



## Behold Their Threatenings

*“And being let go, they went to their own companions and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them. So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said: “Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them, who by the mouth of Your servant David have said: ‘Why did the nations rage, and the people plot vain things? The kings of the earth took their stand, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against His Christ.’”*

*“For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done. Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus.”*

*And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.” (Acts 4:23-31)*

1. As a minister I receive many urgent requests. I am asked to act *immediately* about an upcoming government regulation about to be imposed against Christians or the local churches of America.
2. The requests are for congregational petitions, phone call initiatives, and letter writing campaigns to congressman, senators, and legislators. The opinion seems to be *if the Church doesn't act, we will surely lose our nation.*
3. I do not believe in sitting back and doing nothing and expecting God to do everything about our nation. Part of our national responsibility and privilege is to write and call our congressman and senators when we sense an urgency about a situation.
4. I do not believe that letters, phone calls, voting, and petitions alone will deliver our nation. God is not in heaven concerned that Christians have not sent enough letters or made enough phone calls.
  - a. We are to pray for our leaders to be saved and come to the full knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:2).
  - b. We need mature believers to run for office.
5. Does God wring His hands over past or current legislation in Washington? Is Jesus concerned over bills and petitions which will hinder our ability to worship the Father or spread the gospel? Jesus told us He would build His Church, *“...and the gates of hell*

would not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18). If Satan cannot destroy the Church how can Congress or our President?

6. Does God have something to Say? There is nothing new and all problems which exist today have existed since Adam. God must have something to say about this matter.
7. The writers of the word of God have spoken out in the Old and New Testament about the same issues we face in our nation today. One of those writers was king himself, David. *"Why do the nations rage, and the people plot a vain thing (emptiness)? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, and against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying, "Let us break their bonds (chains) in pieces and cast away their cords (ropes) from us." He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall hold them in derision. Then He shall speak to them in His wrath and distress (terrify) them in His deep displeasure (fury); "Yet I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion." (Psalms 2:1-6)*
8. Rage and Emptiness – The world's population is divided into two parts in verse one – the heathen and the people.  
The heathen is constantly enraged and the troublemakers in society. Some of them are the angry whites, enraged blacks, radical feminists, and militant homosexuals. They take up almost half of every news broadcast. Reporters are quick to cover their marches, street wars, and protests. Their message is heard loud and clear today by everyone and they strike fear into people's hearts. They accomplish their goals through fear, threats, and intimidation. People are filled with fear because there seems to be no apparent solution to the problems. Jesus warned us that in the last days men's hearts would fail them for fear (Luke 21:26).
9. The second part of the world's population is called "the people," the common people. David said they *"imagine a vain thing."* This describes the second half of the news broadcasts. After a few minutes of reporting on rage, the news switches to the emptiness of our modern society. We are warned not to burn wood in our fireplaces or burn our trash, so we don't release carbon dioxide into the air. We are told we live on a fragile planet. We are instructed to "visualize world peace," "coexist," and "live in harmony." Yet it seems with all of man's attempts at peace and harmony, the world is becoming a more dangerous place to live with each passing day.  
Why does the local and national news seem to be reporting the same thing? Why does there seem to be the same liberal slant to reports from government and the news media? Could it be that there is a master plan behind what we see and hear? David says, "yes," and he talks about it, *"The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, and against the Lord and against His Anointed..."*
10. The Kings of the earth behind the scenes. These evil leaders feel hindered, *as well they should.* They are presently working behind the scenes in Washington, Eastern, and Western Europe, and Asia to keep out the gospel and Christian influence.
11. Who Will Stop Them? *"He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall hold them in derision" (vs. 4).* *God is laughing.* He is laughing in mockery and derision. "Derision"

means to “to make fun of.” *“Then He shall speak to them in His wrath and distress (terrify) them in His deep displeasure”* (vs. 5). When God’s anger reaches the boiling point, He will visit them in wrath. They will then find out the foolishness of their defiance against God.

#### 12. The Attitude of the Early Church

In Acts 4, the newly formed church met its first opposition. It came from the government of the land. Because of the healing of the lame man in chapter three. The Sanhedrin called in the Church leaders and beat them with whips. They were then threatened and told them never to preach again in the name of Jesus. The Jews prided themselves on being tolerant of other religions – *tolerant until they became powerful and successful. We speak of religious freedom, but laws are made to come against two groups, two religions, Judaism, and Christianity* (Acts 4:23-25, 29-31).

#### **Whose Job Are You Doing?**

The disciples of the early church understood the issue well. We have civil responsibilities, but ultimately, taking care of the evils of the world is God’s job. Taking the gospel to the world is our job. God will empower us by the Holy Spirit when we accept our responsibility.