

Thinking, Praying, and Living as Christians in Interesting Times

Heb12.22 [Y]ou have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, 23 to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, 24 to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel. 25 See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven, 26 whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, "Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven." 27 Now this, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain. 28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.

* **We are not the first** Christians to encounter hardships, instability, and potential _____. Many, many Christians have been called by God to trust him and walk with him, to live, work, grow up, get married, have and raise children in the midst of _____.

What are some of the things the first generation Christians went through in the first century?

* **What book of the Bible** was written specifically to strengthen Jewish believers, keep them from abandoning the faith, and teach them how to faithfully serve Christ in the midst of crisis?

* **Our text in Heb 12** teaches us that Christ was enthroned by God upon his ascension, that he is the sovereign ruler of the world and history going forward, and that he intentionally uses hardships, big and small, including times of crisis, to advance his kingdom by showing people that he is the only Savior, that their gods are _____ and cannot _____ them.

* **It also teaches us** that our number one duty as Christians in times of crisis is to _____. On the surface, that sounds like the most impractical thing possible, but in reality it is the most practical thing we can do, for in it, we are acknowledging and entrusting ourselves to the One who is in every detail is in _____ of the crisis.

* **It is also essential** to our _____.

Psalm 96.9 Oh, worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness! Tremble before Him, all the earth. 10 Say among the nations, "The LORD reigns ...

* **The Bible also** teaches us that Christ is not only Lord of the storm, the shaking of nations and empires, he is also the Shepherd who cares for every one of his sheep, sanctifying to us our deepest _____.

* **What do we seek? How do we pray? Seven things.**

1) We pray for God to grant that our civil authorities would contribute, and not detract, from an environment conducive to living lives that are _____ and _____, and in which we can freely _____ for Christ and the gospel.

1 Tim 2.1 Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, 2 for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. 3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

2) We seek the peace & blessing of wherever we _____ ourselves.

Jer 29.7 [S]eek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray to the LORD for it; for in its peace you will have peace.

This does not mean approving of whatever _____ is being done, but seeking that God would grant repentance and righteousness, for those are central to experiencing God's peace.

3) We pray for God to give us godly, righteous _____.

Exo 18.21 [S]elect from all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them to be rulers ...

4) We pray that we may _____ all forms of governmental idolatry.

Judges 17.6 In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

Gen 11.4 And they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth."

5) We cast our _____ upon God & go to him with all our needs.

1Pet 5.7 [C]ast[] all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

This is not to inform God, for he already know what we need.

However, we in Christ are his sons and daughters, and he desires to

hear these things from our _____, because he loves us.

Mat 6.7 "[W]hen you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. 8 Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him ... 31 Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things."

6) We do not worry or _____, rather we pray. These are

_____ of one another.

Psalm 37.1 Do not fret because of evildoers, Nor be envious of the workers of iniquity. 2 For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, And wither as the green herb. 3 Trust in the LORD, and do good; Dwell in the

land, and feed on His faithfulness. 4 Delight yourself also in the LORD, And He shall give you the desires of your heart. 5 Commit your way to the LORD, Trust also in Him, And He shall bring it to pass. 6 He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, And your justice as the noonday. 7 Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him; Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, Because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass. 8 Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; Do not fret—it only causes harm. 9 For evildoers shall be cut off; But those who wait on the LORD, They shall inherit the earth.

7) With this attitude of confident humility, we serve God in all of

_____.

Jer 29.4 Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all who were carried away captive, whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem to Babylon: 5 Build houses and dwell in them; plant gardens and eat their fruit. 6 Take wives and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons and give your daughters to husbands, so that they may bear sons and daughters—that you may be increased there, and not diminished.