is traditional education like reading, writing, and arithmetic, but it also goes deeper, learning the Bible approach. As Christ said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God'" (Matthew 4:4). As for the humanistic view of the public school system, their education content consists of varying degrees of traditional and progressive education. Traditional education involves the structured approach of disciplined learning of factual knowledge, including reading, writing, and arithmetic. But its progressive education also involves socialization and pragmatism, based on the idea that the truth is constantly changing, and that there are no absolutes. "Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men..." (Colossians 2:8, Continued on Page 6)

## The Church at Smyrna: Materially Poor but Spiritually Rich By Cheryl Correia

In the Book of Revelation, the Church at Smyrna was characterized by faithful believers. Persecution and prejudice surrounded these followers of Christ. This church was praised by Jesus, and not condemned. Although its people were both socially and economically marginalized by Jews and Gentiles, these believers were materially poor but spiritually rich. Although they were shut out of the trade guilds, they would not be shut out of heaven. Revelation 2:9- "I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich); and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan." The church at Smyrna can be associated with the period of church history from 100-313 AD. It was during this time period that the faithful follower Polycarp, who ministered in Smyrna, was martyred. Around 156 AD, he was boiled in oil and burned at the stake.

An interesting application for believers involves the faithfulness of the church at Smyrna. Even now in America, there is soft persecution towards those who are Bible-believing and are truly living for Christ. We must persevere and overcome any prejudice or persecution because of our faith in Jesus. Another application is to pray for those churches and people who are facing persecution. We should also desire to speak about Jesus while we lawfully still can in our country. Lastly, and most challenging, we should always pray, do good, and bless the persecutors.

There is a warning to those who persecute God's elect, whether knowingly or unknowingly, since they are doing the work of the devil. Revelation 2:10- "Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life." The biblical warning is meant for people to question whose side they are on.

Currently in the USA, this church lives on in Bible-believing churches experiencing soft persecution. However, in countries such as Iran and North Korea, believers are being martyred for their faith. God's promises remind us that He empathizes with and will be with believers through trials. James 1:12- "Blessed is the man who endures temptation, for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life."

## 'Debt Free', (Proverbs 22:7)

By James Moriello

“The rich rules over the poor, And the borrower is servant to the lender.” (Proverbs 22:7, NKJV)

First, the temporal application. We have always had rich and poor, and a private market lending (i.e. banking) system is something that was present even in Bible days. “The borrower is servant to the lender” as long as there is an outstanding debt. The existence of debt puts pressures and stresses in our lives that should not exist, and would not exist, if only we lived within our means. Yet for so many, the covetous spirit causes a living outside the means, and the end is misery. The material things do not satisfy, and the relationships suffer. So pay off your debts as quickly as you are able by stopping the spending. In these days, even in the midst of uncertain times, financial windfalls come. Maybe they come in the form of tax refunds, government stimulus checks, additional unemployment compensation or severance pay, front line hazard pay, overtime (if you are lucky enough to be very busy working), or an inheritance. If these things come, free yourself from being “servant to the lender” by using them to pay off debt, rather than to indulge desires. It is fashionable today to expect the government or some family member to pay one’s self-incurred debts, and to default. This kind of thing happened a few years back when underwater home owners simply refused to pay their mortgages. This scofflaw behavior is horrible testimony when the Christian does it, excepting some real medical or family emergency. Let us be honest. Most people put themselves in such situations. Christian, get out of it by paying your debts. Do not seek to find ways to avoid paying what you promised, but pay your debts gladly and promptly.

Second, the spiritual application, relating to spiritual debts that we owe to God, and to one another. The Bible teaches, “Owe no one anything except to love one another” (Romans 13:8). And in the context of God’s love, love is not a debt to be begrudged, but a debt that we pay freely. Has Christ Jesus not set us free from our sin debt, although He owed us nothing but what we earned, a just payment of spiritual death? “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23). Indeed, we are indebted to Christ, because He paid the sin debt we could not pay, so let us serve Him forever.

# Old Time Preaching Ministry

If you are looking for doctrinally sound Bible preaching and teaching, tune in to WNRI 1380am and 99.9fm on Tuesday at 7pm, and Saturday at 4pm. Where the “Old Book” is still used.

Psalm 138:2 (KJV): “I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy loving-kindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.”

## Bible Trivia in the Gospel of Mark: How much do you really know your Bible?

1. How many chapters are in the Gospel of Mark?
2. In the first verse of Mark, what title is applied to Jesus Christ?
3. Whose wife's mother was healed of a fever in Mark 1?
4. What kind of people did Jesus come to call to repentance?
5. True or false: Jesus healed on the Sabbath?
6. In the parable of the sower, what type of ground receives the word immediately but has no root?
7. When Jesus expunged the demons from the man at Gadara, what type of animal did they enter?
8. Mark names four half brothers of Jesus (sons of Joseph and Mary born after Jesus). Name one.
9. How did John the Baptist die?
10. How many men were fed with five loaves and two fish?
11. There were two Old Testament saints present at the Transfiguration. Name one.
12. What element will never be quenched in hell?
13. When questioned about the legality of divorce, Jesus went back to the original institution of marriage. From which Book did he quote?
14. True or False: Jesus said: "With God all things are possible".
15. Blind Bartimaeus called Jesus by what Messianic title?
16. Which type of tree did Jesus curse?
17. Do angels get married?
18. Who knows the day of the end time?
19. While Jesus prayed at Gethsemane, what were the disciples doing?
20. What time of day was Jesus crucified?

(Answers on Page 7)

### Pergamos: The Compromising Church, By B.B. Johns

Pergamos, the compromising church, is aptly named, being "thoroughly married" to the culture. In it, the church and state were inseparable. Through Emperor Constantine's adoption of Christianity, the Roman Empire merged into the Roman Catholic Church. The city of Pergamos was a center of many pagan cults including emperor worship, goddess worship, and worship of the whole Greek pantheon of gods. Considered an intellectual center of the ancient world, it was more Gentile populated than Jewish. The Pergamos Church history era is between 313 and 600 AD. The church established here consisted of mostly worldly Gentiles. This church is not different from most American churches that carry on some semblance of Christianity, but are wrapped in sins of worldly pursuits. Hence Jesus' bitter words and judgment to the church. "I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is" (Revelation 2:13, KJV). He is omniscient. There is nothing hidden from Him. Our thoughts, intentions, and doings are naked before His eyes. The make-believe Christians within the church who make works more valuable than faith and the truth of the doctrine of salvation are in darkness, and darkness is Satan's domain. The Lord's opening statement in Revelation 2:12, "He which hath the sharp sword with two edges", is a very strong statement denoting severe judgment and readiness to mete out punishment. The Pergamos Church was commended for not denying the divine truth. "Thou has not denied my faith" (Revelation 2:13). Yet the Lord condemned the Nicolaitans within the church who do hypocritical works by which the worship of God is defiled. To the unrepentant, the Lord promises quick retribution (Romans 2:8-9). The Lord is intolerant of immoral behavior and false-teaching works of Nicolaitans and Balaamites.

### Thyatira: The Corrupt Church, By Scott Lanctot

Thyatira means "continual sacrifice." The city was founded by Alexander the Great, and it was a city famous for its colored dyes. The description of this church fits the prevailing Christendom of the years 600 to 1517 AD. False doctrine prevailed. Lay people were forbidden to read the Bible. Only the priests were allowed to. The church was corrupt and in darkness of unsound doctrine, hence the term "Dark Ages." Today in the USA, if you are Christians, and you do not have a Bible and read it, shame on you. How are we to know the truth if we do not read God's Word? 1 John 5:19- "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one." Satan is happy when we don't follow God's commands, knowing that we are apt to falter and sin. Let us do our Bible Study and our homework, and be disciplined in our discipleship, that we may know the truth from error, and make life corrections. We must guard against false teachings. John 1:17- "For the Law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." His Word cut straight, if followed, will prevent you from stumbling. A warning to the unrepentant: "I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works" (Revelation 2:23). Apart from Christ, our works are "filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6). This church "lives on" today in the USA in churches that serve their own bellies and not the true Living God. Scripture speaks of the corrupt church. "These are spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves. They are clouds without water carried about by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame; wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever" (Jude 12-13). We appeal to the promise of God, that He is "not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). If that's not a plea from God, I don't know what is.

## Anti-Semitism is on the Rise Again By James Moriello

It is saddening and horrifying to see and hear of recent attacks upon Jewish individuals in New York City and Los Angeles. People are without God today, and they are looking for reasons to hate, and defenseless people to assault. Satan hates the Jewish people, and so he has put it into the minds of evil men to target them. Ever since the beginning of the nation, the devil has been after the Jews. Israel has undergone great trials, but God has preserved her. Israel was presented with a famine in the land, but God delivered her through Joseph. Israel was in slavery in Egypt, but God delivered her through Moses. Israel was persecuted by the Agagite, but God delivered her through Esther. All of these persecutions of Israel in Old Testament days were designed to prevent Messiah from arising. But this did not work. Jesus of Nazareth was born as a Jew, and He is the "Savior of all men" (1 Timothy 4:10). We all owe a great debt to the Jewish people, for "salvation is of the Jews" (John 4:22). Furthermore, we Christians are under orders to bless the Jews if we want to receive blessings ourselves (Genesis 12:1-3). Sadly, the Jewish people have continued to be hated through the centuries on this side of the cross. May we never forget the Holocaust, the mass murder of Jewish people done in the service of the devil. Yes, friends. This really happened. Let us learn from the past. Please join me in prayers for the Jewish people and nation. May we seek God's face, as He continues to be the Protector of this people. And may we earnestly pray that the children of Israel are convicted by the Scriptures that Jesus Christ, the Messiah, a Jew in His humanity, has already come.

## Christian Versus Humanistic Philosophy of Education (Continued from Page 3) (Colossians 2:8, cont.)

"...according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ"

(3) Control of education in the humanistic view sees public education as something which the state must regulate and control. Familiar terms like mandatory school attendance, teaching credentials (state licensing of teachers, authorizing them as qualified teachers), and minimum standards come to mind. As for the Christian view, God gives parents the responsibility of educating their children for Himself. The parents have been given control of the child's education. The parents may choose to put their child under the tutorship of a church-related school, an independent Christian school, or they may choose to teach the child from the home.

The education today that is taught according to the humanistic philosophy of education is very liberal. In some cases, students learn to even hate themselves. Too often "real history" is not being taught, as history is twisted to fit the desired narrative. The humanists even teach that God does not exist, and some even come across as hating anyone who worships God or has religious beliefs.

Editor's Notes: This is a very interesting, challenging, and though provoking article. There are a few Christian teachers left in our public schools, but they are wildly outnumbered. Humanistic progressive educators must be held to account. Parents need to pay attention to what their children are being taught, and take an active role in their children's education. God must be left in, not left out.

## The Providence of God in History (Continued from Page 1)

Here the unity of the human race is clearly stated. All nations are humankind under one Father (in the universal sense). Has not one God created us and controlled our history providentially? "Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10). A nation should pray to the Lord to reveal His will. "For a good tree does not bear bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. For every tree is known by its own fruit. For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they gather grapes from a bramble bush. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks" (Luke 6:43-45). A nation failing to educate itself in providential history will see a rise in secularism. Whether or not a nation cultivates a relationship with God will be shown by its fruit.

Leaders need to believe in the providential view over the history of the nation. "Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, 'My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure'" (Isaiah 46:10). God is involved in all affairs of the nation. "He makes nations great, and destroys them; He enlarges nations, and guides them" (Job 12:23). America's forefathers had a deep understanding of God's Providence. That is evident in America's foundational documents. "This decision is by the decree of the watchers, And the sentence by the word of the holy ones, In order that the living may know That the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, Gives it to whomever He will, And sets over it the lowest of men" (Daniel 4:17). (Continued on Page 7)

## "A Peg In His Holy Place", (Ezra 9:8), By James Moriello

"And now for a little while grace has been shown from the LORD our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a peg in His holy place, that our God may enlighten our eyes and give us a measure of revival in our bondage" (Ezra 9:8). The period of the Babylonian captivity had ended for Israel, and many of the captives were returning to Jerusalem. Ezra the priest was tasked with setting these folks on a good spiritual track as they arrived. The children of Israel had received grace, unmerited favor, and a second chance. God always preserves His remnant of those of true faith in Him, and so He did in this instance. The imagery of "a peg in His holy place" is one of a nail in the wall, a place to hang something up. We use the expression of our homes as "a place to hang our hat." There may even be another place that you often visit where there is a spot for you to hang up you coat as you arrive for a nice visit with friends and loved ones. When someone hangs up their coat as they arrive "in His holy place", there are two results. First, "that our God may enlighten our eyes." A time of deep prayer and Bible reading and study will alert us to the blessed reality of spiritual truth. Having the sin nature still within us, we are still in that sense "in our bondage." But there is spiritual freedom with Christ Jesus. "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). We surely receive "a measure of revival" from knowing Him and being in His presence. The world can be a scary and uncertain place. But the believer always has "a peg in His holy place." There is a place to go, and a God to go to, when we are groaning under the weight of the trials of this life. God awaits you there, at the door of prayer. Right now.

## Bible Trivia in Mark, Answers

1. 16
2. The Son of God (1:1)
3. Simon Peter's (1:30-31)
4. Sinners (2:17)
5. True (3:1-5)
6. Stony, or Rocky (4:16-17)
7. Swine, or Pigs (5:13)
8. James, Joses, Judas, Simon (6:3)
9. Beheading (6:27)
10. 5,000 (6:41-44)
11. Elijah and Moses (9:2-4)
12. Fire (9:43-48)
13. Genesis (1:26-28, 2:24)
14. True (9:27)
15. Son of David (10:47)
16. Fig Tree (11:13-14)
17. No (12:25)
18. No one but God the Father (13:32)
19. Sleeping (14:37-40)
20. The third hour, or 9 am (15:25)

Scoring:

18-20: A true Bible scholar

13-17: Good working knowledge of Scripture, keep at it

10-12: Keep plugging, and studying God's Word to you

0-9: Don't be discouraged, Rome wasn't built in a day

## The Providence of God in History (Continued from Page 6)

Leaders should recognize and speak open praise to God for His sovereignty over all circumstances, even those strongly adverse to them, and pray that they will be equipped by Almighty God to prevail in adversity. "And inasmuch as they gave the command to leave the stump and roots of the tree, your kingdom shall be assured to you, after you come to know that Heaven rules" (Daniel 4:26). Events of history and God's word affirm the providence of God.

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## The Lukewarm Church, By Brian Violette

The Church at Laodicea was the last of the seven churches that Jesus had John write letters to. This church was located about 45 miles from the ancient city of Philadelphia. Laodicea is located in modern day Turkey near the city of Denizli. Laodicea is referred to as the lukewarm church. It was filled with unbelievers. They most likely didn't believe in the deity of Jesus. God had nothing good to say about that church. Jesus did start off addressing the church based on Who He Is. Revelation 3:14- "And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, 'These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God.'" Jesus made the very same point to the nearby church of the Colossians, that His deity needs to be reaffirmed. Colossians 4:16- "Now when this epistle is read among you, see that it is read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that you likewise read the epistle from Laodicea." Jesus made a point to the church that its lukewarmness disappoints Him to the point of being sick. Revelation 3:15-16- "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth." Not only was this a church without Christ, but they did not realize their own spiritual condition. Revelation 3:17-18- "Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing' -and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked--I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and annoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see."

Jesus offers grace to this church even its hypocritical state. Revelation 3:19-22- "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne." He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'" The message remains the same to all churches without Christ. Repent! Do it fast! Just as Jesus is knocking on the door of the church, He is knocking on the door of your heart. Will you let Him in?

### John 3:16-21

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."

## The Life and Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., By James Moriello

Dr. King (1929-1968) was a visionary, a man of peace, and a social justice warrior. But first and foremost, he was a Christian Pastor. While I neither agree with nor endorse many of his theological beliefs, this man was truly used by God in his time. Dr. King's thinking was informed by several Christian Bible principles, chief among them being the inherent dignity of all men and women as beings made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27, NKJV), love of neighbor as oneself (Leviticus 19:18), and Sermon on the Mount principles of nonviolent resistance and love of enemies (Matthew 5:38-48). We begin with some big picture background of the circumstances that led up to the days of Dr. King and the civil rights movement that he led.

Historically, racism in America has largely been along the lines of skin color. It had its origins in the African slave trade. Both Europeans and Africans were complicit in taking human beings captive and selling them across the Atlantic. Under the Law of Moses, such a thing to the extent that kidnapping was involved, was punishable by death (Exodus 21:16).

Let us now acknowledge two basic Bible truths. First, all people have equal access to salvation spiritually through Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:28-29). This teaches us the high intrinsic value of every soul, for Christ's blood was shed for all peoples (1 John 2:2). The second Bible truth is found in Acts 17:26. "And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings." There is one human race. We are all descendants of Adam and Noah. There are therefore no distinctions based on color or ethnicity, with regard to the value of each person.

The following principles may be derived from the "I Have A Dream" speech by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on 8/28/1963. The commentary is my own.

1. Dr. King saw his movement as the greatest demonstration in US History. But we recall that the greatest demonstration in all of history was that of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ to save sinners such as we (Romans 5:8).
2. Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863. This remedied the lack of human dignity ascribed under the law. But things were much different in practice. Dr. King drew applications from spiritual captivity and applied them to the circumstances in the nation. Just as spiritual captivity was remedied by the coming of the Lord (Luke 4:18), physical captivity is remedied by application of true justice according to Christian principles. See Matthew 6:10.
3. The occasion of this speech is within the context of lawful redress of grievances. This is always the first and best option. But after a century, Dr. King and supporters of the movement for equality of civil rights regarding skin color were not going away. They would neither be intimidated nor give up.
4. Dr. King spoke well of our founding documents. Their basis in Judeo-Christianity was amenable to Dr. King. Human rights were seen by him to be "unalienable", having been gifted to men by the Creator God, and not by the whims of a godless government. His concept of liberty is a similar concept to annotations noted in point 2 in connection with Luke 4:18.
5. "Riches of freedom and the security of justice" are concepts essential to the nature of God, and freely offered by Him. Dr. King's use of "God's children" should, in this context, be applied in the universal sense, and not the special sense of believers only.
6. "For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently?" (1 Peter 2:20a). Dr. King endorsed peaceful means only. Sadly, others who claim to be in the mission of Dr. King have co-opted the movement and committed excesses and crimes. This happened in the 1960's and it continues to this day.
7. "But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God" (1 Peter 2:20b). Dr. King's call for "meeting physical force with soul force" reminds us of the conduct of Jesus Christ when He was arrested at the Garden of Gethsemane, put on trial, and crucified on the cross. It was Dr. King's earnest desire that the movement "not lead us to a distrust of all white people." Yet this is exactly what today's Critical Race Theory does, and it is being promoted in our universities and workplaces today. Dr. King says that "we cannot walk alone." This is what is taught in the Bible in Ecclesiastes 4:8-12.
8. God is no respecter of persons. "For there is no partiality with God" (Romans 2:11). The preacher quotes Amos 5:24, which reads, "But let justice run down like water, And righteousness like a mighty stream" (Amos 5:24).
9. Dr. King shared the Christian belief that "unearned suffering is redemptive." Christ's suffering was redemptive.
10. Perhaps the best known line of Dr. King's speech is this: "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character." This criteria for judgment is color-blindness. Character is important, especially Christian character, above all other traits. Affirmative Action was signed into law by JFK in 1961 as a means to prevent discrimination. Today, it is often used to establish quotas according to race, gender, or other class, and results in unfairly treating those who are not of that class. This is contrary to the spirit of Dr. King's statement. Furthermore, such interpretation and practice foments more division of various groups, races, and classes.
11. The orator interjected into his speech a marvelous and hope filled quote from Isaiah 40:4-5: "I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together."
12. We find five words stressed by Dr. King. Hope. Faith. Brotherhood. Prayer. Freedom. All enjoined in the Bible.
13. "Free at last! free at last! thank God Almighty, we are free at last!" Let us pray as we have been taught by the Lord, "Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10). May divine principles relating to the essential thing, Christian salvation, be operative in our great nation. "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed" (John 8:32,36)

We have come a long way to asserting the human dignity of all men and women of all races. What now should the church do? Preach the gospel and seek to live out the Great Commission. Respect others, assert human dignity, and promote justice according to Christian principles, but do not encourage people to think of themselves as victims of injustice without cause, nor excuse those who choose sinful lifestyles. May we all humbly think of ourselves as recipients of divine love, grace, and mercy! And know this: Christ came to save sinners (1 Timothy 1:15), not to achieve social justice. When we preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and not social justice, we shall have greater effect in the world for Christ. Social justice has its place as an outworking of the gospel, but it cannot be achieved without the conversion of the human heart through the hearing and believing in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.