

The West in the Valley of Decision

by David Orton

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Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God's kindness to you, provided you continue in his kindness. Otherwise you too will be cut off.

Romans 11:22

Like apostate Israel, God has given the West “a spirit of stupor” so that she has not seen nor heard (Rom. 11:8). Still reeling from the carnage of the twentieth century – its global wars, genocides, and policies of death – the West staggers unseeingly from the bloodiest century in human history to the twenty-first century, not knowing where she goes. Again, like Israel, “There is none to guide her among all the sons she has borne; there is none to take her by the hand among all the sons she has brought up” (Isa. 51:18). Tragically, the very people called as the “light of the world” and as “a city set on a hill” (Matt. 5:14), the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ, like the culture, is “a people plundered and looted; they are all of them trapped in holes and hidden in prisons; they have become plunder with none to rescue, spoil with none to say, “Restore!” (Isa. 42:22). When she was called to be Zion, the City of God, she has instead been overrun, and become the City of Man. Her walls are breached, her citadels destroyed. And so, “Justice is turned back, and righteousness stands far away; for truth has stumbled in the public squares, and uprightness cannot enter” (Isa. 59:14). As an apostate culture, the West has sinned “with a high hand” (Deut. 15:30-36). And for the last century, in accordance with God’s covenant-law, has been in the process of being “cut off”. She has presumptuously and arrogantly flaunted God’s laws, whorishly going after foreign gods. Paul, though, makes the options clear: God’s *severity* if she falls, or *kindness* if she continues in faith (Rom. 11:22). To be either “anathematized” (9:3), if she falls from faith, “severed” from covenant privilege, that is, dispossessed of the Kingdom and consigned to incremental judgments (Deut. 28; Lev. 26). Or, continuing in faith, she inherits the Kingdom of God, culminating in “the fullness of the Gentiles” (v. 25). What Paul is saying in Romans 11:22 is that hypermodern man, as a covenant-creature, like Israel, and his first parents, faces the choice between blessing or curse; between either prosperity and freedom, or poverty and captivity.

But until the Church returns to her covenant Lord, in repentance for her own autonomy and waywardness, truth will continue to fall in the public squares. So goes the Church, so goes the culture. Because the Church has forsaken the devotion of her youth, seeking after worthless things, she has herself become worthless (Jer. 2). (For an explication of the Church’s idolatry, see Orton, [Snakes in the Temple: Unmasking Idolatry in Today’s Church](#)). Called as “the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15 KJV), through her own defection, she has stolen “the truth” from society. She has espoused “doctrines of demons” (1 Tim. 4:1), denying the Sovereign God’s right to rule the nations through his own law-word. She has spurned the law of God, preaching a *lawless* gospel, only to produce a *lawless* result. And therefore, been disqualified from her prophetic ministry, seeing the “speck” in the eye of the world but not the “plank” in her own (Matt. 7:3 NKJV). Therefore, any attempt at repentance will entail a return to the God of the Bible, and thus to the Apostles’ Doctrine (Acts 2:42), and to the historic Creeds of the Church, as articulations of that doctrine. No prophecy is of private interpretation (2 Pet. 1:20). Humility demands that we submit ourselves to historic orthodoxy and to the Church as the interpretive community. Otherwise we succumb to the arrogance of the contemporary. The Nicene, Chalcedonian, and Athanasian Creeds, in particular, laid the foundation not only for the Church universally but also for Western liberty. Nothing less than a return to the absolute God of all truth will suffice. To both the Law of God and the Gospel of God. Only then will the God of all mercy relent and turn back his covenant judgments in history. But until then they will incrementally build, for God is true to his own word. He will discipline and chastise until the lesson is learned (Heb. 12). It is, in fact, “a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Heb. 10:31). It is time, for church and culture, to fear the living God; to turn from futile thinking; and to seek after his instruction and knowledge—for “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction” (Prov. 1:7).

The West thus stands in “the valley of decision” (Joel 3:14). Already under the curse of God, she is betwixt accelerating judgment or recovered blessing. Like Elijah’s confrontation on Mount Carmel with the prophets of Baal, the Lord says to her, “How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him.’ But the people answered him not a word” (1 Kings 18:21 NKJV). The choice is clear, and yet, like Israel, we are silent. A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways (Jas. 1:8); and so, silence is a decision for instability, for Baal. For more of God’s judgments. As surely as the God of Elijah answers by fire, the West will experience even greater judgments if she remains silent, refusing to turn.

May God grant this generation the spirit of Joshua, the spirit of faith, that will fearlessly cry out,

Now therefore fear the LORD and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness. Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD.

And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”

Joshua 24:14–15

It is significant that this call came in a time of covenant renewal, as Israel prepared for the passing of Joshua and the emergence of a new generation.

The Reformers (Luther, Calvin et al.), like Joshua, took Israel into the land, signaling a new epoch for the Kingdom of God, the Reformation, and led them in a renewal of the covenant. But within several generations one emerged – the Enlightenment generation (Descartes, Locke, Hume et al.) – that did not know the Lord or what he had done for Israel and turned aside after the Baals. When autonomous man “did what was right in his own eyes” (Jdg. 17:6; 21:25). But God raised up the Judges – evangelists and revivalists (Wesley, Whitefield, Edwards et al.) – who led Israel back to the Lord. But only to serve a recurring cycle of revival and decline until the coming of the one possessed of God’s own heart, who would do all his will, David. The one by whom Christ was born according to the flesh and who prefigured the coming of the Messianic Kingdom of the New Covenant era. Having passed through the time of the Judges and of Saul, the preemptive and failed attempt at the Monarchy (various denominational, kingdom and apostolic movements), the time is now ripe for the emergence of the fulness of the Kingdom of God under David. The Reformation and Revival era must now give way to the fuller increase of the Throne of David and his rule over the nations. This means such a quantum increase of God’s Kingdom in the earth that Christ’s reign is sustained spiritually and culturally from generation to generation until Christ comes to receive the Kingdom and return it to the Father at the Consummation.

Christ’s Kingdom is not only *inaugurated* in history but also *realized* in history. The former through his Ascension, and the latter through his Church. At his Ascension all heaven declared that “The kingdom of the world *has* become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever” (Rev. 11:15). When Christ was enthroned he was given all authority in heaven and earth. Victory over all his enemies! And then, through his Session at the right hand of the Majesty, that victory is progressively exercised by his Church over the kingdoms of men, until every enemy of Christ is subdued under his feet.

This is the war in which we are now engaged. It demands a recovery of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, the Gospel according to Paul, that declares the crown rights of Christ over politics, law, and culture—the reconciliation of *all things* to him as Lord of creation (Col. 1:15-23). For all history – the whole cosmos – is being drawn irrevocably into its one head in Christ (Eph. 1:9-10).

And so, the word of the Lord to the West, through the apostle James, is to, therefore, “Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded” (James. 4:8). No more prevarication—no more Yes and No! No more feigned neutrality—for the Lord of hosts declares, “Whoever is not with me is against me...”

In the words of Joshua, “Now therefore fear the LORD and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness. Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD.”

The time of the Judges has ended, “everyone doing what is right in his own eyes”. The time of the Monarchy has begun. This is the day, therefore, to anoint David as King, for the Son of David has ascended to his Throne. The Lord Jesus Christ is amongst us and his rule has begun! In the day of his power his people shall be willing! As the prophets have declared, his Kingdom shall reign not only from sea to sea, but throughout all generation until he comes. Even so, come Lord Jesus!

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