

## Look Unto Father Abraham

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Like ancient Israel, America is polluted with innocent blood (Numbers 35:33-34). Our cities are also filled with brutal murderers flouting God's law (Deuteronomy 30:19, Isaiah 1:21). Jerusalem families were decimated by fiery, infant sacrifice (Jeremiah 32:35) and here families are ravaged by legalized abortions. Jewish families were impoverished by ruinous inflation (Isaiah 1:22), being reiterated in America's pursuit of the "almighty dollar." Thankfully, Isaiah has a remedy for discouraged saints. "Ye that seek the LORD: look unto the rock whence ye are hewn . . . Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you: for I called him alone, and blessed him . . . (Isaiah 51:1-2).

John the Baptist, Christ's "advance man," denounced Jews as a "generation of vipers," and called them to repent of their sins. He warned them against their excuse, "We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham" (Luke 3:7-8). To hostile Jews who argued that Abraham was their father, Jesus retorted, "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, . . . [I] heard of God: this did not Abraham" (John 8:39-40). When Zacchaeus offered restitution for his tax extortion, Jesus declared, "This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:9).

Like our Hebrew ancestors, Christians, both Gentile and Jew, were early identified by Paul as Abraham's children (Romans 4:1-3). This fulfilled Christ's prophecy regarding Gentile Christians (Matthew 8:11-12). Peter extends Isaiah's call to godly Christian women. He urges them, likened to Sarah, to be subject to their husbands trusting God fearlessly (I Peter 3:5-6). Like faithful Jews in old Jerusalem (Isaiah 1:23), we contend "against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Ephesians 6:12). God's people are locked into a see-saw battle for our cities. We, like Abraham, look "for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:10).

Early Christians were mostly slaves with few family ties. Yet God used those urban working stiff to turn the Roman world "upside down" (Acts 17:6), actually "right side up" in terms of God's law. Yet, in America we are losing the fight for life of the unborn and infirm. *De facto* atheism also threatens our child survivors in public schools, along with destructive immorality, drugs and despair, evidenced by high teen mortality. American families are further bruised by *Big Brother* government's terminal taxation. Besides their failure to ban partial birth abortions, our representatives appear powerless to check the rising power of the military industrial complex. The result has been a continuing series wars presciently profiled in Orwell's *1984*.

God's people desperately need to reclaim Isaiah's electrifying vision of Abraham. "By faith Abraham, . . . offered up Isaac . . . [believing God] was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure" Hebrews 11:17-19). Therefore, "Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you!"

But how, in practice, can we reclaim our lost patriarchal heritage? We live in society whose education and arenas of public discourse are dominated by a secular, politicized agenda. Early Christians were largely unlettered, yet they called the Jewish elite to account for the crucifixion of Jesus, despite their orders to STOP (Acts 5:27-33). Some were martyred, as was Stephen, for persisting in their witness for life (Acts 7:51-60). Others rescued infants doomed by Roman infanticide and reared them as Christians, utilizing their local tithe-funded community resources.<sup>1</sup> Their determined avoidance of a stingy refusal to tithe helped sustain their remarkable prolife ministries.

Early Christians also managed to avoid making up joy-stealing Sabbath rules that Jesus denounced, since "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath:" (Mark 2:27). Sadly, our Puritan Fathers stumbled here, bequeathing *blue laws* for keeping the Christian Sabbath. These have fallen into disuse, partly because it is impossible, really to legislate "delight" into our Sabbath experience, in keeping with Isaiah's exhortation (Isaiah 58:13). Further, *blue laws* hindered evangelism of workers in industries, such as iron and steel, whose

blast furnaces must be operated 24/7.

However, early Christians gathered on Sunday to celebrate the gospel (I Corinthians 15:1-8) in worship of Christ who freed them from fear of death (Hebrews 2:15). These *freed* slaves, surrounded by a “cloud of witnesses,” including Father Abraham, were moved to “run with patience the race” in their respective slave jobs “Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith” (Hebrews 12:1-4). May Sunday become for us all a delightful day of rest, wherein we also are energized to be “stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord” (I Corinthians 15:58).

1. Will Durant, *The Story of Civilization, Vol. 3, Caesar and Christ*, MJF Books, New York, 1944, p. 598.