

# The Prospects of a Rebellious Nation

A sermon delivered Sunday Morning, May 19, 2013  
at Oak Grove Baptist Church, Paducah, Ky.  
by S. Michael Durham  
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Psalm 9:15-20

***The nations have sunk down in the pit which they made;  
In the net which they hid, their own foot is caught.  
<sup>16</sup> The Lord is known by the judgment He executes;  
The wicked is snared in the work of his own hands. Selah  
<sup>17</sup> The wicked shall be turned into hell,  
And all the nations that forget God.  
<sup>18</sup> For the needy shall not always be forgotten;  
The expectation of the poor shall not perish forever.  
<sup>19</sup> Arise, O Lord,  
Do not let man prevail;  
Let the nations be judged in Your sight.  
<sup>20</sup> Put them in fear, O Lord,  
That the nations may know themselves to be but men.***

For quite awhile now the Lord has burdened my heart to prepare this body of believers for what will happen in our society. It's already happening and it will only intensify. It is my burden and responsibility to address the realities of our times and do so by the Word of God.

On June 8, 1978, Alexander Solzhenitsyn delivered the commencement address to Harvard University. Solzhenitsyn was one of the prophetic voices of the 20th century although he was not a preacher by trade but a masterful author earning the Nobel Peace Prize in literature. He was born in Russia in 1918 and was one of the great voices of freedom, morality and faith in a century of Godlessness. He is best known for his three-volume chronicle of the Soviet Tyranny of Gulag System, which he spent years in after being arrested on charges of being a political dissident.

In his stirring speech at Harvard, Solzhenitsyn argued that post-Christian America, stripped of its former morality, was not any better than Soviet totalitarianism. Amazing. He recognized 40 years ago that America was no longer a Christian nation and had already turned its back on God. He pleaded in that speech for a moral and spiritual renewal in America so that she would be able to resist the inevitable outcome of rejecting God—an atheistic, humanistic communism. That's what he warned us and yet his prophetic call was answered with boos and scorn from the educated elites of Harvard.

Having been imprisoned for years as a political dissident, he sad that day at Harvard was the sad-

dest day of his life.

In his 1983 Templeton speech, he forewarned the west and I want to quote a little lengthy excerpt from that. I know it's lengthy, but it's worth every word and attention.

“Over half a century ago, while I was still a child, I recall hearing a number of older people offer the following explanation for the great disasters that had befallen Russia: ‘We have forgotten God; that’s why all this has happened.’ Since then I have spent well nigh 50 years working on the history of our revolution; in the process I have read numbers of books, collected hundreds of personal testimonies, and have already contributed eight volumes of my own toward the effort of clearing away the rubble left by the upheaval. But if I were asked today to formulate as concisely as possible the main cause of the ruinous revolution that swallowed up some 60 million of our people, I could not put it more accurately than to repeat: ‘Men have forgotten God; that’s why all this has happened’.

“The West has yet to experience a Communist invasion; religion here remains free. But the West’s own historical evolution has been such that today it too is experiencing a drying up of religious consciousness. It too has witnessed racking schisms, bloody religious wars, and rancor, to say nothing of the tide of secularism that, from the late Middle Ages onward, has progressively inundated the West. This gradual sapping of strength from within is a threat to faith that is perhaps even more dangerous than any attempt to assault religion violently from without.

“Judging by the continuing landslide of concessions made before the eyes of our very own generation, the West is ineluctably slipping toward the abyss. Western societies are losing more and more of their religious essence as they thoughtlessly yield up their younger generation to atheism. If a blasphemous film about Jesus is shown throughout the United States, reputedly one of the most religious countries in the world, or a major newspaper publishes a shameless caricature of the Virgin Mary, what further evidence of godlessness does one need? When external rights are completely unrestricted, why should one make an inner effort to restrain oneself from ignoble acts?”

I end with this final quote,

“Here again we witness the single outcome of a worldwide process, with East and West yielding the same results, and once again for the same reason: Men have forgotten God.”

We have a problem in this country. Our “exceptionalism,” which I would not dispute, blinds us. We are blind to the fact that what’s happened to the rest of the world could happen here. We don’t think it’s true. We think what happens in other places in the world will never happen here, especially when it comes to faith and morality, but my dear friend, that is an exception that is not exceptional. In other words, to exempt ourselves from the same woes of faithlessness and immorality and say that the consequences will not come here is blind, foolish ignorance. It will

come. We are no exception when it comes to morality. We are not anything special or different. Human nature is the same wherever you go in this world and according to this brilliant man, Solzhenitsyn, America is on a one-way path to its darkest hour, if not its very end, all because we have forgotten God.

I want to direct your attention to the text and say that the judgments we are now experiencing will only intensify and that these judgments are a result of,

## **I. AMERICA'S SELF-DUG PITS AND SELF-MADE SNARES**

*“The nations have sunk down in the pit which they made;  
In the net which they hid, their own foot is caught . . .  
The wicked is snared in the work of his own hands. Selah” (Psalm 9:15-16b)*

The Psalmist is saying that God does not need to take a proactive position in bringing judgment, but rather that judgment will come to a nation when they do these things. It will act like a pit they have dug and they will fall into it themselves. They have laid their own traps and they will fall inevitably into those traps when they disregard God and His Word.

I could name many, but let me just talk about three self-dug pits and self-made snares Americans have created.

### **A. Abortion.**

This is the first self-dug pit and self-made snare America has created for itself and it will catch us and we will fall into it. Now, I do not need to take time and effort to explain the immorality of this great crime. I'm sure there is no one in this audience who would argue for the position of abortion so I don't need to prove why infanticide is a sin. But I want to show you that abortion is, in itself, a judgment. In other words, the consequences of this great sin are going to be devastating to this nation.

Let me see if I can prove this to you. Since abortion was legalized in 1973, over 50 million babies have been murdered. Three thousand killed on a daily basis. Now that fact is hard, isn't it? It's just hard to get your brain around and it breaks the heart, especially when there are mothers who pray and would give their right arm to have a child and can't. That fact alone is enough for God to obliterate this nation and wipe it off the map, but He doesn't have to. The terrible sin of abortion will be one of the downfalls and destructions of this nation and God will not have to lift a finger for the sin itself has built within the consequences that will destroy America.

Not according to my own statistics, but according to the Bureau of Labor statistics, according to the Social Security Administration and the National Center for Health statistics, if abortion had never been legalized in 1973, more than 17 million people would be employed right now in the work force resulting in an additional 400 billion dollars in taxes, 11 billion dollars contributing to

Medicare and 47 billion contributing to Social Security.

Why are those statistics important? Because one of the reasons Social Security has to collapse, it must, is because there's not enough people working to support those who are retired on Social Security. It takes three workers today to support one person on Social Security and because of murdering babies, that ratio is only going to continue to grow. We've killed one-third of the future workforce. Economic collapse has to occur because we don't have the sufficient population to sustain the economy we now have. It's a self-dug pit and a self-made snare. It is the judgment of God.

## **B. Sexual Permissiveness.**

I want to speak first about heterosexual promiscuity.

All forms of immorality is a self-dug pit. I want young people to be listening, but I want everyone else to listen as well because young people aren't the only ones vulnerable to sexual temptation. I thought one of the things about getting older would be that sexual temptation would lessen with time but it hasn't lessened.

All immorality is a self-dug pit. You cannot violate God's Word and it not come back to burn you. "Can man take fire into his bosom and not be burned?" The answer to the rhetorical question is of course not. Can promiscuity, immorality, threaten your longevity? According to science it can. One doctor said in *Everyday Health Magazine*,

"The short answer is yes. Having a large number of sexual partners has been linked with poor health and decreased longevity."

But worse than that, immorality decreases the stability of the home. When sexual sins infiltrate a family, that family can hardly withstand the powers of evil and it's usually pulled apart. Adultery more often than not destroys a home, but not just adultery, premarital sex. Friends, it is destroying the institution of marriage. When people can live together without the blessing of marriage and it be socially acceptable, we are digging ourselves not just a pit but a grave we will not come out of. It has devastating consequences on our homes.

Then, when you look at homosexual promiscuity, the long-term effects of homosexuality demoralizing. Right now our nation is at a crucible moment. Will we legalize homosexual lifestyles? It looks like the answer has already been decided, hasn't it? The answer is yes, we will. Let me tell you what will happen then. Fewer people will marry. Forget about men marrying men and women marrying women. I'm talking about the biblical definition of marriage—a man and a woman. Fewer men and women will get married, which means fewer children will be raised by a married woman or father. Now you tell me, what are the devastating consequences of that? Those of you who have gone through divorce, those of you who are single parents, know what that's like and that means, thirdly, more children will grow up fatherless.

What is the effect of growing up fatherless? Dr. Wade Horn, past president of the National Fatherhood Initiative said this,

“Studies have shown that children in America living in homes without fathers are 5 times more likely to live in poverty than children who live with both their mother and their father. Fatherless children are also 2 to 3 times more likely to develop an emotional or behavioral problem requiring psychiatric treatment. Studies have shown that children who grow up without fathers also are more likely to commit crime, and do poorer in school. Perhaps most tragically of all, children who grow up fatherless also are more likely to commit suicide than those who grow up in a home with both their mother and father.”

Then birth rates will fall. The more we sanction homosexual marriage the less children will be born and we're back to the actuaries and tables that I just mentioned—a workforce not able to support the economy and the style of living we have enjoyed. This will be a pit we will not climb out of.

### **C. The Removal of God from the Public School.**

When the United States Supreme Court in 1962 ruled that public prayer could no longer be in the classroom and then in 1963 ruled that Bible readings in the school were unconstitutional, the court in affect said that God could not be in the classroom.

According to the Specialty Research Associates under the direction of David Barton, here are the results:

- Teenage pregnancy rates have gone up 500 percent.
- Before 1963, divorce rates had been declining for the previous 15 years. After 1963, divorces increased 300 percent each year for the next 15 years.
- Since 1963, unmarried people living together is up 353 percent.
- The educational standard of measure has always been the SAT scores. The SAT scores had been steady until 1963. From 1963 they have rapidly declined for 18 consecutive years even though the same test was used since 1941.
- Since 1963, violent crime in America has arisen by 544 percent.

Now, here's the question—do these statistics prove a valid corollary between the Supreme Court decision of 1963 and with what is now occurring in our nation? Can we say what we are experiencing in our nation is because of that decision? All of these statistics, do they prove when you remove God from the school these things will happen?

I would first caution us to be careful with statistics because someone has said, “Figures don’t lie but figurers do.” The rooster crows at sunrise. Does that mean the rooster’s crowing makes the sun to rise? Is there a corollary? If the rooster stops crowing will the sun stop rising? The point is this—just because one thing happens doesn’t mean that a second thing has to happen or that the first caused the second.

But it’s interesting to note, and I think this will prove there is a correlation, that Christian schools have a much higher SAT score than public schools. In fact, their scores are still at the pre-1962 level. It’s a fact that makes me say that the statistics are showing what happens when a nation rejects God. When you say to children that God is not important and should not be a factor in life decisions, much less morality, it affects not only their moral behavior but also their intelligence. Doesn’t the Bible tell us that?

*“It is the fool who has said in his heart, ‘there is no God.’”*

Friends, these are just three self-dug pits and self-made snares. There are many more and the judgment of God on our nation is more just self-made consequences. These are just things we’ve done to ourselves.

## **II. GOD’S JUDGMENT ON AMERICA**

Look at verse eight and there we will see that what God is allowing to take place and what He will do in the near future is just.

### **A. It is just.**

*“He shall judge the world in righteousness,  
And He shall administer judgment for the peoples in uprightness.” (Psalms 9:8)*

In other words, when God dispenses judgment it is always right. It’s not God being mean or arbitrary to a group of people, it’s His righteousness being displayed and He cannot be trifled with.

### **B. The judgment is three-fold.**

*I. The inevitable consequences of sin.*

*“The LORD is known by the judgment He executes;  
The wicked is snared in the work of his own hands.” (Psalms 9:16)*

Some sins are automatically going to bring certain tragic and drastic results but God’s judgment goes beyond just allowing the consequences to take place.

## 2. The withdrawal of God's blessings and protection.

As a nation that's where we are right now because of our sins. I cannot look beyond my own heart. I don't want us to point the finger and say it's all of them out there as we shelter ourselves within these four walls and say we're innocent. Do you remember Daniel's prayer; do you remember Nehemiah's prayer? Both were conscious of the judgment of God on their nations and both of those men fasted in contrition and included their own sins as the reason why God had judged the people. These holy men did not say "it's those people I ask you to forgive," they said, "It is our sins and we ask for Your mercy." We as a nation have offended our God and one of the results is verse twenty.

*"Put them in fear, O LORD,  
That the nations may know themselves to be but men."*

In other words, the psalmist is praying,

*God, withdraw Your blessings, withdraw Your protection, so that men may see the good which You have done and discover that they are mere men. In this way they will know that they have not done what they think they've done, but that it was You all along.*

Secular culture desires the removal of God. We are living in a culture that is not Christian but secular, very much human-centered and desires the removal of every appearance and vestige of God. But when we remove God, those same voices that call for His discontinuation cry His damnation for allowing evil to extract its terrible price.

When 9/11 happened people were crying, *Where is God, Where is God, Where is God?* Well, He's where you wanted Him—removed. Here's the problem. Instead of seeing protection, plenty and prosperity as the blessings of God, we think they have come from our own hands.

It grieves me when I hear politicians on television stand up and say, "America is the hope of the earth." I cringe every time because that is blasphemous. We are not the hope of this world—Christ is. There was a time when our own presidents and leaders would have never said America is the hope of the world; they would have said God is the only hope. We've turned our focus inward. We boast that we've developed this nation and we've produced its bounty and prosperity. I wince every time I hear someone say that America is the greatest nation on the face of the earth, the greatest military power, the great super power.

I love my country. This is not an anti-American speech. I'm not running for political office and this is not anti-American propaganda. I'm pleading for America today, come back to God! God is our hope. We have not built this nation God has blessed this nation.

God is withdrawing Himself from us proving we are mere men and not semi-gods. He is showing us that it was He all along that has protected, provided and prospered us and as His hand is

further withdrawn and we are then allowed to prove what we are capable of, we are going to be bitterly and sorely disappointed. We will see all the more clearly just how sick we really are as nothing more than mere men.

Look at what's happened just recently. All of these crimes happening and these three young ladies abducted. All the neighbors said of the abductor in Cleveland, Ohio, "He was just an average fellow. Nothing insignificant, nothing different," and I want to suggest to you that's a true statement—he is like everyone else. Others have just perhaps not acted upon the seed of their own corruption as he has. We are no different.

The Bible says, "all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." The Bible says, "there is none righteous, no not one." "There is none that does good, no not one." Our mouth is an open sepulcher. The poison of asps is in our lips. Our feet are swift to shed blood and the way of peace is not known, while there is no fear of God in our eyes. This is what's happening—God is withdrawing His protection from this nation and He's allowing the natural humanness to have its course and it is not fun.

Our 16th president understood that the American Civil War to be the righteous judgment of God on this nation. Abraham Lincoln said not in implication but explicitly. Why then should you or I be scandalized for seeing the same righteous hand of God in the plagues and curses of our generation?

By saying what I'm saying to you and having that recorded and having it disseminated we will come under scrutiny and scandal because we said exactly what Lincoln said 150 years ago. Today you can't say those things.

Listen to what Lincoln said in his second inaugural address and remember this is not a preacher talking, but a president.

"If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offenses which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to Him?"

In other words, Lincoln said that slavery was a moral sin God allowed it for a time but His cup was full and He was no longer going to allow it. Why can I not say that abortion is a sin just as unconscionable and be honored for saying so rather than scandalized and attacked? If Lincoln could say that slavery was a sin for which America had to pay, then surely we cannot be any less responsible for the sins of this generation. Lincoln continued to say,

"Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood



drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said 'the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.'"

God is righteous in what He's allowing to take place in this nation.

3. *The use of foreign enemies.*

God will eventually allow enemies without to come within. You see, no nation will survive who will not repent and be restored to righteousness. Look at verse 17,

*"The wicked shall be turned into hell, And all the nations that forget God."*

I want to say that we have not forgotten God—we have rejected God. What shall be done to us?

### **III. THE REFUGE OF THE RIGHTEOUS**

What are we to do? What is our response to be when we live in a society that is increasingly becoming more and more hateful to God? Verses nine and 10,

*"The LORD also will be a refuge for the oppressed,  
A refuge in times of trouble.  
And those who know Your name will put their trust in You;  
For You, LORD, have not forsaken those who seek You."*

#### **A. The Righteous Will Be Persecuted.**

David is acknowledging that he was persecuted because he had chosen to side with God. He received the hatred and the evil of men and so will we. Some of us have already experienced this. The righteous will be persecuted. The darker it becomes, the brighter the saints of God will shine and therefore more fierce will be the attempt of the unrighteous to snuff out the illumination of the people of God. Your life and testimony will be a bitter reminder to the wicked of the righteousness of God and they will not endure. Your testimony of God and godliness will be like the pain of a burning iron stuck into the eye and they will try to remove it by removing us.

This week, just this week, we learned through the IRS scandal that has come forth that the IRS refused to grant certain pro-life and anti-abortion organizations tax-exempt status unless, listen to this, they gave the IRS the content of the prayers of their members and promised to protest against Planned Parenthood. The IRS requested from pro-life Christian organizations that they report on the content of the prayers of the people of that organization. A church also applied for tax-exempt status and was told their application had been declined and, according to World Net Daily, the founder of the church said the IRS told him they didn't qualify.

“The representative was telling me that I had to provide information on all aspects of abortion, I couldn’t just educate the church from the pro-life perspective.”

The IRS was telling this man what he could and could not preach if he was to have tax-exempt status. *The Washington Times* reported recently that a 10-year-old New Hampshire girl had been ordered to attend public school. The state disapproved of her mother’s firm Christianity and said she could not be homeschooled; she had to be exposed to other religious faiths.

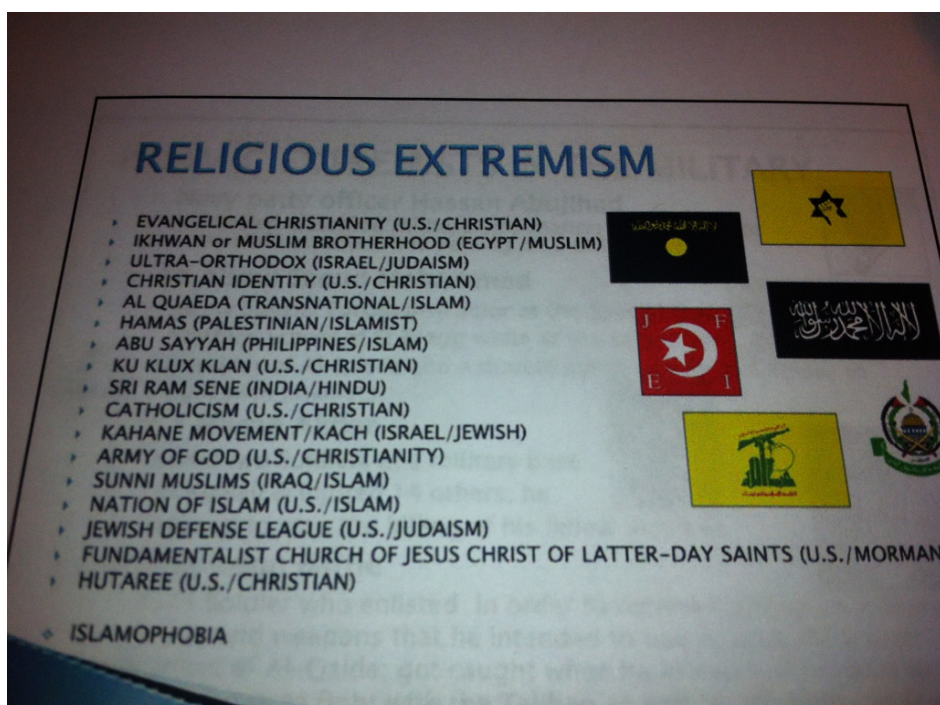
In Massachusetts, town clerks who refused to solemnize same-sex marriages were ordered to do so or be terminated.

Also in Massachusetts some Catholic charities have been forced to close their adoption agencies since they could not abandon their teaching in order to comply with state rules requiring children with same-sex couples to also have placement.

A man’s 6-year-old son was exposed to instruction on homosexual relationships in kindergarten. His father, David Parker, was arrested for going to the administration and protesting that his child have to endure that instruction. He spent a night in jail and was taken to court in handcuffs.

Two years ago a teacher in Mount Dora, Florida was awarded teacher of the year. The very next year was suspended from his job and investigated for simply stating his sincerely held beliefs regarding homosexuality on his personal Facebook page. Not in the classroom, but on his personal Facebook page. His position, of course, was the Christian position.

Now we have a photo to show you. This is titled Religious Extremism. Do you see who’s on the top?



This came from a briefing with an Army Reserve Unit in Pennsylvania. A United States training instructor listed first of all Evangelical Christianity and on down the list Catholicism as examples of Religious Extremism, along with, by the way, Al Qaeda and Hamas. You want to know what your government thinks of you? Now you know. There is a growing anti-Christian sentiment in this nation and I think this sentiment is best expressed by what one woman reported seeing on a bumper sticker:

“So many Christians, so few lions.”

That’s the truth, but there is hope.

## **B. God Will Preserve the Righteous.**

*“The LORD also will be a refuge for the oppressed,  
A refuge in times of trouble.  
And those who know Your name will put their trust in You;  
For You, LORD, have not forsaken those who seek You.” (Psalms 9:9-10)*

God will preserve us. He will have to take us through this and we will have to endure it, but He will preserve us one of two ways.

## **He may miraculously spare you just as He did Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.**

The king had built a magnificent and tall statue of himself, plated with pure gold. The order went throughout the entire nation of Babylon, one of the most impressive civilizations up to that point in human history—in fact, their gardens are still one of the seven wonders of the world—and when the sound of the trumpets and the music began that everyone was to bow down to that idol. Three Hebrew young men, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, refused to bow down to the idol. They would not compromise. That is the position I am pleading with you this morning. Take the position of no compromise.

They didn’t think like some of us would think. *You know, I’ll bow, but I’ll be standing up on the inside.* They didn’t rationalize it and say, *You know, the Apostle Paul says that idols are nothing so we aren’t bowing down to it.* There are 101 ways to rationalize sin and you can use the Bible to do it but stay with God and God will stay with you. We need a people today, if there is hope for this nation, that will not compromise. I love what Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego said to the king when they brought them to him.

*“O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. **But if not,**”*

There's the Christian position. It's great to believe God for miracles and even pray for them, but will you trust God when He doesn't provide the miracle? Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego did.

*“But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up.” (Daniel 3:16-18)*

God preserved them miraculously. They were thrown in the fire and nothing happened to them. They didn't even have the smell of smoke on them.

### **The second way God can deliver you from the times of persecution and hardship is through death.**

I want to refer to you not to Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego but Stephen in Acts 7.

This man was also a no compromiser. He preached before the leadership of his nation and told them their own sins. And under threat of death to recant he refused to do so and he was stoned to death. As those rocks pummeled his body and one rock cracked his skull, as another broke his ribs, the Bible says he even prayed for the peoples' forgiveness, just like Jesus had done with those who crucified Him.

How could Stephen's martyrdom be as great as Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego's deliverance? Jesus answers that question for us in Luke 21:16-18.

*“You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But not a hair of your head shall be lost. By your patience possess your souls.”*

Now perhaps you would say, *Okay, Lord, I'm not following You. If I'm dying it seems like a lot of hairs on my head are going to be lost. I don't get that. How cannot a hair on my head be lost if I'm dying for You? What He's saying is, I know all about you. Remember? I have numbered every hair on your head. This is an allusion to God's superintendence and sovereignty over the situation. I may not deliver you from it, but I'll carry you through that your patience will possess your souls. You will not deny Me. You will not deny Me in the hour of crucible.*

In both cases, both Stephen and Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, I want you to see that the Son of Man was present. In Daniel 3:24-25 we read,

*“Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished; and he rose in haste and spoke, saying to his counselors, “Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?” They answered and said to the king, “True, O king.” “Look!” he answered, “I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.””*

It was the Son of God. It was Jesus Christ. He was there. And dear friend, He was no less there

with Stephen for in Acts 7:55-56 we read,

*“But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, 56 and said, “Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!””*

He was there with Stephen as well. Sometimes He delivers miraculously and sometimes He delivers through pain and torture and finally death, but listen to me, God’s judgment on the wicked will be our vindication.

*“For You have maintained my right and my cause;  
You sat on the throne judging in righteousness.” (Psalm 9:4)*

*“He shall judge the world in righteousness,  
And He shall administer judgment for the peoples in uprightness.” (Psalm 9:8)*

*“When He avenges blood, He remembers them;  
He does not forget the cry of the humble.” (Psalm 9:12)*

I want to bring this message to a conclusion. We are living in a transition that is near the end. We have become a full-fledged secular society and the change, the transition, is about done. There’s not much left. The next thing they’ll do is sandblast “In God we trust” from the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and remove it from our currency. There will be new laws that will have to be passed about hate speech, and this message would come under that heading, but for the most part the transition is finished. But I still have hope. I still have hope for America, one of the most blessed nations of all the nations of history.

The hope of this nation, if there is hope, is not in our compromise as Christians but in our determined commitment to the truth of our Lord and His Word. If this nation is to have any hope of change it is because you and I will stand firm in the hour of our challenge, tested for our faith and stand resolute, immovable, and steadfast. When we do that, people will begin to notice and God can once again use the church to become salt and light to a nation that is unpreserved in the darkness.

I want to leave you with the words of Martin Luther, who, at his trial at the Diet of Worms, stood before the authorities who thought they held his life in their hands and asked him if he would recant from his writings and his teachings on justification by faith. Here’s what he said. I hope it is our words today and forever.

*“Unless I am convinced by proofs of Scripture or by plain and clear reasons and arguments, I can’t and will not retract. For it is neither safe nor wise to do anything against conscience. Here I stand, I can do no other. God help me. Amen.”*

Oh for Martin Luthers today! Oh, for people who are willing to withstand the heat of a nation and religion in order for what conscience and Scriptures both advocate. Church, we can be the agent of change for our nation. We can make a difference if we refuse to compromise, knowing God will not forsake us. He will be our refuge in the time of trouble. Amen.