

Ichabod: The Glory Is Gone: Introduction: Veterans' Day & National Discipline; the Ichabod of Israel: the Corruption of the Priesthood & Jeremiah's Dire Prophecy

Ichabod

The Glory Is Gone

Veterans' Day Special - 09 November 2008

I. Introduction:

There are two events coming up over the next couple of days that command our attention. Tomorrow marks the 233rd anniversary of the United States Marine Corps, originally organized on November 10, 1775, as the Naval Infantry. The Corps has served in every American armed conflict and it gained special prominence in the Pacific theatre during World War II.

On Tuesday, November 11 we will observe Veterans' Day, known formally as Armistice Day. Its original purpose was to honor all, living or dead, who have served in the US Armed Forces in wartime.

The observance was instituted on November 11, 1919, to commemorate the termination of World War I which was concluded at 11:00 A.M. on that date a year earlier in 1918. President Woodrow Wilson issued a proclamation eulogizing fallen Allied soldiers from the United States, France, Great Britain, and Canada. In the United States, the name of the holiday was changed to Veterans' Day in 1954. The day is referred to as Remembrance Day in Canada and as Remembrance Sunday in Great Britain.

On the flag poles in front of the church we always fly the Stars and Stripes on the thirty-foot center flag pole. In recognition of the Marine Corps' birthday its colors are also posted on one of the twenty-foot standards.

Finally, there are several days throughout the year that the POW/MIA flag is posted, Veteran's Day being among them. It, too, flies from one of the twenty-foot poles.

The US and Marine flags remind us of those who have served this client nation over the course of its entire history while the POW/MIA flag is a stark reminder of those who remain unaccounted for in our several wars.

In view of these significant events and the 232 years of freedom that these flags represent, it struck me that a clear cold look at the present Zeitgeist is important for us to take.

We are eternally grateful to each of our service organizations and especially to all the men and women who have and do serve in them. For two and a third centuries, this nation has called on these citizen soldiers to fight her wars, yet we find that the freedom they bought at such high cost is now being legislated away by foolish politicians who are willing to destroy the country in order to acquire power and confiscate treasure.

It is easy to blame these people for their folly for they are the ones who are carrying out the spiritual execution of this client nation. Whereas in the past the Progressives' advance toward a socialistic society was a goal wistfully imagined, their recent ascendancy to power has emboldened them to seize their prize with great alacrity. The end result may not advance us to a fourth or fifth cycle where predator nations conquer the real estate known as the United States, but their power enables them to change the country from a free Republic to a totalitarian state.

The time is far past when establishment or human viewpoint problem-solving devices could repair the damage done to our nation by Progressive ideology. Such solutions are no longer available. Those who are in power are not about to retreat now that their dream is about to be transformed onto reality. Given the opportunity they are sure to take it.

The tendency of traditionalists is to become upset with the New Sheriff and his posse of Progressives. But you direct your ire at the wrong people. Those responsible for the decline of this nation are the many pastors who have stood in pulpits for the past fifty years and, having bought into the lie, have served it up full course to their parishioners.

For half a century, pastors have failed to teach doctrine and as a result the people remain ignorant of divine viewpoint. Into the void rushed the cosmic lie which lured believers into sin – the arrogance of legalism and the folly of licentiousness.

When believers are ignorant of divine viewpoint they can no longer influence their fellow citizens and thus, when confronted with the problems of life, join with unbelievers in demanding human good and evil from government.

When faith is lost in God's grace to provide, when reciprocal love is transferred from God to men, and when personal pleasure supersedes pursuit of true happiness, then the national will is broken.

The list of violations against God that have been broadly accepted in this country, and even incorporated into its precedence and case law, is far too long to enumerate here. But the conclusion that can be reached is that lack of doctrine is bringing national discipline upon our country and its citizens.

Hosea 4:6 offers this sobering assessment:

Hosea 4:6 - My nation is destroyed because of lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I will reject you from being a client nation to Me. Since you have rejected the doctrine of your God, I will neglect your citizens.

There is a passage of Scripture that documents what happens to a client nation that "lacks knowledge" and "rejects" it. It offers clear testimony to the failure of the United States to respect its client-nation status and the end result of doing so.

Fortunately, it also reveals the manner by which order is restored to that client nation when the population, through the persuasion of suffering and punishment, returned to the laws of divine establishment and to the requirements of what the Mosaic Law demanded.

For us in the Church Age, believers must acquire an intense hunger and thirst for the Word. Suffering and punishment must bring them back to serious and professional instruction of the Word provided there are enough qualified pastors to feed them. Whether or not this will occur remains to be seen. But if a true revival should occur, our central passage reveals the certainty of a positive result.

We will now undertake a special that will last this entire week. As we salute our veterans we need to also take a close look of what happens when pastors do not do their jobs or when believers ignore the teaching of the Word of God.

II. The Ichabod in Israel:

- 1- About the year 1200 B.C. the Tabernacle was located at a central point in Canaan at a community called Shiloh. There inside the holy of holies was placed the arc of the covenant and dwelling between its cherubs was the Shekinah Glory.
- 2- The high priest at this time was Eli whose sons, Hophni / *HOFF-nye* / ("Tadpole") and Phinehas / *FIN-e-us* / ("Nubian"), are characterized by Scripture as "sons of Belial," a Hebrew idiom which means worthless and lawless.
- 3- Another central character at the beginning of 1 Samuel is Samuel's father, Elkanah / *El-KAY-nah* / who had two wives, Hannah, who was initially barren, and Peninnah / *Pe-NEEN-ah* / who had borne him many children.
- 4- Samuel's mother was Hannah. His birth was the result of her prayer to God, "give Your maidservant a son" in 1 Samuel 1:11. Samuel would become the last Judge of Israel.
- 5- Samuel would be trained under the tutelage of Eli the High Priest. All high priests were descendants of Aaron from the line of one of his two sons, Eleazar or Ithamar. Eli's line went back to Ithamar.
- 6- Eli functioned as an honorable high priest but as he grew older his sons Hophni and Phinehas took over the sacerdotal duties at the Tabernacle.
- 7- Their administration of the sacrifices, the feast days, and the Sabbaths transformed these events into blasphemous rituals that did not honor the Lord but instead their own lustful appetites. In addition to dishonoring the priesthood in this fashion they went even further by having illicit sexual relations with women in front of the Tabernacle.
- 8- There are many sins that contribute to the fall of a client nation, but there are a few that fall at the top of the list with regard to their efficiency in drawing severe divine disapproval: fornication, adultery, idolatry, homosexuality, and anti-Semitism.
- 9- Although Hophni and Phinehas were obviously not anti-Semitic they were involved in the first three and their guilt solicited divine discipline upon both themselves as well as Israel.
- 10- Eli had a tragic flaw. His intense parental love for his sons blinded him to their misbehavior at the Tabernacle so that he only mildly admonished them instead of firing them.
- 11- Their sins are exposed in:

1 Samuel 2:22 - Now Eli was very old; and he heard all that his sons were doing to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who served at the doorway of the Tabernacle.

v. 23 - And he said to them, "Why do you do such things, the evil things that I hear from all these people?"

v. 25 - "If one man sins against another, God will mediate for him; but if a man sins against the Lord, who can intercede for him?" But they would not listen to the voice of their father, for the Lord desired to put them to death.

- 12- In every dispensation, some individuals are sanctified, that is, set apart for special service to the Lord. Such divinely chosen people are given precise direction with regard to their duties. In the case of the Levites, they were responsible to carry out the daily chores inside the holy place and the outer court of the Tabernacle, to perform the sacrifices, to officiate at the feast-day rituals, and to utilize these things to instruct the people about the theology that each was intended to represent.
- 13- When men who possessed divine authority failed to use that authority to glorify God they engaged in a level of public sin that was always dealt with harshly by the Lord.
- 14- We have all studied the case where Moses, commanded to speak to the rock for water, struck it twice instead. This failure by Moses to follow precisely the mandates given to him by the Lord resulted in him not being allowed to enter into Canaan.
- 15- The fate of Hophni and Phinehas was far more thorough, in fact, terminal. Further, during their time of administrating the priesthood in Israel the people lost the thought as a result. Although the priesthood was the catalyst for the decline of Israel, the people were personally responsible for their failure to remain positive.
- 16- Jeremiah makes it clear that national decline begins with the failure of spiritual leadership in any given dispensation:

Jeremiah 23:1 - Woe to the shepherds [Levitical priesthood] who are destroying [spiritual corruption that leads to destruction] and scattering the sheep [Jews] of My pasture [Judah]!" declares the Lord.

v. 2 - Therefore thus says the Lord God of Israel concerning the shepherds who are tending [teaching false doctrine] My people: "You have scattered My flock and driven them away, and have not attended to them [by teaching the ritual plan of God]; behold, I am about to attend to you [personal discipline to apostate priests] for the evil of your deeds," declares the Lord.

- 17- This verse gives us the key to why our nation's wall of fire was lifted the morning of September 11, 2001. For too long the pastors of this client nation have meddled with God's Word, distorted the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and promoted as righteous the behaviors of heathen. Too many pastors have participated in the tearing down of the four divine institutions while ignoring their clear teachings in the Scripture.
- 18- The human race is a fallen breed infected with the trends of the sinful nature that must be kept in check by divine revelation. Without this vision of biblical truth, the people perish.