

June 30, 2002  
AM Service  
Patchogue Church of the Nazarene

“What to do When Foundations are Being Destroyed”  
Heb 13:8-9a (NLT)

8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. 9 So do not be attracted by strange, new ideas.

### **Crumbling Foundation**

The headline of Thursday's Newsday was: “*Under God*” Banned! Based on a suit by a man who is an atheist two judges ruled that the words Under God in our Pledge of Allegiance (“one nation *under God*”) were unconstitutional.

In our time ideas are changing and too many things are changing in too short a time. These rapid, continual changes have brought disorientation and stress.

*Wars* in various places, the *change of political leader ship*, *large corporations falling* and so many other frequent, rapid changes.

In his book *The End of the World...As We Know it* Chuck Smith, Jr. points out how the rules have been changed on us. At one time we believed that *science and technology* would solve all our problems. And why not? Science had found a cure to small pox and polio and certainly would find a cure for heart disease and cancer. And technology would come up with more and more gadgets to make our lives easier and less stressful. Some of you remember the World's Fair in the early 60's with exhibits of the “World of Tomorrow” (I loved the G.E. exhibit. Do you remember that? The audience was rotated to view technological advances from the invention of the electric light bulb to future possibilities.). But science hasn't been able to cure all our diseases and solve all our problems. Although scientists have done some good things they also have been used for evil. They discover chemical/drugs to cure illness, saving many people from death, but also make chemicals that are use as weapons to kill masses of people. And is technology really making our life easier or more complex and stressful? A few years back my father-in-law bought a VCR that he never used. It had so many buttons and features he was never able to figure out how to work the thing. Now, he says it doesn't matter because VCR's will soon be obsolete - replaced by CD's. And so to this day it sits disconnected and unused on top of his new big screen TV (which he purchased to upgrade from his last big screen TV which had older features...which he didn't know how to work).

Our *worldview is changing* also. I grew up an Italian American. The neighbor hood were I was born in Brooklyn was all Italian. We moved to Valley Stream where the neighbor was multicultural – Italian, Irish and Jewish. My parents still live on that same block that now consists of Italian, Irish, Jewish, Hispanic, Chinese, Indian and African Americans just to name a few. I grew up only knowing the Italian culture therefore, how they did

things was the right way. Now we are exposed to many cultures who do things different and we have to accept that.

*Ideas are changing.* Things that were not acceptable a few years ago are now acceptable. Recently, I was visiting someone in the hospital. The nurse came in and asked me to step out for a moment. I was in the hallway waiting, thinking and praying. I was looking down at the floor, my eyes moved to my right and noticed a tattoo on a ladies ankle as I raised my eyes I noticed that the lady was a woman in her 60's. Do you know how unusual it would have been just a few years ago for a woman in her 60's to get a tattoo? There were times in the church when if a lady wore earrings or other jewelry people would think bad things of her. Now we got men wearing jewelry. I'm not saying there's anything wrong with tattoos or jewelry on men or women. And that's my point. Perhaps in the past a pastor would preach against these things. One of the first times I went to a Nazarene Church I showed up in jeans and sneakers. A young man (younger than me and I was only in my late 20's at the time) came up to me and said, "Isn't God important enough to you to put on a shirt and tie when you come to His house?" Well, after that I started wearing a shirt and tie. Look at me now! Times and worldviews are changing...like it or not.

As I said, it's like the *rules have been changed* on us. Even things that we believe were wrong we now deem acceptable.

ABC News reports that a Christian woman who examined research on marijuana found "no evidence to back up the horrible things she had heard about the drug." A Bible study on the topic turned up nothing negative, so "she began to wonder why some religious leaders seemed to favor stiff penalties for marijuana users." She even decided to try smoking pot.

According to ABC, the woman, who is 35 and a mother of five, then decided to launch a "Christians for Cannabis" Web site, and to begin a grass roots campaign aimed at encouraging legislators, religious leaders and newspapers to rally for an end to the marijuana prohibition. The mission of Christians for Cannabis is "to provide encouragement, support and prayer for the [Christian (marijuana) user] subculture as a whole and those that work on its behalf."

(I don't know how she interpreted Scriptures about not hurting your body because it is the temple of the Holy Spirit or not to get "high" on anything but rather be filled with the Holy Spirit). This is what is most disturbing. When people, even Christians question God's truth. It is amazing to me how many Christians justify sin by accepting what our culture believes instead of what the truth is. Can you imagine if we were told that it is now acceptable to go through red lights and stop signs? You can stop if you want to but it is perfectly ok to go through and not stop if you choose (I think I've seen people on the road who already believe that). Can you imagine the chaos and confusion that would

cause? But it seems to me that people really don't care what the truth is. I've even heard that lawyers feel that cases are won not by the lawyer who produces the best evidence but by the one who tells the most emotional story (that's what will win a jury).

The world is changing whether we like it or not. These changes have brought disorientation and stress even though we are told to accept it all and enjoy it.

I read a true story this week that was published in a Chicago paper three years ago. The person telling the story says:

I was traveling with a backpacking group through Africa, and found myself waiting in Kariba airport for a flight to Hwange. Our flight was delayed, so we settled down to wait.

Three hours later, we were finally boarded an Air Zimbabwe, "used airplane," bought from another airline. The midsize jetliner was clearly one that no one else had wanted. Finally, the pilot's voice came over the loudspeaker. "We're all ready to go, however, the copilot still hasn't arrived, so we're going to be flying without a copilot today. If any of you feel uncomfortable with this, feel free to disembark now and Air Zimbabwe will put you on the next available flight to Hwange.

There were no takers on this offer, so we all stayed aboard for the one-hour flight. Once aloft, the pilot came on the loudspeaker again "Ladies and gentlemen. I am going to use the bathroom. I have placed the controls on autopilot and everything will be fine. He wedged the cockpit door shut with a magazine so it wouldn't lock and disappeared behind the restroom door. Shortly after this, in a sudden patch of turbulence, the cabin door magazine fell out and it promptly swung shut.

When the pilot came out of the bathroom, both he and the stewardess came running up to open the door. But it wouldn't budge. He was locked out of the empty cockpit. What would he do?

He hurried to the rear of the plane and returned holding a big ax. Then he chopped a hole in the cockpit door, reached inside, and let himself back in. "Ah, ladies and gentlemen, we just had a little problem there, but everything is fine now. So relax and enjoy the rest of the flight."

This is a true story published in the Chicago Tribune "Travel" section for June 6, 1999 in a story entitled "Choppy Skies -A white-knuckle flight on Air Zimbabwe. -- Sermon Fodder, arr. by Gaby Plattner

Do you think those people could "relax and enjoy the rest of the flight."

My cousin, several years ago, worked for Amtrack. He was offered a transfer to California. He always wanted to go there, he was a single young man, felt nothing was holding him back and so he took the transfer to California. I remember him telling me of his first experience he had with an earthquake. He said it scared him half to death as the earth moved under his feet. It was a very minor earthquake. All the other workers native

to California and use to this happening, just waited until it was over and went back to work. My cousin said to his fellow workers, "what are you doing?" They said, "Oh, we have these tremors often we just wait and when it stops we go back to work." And my cousin said, "Not me, I got to go home and lie down for awhile."

That's what it's like. Our foundations are moving under our feet and even being destroyed. What can we do? Where do we go?

### **Steady Foundation**

David asked the same question:

Ps 11

v3 "When the foundations are being destroyed, what can the righteous do?"

He already answered this question in v1 "In the LORD I take refuge."

Then he says in v4-7 "The LORD is in his holy temple; the LORD is on his heavenly throne. He observes the sons of men; his eyes examine them. 5 The LORD examines the righteous, but the wicked and those who love violence his soul hates. 6 On the wicked he will rain fiery coals and burning sulfur; a scorching wind will be their lot. 7 For the LORD is righteous, he loves justice; upright men will see his face.

He is saying the same thing our text from Hebrews is saying: Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. So do not be attracted by strange, new ideas.

Here is what this verse tells us about Jesus

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever:

1. Jesus is God – always existed and always will.
2. Jesus is Christ - the anointed Savior of the World.
3. Jesus is the same – always! He will not change.

Worldviews are changing rapidly. Foundations that we once stood strong upon are being destroyed. What can the righteous do? Take refuge in the LORD Jesus. He does not change. His Word does not change. If He has said something is sin it will always be sin. He has told us to love the Lord our God with our whole heart, soul, mind and strength and to love our neighbor as our self and He will not change his mind about that.

Jesus said:

Matt 7:24-27

24 "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. 26 But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. 27 The rain came

down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."

David says the Lord is on His heavenly throne. Political ideas and leaders will change But God will always remain sovereign over all the universe and in control. And here is the greatest hope: David says the upright will see His face. These things will not change.

"So do not be attracted by strange, new ideas" and do not worry. You can "relax and enjoy the flight" if you have faith in Jesus. He will direct, guide and guard your life as you take refuge in Him. He has said through Mal 3:6 "I the LORD do not change. So you, O descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed." And James wrote: James 1:16-17 - Don't be deceived, my dear brothers. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

Things are changing. Some changes we must accept. We, the church, must change if we are going to reach the people of this age. But the facts of the Bible, the facts of our faith, the fact of Jesus our Savior, Lord and God – His promises, His truth will never change. In these times, put your faith in and cling to Jesus and His Word. "When the foundations are being destroyed ..." you know you can take refuge in the LORD! Amen.