

Dear Friend,

Yesterday, in light of recent events in New York City, I was thinking about a cry that emanated from the heart of King David shortly after he heard of the death of the once-anointed former king, Saul. *"The beauty of Israel is slain on your high places! How the mighty have fallen!"* (2 Samuel 1:19).

This city had decided to erect, in Times Square, an arch honoring a former temple founded on rampant immorality and the violent sacrificing of children. This former temple (and its heathen god, Baal) was somehow being heralded as a culturally relevant and noble thing when plans were suddenly canceled.

In contrast, if we were to erect a Nativity scene at the same location depicting a young couple cradling a Child of hope and peace, there would be a public outcry that would undoubtedly occupy the news media for days. That would happen even though the same reason of preserving cultural heritage could be given.

A cry has deepened in my heart. *"The beauty of America has been slain in that high place where we have exalted ourselves above the knowledge of God. How this once mighty nation has fallen!"*

If ever there was a time to pray, that time is now!

Yours, in Christ,
Pastor Carter Conlon

EVIL IS AT THE GATE

by Carter Conlon

"Belshazzar the king made a great feast for a thousand of his lords, and drank wine in the presence of the thousand. While he tasted the wine, Belshazzar gave the command to bring the gold and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple which had been in Jerusalem, that the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines might drink from them. ...They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold and silver, bronze and iron, wood and stone. In the same hour the fingers of a man's hand appeared and wrote opposite the lampstand on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace; and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. Then the king's countenance changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his hips were loosened and his knees knocked against each other" (Daniel 5:1–6).

While Belshazzar the king stood there in fear, Daniel gave him the word of the Lord: *"O king, the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar your father a kingdom and majesty, glory and honor...But when his heart was lifted up, and his spirit was hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him. Then he was driven from the sons of men, his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild donkeys. They fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till he knew that the Most High God rules in the kingdom of men, and appoints*

over it whomever He chooses. But you his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, although you knew all this" (Daniel 5:18–22).

In the formative years of the United States of America, we, too, set our hand to shameful practices.

We see here that this was not the first time God had dealt with pride in this nation. Before Belshazzar, a king named Nebuchadnezzar ruled in Babylon, and this was the word that was given to him: *"This decision is by the decree of the watchers, and the sentence by the word of the holy ones, in order that the living may know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, gives it to whomever He will, and sets over it the lowest of men. They shall drive you from men, your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make you eat grass like oxen. They shall wet you with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over you, until you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses. And inasmuch as they gave the command to leave the stump and roots of the tree, your kingdom shall be assured to you, after you come to know that Heaven rules"* (Daniel 4:17, 25–26). In other words, "Nebuchadnezzar, you have

exalted yourself above the knowledge of God, engaging in practices that God has clearly forbidden. Because of the pride of your heart, your kingdom is going to be cut down. However, there will be a stump left, and it will grow again after you are humbled.”

And now Daniel was standing before the one whom he called Nebuchadnezzar’s son, saying, “Belshazzar, you are well aware of how God deals with pride! You know that you cannot deal treacherously with God and escape the consequences. Yet even knowing this, you have not humbled yourself.”

■ AMERICA’S OFTEN-FORGOTTEN HISTORY

In the formative years of the United States of America, we, too, set our hand to shameful practices which ultimately brought about the judgment of God, just as in Belshazzar’s day.

In the years when slavery became an acceptable practice, 12.5 million Africans were stolen from their homeland—mostly the young and the strong. Approximately 10.5 million survived while 2 million died en route to their various destinations due to the cruelty imposed on them. According to the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, 6 percent of those who survived were delivered to North America, making the numbers somewhere in the vicinity of 630,000 slaves that we attained. Most people today have no idea that even Wall Street in Manhattan was once a slave-trading post.

Tragically, thousands of slaves died because of the conditions they were forced to live in, even after arriving on the shores of America. Amputations were a common punishment for slaves trying to gain their freedom, which

was actually the irony of ironies—a nation that was priding itself on freedom from tyranny became in itself tyrannical to a whole race of people that were brought to its shores. Many of the African slaves were buried without any record of who they were.

Although there were other circumstances, in great measure, slavery was the predominant issue that led to the onset of the Civil War in this country. In the war, 625,000 young people in America died—not only men but women. That was 2 percent of the American population!

In President Abraham Lincoln’s second inaugural address, which took place when both slavery and the Civil War were nearing an end, he suggested that the death and destruction brought on by the war was divine retribution to America for possessing slaves. He even believed that it might be the will of God for the war to continue “until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword.”

As the Bible says, “*Do not be deceived, God is not mocked, whatever a man sows that will he also reap*” (Galatians 6:7). I do not believe it is a coincidence that 630,000 slaves were dropped off in America, and later 625,000 American sons and daughters died in the Civil War. Just as thousands of the slaves died because of their cruel living conditions, 56,000 people died from starvation and disease in prison camps during the war. Many slaves were buried without dignity or any record of who they were. In the war, 40 percent of the dead were never identified; they had been left to rot in piles on the battlefield.

■ CONTINUING IN PRIDE

And so we must ask ourselves: What are we doing with the history that we know? There is no excuse

for the ignorance of what we once did and how God responded in this nation. As we saw in our opening text, Belshazzar, too, was without excuse. “*But you his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, although you knew all this*” (Daniel 5:22). Belshazzar continued in his pride and rebellion, even though he should have known that God will not be mocked.

The indictment continued: “*And you have lifted yourself up against the Lord of heaven. They have brought the vessels of His house before you, and you and your lords, your wives and your concubines, have drunk wine from them. And you have praised the gods of silver and gold (the gods of prosperity), bronze and iron (the gods of human strength and ingenuity), wood and stone, which do not see or hear or know; and the God who holds your breath in His hand and owns all your ways, you have not glorified*” (Daniel 5:23). Similarly, in America, we have praised the gods of silver and of gold. We allowed preachers to be raised up, unchallenged. Absolute charlatans came in and taught the people that somehow godliness is a means to financial gain.

Can’t you see that the handwriting is already on the wall?

“*Then the fingers of the hand were sent from Him, and this writing was written. And this is the inscription that was written: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. This is the interpretation of each word. MENE: God has numbered your kingdom, and finished it; TEKEL: You have been weighed in the balances, and found wanting; PERES: Your kingdom has been divided, and given to the Medes and Persians. Then Belshazzar gave the command,*

and they clothed Daniel with purple and put a chain of gold around his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom. That very night Belshazzar, king of the Chaldeans, was slain.” (Daniel 5:24–30).

The writing was on the wall, yet what did Belshazzar do? He got up from the table and proclaimed Daniel to be the third ruler in his kingdom! He should have turned to prayer. He should have fallen on his knees and cried out for mercy. He should have barricaded the gates. Instead, he simply decorated Daniel!

Historians tell us that the Medes and Persians were already at the gate, and they ended up entering the city without any resistance from the people within. That very night, Belshazzar was slain.

What will we do as the Church of Jesus Christ?

In the same way, in this hour, evil is at the gate in America! Can't you see that the handwriting is already on the wall? We are on the verge of being given over to the godless. In fact, the godless with their value system have already largely infiltrated our society. However, we are on the verge of something much deeper and darker than anything we could have imagined.

■ IT'S TIME TO PRAY

This leaves us with one question: What will we do as the Church of Jesus Christ? We are the only ones left with the power to push back the darkness. We do not have to open the gate and allow this nation to be flooded with evil. That is, unless we become like Belshazzar and his entourage, who agreed with the word of God yet could do nothing about it. All they could do was decorate

the prophet, saying, “Yes, this is a man of God. Yes, this is a word from God!” Similarly, you can read this newsletter and call me an anointed man of God; you can agree that this message is from the Lord, yet still do nothing.

If we do not pray, what kind of country are we going to be leaving for our children and grandchildren?

However, I remind you that God said to His own 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*” (2 Chronicles 7:14). We must admit that our ways have not been God's ways—that we have pursued pleasure more than God. We must acknowledge that we have failed to be a light to this generation and turn from our wicked ways!

America can still experience a great awakening before that final day of judgment comes upon this whole world.

According to His Word, we must also humble ourselves and pray. Oh, if ever there was a time to pray, it is now! If your church does not have a prayer meeting, start one in your home! If we do not pray, what kind of country are we going to be leaving for our children and grandchildren?

What kind of evil is going to invade the classroom? What kinds of laws are going to be passed obligating the Church of Jesus Christ to become partakers of this nation's sin?

I would like you to seriously consider these things, for we are living in a moment when evil is at the gate of our nation. However, the good news is that it can still be averted in measure, for God is good and His mercy endures forever. I believe God can still touch our children; He can still touch our churches and our neighborhoods. I believe that America can still experience a third great awakening before that final day of judgment comes upon this whole world.

But I also know that there has never been a great awakening anywhere at any time in history without somebody, somewhere, praying and laying hold of God. It all begins with prayer. In the book of Ezekiel, the Lord said, “*I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one*” (Ezekiel 22:30). I can picture the Spirit of God going through the streets of a nation that was known for its religion. There was a deep pleading in the heart of God, for He did not want to have to judge that nation. Yet the people were probably busy, just as we are today. “I have children to tend to. I have groceries to buy. I work long hours on my job.” Everyone had an excuse, and so they remained unaware of the critical moment in history they were living in.

■ ANSWERING THE CALL

However, as the writer of Hebrews said, “I have a vision of better things in your case” (see Hebrews 6:9). I believe with all my heart that some of you reading this newsletter will take this call seriously and will not simply put away this plea from the Holy Spirit. You understand that we

are living in a crisis moment, and are willing to get up and say, “I will go to the gate. I will intercede, and I will trust God for the strength to push back the plans of darkness to destroy our society!”

You and I have no excuse for remaining in spiritual poverty.

It is encouraging to remember that even though the Medes and Persians did take over Babylon, Daniel, because he was a righteous man, was technically transported into the next society and given much favor. He became one of the vessels God used to influence the king to sign a decree allowing God’s people to return to the Promised Land to rebuild the testimony of the Lord.

We have the power to call down heaven in order that His Name might be exalted in this generation.

And so I challenge you now to pray as you have never prayed before. You and I have no excuse for remaining in spiritual poverty. After all, everything was accomplished for us on the cross, and the Lord has left us here on this earth as His co-laborers to win a harvest of souls. He has given us the assurance that whatever we ask, believing, we shall receive.

That means we are not powerless; we do not have to merely sit as spectators, watching this godless parade flood our nation. No! We have power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy (see Luke 10:19). We have the power to stand at the gates and resist evil. We have the power to believe God for a spiritual awakening. We have the power to call down heaven in order that His Name might be exalted in this generation—and by God’s grace, that is what we will do!

Carter Conlon
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TIMES SQUARE CHURCH

Times Square Church was founded in 1987 by Pastor David Wilkerson, author of “The Cross and the Switchblade.” It is an interdenominational church located in the heart of New York City.

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WEEKLY SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Sunday	10:00AM	3:00PM	6:00PM
Tuesday	7:00PM	Prayer Service	
Friday	7:00PM	The Gate*	

*Youth and Young Adult Service

Live Webcast:
All our Sunday and Tuesday services can be watched live and replayed for seven days on our website.

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