

In God We Trust

Written by David McNabb

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"In God We Trust." These four short, yet powerful words form the official motto of the United States of America. During the War of 1812, after seeing the attack on Fort McHenry in the Battle of Baltimore, Francis Scott Key was inspired with the words of *The Star-Spangled Banner*, which would later be adopted as the national anthem on March 3, 1931.

The little-known, final stanza of Mr. Key's poem says, "O! thus be it ever, when freemen shall stand Between their loved home and the war's desolation! Blest with victory and peace, may the heav'n rescued land Praise the Power that hath made and preserved us a nation. Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just, And this be our motto: 'In God is our trust.' And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!"

Although there was no official motto, "E Pluribus Unum," meaning "from many, one," was the de facto national motto until the Civil War. That war gave rise to an increased Christian sentiment. In 1861, Treasury Secretary Salmon Chase received a letter from Rev. M. R. Watkinson which stated, "Dear Sir: You are about to submit your annual report to the Congress respecting the affairs of the national finances. One fact touching our currency has hitherto been seriously overlooked. I mean the recognition of the Almighty God in some form on our coins. You are probably a Christian. What if our Republic were not shattered beyond reconstruction? Would not the antiquaries of succeeding centuries rightly reason from our past that we were a heathen nation? What I propose is that instead of the goddess of liberty we shall have next inside the 13 stars a ring inscribed with the words PERPETUAL UNION; within the ring the allseeing eye, crowned with a halo; beneath this eye the American flag, bearing in its field stars equal to the number of the States united; in the folds of the bars the words GOD, LIBERTY, LAW. This would make a beautiful coin, to which no possible citizen could object. This would relieve us from the ignominy of heathenism. This would place us openly under the Divine protection we have personally claimed. From my heart I have felt our national shame in disowning God as not the least of our present national disasters. To you first I address a subject that must be agitated."

After a series of mottoes were presented, Sec. Chase approved the words "IN GOD WE TRUST" for use on American coinage, first appearing in 1864. It was not until July 11, 1955, 91 years later, that the Legislature mandated these words to appear on all coins and currency.

On July 30, 1956, President Eisenhower signed legislation making "In God We Trust" our official national motto, and the first paper bills to bear the affirmation appeared in 1957. (No doubt, these efforts in the 50s were intended to emphasize the contrast between the U.S.A. and the

philosophy of atheist communism.)

Now, more than 50 years later, at least two generations of Americans have grown up trading currency that echoes the Declaration of Independence signers' "firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence." But, do these words reflect public sentiment, or are they merely idle words which fall to the ground and are forgotten, like the many pennies that bear them?

Do people even know what it means to trust God anymore? Certainly, there are many Americans who deny the existence of God and many others who proclaim a belief in some deity other than the God of our Lord Jesus Christ. Such fools (Psalm 14:1; Psalm 53:1) have been around since the earliest times of man's history and will probably continue to be until every knee bows and every tongue confesses that Jesus Christ is King of kings and Lord of lords. I am not, therefore, overly concerned with whether such folks trust in God or not. Rather, I wonder if those people that profess to know God know what it means to trust Him.

Why should we trust God? When someone asks for credit, they are actually asking the potential creditor to trust them. The lender requires an application to be filled out, giving him certain information which will allow him to make a determination as to the trustworthiness of the applicant: credit history, work history, expected income, references, etc. With that information in hand, the lender can decide whether or not to lend the money – whether or not to trust the person making the request to pay back the loan.

Very often, a person may borrow from someone whom they know very well or from a "friend of a friend." In these cases, one's word is often good enough, since he has a proven reputation of being good to his word.

So, why should we trust God? Throughout the ages He has asked that man do so. How do we know that such trust is not misplaced? He has said time and again, "Fear not, for I am with thee," and, "I will never leave nor forsake thee." He has made many promises.

It is God's own word, and His own name, that is proof enough of His faithfulness. In His word, He has given us character references: Abraham, Jacob, David, Ruth, Esther, Daniel, and many others. Each biblical account further confirms both God's ability and His faithfulness to do what He said He would do. Each time God prophesied, it came to pass. Each time God promised, He

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also fulfilled. God has proven that there is one thing that is impossible for Him to do: lie. God cannot lie, neither does He change His mind. If He said He will do it, neither heaven nor earth can prevent Him from performing His word.

He told us that we need only look to those things that He has done with and for His people in the past, so that we might have confidence in Him for what He will do for us today. He said, "That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past" (Eccl. 3:15).

A large part of today's Christian generation will soon discover if they really trust God or not. Many of the pulpits have proliferated a teaching that, if true, lessens the believer's need for real trust. A fairly new doctrine has emerged which teaches that the generation of believers living at the time of the return of our Lord will not endure any real persecution, but rather will be spirited away to glory, prior to the onset of the prophesied hard times that are coming.

One need only pull a copy of God's "credit report" – The Bible – to see if that is how He operates. Let's look at some of His credit references:

The Children of Israel: When they were oppressed in Egypt, God poured out plagues on the Egyptians, yet protected the Israelites *while they were still in the midst of Egypt*.

Daniel: When he was found guilty of praying to God, contrary to the law of the land, he was thrown into the lions' den. He was not protected from going to the lions, but *was* protected from the lions.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego: When they would not bow to the national idol, they were thrown into the fiery furnace. It was there that God's protection was upon them, even preventing the smell of smoke from permeating their garments.

Mordecai: When the edict to bow before Haman was given, Mordecai and the Jewish people were not removed to some remote location, far from the threat of harm. Instead, God worked miraculously, not only sparing Mordecai when he obeyed God's law and

refused to bow, but also causing him to replace Haman as prime minister.

Paul and Silas: They were not kept out of prison, but their imprisonment was used as a tool by God to glorify His name.

God's "credit report" is impeccable and harmonious. It serves to work faith in our lives, because it shows the faithfulness and unchangeableness of the Almighty God. As darkness begins to fall upon the whole earth, and as the rain begins to fall upon the just and upon the unjust (Matt. 5:45), the prophecy will be fulfilled, which was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah, "O LORD, my strength, and my fortress, and my refuge in the day of affliction, the Gentiles shall come unto thee from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit" (Jer. 16:19). False teaching will be brought to light, and a newfound trust in the word of the Lord will emerge.

Do we not desire the day of the Lord? Then the warning of Amos the prophet is to us, "Woe unto you that desire the day of the LORD! To what end is it for you? The day of the LORD is darkness, and not light. As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him. Shall not the day of the LORD be darkness, and not light? Even very dark, and no brightness in it?" (Amos 5:18-20). When things are happening around you that you were convinced you would not be around to see, will you yet trust the Lord your God?

Get your Bibles out! Study earnestly God's precious word. Learn about the Lord's proven track record of great deliverance to His people when they place their confidence in Him in the face of certain doom. Humble yourselves, and pray and seek the face of God.

Heed the words of the prophet Zephaniah, saying, "Gather yourselves together, yea, gather together, O nation not desired; Before the decree bring forth, before the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the LORD come upon you, before the day of the LORD's anger come upon you. Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD's anger" (Zeph. 2:1-3).

Reject Christian fables, and place your trust in the Lord and in His word. "For therefore we both

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labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe" (1 Tim. 4:10).

"Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 15:13). Amen.