

The Sword & The Plow

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Are the Jews Still the Elect of God?

Still Chosen?

“No man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” Jn. 14:6

I am always astonished when I encounter Christians who harbor the idea that the Jews are still God’s chosen people. It is a common belief among many Christians that there is a natural affinity between Jews and Christians; that we are somehow serving the same God and are equally acceptable to him. Many Christians even believe that Christians are obligated to support the Jews as a nation and people; that America’s foreign policy must be pro-Israel, and that in “blessing them” we will in turn be blessed by God.¹ When I pointed out to someone recently that God destroyed Jerusalem in A.D. 70 in vengeance for

¹ If anything, I am of the opposite opinion and that there is a natural antagonism between the gospel and Judaism, and that in aligning ourselves with a nation or religion that denies Christ we are in courting apostasy and in danger of divine wrath.

the Jews’ murder of Christ, rejection of the gospel, and persecution of the church, and that they therefore could not still be God’s chosen people, I was called “anti-Semitic.” Thus, it would seem there is a need to see what the Bible says about the Jews and whether they are still the elect of God.

God’s Purpose in History

It is important at the outset to establish the fact that whatever God does in history it is always for the express purpose of saving mankind. When we say “mankind” we do not mean “all men,” for it is clear that some men will refuse God’s offer of grace and salvation. Rather, by saving mankind we mean providing the means of man’s redemption so that all who are willing can receive it. Thus, two fundamental truths emerge at the very outset: God works all things for man’s salvation, but not all are willing to accept

the free gift. Those who accept receive eternal life; those that refuse suffer wrath. *“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him” (Jn. 3:36).* This is precisely where we find the Jews: grace is offered in Jesus, but they have persisted in unbelief and therefore will die in their sins. Jesus told the Jews this very thing himself. *“I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins” (Jn. 8:24).* A little later in the same chapter, because they rejected his word and sought to kill him, Jesus told the Jews they were of the devil. *“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, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham...Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do” (Jn. 8:39-44).* Although we are getting ahead of ourselves a bit here, without even traversing the history of redemption and the Jews’ place in it, we find it already an established fact that unbelieving Jews were\are of the devil, under wrath, and die in their sins. And these are the people some would have us believe are still the elect of God? But let us proceed.

The Promise to Adam

When our first ancestors fell God promised to save the couple. Sin and death, as symbolized by the serpent, would be defeated by a promised Seed and Kinsman redeemer: *“And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel” (Gen. 3:15).* Death would bruise Christ’s heel (inflict a venomous wound) at the cross; but Christ would have the victory and destroy the power of sin and death (crush the serpent’s head) by his atoning sacrifice and resurrection.

This promise was made before there was any distinction between Jew and Gentile, and was sure to the whole race of mankind descended from our common ancestor, Adam. But as the work of redemption required that the Godhead (or some part of it) be made flesh, it was necessary that our Lord be born into some race or nation. The question therefore is should he be born randomly into pagan nation with no understanding of sin and which knew not the true God, or was it necessary that he be born into a nation that had maintained knowledge of God,

man’s fallen condition, and the need of a Redeemer? Clearly, the latter is the correct choice. If Christ had been born into a pagan nation that worshipped idols, that condoned sin, knew not God, and did not have the holy scriptures, Jesus could not accomplish his mission, for the very significance of his life and death would be lost upon such a people. But, if born into a nation whose institutions had for millennia taught them to look for a Saviour, whose institutions kept before them the fact of their fallen nature and the need of blood sacrifice for sin, a nation whose sacred writings long foretold the suffering sacrifice of one who would be bruised for their transgressions, and who would defeat the power of sin and death, then and only then could the life and death of Christ fulfill its mission to the world. Therefore, the promise of God to the first couple implied more than the simple birth of a Savior, it entailed the *active government of God over the nation of people and their sacred institutions to which he would be born.*

Conditional Nature of Election and the Flood

Sacred history relates that offspring of Adam began to quickly fill the earth. However, like weeds that overtake a garden, choking out the tender herbs, so the wicked quickly outstripped the righteous and threatened the existence of a righteous seed in the earth. Scripture relates that the proximity and close association of the righteous with the wicked caused the former to soon abandon God in favor of their lower appetites: the “sons of God” (righteous descendents of Seth) saw that the daughters of unbelieving men were fair and made affinity with them in marriage (Gen. 6:1-4). God therefore divinely intervened, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly, a universal deluge to destroy mankind, including the apostate “sons of God,” preserving a righteous seed in Noah (Gen. 6-9). It is to these “sons of God” that Peter almost certainly refers when he mentions the “angels that sinned” who were cast down to Tartarus when the flood was brought in (I Pet. 3:19, 20; II Pet. 2:4, 5). From this early history we learn that the elect, in this case the sons of Seth, must abide faithful or they too will be severed from God and suffer his wrath (Jn. 15:1-6; Rom. 11:17-21). And if this was true of the descendents of Seth, may it not also be true of the Jews? Can any man, regardless of race and descent, live in rebellion and disbelief and find grace with God? John the Baptist would

therefore warn the Jews “think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stone to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire” (Matt. 3:9, 10).

The Tower of Babel and Call of Abraham

The purpose of God to bring Christ into the world through the descendents of Seth was not lost because generations of faithless children grew up in the place of their parents. God preserved a righteous seed in Noah so that his purpose to save mankind would continue. However, we find that shortly after the flood the righteous were again quickly threatened with extinction by too close association with the wicked: men lived in a single socio-political union, joined by a common tongue. Within 101 years after the flood, God was forced to divinely intervene a second time to preserve a righteous seed. God confused the language of man and scattered him across the face of the earth, and men assembled themselves into nations according to their several tongues (Gen. 10, 11).

This bit of history is included in the Bible for a very important reason. God’s confusion of man’s language and the origin of the nations serve to introduce us to Abraham. The flood narrative closes with an account of the descendents of Shem, introducing us to Eber, the father of the Hebrews (Gen. 10:21-24), and the Babel narrative closes by introducing us to Abraham the descendant of Shem and Eber (Gen. 11:10-32). In Gen. 12:1, 2, God calls Abraham to leave his kindred, promising to make of him “a great nation,” saying that in him all families of the earth would be blessed (v. 3). This refers to Christ, who God chose to bring into the world through Abraham. As already noted, although there were hundreds of nations in the world, it would not do for the promised Seed to be born just anywhere, into just any family or nation. It was necessary that the Messiah be born into a nation especially molded and preserved by God; a nation whose sacred writings foretold the Redeemer’s coming; a people whose religious ceremonies and institutions were all calculated to show man his sin and reveal his Savior. Thus, Abraham becomes the conduit through whom God will bring his purpose to save mankind into effect.

God will give seed to Abraham, though his wife is sterile, and family go forward, gradually increasing into a nation, which God will lead out of slavery in Egypt and settle in Canaan.

It is important before we continue to note that Christ was the overarching purpose of God in Abraham’s call. The formation of his descendants into a nation had no other purpose, and once that purpose was fulfilled, the promises of God regarding their special place in the divine plan would terminate. All families of the earth would be blessed by the Savior that came into the world through them, not because of them. The work was God’s; the Jews were merely the vessel. He formed the nation for a particular purpose, fulfilled that purpose, and moved on to the business of saving all nations of men. The Jews, like every other race of people, were invited to share in that salvation, but none are forced or compelled. The nations that will not serve the Son are accursed. “Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile” (Rom. 2:9).

Possession of the Land and Obedience to the Law

No nation can exist as a separate people without its own land and territory. Any race or tribe that dwells intermingled among other peoples sooner or later will lose its separate identity, language, customs, and institutions. Since it was necessary that the descendants of Abraham keep their separate identity until the gospel was sent into all the world, God gave the land of Canaan to Abraham and his seed as an “everlasting possession” (Gen. 17:5-8). Some have interpreted this to mean that the Jews have an eternal claim upon Palestine, and therefore seek to justify the existence of the modern state of Israel and its robbery of Palestinian lands and oppression of the Palestinian people. However, this is sorely mistaken. The land promise to Abraham’s seed was, first and foremost, *provisional*, to bring Christ into the world and give the gospel a place from which to spread abroad, like a spring to irrigate the earth. “*Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem*” (Lk. 24:46, 47; cf. Zech. 13:1; Ezek. 47:1-12). Moreover, the land promise was always *conditional*. Moses made

very clear that possession of the land was conditioned upon obedience to the law, and that the nation would be uprooted and scattered to the wind should it refuse and rebel.

“And it shall come to pass, that as the Lord rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you; so the Lord will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought; and ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it. The Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from one end of the earth even unto the other...” (Deut. 28:63, 64).

It is worth noting also, that possession of the land was premised upon obedience to the rite of circumcision. At the time God made the promise to Abraham to give his seed the land of Canaan, he imposed as a condition the covenant of circumcision, and called it an “everlasting covenant” (Gen. 17:8-19). Thus, before Joshua was permitted to bring the Jews in to possess the land, the nation was told to circumcise all the males in token of the covenant given to Abraham (Josh. 5:2-9). This is important. The land was given to the Jews as an “everlasting possession” but it was predicated upon obedience to the law of Moses and the rite of circumcision as a “everlasting covenant.” Like the dietary restrictions and other laws of the Jews, the purpose of circumcision was to separate the Jews from their pagan neighbors. Because they could not give their daughters in marriage to any that were not circumcised, and because none would consent to be circumcised that were not willing to convert to become Jews, the nation would forever be separate from the Gentiles by this mark in their flesh. But the law of Moses is now abrogated and annulled, and the rite of circumcision abolished. Paul even warns that to obey circumcision is to be “cut off” from Christ and to fall from grace (Gal. 5:2-4). Thus, possession of the land was premised upon obedience to the law, but the law has been annulled by Christ; and since to obey the law is to deny Christ, and to deny Christ is to be under wrath, there can never be a Biblical basis for possession of the land. The land promise, like the Old Testament itself, terminated in Christ.

Return of the Captivity and Resettlement of the Land

The history of national Israel was marked by cycles of obedience and blessing, followed by apostasy, captivity and subjugation by foreign

powers, followed in turn by spiritual repentance, and national renewal and revival. This is nowhere more apparent than the book of Judges, which traces the history of the nation over approximately 400 years, cataloging its spiritual cycles and national vicissitudes. It is also the topic of several Psalms, which look with longing for the time when God would return the captives of Israel (Ps. 14:7; 53:6; 85:1; 126:1, 4). It is probable that the Psalms all speak to the interim captivity Israel suffered under its neighbors, including the Moabites and Philistines. However, the great captivity occurred under the Assyrians and Babylonians. The northern tribes were carried into captivity by Assyria, Judah and Jerusalem by Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar, who destroyed the city and burnt the temple (586 B.C.). This was done by the express will of God, because the Jews had strayed so long and refused to repent though continuously urged and warned by the prophets (II Chron. 36:15-21).

However, as before, the purpose of God to save mankind did not depend upon the faithfulness of the Jews. Although the people were carried into captivity and the political institutions and temple service completely ceased, God promised to bring the nation back from captivity and to resurrect its political institutions so that Jesus could be born in Bethlehem and die upon a Roman cross. The prophet Daniel records that God determined 490 prophetic years upon the nation, to bring in the Messiah and his salvation, and then the nation would be destroyed for all time (Dan. 9:24-27).² The end would come like a flood, bring desolation upon the capital city where the blood of the Savior was shed. The captivity returned under Zerubbabel, Joshua, Ezra, and Nehemiah, but the cycle of apostasy and rebellion was never fully broken; its end was inexorably fixed.

The Last End of Biblical Israel

² The present state of Israel is purely secular and has not religious pretensions and does not claim nor can its members prove any physical descent from Abraham. To the contrary, the present inhabitants of Palestine are almost exclusively Europeans with no Semitic blood at all. Israel today is a political state with a Biblical name and nothing more.

The prophecies of God's full and final divorce of the nation, in place of which he has now take the Christian church as his bride, are found in almost every book of the Bible, from Genesis (Gen. 49:1) though Joel, Zechariah, and Malachi. Indeed, the Old Testament canon closes with the words of Malachi, warning of the coming day of the Lord's judgment against the sinful nation (Mal. 4:1-6). But even at this extremity, God's wrath would be preceded by the prophet "Elijah" (John the Baptist, Matt. 11:14), who would precede the Messiah and issue in time of national, spiritual restoration before its destruction. The New Testament thus opens with John the Baptist warning of the coming judgment of fire upon the nation, urging it to repentance. Sadly, John's warnings went largely unheeded; only a remnant obeyed the gospel and was saved. Jesus, too, prophesied of the coming destruction of the city and temple in highly charged language, which was intended to signify the momentous events that would overtake the nation at its end (Matt. 23, 24). The Jewish historian Josephus records the awesome events that witnessed the nation's final destruction. Over 1.1 million Jews starved to death in Jerusalem alone, where they were shut up by the Roman armies, taken aware during celebration of the Passover, an apostate feast whose observance stood in very denial of Christ, the true Passover Lamb which took away the sins of the world.

The Jews were not alone; divine wrath would be poured out upon the entire Roman world for its persecution of Christ's bride under Nero and the Jews, in which nearly the whole Christian population was extirpated by the most cruel and exquisite tortures perverse minds could imagine. Made spectacles for the mob in the circus where they were burned and crucified and thrown to wild beasts, at length even the Roman people, that calloused and sanguinary nation, were nauseated by the display and their sympathies turned toward the Christians. Nero would be declared a public enemy by the Senate, he would die by his own hand to escape justice, and the nation be thrown into a series of civil wars (A.D. 68-70) during which the empire suffered enormous convulsions as Galba, Otho, Vitellius, and Vespasian each contended for the throne, Italy was destroyed, and the Roman capital burned.

Conclusion

There is not one particle of scripture to support the notion that a people whose national and religious existence is based upon denial of Christ is or ever can be God's chosen people or enjoy his favor and grace.

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Destruction of Jerusalem



"For these be the days of vengeance that all things written may be fulfilled" (Lk. 21:22)

Fulfilled Eschatology and Christianity Today

"Preterism seems to apply everything to AD 70 - does anything apply to us today? How should Preterists be living out a fulfilled eschatology?"

What Applies?

People coming to preterism sometimes find the idea of an unknown or unwritten future troubling. Perhaps they come from a church background that teaches members to live in a state of heightened expectation of the imminent, cataclysmic end of the cosmos. Perhaps they have been taught, like so many today, to live in anticipation of a coming world "antichrist," time of "great tribulation" and "rapture." Perhaps they have been taught that the second coming is the one great hope the Christian lives for. Now, learning that these are all past events, the lack of prophetic expectation leaves them feeling strangely awkward and empty, as if without these things to look forward to their Christianity is somehow anti-climatic.

This sort of experience is not unusual. Whenever we have a shift of paradigms there is a period of adjustment. We feel a certain discomfort as we experience change. But as we learn to correct our hopes and expectations to match our new understanding, we quickly find ourselves at home with the truth. Also, it is important to remember that Christianity is not about the "end of the world," but about changed lives, obedience to God, and loving our fellow man. The day to day stuff of Christianity is of a much more mundane and practical nature than the stuff of "Left Behind" and televangelism, but it is also much more meaningful and rewarding. The change may take a little getting used, but it is worth it.

Still, the question remains: What applies to us today, and what does not, and how are Christians to live in light of fulfilled eschatology?

The Moral Law

The moral laws of God are timeless; they applied in the garden; they applied under the patriarchs;

they were codified under the mosaic law, and they apply now under the gospel era. Fornication, adultery, murder, covetousness, hate, greed, theft, over-reaching, these have always been and always will be against the law of God. The passing of the mosaic law and temple ritual had no affect on these whatever. Christians must live within the bounds and mandate of the moral law if they would be saved: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption: but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Gal. 6:7, 8).

The Law of Sin and Death

We are not saved by the subtraction of law, but the addition of grace. The law of sin and death was present in the garden ("in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" Gen. 2:17), it was present under the patriarchs, it was present under Moses, and it is present today. Sin is transgression of God's law; every commandment of God has the law of sin and death annexed. Christians have grace as long as they attempt to live obedience to the law of Christ. John says there are "sins unto death" and there are "sins not unto death" (I Jn. 5:16). Presumptuous sin, sin that is willful and deliberate, hating our brother, sexual immorality, abandoning the faith, denying Christ, neglecting our own salvation, these are sins unto death. We find grace for these only as we repent of them and turn again to Christ. Lesser sins, unavoidable sins of our fallen nature, are covered by the blood of Jesus as we live in obedience to his gospel. "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I Jn. 1:7).

Christian Ordinances and Sacraments

Some have supposed that the New Testament ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper terminated at the eschaton. We believe this sort of teaching is dangerously mistaken.

Baptism is an essential teaching of the gospel. Jesus' last commandment before his ascension was that the disciples continue the work of preaching baptism and remission of sins in his name. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mk. 16:15, 16). Paul was told to wash away his sins by evoking the Lord's name in baptism: "And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). Peter said "baptism doth also now save us" (I Pet. 3:21). Paul called baptism the "circumcision of Christ" (Col. 2:11, 12). We are "buried by baptism into Christ's death" (Rom. 6:3-6). In baptism, we are made the seed of Abraham and heirs of eternal life: "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:27-29).

These and other verses show that baptism is an ordinance or sacrament by which we enter a covenant relationship with God. As the New Testament is still in force, so is the ordinance of baptism.

Similarly, the Lord's Supper is a permanent feature of the New Testament economy. Jesus said "This do in remembrance of me" (Lk. 22:19). Paul characterized the Lord's Supper as a "participation" in the body and blood of Christ: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" (I Cor. 10:16, 17). Therefore, communion is a participation in the body and blood of Christ; it renews the blood of the covenant we first encountered in repentance and baptism. This makes communion serious stuff! Of course, communion is not a participation in the actual body and blood of Christ; we do not believe in the doctrine of "transubstantiation." However, the bread and fruit of the vine are deemed Christ's body and blood in *contemplation of law*, and therefore to be

approached only by believers, with appropriate reverence and discernment. It was for lack of sufficient reverence and discernment that Paul said that many of the Corinthians were sick and fallen asleep (died).

Promised Inheritance

Preterism teaches that the redemption of man is complete; that the world is firmly beneath the government of Christ, who rules the nations with a rod of iron. The last enemy, Hadean death, has been destroyed; our loved ones who have gone before us are now in heaven, not waiting in Hades for resurrection day. Preterism teaches that Christians today live in present glory of divine adoption as sons and daughters of God; we are citizens of heaven, and enjoy the hope and assurance of eternal inheritance at physical death.

Heaven has always been the ultimate hope and purpose of the saints. Unlike Jehovah's Witnesses and Postmillennialists, like Kenneth Gentry and Keith Mathison who believe that our eternal state is on a "material new creation," the Bible teaches that our inheritance is in heaven above. Abraham and the patriarchs looked to the heavenly reward: "But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared from them a city" (Heb. 11:16). Peter says we have been called "to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" (I Pet. 1:4). Jesus said that in the resurrection we will be "as angels of God in heaven" (Matt. 2:30).

The Last Trump?

I have come recently to see I Cor. 15:51, 52 in a new light.

"Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of any eye, at the last trump: for a trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

I have given the verse here as it occurs in the Greek, substituting "the trumpet shall sound" (definite article) with "a trumpet shall sound" (indefinite article). The translators apparently assumed that "the last trump" is identical with

the trumpet that would call forth the dead from Hades and substituted the definite article for the indefinite. But the assumption is not necessarily sound; the Greek seems to distinguish between the last trump that marks the change of the living, and the trumpet that would mark the resurrection of the dead. In the past, I have always assumed they were the same trumpet. This caused me to interpret the “eschatological change” legally and covenantally, as consisting in going from a state of betrothal to a consummated marriage with Christ. And while that still may be true, the possibility that the trumpets are not the same means that the “change” need not have occurred in AD 70, but happens as a process over time as individual saints one by one are called from this life. This is my understanding of I Thess. 4:17, where Paul says that “we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air.” That is, the saints were not caught up simultaneously at the trump of God marking the resurrection of the dead, but in a process over

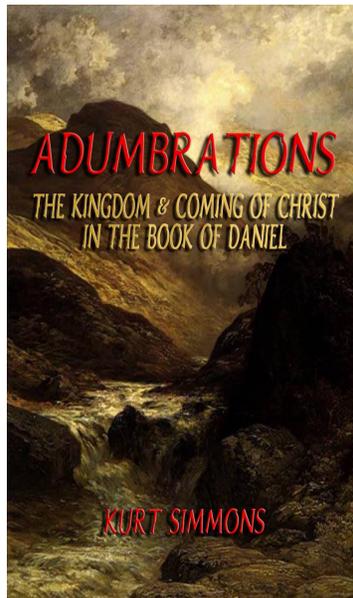
time as individual saints pass from this life. Adjusting our thinking about the trumpets to allow for more than one allows for the harmonization of these two texts.

If this is correct, then there is a last trump for *each of us* that will call us from this world to the next, and each of us should be so living as to be acceptable to the Lord when called before him. “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (II Cor. 5:10).

Conclusion

Fulfilled eschatology does not change how we live or the essence of the Christian hope. Rather than being distracted with sensational ideas of a coming “antichrist” and “great tribulation” or “rapture,” we can live daily life and plan for tomorrow in consciousness of our heavenly hope and goal.

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Questions from our Readers

Question: I just briefly glanced through *The Sword & The Plow*. I disagree with your corrections” to Philip Mauro’s chronology. 538 B. C. is the date of historians and theologians, not the date of the Bible. The decree was issued in 457 B. C. And Isaiah prophesied not once, but twice, that **Cyrus** would issue the decree for Jerusalem to be rebuilt. If I now have to believe that it was Artaxerxes who issued a decree in 454 B. C. to accommodate Ptolemy’s faulty lineage instead of following the chronology of the Bible I have to reject the Bible as faulty. I am not willing to do that.

Answer: I appreciate your comments. I know many people want to use Cyrus as the person referred to by Daniel, which is only natural. Isaiah mentions Cyrus several times, so it is natural to want to use him as the launch point for Daniel’s 490 prophetic weeks. However, Daniel’s prophecy mentions the wall being rebuilt (v.25), which did not occur until Nehemiah. Hence, that is the historical event that most conforms with Daniel’s prophecy, not Cyrus’s decree. Also, the chronology doesn’t work out if we begin anywhere else than Nehemiah and Artaxerxes. Luke said Jesus was baptized in the 15th of Tiberius, which was AD 29. 454 BC - 483 years = 29 AD. So the date you suggest (457 BC) won’t work; it doesn’t bring us to AD 29, but to AD 32 or 33. This is when Jesus was crucified, not baptized. Mauro himself admits that the prophecy was fulfilled at Jesus baptism (if I understand him correctly). Hence, even by Mauro’s analysis it has to be AD 29 that we align our chronologies with. 457 BC and 538 BC just can’t be made to work.

Any way, appreciate your thoughts. If you want to send more information, I will be glad to consider it!

Question: Dear Brother Simmons
I read your article in the latest Fulfilled Magazine with both approval and frustration. The question of “What Next” is a very big one and you handled it especially well. Shifting paradigms is always a difficult process.

However, we quickly parted ways after that :). After sleeping on it, I wondered if you would be kind enough to answer some questions for me, 3 to be exact though they are dozens. I have asked such questions of others, mostly of the Yahoo group I am on, and they have all refused to deal with them. It occurred to me though you might be willing.

In your 1st paragraph under Moral Law, you end by saying, “*Christians must live within the bounds and mandates of the Moral Law if they would be saved,*” My question is: Saved from what? How can there be law and grace at the same time? They would cancel each other out. You cannot earn a free gift.

Last but not least: In Genesis we see Adam choosing to go his own way and causing a separation between God and humankind. In Jesus, due to his trusting God, we see that separation removed. In Exodus etc. we see the nation of Israel created through covenant with God. This covenant had three basic tenets. “If you do as I say you will be blessed If you fall away but repent when warned a still applies. If you fall away and refuse to repent, I will destroy you.”

We see Jesus’ judgment on this issue in John 10:41 and the fulfillment of the curse in 70AD. We also see in Daniel 12 that the shattering of the power of the Holy people immediately preceded the coming of the New Kingdom. (See Don Preston’s good article dealing with this in the same issue of Fulfilled Mag.) What we have here are essentially two curses, one on the entire human species and one on Israel.

My question is: Where is the third curse? Where does God or Jesus anywhere say that once the final judgment was rendered it would be rendered again on the eternal kingdom? Where does it say there will be a second days of vengeance?

Answer: Thanks for writing, I will try to answer your questions in order. 1) Saved from what? Saved from eternal damnation. I do not believe in “once saved always saved” or any

similar doctrines. Our salvation can be lost by disobedience, and even neglect. See the book of Hebrews for extensive warnings to this effect (Heb. 2:3; 3:13-19; 4:1, 11; 6:4-8; 10:26-30; 12:4, 15).

2) Law and grace are not mutually exclusive. They have always existed together. Adam was created in a state of grace, but lived under law ("thou shalt not eat of the tree of knowledge"). **We are not saved by the subtraction of law, but the addition of Grace.** Under the Mosaic economy grace did not exist. The law only condemned, never acquitted. The blood of bulls and goats could not take away sins (Heb.10:4). The blood of Christ was therefore interposed to make atonement for sins under the 1st Testament.

Today, moral law still exists. Christians are under direct commandment not to commit fornication, adultery, theft, murder, etc. If we do, we fall from grace (although we can be restored to a condition of grace by repentance).

The idea that we are saved by removal of law results in Universalism, because where there is no law there is no transgression....for anyone! (Rom. 4:15). Everyone is saved! Thus, law exists and it condemns all who are outside of Christ. When we come to Christ we enter a condition of grace based upon the New Testament. As long as we attempt in good conscience to live in obedience to Christ, we continue in a condition of grace. When we disobey by committing willful sin (fornication, for example) we come under condemnation and are at eternal peril unless we repent.

3) Adam violated the law of sin and death: "you sin, you die". This law is still fully extant today and is attached to every commandment of God. Moses did not create the moral law; he merely codified the moral commandments of God that existed from creation. It was wrong to commit adultery before Moses, and it is wrong now. When we violate that law, we come under the sentence of death. Hebrews say "it is given unto man once to die and after that judgment" (Heb. (9:27). Thus, we all face judgment at death. There is no need for a "third curse" as you suggest. If we die physically outside of Christ, we will be lost eternally.

I reject the idea that God imputes Adam's sin to all mankind. We suffer the physiological consequence of Adam's sin (a fallen nature) but we do not suffer his punishment. Each man is punished only for his own sin. Babies cannot sin and therefore are safe, and do not need to be saved.

Question: Kurt, It is amazing that a man with such Biblical understanding is so far off Chronologically! Jesus died 33ad? Are you kidding? You are not the same guy that I used to talk to many years ago! With this article, you would have no right to say anything if I observed "All Saints Day" (Halloween). There is no difference! I don't condemn, yet I believe you're way out in left field. If you want to do Christmas that is your business, but don't justify it Biblically. The elements of Christmas are clearly pagan, and are of pagan origin. Christmas is no different than Easter, May Day, St. Patrick's day, etc. This is foolishness!

Kurt, this kind of justification only leads in other directions such as pagan jewelry used in pagan worship. If you have no problem with your wife wearing Earrings, would you have no problem if she put those Earrings in her nose or Eyebrows? Come on, Kurt, you're not thinking right.

Jesus was not born in Dec. 25th, Christmas trees are pagan, and where in the Bible do you find people giving other people gifts on a Birthday other than the Birthday person? Consider the Course of Abia! It doesn't fall on Dec. 25th. Question: What Chronologist are you studying from? Of all the notable, and qualified Chronologists, none put His birth on Dec. 25th, nor His death 33ad. Who are you getting this from?

Answer: Jesus most certainly did die Nisan 15, AD 33. Luke said Jesus was baptized the 15th of Tiberius when he was 29 years old (Lk. 3:1, 23). Augustus died in AD 14. Therefore, the 15th of Tiberius would be AD 29. Jesus had a 3 1/2 year ministry. Simple arithmetic will bring us to AD 33: November 15, AD 29, plus 3 1/2 years equals Nisan 15, AD 33.

As for Chronologists that place Jesus' birth in winter 2 BC, there are many. The WORLD LEADER in Biblical chronology is (the late)

Jack Finegan. His "Hand book of Biblical Chronology" is available from Hendrickson. I suggest you get a copy and read up. Another world leader in chronology is W.E. Filmer whose works were published by Cambridge University Press. You can read his works placing Jesus' birth in 2 BC and Herod's death in 1 BC at my web site www.dec25th.info.

You have presented NO FACTS for another date or birthday of Christ, just bare accusations. Produce your case. I would be interested to know when you think Jesus died and when he was born. Let me see you recreate the priestly courses from Jehoiarib which was serving the 9th of Ab, AD 70, when the temple was destroyed, all the way back to the course of Abijah when Zechariah was serving and John conceived. Go to my web site and look at the courses of the priests: I there show, together with Alfred Edersheim, a Jew converted to Christ, that Abijah was indeed serving in Sept., 3 BC, and that Jesus' birth 15 months later would be Dec., 2 BC. FACTS. Blessings,

Question: Thanks I just wanted to say that I am thoroughly enjoying Consummation of the Ages. I have only read the forward, introduction and chapter 1 and it's hard to put down. Thank you for writing in a concise and easy to understand format. As I read it I am amazed how many Christians just don't get it, especially the pretrib dispensational crowd. The references to the Old Testament prophecies tie everything together and it has been thrilling to me to discover these new truth's. No questions yet but on an unrelated matter do you believe the unrepentant souls are destroyed in Hell and that they do not suffer eternal torment? Take care

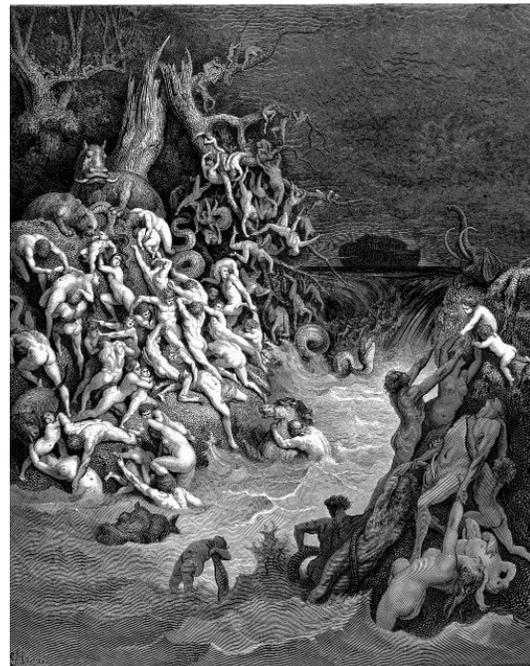
Answer: Glad you are enjoying the book. I believe souls are destroyed. I no longer hold to the view they are tormented eternally.

Question: Hello Mr. Simmons. In John 1:29 he refers to Jesus as the "Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world". It appears that John had foreknowledge that Jesus was to be sacrificed for our sins. Why else would he refer to him as the lamb? Especially in light of the fact he was probably looking for a conquering King like all Jews at that time and at one point questioned whether or not Jesus was the awaited Messiah? Thanks

p.s. are there scripture verses indicating that the soul is destroyed in hell other than where we are to fear Him who is able to destroy both the body and soul in hell?

Answer: Thanks for writing. John the Baptist spoke by the power of inspiration, so it is difficult to say how much he actually understood. The prophets of old, sometimes the Holy Ghost moved them to say or write things they clearly did not understand. My guess is that this was also at least partly true of John.

Whether the soul is tormented eternally or is annihilated is a topic of much debate. Matt. 10:23, which you cite, is the clearest statement that the soul is destroyed. II Thess 1:9 says the wicked/disobedient will be punished with "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord." Others occur in the Psalms and Proverbs where it speaks about the wicked going down to "destruction" etc. I don't feel it is a topic that should be divisive among Christians, but I do have a hard time reconciling the idea that God perpetuates the life/existence of the wicked for eternity just so he can torment them. The idea of that the soul is immortal originates with the Greeks and Indians, not the Bible.



Dr. Edwin Vieira, Jr. on the Failure of the Public Sector, the Coming Military Crackdown and What Can Be Done to Stop It

Sunday, January 10, 2010
<http://www.thedailybell.com/724/Edwin-Vieira-the-Coming-Military-Crackdown.html>

The Daily Bell is pleased to publish an interview with the distinguished libertarian attorney and activist, Edwin Vieira, Jr.

***Introduction:** Dr. Vieira holds four degrees from Harvard: A.B. (Harvard College), A.M. and Ph.D. (Harvard Graduate School of Arts and Sciences), and J.D. (Harvard Law School). For over thirty-six years he has been a practicing attorney, specializing in cases that raise issues of constitutional law. He has presented numerous cases of import before the Supreme Court and written numerous monographs and articles in scholarly journals.*

Daily Bell: Thanks for sitting down with us. Let's get right to it. In your view, what are the most critical domestic problems facing America?

Edwin Vieira Jr.: Two stand out. The foremost problem-because it is the source of, or contributes significantly to, almost every economic difficulty now plaguing this country-is the inherent and ineradicable instability of the present monetary and banking systems centered around the Federal Reserve System.

The second problem derives from the first. It is the ever-accelerating development of a first-class para-militarized police-state apparatus centered around the United States Department of Homeland Security, with its tentacles reaching down into every police force throughout the States and localities. Fundamentally, this apparatus is not, and never was, designed to deal with international "terrorism". If that were its goal, its first task would be absolutely to secure the southern border of the United States, which it has never seriously attempted to do. Rather, it is

being set up to deal with what the political-cum-financial Establishment anticipates (and I believe rightly so) will be massive social and political unrest bordering on chaos throughout America when the monetary and banking systems finally implode in the not-so-distant future-surely in hyperinflation, and probably in hyperinflation coupled with a gut-wrenching depression.

Of these two problems, the second is actually the more dangerous. For if (on whatever pretext) this police-state apparatus does succeed in clamping down on America, the likelihood of effecting basic reforms in money, banking, or anything else favorable to the American people will be reduced to something approaching nil, absent a veritable political uprising in this country.

Daily Bell: How can these two problems be solved?

Edwin Vieira Jr.: The problem of money and banking breaks down into two interrelated parts: one economic, the other political. Economically, the problem lies in the commonly accepted fallacy that debt-whether the private debt of banks or the public debt of governmental treasuries-can function as sound currency over the long term. "Money" is supposed to be the most liquid of all assets-which is why the best moneys have always proven to be the precious metals, silver and gold. "Debt", conversely, is not an asset at all, but is someone's liability, the value of which is contingent upon the debtor's ability and willingness to pay, and often the creditor's ability to force the debtor to pay. The attempt to put into practice the self-contradictory notion that a liability payable in money can be an asset that functions as money-and that the ultimate debtor or surety in this scheme can be a governmental treasury, which usually cannot be compelled to pay in any event-has been tried again and again, in country after country, and failed again and again. For Heaven's sake, it was

tried in this country with the Federal Reserve Act of 1913, and only about twenty years later utterly failed with the banking collapse of 1932, Franklin Roosevelt's seizure of the American people's gold, and the ensuing Great Depression that lasted throughout the 1930s! Right now, we are witnessing what will soon prove to be a more catastrophic failure of that same false idea embodied in that same pernicious institution. Apparently, as the old saw has it, "No one ever learns anything from history except that no one ever learns anything from history." Obviously, massive efforts in public education will be necessary to overcome this deplorable level of ignorance.

In our particular case, the problem also appears in a political form, actually dating from well before 1913: namely, the coupling of bank and state, whereby the government empowers private special-interests groups by statute to "manage" the monetary and banking systems-primarily for the economic benefit of those groups, but as well to the political advantage of the public officials, politicians, and political parties that support the system and receive support from it. The Federal Reserve System is such a coupling: the hermaphroditic creature of private enterprise and statute, at once both quasi-private and quasi-public in source, form, and functions.

Daily Bell: We call it mercantilism.

Edwin Vieira Jr.: Strictly speaking, it is a classic example of a corporative-state arrangement in the particular field of banking, exactly parallel to what Benito Mussolini set up throughout the economy of Fascist Italy, and to what Franklin Roosevelt established for all other American industries in the National Industrial Recovery Act of 1933 (until the Supreme Court declared that act unconstitutional in 1935).

The reason for this unholy alliance between bank and state lies in the operation of "debt as currency": namely, that using "debt as currency"-and particularly "debt as currency" that can be paid through the emission of new "debt as currency"-allows for the essentially unlimited redistribution of real wealth from society to the issuers of the currency and their immediate clients.

When the redistribution favors bankers and their clients among private businessmen, it is called

"forced savings"-the average America being compelled by the system to lose real wealth so that the bankers and businessmen can employ that wealth in their own speculative ventures. When the redistribution favors bankers and their clients among public officials, it is called "hidden taxation"-the average America being compelled by the system to lose real wealth so that public officials can buy more votes with more governmental spending (with the bankers taking a cut of the proceeds). In both cases, by the system's very design, the financial and political classes always benefit, the masses are always looted.

The truly vicious nature of this scheme, though, is now appearing in all its ugly nakedness in the multi-trillion-dollar bailouts that the financial Establishment is extorting, and will continue to extort, ultimately from the taxpayers and the victims of inflation, on the threat that, without such payoffs, the entire economy will melt down into irremediable chaos.

So, here we see the ultimate practical truth of the matter: Private financial special-interest groups buy politicians; in public office these politicians empower the special-interest groups by statute to manipulate the monetary and banking systems; to the extent that these manipulations succeed, the profits are largely privatized; and to the extent that the manipulations fail, the losses are almost entirely socialized. In either case, the general public is held hostage to the racket, and foots the gargantuan bill for its operation. And the guilty parties escape scot free to steal again, and again, and again.

Daily Bell: So what is to be done?

Edwin Vieira Jr.: In principle, this problem can be solved, if America enforces her Constitution. In practice, implementing such a solution will take no little time and effort, though, because: (i) the Federal Reserve System cannot simply be "abolished" at one fell swoop without generating massive dislocations throughout the markets; and (ii) the necessary reforms cannot arise out of the snake pit of Congress in the foreseeable future. Instead, Americans need to create an alternative constitutional and sound currency-actually consisting of, not simply "backed by", silver and gold-to compete with Federal Reserve Notes in the marketplace.

This step must be taken at the State level, for several reasons. First, it cannot be done through Congress, because Congress is thoroughly in the vampiric embrace of the financial Establishment. Second, the States enjoy the legal authority to adopt an alternative currency-indeed, as the Constitution declares, "No State shall . . . make any Thing but gold and silver Coin a Tender in Payment of Debts". Third, the States' exercise of their legal authority to adopt an alternative currency is constitutionally immune from interference by Congress, as even the Supreme Court has held on more than one occasion. Fourth, the States have a political and legal responsibility to their own citizens to protect the public health, safety, and welfare-which necessitates adopting a sound currency to replace the collapsing Federal Reserve Note before it is too late. And fifth, among the fifty States there must be at least a few in which the political and economic climate is such that State legislators can be convinced to take appropriate action.

Once the experiment has been tried and proven workable in one State, it will quickly spread to others, because no alternative exists, other than supine and stupid acquiescence in the collapse of the Federal Reserve System, with all the dire consequences that will entail.

Daily Bell: We at the Daily Bell are of a free-banking caste, and we often have discussions with what we call [Brownians](#) - those who, like Ellen Brown herself, believe that money is the province of the state and that gold and silver are merely commodities until the state stamps them with its authorized mark. We disagree. What do you say?

Edwin Vieira Jr.: The people who believe in "the state theory of money" need to study what the Austrian School of Economics teaches about money, and in particular "the regression theorem" that explains the origin of money. Gold and silver did not become money because some "state" first authorized them as such. Various states throughout history adopted gold and silver as money because markets (particularly in interregional or international trade) were using the precious metals for that purpose. Indeed, that is the explanation for the adoption of the "dollar" (actually, the silver Spanish milled dollar) as the unit of American currency, both under the Articles of Confederation and then explicitly in the Constitution.

More recently, of course, various states, including rogue public officials in the United States, have tried to "demonetize" and then demonize gold and silver in vain attempts to compel free markets to comply with officialdom's generally uneconomic and often blatantly tyrannical political policies. Roosevelt's gold seizure of the 1930s is the pre-eminent example in recent American history.

If gold and silver could function as money only because some state authorized such use, though, there would be no need for states to expend such efforts to "demonetize" the precious metals. Simply withdrawing a state's formal authorization would suffice. So, the veritable war that many states have felt it necessary to wage against specie money, and particularly gold, during most of the Twentieth Century renders rather implausible "the state theory of money".

Daily Bell: Do you believe the current push to audit the Fed will result in success? What would be the result of such an audit in your opinion?

Edwin Vieira Jr.: The Establishment doubtlessly will put up tremendous resistance to a comprehensive audit of the Federal Reserve System, if that audit includes a thoroughgoing investigation and public exposition of the ulterior motives for and untoward consequences of the System's twists and turns in "monetary policy" over the years. I wonder, however, what such an audit would accomplish, and whether it is really necessary. If ten economists examined the System's decisions, they would probably give a dozen different opinions as to what motivated those decisions, and whether the results were good, bad, or indifferent. So the upshot of an audit could be nothing more than confusion twice confounded.

For all the journalistic shortcomings of its aggressively "liberal" perspective, the old expose by William Greider, *The Secrets of the Temple: How the Federal Reserve Runs the Country* (1987), tells us enough about the motivations and performance of the banking cartel, even without a formal audit, to justify the conclusion that it must be disestablished post haste. Actually, anyone who studies the Federal Reserve Act of 1913-particularly in the context of earlier banking and monetary legislation-should conclude that it always was and remains unworkable and doomed to failure, besides being

utterly unconstitutional. So an audit is superfluous. On the other hand, if the results of, or the even demands for, an audit would galvanize public opinion into doing something positive in the area of monetary reform-such as supporting adoption of an alternative currency in the States-it probably would be worth the effort. But that is a very large "if".

Daily Bell: Ugh, that was a terrible book. He catalogues what's wrong for hundreds of pages and then decides having the Fed around is better than the alternative. We think it's central banking in large part that has given the elite the funds to take America down the wrong path, and that the velocity is accelerating - given the creation of Homeland Security, etc.

Edwin Vieira Jr.: In my estimation, dealing with the domestic-police-state-in-the-making is an even more critical concern than dealing with the problems engendered by the Federal Reserve System. This, because the present monetary and banking regime, being nothing more than a confidence game, could implode at any moment, and certainly could collapse before an alternative currency were in operation, thereby plunging the country into the sort of economic, political, and social chaos which would serve as the pretext for the imposition of all-round police-state repression. Therefore, if Americans do not have a plan in place, and very soon, for preventing that repression, everything could be lost.

That is not all. Even the Establishment could be hoist with its own petard. The police state now being elaborated from Washington, D.C., does not consist solely of civilian law-enforcement agencies. Rather, the deep thinkers in the "homeland-security" business are working feverishly to insinuate the Armed Forces into their schemes for nationwide domestic oppression. As a practical matter, this is probably necessary (from their point of view), inasmuch as a general economic, political, and social breakdown would set off eruptions of violent unrest beyond the capabilities of most if not all State and local police departments to put down.

Daily Bell: So you believe that the Establishment realizes how large a divide is growing between "average Joes" and America's elitists?

Edwin Vieira Jr.: Of course. Anyone even randomly surfing the [Internet](#) will stumble upon massive evidence of the irreconcilable antagonism and rancor rising at a fever pitch among common Americans against the economic and political "leaders" who have sold them and their country down the river. (Which is one of the main reasons the Establishment is desperate to come up with some rationalization and means to censor the Internet.) The Establishment knows that it stands on shaky ground-and that if it can no longer depend on the good will of the people, it must hope to be able to suppress collective manifestations of their ill will. This will require vast numbers of "boots on the ground". Thus, the ever-mounting emphasis by officials in "homeland-security" agencies on involvement of the Armed Forces in domestic "peacekeeping".

As Richard Weaver observed, though, "ideas have consequences"-and, one might add, particularly stupid ideas very often have extremely bad, albeit unintended consequences. The lesson that history teaches, but that the big brains in Washington apparently have not absorbed, is that once politicians (in any country) have turned to the Armed Forces to control domestic dissent arising out of failed economic and social policies, the Armed Forces quickly conclude that they are able and even entitled to become political powers in their own right. After all, why should the Armed Forces not exercise control over the policies and other decisions civilian officials make concerning the deployment of the Armed Forces, particularly when those officials' incompetence or corruption has brought about the domestic disturbances the Armed Forces are expected to risk their lives to quell? And then why should the Armed Forces themselves not promulgate, or at least oversee, policies on all economic and social matters in the first place? Could they fail any more miserably than have the civilian officials?

Furthermore, here in America, if the Armed Forces are deployed to suppress widespread civil unrest emanating from a major breakdown of the economy that threatens the continued viability of the military-industrial complex, the Brass Hats will have a particularly compelling institutional incentive to maintain themselves in positions of political leadership: namely, securing their reason for being and the source of their importance, power, and benefits. In addition, thoroughly politicized Armed Forces will likely

feel the need to justify the expensive existence of the military-industrial complex by inserting themselves into, if not instigating outright, ever-expanding overseas military adventures. Thus, "the war on terror"-in addition to whatever other forms of aggressive imperialism can be fomented, ostensibly to "defend our freedoms" in a "homeland" no longer free-will drag on forever, at untold costs in lives and treasure.

Of course, as has proven true everywhere else, politicized Armed Forces in this country will be unable to solve the underlying economic and social problems that rationalized their politicization in the first place. So America will be wracked with chronic political chaos: token civilian regimes staffed with incompetent puppets and "yes men", followed by new bouts of military string-pulling or outright intervention aimed at cleaning up the last crisis, and so on, along the sorry lines South American republics such as Argentina have followed for generations.

For that reason, people worried simply about the likelihood of hyperinflation, depression, or hyperinflation coupled with depression-and about how they might be able to protect their incomes and accumulated wealth under such circumstances-are viewing their world through rather ill-fitting rose-colored glasses. When hyperinflation or other economic calamities strike, and the Armed Forces are politicized as instruments of domestic repression, merely maintaining his income and securing his accumulated wealth will become matters of very low priority for anyone with high economic, social, or political visibility who has or might run afoul of the regime. So those myopic people who are trying to figure out how they can personally profit from the coming collapse of America's economy had better start thinking instead of how they can contribute to the effort to prevent that collapse, to fend off a police state that collapse will engender, and to return this country to the rule of constitutional law-right now, before time runs out.

Daily Bell: How can a police state be fended off?

Edwin Vieira Jr.: Actually, the constitutional solution for dealing with the emerging police state is even simpler than the solution for dealing with the collapsing Federal Reserve System. Now, I do not believe that, at the present time,

the upper echelons of the Officer Corps in America's Armed Forces contain significant numbers of potential Bonapartists. The patriotic sense of "duty, honor, country" doubtlessly still prevails. But this circumstance could change. It has changed in other countries. As the Second Amendment to the Constitution declares, "[a] well regulated Militia" is "necessary to the security of a free State". Not the regular Armed Forces, but "[a] well regulated Militia".

"A well regulated Militia" is the only thing the Constitution identifies as "necessary" for any purpose, and the only thing it identifies as serving the specific purpose of "security". So, if Americans want a stable and prosperous economy, they want a free economy (that is, one based on the free market). If Americans want a free economy, they want "a free State", that being the only kind of political system that will support and defend the free market. And if Americans want "a free State", they want "[a] well regulated Militia" in every State. And what is "[a] well regulated Militia"? As Article 13 of Virginia's Declaration of Rights (1776) so aptly put it, "[a] well regulated militia, composed of the body of the people, trained to arms, is the proper, natural, and safe defence of a free state". That is, "[a] well regulated Militia" consists of We the People ourselves-in the final analysis, the only possible guarantors of freedom in a self-governing society.

Moreover, for all of these reasons, the members of the Armed Forces-all of whom take an oath to support the Constitution-should want "[a] well regulated Militia" in every State, too. Unfortunately, "[a] well regulated Militia", fully formed and operated according to proper constitutional principles, does not exist in even a single State today. (No, Virginia, the National Guard is not, never was, and cannot be the Militia.) So a great deal of work remains to be done in this area, as well.

Daily Bell: If these problems could be solved by application of the Constitution, then why did the Constitution not prevent them from arising in the first place? Has not the Constitution proven itself ineffective?

Edwin Vieira Jr.: We have had the benefit of the Ten Commandments since the days of Moses; but has their mere existence prevented all, or even most, sinful behavior? No. Whose

fault has that been? God's or the sinners'? And shall we now blame the Ten Commandments-or worse, jettison them entirely-because some, even many, individuals continue to murder, to steal, and so on, whether in public office or private occupation?

The same reasoning applies to the Constitution. The Constitution is a set of instructions for running a complex political machine. This machine has as workmanlike a design as political science has ever recorded throughout the ages; and the instructions for its operation are concise and clear. So if, from time to time, the operators of the machine, through incompetence or malevolence, fail or refuse to follow those instructions, with deleterious results, does the fault lie with the instructions or the operators? Now, at one level, the operators of the constitutional machine are public officials. But they are subject to control by a higher level of operators: We the People, the selfsame We the People who (as its Preamble attests) "ordained and established th[e] Constitution" in the first place. So, if compliance with the Constitution's instructions has not been had, then ultimately We the People, not the Constitution, are to blame. Which is very fortunate, because We the People are in an unique position to do something about this situation.

We the People are the voters who select legislative, executive, and some judicial officers for government at every level of the federal system. We the People are in actual physical possession of most of the valuable property in this country. We the People constitute the Militia, which imposes upon us the direct responsibility to maintain "the security of a free State". And, with a little organization pursuant to statutes enacted in the States, We the People can effectively enforce Nancy Reagan's dictum: to "just say NO!" to further economic and political incompetence, corruption, and downright oppression in this country, emanating from Washington, D.C., New York City, or anywhere else.

Daily Bell: But is not the Supreme Court the final legal authority on what the Constitution means, and therefore legally superior to the people?

Edwin Vieira Jr.: Balderdash. A judicial opinion about the Constitution is precisely that,

and no more: just an opinion of some fallible human beings who happened to occupy the Bench at that time. It may be correct-or it may be incorrect. The Supreme Court does not determine what the Constitution means; rather, the Constitution determines whether a decision of the Supreme Court is right or wrong. Even the Supreme Court has recognized that "[t]he power to enact carries with it final authority to declare the meaning of the legislation". *Propper v. Clark*, 337 U.S. 472, 484 (1949). And We the People-not "we the judges"-enacted the Constitution. It is our supreme law, not theirs.

We are the principals, they merely our agents. So we are the ultimate interpreters of the Constitution, and the ultimate judges of whether public officials are complying with it. As Sir William Blackstone, the Founding Fathers' primary legal mentor, observed: "whenever a question arises between the society at large and any magistrate vested with powers originally delegated by that society, it must be decided by the voice of the society itself: there is not upon earth any other tribunal to resort to". *Commentaries on the Laws of England* (1771-1773), Volume 1, at 212. Any self-governing people should know as much without being reminded. One can only hope that the present economic crisis will focus people's minds on this basic truth to a degree sufficient to make a difference.

