

SHIELD OF FAITH

By

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From the Holocaust as Waco to Washington's exaltation of homosexuals the evidence is overwhelming that our society is disintegrating right before our eyes.

The schools system, once thought to be the fountain and fortress of truth and freedom, has become our greatest liability, now used to erase God from young minds and replace Him with sex and propaganda for a Babylonian society of amoral citizens whose God is the state.

Government has joined the media in its hostility to the Christian faith and seeks to annul God's laws and replace good with evil. Since 1985 the FBI has been used to target Christian separatists. In the cases of Gordon Kahl, the Weaver Family, and the Davidian group, all the killings were without due process of law and the government destroyed evidence by burning or cremation.

In his May Survival Report, former congressman Ron Paul wrote that even if the Koresh group were religious nuts, "that is not supposed to be against the law in a free country. We hear bleats about homophobia, but it is actually religio-phobia that afflicts America. The government is starting with the fringe, but it won't stop there. All Christians have much to fear."

Armed with faith. Evil people see Christians as the greatest threat to their sensual and selfish desires. But rather than living in fear, we are to live in faith. Paul explained that our warfare is not physical but spiritual,¹ therefore our weapons are not guns and grenades, but such things as truth, righteousness, the gospel, salvation, the word of God and faith.²

Throughout history it has been people of faith who have stood against the enemies of God, remaining faithful even to death in fulfilling His purpose.

By faith I do not refer to a set of doctrines. Of course, doctrine (teaching) is part of one's faith, but not its object. Doctrine is not an end in itself, but should lead us to a knowledge of God and faith in Him.

There are people who can recite their church "creed" and all its main doctrines, but who still haven't faith to trust God in the difficult times of their lives. They see faith as belief in certain things such as baptism, communion, tithing, and church attendance. As important as these are, they are the results of faith, a "faith that works through love."³ Faith itself is far greater than all these things combined.

God cannot be reduced to a creed, whether from Nicea, Trent, Westminster or any other religious council. God cannot be completely defined, nor does He require us to understand everything He has done or is doing or will do in the future. We do not need to know the future and what God's next move will be in order to serve and glorify Him in daily activities.

His purpose. From the beginning God purposed to have man in His own image,⁴ and instructed Adam and Eve so that they might live in fulfillment of that purpose. They failed to trust His purpose, and tried to establish a purpose of their own, which brought their downfall.⁵ **It is only the Creator's purpose that ultimately can prevail.** Faith is to

believe that He is working toward that purpose, in spite of all the developments to the contrary.⁶

In doing this, He must cause a change in those who are to be part of the final product. John, Jesus and the apostles all preached, “Repent!” which is to say, “Change, turn around.” The Creator is not merely giving help and encouragement to make life easier for man to go on following his own way of error, which leads to destruction. Popular slogans, such as “Let go and let God,” “Prayer changes things” and “Smile, God loves you,” lead many people to adopt a shallow and fatal concept of their relationship to God. They set their own goals, thinking that if they can only enlist God’s help, they can certainly accomplish their purpose. But instead, if they are sincere about asking God’s help, they may find greater obstacles. When God is asked to take part, He may want the subject to go in a completely different direction. True faith is to believe that God’s purpose is far better than any other we could devise, and turns one toward that purpose.

More precious than gold. When we see the foundations of our culture being shaken and the superstructure of morals and values crumbling, we may ask, “Why does God allow this? Why doesn’t He do something?” We don’t like to be disturbed out of comfort and ease, and want God to restore the good times. But the work of God is to transform us into His image, not to relieve us of all responsibility and difficulty. It is in the crisis that He breaks our hardened habits and changes our stubborn character.

During the evil days of the decline and collapse of the Roman Empire, Peter wrote,

“...you have been put to grief in manifold trials, that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold that perishes though it is proved by fire, may be found unto praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”⁷ Whatever the fiery trial may be, faith sees in it the hand of God, clearing away the dross of greed, pride and selfish desire, that a new creature may be formed to reflect His purity as seen in Jesus.⁸

In the parable of the wheat and tares, the faithful servants wanted to pull up the tares (darnel, which closely resembles wheat), but the owner said, “Let them both grow together, lest while you gather up the weeds, you also uproot the wheat. Let them both grow together until the harvest.”⁹

This is where faith is put to the test, to live in a manner that is despised by the world, a life that is designed to please God rather than that which is “politically correct.” The greater one grows in that faith, the more he will be subjected to the enmity of the world.

The world’s hostility to Christians is intensified when by faith we accept Christ’s statement that a harvest is coming, in which the ungodly are to be taken like the tares and destroyed by fire.¹⁰ But by the same faith we look for vindication for all who have put their trust in God through His Son Jesus Christ.¹¹

Not alone. A few years ago Christians were shocked in disbelief when Francis Schaeffer said that we were living in a “post-Christian” world. For so long we had taken for granted that this is a Christian nation, we assumed that Christian values would always be recognized and would prevail. But Schaeffer was right. The commandments of God are held as tenets of archaic superstition, and the idea of judgment is a joke. It is social suicide to stand against the “political correct” standard of the world, and Christians are obviously despised by the ruling powers of the arts, education and government.

Confronted with such hostility one might feel as did Elijah, when he cried out, “I, even I only am left.”¹² But God understood Elijah’s despair, and revealed that he was not alone, even though isolated from the other seven thousand faithful ones. God demonstrated His own concern for Elijah, by providing food and water and a time for him to rest, before continuing his mission.

Faith is the confidence that God is still with us in the worst of times. When Paul wrote the Corinthian letters, the Christians in Corinth were surrounded by pagans with the same corrupt morals so popular today. Yet he wrote that God “always leads us in triumph in Christ.”¹³ Always? Even when the diagnosis is cancer? Even when I’ve just been laid off from work? Even when I’ve been falsely charged by a corrupt court system?

Yes, always. He is leading us to triumph, just as in the case of Stephen when he was being stoned to death by the Jews; just as He was leading Paul when he was being chased out of town, and later delivered to prison in Rome. In all of these things, God is leading to the ultimate goal, that we might be conformed to His image.¹⁴ He never becomes so involved in the weighty matters of nations in turmoil that He has to abandon His purpose for even one of His children.¹⁵ “His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He cares for me.”

In the world there is tribulation and suffering.¹⁶ But faith say that the goal is worth it. “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things?”¹⁷ He will supply all things we need to reach the goal.

“This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.”¹⁸

“Stand therefore...taking up the shield of faith.”¹⁹

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