

Devotion on the Collect for the Fifth Sunday in Lent, commonly called Passion Sunday
– 19 March 2013, Anno Domini



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Passion Sunday.

The Collect.

WE beseech thee, Almighty God, mercifully to look upon thy people; that by thy great goodness they may be governed and preserved evermore, both in body and soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The Prayer Collect for Passion Sunday relates to the just and orderly government of the people of God in His trust and preservation. This Collect, too, is taken from the Gregorian Sacramentary. The original (in the Latin) for "thy people" was *familia*. I prefer the older term for it means the "Household, or family, of God" and that is what those who trust in God should be called.

The government of God is just and equitable, and all governments incorporate to some extent the Laws of God for governance; but those that corrupt aspects of these laws in contempt of the Maker are those tyrants and despots that are so common in our day around the world. I need not remind the Christian that ALL just laws derive from the Law of God and are subordinate thereto. The French economist and Parliamentarian, Frederick Bastiat recognized this principle and very well articulated it in his short commentary entitled, "The Law" of 1848. But even sooner than this, the Holy Bible also held forth the same principle lest any forget: *It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man.* (Psalms 118:8) *We ought to obey God rather than men.* (Acts 5:29) I hope no minister of God ever doubts his allegiance to God over the traditions or deceits of man-made government. If the government forbids the admonition of sins such as homosexuality, abortion, or adultery, I hope every Christian and minister reading this devotion will be faithful to his Christian vows and follow God rather than man. If the laws and purposes of government become contrary to Scriptural truth, then they are not legally binding on the Christian. God did not give us a conscience to be squandered away at the bar of government.

Our Founding Fathers well knew the legitimate limits of governmental power and included a clear definition in the Declaration of Independence – an oft disregarded

formulary of our freedoms: "*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, — That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.*" Declaration of Independence, unanimously ratified by the Thirteen United States of America, July 4th, 1776 Anno Domini. Governments that are righteous will also enforce laws that are righteous. *Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work* (Titus 3:1) Every good work is not possible under the tyranny of oppression and religious persecution. It is noteworthy that the Founding Fathers of the most flourishing Republic in history acknowledged the Source of legitimate governmental powers to descend from God.

We petition, in today's COLLECT, for God's government and preservation of His own people. *WE beseech thee, Almighty God, mercifully to look upon thy people.* Our prayers have no effect on the government of the ungodly, but they indeed do have application to the national character and morals of the nation in which His people dwell. You will recall from 2 Chronicles 7:14, that well-worn petition and counsel for national healing: *If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.* (2 Chron 7:14) Though modern-day America has become overpopulated by heathen and luke-warm Christians, only those who are called by HIS name, with serious intent, will suffice in prayer. All the false professor and legal idiots do not need to offer prayer at all for no one would hear them.

".....*that by thy great goodness they may be governed and preserved evermore, both in body and soul.*" What result may we expect if we are a nation well favored by God for our faith and obedience? The amazing testimony of America in her first 175 years has been characterized by faith and righteousness before the Lord. *7 Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil. 8 It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones. 9 Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: 10 So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.* (Prov 3:7-10) The blessings of God on a nation obedient to His laws are inexhaustible and extend not only the health of the soul, but the health and preservation of the body as well. *Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance.* (Psalms 33:12) What a tragic downfall that is destined for the favored-nation who has known well the blessings of God but, yet, has fallen for the filth and slop of the world – a nation that once honored God in all her public institutions and expressions, but has now abandoned every reference to God and embraced the sins of abortion and homosexuality along with every other abominable thing.

It has long been the yearning of my heart that I could write in truth and good conscience of my beloved nation's turn back to the God that gave her standing from her ancient founding; but I cannot do so. I have prayed that God would place a hook in our hearts, if we awaken not to our peril, and draw us by force back to His favored ground. He may do so yet, but I fear we are approaching that impassable of which Jeremiah prophesied. He at first preached repentance for national salvation, yet, the apostasy

became so great and tragic that he changed his prophesying to a preaching of going into bondage as a chastisement, and then a national salvation based on repentance from the land of bondage at Babylon. How earnestly I pray that such bondage will not overtake our beloved America, but if it cause a national repentance, I plead that the Lord will bring it on sooner rather than later. It will be a sad day when the American Song is sung in bondage to strangers as in Babylon: *1 By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. 2 We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. 3 For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion.* (Psalms 137:1-3) Will it not be far more edifying to sing our national song by the Mississippi, or Missouri, Rivers than on the riverbanks of some strange and hateful enemy of our people? Unfortunately, the enemy is encamped among us today and will have a song in mirth of Christ and our God. Again, beware the fateful words of that ancient Roman proponent of Republican forms of government, Marcus Tullius Cicero: *"Power and law are not synonymous. In truth they are frequently in opposition and irreconcilable. There is God's Law from which all Equitable laws of man emerge and by which men must live if they are not to die in oppression, chaos and despair. Divorced from God's eternal and immutable Law, established before the founding of the suns, man's power is evil no matter the noble words with which it is employed or the motives urged when enforcing it. Men of good will, mindful therefore of the Law laid down by God, will oppose governments whose rule is by men, and if they wish to survive as a nation they will destroy the government which attempts to adjudicate by the whim of venal judges."* 42. BC.