

August 22, 2016

Dear Members and Friends:

In the early 1960's, Bob Dylan penned a song that became a reflection of a generation growing up in that decade. "The Times They Are a-Changin'" became a ballad of the civil rights movement. Dylan himself became an icon for that era and embodied changes that many sought after, either peacefully or through radical means.

History.com sums up this decade stating, "At the beginning of the 1960s, many Americans believed they were standing at the dawn of a golden age. On January 20, 1961, the handsome and charismatic John F. Kennedy became president of the United States. His confidence that, as one historian put it, 'the government possessed big answers to big problems' seemed to set the tone for the rest of the decade. However, that golden age never materialized. On the contrary, by the end of the 1960s it seemed that the nation was falling apart."

Fast forward five decades and it's obvious no utopian change took place in that "golden" decade. But change has happened, just not for the betterment of man. Quite the opposite! The ruler of this world desires nothing less than the ruin of man. In Isaiah, we read of Satan's character, "How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations!" (Isaiah 14:12). Satan will stop at nothing in order to dismantle God's Plan in any way possible. Any human effort to affect lasting change without God's leadership is simply futile. If we aren't promoting God's Way of Life, we are working in opposition to it.

But of course, this is not the way in which man's efforts are projected by the great deceiver. Man rejoices in the unshackling of the "ancient ways" in the worshipping of God. This misguided approach never ends up seeking to fulfill the Will of God. Instead, religion without the true God ultimately seeks to satisfy Satan's desires. This rebellious attitude leads directly away from true freedom and instead binds us into slavery under Satan.

We know that God doesn't change. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8). Thus, anything seeking to change the foundations laid before us by God's true servants cannot be of God. Many invoke the name of God, but few take the time to acknowledge who God really is. They instead seek to satisfy their own desires and create their own gods.

This attitude of ignoring the truth is the reason God's Judgment is going to be so harsh upon this world. Paul states, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness..." (Romans 1:18). Without God's Truth, mankind is doomed.

For this reason it is imperative that we keep the light of God's Truth shining brightly in our lives. We must lay a foundation upon the unchanging stability of Christ. Besides lighting up the darkness, lighthouses were built on ground that wouldn't give way, even in the most turbulent storms. If we are not seeking that kind of stability, we will fail. If we are seeking God on our own strength and understanding, we will fail. Paul continued to warn those who knew God, but didn't have the foundation to stand during a storm, "...because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things" (Romans 1:21-23).

The motivation for the lie that Satan so masterfully laid out before man was revealed explicitly when Satan tempted Christ: "Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to Him, 'All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me'" (Matthew 4:8-9). Satan rose up into heaven in order to usurp God from His throne. After failing and being cast down to earth, his motivation didn't change. He still desires to be worshipped and stand between God and God's plan for mankind.

We are witnessing a growing change in world views that will lead many astray, including God's very elect. The cause for falling away is always self-reliance, the acceptance of false teachings, and a failure to believe and rely solely on God. We are fighting against those principalities with far greater power than any one of us possesses on our own. Succeeding against Satan is impossible unless godliness and faith are our shield (Ephesians 6:16). Paul spoke about this great deceit and the consequences for those of us swayed by it: "The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thessalonians 2:9-12). We see a world reveling in unrighteous pleasure. God is ignored in lieu of passing sinful pursuits that will always lead to death. We must stand strong in this great storm of satanic deceit, for it will topple anyone not rooted in the truth.

True change is manifest when we put away our own desires and seek after God. If we are seeking His Kingdom first, our attitude will change. We have a promise laid out before us, and the day is quickly approaching when Christ will be fulfilling that promise: "Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1 Corinthians 15:51-52).

In Christ's Service



Robb Harris