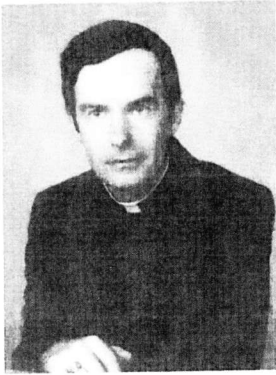


Chaplain's Corner, Hughes Camp Chaplain Richard W Rudd



"Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is easy, that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard, that leads to life, and those who find it are few. Beware of false prophets, who come to you in

sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits." (Matt. 7:13)

In this admonition, Christ speaks to each one of us personally and to all Americans collectively as a nation. As recorded in both Biblical and secular history, God deals with nations as He does individuals. One needs only to study the fates of empires as ancient as Assyria, Babylon, Egypt, and Rome, or as recent as Britain.

Consider the Assyrian Empire whose capital was Nineveh, located on the east bank of the Tigris River near present-day Mosul in Iraq. It had a large population and was both wealthy and powerful. In 1859, Charles Dickens wrote a novel entitled *A Tale of Two Cities*. As recorded in the books of Jonah and Nahum, Nineveh's story reads like two tales of one city. We are familiar with Jonah and his fishing expedition when the big fish did not get away, but instead caught Jonah. Around 840 BC, God commissioned Jonah to warn Nineveh to repent of their warfare, bloody cruelty, and pagan practices or face judgement. "(T)he people of Nineveh believed God..." (Jonah 3:5) and God's messenger. The king issued a proclamation decreeing a fast and repentance. "When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God..." retracted His threat of judgement "...and He did not do it." (Jonah 3:10) But later, around 710 BC, Nineveh backslid into its old ways and faced a similar choice between mercy and judgement. They stood before the same God Who "...is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; He knows those who take refuge in Him." (Nahum 1:7) But as Nahum predicted, this time they did not amend their ways and chose to stand before a God Who "...is avenging and wrathful; (Who) takes vengeance on His adversaries and keeps wrath for His enemies." (Nahum 1:2) In 612 BC, Nineveh, in spite of its wealth and power, was

destroyed and never recovered. Its glory was reduced to a mound called Tell Kuyunjik, referring to it as a place where sheep grazed.

AD 2016 was, to date, perhaps the most critical period for America in the lifetime of most of us. As individuals and as a nation, we stood poised on the precipice of one of the most momentous decisions America's citizens have had to make in recent history. Like Nineveh, we had come to that juncture in our national journey where we were called upon to choose our future course by entering either through the wide or the narrow gate. Beckoning to us through the wide gate were ravenous wolves in sheep's clothing, offering false prophecies and promises of easy freedom without moral responsibility and easy prosperity through socialism. Many, a slight majority of the electorates' popular vote, entered by the way of the wide gate. Had they prevailed, the DNA of America would have been irreversibly mutated. It is because the liberal cartel, through their effective manipulation of the media and the masses, came so close to realizing the solidification of their dream that they and their minions cannot believe, accept, or adjust to the defeat they were dealt. At stake were not only a tightening of the binding chains of legislation and bureaucratic regulations, but the appointments of numerous federal judges and possibly several Supreme Court judges whose tenure and ramifications of their decisions will reverberate far into the future.

Throughout history, God has spoken through messengers to warn nations of the implications of their political errors. Elijah opposed King Ahab and experienced his resistance. Elisha was directly involved in political and military events, provoking a rebellion against Ahab. Isaiah warned Judah of its errant policies. Jeremiah delivered an unpopular message against government corruption and experienced rejection by the misguided people he sought to rescue from their false hopes. Nehemiah sought to rebuild his country of Judah, but experienced organized opposition from those among the populace.

Our American Forefathers, both Revolutionary and Confederate, grounded in the Christian faith and a working knowledge of history, strove to apply both

with a mixture of common sense to deal effectively with the issues they faced in their day. In the course of writing these articles, it has been my humble effort to follow their example and encourage my readers to do the same. The overlapping political, economic, and social (i.e. moral) issues with which we grapple are merely symptoms of the root cause of what so deeply divides America today. America's real division is spiritual; Christian culture is under attack from forces promoting a secular, pagan society. Written within the context of eating food, Prov. 23:7 tells us, "For as (a man) thinks in his heart, so is he." Those thoughts we accept as truth form our belief system. If physically, we are what we eat, then spiritually, we are what we believe. According to Gallop, 95% of Americans identified themselves as Christian in the 1950's, 80% in 2008, and 75% in 2015. In 2014, Pew Research found that all categories of Christians declined and all categories of non-Christians increased. Unless America experiences real repentance, at the current pace of decline, America will be only 50% Christian in the next 25 years.

The organizing principle of society is not law; it is moral virtue. Due to the limit of their external effect, it is repeatedly demonstrated that laws fail to adequately govern man's behavior. To accomplish that, an internal spiritual transformation is needed. What we do when nobody is looking is the true barometer of our moral state. How two people treat each other extrapolates to affect society's organization. How we approach the political issues of our time will be determined by whether we deal with them from a secular or Christian perspective. Washington said, "Religion and morality are the essential pillars of civil society." John Adams observed, "Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of another."

In 2016, America secured a reprieve from God's judgement. Victory was not won with the results of the election; the battle has just begun. As it was with the ancient prophets, we can expect rejection, fierce resistance, and even persecution from the opposition. Like a bad disease, secular liberalism might appear to be in remission, but will only come

back with a vengeance if we fail in this opportunity to be vigilant in accomplishing the task before us. As a warning, it has been said, "What is against us is preached to us...and what is preached to us...will prove to be against us." In 2016, the silent majority finally mustered enough resolve to break their silence. If we miss this opportunity and regress into silence and inactivity, we will be viewed as weak, fearful and intimidated, lacking the dedication and commitment to what we claim to believe, and fail to convince others of the justification of our cause. What we can learn from our opposition is to make our presence visible, our voices heard, our positions known, and our strength felt. What our opposition should learn through us, if we persevere in our cause, is this: "If we confess our sins (individually and as a nation), He (God) is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us (and our land) from all unrighteousness." (1 Jn. 1:9)

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