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What would Jesus Really Do? (*WWJRD?*)

As I was surfing through the channels last week looking for something on television that was not a rerun or totally tacky, I ran across a discussion of why America was not mentioned in Bible prophesy. Since that has been a topic that we have brushed upon here at Wonder Springs in the past, and we were getting well up on the channel surfing dial, I decided to give it a listen, after all, it was Christmas!

The man leading the discussion was a somewhat well known Christian television minister and the man with all the information, I did not know, but anyway I decided to stick around and see what would develop.

What I remember was that there were four reasons given for why the United States was not to be found in the Bible's end of this age prophesy, one of those was the coming Rapture, the other three I can't remember, but for only a \$50 gift to the ministry I could get

the DVD. What wasn't on the list however was anything to do with the outworking of real natural law especially as it relates to individual diversity, responsibility and natural energetics.

I watched most of the first episode, but I have to admit it was getting late, and I did doze off for a couple of brief lapses. At the beginning of the second, I made the determination to pay more attention. However I again awoke at the close of the episode and decided that I might as well just go to bed. Look at it this way, even though the world is rapidly going to hell, it really isn't that exciting watching two aging men sitting across from one another discussing a topic they believed in, but at the same time really had little to say for at least four hours.

What really is more interesting is reading the biography of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. That is also not something you can't put down and must read until the end, it is



after all almost six hundred pages. Furthermore the contrast between Bonhoeffer's life and the television episodes could not be more striking, even though I would believe that the two Christian leaders would not totally agree with my comparison.

That difference I would summarize is that my sleepy television hosts were discussing concepts of the American evangelical Christian religion, Bonhoeffer's life thus far has been one more about wonder and the workings of Christianity at its very core, and how the church just doesn't seem to get, or be interested in, the essence of the Christian gospel.

Put more bluntly, the one seems to major in the minors, the other, Bonhoeffer's view, seems to consider the essential reality of the gospel, as it relates to what Jesus did, is to be the whole message of the church, and the rest of the Christian religion, distracting noise.

One such issue of noise that is truly and has become an American Christian symbol, is the concept of WWJD (What Would Jesus Do?) I do suppose that concept is somewhat dated at the present time, because there are deeper issues of today's life that more focus upon reality, rather than warm fuzzy piety, but it does seem to lead us to a more appropriate discussion, "What Would Jesus Really Do?" if he returned today.

For that we need to look seriously at what Jesus really did when he walked this earth.

What emerges from that context are two basic themes. The first is that Jesus proclaimed the reality of the present "Kingdom of God." The other is that he was really a friend of sinners and really was not much into the pious religion that he found in the Israel of his day.

Transporting those conclusions into the present, we find essentially a presence of the real "Kingdom of God" that we (the church) have ignored essentially for the last two thousand years and in the process we have followed human religious laws as a substitute. In the truest form our Christian piety goes back to Moses and bypasses the Kingdom of God's Grace that Jesus came to proclaim.

This Christian religion is truly the antithesis of what pastor Bonhoeffer called Religionless

Christianity. But if we broaden the context, Bonhoeffer's concept is not all that different than the reoccurring themes of Michael Horton's "Christless Christianity," or Julia Dunn's "Quitting Church," as well as Christian Smith's "Moral Therapeutic Deism," as well as a whole genre of wake up calls for Christianity to get back to its true calling.

The Kingdom of God that Jesus brought to our lost and dying world is a kingdom of God's amazing unmerited grace. That was the reason for the season for Christmas. However the birth of Jesus is really just a small part of the most important part of the story, which ends on a Cross outside of Jerusalem some thirty-three years later.

We can blame the reality that our world is all falling apart on all the sinners, money-grubbing bankers, and a whole host of bad people who only seek to satisfy their temporal desires, but they are in reality just fulfilling their job description.

The church in contrast is not called to move into Babylon and wonder what Jesus would do, but rather proclaim what Jesus did two thousand years ago. In the process we have lost not the law of God, but the gospel of God's grace through Jesus Christ.

So what is really taking place today is the purging of the temple of God, so that that gospel will again be capable of being seen, and the money changers and others who make a substantial living from church affairs will again be found wondering what happened to their positions of power and prestige.

We must look at the founding of the American Republic and the context of the TEA Party if we are to understand what is happening. The founders of the American Republic understood that any successful nation must be founded upon the common moral principles of God's Law. That law was basically codified by Moses at Mount Sinai. It is that moral law that is the common basis for all human societies. It is really what Thomas Jefferson tried to do with the Bible that now carries his name.

What we have lost is the difference between the moral common revelation of religious religion and the specific revelation of divine grace. We have at least almost a century of the misuse of what would Jesus do, with what Jesus would really do. WWJD is really just common natural religious law. WWJRD is the

militant cleansing of the temple of God, so that the reality of the Kingdom of Grace may again become apparent.

In the New Testament, the contrast of Law and Gospel is shown in the life of the Apostle Paul. Once he received the specific revelation of God's grace, he considered his obedience to the law as dung. Transporting that concept into today, once the church again begins to understand the difference between law and gospel, the change will come in society and it will come as a specific revelation with amazing speed.

Today we look at the founders of the American Republic as essentially moral therapeutic deists. However moral therapeutic deists don't have the moral guts to take a risk, *"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."*

The words of Benjamin Franklin, at the close of the Constitutional Convention, which stated, "You have a republic, if you can keep it." now faces its most significant challenge. We seem to think that the written constitution was in some way disconnected from the mutual pledge at the end of the Declaration of Independence.

In the same way we seem to think that our progressive enlightenment of our human achievements will in some way understand what is happening, when in reality, just as in the Declaration of Independence we have become a nation of governance not all that different than the English Monarchy we eliminated:

When in the Course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers

from the consent of the governed, — That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security. — Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.

What this section of the Declaration shows is that the American nation came about through natural law and not the wisdom of humans selling DVD's discussing why the United States is not mentioned in end times Biblical prophesy.

The United States of America was created by God not to be a shining city on a hill to represent an eternal Jerusalem, but rather a common nation of God's grace, that is to be manifest through natural law that provides for individual human liberty and freedom.

That truly is not the nation we have become, hence those changes now taking place here are not significant to the judgment and the end of this present age in the rest of the world. Instead America will again become a beacon of God's grace and the Kingdom of God.

We have lost our way in a world of our own created wilderness, and just like at the founding of the American governance, that renewal or redux will be a work of God and not a work of man. This lesson we are in the process of learning again first hand as we begin to see the manifestations of WWJRD.

Happy New Year!