

## **The Song of the Happy Dead Who Die**

Revelation 14:1-13a

September 16, 2001

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Last week we preached on Revelation 13. We preached that the Beast from the sea and the Beast from the land are idolatrous politics and religion. They are principalities and powers . . . evil that somehow inhabits and uses the systems and administrations of this world.

We preached that at the time of The Revelation the Beast from the sea took the form of the Roman Empire. And the Beast from the land took the form of the Roman Concilia (the counsel that enforced emperor worship) and also the form of the chief priests of Israel who crucified Christ.

These two Beasts,  
idolatrous politics and idolatrous religion,  
together are especially lethal.

Gary Wills wrote of the United States, "The first nation to separate Christianity from government produced perhaps the most religious nation on earth." That's a pretty fascinating statement, and perhaps it means that we have done better as a country battling those two Beasts than most any other country in history.

Last week we asked, "Where's the Beast today?" We talked about Hitler and the Nazis; we talked about Marx and Communism. America did very well, it seems to me, against those Beasts. The American government wielded the sword with a wisdom and restraint far greater than other countries. We didn't *occupy* their land.

The American Church didn't rely on power so much as preached the Gospel, it seems to me. And even the American economy blessed its enemies . . . with the Marshall Plan, for instance. And now Japan is our ally. Now those two Beasts of Nazism and Communism are mostly gone or dying.

Then last week we talked about Islam, Afghanistan, and Indonesia. We talked about the atrocities in the Sudan where, according to some accounts, 6 million have already been slaughtered, many of them crucified in the deserts of Sudan by Islamic fundamentalists.

The American government could probably *do* something if we weren't too concerned about the economics of oil. We could probably *do* something, but not as much as you think. Governments can keep people breathing a few more years in this fallen world, but governments cannot keep *anybody* out of Hell.

However, last week we preached that the American Church just might be able to do something immense and eternal . . . sacrificially love Sudan . . . maybe even some folks crucified in the deserts of Sudan with their brothers and sisters in the Church there . . . and things would change. For we hold the power of God, the romance of God, Jesus Christ and Him crucified. We conquer by being conquered in and with love.

Last Tuesday morning as I was getting dressed, I thought maybe all this talk of Revelation and the Beast and Islam was just too far away and too unreal. So I thought *this* week I'd just bring it home . . . talk about how we're not only to die as martyrs in places like Sudan, but in places like your marriage . . . and your budget . . . and what videos you do and don't bring home from your local Blockbuster. That is, every time you're obedient in faith to Jesus, you die to sin and you die to this world.

I thought maybe I'd bring it home, because The Revelation can just seem so . . . unreal, apocalyptic, distant, and irrelevant. That was Tuesday morning right before my sister Lydia called and said, "Peter and Susan, you ought to turn on your TV." When I turned it on, I saw what you saw.

One of the World Trade Center towers was billowing with smoke, a huge, gaping wound in the side. Then another airplane; then another tower on fire; then a report that one of the towers had fallen. Then, all at once, before my eyes on live TV, I saw the other tower crumble all the way to the ground. Then the picture that I don't think I'll ever forget:

There seated on the water was Lady Liberty,  
Holding her torch, facing the east,  
As if beckoning, "Give me your tired, your poor  
Your huddled masses longing to breathe free."

Lady Liberty, and behind her the great city, the United Nations, Wall Street . . . the great city billowing with fire and smoke, the World Trade Center fallen to the ground.

At that point The Revelation seemed *relevant*. And as I began to read it, it was so relevant it just about took my breath away. God is telling His story—telling *history*.

I need to tell you that I don't think I'd preach this sermon this morning if I were in New York. And it's going to be hard here, because *so many* stories are happening at once.

So many stories,  
so many emotions,  
but Jesus is *in* every story.

So if you came here this morning overwhelmed with sorrow over a particular story . . . someone you knew in New York, a child that will go to bed weeping tonight because he won't see his mom or dad again in this world, lovers that won't kiss again . . . if you're overwhelmed with sorrow, I need to remind you . . .

*Jesus is in New York.*

He's in New York right now, suffering and weeping and conquering. I praise Him that He loves New York and every fatherless child in that city far more than I am even able to begin to comprehend. And in every person He's telling *His* story of love for them. Each one of those stories is utterly unique, and I, Peter Hiett, *do not know it*.

He's also telling a story of governments, empires, principalities, and powers . . . an apocalypse (a revelation) of Jesus conquering the world. Since we're in Denver and not in New York, and since we're preaching through The Revelation, I think we need to start asking the question "What does it mean?" And if your sorrow has given way to anger, we had better ask, "What does it mean?"

This week I was angry. I really believe that the United States of America is the greatest nation that this world has ever seen.

I love my country.

There is no other country in which I would rather live.

I love my government and it's military.

I'll never forget a moment in Romania when my previously tortured and persecuted friend Peter Dugulescu rolled up his shirtsleeve and showed me his scars. He said, "Brother Peter, if it wasn't for pressure from your government on mine, I would be dead."

I love free market capitalism.

I think it is the most godly system. It's roots are in John Calvin, reformed theology, and the Bible. It takes the image of God seriously and allows us to love people and love God with our resources, like they did in Acts 2 when they sold everything and shared all that they had in common, not because they *had* to, but because they wanted to.

I love liberty.

I've spent time overseas, and I know that freedom comes with a price. I know this sounds strange to you if you haven't traveled much, but even my freedom to choose soft drinks at 7-11 is an ideal that has its roots in the Gospel of Christ and is paid for with blood.

I love America, and I love George Bush.

I'm thrilled that he called a Day of Prayer and quoted Scripture, and with

him I long for justice and judgment. “Make no mistake. The U.S. will hunt down and punish those responsible for these cowardly acts.”

So I felt *angry*. As one expert in terrorism put it, “This struck at the heart of America, our military power, and our economic power.” *Angry*. And I have wanted to *conquer* the *Beast*.

Revelation 13:7: *[The Beast] was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them.*

Revelation 13:10: *Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints.*

Sometimes Scripture is just too stinkin’ *relevant*.

We’d rather listen to illusion . . . to CNN. But where are you going to get your meaning this week? CNN or Jesus? They *do not* sing the same song.

Revelation 14:1: *Then I looked, and lo, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with him a hundred and forty-four thousand who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads.*

*And I heard a voice from heaven like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder; the voice I heard was like the sound of harpers playing on their harps, and they sing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and before the elders. No one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who had been redeemed from the earth.*

*It is these who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are chaste; it is these who follow the Lamb wherever he goes; these have been redeemed from mankind as first fruits for God and the Lamb, and in their mouth no lie was found, for they are spotless.*

They *conquer* by being conquered in love.

They conquer the Ancient Dragon while being conquered by his Beast.

They conquer by the “blood of the lamb and the word of their testimony, loving not their lives even unto death.”

They conquer by following the Lamb wherever He goes . . . He goes to a cross.

They conquer, and they are us.

We are like “first fruits redeemed from the earth” (James 1:18). We are the Church militant: 144,000 sealed servants of God, the Israel of God, 12 tribes x 12 divisions, each soldier devoted to war so figuratively celibate like the ancient

Israelites. (That's why Uriah would not sleep with Bathsheba.)

But most importantly, we are undefiled by idolatry. In Scripture idolatry is whoredom.

We are those in Hebrews 12 who “have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven, and to a judge who is God of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks more graciously than the blood of Abel.”

We conquer by the blood of the Lamb. We conquer with the power of the cross, the romance of God, even dying for our very enemies.

That is last week's sermon. And you “amen-ed” it. And it's Jesus in Matthew 5: “Love your enemies,” (and He showed us what love was) “and pray for those who persecute you.”

But my guess is many of you might prefer another scripture this morning. How about this one: “When you find the unfaithful strike off their head till you have made a great slaughter among them.” Do you like that one? It's Muhammad . . . the Koran, Sura 47.

You see, the Dragon is trying to get you to convert.

“Beware when fighting the dragon  
lest you become the dragon.”

Jesus is *also* trying to get you to convert . . . to get *everyone* to convert. Islam has made great inroads into our country in the last thirty years largely as a response to racism upon the children of black slaves, and also as a response to consumerism, pornography, and immorality—“American Economic Idolatries.”

But today Muslims are having an identity crisis, for just like at the cross, the Beast has exposed himself in violence. Muslims are asking, “Is this what Islam leads to?” Read the Koran; the answer is “yes.”

They are also asking another question while they're looking at us: “What does Christianity lead to?” If we retaliate in kind, I doubt they'll read the Bible. They'll just read us and say, “Well, it's just the same, old song.”

Philip Yancey faxed me a letter e-mailed to him last Wednesday. It's from a confused and frightened Pakistani man living in the States, questioning his faith. I'll quote just a portion:

As I have read the Koran recently and its explanations, and the life history of

prophet Muhammad, I have found out that the concept of political domination by force is very prevalent in it. And the terrible tragedy that happened yesterday in this country, to me it seems the logical outcome of the teachings which tell you it's ok to reply in kind, which says you are duty bound to enforce the will of God through warfare if necessary. I could be wrong here in my opinion but I think that's what happens when you try to enforce God's will in this earthly world rather than believing that your kingdom is not of this world but of the other world.

That sounds familiar. He then laments being forced to return to Pakistan where it's illegal to convert — people die for it there. But Lady Liberty is sending him back in a year. We *know* why. It's the economics of immigration. He continues:

I can't imagine going back to Pakistan. It would be just impossible. But how would I manage to stay here in this country? Do you think there is a way? Do you think I would find loving and open-minded friends in the church?

Technically he *could be* the Bride of Christ. The Bride is hidden in the people of the world. "Beware when fighting the dragon lest you become the dragon."

Thursday night at Small Group we were talking about all this, and my friend Mark got frustrated and said, "Well, Peter, what do you think Jesus would do if He was president?" That's a good question. And I *did* know. I said, "He'd resign." In John 6:15 the people (oppressed by the Roman Beast) come and try to take Jesus by force and make him president (king). And Jesus runs away.

It's not that Jesus could not conquer Rome with power . . . Satan had already tempted Him with that in the wilderness . . . it's that He so wanted to conquer *Romans* with *love* and crush the Dragon.

So He rode into Jerusalem, the great city,  
As a king in order to hang on a cross.

Let me rephrase the question. "What should the president do?" My honest answer is, "I don't know." I'm glad he names Jesus as his Lord. But I don't know.

I suppose he should "wield the sword out of faithful obedience to God," just like a policeman or a security guard. That's the role of government in Romans 13. It's the role of protecting people's physical well-being.

Presidents can do that, a bit. But a guy named George who loves Jesus . . . he can do *so much more*.

He can go on national TV and weep for New Yorkers and children in Afghanistan.

He can weep like Jesus wept over the city of Jerusalem before it

killed Him.

He can sing a different song.

I love our government; I just can't kid myself that it can preach the Gospel with guns, as if the kingdom were a kingdom of *this world*. In Revelation 14 the 144,000 unharmed, slaughtered saints of God—the army of God—sing a different song on Mount Zion.

Verse 6: *Then I saw another angel flying in midheaven, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and tongue and people; and he said with a loud voice, "Fear God and give him glory, for the hour of his judgment has come; and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the fountains of water."*

“The U.S. will hunt down and punish  
those responsible.”

Well, we may incarcerate and we may kill the perpetrators, but . . . “those responsible”? Have you read where Osama bin Laden got his training? — the CIA in Afghanistan, where they were teaching him to fight the Dragon, the Communist Beast.

Do you really want to trace financial responsibility? Do you know where he got his 300 million dollars? — From Americans buying gas. I'm just saying that vengeance is not so easy to dispense. And if we try, the quest for “those responsible” will take us right to our own living rooms and all the way back to a garden and a snake. And we will end up condemning our own mother—our species—in Hell. *Hell* . . . unless we hear the Gospel song, the “hour of His judgment.”

What you do with Jesus on *that* cross is *your judgment*.

John 12: “*Now is the judgment of this world.*” If you trust judgment to Christ and believe He bore your judgment *for* you, if you believe His forgiveness and likewise forgive, you will go to Heaven. If *not*, you can dispense justice, and you can bear judgment . . . you can go to Hell. Next verse . . .

*Another angel, a second, followed, saying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who made all nations drink the wine of her impure passion."*

*And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If any one worships the beast and its image, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, he also shall drink the wine of God's wrath, poured unmixed into the cup of his anger, and he shall be tormented with fire and sulphur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment goes*

*up for ever and ever; and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name."*

*Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.*

That's *you*. This isn't just about some weird, bizarre Israelite army somewhere off in the distant future; it's about *you*; it's about *us* . . . right now.

*And I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord henceforth."*

"Happy," "blessed" . . . they are the conquering, conquered saints singing with Jesus on Mount Zion. And it's not just a picture of "pie in the sky by and by"; heaven invades *now* in Christ by faith. "We have come to Mount Zion" (Hebrews 12). These are suffering saints dying with Christ even now.

So how can they sing like that when the world lies in ruin? Fearless, as if no terrorist act could ever terrorize them? As if there is nothing in this world that could harm them?

In verse 8 an angel flies through declaring, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great. She made all nations drink the wine of her impure passion." Her fall isn't described until chapter 18, but maybe she's already fallen in the hearts of these singing saints. So she no longer has any more power over them, "in this world, but not of this world."

It's strange . . . we Americans love to talk and write about the Beast and the Antichrist, yet we hardly ever mention the great Whore. She takes up more space in the book. She's another one of these "principalities and powers," like the Beast. In fact in chapter 17 we find she *sits* on the Beast or political power. "All the kings of the earth have fornicated with her, and all the peoples of the world are drunk with the wine of that fornication."

It becomes clear that the Whore, here in The Revelation, is the economy and culture of Rome. The angel tells John she is the "great city" which has dominion "over the kings of the earth." She is Rome but also Babylon and Egypt and Sodom. She is the global economy that thrives under an empire due to free trade. The kings of the earth *hate* her because of her power over them. But they're in bed with her, for they want her pleasures. She is world economy.

But an economy isn't necessarily corrupt. There is another economy in The Revelation as well, the economy of the New Jerusalem, which is the people of God and also the great Bride of Christ.

As a husband you are to give your life (your seed) to your bride in order to bear



fruit (life). But Satan tempts you to give your seed (your life) to whores in order to bear death. In Revelation the kings of the earth are playing the Whore rather than loving the Bride.

Men lust after whores, sleep with them, and then hate them and hate themselves.

Men lust after idols, worship them, and then destroy them and destroy themselves.

Men turn the economy into an idol, go to bed with it, become enslaved to it, and then they hate it and it kills them.

The Beast and the kings fornicate with the Whore, and then in Revelation 17:16 they hate the Whore . . . desolate the Whore . . . burn her with fire.

Satan's kingdom devours itself.

So the Whore of Babylon appears to be an idolatrous world economy. In Revelation she's pictured as the goddess Roma or Cybelle, seated on the waters and Seven Hills. Not the "Great Mother" goddess but the "mother of whores and earth's abominations," and the merchants (traders) of the earth have grown rich with the wealth of her wantonness.

If she were around today where would she be?  
We asked that about the Beast last week.

If she were around today . . .

I bet she'd *try* to be seated in the world's richest economy and most influential city.

I bet the nations would be united around her, addicted to her intoxications (dependent on her), yet deeply resenting her.

I bet she'd sell her goods with blasphemies, promising cars could save your soul and blue jeans could give you an identity.

I bet she'd be the leading producer and distributor of pornography worldwide—whoredom.

I bet she'd consume the vast majority of the world's resources, rich and fat while the world starves.

I bet she'd be defended by people that preach free trade (which is good), but they'd use their freedom as a license for evil. And even though freedom would be

the song, it would be idolatrous freedom, placed above God who is love. So human life would no longer be sacred, and it wouldn't surprise me if much of her wealth had been built on the backs of slaves (Revelation 18:13).

Sometimes I think we Americans are pretty stupid to worry about the Beast. The odds, *even now*, of your being killed in a terrorist attack are remarkably slim. But maybe we ought to be a bit on guard against the Whore and what she's up to. She's seductive, and in chapter 18 verse 4 the people of God are seduced by her.

If I was a Palestinian Arab Christian kid (which I'm not, but *if*), and I was living in the West Bank last Tuesday and reading The Revelation, I think I'd see Osama bin Laden as the Beast in bed with the Whore, dependent on the Whore for his 300 million, yet hating the Whore . . .

Then I wouldn't help but notice the Beast flew his planes right into the World Trade Center next to Wall Street and the United Nations . . .

I'd watch them fall and burn behind a statue of a woman holding a torch, which I'd learn was a gift from France, reminiscent of the Goddess of Reason from the French Revolution and Republic, and also patterned after the Mother Goddess by Augustus Bartholdi it's sculptor. (Seven horns are the seven seas and the torch symbolizes enlightenment).

I must confess that as a poor, oppressed, Palestinian kid, I'd be tempted to . . . *dance* . . . not because American children, mothers, and fathers lay dying—they would be abstractions to me at that point—but because the Whore had fallen. I'd be tempted to dance, kind of like you were tempted to dance at the end of the Persian Gulf War . . . not because Iraqi children, moms, and dads were burning in the desert—at that point they were abstractions to you—but because the Beast had been mortally wounded.

Listen closely: *I did not say* the Statue of Liberty is the Whore of Babylon. Idols only have power if you idolize them. So don't get hung up on trivialities. (If you want, we can take a fire hose, baptize her, and call her the Church holding the light of Christ.)

But understand this: Our statue of liberty is not a woman holding a torch of enlightenment beckoning "give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses." That is an idol. No government, no religious system, no economy can give you liberty. Our statue of liberty is a *cross*. And the Spirit cries, "Come to me all you who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest."

How can the saints sing  
when the world is in ruins? —  
They're free from this world  
and belong to another.

That's liberty; that's rest. And only God can give it to you.

And I *did not say* the World Trade Center or Wall Street or the people *in* the Trade Center were the Whore of Babylon. *Every one* of them is a priceless treasure for whom our Lord died on a cross in order to save them! Don't you slander my sermon.

And I *did not say* America is the Whore of Babylon. But I *will* say this: She *is* seduced by her and infected with her demons (Revelation 18:2).

That expert on terrorism said, "They've struck the heart of America . . . our military and our economy." If our military is our heart, say "hello" to the Beast! And if our economy is our heart, we have the heart of a whore. And if you turn your country into a whore, you will *hate* her. How dare you pledge allegiance to this [flag] before you pledge allegiance to this [cross]!

It's time to love America as we never have before.

And what is America?

To God she's dearly beloved people.

And what is her heart?

God wants to give her a new heart. May her heart be Christ.

And how will He give her that heart?

Not through government, not through some religious program, not through the economy, but through *you*—the saints—singing the new song on Mount Zion. No one else in Heaven and on earth can sing it but you.

Your life: the song of God's grace over you. Amazing grace: I was guilty as Hell and God bled for me.

So romance the Bride; sing the song to the Bride; tell her who she is. She's hidden in the people, the "New Jerusalem coming down." But you cannot romance the Bride, you cannot love your country, if you're in bed with the Whore.

At the fall of Babylon in chapter 18 a voice cries from Heaven . . . it's the voice of our Lord, and He cries, "Come out of her, my people. Come out." Do you get the picture? In Scripture when a man goes into a woman, she gets pregnant. The voice is crying, "Stop giving your life to the Whore. Stop giving your heart to the Whore."

Give your heart to the Bride and bear the fruit of the kingdom. Stop spending your life, your heart, your passions, your treasure on consumer idolatries! Stop consuming! Stop calling yourselves "consumers" and start calling yourselves "creators." Love the Bride in America, Sudan, Pakistan . . .

And husbands, love *your* bride. Forsake porn. Love your children, and give them time. Romance the Bride, sing her the song of the cross, because the Whore will suck you dry and leave your soul a desert. But the Bride will be a treasure forever stored in Heaven.

So how then do the saints on Mount Zion sing while the world lies in ruin? —

They belong to another world already, and it is invading this one. And no longer intoxicated by the Whore, they begin to see the beauty of the Bride. They begin to believe the furious love of the Bridegroom. Dead to this world and alive to another, they *change* this world. *They* are the ones who change the world . . . change a country.

“Consider yourself dead to sin [this world] and alive to God,” writes Paul in Romans 6:11. We are constantly being given up to death. Now listen one more time to this line from The Revelation: “Blessed [happy] are the dead who die in the Lord.”

It’s weird, but times like these force the issues.

On Tuesday afternoon I was racked with a million emotions but surprised and ashamed of one. For in the midst of sorrow and grief, compassion and mourning, I must admit something in me felt like singing. I think I was hearing a voice from another world . . . “Come out, Peter. Come out of her.”

I ached for victims; I mourned for my own investments in Babylon—my way of life. But The Revelation was *so entirely relevant*. It was so relevant that it was like this whole world was losing its grip on me and I was ready to go . . . *home*.

Tuesday night we came here to have church, and many of you were here. We had communion, body broken, blood shed, slain Lamb. The Lamb and the saints gathered on this mountain, and we *sang well*.

It’s time to love your country.

So sing your sing,  
The romance of God,  
The power of God unto salvation.

Let’s pray.

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“Lord God, we pray for everyone . . . I was going to say “victims,” but I don’t know if I can use that word. Lord, they were victims of another person’s

evil. We are *all* victims of other people's evil, yet, Lord, none of us is without sin.

"So, Lord God, we pray for everyone, especially children, Lord Jesus, who will weep tonight for their mothers and their fathers. Lord God, I pray that you would ride into their bedrooms on your white horse, you would grab hold of their hearts, and you would whisper to them that they are not fatherless.

"So we pray for victims in New York and in Afghanistan and Sudan and all over the world that you so furiously love.

"And, Lord Jesus, we pray for our president. I truly thank you for George Bush. Because, Lord Jesus, I'm honest when I say I *don't know* what he should do. I know, Lord Jesus, that you give the sword to government for the public good, and I know, Lord Jesus, that you called soldiers to yourself in your Gospel. But, Lord Jesus, I don't know exactly what they should do. Lord Jesus, I am so thankful for this, that the president calls out to you, and *you* know. So we pray, Lord Jesus, that he would hear your voice.

"And I pray, Lord Jesus, for every soldier, that *they* would hear Your voice. And, Lord Jesus, if they are called up to do battle with guns, guard their hearts from the Dragon. Even there, Lord Jesus, let them preach your Gospel, not with guns but with tears.

"And, Lord Jesus, we pray for our nation, we pray for our economy, we pray for our churches, and we thank you, Lord Jesus, for all those things. But, Lord God, we pray that you would cleanse us of the Evil One's demons, and that, Lord Jesus, our economy would be used to bless the peoples of the world, as it has been so many times in the past, Lord God, and is doing now. But, Lord Jesus, cleanse it of its evil. And cleanse us of our evil.

"In the silence now we lay our hearts before you, Lord Jesus. [Moment of silence.]

"Thank you for your grace, Lord Jesus. Thank you that you forgive every sin. Thank you that you wash us with your blood. Thank you that you send your Spirit to walk with us through the valley of the shadow of death. Thank you, Lord Jesus, for your incredible grace. And thank you, Lord Jesus, that you have called us to war—*your* war. In your name, Lord Jesus, we pray."

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You have come to Mount Zion, and Jesus the Lamb—the slaughtered Lamb—is in our midst. And in His name I call you to "jihad"—holy war, but not against any man, not against any woman, not against any government, not against any

economy. They can *all* be redeemed!

I call you to war against the Dragon and his demons. There is *right now* an immeasurable greatness of power in you. So right now on Mount Zion sing your song, and you crush the head of that Ancient Serpent.

In Jesus' name, amen.

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[Benediction]

The trumpets are sounding, and He is coming. In Matthew 26 Jesus stood before the religious Beast Caiaphas, who was about to turn Him over to the political Beast Pilate. As I see it, He looked Caiaphas in the eye and said, "Henceforth you will see the Son of man seated at the right hand of power and coming on the clouds of heaven." *Henceforth*. He *has* been coming, and He *is* coming. The empires of Rome, Babylon, Egypt, and Sodom are fallen long ago, and the kingdom is growing.

I pray that America will only grow stronger, but my hope is in *Him*. He *is* coming; He *is* conquering. You watch . . . it's happening even now. His kingdom is growing all over this country and all over this world. So let's not ask if God's on *our* side, let's make sure we're on *His* side.

Whatever you do, do *not* be afraid. A terrorist act has *no power* if you're not terrorized! You're the saints on Mount Zion! If you've come to His cross, nothing can harm you! You already belong to another world. And you are in this world to be a blessing to those who have not yet come home. So sing your song with great cheer. For "in this world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

In Jesus' name, amen.

### Further Reading

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; never be conceited. Repay no one evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends upon you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God; for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." No, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore he who resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of him who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain; he is the servant of God to execute his wrath on the wrongdoer.

-Romans 12:14-13:4

We must remember these religions are not that different. Islam, Christianity, and Judaism all believe in the God of love."

-Tom Clancy, on some news show the day of the attack

When ye encounter the infidels, strike off their heads till ye have made a great slaughter among them, and *of the rest* make fast the fetters. . . . O Prophet! make war on the infidels and hypocrites, and deal rigorously with them. Hell shall be their abode! and wretched the passage to it!

-Muhammad, The Koran (Sura XLVII and LXVI)

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. . . ."

-Jesus, The Bible (Matthew 5:43-45)

Beware when fighting the dragon lest you become the dragon.

-Friedrich Nietzsche

If there is any entity to which ultimate loyalty is due, it is the nation state. . . . The charge of blasphemy, if it is ever made, is treated as a quaint anachronism; but the charge of treason, of placing another loyalty above that to the nation state, is treated as the unforgivable crime. The nation state has taken the place of God.

-Stanley Hauerwas and William H. Willimon

But Jesus called them to him and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave; even as the Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

-Matthew 20:25-28

Sir, your supreme weapon is killing. My supreme weapon is dying.

-Joseph Tson

Then I looked, and lo, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with him a hundred and forty-four thousand who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder; the voice I heard was like the sound of harpers playing on their harps, and they sing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and before the elders. No one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who had been redeemed from the earth. It is these who have not defiled themselves with women, for they

are chaste; it is these who follow the Lamb wherever he goes; these have been redeemed from mankind as first fruits for God and the Lamb . . . .

-Revelation 14:1-4

Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures.

-James 1:18

Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees . . . . But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven, and to a judge who is God of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks more graciously than the blood of Abel.

-Hebrews 12:12, 22-24

Another angel, a second, followed, saying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who made all nations drink the wine of her impure passion." . . . And he said to me, "The waters that you saw, where the harlot is seated, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues. And the ten horns that you saw, they and the beast will hate the harlot; they will make her desolate and naked, and devour her flesh and burn her up with fire, for God has put it into their hearts to carry out his purpose by being of one mind and giving over their royal power to the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled. And the woman that you saw is the great city which has dominion over the kings of the earth." After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority; and the earth was made bright with his splendor. And he called out with a mighty voice, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! It has become a dwelling place of demons, a haunt of every foul spirit, a haunt of every foul and hateful bird; for all nations have drunk the wine of her impure passion, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have grown rich with the wealth of her wantonness." Then I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you take part in her sins, lest you share in her plagues . . . ."

-Revelation 14:8, 17:15-18:4

He needs not fear confiscation, who has nothing to lose; nor banishment, to whom heaven is his country; nor torments, when his body can be destroyed at one blow; nor death, which is the only way to set him at liberty from sin and sorrow.

-Eusebius to Emperor Valens (4<sup>th</sup> century A.D.)

It is said that Rabbi Akiva, while his body was tortured by red hot irons for his faith, was jubilant: "Only now I can finally love God with all my heart, for none of the things of this world distract my attention from it any longer!"

-Richard Wurmbrand

Moderate strength is shown in violence, supreme strength is shown in levity.

-G. K. Chesterton

But when her owners saw that their hope of gain was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the market place before the rulers; and when they had brought them to the magistrates they said, "These men are Jews and they are disturbing our city. They advocate customs which it is not lawful for us Romans to accept or practice." The crowd joined in attacking them; and the magistrates tore the garments off them and gave orders to beat them with rods. And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, charging the jailer to keep them safely. Having received this charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them . . . .

-Acts 16:19-25

Our whole Roman world had gone dead in its heart because it feared tragedy, took flight from suffering, and abhorred failure. In fear of tragedy we worshiped power. In fear of suffering, we worshiped security.



During the rising splendor of our thousand years, we had grown cruel, practical, and sterile. We did win the whole world, but in the process, we lost our souls.

-St. Ambrose

Why do the nations conspire, and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and his anointed, saying, "Let us burst their bonds asunder, and cast their cords from us." He who sits in the heavens laughs; the LORD has them in derision. Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, "I have set my king on Zion, my holy hill." I will tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to me, "You are my son, today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, with trembling kiss his feet, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way; for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

-Psalm 2