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## Gleanings

### Divine Help, Anyone?



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The Old Testament prophet Ezekiel lived during the time of the Jewish exile. Because Israel rejected God by choosing to make up their own rules for life, the nation suffered judgment politically and economically. Israel's leaders came to the prophet to inquire of the Lord because Israel was suffering under Babylonian captivity. The leaders sought divine help (Ezekiel 20). But the Lord would not listen because the nation abandoned the ways of God and chose the ways of the world. Israel's experience illustrates a divine principle: A predicate to receiving help from God is to repent from the ways of the world and turn to the ways of the Lord.

As a timeless universal principle, this is an ominous warning for us today. Though we live under the New Covenant not the Old Covenant, we are still under the same mandate as Israel to obey the will and ways of God as revealed in Scripture. If this is true, then we can expect that, as with Israel, disobedience to God will lead to political and economic calamity.

Is it possible that the current economic and political crisis is, at least in part, a divine response to the world's ever-increasing rejection of God?

If you concur that this is a possibility, what would a world living in rebellion against God look like? May I suggest that such a world would display confusion about theology and the definition of right and wrong? Let's consider some anecdotal data.

**Theology.** Today the popular view of God is pluralistic, which is not a biblical view. Therefore those seeking to assert that there is one God who is revealed through Christ are increasingly marginalized. Confusion about who God is and how He works will lead to confusion in all of life. Following are some examples of theological confusion in our culture:

During the recent USA political debates, the candidates for president deflected questions about their theology. Instead they asked voters to disregard their theology and consider their values. Interestingly, the media did not probe to discover the origin of the candidates' values. If one's values don't emanate from one's theology, where do they come from?

A chaplain filed a lawsuit against the U.S. Navy claiming that his rights were violated when he was reprimanded because he quoted the Bible, prayed in the name of Jesus, and wore his uniform while worshipping in public (<http://www.christiannewswire.com/news/7248518220.html>).

There is now a seminary that will train you in more than one worldview. Take your pick – Christianity, Judaism, or Islam. This institution is pandering to the pluralistic trend in the culture and is perhaps the first pluralist seminary in the world (<http://www.worldmag.com/articles/18836>).

On Veteran's Day, the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) paused for a moment of silence. As the camera panned the floor of the NYSE, most of the people were just standing quietly looking around. Everyone was free to do as they wished; there was no leadership—no prayer in the name of Christ and no Bible reading. If we don't know who God is, then we simply opt for silence on such occasions because we are confused about what to do.

Recently, a sexual abuse scandal involving a former Penn State football coach was revealed. Knowledge of his nefarious acts were apparently covered up by the university. It would appear that the cover-up was money motivated. No one wanted to put the football program at risk, so those involved responded inappropriately. Later that week, there was a time of silence before Penn State played Nebraska—like Veteran's Day at the NYSE.

**Right and Wrong.** Confusion about theology leads to confusion about right and wrong. People who are not anchored in Christ determine right and wrong based on personal preferences instead of the timeless universal truth of Scripture. Consider the following examples:

During the Republican debates, the candidates were split on the issue of waterboarding—was it right or wrong? After the debate, President Obama stated that he viewed waterboarding as wrong. How do we determine which political leader is right? Without agreement on who God is, how can one determine what is right and wrong?

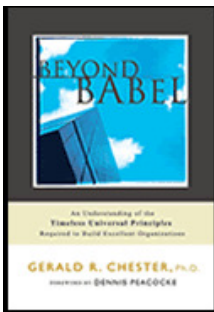
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The Occupy Wall Street gatherings that began in September continue and may even be growing. Among other things, the movement is protesting greed in corporate America and Wall Street. Greed is a symptom of the worship of money. Scripture is very clear that a person cannot worship both God and money. Wall Street operates on the thesis that greed is good. Greed supposedly motivates people to work hard and drives people and organizations to excel. Occupy Wall Street disagrees. Who is right?

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The issues of theology and right and wrong are inherently coupled. They cannot be severed because only the Creator of the universe has the authority to define right and wrong. When people presume that they can disregard God and make up their own rules, they make the same mistake that Israel made and should expect the same consequences: political and economic calamity.

The solution to this state of rebellion against God is the same today as it was for Israel: repent and turn to the one true God.

If we don't repent, then all the moments of silence at various events mean nothing. Seminaries and other institutions will continue to pander to cultural whims. Those who truly seek to stand for Christ will be increasingly marginalized and persecuted. People who do not have a biblical worldview will be elected to political positions and will make unwise public policy. The end result of this will be political and economic calamity.

If, however, we do repent, then political peace and economic blessing can be restored. This requires people to truly humble themselves and seek God through Christ as revealed in Scripture.

Are there signs this could be happening? There may be.

At the Penn State–Nebraska game mentioned above, the Penn State football team didn't run onto the field as they normally do. Instead they walked on arm-in-arm. Then both teams kneeled in the center of the field, but not for a "moment of silence"; instead, the Nebraska running backs coach, Ron Brown, led both teams in prayer in the name of Jesus and quoted from Scripture, demonstrating that the important issues of life are rooted in our theology ([http://huskerextra.com/sports/football/article\\_617822bf-7103-5e8c-aeee-757b48b97898.html](http://huskerextra.com/sports/football/article_617822bf-7103-5e8c-aeee-757b48b97898.html)).

A recent survey by Generation Opportunity discovered that the Millennial generation (ages 18–29) is very concerned about issues that the baby boomers have largely ignored: public debt, budget deficits, and energy dependence (<http://www.christiannewswire.com/news/7285018312.html>). The Millennial generation realizes some of the errors of their parents who, like Israel, have largely made up their own rules of life and adopted the ways of the world. Now Millennials have an opportunity to turn from the ways of the world and embrace the ways of God.

Will Millennials follow the example of Coach Ron Brown and turn to Christ? If so, tangible signs of their repentance could include the following:

A return to prayer in the name of Jesus replacing the current practice of a moment of silence at public events.

Politicians turning to Christ—attending church, reading and studying the Bible, praying, and seeking guidance from the Lord. Public policy will reflect the ways of God not the ways of the world.

All branches of the military service will have Christian chaplains who will teach the Bible and pray in the name of Jesus.

Seminaries will return to biblical training based on Christ as the singular way to God.

Business and educational leaders will humbly seek the Lord realizing that obedience to God trumps money. Ponzi schemes will stop.

Pedophilia will not be tolerated no matter what the price.

Right and wrong will be based on Scripture not on human preferences.

Would you like to live in a world characterized by these traits? Turn to Christ and start living according to God's will and God's ways.

This month we celebrate Christmas—the birth of Christ. Christ is God incarnate. He alone is Lord of heaven and earth and seeks followers who worship only Him. He defines right and wrong. Without Christ, life is meaningless, rudderless, and hopeless. When people disconnect the economy, businesses, families, and public policy from the source of truth, the end result cannot be good. But when people humbly and obediently turn to Christ, they can find an audience with God and divine help in time of need. May God grant us grace to do this.

**Merry Christmas!**

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Helping You Find and Fulfill Your Life Purpose

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Training to <b>Find</b> Your Life Purpose	<a href="#">Seminar</a> : Strategic Life Alignment	March 1—2, 2012 (Seoul, S. Korea)
	Strategic Life Alignment Recordings	Recordings Available
	<a href="#">Seminar</a> : Strategic Life Alignment Alumni Event	March 4, 2012 (Singapore)
	<a href="#">Seminar</a> : Strategic Life Alignment Alumni Event	June 22—23, 2012 (Dallas, TX)
	Strategic Life Alignment Alumni Event Recordings	Recordings Available
Training to <b>Fulfill</b> Your Life Purpose	<a href="#">Business Transformation Series Seminar (BTS)</a> : Beyond Babel	March 5, 2012 (Singapore)
	<a href="#">BTS Seminar</a> : Biblical Leadership	April 6, 2012 (Dallas, TX)
	<a href="#">BTS Webinar</a> : Biblical Leadership	May 7, 14, and 21, 2012
	BTS Seminars/Webinar Recordings	Recordings Available