

TURNING FROM GOD: PRELUDE TO DESTRUCTION

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If you have been paying attention to the news lately, you have noticed that the culture war is expressing itself mightily in the United States Senate. The liberals' there want to block some of President Bush's appointments to the Federal bench. They deem some of his nominees too conservative. The primary problem seems to be that these nominees are openly religious. The left in this country is afraid that something will happen to their beloved right to abort unborn children should a judge with principles informed by Judeo-Christians heritage ascend to the Supreme Court. It looks like the President is about determined to see that justice happens and I hope he is successful.

An aspect of this conflict is that liberals in the Senate are using a form of filibuster rule to keep from having an up or down vote on these judges once they are reported out of the proper committee. Our neighbor in Tennessee, Bill Frist, is attempting to attend to the matter but it remains to be seen what will occur. Aside from the particulars, there is another amazing facet to this discussion and that is the idea that a firmly religious person is somehow not fit for service in our Federal courts. Now, the fact is one can be firmly atheistic and be OK, one can be firmly relativistic and be just fine, but one may not be firmly committed to the principles of God's Book. Nope, that won't do. Those on the "throw God all the way out of public life" side of this battle would do well to remember what happened to folks who turned away from God.

The story is as old as can be. Very early in the game of humanity folks turned away from God and everybody got perilously wet as a result (Genesis 6, etc.). You would think we would learn but we don't. After God chose a people to bless especially (and He did), these very people turned away from Him. Hebrews 3 speaks of their rebellion as they hardened their hearts in the day of trial in the wilderness (Hebrews 3:8). The results of their foolishness they wandered forty years. The fifth chapter of Isaiah speaks of their treachery. Even after God had provided everything they needed (as a good husbandman does a vineyard) they rejected his counsel and turned to unrighteousness.

Folks in our day, the day of the New Covenant, are scarcely any better. Paul warned Timothy of those who would not put up with sound doctrine but *"...according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they heap up for themselves teachers, and they shall turn their ears away from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables"* (2 Timothy 4:3-4 NKJV). Now we know that the primary application of this passage has to do with doctrinal fidelity in the church. We are able to stay true to the pattern revealed in God's Book (1 Timothy 1:3-11) and we are expected to do so. But I wish to suggest that the principles in the passage have application in a less spiritual but broader context.

It is undeniable to the honest mind that the culture of the western world and particularly of the United States is the most free and beneficial to its constituents. Our society is far from faultless, both historically and in the present, but concerning the rights and interests of the individual, it is the best on the planet. Now, it did not get this way accidentally. In those situations wherein the west is most beneficial to its inhabitants, it is because it still follows the principles revealed in God's Book. When a man is free to practice his own business, art, leisure and most importantly, his religion, the culture in which he is a participant benefits.

Our nation has turned away from God, but not fully. It is an altogether reasonable desire to see that religious people are not disqualified from serving this country as a representative, a President or a judge. If we allow only those who have no regard for Biblical principle to rule us, we can do nothing but turn more firmly away from the Lord. And as the Bible and history have told us, He does not take well to such treatment.