

SUBJECT: "CAN GOD BLESS AMERICA?"

SCRIPTURE: PSALM 33

Date: Feb. 1, 1999 p.m.

A Sermon Delivered by Dr. Doyce H. Nolan

Introduction

U.S. District Judge Lowell A. Reed Blocks Porn Law.

This past October President Clinton signed into law The Child Online Protection Act that would protect children from pornography and implicit sex acts on the Internet.

On Feb. 1, just 6 hours before this law went into effect, federal U.S. District Judge Lowell A. Reed slapped an injunction blocking this federal law that would shield children from online pornography. He said this new law violates the First Amendment's free speech guarantee and could be used unfairly to prosecute gays and lesbians, AIDS activists or doctors distributing gynecological information. Judge Reed was representing the ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union) represents 17 clients who filed the suit against the law.

The Penalty of violators of the Child Online Protection Act stated that violators would spend up to 6 months in jail and be fined \$150,000.00. One of the clients who owns a chain of bookstores across the nation called "A Different Light" said, "I'm not ready to go to jail. My site offers 21,000 titles with sexually explicit themes."

The Report of National Commission on Civic Renewal.

On June 25, 1998, the National Commission on Civic Renewal, led by senators Bill Bennett and Sam Nunn, released a report concerning the USA.

Quote:

"Our population is infected with a corrosive cynicism that has crippled our civic spirit. The United States leads the nations of the world in murders, violent crime, imprisonment, divorce, abortion, sexually transmitted diseases, teen suicide, cocaine consumption and pornography production."

Question: How long will God continue to bless the America.?

Psalm 33 was written in God's dealings with the ancient nation of Israel, but it has some application for us today. We are given no hints as to what event in Israel's history is being referred to here. That fact suggests that this psalm was intended to reach beyond Israel's borders and beyond Israel's ancient history, to all nations throughout history.

This psalm describes two kinds of nations: The kind of nation that God blesses and the kind of nation that God breaks; the kind of nation God delivers and the kind of nation God destroys. Verse 11 says, "The counsel of the Lord stands forever, The plans of His heart to all generations."

The New International Version is more dogmatic in describing God:: The plans of the Lord stand FIRM forever, the purpose of his heart through all generations. That one word "firm" describes

our God as "not yielding, not moved, unchanging." This describes the theme of this Psalm which is: The Sovereignty of God! God is the supreme ruler of the universe. He does whatever He wants to do, and no one can stop Him. All that God plans will come to pass!

God's sovereignty takes in both individuals and nations. He has the right to break nations, or to bless them. The fact that God can break the nations that oppose Him is seen in verse 10 "The LORD brings the council of the nations to nothing; He makes the plans of the people of no effect."

Anytime a nation fights against the eternal moral standards established by God, God will eventually come down hard on that nation. When the judges of a nation chooses to break God's law, that nation itself is broken by God's law.

When any nation allows God to be its Lord, by following God's principles for right living which He has revealed to mankind, that nation will be blessed by God. This is seen in verse 12 -- "Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, the people whom he has chosen for his inheritance." (NAS) Not all of our Founding Fathers were Christians, but they feared God as their Creator. That is why we put on our coins, "In God we trust." That is why we include in the Pledge of Allegiance, "One nation, under God."

Supreme Court Justice, Judge William Douglas, was not a Christian. Just before he died in 1952, he said of America, "We are a religious nation. Our institutions presuppose a Supreme Being."

De Tocqueville of France said over a hundred years ago, "I sought for the greatness of America in her harbors and rivers and fertile fields, and her mines and commerce. It was not there. Not until I went into the churches and heard her pulpits flame with righteousness did I understand the greatness of her power. America is great because she is good; and if America ever ceases to be good, America will cease to be great."

Question: Has America Ceased to be Good?

1. A nation overrun by sin.
2. Financial corruption is normal for many of our leaders.
3. Drug and alcohol abuse continue to skyrocket.
4. Our entertainment industry produces the world's pornography and violence.
5. We murder 1.5 million unborn infants each year.
6. Homosexuality is glorified as an acceptable alternative lifestyle.
7. Satanic cults and witchcraft abound.
8. We now sanction medical killing of people who are either sick or old.
9. Sexual immorality is considered normal and healthy.
10. Children rebel against authority, no respect for parents.

11. Church attendance is in decline.

Proverb 14:34 says, "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people."

Has America Ceased to be Good? Answer: "Yes".

We as a nation have been disgraced by the depth of our sinfulness. America has definitely ceased to be the moral nation of our birth 223 years ago in 1776..

SEVEN QUESTIONS THAT FACE US:

1. At what point will God's blessing on our nation switch to God's breaking?
2. Has that process already begun?
3. Is it already too late?
4. If so, what are we supposed to do about it?
5. Abandon the political party system?
6. Join a Christian commune in Canada?
7. Store up food and ammunition and become a survivalist? Don't panic.

I. LET US CELEBRATE THE GREATNESS OF OUR GOD (1-3)

This says to believers who are forgiven and justified--"Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous! For praise from the upright is beautiful. Praise the Lord with the harp; Make melody to Him with an instrument of ten strings. Sing to Him a new song; Play skillfully with a shout of joy".

1. God Calls His People to Worship Him. No matter what nation you're from, no matter what kind of government structure is over you, God calls His people to worship Him with singing and majestic music. "New songs" are fresh expressions of thankfulness to God and appreciation to the wonderful grace and mercies that we have received.

Ephesians 5:19-20 We are to "Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

2. Worship is Not Just a Matter of Coming to Church, singing a few songs, listening to preaching, and praying. In reality, all of those things are designed to prepare you for real worship.
 - a. Real worship is a matter of adoring God for Who He is.
 - b. Real worship is being aware of His nearness and enjoying His presence.
 - c. Real Worship is praising His character and thanking Him for His goodness.

II. GOD WAS SOVEREIGNLY IN CONTROL OF THE PAST CREATION OF PLANET EARTH (VS. 4-9)

"For the word of the LORD is right and true; he is faithful in all he does. The LORD loves

righteousness and justice; the earth is full of his unfailing love. By the word of the LORD were the heavens made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth. He gathers the waters of the sea into jars; he puts the deep into storehouses. Let all the earth fear the LORD; let all the people of the world revere him. For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm."

Nations change, and nations die, but God never falters and never fails. Therefore, no matter what is happening in our nation, our sovereign God is still worthy of praise, for His plans and purposes will stand firm forever. So let's leave behind the gloom and doom stuff for a moment and refocus our eyes on the beauty and glory of our Creator.

Intelligence of science: "Science professor Rosen's discovery of life back to 3.7 billion years. It appears that at least 3.7 billion years ago, the plankton, small organisms may have already colonized the open ocean, instead of remaining in local areas with extreme environments where they are thought to have developed. In the ocean, they started the processes that formed the Earth's atmosphere, water and climate." The Bible says, God Created!

1. God is So Powerful That All He Had to Do Was Speak, and all matter and life sprung into being. All of the magnificence of the stars and planets are the result of His speaking it into existence out of nothing!!
 - a. As we gaze out into the night sky, and see billions of galaxies, each full of billions of stars, we are to stand speechless at the marvels of His skill and submit to Him in reverential fear.
 - b. As we stand at the beach and realize that the oceans cover 3/4 of the surface of the earth, we should remember that God is so big, He could drain all that water into a few pitchers and store it on the shelf.
2. Evolution or Creation? People who believe in a Creator are people who know that they will be held accountable for their actions, not to some organism from the sea! But to God who created that organism, who is watching our life!
 - a. Blessed is that nation that fears this all-powerful, all-knowing God as their Lord, for that nation will have a much greater tendency to do what God says is right. A blessed nation is one that bases its existence and survival on the fact that God is the creator of the universe.

III. GOD HAS A PLAN FOR ALL NATIONS (vs. 10-12)

1. God will break the nation that opposes Him (10)
 - a. The Lord nullifies the counsel of the nations; He frustrates the plans of the people.
2. The purposes of God cannot be stopped (11)
 - a. The counsel of the Lord stands forever, The plans of His heart from generation to generation.
3. God will bless the nation that fears Him (12)

- a. Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, The people whom He has chosen for His own inheritance.

IV. GOD REMAINS SOVEREIGNLY IN CONTROL OF THE PRESENT EVENTS ON PLANET EARTH (VS. 13-19)

"From heaven the LORD looks down and sees all mankind; from his dwelling place he watches all who live on earth -- he who forms the hearts of all, who considers everything they do. No king is saved by the size of his army; no warrior escapes by his great strength. A horse is a vain hope for deliverance; despite all its great strength it cannot save. But the eyes of the LORD are on those who fear him, on those whose hope is in his unfailing love, to deliver them from death and keep them alive in famine."

1. Verses 16-17 Point to the foolishness of any nation to rely exclusively on its military superiority for its protection. History proves that it is ridiculous to assume that a big army is all you need to keep you safe.
 - Example: Daniel 5, We see an invincible Babylonian Empire destroyed overnight by Cyrus the Mede.
 - Example: The Great Wall of China. The Chinese Emperors spent hundreds of years building the Great Wall of China to keep their northern enemies from invading their country. As long as the gates of that wall were closed, no enemy could possibly get through. But China's enemies did get through. How? By means of bribing a gatekeeper.

Could America ever be sold out or be blackmailed as well? We as Americans have all our attention on fearing the Y2K Bug, and the problems that might occur, when there is a greater danger to be concerned with. With today's germ warfare agents, a nation like Iraq could conceivably destroy America's population with its lethal VX nerve gas, recently found in Iraqi missiles. One drop of VX on the skin instantly causes victims to be wracked by seizures, twitching to death within five minutes.

Defense Secretary William Cohen believes that Iraq has stockpiled as much as 200 tons of VX, enough to kill every person on earth! How do you think our president would respond to a true threat to either surrender or die? I don't know, and I hope I'll never find out, but the only One I'm going to totally depend on is the Lord, for as verse 18 says, "the eyes of the LORD are on those who fear him, on those whose hope is in his unfailing love."

The Lord God, Creator and Ruler of the universe is the only One who will never let you down. The only way you can ever truly find peace of mind in this crazy world is to relax and collapse in His sovereign arms. The only way to experience genuine rest is to remember that He is still on the throne. He is still able to intervene in history. He can still be trusted to do the right thing.

Conclusion

Verses 20-22 -- "We wait in hope for the LORD; he is our help and our shield. In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name. May your unfailing love rest upon us, O LORD, even as we put our hope in you."

The psalmist is saying, Lord, in light of Your awesome power and infinite ability, We will put

our hope in You, and You will cause Your unfailing love to rest on us.

1. No matter what you happen to be going through, can you place your hope completely in the Lord? You may be going through a terribly difficult time in your personal life. Your closest relationships may be on the ragged edge. Your job and income may be at risk. You may have severe doubts about what your future holds. But the fact is, if you are trusting in the Lord, resting in His unfailing love, waiting in hope for His plans to unfold, you have nothing to fear. You are more safe and secure under His protective ruler ship than you could be anywhere else in the world. God unfailingly loves His own. You can count on that. If you are one of His children, trusting that Christ died for your sins and rose from the dead, God cares for you. You may have to wait in hope for a long time, because He does not always answer your prayers immediately, or the way you would like, but the Lord will never fail to keep His promises to you. Your job is to wait in hope for Him to bring to pass what He knows is best for you.
2. This psalm begins with worship, and it ends with waiting. Both our worship and our waiting are based on the truth that God is sovereign. He is in full control of the past, the present, and the future. Whatever He plans will come to pass.
3. This psalm is a clear application of the sovereignty of God to all nations. It teaches us that since the purposes of God cannot be stopped, God will break the nation that opposes Him, and God will bless the nation that fears Him. To fear Him is to realize that He is watching everything we do.
4. God can bless America only to the degree that America fears Him, for that will determine whether or not America remains good. So as citizens of a nation that was once better and more blessed than it is today, let's commit ourselves to fear and honor Him.
5. Let's remain alert to the moral issues that are rapidly chipping away at the foundation stones of our republic. As we have opportunity, let us vote as Christians should, and pray passionately that God will yet send one last Spiritual revival to our land.
6. Let us unashamedly worship our sovereign God for the fact that He blesses only those nations that fear Him. With a spirit of humility and repentance, let us live in such a way that our holy God can continue to bless America for one more generation.