

THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,
**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God
IN CHRIST JESUS.**
(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)*

#04-1004

Bribery

January 11, 2010

As the US Senate was debating their version of health insurance reform legislation, it was reported that several senators were offered enticements, if you will, rewards, for their support of the proposed legislation. Essentially, the power brokers of the Senate bought votes. It was quite interesting, if not maddening, to hear senators one day opposing the bill and the next day supporting it as if they were for it all along. Those in opposition to the legislation began to cry foul and declare that this is a form of bribery.

Well, what is bribery?

In Hebrew, the word for *bribery* is *shachad*, which means “a donation,” such as a bribe, gift, present, reward. Simply, one receives a gift or reward for some favor.

In the English language, *bribery* is defined as “anything, especially, money, given or promised to induce a person to do something illegal or wrong; anything given or promised to induce a person to do something against his wishes.”

Thus, bribery is an attempt to influence an outcome by giving something to the person who has some say in or persuasion over the outcome. This sort of influence can be manifested in a variety of ways, even in limitless ways, for as the saying goes: “**Everyone has a price.**”

The problem today is that, in some cases, bribery has become so sophisticated that it often is not seen as something wrong or illegal. We could say that it has become the norm or the standard by which business and government are done. One example is the lobbying industry that daily influences the affairs and decisions of the US government at all levels. Lobbying has become a legal form of bribery, as far as man’s law is concerned, but not according to God’s law. For more on this, please see issue #03-0968, February 24, 2009, *The Kingdom of Our Lord #8. The Law Against Bribery.*

Further, it was rather disheartening to listen to US senators defend their actions and the actions of their colleagues, as if it were standard practice to sell one’s vote for special favors. After all, as the thinking goes, they are looking out for their constituents (i.e., the ones that vote for them to keep them in power), and this justifies whatever they do or do not do. In other words, the end justifies the means, even if it is unethical, illegal, immoral, or hypocritical. Of course, they would deny that any of their actions fall within any of these categories. Why is this so? I suggest that, over time, their consciences become so seared that they no longer know the difference between good and evil or right from wrong. Simply, their seared consciences not only fail to discern the error or evil of their actions but even justify them as good or right according to their own unrighteous and self-righteous standard.

Bribery comes from the spirit of the world where the lust of the flesh thrives. Once lust has conceived, it births sin, and, like a born child, it continues to grow. Only in this case, it does not lead to life but to death. Once sin is birthed, the seared conscience justifies its actions as necessary and proper, but such a conscience no longer discerns unrighteousness.

(14) But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. (15) Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. (James 1:14-15 NASB)

(15) Do not love the world nor the things in the world. ... (16) For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. (17) The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever. (1 John 2:15, 16-17 NASB)

The spirit of the world is a mighty powerful influence over the heart and conscience of man, and we are witnessing this spirit of the world influence the governance of the United States today. It is sad to watch a nation whose motto is **“In God We Trust”** ignore God’s righteous and divine law so blatantly and be driven by the lust of the flesh. Unfortunately, I believe this is a reflection of the church-at-large that has soundly rejected God’s righteous divine law and, in many respects, is living by the lust of the flesh, as well. Where is the repentance? Where is the **righteous indignation** in our day?

As James testified, the result is death, and I believe that this is where the US political system is headed. The Lord has lifted up His hammer, which is His word, His fiery law, and He is going to strike the **politico-centric** heart of the nation. As I have stressed many times, I do not know exactly what, when, or how; I just know that it is coming, for the Lord has given me His word: **“Thus saith the Lord, ‘I have lifted up a hammer over the United States and I am about to strike at the very heart of the nation’”** (word received on February 10, 2009). June 11th is 210 years since John Adams moved the Office of President to Washington DC as the city became the new capital of the United States. Only the Lord knows if this specific date or one close to it will have any significance in the fulfillment of this word. At any rate, we will know when and how this word is manifested, for it will be like a hammer.

“Is not My word like fire?” declares the LORD, “and like a hammer which shatters a rock?” (Jeremiah 23:29 NASB)

Whatever God’s specific word is in regard to the US, we can be assured that it is going to shatter the hard rock that has been formed against the Almighty. It is time to wake up. Change is coming.

Now, back to the matter of bribery; this is only one symptom of a corrupt system, but it is a telling one, at the very least. Consider how God views bribery.

(19) You shall not distort justice; you shall not be partial, and you shall not take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and perverts the words of the righteous. (20) Justice, and only justice, you shall pursue, that you may live and possess the land which the LORD your God is giving you.” (Deuteronomy 16:19-20 NASB)

“You shall not take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the clear-sighted and subverts the cause of the just.” (Exodus 23:8 NASB)

“Now then let the fear of the LORD be upon you; be very careful what you do, for the LORD our God will have no part in unrighteousness or partiality or the taking of a bribe.” (2 Chronicles 19:7 NASB)

A wicked man receives a bribe from the bosom to pervert the ways of justice. (Proverbs 17:23 NASB)

For oppression makes a wise man mad, and a bribe corrupts the heart. (Ecclesiastes 7:7 NASB)

Who justify the wicked for a bribe, and take away the rights of the ones who are in the right! (Isaiah 5:23 NASB)

Why is there so much blindness on the part of the political leaders who do not see their actions as unrighteous? Bribery! Why is there so little of righteous justice? Bribery! Why is justice perverted? Bribery! Why are hearts so corrupted to the truth? Bribery! Why are lies accepted as truth? Bribery! Why do they justify their wickedness? The answer is bribery!

May our political leaders wake up soon and repent. Instead of justifying their unrighteous ways, they need to confess them, turn from them and their many idols, and turn to the living and true God. However, let us not forget that we too need to turn from these things if they are in our own lives. As Paul wrote, we have not received the spirit of the world; we have the spirit of the Lord. Let us live by His spirit. A day is coming soon when Jesus will be lifted up as the King of the nations. Let us be ready!