

# CERTAIN TRUTHS FOR UNCERTAIN TIMES

Aaron Beard  
Trussville  
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## INTRODUCTION:

- A. On November 4, 2008 the people of this country experienced a great opportunity of freedom in voting for the next president of the United States Of America. It was certainly an election for the record books, but it didn't come w/o much anxiety, fear, & concern. Feelings which continue for many
- B. As some Christians are very concerned about the future of our country, we need to return to the word of God to set our hearts on some certain truths that will carry us through these uncertain times

## LET'S LOOK AT SOME OF THESE CERTAIN TRUTHS TO RENEW OUR CONFIDENCE, STRENGTH, & HOPE DURING THESE UNCERTAIN TIMES... THEY ARE ALL THINGS WE ALREADY KNOW, BUT ARE THINGS WE NEED REMINDED OF

### A. First of all, no matter what men may do, God still rules and is in control of the affairs of this world:

1. This was the major thing Job had to learn when it came to the things which he suffered (**Job 40:8-14**)
  - a. He's a man who's life, in one day, suddenly became very uncertain! His losses top any the stock market ever saw! He wasn't fearing what might be, he was groping to deal with what was!
  - b. His concerns were bigger than the political concerns we may have – If you faced in one day what Job faced, you wouldn't be thinking at all about who the next president would be! But the lessons he needed to learn to reassure him are the same lessons we need to reassure us!
  - c. Everything God had to say to Job could be summarized in the words, "I Am In Control... I Will Do What Is Right" → Even the most difficult of circumstances, the most mind boggling occurrences, and the most powerful among God's creation were under God's control!
2. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, learned the hard way it was the Most High who ruled in the kingdoms of men. As powerful as he thought he was, God was still in control! (**Dan 4:25-26, 28-33, 34-35**)
3. Paul emphasized again God's role and God's authority behind the governments of men (**Rom 13:1-6**)
  - a. We think it's hard to respect our political leaders, we ought to try respecting those of Paul's day!
  - b. The point is that we don't show respect because of the inherit respectability of the particular leaders. We show respect because the governing authorities are appointed by God!
  - b. When we read this people always want to know, "Does this mean God causes every specific leader to be in the office they are in?" – Does He raise up every single leader? Does He just allow some to come to power? I don't know all the answers, but I know God is in control!
4. To reassure the 1<sup>st</sup> Century Christians, Jesus pictures God's throne in the center of everything (**Rev. 4**)
  - a. Jesus had prophesied that great turmoil would characterize the time leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem. Revelation is written to Christians who were in the middle of this – They were being persecuted, wars & rumors of wars abounded, & political unrest had become the norm
  - b. So one of the first things Jesus does in this book is to show them the throne room of God. In this picture, God's throne is in the center... Everything surrounds it! Take heart, God is in control!
  - c. In this book the term throne appears 46 times... It's only comes up 15 more times in the whole NT!
  - d. There's no need to fear the future on earth... The kingdom of Heaven will always be triumphant!
  - e. Marty Pickup writes, "Man's perspective was too limited to give him an accurate knowledge of the activity of God in the world. Despite how things might appear from an earthly perspective, god was always in complete control and His purposes could never be thwarted!"

- f. **Vs. 8 & 11** → The three fold holies speak of God's perfect character, as the Almighty He is in control; as the One who was, is, & is to come He has an eternal perspective & will be with us through it all; He has all glory, honor, & power because He created it all and controls it all!
5. As we consider what the future holds, we need to remember who holds the future! The more we focus our hearts & minds on the throne of the Lord the less we should worry about tomorrow!

**B. There has always been a people of God who have served Him despite their society or their circumstances:**

1. One great example of persistent faithfulness is Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, & Azariah (**Dan 1:8; 3:16-18**)
  - a. They are four young men of God who were plucked out of their homeland where their faith could flourish & put in the middle of an idolatrous nation which was antagonistic to their faith
  - b. Neither the nation they lived in nor the circumstances they were placed in dictated their faith and their morality... Because of this they brought God into a very godless and immoral society!
  - c. As we know they even had to face difficult physical consequences for their faith & morality, but the threat of the persecution did not change the way they lived! They walked by faith!
2. Consider the example of some of those who walked by faith in difficult times & places
  - a. Although Lot's initial decision showed misplaced priorities, he was able to live a righteous life in one of the, if not the, most wicked cities of all time. He stayed above the influence of sin.
  - b. Joseph lived righteously & faithfully in Egypt with no other faithful person to encourage him!
  - c. Moses chose to give up the opportunity, riches, power, and fame of Egypt to lead God's people
  - d. The prophets during the captivity & the time which led up to it who faced great discouragements, preached when people didn't appreciate it, and served under foreign & ungodly regimes!
  - e. How about all the Christians of the 1<sup>st</sup> Century! They faced the pressures and persecution of the Jewish people & endured the Roman persecution! They were under the Roman government which was very crooked! They lived around the influence of Greek culture which was very sinful as well as philosophically & theologically corrupt! Our society is far better than this!
3. When Paul was closing out his letter to the Philippians, he sent them greetings from the saints of Caesar's household. Here's Christians in a most unlikely place! (**Philippians 4:21-22**)
  - a. Exactly who these Christians were we may not be sure. Some suggest they were part of Caesar's physical family but most suggest they some of his employed servants or officers of the court
  - b. The Caesar was Nero – The persecutor of Christians... He is described as "a wholesale robber, a murderer, matricide, liar, coward, drunkard, glutton, incestuous and so utterly depraved that even the pagans of his day spoke of him as a mixture of blood & mud" – Killed his own mom!
  - c. Despite their environment, they were SAINTS! No, this doesn't mean they were super-Christians. Saint is simply a word to refer to God's people, in fact, it's used more to refer to Christians than any other term! Saint means, "holy" – Despite their surroundings they were holy!
  - d. Alexander McLaren wrote of these people: "Our duty is to stand at our post however difficult our surroundings and unfriendly our company, and if we are sure that He has set us there, we may be sure He is with us there & that there we can live the life and witness to His name"
4. While a "godly society" would makes certain things easier, a Christian does not depend on his surroundings or his circumstances to determine his walk with God! (**Romans 12:1-2**)

**C. Another certain truth is the fact that we are citizens of a kingdom that cannot be shaken:**

1. Many seem very concerned, even to the point of being filled with anxiety, about the future of the USA:
  - a. We see the moral decline of our country – We only fear that things will get worse as time goes on!

- b. We see a more broad movement among people in their recognition of God – Some try to get God’s name removed from any public thing. Many more simply don’t live like they believe in God!
  - c. We also see some sociological, economical, and political trends that show instability – We worry about decisions that may be made by the new administration, the stock market is volatile, right now it’s difficult to get or keep a job, & it’s harder to afford the life we had 2-4 yrs ago
  - d. Add to this the threats of war & terrorism that exist – There’s people & nations out there who’d love to see the USA fall and we fear decisions may be made that compromise our strength
2. After describing the rise and fall of the coming kingdoms of men, the Lord through Daniel prophesied about kingdom that was coming that would never be destroyed! **(Daniel 2:36-45)**
- a. Nebuchadnezzar dreamed of a great image with a head of gold, chest & arms of silver, belly & thighs of bronze, legs of iron, & feet of iron and clay. He saw a stone cut from a mountain, without hands, and flung at the feet of the image, breaking it into pieces. The whole image then blew away like chaff in the wind. The stone became great & filled the whole earth!
  - b. Daniel tells him each part of this image represented the kingdoms that were to come... Starting with Nebuchadnezzar’s Babylon you have it, then the Medeo-Persian, Greece, & then Rome
  - c. Notice this stone was cut without hands... This kingdom originated from God, not man. It starts out as a stone & becomes a huge mountain that fills the whole earth... It sees great growth!
  - d. This kingdom would not be like the kingdoms of men... It’s a kingdom that would not pass away, it would not be destroyed, it would not be left to the instability of men! This is God’s kingdom!
3. As we come to the New Testament, we see this dream of Nebuchadnezzar’s fulfilled and the kingdom of the Lord is established, it becomes that mountain, & it fills the earth! **(Hebrews 12:18-24)**
- a. Throughout the gospels this kingdom is preached – Both John & Jesus said the kingdom of Heaven was at hand or near. They looked to it with great anticipation! **(Matt 3:2, 4:17, 13:31, 16:28)**
  - b. This passage in Hebrews is contrasting the Old Covenant with its mountain to the New Covenant and its mountain. Notice the magnitude of the mountain we have come to, notice it’s wonderful company, notice how it reaches into Heaven while the part we’re on is on earth
  - c. Our wildest imaginations cannot even begin to capture the reality of the magnificence of this mountain! It is a mountain that cannot be shaken! A mountain that will stand forever!
  - d. There has always been uncertainty, corruption, and struggles within the governments and leadership of men. But none of these things are found in the kingdom of the Lord!
4. This kingdom we are part of and this citizenship we possess is not of this world! **(Philippians 3:17-21)**
5. The more we focus our energy and thoughts on the kingdom of Heaven of which we are a part, the less we will worry about the political and national futures of this earthly kingdom!