

THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,
I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God
IN CHRIST JESUS.*

(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)

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'In God We Trust' – Are We Living By This Motto?

For many years now, there has been and continues to be controversy over the use of the word *God* in relation to the governance of the United States, and yet, we continue to ask God to bless us and maintain a national motto that says we trust in God. To some, the use of the word *God* is very spiritual or religious; to others, it is an offense; and to others, especially the courts, its use is what is referred to as "**ceremonial deism**," which means the word *God* is simply ceremonial in its use and has no real religious meaning. Further, God exists and created the world; nevertheless, He has not assumed any control over it or the lives of people.

Frankly, we shouldn't really care about all the controversy over the word *God* from man's perspective. **We need to be more interested in God's perspective.** Regardless of what anyone thinks to the contrary, there is only one God who rules over the realm of mankind (Daniel 4:25, 32); just ask Nebuchadnezzar what he thinks of the matter. This poses the question: **How does God look upon a nation with a motto "In God We Trust"? What does He expect of such a nation?** What does God expect of a nation that, according to a 2006 study, has 68 references to "God" in its legislation? Of the 68, 46 are references to "acts of God"; however, the other 22 are more explicit affirmations of the positive role of God in the country.

What does God expect of a nation that, by legislation in 1954, added the words "**Under God**" to its **Pledge of Allegiance**? The congressional house committee that recommended passage of the legislation found: "**Our American Government is founded on the concept of the individuality and the dignity of the human being. Underlying this concept is the belief that the human person is important because he was created by God and endowed by Him with certain inalienable rights which no civil authority may usurp. The inclusion of God in our Pledge therefore would further acknowledge the dependence of our people and our Government upon the moral directions of the Creator.**" This doesn't sound like deism.

What does God expect of a nation that has the phrase "In God We Trust" in the **Star-Spangled Banner**, which was written in 1814 by Francis Scott Key and later became the National Anthem?

What does God expect of a nation that, based on appeals by Christians during the American Civil War, legislated that the phrase "In God We Trust" be printed on some of its coins, and then 91 years later, on July 11, 1956, required the phrase to be printed on **all its coins and paper currency**? Personally, I could do without the motto being on our money, especially in this day of materialism and consumerism and a day in which there is much love of money. As an interesting side note, in presenting the original bill to Congress, Representative Charles Bennett of Florida stated: "**In these days when imperialistic and materialistic communism seeks to attack and destroy freedom, we should continuously look for ways to strengthen the foundations of our freedom. At the base of our freedom is our faith in God and the desire of Americans to live by His will and His guidance. As long as this country trusts in God, it will prevail.**"

What does God expect of a nation whose president, Dwight D. Eisenhower, on July 30, 1956, signed the law making "In God We Trust" the official national motto of the United States? 36 USC Sec 302 simply reads: "**In God We Trust**" is the National Motto. More light is given on the genesis of the National Motto in a statement by the Judiciary Committee that recommended passage of H.J. Res. 396 as recorded in the 1956 Congressional Record.

"At the present time, the United States has no national motto. The committee deems it most appropriate that "In God we trust" be so designated as our national motto. The phrase "In God we trust" has received official

recognition for many years. It was authorized to be placed on certain coins by the act of March 3, 1865 (13 Stat. 518). Further permissive authorization for inscribing "In God we trust" on coins was given in the Coinage Act of February 12, 1873 (17 Stat. 427). The first mandatory requirement for the use of this motto on certain coins was in the act of May 18, 1908 (35 Stat. 164). Last year, Public Law 140 was enacted by the Congress making the use of "In God we trust" mandatory on all currency and coins of the United States. Further official recognition of this motto was given by the adoption of the Star-Spangled Banner as our national anthem. One stanza of our national anthem is as follows:

"O, thus be it ever when free men shall stand
 Between their lov'd home and the war's desolation!
 Blest with vic'try 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."

In view of these words in our national anthem, it is clear that "In God we trust" has a strong claim as our national motto. It will be of great spiritual and psychological value to our country to have a clearly designated national motto of inspirational quality in plain, popular accepted English. ... The committee considers "In God we trust" a superior and more acceptable motto for the United States."

Whether the so-called atheists, the ACLU, or, even perhaps, some religionists do not want any acknowledgement of God in the governance (rule) of the United States, it is quite apparent that there is a preponderance of support and historical evidence that, in fact, God does rule and is even expected to rule in some measure, even if it is to save us from disasters and the like, or to bless us, as in "God Bless America," which means to turn us from our wicked ways. So, whether we mean it or not, or whether we expect it or not, we, as Americans, are imploring God every day to be part of our lives in some measure and are declaring that we trust Him. **We are declaring that we are in His Kingdom and we submit to His sovereignty over our nation!** Are we to think that this goes unnoticed by God? Are we to think that He shakes His head and says that we do not mean it so He will ignore it? Well, even a cursory read of the Bible reveals that God is not an absent landlord and that He takes the word of people very seriously. He listens to our words and then He reads our hearts. More times than not, the two are in opposition. Are we to expect God to ignore this disparity? Do we think that, as a nation, we can fool God? Do our leaders, both of government and of the church-at-large, think they can get away with hypocrisy and pretense; that God is going to ignore it forever? It is time to wake up and turn back to God and His Son!

All of this should remind us of Paul's great speech on Mars Hill in Athens, Greece. He had seen an altar with the inscription "**To an unknown God,**" and he responded accordingly. Read his entire sermon as recorded in Acts 17:22-31. However, consider some excerpts.

(24) The God who made the world and all things in it (26) and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, (27) that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; (28) for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His children.' ... (30) Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, (31) because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead." (Acts 17:24a, 26-28, 30-31 NASB)

Herein is the answer for all nations. As for the United States, which has a large Christian population, we do not have an unknown God. It is time to match our words with our hearts. It is time to be one nation under one God, a nation that puts its trust in God, a nation that turns from man's ways to God's ways, from man's law to God's Law, and a nation that declares that Jesus is Lord and King. In judgment, let us declare: In God We Trust!