

“If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God...” (1 Peter 4:11).

WHAT MAKES A NATION GREAT?

Author Unknown

It's often been said that the United States of America is the greatest nation on the face of the earth. Is that true? Are we the greatest nation? What makes a nation great? And who determines the greatness of a nation?

The Scriptures teach, *“Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people”* (Prov. 14:34). What exalts a nation? Righteousness! That is to say that those of that nation walk righteously before God. Paul wrote, *“Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God”* (Phil. 1:11).

Peter told Cornelius, *“But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him”* (Acts 10:35). A better question might be what causes each one of us to be accepted with God (in whatever nation we find ourselves)? The important thing is that we fear God and work righteousness (do what is right in God's eyes)!

ANGELS IN THE PSALMS

John Edwards

Angels make for a fascinating Bible study. In this writing, we call attention to angels as they appear in the Psalms.

PSALM 34:7, *“The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.”*

PSALM 35:5-6, Concerning those who fought against him the Psalmist said, *“Let them be as chaff before the wind: and let the angel of the Lord chase them. Let their way be dark and slippery: and let the angel of the Lord persecute them.”*

PSALM 68:17, *“The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place.”*

PSALM 78:25, *“Man did eat angels' food: he sent them meat to the full.”*

PSALM 91:11-12, *“For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.”* The Devil quoted this in the temptation of Jesus (Mt. 4:5-7).

PSALM 103:20-21, *“Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. Bless ye the Lord, all ye his hosts; ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure.”*

PSALM 104:4, *“Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire.”* The Hebrew writer mentioned this in affirming Christ *“...made so much better than the angels...”* (Heb. 1:4) in Hebrews 1:7.

PSALM 148:2, *“Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts.”*

WHY STUDY THE BIBLE?

John Edwards

There is no good reason not to study the Bible. There are many good reasons for studying the Bible:

TO FULFILL A COMMAND. We are taught, *“Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city”* (Rev. 22:14). Study is a command! Paul commanded, *“Study...”* (2 Tim. 2:15). This word means to exert oneself,

endeavor, give diligence.

TO SHEW THYSELF APPROVED UNTO GOD. We should want to be approved unto God, our Maker (Ps. 95:6). Either God approves of us or He does not. It is up to you and me, individually, to present or show ourselves to God and receive His approval. This requires study! *“Study to shew thyself approved unto God...”* (2 Tim. 2:15).

TO NOT BE ASHAMED. Ecclesiastes 12:12 says, *“...much study is a weariness of the flesh.”* Paul said, *“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed...”* (2 Tim. 2:15). When we put in the time and put forth the effort it takes to properly study, we will not be ashamed. If we are lazy and neglect careful study, we have every reason to be ashamed.

TO RIGHTLY DIVIDE THE WORD OF TRUTH. *“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth”* (2 Tim. 2:15). This would imply that the word of truth may be wrongly divided. This happens

due to lack of study. We must not handle *“the word of God deceitfully”* (2 Cor. 4:2) or *“wrest”* the Scriptures to our own destruction (2 Pet. 3:16).

TO KNOW. God expects us to know. *“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free”* (Jn. 8:32). We can't afford to take someone else's word for the truth. We must search the Scriptures for ourselves (Acts 17:11).

TO UNDERSTAND. Jesus taught the importance of understanding when He said, *“For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them”* (Mt. 13:15).

Understanding is necessary to conversion! And study is necessary to understanding! *“Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ”* (Eph. 3:4). One reason some do not understand is because they do not read and study so as to understand!

TO GROW. The Lord wants His children to grow. One of the last things Peter said was, *“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ...”* (2 Pet. 3:18). The word of God is the nourishment vital to our spiritual growth. *“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby”* (1 Pet. 2:2). Where are we in our spiritual growth? A babe, full age, or somewhere between (Heb. 5:13-14)?

TO BE ABLE TO TEACH. Teaching is not an option for the Christian. *“For when for the time ye ought to be teachers...”* (Heb. 5:12). Timothy was instructed, *“And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also”* (2 Tim. 2:2). *“And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach...”* *“Apt to teach”* means skillful in teaching. This comes through study and experience in teaching.

The Bible can benefit us in ways no other book can!

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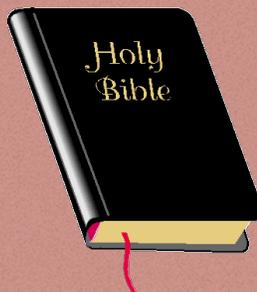
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