

Mightier Than The Sword (Part Twenty-Three)

John W. Ritenbaugh

Given 28-Nov-15; Sermon #1297c

A headline appearing in the *Washington Post* newspaper on May 12, 2015, stated, “Christianity Faces Sharp Decline as Americans Are becoming Even Less Affiliated With Religion.” The article was written by Sarah Pulliam Bailey. She pulled her statistical information from what was then the latest Pew Survey. She said,

Christianity is on the decline in America, not just among younger generations or in certain regions, but across race, gender, education and geographic barriers. The percentage of adults who describe themselves as Christian dropped by nearly eight percentage points in just seven years to about 71%. . . . At the same time, the share of those in the population who are not affiliated with a religion has jumped from 16% to about 23% in the same time period.

These are the “nones.”

Again, from the *Washington Post* but having a date of November 4, 2015, another headline stated, “Nominal Christians Are Becoming More Secular.” Nominal Christians are defined as people who identify to others that they are Christians, but are generally unengaged with a church denomination. These too are unchurched. They are folks who might attend a church on Christmas and Easter. They agree with Christianity but are not active.

There is a term in that headline that one must understand the meaning of in order to more fully grasp what is happening in the world in this time in which we live. The term is “secular.” It is derived from Latin, and in that language it was used as a noun and meant, “era or period of time.” However, in English, my *Reader's Digest Encyclopedic Dictionary* defines secular used as an adjective, meaning, “Of or pertaining to this world or the present life; temporal; worldly; distinguished from spiritual; not under the control of the church; civil; not concerned with religion.”

As an adjective, "secular" is a term that describes a noun more precisely. Thus, one who is secular is worldly, not following a church's teaching, not concerned with religion enough to be part of one. His life is focused on this present time and being part of this time's activities.

"Secularism" is the noun form. It is defined by my dictionary as: "A belief that morality should be based on the well-being of mankind *without* any consideration of religious systems and forms of worship." In terms of the application of this belief, *Webster's College Dictionary* states the following: "Secularism is the belief that religion and ecclesiastical affairs should not enter into the functions of the state, and specifically [this was interesting to me], public education." This confirms that one who is secular shows little or no concern about God and His purposes.

Here is another term taken from that root: "Secularist" is also a noun. It is defined as, "One who believes his entire life is bound within this present time." This means this person conducts his life believing everything about his life is completely consumed, with no conduct made in relation to anything beyond death. Calling this nation "secular" is really and truly condemnative.

I want to remind you again that these times we are living in are the fruits of an agenda. The circumstances we are living in, with their horrible immorality, didn't happen by accident. They exist and we live in them because they were *planned* to happen, then they were actively *caused* to happen.

I think I can guarantee that the vast majority of sincere people, believing they are Christians, walking American streets, rarely, if ever, give this truth any more than a momentary thought as having any impact on the greatly diminished quality of life they are living. What chance does America have in that state?

Some few Americans do believe this, though, because they do believe in God and His Word to some level, and therefore, they believe there is a Satan, a destroying demon at war with God and mankind, who, by working through men under his influence, has produced this world as it is today. His agenda

was accomplished by educating leading, influential people with certain God-denying information by means of educators trusted by those educating them.

I did not know this until I started making this commentary, but Isaiah 59 (written over 2500 years ago) speaks of an enemy coming into Israel like a flood. That prophecy is picked up in Revelation 12, written by the apostle John, and used as a metaphorical flood of words sent forth by one seeking to destroy the faith of a people. That has occurred in the Western world over these past 600 years or so, and is continuing apace in our day and age. I am saying that this flood is not merely something that happens right at the end. It has been going on for hundreds of years. What for? I've been telling you—it is to set up the world and the conduct of people within it for right now.

Recall two biblical items that I think are interesting to think upon. First is that Jesus clearly declared in Matthew 24 that the times just before His return would be like the days before the flood. The second item is this: Genesis 6 clearly mentions *nephilim* influencing people during that period of time. *Nephilim* is usually merely understood as indicating people of giant stature. However, as time goes on, researchers are finding evidence that though *nephilim* does mean giant, it is also used metaphorically by the ancients as indicating people of great influence over others because of who they are.

In our day, this would mean a political figure, like a president or a prime minister, king or queen, a military leader, athlete, or entertainer, scientist or author, teacher or religious figure. According to this, they can all be *nephilim* despite their physical stature because of their powerful influence over others.

In those days, when the philosophers were so influential, there was almost no competition to deter their influence. There were no movies, television, or even radio. Newspapers were almost non-existent. Once the Gutenberg press was invented, there were books. In fact, almost nothing but books to influence people's minds and therefore their beliefs. And so the philosophers wrote. And they wrote and they wrote, and people bought into what they wrote even as today people buy into what the media writes and what the movies show. The people were influenced by these giants among those who influence by what we see. The *nephilim* arose.

One resource I used to supply some information for these brief overviews of a small number of prominent philosophers stated that he believes that it was John Stuart Mills who prepared Great Britain for the 20th century. It was Frederick Nietzsche who prepared Germany for the 20th century, and it was John Dewey who prepared America for the 20th century. Unfortunately, much of the entire Western nations ascribed to the educational philosophies of John Dewey and this greatly helped pull all of them over the edge of the cliff. More to come on Mr. Dewey.