

America: Lest We Forget

I. A Christian Worldview Shaped the USA

II. We Have Forgotten God

A. Lessons from History

Over half a century ago, while I was still a child, I recall hearing a number of older people offer the following explanation for the great disasters that had befallen Russia: **"Men have forgotten God; that's why all this has happened."** Since then I have spent will nigh 50 years working on the history of our revolution; in the process I have read hundreds of books, collected hundreds of personal testimonies and have already contributed eight volumes of my own toward the effort of clearing away the rubble left by the upheaval. But if I were asked today to formulate as concisely as possible the main cause of the ruinous revolution that swallowed some 60 million of our people, I could not put it more accurately than to repeat: **"men have forgotten God; that is why all this happened."**

"Our life consists not in the pursuit of material success but in the quest for worthy spiritual growth. Our entire earthly existence is but a transitional stage in the movement toward something higher, and we must not stumble and fall, nor must we linger fruitlessly on one rung of the ladder. Material laws alone do not explain our life or give it direction. The laws of physics and physiology will never reveal the indisputable manner in which the Creator constantly, day in and day out, participates in the life of each of us, unfailingly granting us the energy of existence; when this assistance leaves us, we die. And in the life of our entire planet, the Divine Spirit surely moves with no less force: this we must grasp in our dark and terrible hour." — Alexander Solzhenitsyn, "The Templeton Address, 1983"

B. God's Warning

Deuteronomy 4:9 (NIV®)

Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them.

Deuteronomy 6:10-15 (NIV®)

¹⁰ When the LORD your God brings you into the land he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you—a land with large, flourishing cities you did not build, ¹¹ houses filled with all kinds of good things you did not provide, wells you did not dig, and vineyards and olive groves you did not plant—then when you eat and are satisfied, ¹² **be careful that you do not forget the LORD**, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. ¹³ Fear the LORD your God, serve him only and take your oaths in his name. ¹⁴ Do not follow other gods, the gods of the peoples around you; ¹⁵ for the LORD your God, who is among you, is a jealous God and his anger will burn against you, and he will destroy you from the face of the land.

C. The Instructions

Deuteronomy 5:6-21 (NIV®)

⁶ "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. ⁷ "You shall have no other gods before me. ⁸ "You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven



above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. ⁹ You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, ¹⁰ but showing love to a thousand [generations] of those who love me and keep my commandments. ¹¹ "You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name. ¹² "Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy, as the LORD your God has commanded you. ¹³ Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁴ but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your ox, your donkey or any of your animals, nor the alien within your gates, so that your manservant and maidservant may rest, as you do. ¹⁵ Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the LORD your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the LORD your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day. ¹⁶ "Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you, so that you may live long and that it may go well with you in the land the LORD your God is giving you. ¹⁷ "You shall not murder. ¹⁸ "You shall not commit adultery. ¹⁹ "You shall not steal. ²⁰ "You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor. ²¹ "You shall not covet your neighbor's wife. You shall not set your desire on your neighbor's house or land, his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor."

1. You shall have no other gods before me.
2. You shall not make for yourself an idol.
3. You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.
4. Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.
5. Honor your father and your mother.
6. You shall not murder.
7. You shall not commit adultery.
8. You shall not steal.
9. You shall not give false testimony against neighbor.
10. You shall not covet

Matthew 5:17 (NIV®)

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.

Romans 10:4 (NASB®)

For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

III. Wheat & Tares

Matthew 13:36-43 (NIV®)

³⁶ Then he left the crowd and went into the house. His disciples came to him and said, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field." ³⁷ He answered, "The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. ³⁸ The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, ³⁹ and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels. ⁴⁰ "As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. ⁴¹ The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. ⁴² They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.



⁴³ Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

IV. Solomon's Folly (Our Challenges Are Not New)

Ecclesiastes 1:1-9 (NIV®)

¹ The words of the Teacher, son of David, king in Jerusalem:

² "Meaningless! Meaningless!" says the Teacher. "Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless."

³ What does man gain from all his labor at which he toils **under the sun**?

⁴ Generations come and generations go, but the earth remains forever.

⁵ The sun rises and the sun sets, and hurries back to where it rises.

⁶ The wind blows to the south and turns to the north; round and round it goes, ever returning on its course.

⁷ All streams flow into the sea, yet the sea is never full. To the place the streams come from, there they return again.

⁸ All things are wearisome, more than one can say. The eye never has enough of seeing, nor the ear its fill of hearing.

⁹ What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; **there is nothing new under the sun.**

Ecclesiastes 2:10-11 (NIV®)

¹⁰ I denied myself nothing my eyes desired; I refused my heart no pleasure. My heart took delight in all my work, and this was the reward for all my labor. ¹¹ Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; **nothing was gained under the sun.**

Psalms 84:10 (NIV®)

Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere; I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked.

V. Essential Things

Prayer

Heavenly Father, You are the author of life and the sustainer of all things. Your light illumines our path and dispels the darkness before us. Awaken Your people in this generation. Confirm Your Word in our midst with great demonstrations of Your power. May our hearts be turned to You in humility and great reverence. Open doors of opportunity before us and grant us the wisdom, boldness, and courage to move through them. Comfort Your people. Strengthen the weary, deliver the oppressed, and lead us forward. May the name of Jesus be exalted through the whole earth. Amen.