

Glenpool Church of Christ

God Shapes the Nations

“Like the potter and the clay.” It is a metaphor as common in Christian speech as almost any other. It is derived from a little scene in Jeremiah 18:1-6. Typically, we consider this passage as a metaphor for the shaping of an individual human life in the hands of our Creator. However, the context is about nations and history more than individual persons. The context makes this evident:

“If at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom, that I will pluck up and break down and destroy it, and if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I intended to do to it. And if at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom that I will build and plant it, and if it does evil in my sight, not listening to my voice, then I will relent of the good that I had intended to do to it. Now, therefore, say to the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem: ‘Thus says the LORD, Behold, I am shaping disaster against you and devising a plan against you. Return, every one from his evil way, and amend your ways and your deeds.’” (Jeremiah 18:7-11)

What are the implications of this passage?

God Shapes the Nations. God is not a distant observer of human history. The story of nations and kingdoms has been and continues to be shaped by the Almighty. He may declare that a nation is to be built up, or he may decide to pull it down. Empires do not overthrow God. Empires are overthrown by God. Nations may decide how they wish to view God, but never how they stand beneath God. No nation is exempt from God's dominion. Egypt learned that the Hebrews were God's nation, not Pharaoh's slaves. When Israel approached Canaan, they were told to remember this lesson (Deut. 7:17-19). Centuries later, mighty Assyria marched against Jerusalem after crushing Syria and Israel to the north. However, God explained to Hezekiah that all that had happened had been at God's direction, as would be the eventual Assyrian retreat (2 Kings 19:25-29). In the days of the exile, God once again asserted himself as the God of the nations, saying through Isaiah that Cyrus of Persia was “his anointed ... whose right hand I have grasped, to subdue nations and to loose the belts of kings” (Isaiah 45:1). God claims to have shaped the stories of many nations, including the Cushites, the Philistines, and the Syrians (Amos 9:7). Our Lord likewise explained to a Roman governor that he had no power of his own except what “had been given you from above” (John 19:11).

Humans Do Not Shape Nations. If God shapes the nations, then I do not. All political campaigns revolve around the assertion this particular person must be elected so

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September 4, 2016

ELDERS

Bobby Hill

Bill Path

Keith Riggs

David Tenison

PULPIT MINISTER

Benjamin Williams

YOUTH INTERN

Haden Brill

PRISON MINISTER

Bill Hamrick

DEACONS

James Hamilton,

WORSHIP

Thomas Hallsted,

FINANCE

Todd Khoury

BUILDING & GROUNDS

Johnny Riggs,

MEMBER SERVICES

Bruce Rothell,

MISSIONS

Zac Tenison,

YOUNG FAMILIES

Edwin Whittlesey,

ADMINISTRATION

SECRETARY

Karen Brown

Belong. Learn. Serve.

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that he or she can take the nation “Forward” or “Make America Great Again.” All such claims and promises amount to less than anyone would ever believe. Faith may move mountains, but emperors do not. We ought instead to remember the old tale of King Canute (Cnut), who ruled over England, Denmark, and Norway:

In addition to the many wars in which he was most particularly illustrious, he performed three fine and magnificent deeds. ... When he was at the height of his ascendancy, he ordered his chair to be placed on the sea-shore as the tide was coming in. Then he said to the rising tide, “You are subject to me, as the land on which I am sitting is mine, and no one has resisted my overlordship with impunity. I command you, therefore, not to rise on to my land, nor to presume to wet the clothing or limbs of your master.” But the sea came up as usual, and disrespectfully drenched the king’s feet and shins. So jumping back, the king cried, “Let all the world know that the power of kings is empty and worthless, and there is no king worthy of the name save Him by whose will heaven, earth and sea obey eternal laws.” Thereafter King Cnut never wore the golden crown on his neck, but placed it on the image of the crucified Lord, in eternal praise of God the great king. By whose mercy may the soul of King Cnut enjoy rest.

If God shapes the nations, then I do not, nor does any king or candidate.

If God shapes the nations, then my anxiety over our national future is wasted. A Christian would be a fool to have no concern for the nation and its moral standing. Paul advocates prayer as a proper response to such concern (1 Timothy 2:1-2). However, many of us take this to an unhealthy extreme. We fear so much, ignoring the Scripture's most common command: “Fear not.” We desperately need to recalibrate both our expectations and concerns. The ascendancy of an unworthy candidate or party and the downfall of our republic are not the worst things that could happen in this election cycle. Which brings us to ...

Faithfulness. The worst thing that could happen in this or any period of history is that the people of God would prove faithless. In Jeremiah's time, God's people are told that the nation is in God's hand, but their decision to obey his voice was their own. “Return, every one from his evil way, and amend your ways and your deeds.” In the days of Christian persecution, the church was reminded that faithfulness was only concern of God's people (Revelation 2:20). Today, our task remains the same. Like King Canute, we cannot roll back tides, but we can decide who we recognize as Lord of tides and nations.

by Benjamin J. Williams

This is an abridged version of the full article available at www.benpreachin.com



Monday, Sept 5

Labor Day—the office will be closed

Sunday, Sept 11

Leadership meeting at 3:00

Young Families dinner after evening services

Sunday, Sept 25

Friends and Family Day

IN NEED OF OUR PRAYERS

- There have been no ill reported to the office.
- **Service men and women:** Jenna Sullivan; Jacob Littlebear;

Long Term Prayer List: Eric Vaughan (heart surgery); Henry Lack (dizziness); Stephanie White (pain); Dolores Scherman; Steven Cornejo; Alan Trimble (ALS); Wayne Morgan; Rosalie O'Neal (kidneys); Ruth Henry;

MONDAY NIGHT FOR THE MASTER

Monday Night for the Master will resume meeting on Monday, Sept 12th. If you have a project in mind that might be done on these evenings, email or contact the office and we will see if it could be added to the list of projects.

MOVING ON UP

Today is the Sunday for our young people to promote to their new classes.

Some of the ages/grades may be moving to a different area—Just double check the signs.

MOVING ON UP

We are happy to pass on the news that Larry, Beverly, and grandson Ryder Killebrew are placing their membership with this congregation. They are Sarah Hallsted's parents. Welcome to the Glenpool Church of Christ!

YOUTH ACOMPLISHMENTS

- ◇ **Lily Hallsted** knows the names of Adam & Eve's family.
- ◇ **Carson Hallsted** knows the names of Adam & Eve's family.
Good work !

LEADERSHIP MEETING

The monthly leadership meeting is scheduled for Sunday, Sept 11th at 3:00. This is for the elders, deacons, and ministers.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT BOOK

If you are wanting a copy of *Simply Christian* for Ben's Wednesday night class down the hall but have not paid for one yet, please speak with Ben as soon as possible.

CHANGE CANS FOR HOPE HARBOR



Please start returning your change cans for Hope Harbor. They need to be returned by Sunday, Sept 4th. There are extra cans in the foyer if you wish to take one and begin filling it up for next year.

Hope Harbor is looking for items for their silent auction and more valuable items for the live bidding auction at their Open House, Sept 24. Their phone number is 918-343-0003 if you would like to contact them.

UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

Carson Talley, Sept 4	Meagan Russell, Sept 9	Daniel Marquez, Sept 12
Syble Stone, Sept 4 (95 yrs)	Spencer & Steph Yeager, Sept 10	Bob Simmons, Sept 12
Bob & Virginia Burrus, Sept 4 (62 years)	Sloan Bain, Sept 10	David & Betty Shelby, Sept 12
Jennifer Wetzal, Sept 7	Meghan Causby, Sept 11	Richard Senn, Sept 12
	Peyton McCafferty, Sept 12	Jeff Bullinger, Sept 13

SUNDAY AM WORSHIP

Song Leader	Edwin Whittlesey
Opening Prayer	Matt Caldwell
Table	1. Wes Wadkins 2. Steve Rucquoy 3. James Hamilton 4. Darrel Kent 5. Jeff Bullinger 6. Hayden Bullinger
Scripture Reading	Zac Caldwell
Closing Prayer	Jerry Morgan

SUNDAY PM DEVOTIONAL

Song Leader	Edwin Whittlesey
Opening Prayer	David Tenison
Table	1. James Hamilton 2. Steve Rucquoy
Closing Prayer	Zac Tenison

WEDNESDAY DEVOTIONAL

Song Leader	Joseph Whittlesey
Opening Prayer	Randy Brown
Devotional	Benjamin Williams
Closing Prayer	Jerry Morgan

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Sunday Contribution	\$4,318
Budget	\$4,625
Over Budget	\$29

LAST WEEK'S ATTENDANCE

Sunday Bible Classes	147
Sunday AM Worship	194
Sunday PM Worship	95
Wednesday Bible Classes	74

COMMUNION PREPARATION

9/4	Marcia Riggs
9/11	Dana Kent
9/18	Earline Lierly
9/25	Cathy Burcham

NURSERY ATTENDANTS

9/4	Saundra & Nancy
9/11	Stephanie & Mackayla
9/18	Tonya & Toni
9/25	Debbie & Autumn

SUNDAY MORNING

Bible Classes / 9:30 am
 Worship / 10:30 am

SUNDAY EVENING

Devotional & Classes / 5:00 pm
WEDNESDAY
 Devotional & Classes / 7:00 pm

“The Power of Prayer”

James 5:16
 Haden Brill

Sunday Evening Devo:

Psalm 104 (James Hamilton)

Sunday Evening Class:

Presentation (Bobby Hill)