

What Happened to America? -3/05/23

TEXT – 1 Peter 4:17 *For the time is come that judgment must begin at the*

INTRO – Loving your country is a commendable act. Even with America in decline, I believe it is the greatest nation on earth.

In my childhood I was taught respect and love for our country. I have visited almost every state and many foreign countries. I have been at US 1 where it begins in Fort Kent Maine and where it ends in Key West Florida. I grew up in the Midwest attended college in the south and have lived most of my life in New England.

I remember learning about our great heritage in grade school and attending basketball games where they raised the flag during the national anthem. It sent goosebumps up my spine.

Do we live in the same America? Many are confused about the origin and role of America.

Recently we have observed homeless camps in San Francisco, Seattle, Portland and other cities.

There has been a drastic increase in mass shootings, organized mobs of thieves bankrupting stores: murders, rapist and anarchists released on bond; schools locked down like prison camps, wasteful and uncontrolled spending; mountainous debt, defunding the police, censorship of ideas, colleges deteriorating into totalitarianism; cancel culture, imperial presidents, ultra-extreme party politics; the breakdown of law and order in our cities, the wokeness destroying the moral of our military; America's sports star refusing to honor our flag; an open border, drag queens indoctrinating our youth in local libraries; the breakdown of our nuclear family, vast number of illegitimate children, totalitarian school boards running roughshod over parents in the public school system, support for men who pretend to be women entering women's restrooms and participating in women's sports, assisted suicide and abortion on demand to highlight a few of the changes in our country. People are confused. The world's eyes have been upon America since it founders purposed it to be "a city on the hill" to shine truth and liberty across the globe.

What has happened?

There are two Americas. The old America I remember and a new America that has emerged in the last thirty years.

America was always a mixture of cultures and beliefs. It contained zealous believers and secular human minded heathen.

True born-again Christians has always been a relatively small part of society, even when Christianity dominated the culture. Few if any of our presidents were truly born-again believers.

Many of the colonists were seeking liberty for truth and godliness, while

others were seeking filthy lucre just as passionately.

Righteousness and covetousness have always composed the heart and soul of our country.

The central aspect of America's early years was liberty. It is enshrined in the Declaration of Independence, the US Constitution, the First Amendment, and the second amendment.

America was created to be an Empire of Liberty, a Beacon of Liberty, the sweet land of liberty.

It is the land of the Liberty Bell, the Liberty Tree and the statue of Liberty.

It is the place where men stated, "Give me liberty or give me death."

The liberty of religion, the Liberty of speech, the liberty of the press, the liberty of self-government, liberty from injustice, liberty of economics.

America has been called an idea, and that idea is liberty. Though that liberty was not enjoyed by all it was rectified in the 13th and 15th amendments.

(Abolishing slavery and voting rights for women.)

Liberty was stitched in the fabric of American Federalism. Throughout the nineteenth century the federal government had little impact on daily life, apart from the local post office.

The old America was more mightily influenced by the Bible than any nation in history, other than Israel. Even the more skeptical founding fathers like Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson were greatly influenced by the bible.

The Bible was used as a textbook and reader in the nation's public and private schools for the first 250 years. Everything was taught from a Biblical view of God and morality.

America's first reader was the New England Primer which quoted numerous passages from the King James version.

It was the most important textbook printed from 1690 to 1790.

Noah Webster's American Spelling Book (The blue back speller) was an essential part of elementary education. Webster has been called the school-master of the republic." It taught biblical principles to millions of children.

Americans of the 17th through the 19th century were steeped in Scripture from a young age which had a powerful influence on society even the unsaved.

It was the bible influence that produced America's greatest qualities:

- **The belief that the bible was God's word**
- **A universal belief God created the world**
- **Acceptance of absolute truth**
- **The emphasis on good character, such as honesty, purity, humility, self-restraint and benevolence.**

Where are we now?

The changes we have more recently undergone are a rebellion against the biblical principles of the past.

There has always been rebellion and unbelief.

During the Civil War Thomas Paine, in the age of reason attacked the Bible and exalted human reason as the final authority.

In the 19th century rebellion took the form of enlightenment, existentialism, Unitarianism, liberalism evolution, Freudian psychology, and socialism. (The new deal and the great society)

In the twentieth century there was an addition new age secularism, feminism, abortion rights, the sexual revolution, globalism and many others.

In 1940 teachers identified the top problems in America's schools as: Talking out of turn, chewing gum, making noise and running in the hall. In 1990, teachers listed drugs, alcohol, pregnancy, suicide, rape and assault. These are not good things to get used to, either.

In the 21st century there has been the addition of cultural Marxism (Antifa etc.) analytic philosophy, wokeness etc.

They have had their spokesmen.

Some celebrity's sports stars Hollywood actors, new media, politicians and many others.

While the early principles of America are not dead evil predominates. Evil has exploded into the limelight. There is pushback but still evil predominates.

Bringing about change through political processes and electing conservative politicians I am all for it. However, what should be doing to restore our country?

I. God Will Judge Every Nation That Forgets God

Psalms 9:17 *The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.*

Job 12:23 *He increaseth the nations, and destroyeth them: he enlargeth the nations, and straiteneth them again.*

Psalms 22:28 *For the kingdom is the LORD'S: and he is the governor among the nations.*

II. God Will Bless A Nation That Honors Him

Psalms 33:12 *Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance.*

And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without his Notice, is it probable that an Empire can rise without his Aid? – Benjamin Franklin

III. We Should Pray For Our Country

1 Timothy 2:1-4 *I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; 2 For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. 3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; 4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.*

IV. The Church Must Be Faithful Under Any Government

1 Peter 4:17 *For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?*

The need of the hour is for Christians to awaken from their slumber and carry out the great commission for our day.

The church can thrive under persecution but it often succumbs to prosperity.

CONCL –

French writer Alexis de Tocqueville, after visiting America in 1831, said, "I sought for the greatness of the United States in her commodious harbors, her ample rivers, her fertile fields, and boundless forests--and it was not there. I sought for it in her rich mines, her vast world commerce, her public school system, and in her institutions of higher learning--and it was not there. I looked for it in her democratic Congress and her matchless Constitution--and it was not there. Not until I went into the churches of America and heard her pulpits flame with righteousness did I understand the secret of her genius and power. America is great because America is good, and if America ever ceases to be good, America will cease to be great!"