

## Light and Life

## Christianity And Tyranny

Many Christians fear living under a tyrannical government. There is certainly cause for concern in such circumstances! Historically, tyrannical governments have not been kind to God's people. The Hebrew author described those who "were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others had trials of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented" (Heb. 11:35-38).

Aquila and Priscilla were displaced from their homes because Rome had kicked the Jews out (Ac.18:2). John the Baptist was beheaded for preaching against Herod's adultery (Mt. 14). James was beheaded (Ac. 12:2) and the same was intended for Peter as a political move to keep unbelieving Jews happy.

Despite this persecution from tyrannical governments, God was still in control and His kingdom still grew. Daniel prophesied, "the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever" (2:44). No matter what powers have attempted to suppress the truth of God's kingdom, they have never been successful!

In fact, God used these persecutions to spread His message. Those who have tried to oppose God have actually been of great use to Him. He often used wicked nations to punish Israel, and said His judgment was to purify His people (Isa. 1:25). In the beginning of the church, the gospel spread faster because people were scattered by persecution (Ac. 8:4)!

No matter what our political situation, let us always use it to God's glory!

*- Sam Bunyard*

## Another Perspective

## Psalm 1 – The Two Paths

Moses set before the Israelites two paths in Deuteronomy 30:15-20 – life and death. Jeremiah preached a similar message to the Jews (21:8-10). Jesus taught the same principle in his sermon on the mountain (Mt 7:13-14) – life and destruction. The Psalmist wrote about the righteous and the wicked – two paths, two ways. The righteous are blessed, grounded, and fruitful. The wicked travel down a different path and will be driven away like the chaff!

What can we learn about the righteous from Psalm 1 that will help us stay on the path to life? The righteous spend time with God and seek His counsel. The righteous take pleasure in God's law. He meditates on God's revelation day and night! They understand that life and blessing await those who walk in the knowledge and fear of God's greatness, His mercy and steadfast love. Seeking to know all they can about God keeps the righteous on the path that leads to life. By knowing God's law, he avoids the path of the wicked! His roots are safely and securely planted and grounded in the word of God.

The wicked are just the opposite. They do not have a desire to truly know God. They are not grounded in God's word. In their ignorance they are easily driven away by the wind like chaff. The end of their path is death. They will not stand in the judgement, but instead, they will perish.

Jeremiah reminds us that any path which is not God's path has no profit. God promised that the righteous will receive every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places! Jesus promised eternal life to the righteous who follow the narrow way. Only two paths are before us. One path leads to destruction and death, while God's path leads to life and spiritual prosperity. The choice is ours alone! We must choose wisely because our eternal destination awaits at the end of each path. Life, or death? What will you choose today?

*- Lucas Griggs*

## ASSEMBLY TIMES

### Sunday

Morning Bible Class 9:30  
Morning Assembly 10:30  
Evening Assembly 5:00

### Wednesday

Evening Bible Class 6:30

Pray “for kings and  
all who are in high  
positions, that we  
may lead a peaceful  
and quiet life”

1Ti 2:1-2

## Downtown Church of Christ

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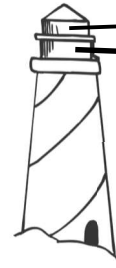
When there is no wind,  
row (Ex 4:10-12).

## ELDERS:

Otis Hardin  
Perry Johnson  
Ken Parker  
Alan Revier  
GW Walsh

## DEACONS:

TJ Burleson  
Scott Hale  
Jason Hill  
Chris Johnson  
Brock McKeel  
Randy Potter  
Tim Roberts  
Randy Shell



# DOWNTOWN GOSPEL BEACON

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## Where There is No Vision

“Where there is no vision, the people perish...” (Pr 29:18 KJV).

Few passages have been so abused through the years as this one. Using the term “vision” in its popular sense (as a company CEO who has a ‘vision’ for the organization), an eldership or a dynamic preacher may have a ‘vision’ for the church – without regard to whether their ‘vision’ is scriptural. Many applaud such ‘visionaries’. (Of course, there is a place for ‘big picture’ thinking – but only within God’s framework.)

Many modern translations clarify this verse: “Where there is no revelation...” (NKJ), “no prophetic

vision” (ESV), “without revelation” (CSB), etc. It has nothing to do with grand schemes. It has everything to do with heeding God’s Word!

We could simply read the rest of the verse (in almost any translation) to get the point: “but he that keepeth the law, happy is he” (KJV), “blessed is he who keeps the law” (ESV), and “one who follows divine instruction will be happy” (CSB). The ‘vision’, in context, is God’s divine revelation, and the contrast is powerful – if we do not pay attention to God’s Word (if there is no prophetic vision), we will perish. Now **there’s** a ‘vision’ we can all get behind!

- *WKing*

## FAMILY NEWS

### PRAYER LIST –

*Preachers we support:* Japan, Philippines, Vietnam, Canada, Mexico, Peru, & U.S.

*Sick:* KFletcher, Swims, JMarshall, RStarr, MiBader, KHeiligenthal, JTerrell

*Shut-ins:* Billie Pennington, Shirley Cole, Susan Wiese, Virgil Carter

*Military:* Kyler Sullins, Sean Potter

**CLASSES** – The book of Revelation? Men’s study in Genesis? Ladies’ study in Proverbs? These classes (& more) available in addition to regular class times.

**SENTENCE SERMON** – “Pettiness is the tendency of people without large purposes.” – George Will