

HIDDEN NUGGETS IN 2 CHRONICLES

by Tom Wacaster

The books of First and Second Chronicles tend to be neglected, even by the most ardent of Bible students. Admittedly I have been prone to rush through these two books, due in no little part to the repetitious nature when compared with the books of First and Second Kings. Over the past three years I have made a diligent attempt to read through the Old Testament two times in each year. Perhaps it is this increased exposure to the Old Testament books that has helped me realize that there are wonderful truths within the verses of some of those books, truths which tend to jump off the pages from time to time.

Today I was reading from 2 Chronicles chapter 15, and when I came to verse 3, something caught my attention that, so far as I can remember, had never caused me to stop and take a closer look. Now, if you have not grabbed your Bible yet to rush and see what it is that might have arrested my attention, let me make some preliminary remarks before you go to the text. The past fourteen months have been, without doubt, the most challenging, anxious, and stressful of any I can remember. When I was a young boy growing up in Dallas, Texas, our nation faced precarious times in what has come to be better known as the “Cuban Missile Crisis.” For thirteen days in the Fall of 1962 the powers that be on either side of the Atlantic Ocean argued, negotiated, and threatened one another so much so that we came close to nuclear confrontation – the “unimaginable” almost became a “reality.” I was a freshman in high school, and at least once a day the school had a “nuclear attack drill,” in which the students were either hurried into the hall or under our desks, and told to put our hands over our heads in order to “survive” the explosion of an atom bomb (not too useful for a nuclear attack in my estimation). Evenings, we were glued to the television as the late John F. Kennedy kept us abreast of Russia’s activities in Cuba. Yes, those days were quite stressful.

Almost half a century later (lacking two years) our nation is, once again, locked in a battle for its very survival. In 1962 the enemy was without – today it is within our borders. Our nation is sick from the head to the toe. Our leaders have denied God, and the immorality and ungodliness that dominates the powers that be have filtered down to the man on the street, and are even being taught in the institutions of public education. I am convinced there is a concentrated effort on the part of “wickedness in high places” to dismantle, dilute, and destroy the very principles of godliness upon which this nation was established. Yes, these days are quite stressful.

What has all this to do with 2 Chronicles 15? Well, here is what the sacred record tells us: “Now for a long season Israel *hath been* without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law. But when they in their trouble did turn unto the LORD God of Israel, and sought him, he was found of them. And in those times *there was* no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in, but great vexations *were* upon all the inhabitants of the countries. And nation was destroyed of nation, and city of city: for God did vex them with all adversity” (2 Chron. 15:3-6). In four short verses we learn some incredible lessons that are as relevant as if freshly written by the inspired writer of old.

First, there is a difference between true religion and false religion. “For a long season Israel hath been without the true God.” Will you permit me to change one word in this passage – not in an attempt to rewrite the passage, but in order to drive home our point? “For a *long season America hath been without the true God.*” The United States of America was established upon the Bible, and the determination of our founding fathers to grant to every man the freedom right to seek that God. Consequently the United States of America became a fertile seed bed wherein a return to the simple teachings of the Bible could be accomplished, and ushered in the longest era of the growth of the Lord’s church since the first century.

About the middle of the last century things began to change, and Americans began to cast off the true God of the Bible for Eastern religions, cults, and New Age spiritualism. Today it is not uncommon to read of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam, all of which are lauded by the “politically correct media,” while Christianity continues to be attacked and ridiculed. Muslim mosques are being built at a rate that far outpaces the construction of church buildings, and the “gods” of unbelievers are replacing the God of the Bible in the minds of men.

Second, we are rapidly becoming a people “without a teaching priest and without law.” Since every child of God is a “priest” (1 Pet. 2:9), and every Christian a “teacher” (Heb. 5:12), it stands to reason that when WE (members of the Lord’s church) cease to teach others about Christ, then it can be said that America is “without a teaching priest and without law.” Many buildings still bearing the name “Church of Christ” have ceased teaching the lost world about the true church, the will of the Father, and the plan of salvation. They have become nothing more than a “kitchen open 24/7” for the physical well being of society.

Third, God’s judgment will come upon any nation that forgets its Creator. Peace will give way to vexations, adversity, and trouble. A whopping 67% of our country now thinks we are no longer on the right track (news cast, Fox News, 2-26-2010); consumer confidence is at an all time low; contentment is something sought after but which continues to elude us. Like Israel of old, we stand on shaky ground, and there is little over the horizon that gives us encouragement that we can long endure another decade of existence.

Fourth, the answer – yea, the ONLY answer – is that men turn back to their God: “But when they in their trouble did turn unto the LORD God of Israel, and sought him, he was found of them” (verse 4). The “tea party” movement is not going to save America. Democrats, Republicans, Independents, nor any other party, has it within their power, programs, or prowess to save America. Unless we, as a nation, begin the journey home to God, there is no hope! But, alas, our God has promised, if a nation will seek God, He will be found of them. God kept His promise to Israel, for verse 15 tells us: “And all Judah rejoiced at the oath: for they had sworn with all their heart, and sought him with their whole desire; and he was found of them: and the LORD gave them rest round about.”

Beloved, America is not going to be saved by any health reform, cap-and-trade energy bill, or even a redistribution of the wealth. America will only be saved if our leaders begin the journey home to God. Until that happens, we will continue to see a deterioration of our temporal blessings. Perhaps you and I, as members of the Lord’s church can start a genuine “grass-roots” movement to that end.