

A Sign of the Times

One of the more pressing issues in the on-going judgment of the United States and all its people, is the blatant hypocrisy in which they engage. Rather than be a sharply noticeable departure from the norm, it is endemic to the extent it is not even noticed by the vast majority of people. It is certainly not noticed by the major media. Rather, they traffic in hypocrisy. Under the guise of reporting news, they routinely advance agendas, all the while swearing they are presenting “unbiased news.” This occurs in both the liberal and conservative media.

However, it sells. The reason it sells is because the American people want it. It doesn't seem to bother the electorate unless... This “unless” has to do, not with the fact the individual engaged in blatant hypocrisy, but with the fact they did so while belonging to the opposite political party. This “conditional hypocrisy” is one of the major reasons for the judgment of America.

It should be understood that hypocrisy involves lying and deceit, both of which are an abomination to the LORD God and are cause for Him to bring judgment:

Lying lips are abomination to the LORD: but they that deal truly are his delight. (*Proverbs 12:22*)

He that speaketh truth sheweth forth righteousness: but a false witness deceit. (*Proverbs 12:17*)

Those who engage in hypocrisy do so to the destruction of those around them:

An hypocrite with his mouth destroyeth his neighbour: but through knowledge shall the just be delivered. (*Proverbs 11:9*)

Thus it becomes of interest when those who profess to be the

messengers of the LORD God and are supposed to be guardians of the truth of the Gospel, themselves engage in hypocrisy. While this behavior deserves rebuke and admonition from other pastors and elders, ultimately it is up to the church they belong to to censure them and remove them from positions of trust.

Normally, I wouldn't be concerned about what happens in a church halfway across America. But this isn't a normal situation, and it threatens the perception of all who encounter this situation as pertaining to the actual duties and calling of pastors, particularly Baptist pastors. The creator of this situation is Raphael Warnock, a "Baptist pastor" at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia. There is reason why Baptist pastor is in quotation marks. It is simply due to the man's doctrine. Unsurprisingly, it isn't standard Baptist doctrine. Yes, he indeed holds the position of pastor in a church that labels itself as Baptist. While the church is free to call themselves whatever they want, they are not free from scrutiny concerning their doctrine and practice.

So what is it that generates so much attention? It is a statement that is, at best, poorly worded. At worst, it's condemning of a group of individuals that the Lord Jesus Christ, John the Baptist, Peter, or Paul condemned. When we realize that none of the above condemned the military of that day (which were far worse in behavior than the American military), we have to consider why Mr. Warnock stated what he did in a sermon back in 2011:

"America, nobody can serve God and the military," Warnock said at the time. "You can't serve God and money. You cannot serve God and mammon at the same time. America, choose ye this day who you will serve. Choose ye this day." – Raphael Warnock, April 2011

Now, the statement that you cannot serve God and mammon is

indeed in the Scripture and the Lord Jesus Christ stated it more than once. However, he never stated you could not serve in the military and serve the LORD God. The Lord Jesus Christ certainly had many opportunities to make such a condemnation. He certainly knew of the excesses military members engage in from time to time. In fact, John the Baptist expressly admonished the soldiers that came to him asking what they should do:

Luke 3:1-14

(1-2) Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judaea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituraea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene, Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.

(3-4) And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins; As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

(5-6) Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

(7) Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

(8) Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

(9) And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

(10) And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then?

(11) He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.

(12) Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do?

(13) And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you.

(14) And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages.

We should note that he didn't tell them to stop being soldiers. He didn't tell them they were being disobedient to God by being soldiers. A careful study of all the New Testament reveals that none of the apostles ever advised any Roman soldier to stop being a soldier, or that they were in disobedience to the LORD God for being a soldier. When the Lord Jesus Christ encountered a Roman centurion who desired the LORD to heal his servant, the LORD made the following observation:

And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him, And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. (*Matthew 8:5-10*)

If there were ever an opportunity to rebuke a soldier for being a soldier, this would be it. Instead, that is not what happens at all. Because the centurion displays remarkable

faith in the LORD, it is pointed out by the LORD as the example all Israel should follow.

Hence, it is strange that a Baptist pastor would do something the LORD never did:

Lump military service in with worshipping and serving money.

As a rule, Baptist pastors should have the attitude of the apostle Paul:

For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. (*Galatians 1:10*)

This is because there is no higher calling than to be entrusted with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Only the Gospel has the power to convert a child of iniquity to a child of God. It only has the power to change the soul, and thus the eternal destiny of the individual. Christ, and Christ alone is the Savior of all persons, regardless of where and when they are born and what station of life they occupy, if only they will place their complete reliance in Him.

But that doesn't seem to be the message Mr. Warnock is preaching here. Rather, in looking at the totality of Warnock's public testimony, something else seems to be the focus.

What that focus is becomes glaringly obvious when it is considered what Mr. Warnock seeks to do:

He seeks to be a US Senator.

The only position that is more powerful in the US Government is that of the President, although a single senator can stop certain actions of the President.

Moreover, US Senators get compensated handsomely for their

time in office – even if they only do a single term. There are many worldly benefits, not the least of which is public recognition. After all, you are one of an exclusive club of 100, making decisions (or not), but certainly getting the recognition. And, while single term senators won't get a fantastic pension, getting any pension after only five years of service is quite the deal. Making \$174k a year isn't a bad gig either.

Hmmm...

Who is serving mammon here: US Senators or the members of the US military?

Now, whether or not any particular senator happens to be serving only for monetary gain is a question only the LORD God and that individual can answer. However, it is quite obvious no one goes into the military to "make money." While it cannot be said about everyone in the military, it's going to be a tough sell to promote the idea that any significant number of military members seek to make the United States into a "god" and worship it. Rather, the vast majority of US military simply want to keep the United States free, and if possible, better themselves while they do it.

Hence, Warnock's comment in the sermon from 2011 now becomes an hypocrisy that he must own. It is after all, utterly hypocritical to condemn individuals in the US military by lumping them in with those who love money, and then turn around and seek a worldly position in that same government, that has financial benefits far beyond anything anyone in the military receives.

Perhaps Mr. Warnock should acquaint himself with the writings of the apostle John:

I John 2:15-17

(15) Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is

not in him.

(16) For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

(17) And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

Mr. Warnock, go bury yourself in your hypocrisy.

If Americans expect to do better as a nation, they must begin by recognizing hypocrisy and rejecting it, both in themselves and in the people they elect to office to represent them. It has to start somewhere.

Mr. Warnock, you speak of repentance, but you, yourself have refused to recognize that you are in need of repentance. If you want to be a US Senator, fine. Resign your pastorate and quit calling yourself a Baptist pastor. You're divorced anyway, which disqualifies you from the pastorate.

But be advised, if the people of Georgia elect you, it is only because they, themselves are utter hypocrites.