

## The Heart of Our Country's Ills

In 1787 the world was introduced to a magnificent document that became known as the Constitution of the United States. This document's purpose was "to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity." It has served our country well for these 200 plus years, even though of late it seems to be taking a beating by those who are supposed to uphold it. One can only wonder how many of our country's ills could be cured if only our leaders would base their decisions on one simple question: "What does the Constitution say about this?"

There is a deeper ill affecting us though, one that goes far beyond a lack of respect for the Constitution. It is a lack of respect for God's Word. While the Constitution may have the authority to regulate our laws, only the Bible has the authority to regulate our lives in guiding us toward eternal life. While the Constitution stands as one of the most powerful documents ever written by uninspired men, it is still just that; a document written by uninspired men. The present moral condition of our country cannot be traced so much to a lack of our leaders neglecting to ask, "What does the Constitution say?" as to a lack of America as a whole neglecting to ask, "What does the Bible say?" and then listening to and obeying the Sacred Scriptures.

"What does the Bible say?" To neglect this question is to be like the Israelites in the days of the prophet Hosea. Through him God said, "Hear the word of the Lord ye children of Israel: for the Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land... My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge..." (Hosea 4:1,6). Israel rejected knowledge (verse 6). They would not seek God and thus were cast off (II Kings 17).

"But," someone objects. "Isn't the Bible still the best-selling book in America? Aren't there thousands of religious groups dotting a map of the USA? How can you say that Americans are not asking, 'What does the Bible say?'" The answer is found in the next point.

"What does the Bible say?" To ask this question AND NOT OBEY THE ANSWER is to be like the nation of Judah in the days of the prophet Jeremiah. At one point the citizens of Judah at least outwardly demonstrated that they wanted to know what God had to say to them. They came to Jeremiah and said, "Let, we beseech thee, our supplication be accepted before thee, and pray for us unto the Lord thy God, even for all this remnant; (for we are left but a few of many, as thine eyes do behold us:) That the Lord thy God may shew us the way wherein we may walk, and the thing that we may do." (Jeremiah 42:2-3). Jeremiah proceeded to tell them exactly what God had told him (Jeremiah 42:7-22). The people replied, "Thou speakest falsely: the Lord our God hath not sent thee..." (Jeremiah 43:2). Judah heard God's will. They knew God's will. They chose not to obey it. What is the difference between the person who does not know God's will and the one who knows it but doesn't obey it? Both are still doomed to eternal damnation (Luke 12:41-48).

Ignorance of and apathy toward the Constitution of the United States is certainly contributing to our national woes, but a disregard for God's authority as revealed in His Word is the bigger and potentially more damaging issue. We're all familiar, I'm sure, with the inspired words of Solomon in Proverbs 14:34 in which he wrote, "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people." Before a nation can "get right" its people have to "get right." We need to go back to the Bible and obey God's Word for the sake of our souls and strive to lead others back to God's Word for the sake of their souls. That's where the road to recovery truly begins for America, or any nation for that matter.

Mike Gifford