
Surely the contemporary social habits and the rising tide of the mystery of lawlessness has not so de-sensitized your American Conscience that your sensors have not picked up the obvious increase in the taking of God's name in vain, a large show of lack of respect for God. **WITHOUT RESPECT FOR GOD THERE IS NOTHING:** no religion, no faith, and no salvation. All this taking of God's name in vain on TV, in public, and in books is a sure sign that the proper attitude toward God on the part of citizens in America has never been developed so that in spite of all the church attendance and superficial manifestations of religion, God from the Great White Throne in heaven and on the circle of the earth with His feet in the clouds has not witnessed the kind of attitude He needs to see from humanity in order to qualify them as eligible for the famous salvation of the Bible, now and for eternity. Have you ever stopped to think that what stands between you and salvation for now and eternity is what God sees in your heart and mind as compared to the requirements He must see and which He has laid down once and for all as part of "the faith once for all delivered to the saints" in order for you to have the change of life that goes with salvation. Yes, in the ultimate analysis, it is just between you and your Creator: what you think and what He sees of what you think. Never be deceived, even as Jesus knew what was in the heart of man and did not need that any other man should have to tell Him, so the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ knows like the very hairs of our head every thought and emotion of the heart which you have!

17-1: Current Popularity of God's Name in Vain Does Not Make for "Guiltless".

The Bible clearly states that "God will not hold him guiltless that takes His name in vain". The two primary excuses today will not promote innocence: (1) "Oh, I just did not stop to think"--this is even worse since it shows evidence of a lack of thought for God and about God, the worst thing you can do on the way to a lack of proper regard for and respect of God; and (2) "It is always a way to get attention and place emphasis", the TV and book writers like to say--and what a cheap way to sacrifice a proper relationship with God and even salvation for emphasis in writing and expression. It reminds me of the "shoestring reasons for tragic decisions" that was mentioned in an earlier chapter. No matter what the excuse, you just can not justify such lack of respect for God as evident in the taking of God's name in vain. He is your Maker and Creator, He reigns supreme over the earth from His vantage point in heaven; He sees and knows it all here on earth; and while the taking of God's name in vain may show as much about yourself as it does of your lack of regard for Your Maker, even a lack of respect for yourself will clearly not be accepted by the Word of God, the Bible.

17-2: The Beginning of Wisdom is Respect for God.

While the Bible does state "The knowledge of God is beginning of wisdom", and some preachers most verses in the Bible have stated that "God is the fundamental postulate of all rational thinking", implied and obvious in those two statements of fact are: (1) that respect for God is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge; and (2) that the fundamental postulate of all rational thinking is really respect for God, for respect for God involves both God and our proper attitude toward God.

Even as I would tend to dislike any person showing a lack of respect for my wife and the name of my wife, so would I even more have disgust at the person who does not respect, including believe in, the God for whom my life has been devoted; and with whom I converse in prayer daily, and count on for my salvation in this life and the life to come. We are really torn in loyalties when friends or loved show a lack of disrespect by unbelief in our God, but in the final analysis we must cast our loyalty on the side of God and faith in God!

17-3: You can not separate God from the Name and Character of God.

One reason that we are so dependent on the Bible is for our ultimate knowledge on what God is like which goes beyond that of (1) the works of Creation as the

Respect for God

evidence of a loving Creator of ultimate capacity in design; (2) the conscience of man with the Social and collective Conscience of societies, like Romans states automatically "accusing and excusing one another"; and (3) the character and works of the Lord Jesus Christ who said He primarily came to teach and make known the will and mind of God, even teaching man like in the Sermon on the Mount to pray not to Himself but to "our Father which art in heaven". If you want to express the name of God did not waste it is vanity and vainness, but in prayer to God the Father; and "your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly". (Matthew 6:6)

17-4: The First Four Commandments Strongly Demand Respect for God.

You perhaps remember the first four of the Ten Commandments.

1. You shall have no other gods before the Lord God of heaven, the Creator; and originally identified by God Himself to the children of Israel as the same LORD your God that brought you out of the land of Egypt, so that they knew him to be powerful, and out of slavery in the house of bondage, so they also knew Him to be a God of power and salvation. You see it is not that God does not admit to the fact that a people often have other gods, but He demands first place with first priority. (Exodus 20:2)

2. You shall not make a carved image--like anything in heaven, on the earth, and in the water--or bow down to serve them. By the way, did I tell you that our God "is a jealous God". That is part of His character and personality and He shows that by: (1) visiting iniquity on a people who hate Him for 4 generations, and (2) showing mercy to the thousands {perhaps 7,000 per generation} that (a) love Him and (b) keep His commandments. (Exodus 20:4,5)

NOTE: And the righteousness which God demands which we will discuss in a following section, a righteousness which God's demands of His subjects, is a matter of the keeping of the commandments of the Ten Commandments, these four of the Ten and all of the Ten.

Surely you would not try to get into a debate or quarrel with God about the way that He does things even as the clay would not disagree with the potter as Paul describes later in his writings.

3. You know about the taking of God's name in vain with a reminder of the disrespect that goes with that, a direct quote is demanded of Exodus 20:7. It is short for a commandment even, but to the point.

Respect for God

“You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.” (Exodus 20:7)

Did you hear that of careless speaker of God's name other than in prayer? Guilty! “Oh, but it was a slip of the tongue.” GUILTY! “I did not mean to say it as I did it without thinking.” Even worse, GUILTY, as you are not giving thoughts to God with proper priority in your mind and heart.

4. Remember the Sabbath Day **{Jesus did change this command to the first day of the week or Sunday}** to keep one day of the week holy to God. It is to be a day of physical rest, just like God rested on the seventh day after making the heavens and earth in six days, and spiritual activity.

I bet you right now you feel a little guilty as you know how short you come on just these first four commandments. Your coming short on these is a good way to start a Bible definition of unrighteousness. The quote from Revelation on the cover about unbelievers being right in there with adulterers and murderers, describe a way of life of those who habitually exhibit these acts of unrighteousness by disobedience to the laws of God like in the commandments.

17-5: The Summary of the 10 Commandments Highlight Respect for God.

Don't ever forget as you read in the last chapter that (1) love for God and (2) love for fellow man summarize all the commandments. They were summarized this way in Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18 with the original giving of the law of the Ten Commandments. When a lawyer of Israel ask Jesus a question to test Him, “which is the great commandment in the law?”, Jesus quoted from Deuteronomy 6:5, “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind” **{and I would think that pretty well covers all matters of what a priority of loyalty must live}**; following it quickly with “this is the first and great commandment” (Matthew 22:38) **{well, God and Jesus together with the Bible certainly let us know where we stand, or at least where they stand, and how this helps to identify our standing and status in their sight}**; then about the second which is like the first, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself”. And again this later, which many do not realize, is a quote from Leviticus 19:18, so that all of the ten commandments are summarized with only these two verses from Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18.

Love as a fulfillment of the law and Ten Commandments, many would like to believe and that is what the lawyer had in mind when he questioned Jesus, came

Respect for God

in the New Testament times of Jesus. Nope, that summary was there in the law of Moses, written in the same first five books of Moses, the Pentateuch, when the Moses wrote those first five books of the Bible.

17-6: Salvation and Respect for God.

It is hopeful that you recognize that when you die you automatically lose all control of where your soul goes; and it is too light to remain here on the earth that you have come to know so well, without mass, no longer controlled by gravity like your body has been for so many years, and whether you like it or not, the Great Maker and Controller of all the automated systems of the Universe determines for you, based on your attitude of life and respect for Him, where you soul goes.

For all those who would be saved, and not just to be saved but rather to be right with our Maker, God demands a certain attitude toward Jesus Christ, His Son. That proper attitudes demands that you recognize His Son as His Son, the Son of God, and that you accept what Christ once for all did on the cross in making provision for the sins of the world **{the atonement}**. The words most often used by the Apostles and Jesus in the Bible to describe the proper attitude toward God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ is (1) repentance and (2) faith. Actually it is one single attitude as there is a little repentance in faith and a little faith in repentance. It is like the about face or to the rear march in the military and in band, at the same time you turn away from a self-centered life of sin, repentance, you are turning toward a life dominated by God and Christ, faith.

17-7: Covenant with God.

Seldom do we stop to think that when we become Christians, we make a covenant with God that includes righteousness. Granted it is not exactly the same as the old covenant that was made between God and God's people of Israel at Mount Sinai and written down by Moses on tablets of stone, recorded also in Exodus and rehearsed again before the people before entrance into the Promised Land (Deuteronomy). Yes, it is the New Covenant of the New Testament with the added privileges not found in the Old Covenant of new birth and atonement and redemption through the blood of Christ on Calvary's cross. However, this New Covenant that you make with God through Christ and through faith is the same as the Everlasting Covenant that God made with Abraham and his seed by faith, which includes all Jews and Gentiles who now believe in Christ. Yes, Abraham is our Father also as the Apostle Paul, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, makes clear in the book of Romans. **{Much of this you saw in the last chapter on the Righteousness of God and Man.}** The Bible tries to tell us in many ways that God demands right living or righteousness of His own people, or even those who would

become His own people. Throughout the Bible, and addressed to Christians or those who would be, are short quotes like "Be holy, for I am holy" and "You are a peculiar people" and "Come out from among them and be a holy people!"

No people have ever been as religious as the nation of Israel at the time of Christ. The law of the nation was both religious and State law, but the righteousness as explained by Christ and then as the mantle was passed to Paul as the chief editor of the New Testament, one formerly trained in the laws of their religion and nation, a lawyer and tentmaker before conversion on the road to Damascus and after special training by the Ascended Christ in Arabia, was a righteousness by faith which most of them never caught onto.

"For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God." (Romans 10:3)

This as a characteristic of human nature is a repeated process today which we will discuss in the next section where the majority of the religious, moral, or just "good people", try to self-identify their own status and standing in the sight of God. They just never catch on, "remain ignorant" of God's righteousness and the way God through Christ has provided for the righteousness of man, as discussed in the last chapter, the legal or real righteousness declared in the sight of God when God sees the attitude of faith, and then through the power and help of the Holy Spirit and the new birth an actual righteousness that is both "being and becoming", that is a righteousness being to a certain and extent and becoming to a larger extent.

17-8: The Righteousness by Faith apart from struggles to attain Rightness.

What is really being stated in Romans 10:6,7--"Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?' in order to bring Christ down to our level or who will descend down into the uttermost depths of the earth in order to bring Christ up to us {you see, all that ultimate in human effort to scale the heights of righteousness or the depths}--is that it far beyond any human capability and wisdom to attain their status and standing in the sight of God. If it were for the wisdom of the Bible alone, that is of what is quoted here in Romans 10:6,7 from Deuteronomy and further amplified by the Paul who knew both the law of Israel and the teachings of Christ, a wisdom shown here of thousands of years between the law of Moses {the first five books of the Bible} and the New Testament, "every mouth would be shut and the whole world become guilty before God" for a lack of the correct kind of righteousness and morality, or

Respect for God

goodness. What is being said is that if you even momentarily ignored that the Bible is the Word of God, God speaking to His own Creatures to tell them what they need to know, then it would incorporate the wisdom of thousands of years of history wherein men and women struggled to find God and His right way of living; and therefore on that basis alone, you are not going to be able to find a new and novel way to identify your status and standing in the sight of God. That is what is written in Romans and Deuteronomy: no matter what efforts you might make after God, Christ, and rightness to scale the heights or plumb the depths, you will find no new and novel way to identify your goodness and rightness in the sight of God, short of the Biblical faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

What does the wisdom of history and the Bible say to you as to every human being that would attempt to identify with God and His righteousness.

“But what does it say?” (Romans 10:8)

What does this Bible, Old and New Testament, of human wisdom and teachings from God Himself tell you. Well, you already know and that is the beauty of it!

“The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart...” (Romans 10:8b)

You heard it from preachers, you have heard it from parents, you have heard it from the Bible and Sunday School.

“it is the word of faith which we preach” (Romans 10:8c)

It is a “WORD OF” and ABOUT “FAITH”, that word preached by Moses, Jesus, and Paul.

“that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead, you will be saved.” (Romans 10:9)

You see, all that effort at religion, morality, and goodness or rightness in the sight of God--all that scaling the heights and plumbing the depths is wasted--for like you really know in your heart and mind, it is simply a matter of (1) confession of the Lord Jesus Christ with your mouth and (2) believing in all that the Lord Jesus Christ, according to the plan and purpose of God, did to provide salvation and righteousness to you.

THE WAY TO SALVATION AND RIGHTEOUSNESS, the bottom line: Please catch this.

"For with the heart one believes unto RIGHTEOUSNESS, and with the mouth confession is made unto SALVATION." (Romans 10:10)

17-9: The Protestant Pope Pastor Rich Warren.

Perhaps Rick Warren started out right before riches and popularity, before Rick Warren became Rich Warren. But what happened at Saddleback in the Civil Forum with the Presidential candidates of Obama and John McCain, better than any example I know since it is so hard to buy on the part of Christians and church members, and impossible for the "world"--a biblical word that we wish to define in more detail in the next section--how Christians to summarize much of the Teachings of Jesus and Paul and the Apostle John must be "IN THE WORLD, but "NOT OF THE WORLD." What Bible scholars and students alike can seldom see in discussions of the Baptist Distinctive of "Separation of Church and State" is that at the base line in teachings of the Bible is that we are talking about "Separation between being in the world and not of the world." {Roger Williams, a founding father of the heritage of Baptists in the US and founder of the State of Rhode Island, understood this as he first separated from the Church of England, Puritanism, then became an Independent and Separatists, the one of whom Parrington says in MAIN CURRENTS OF AMERICAN THOUGHT is a "Christian and a gentleman whose generation has not yet been born".} In the United States where the line of distinction between the American Democratic Faith and the Faith of Jesus and the Bible has been blurred, it is so hard to realize that the United States establishment, government and society, is as much part of the world as all the countries overseas, as much as was Rome and Greece and Persia part of the "world". In fact, the shock that will come to us as we fathom the depths of the meaning of the word "world" in the Bible, especially from the Apostle John in I John where "all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life if not of the Father but of the world," that to be and become part of the establishment of the United States, social and political, is about as close as you can get to being also part of the "world".

You stop and think about it: where most Christians and church members fall short today in worldliness is in their frequent practice of the "pride of life" whether it is for their own achievements, possessions, family, church, patriotism, or that of their children and school. It as the Bible and the Apostle John

Respect for God

say in I John 2:15-17 to be OF THE WORLD when you speak or manifest any pride of life!

Separation of Church and State

The longer title would be: "Separation of the American Democratic Faith from the Faith of the Bible and Christ." It is much like the guiding principle of the New Testament that Christians are to be "in the world but not of the world". Paul first wrote a book saying "to separate yourself from adulterers"; but then had to explain that what was meant was to separate from adulterers in the church but not from adulterers in the world, then he said, "you would needs have to go out of the world." To make this a most positive approach and in the name of a reasonable debate: RESOLVED THAT THERE SHOULD BE AND CONTINUE TO BE A SEPARATION OF THE LOYALTIES BETWEEN THE AMERICAN DEMOCRATIC FAITH AND CHRISTIAN BIBLICAL FAITH!

Protestant Pope Pastor Rick Warren.

Now Pastor Rick Warren has done it with the recent leadership of a Saddleback civic forum with the two presidential candidates, Obama and McCain. He has become captive to his own popularity, and that fame will take precedence over any of his Christian convictions. In a next day interview on Larry King Live, Warren made the statement that he does believe in one of the Baptist Distinctives of "Separation of Church and State"; then playing with words as he likes to do so often as in his play on the word "purpose" in PURPOSE DRIVEN LIFE and PURPOSE DRIVEN CHURCH, where for the word purpose has been substituted for the words of Christian convictions and Bible of "Holy Spirit" driven or "Christ" driven, he stated that while he believes in the separation of church and state, he does not believe in the separation of "faith and politics." Warren is a master of the boomer practice of a compromise between functionality {a good example was the young soldiers of Warren's generation in Vietnam that wore both "kill" and "peace" symbols--this may be some of the "common ground" thinking that he references}, that is what works, and convictions; and any time this is done, convictions lose. You take for example, the not too long ago vote of the Presbyterian Church as to whether they should stop claiming that "Christ is the only way of salvation" as it seems too intolerant. Just that attitude that could even bring it to a vote illustrates how Americans of the American Democratic Faith have come to allow the American Democratic concept of "tolerance" to dominate over Christian Convictions. You see, it is not the separation of Church and State, or Faith and Politics, that we have to worry about in America as it is

Respect for God

the separation between the American Democratic Faith and the Faith of Christ and the Bible. Once the ideological battle is won of the American Democratic Faith's domination, like in tolerance over conviction, over the Faith "once for all delivered to the saints" of the Bible and Christ, then the war is over; and all some Pope like in Rome or in Saddleback has to do is formalize an organization.

Far fetched for Warren to be a Protestant Pope. Well, at the susceptibility of playing with words like he does, it can easily be stated that in fame and ideology he is already there as many like Larry King like to refer to him as the new Billy Graham, for some reasons we will discuss momentarily. Recently a SBC convention pastor in order to find justification for his actions as he ostracized a long standing church member, with approximately 20 of his followers, from church membership in a large church of Alamogordo, New Mexico, because he and his followers objected to the departure from tradition in the church music, this same pastor sought approval before his action from Rick Warren because of his influence from the best-selling Purpose Driven books.

CNN, of course, is just riding the fame of Warren, and no doubt a little self-justification and equal time allowance for a Protestant Pope since we witnessed this unheard of lack of Separation of Church and State when they covered for days the religious services, including mass, and activities of the Roman Catholic Pope. While you may not immediately see in this a combining of Church with State, and on the part of a religious group, the Roman Catholic Church, that has a long standing history of church meddling in the State, surely you do see that the news media are more functions of State than of Church, traditionally and practically. **{Surely in this day and time when the control of the administration in power over journalism, as Bill Moyer has tried to make clear in speeches and programs, you see how news is far more an arm of the State than of Church.}** If nothing else, you know and I know that the prime subject matter that News agencies have trained us to become accustomed to is to deal with politics and both the domestic and international functions of government.

Granted these slick politicians--Warren, Obama, and McCain--tried to keep religion and politics separated in their discussions of "Evil" where Obama focused more on domestic crime and McCain like George Bush before, and which is a military man tendency, focused on evil as the personification of bad countries like Russia, North Korea, and Iran. What really happened in that forum was that Warren got pulled into a public allegiance, and all Christians to a certain extent with him, where the concept of evil became dominated by a

Respect for God

State concept rather than a religious concept. Goodness, if any of the two should dominate on the subject of evil, it should be religion; and in particular when we as Christians and Baptists have for so long been devoted to outspoken allegiance to the Bible as the Word of God, at least before Warren and his fundamentalist group came along to take over 30 years ago the SBC, evil must be clearly identified as: (1) sin and lawlessness; (2) the heart within every human being, Christian or otherwise, that lusteth to envy, and which Pastor James in the Word of God identifies as the real source of all wars, disagreements in churches and denominations, etc; and (3) Satan, whom the Bible calls the "Evil One". Did you hear anything about "sin" and "Satan" in that church meeting of Saddleback with two representatives of the US State government present; and by the way dominating the trend of the conversation even as they became agents of politics dominating over faith, State over Church religion.

Warren and Joel Olsteen, also Beth Moore and Paula White, and others are no better than Jesus; and Satan comes to each of these religious leaders at the beginning of their careers to seek a worldly dominance of their faith. Satan says to each of them, "I will give you all these things of the world that you see--fame, fortune, status, and homes and lands, and comfort and riches--if you will fall down and worship me; and do not be confused on this matter that any dominate allegiance to the world and the politics of the established world {America or any other country}, simultaneously gives prime allegiance to Satan, the prince of this world, as dominant allegiance is given to the world. What Warren and these new religious leaders of America have done in their seeking of and finding of fame and fortune and popularity is to sell their souls to the company store, that is with a devotion to the established world of fame and fortune comes ideological and heart control from Satan and the ultimate in evil. However, it looks so much better than the evil on the streets and the killings by Russians in Georgia, that we hardly identify such devotion to the world--and remember as the Scripture and Jesus state "He that would be the friend of the world is the enemy of God"--as Evil. My goodness, we can hardly conceive of the concept that by allowing the American Democratic Faith to dominate over our Christian Faith that we have already violated the Separation of Church and State, that we have failed to practice the teaching of Jesus to "Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's and unto God what is God's". My, our concept of evil and the world, and "world view value system", to use some words and a concept from Warren, and Satan belong more to God than to the political world. In his play with the words and concept that every one, citizen or church member I would presume Warren means, has some "world view" and value system that goes with the world view; and no doubt has not stopped to think that this places a dominance of world politics over faith,

Respect for God

exerting an influence on other Christians toward this loyalty to the State over loyalty to the faith of God, Christ, and the Bible!

How can Warren be labeled a Protestant Pope Pastor, for true that Baptist history has been in the main stream a protest to being called a Protestant, since they protested against nothing; but rather from direct and individual priesthood of the believers reading of the Bible, came to develop the Baptist Distinctives of: (1) the importance of the individual; (2) the Bible as the Word of God that can be individually understood by every Christian; (3) baptism by immersion as an example and representation of the immersion in the salvation of God; (4) the separation of church and state, and (5) the Bible is the sole criterion for faith and practice **{fundamentalists like Warren would attempt to put the Bible and quotes from the Bible as an Appendage to an American Democratic Faith based on custom and traditions, primarily the evolved customs and traditions of Bible Baptists}**. However, you need to know and appreciate more American Baptist and church history by the recognition that there are distinct differences between (1) evangelicals, (2) Southern Baptist, and (3) fundamentalists. While King in the promotion of "Pastor Rich Warren" remind us often of both his best selling books on purpose and how he is a fourth generation pastor, not knowing the warfare between the Baptist fundamentalists and Southern Baptist. Goodness, you are excused as most church members have never know the differences, without any study of the good books on Baptist History or History of the Southern Baptist Convention. The fundamentalists, most generally called Bible Baptists, the most famous leader of which was the recently departed Jerry Falwell, split off from the Southern Baptist Convention, once the largest Protestant denomination in the world under the downward trend of the last 20 years as the fundamentalists took control of the convention. Besides the splitting off of two other major conventions, there has seen that big happening been continuous warfare between "moderates" and "fundamentalists" like between the new fundamentalists convention leaders and State conventions like in Texas, like between Baylor and Southwestern Seminary. Like W. A. Criswell, with support from Adrian Rogers and Charles Stanley, told Bill Moyer on TV, "we will keep fighting until one side or the other wins." Real southern baptists by and large refused to fight, dominated by the Christian spirit of love and moderation, while the fundamentalists under the leadership of those three Pope Pastors, all three of which never came from a SBC background in the first place but were called to large SBC churches as the reading level of American dropped from the sixth to the third grade level, the fundamentalists taking political control. **{They still do not have ideological**

Respect for God

control as demonstrated by the continued warfare, and as many real southern baptists have never awakened to this historical happening.}

NOTE: Do not be deceived Baptists and fellow citizens, the front of a goat in sheep's clothing is that of a smiling attitude of "disagreeing with being disagreeable" that all along the fighting fundamentalists have had during their takeover and warfare against real southern baptists. Surely it must remind you of the popular westerns where a killer can smile and show a gracious countenance at the same time the knife is inserted. What do you think it takes to make a wolf in sheep's clothing that scatter and fleece the flock except the looks of graciousness, smiles, and like the Trojan horse become Greeks baring gifts. Did you think a fighting fundamentalists would show all his true colors and put all his cards on the table at once! Look at their history, look at their approach like politicians to the Bible to use the Bible as an appendage to life and faith, and above all look at their popularity in this age of the Falling Away when the popularity of preachers and teachers is a bad sign. Now that they are in control, certainly in spite of the recent decline of the SBC, they would like for you to think that they are the "good guys" with the white hats.

Expanding our horizon to an honest look at early church history, the manner in which the first New Testament churches degenerated into a man-made organization called the Roman Catholic Church, the most outstanding example in history of the opposite of Church and State--and by the way, one of the major reasons for the foundation of this country as thousands flocked to the new country to gain religious freedom from the tyranny of Church over State--was when the pastor, the NT word of "bishop" had preference then, of the church at Rome assumed a larger status than the pastor of a local church which is the way it was in the New Testament, and still is. **{You will find only 3 words in the NT for the title of the leader of the local church, pastor, elder, and bishop--all the same--and with clear definitions of those limited local functions.}** Yes, the bishop at Rome assumed the title Pope and then was able to exert enough influence on the other churches to make it acceptable to them. Of course, just like today throughout the Roman Empire there were many churches who did not accept that man-made position, just many real southern baptists do not accept today these protestant popes of the fundamentalists movement. **{By the way this current mess of a combination of a Vatican which is an independent State also being a Church or denominational organization is not a practice or example that we wish to see dominate in the United States, even as with the Church of England where the Queen is the official head. Let us not give up**

our independence of July 4, gained physically when Puritans and Pilgrims came to this country or our intellectual independence gained by Emerson and others during the Romantic Period, although sometimes men like Warren and the late Jerry Falwell would have used the flag of July 4 to exercise influential control over America, at the same time out of ignorance of American history, church history, the Bible, and Baptist heritage, ignoring intellectual honesty. One of the still famous last sayings of Falwell was the current signs of spiritual revival in this country because of Ted Haggard and the Evangelicals, Rich Warren and the Purpose Driven philosophy, and Tim LeHaye with his fiction based on fiction and the Scoffed Bible Notes. It is greatly significant that the same fundamentalists who have given us all the answers on eschatology by a distorted of the 1,000 years, and all the answers on when to fight and not to fight in the SBC takeover, are the same fundamentalists with a emphasis of custom, tradition, and community over the Bible itself, instead of about the Bible, that are now leading in the De-Separation of Church and State.}

Even as the fundamentalists like Rich Warren would seek to blur in your mind the difference between real southern baptists and fundamentalists, so would they also like in the name of popularity and fortune like to confuse the differences between the American Democratic Faith of military men like John McCain and the Faith of the Bible and Christ, "the faith once for all delivered to the saints." We can believe in the social evolution of Spencer without believing in the physical evolution of Darwin; and while there has not been any evolution whatsoever in the truth of the Bible referenced in Jude 3 as the faith once for all delivered to the saints, there has been an evolution in the American Democratic Faith. For a complete description of the differences you should look at the PDF books offered on www.biblecombibleman.com, www.sungristbible.com, and understandbible.googlepages.com; but we will look quickly at the three major differences: (1) the emphasis in the American Democratic faith is on the majority, the minority in the Bible and with Christ; (2) tolerance goes to the extreme, taking precedence over and dominating convictions, or at least watering down convictions and testimonies as you saw in the civic forum of Saddleback--this is the sad, big jump in removing the gap between church and state; and (3) while the focus of the American Democratic Faith, as it should be and as we appreciate it, is elimination of discrimination based on "sex, religion, and creed", the forbidden discrimination of the Bible and Christ is based on "clothing, status, and income". {And wearing flip-flops and colorful Hawaiian shirts, which are in keeping and appeal in popularity to the casual California style, will not cut it as they are the most expensive of

Respect for God

that type just like wearing worn and torn jeans is no longer a sign of identification with the less than rich, when even obviously even 10% of his book sales have placed him in the Biblical category of the rich men, "who oppress you", and in spite of seeking some self-justification from the two Senators with a definition of rich.}

As citizens, and we must appreciate the contribution Rich Warren made to America on a beginning of clarification between faith and politics, we respect the American form of government and way of life which often in American Studies has been called the American Democratic Faith. We also appreciate the Christian Faith as recorded in the Bible, and as "once for all" was delivered to the saints through the writings of the Apostles and Prophets. However, we must appreciate the large gap that exist between them in spite of Warren's efforts to find "common ground"; and the large gap that must continue to exist between them as we maintain the historical Separation of Church and State which is our Baptist heritage, also our American heritage. Once you allow, as we saw happening at the Saddleback Vatican, the State Faith of the American Democratic Faith to dominate over Christian Faith, you have just lost the ideology battle to separate the two.

You know, none of this is really new except by an unread and untrained generation. It has long been called "intellectual honesty" by Elton Trueblood and the Christian philosophy of religion, even as "purpose" and "community" like Warren is championing is based on the Religious Dimension of Personality of psychology and the Christian psychology of Wayne Oates. What is new in history is the Falling Away among Christians and churches, as well as the world wide rising tide of the mystery of lawlessness and sin, and popularity as a bad sign. This period in American history is not like during the popularity of Billy Graham, when we were not overcome by the "they will not endure sound doctrine" (II Timothy 4:3,4) of the Falling Away, or the vast and popular "heaping up" of Bible teachers and preachers of "itching ears", seeking to teach and preach something new or something that sounds new! You really don't whether to blame Warren, the fundamentalists relatives and teachers that made him, the people who support him at Saddleback or in the rest of the world, just like you can not tell for sure whether in II Timothy 4:3,4, it is the teachers and preachers that have itching ears of the church members, but probably both! In short, popularity in this time of the Falling Away is no longer a luxury that Pastors and Bible preachers of the Word of God can afford. Also it is the unsaved who wish to think that the American Democratic Faith is the same as Christian Faith, the ultimate in a lack of

Respect for God

separation of Church and State: Christians and church members dare not compound the guilt!

17-10: IN THE WORLD, OF THE WORLD", and Jesus's Sermon on the Mount.

What this summary of Bible teachings from Paul and the Apostle John, based on the fundamentals of the teachings of Jesus especially from the Sermon on the Mount, is that Christians and church members {there can be some Christians that are not church members like during the time of Elijah there were 7,000 faithful to God not none by the official leader of Israel, Elijah, but who had not bowed their knee to the world of Baal} have to remain **IN THE WORLD** in order to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world, which by the way excludes accepting fellowship with adulterers in the church although acceptable to associate with such in the world, but not **OF THE WORLD** where all that is in the world, according to the Word of God and the Apostle John, (1) the lust of the flesh, (2) the lust of the eyes, and (3) the pride of life is of the world and not of God the Father. Can it be any more simple and spell out for you? Simple to understand, but hard to implement as most Christians never get to the application of their life style.}

NOTE: By the way what do you have left in this world when you eliminate "the world"? The answer is that less than popular word of the Bible called "the kingdom of God and of Christ", being substituted in the minds, hearts, and efforts of Christians today as the church, churches, or even State and democracy. Did you ever stop to think that this is the reason as Jesus made so many efforts in the Sermon on the Mount to properly identified the proper relationship of God to man taught, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you." May we suggest that you put a priority of life and efforts first on the kingdom of God and God's righteousness before even your church, your family, and even the State and your possessions {life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness was in the first writing "the pursuit of property"}. Go and figure this out and you have the message of the Bible on **IN THE WORLD, NOT OF THE WORLD.**

We have mentioned the teachings of Jesus and the Apostle Paul on this separation from of the world while in the world, but perhaps you are also familiar with the teachings on the same subject from the Apostle Paul. Paul wrote a letter, not in the New Testament Canon, admonishing the church members that as

Respect for God

their Christian faith and responsibility demanded, they were "not to keep company with sexually immoral people"; and since as he received reports back from this church at Corinth, what happened was that many church members were attempting to live a complete separatists life that would have taken them almost all the way OUT of the world. Paul under the inspiration of the Spirit, and based on what Jesus taught him, wrote:

"Yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world, or the covetous, or extortioners, or idolatoers, since then you would need to go out of the world". (I Corinthians 5:10)

You see, if you separated from all those in your world, in the world, that are (1) sexually immoral, covetous, extortioners, or idolaters, you would have to go all the way into getting out of this world. {By the way some of many sects and throughout history have tried to do that very thing as you well know.} This is not the extreme that Paul and the Word of God is advising!

"But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone name a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner--not even to eat with such a person." (I Corinthians 5:11)

This is the reason later Paul wrote in II Timothy 3:1-9 not to associate with fellow church members, having a form of godliness and denying the power thereof--religion without anything inside in other words--listing in great details these bad habits and attitudes of some church members during difficult times, which has been called both "Den of Thieves" and "Hideout for Bad Habits" in books written by SunGrist_Bible and now available online at www.biblecombibleman.com. Also the Apostle John agreed with Paul and with Jesus before both of them, not to take into your home anyone without the full implications of the "doctrine of Christ". It was a sin to even bid them Godspeed!

That this dedication to the teachings of the Bible and Christ has gone far beyond the faith and practice of Saddleback and that of most American churches is immediately admitted even as "many are called and few are chosen" and even as "narrow is the way that leads to life eternal and few there are that find it" while many and most, of course the majority of the American Democratic Faith as contrasted to the minority of Faith of the Bible and Christ. That as we get deeper into the Falling Way, clearly taught in the Bible as necessary in history before the Second Coming, there will be less and less in the church and in

the world {in the kingdom} who sustain a loyalty to Christian Faith over the American Democratic Faith; and even as most of God's original people fell in the wilderness after 40 years of testing, so also will most church members of God's new people fall from the Faith once for all delivered to the saints, and of the Bible, in favor of a total loyalty and priority for the American Democratic Faith, the faith of this world.

17-11: "Manifest to Us and Not to the World".

What is so interested in this question asked by Judas, not Iscariot, the question of John 14:22--"how will you manifest yourself to us and not to the world"--is that Judas does not say specifically: "How will you manifest yourself to us {disciples and other believers} and not to the rest of the world? Unlike for disciples today the world was clearly identified to him and no doubt the other of the apostles after being with Jesus day and night for over 3 years. There was two groups, believers called disciples and then the rest of the world; however, we can be certain from all the problems and Peter with others later had in associating with Gentile believers, that at this point in the learning Christ process of the Apostles, "us" meant a select few of the Jews and the world meant the world of the Gentiles. {You can not help but notice that in the Bible of the Old Testament, in spite of many teachings about Gentile believers and how there were many introductions to the new citizenship of God's people in the kingdom that would be Jews and Gentiles, the words "heathen" and "Gentiles" were used interchangeably.} Indeed in the mind and heart of most Hebrews, heathen and Gentile were one and the same. Look at the problem Jonah had in going as a missionary to the Gentile nation of Nineveh.

Jesus after Ascension called Paul, once a Hebrew of the Hebrew and great defender as a lawyer of the nation's religious, moral, and civic laws {one once so staunch on the "us" before even Jesus was manifest to him on the road to Damascus, where he went to place more Christian believers in bondage, that he sincerely thought before conversion that by persecuting Christians he was doing the will of God}, to straighten out Christians on the "us" as a kingdom of Jews and Gentiles. Later as we know from the history since Christ that less and less the Jews entered into the kingdom {it is not a subject for discussion for now but only one-third of them were allowed, and with persecution to become Christians by God and as predicted in Daniel and Zechariah}, most of the believers of the kingdom of God coming from Gentile nation, and that as the "Fulness of the Gentiles" has approach, that Paul wrote of in Romans, the

Respect for God

United States and Canada have provided the fullest as well as the majority until recently of the worldwide missionary efforts.

While it is hard to conceive from the perspective of a lifetime practitioner of respect for God that any would not believe in God the Father as the Creator and Sustainer as well as provider of salvation, muchless be able to take a hardened stance of unbelief to attempt a self-identification of themselves as agnostic or atheistic, so of this no doubt is a life long sense of being left out of the "us" group. Often in with friends and associates of the "us" group of believers, but all along realizing that there is something quite different; and still not comprehending the answer as Jesus gave it to Judas on how God and Christ did and do manifest themselves to "us" and not to the world. How can we see Him and they not see Him, Judas was asking? How can we have a personal relationship with God and Christ and not the world? How can we experience in this day and time salvation from God and not the rest of the world? What, bottom line, separates the "them" from the "us"? And we must come back to the seemingly simple answer of Jesus that He and the Father would come into the human heart when welcomed and make Their home with us! (John 14:xx) Simple, seemingly, yet all the difference in the world.

It is as if the rest of the world, so busy during a lifetime of reaching up or reaching down for God and Christ, without success; and being frustrated, are saying how can you find God and Christ manifest to you and I have not been able to have Them manifest to me? And the obvious answer is a simple attitude toward God and Christ, an attitude of faith, trust, and belief which says in effect, "God, when you knock as you always knock on every heart through the Holy Spirit's total presence here on earth, then I am going to listen and invite you into the home of my life, that of my heart."

17-12: Respect for the Name of God and Christ by Which you Call Yourself.

Closey related to the respect for the name of God in our language is the respect for the name of God we show by our actions, recalling as the Bible teaches of both Jews and Gentile Christians that they can being either shame or respect to the name of God by their righteousness, or even by the witness of their history when they force God because of wickedness to curse them rather than bring a blessing.

1. This is what Paul had in mind about the Jewish nation in Romans 2 as he informed them that they had brought shame on the name of God.

Respect for God

"For 'the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you,' as it is written." (Romans 2:24)

And this is a quote from their Hebrew Bible of the Jews, the Old Testament, as found in Isaiah 52:5 and Ezekiel 36:22. When they became a hissing sound to the Gentile nation and a term of reproach like when the world looked on the ruins of Jerusalem, knowing as they did that it was because of their own sins and lack of humility and prayer, then it was they themselves that by their actions brought disrespect on the name of God.

2. This is what the Bible tells us in II Timothy as Christians when it is stated "and let every one who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

"Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: 'The Lord know those who are His', and 'Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.'" (II Timothy 2:19)

a. God places a Seal on His own people.

It is quite often confusing as to who are the real people of God, even in churches where there are members of both the tares and the wheat variety, the sheep and the goats, and their are false and true leaders, pastors, preachers, and evangelists; however GOD KNOWS HIS OWN. They have a seal on them from God: this is the solid foundation of God. And by the way if you want a way to determine to a limited extent anyway which people of God who claim to be the people of God are genuine, then look at the extent to which either they have or have not really departed from iniquity.

b. This seal, like the everlasting covenant, has strings attached that the people of God must: (1) remain righteous; (2) remain humble as contrasted to the evil of the "pride of life"; (3) put loyalty to the God above all other gods of mammon and man; and (4) pray effectively.

17-13: Calamities, Curses, and Chastisement from God.

What you will find in the brief study of the Bible on calamities like Gustav, curses, and the Chastisement from God is that there is a close relationship between the cursing of man, which shows a lack of respect for God, and the CURSE as contrasted to promised Blessing from God where God responds to that lack of respect for His own people. Sometimes in the Bible the same Greek and Hebrew word is used for curse and cursing in the two ways, from

Respect for God

God and from man. History and the Bible has ample testimony to the reality that a lack of respect for God is in many ways the beginning and fulfillment of the downfall of civilizations, and that the Curse of God on His own people is evidences when there is a long period of intense calamities. It can be said: IT TAKES A LOT OF CALAMITIES FROM GOD TO MAKE A CURSE ON THE PEOPLE OF GOD! Unfortunately the people and the land of the country like the United States where God has begun to chastise His own people to promote righteousness, humility, and prayer are just innocent bystanders of the continuous work of God.

Even as it takes many blessings for us to know that God has blessed us, so it takes many calamities for God's people to realize that God has cursed them; but the guarantee of the Bible is that God never does anything without warning, without letting His people know what He is about to do!

17-14: Gustav Grieves the Gulf Coast.

It seems that the real question then is whether the calamity of the hurricane named Gustav is the warning {and certainly for the Gulf Coast, especially for New Orleans, there was over a week of warning}, or if Bible teachings on calamities, curses, and chastisement from God are the warnings, and that the intense series of calamities on the United States since 9/11 in floods, droughts, invasion from external enemies in the destruction of the twin towers, fires, hurricanes, and tornadoes is the actual chastisement on God's people. It would seem that Bible teachings in colleges, seminaries, churches, and homes for several generations are adequate to know that God either curses or blesses His own called people directly proportional to (1) their righteousness and obedience, and (2) the effectiveness of their fervent prayers based on righteousness. And what really makes convictions on these Bible teachings of blessings and/or curses from God on God's people from the heathen practices of past history where any "act of God" was considered as punishment from the gods is: (1) where there are many gods as recognized by the Creator of the Universe and written about in the Bible, there is only one real God with the power to manage these calamities; and (b) the ability of God's people to know and understand the teachings of the Bible remove us from such superstitious reactions to "acts of God".

Even as such destructive acts of nature have always been historically attributed to God or "gods", so even our weather men of science, if there can really be any such thing, have personalized tropical storms and hurricanes with personal names, which within itself is almost a primitive act of deification; or would be were it not for the Bible teachings on calamities, curses, and chastisement. How

Respect for God

do you know when an intense series of calamities are simply the natural result of the law of God automatically applied to the "rain on the just and the unjust", or when it is evidence of a curse from God on God's people and the rest of the world is just innocent bystanders. {Certainly, this is not an intention to seek the human sacrifice of churches and church members to appease God, like the heathen practices of the past when bad things happened from nature; however, as the professed people of God they are responsible to God for what happens in blessings and/or curses from God on the land and the people, by the extent of their righteousness and the effectiveness of their prayer.} Well, the answer to that question of how to chose between an automatic law of God and evidence of a curse from God, for one thing, is in the intensity of the calamities, and the location, per unit of time. Also you can go by the acts of grace manifest during the calamities like hurricanes and as for example that while Gustav killed approximately 98 people on the way to the Gulf Coast, on land where we would agree that few of God's people live, it only killed approximately 7 people on the Gulf Coast!

However, back to the Bible and Bible teachings for some sure word of clarity on calamities and curses!

17-15: Calamities and Curses in the Bible.

It is clear from Bible teachings such as in II Chronicles 7, Solomon's dedicaton of the Temple as the House of God and the place where God would place His name, that it takes a curse from God is made up of a lot of calamities. However before a more detailed look at exactly what God told King Solomon in reponse to His prayer during the dedication of the first Temple of God, we must consider the Bible teachings from Deuteronomy that already existed in the minds and hearts of God's people, taught often to them and which is the same for us, on the blessing and/or curse of God.

1. Deuteronomy 11:26: The Established Natural Law of God for His own people of either a BLESSING or a CURSE.

God clearly set before His own people in the wilderness, and used the words Himself "I set before you" this very day "A Blessing and A Curse".

"Behold {sort of like Christ His Son, who learned of course from the Father would stress a most important teaching with the preface of "verily, verily, I say unto you}, I {this is God speaking and none less than God the Great I, the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end}...Behold, I

Respect for God

set before you today {no doubt as to when He did it and where, in the wilderness, through Moses, and at the time of the 40 years of wilderness wanderings as the new nation of Israel was formed up from the multitudes brought out of Egypt}...."Behold, I set before you today a blessing and a curse..." (Deuteronomy 11:26)

What would you like to argue with here, that God said it or that God did it? Or do you just want to disagree by any intellectual and spiritual efforts possible that God exercises those two options toward the treatment of His people throughout history where (1) He either blesses His people based on the extent of their obedience on righteousness, or (2) He curses the people because of the wickedness, the opposite of righteousness, and because of their ineptness on prayer.

NOTE: Even as righteousness and effective prayer go hand in hand, that is according to the Bible "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man {and righteous people} availeth much", and the opposite would also be true--without righteousness in the churches and among the church people while still many formal prayers and many words spoken, the effectivity of the prayers will be lessened, so the first big evidence that any House of God has passed from a "House of Prayer" to a "Den of Thieves", as spoken by Jeremiah and later Jesus, is when the extent and effectiveness of prayer has disappeared. Likewise as the churches pass from houses of prayer to HIDEOUTS FOR BAD HABITS, which is the real meaning of Den of Thieves as used in Jeremiah and from Jesus. Yet you should not be shocked that the most religious people who ever lived, led by the Pharisees, priests, lawyers, Sadducees {the religious leaders} in spite of much speaking of prayers in public and on street corners, and with many words as Jesus observed to His first disciples, became ineffective in prayer about the same time Jesus said they had turned a "House of Prayer" into a "Den of Thieves." {You may want to read these two ebooks from SunGrist_Bible at www.biblecom Bible-man.com .}

a. THE BLESSING from God to God's people when and if you obey the righteous teachings of the Word of God, the Bible.

"...the Blessing, if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you today." (Deuteronomy 11:27)

Respect for God

Yes, this was also the time of the giving of the commands of God, in particular the Ten Commandments that God's people in the churches of the US know so well.

b. THE CURSE.

"and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside from the way which I command you today, to go after other gods which you have not known..." (Deuteronomy 11:28)

REMEMBER, then and now, most basic and fundamental is the command to have no other gods before the One LORD God of the universe; and that simple and basic to Bible understanding is that any thing, person, or "mammon" that has the place of loyalty in your life where God should have this commanded priority, be it inanimate or animate, becomes a "god" to you.

2. Deuteronomy 30:1-- For the world, the US included, of God's people just like for our example in the Bible of the history of Israel, and as predicted and fulfilled for Israel in the Bible, the blessing was followed by the curse, and sometimes vice versa, and the cycle of the history of Israel was (1) Blessing, (3) Curse, (4) Return to God and Restoration, and (5) A repeat on the group level of the nation of God's called people again Falling Away.

NOTE: Be not deceived as sure as the prediction and fulfillment in the Old Testament of this cycle and Falling Away of God's people, so is the surety of the same for God's people today in the world and the US. The whole book of Hebrews is about the Falling Away we are in now; Jesus taught it in His famous teachings on eschatology like in Matthew 24 where "because sin will abound the love of many will wax cold"; Paul wrote the often ignored book of II Thessalonians to explain that you must look for the Falling Away before the Second Coming, and that if you confuse the historical sequence you are out of step with the Word of God and God's plan for the Universe.

"Now it shall come to pass, when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the LORD your God drives you, and you return to the LORD your God and obey His voice, according to all that I command you today, you and your children, with all your heart and with all your soul {recall the summary of the 10 commandments on love for God and fellow man}, that the LORD your

Respect for God

God will bring you back from captivity, and have compassion on you..." (Deuteronomy 30:1-3)

You want some history and wisdom on curse, blessing, and calamity much older than any history we have about nations and nations of God's people, here it is! Heed!

a. Curse in the Dictionary: "a prayer for harm to come upon one".

Of course in the case of a curse from God Himself, the prayer is not a request but a demand to the universe and the nature of the universe that it will be done; and in the case of God the Father for His own people, it not harm for destruction, but rather for chastisement and in order to promote righteousness and holiness in the life of His own people.

"Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it." (Hebrews 12:11)

By the way, why is it that often you hear from people that "God has blessed us", why but self-denial and at the group level, do you never hear "God has cursed us"? Is it respect for God? No, it can not be for you see what the teachings of the Bible is on these matters of calamities and a curse. Perhaps it is because of our false concepts of God, having in the US in the last few generations created like Phillips said in our minds and hearts "a god that is too small", or beyond that in the last 40 years or so of the unsound doctrine of the Falling Away in our churches and other pulpits created a god that is not at all the God of the Bible, an idol in our mind that does not exist but to whom we give loyalty over the real God of the Bible and of the Universe. You know what has created this Gospel of Prosperity of this "time when they will not endure sound doctrine" is a false gospel that has rationalized and justified the creation of false gods; and that is need now is a Counter Gospel to this, perhaps a GOSPEL OF GOD'S CURSE OF CALAMITIES!

b. Calamity in the Dictionary: "great distress or misfortune; an event causing great harm or loss and affliction; a disaster".

That Gustav and Katrina and others of these hurricanes and tornadoes--fire, floods, invasions from abroad by Muslim fundamentalists, and droughts--are great distresses, misfortunes, events of great harm with loss and afflictions,

Respect for God

alias diasters is obvious; and obviously calamities, that an intense series of calamities is evidence of a Curse from God should become more evident, and that it is a gracious reminder for the people of God, alias the many churches of America, to return to righteousness and effectual fervent prayer.

c. Chastisement in the Dictionary: "to correct through punishment or suffering; discipline."

And since we want to be known in churches as God's people who believe in the Word of God, let us look at the definition of the chastisement of God's people in the Bible:

**"..but He for our profit,that we may be partakers of His holiness."
(Hebrews 12:10)**

You certainly have a good concept of the Bible teachings on chastisement if you read this and remember the verse after it, Hebrews 12:11, quoted above and add to that the total teachings on the total context of Hebrews 12 on chastisement, how that it is not for the bastard children of the world but for the people of God, those whom God loves and wants to make more righteous, holy, and effective in prayer.

d. Hebrew and Greek words in the Bible for "calamity": the word is found 20 times in the Bible, literally meaning "mist or vapour", "accident and misfortune", and "evil" or "bad" {Isn't that definition of a calamity like Gustav being labeled by the Word as evil, an interesting personification in light of many political efforts to personify evil as something far from our churches and our land and people, all the way to bad nations of the world or even to the streets of Chicago and the caves of Pakistan?}

e. Hebrew and Greek words in the Bible for "curse": found so many times in the Bible, referring to acts of God and man too often to number with 22 distinct Greek and Hebrew words and meanings such as: (1) oath, (2) devoted thing, (3) execration, (4) a reviling or thing lightly esteemed, (5) swearing, (6) imprecation, (7) to place under an anathema, (8) to bless, etc; and the word "cursed" has at least 7 more definitions and words in the Bible in the Greek and Hebrew,

3. Life and death in the Bible is correlated with respectively blessing and curse in the Bible: Deuteronomy 30:19.

Respect for God

"I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live..." (Deuteronomy 30:19)

NOTE: You really want to do something good for the future of this country and the children to follow, then make the choice and choices in your churches in favor of righteousness, effective prayer, and a loyalty for the one God over other gods.

17-16: Now we are ready for Dedication of the House of God by Solomon.

1. When pestilences, calamities, and other acts of God comes upon God's people, it is literally as stated in law "acts of God"; for you will notice in II Chronicles 7:13,14 the number of times and the number of actions by God Himself as He says, "I shut", "I command", and "I send". How can you doubt in the light of the teachings of the Bible on this matter that when these hurricanes like Gustav strike the people of God in the US, that it is God who shuts, God who commands, and God who sends!

"When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people, if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land." (II Chronicles 7:13,14)

2. According to these verses from the Word of God above: the American land and the American people, and the welfare of both in the present actions and planning and management of God is dependent on the righteousness, loyalty, and prayer of the churches; and bottom line, the churches of America are responsible for the blessing or curse from God.

3. As the assesment of the damage to the Gulf Coast is made, like in other hurricanes and tornadoes as well as other floods and calamities, the question will be asked in mind and heart if not in words, **"Why has the LORD done thus to this land and this house?" (II Chronicles 7:21)**

Yes, like in the pervious intense series of calamities being experienced by America, you will see churches destroyed and you will see suffering among God's people! Why not a start from the pulpits and a renewal of Bible teachings on more than a superficial explanation than that being given by people such as Major Nagel, "we live in a hurricane prone territory", a start of reconciliation of Bible

Respect for God

thought that GOD HAS DONE THIS TO THE LAND AND THE CHURCHES, TO HIS OWN PEOPLE!

4. God's people of the churches are in a proper mental position, it is called attitude, to begin on a revival of righteousness over the Gospel of Prosperity; from excuses and rationalization to an enlarged concept of "Evil" based on the Bible which faces up to "the spirit within us that lusteth to envy", the rising tide of the mystery of lawlessness of the Falling Away; from the HIDEOUT FOR BAD HABITS to the recognitions of follies; and from the "Den of Thieves" back to the Houses of Prayer and righteousness.

"Then they will answer, 'Because they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, who brought them out of the land of Egypt, and embraced other gods, and worshiped them and served them; therefore He has brought all this calamity on them.'" (II Chronicles 7:22)