

Notre Dame, Lessons Learned

Sunday AM 05/05/19

Introduction:

April 12, 2019 Notre Dame in Paris suffered a major fire.

I) Background

A) "Our Lady of Paris"

1. Catholic Cathedral consecrated to the "Virgin Mary"
2. Construction began 1160 AD and completed 1260 AD
3. 19th Century the site of the coronation of Napoleon I
4. Throughout history it has needed remodeling, restoration, and cleaning.
5. 12 million people visit Notre Dame annually, making it the most visited monument in Paris.
6. One can admire the building for its beauty, architecture.

B) **Man has often built great buildings and structures**

1. Tower of Babel, *Genesis 11* with its brick and asphalt mortar.
2. Temple of Dagon, *Judges 16. 23, 25-27*
3. Temple of Diana at Ephesus, *Acts 19*
4. Even the Temple at Jerusalem. Obviously there were differences between that temple and those mentioned above.

- a. The Temple was dedicated to the true God vs. the others were either for man or his gods.
- b. The Temple was smaller and less physically impressive than the others.

II) Lessons We Can Learn From Notre Dame

A) **The secularization of society**

1. While the building was burning, the newscaster was interviewing someone there. They explained that most of the money to restore Notre Dame came from America as France is a "secular society."
2. Definitions
 - a. Secular- denoting attitudes, activities, or other things that have no religious or spiritual basis.
 - b. Secular humanism- with regard in particular to the belief that humanity is capable of morality and self-fulfillment without belief in God.
 - c. Secularization- is the transformation of a society from close identification with religious values and institutions toward nonreligious values and secular institutions. ... Secularization refers to the historical process in which religion loses social and cultural significance.
3. Notre Dame had lost any religious significance it once held because society moved beyond God.

4. We are warned in the Bible of that danger.
 - a. Israel had a generation that knew not God, *Judges 2.10*.
 - b. The Romans rejected the knowledge of God and became fools, *Romans 1.18-23*.
 - c. Our society is becoming more and more ashamed of God, religious values, and the belief in right and wrong.
5. A "secular society" does not recognize God or His word, in fact it will not tolerate Him. *Judges 21.25*.

B) The church is not the building

1. This is not to argue that the church cannot own a building but it is the redeemed, *Ephesians 1.7*.
2. God did not tell us to go and make some great physical structure but He told us a lot about the spiritual nature of His church.
 - a. Build on Jesus Christ, *1 Corinthians 3.11*
 - b. Its head is Jesus, *Ephesians 1.22*
 - c. It is made up of living stones, *1 Peter 2.5*
 - d. Offering up spiritual sacrifices, *1 Peter 2.5*.
3. This church cannot be destroyed by fire or mankind.
4. We often say the church is not the building but it is the people. Church buildings can become tombs, museums, artifacts, the "church" can never be destroyed for it is based on God's word.

C) When the People Stray from the Word of God either They Need To Go Back To It Or they Will No Longer Be The Church

1. In Revelation We Read of Five "Churches" who Were In danger
 - a. Ephesus left their first love, *Revelation 2.4*; told to repent, *v. 5*
 - b. Pergamos had the doctrine of Balaam and sexual immorality, *Rev. 2.14*; told to repent, *v. 16*
 - c. Thyatira allowed Jezebel to have her influence which resulted in sexual and spiritual immorality, *Rev. 2.20*; Jesus threatens to kill her and her children, *v.23*
 - d. Sardis had a reputation of being alive but was dead, *Rev. 3.1*; told to repent, *v. 3*.
 - e. Laodicea thought she was rich but was lukewarm, *Rev. 3.15ff*, told to repent, *v. 19*.
2. How to "restore" the church today?
 - a. Starts with the Word of God, *2 Timothy 2.15*.
 - i. The common thread in our lessons "Challenge(s) for Our Age(s)" was the word of God.
 - ii. Godly people must value God's word.
3. See the "pattern" laid out for us in the Bible, *Hebrews 8.5*.

- a. Salvation has a pattern of hearing, believing, repenting, confessing Christ, and being baptized.
 - b. The church has a pattern-autonomous congregations, members, treasury, elders, worship and work.
 - c. The Home has a pattern - one man and one woman for life, children being nurtured, etc.
4. If we ever find ourselves straying from the word of God, we must with due care seek to get back to the church of the 1st Century.

Conclusion:

No doubt they will rebuild Notre Dame. It will take time, money, effort, skilled craftsmen to do so. We can be a part of the Lord's body but it will take time, effort, skillfully using God's word.