

If the Foundations Be Destroyed, What Can the Righteous Do?

John Isaac Edwards

Psalm 11

1 In the Lord put I my trust: how say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain?

2 For, lo the wicked bend their bow, they make ready their arrow upon the string, that they may privily shoot at the upright in heart.

3 *If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?*

4 The Lord is in his holy temple, the Lord's throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men.

5 The Lord trieth the righteous: but the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth.

6 Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup.

7 For the righteous Lord loveth righteousness; his countenance doth behold the upright.

The foundations upon which an edifice rests uphold the building. The building will stand no longer than the foundations endure. Thus, the importance of rock-solid foundations.

If the Foundations Be Destroyed. How sad to see a beautiful building collapse and lie in ruins because the foundations beneath it were destroyed! Sadder still, to see institutions established by God crumble because of a failure to preserve and protect His founding principles!! We take a brief look at three divine institutions revealed in Scripture:

The Home. The home was instituted by God at the beginning (Genesis 2:18-24). It provided for the propagating of mankind (Genesis 1:26-28), companionship (Genesis 2:18), and was designed to keep the human race morally pure (1 Corinthians 7:2). The home was established upon these principles: (1) One man for one woman for one lifetime (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:3-6); (2) Husband to rule over the wife (Genesis 3:16; Ephesians 5:22-24); (3) Mutual love, respect and fidelity (1 Corinthians 7:1-4; Ephesians 5:25-33; Titus 2:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7). “Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge” (Hebrews 13:4). Cohabitation, fornication and adultery, divorce, same-sex relationships (and the list goes on) destroy these foundations, bring the collapse of homes and threaten the strength and stability of society!

Civil Government. Paul wrote, “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God” (Romans 13:1). The principles upon which civil government was established are set forth in Romans 13. The basic reason for civil government is “...for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well” (1 Peter 2:14). Kings, governors, governments and nations rise and fall. Israel fell. The Assyrian empire fell. Babylon fell. Rome fell. America can fall. “Righteous-

ness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people” (Proverbs 14:34). Righteousness is the strength of civilization! When righteousness gives way to sin, it is not a matter of if but when that nation will fall.

The Church. The church was planned by God (Ephesians 3:10-11), built by Christ (Matthew 16:18), and established in Jerusalem with Christ as its foundation (Isaiah 28:16; Acts 2; 1 Corinthians 3:11). Any church planned or built by someone else or established in any other place does not rest upon “...a sure foundation...” There are churches which have been sound and solid through the years that have been weakened through compromise and fallen into error by not respecting the authority of Christ in all things, and this is sad!

What Can the Righteous Do? When truth is no longer respected; when justice is no longer practiced; when fraud and violence have taken the place of honesty and honor; when error prevails; when a character for integrity and virtue no longer affords any security - *what can the righteous do?*

Continue to Trust in the Lord. Those that truly fear God and serve Him do so at all times. Remember Job and Joseph? The Psalmist said, “In the Lord put I my trust...” (Psalm 11:1). It may be tempting to distrust God and for-

sake His ways. We must never forget God is still in control - “The Lord is in his holy temple...” (Psalm 11:4) - and He will reward “the wicked” and “the upright” (Psalm 11:5-7). As Paul encouraged Timothy, “But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of...” (2 Timothy 3:14).

Be Righteous. Though the wickedness of man may be great and the earth corrupt, we can still be righteous before God. Remember Noah? The Psalmist declared, “Blessed are they that keep judgment, and he that doeth righteousness at all times” (Psalm 106:3).

Pray. We may be an inhabitant of Gilead with an Ahab in Samaria, but we can pray. Remember Elijah? “...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (James 5:16). We are taught to pray, “...that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty” (1 Timothy 2:1-2).

Preach the Word. Noah was “...a preacher of righteousness...” (2 Peter 2:5). In the context of “perilous times” (2 Timothy 3:1), Paul charged Timothy, “Preach the word...” (2 Timothy 4:2).

Keep looking for that “...city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (Hebrews 11:10). Don’t give up!

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