

WHOSE SIDE IS GOD ON? AMOS 1-2

Few questions have been asked more (although usually silently). Fewer answers have been assumed more
→ God is always on my side, and my group's side!!!

How could God not be?

Thence is our problem: How many sides is God on? How many sides can God be on?

Transcript of President Abraham Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address (1865)

Fellow Countrymen

At this second appearing to take the oath of the presidential office, there is less occasion for an extended address than there was at the first. Then a statement, somewhat in detail, of a course to be pursued, seemed fitting and proper. Now, at the expiration of four years, during which public declarations have been constantly called forth on every point and phase of the great contest which still absorbs the attention, and engrosses the energies of the nation, little that is new could be presented. The progress of our arms, upon which all else chiefly depends, is as well known to the public as to myself; and it is, I trust, reasonably satisfactory and encouraging to all. With high hope for the future, no prediction in regard to it is ventured.

On the occasion corresponding to this four years ago, all thoughts were anxiously directed to an impending civil-war. All dreaded it -- all sought to avert it. While the inaugural address was being delivered from this place, devoted altogether to saving the Union without war, insurgent agents were in the city seeking to destroy it without war -- seeking to dissolve the Union, and divide effects, by negotiation. Both parties deprecated war; **but one of them would make war rather than let the nation survive; and the other would accept war rather than let it perish. And the war came.**

One eighth of the whole population were colored slaves, not distributed generally over the Union, but localized in the Southern half part of it. These slaves constituted a peculiar and powerful interest. **All knew that this interest was, somehow, the cause of the war. To strengthen, perpetuate, and extend this interest was the object for which the insurgents would rend the Union, even by war;** while the government claimed no right to do more than to restrict the territorial enlargement of it. **Neither** party expected for the war, the magnitude, or the duration, which it has already attained. Neither anticipated that the cause of the conflict might cease with, or even before, the conflict itself should cease. Each looked for an easier triumph, and a result less fundamental and astounding. **Both read the same Bible, and pray to the same God; and each invokes His aid against the other.** It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces; but let us judge not that we be not judged. **The prayers of both could not be answered; that of neither has been answered fully. The Almighty has His own purposes.** "Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!" If we shall suppose that American Slavery is one of those offences which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, and that He gives to both North and South, this terrible war, as the woe due to those by whom the offence came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a Living God always ascribe to Him? **Fondly do we hope -- fervently do we pray -- that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away.** Yet, if God wills that it continue, until all the wealth piled by the bond-man's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash, shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, **as was said [our] three thousand years ago, so still it must be said "the judgments of the Lord, are true and righteous altogether"**

With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan -- ~~to achieve and cherish a lasting peace among ourselves and with the world.~~ to do all which may achieve and cherish a just, and a lasting peace, among ourselves, and with ~~the world.~~ all nations.

Original manuscript of second Inaugural presented to Major John Hay. A. Lincoln, April 10, 1865

Amos confronted Israel at a highpoint during the reign of Jereboam II – a time of wealth, prosperity, peace, & safety.

Amos 4:1 Hear this word, ye kine of Bashan, that are in the mountain of Samaria, Which oppress the poor, which crush the needy, Which say to their masters, Bring, and let us drink.

Amos 6:1 Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, And trust in the mountain of Samaria, Which are named chief of the nations, To whom the house of Israel came!

And of course, God is on our (Israel's) side because...He is blessing us with wealth, safety, peace...

We are even more blessed than that pious, obnoxious, “fundyish” Judah! God is blessing us so much more and we are so much bigger, richer, stronger...

A. God’s word to Damascus

North & east

Amos 1:3 Thus saith the LORD; For **three** transgressions of **Damascus**, And for **four**, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; **Because** they have threshed Gilead with threshing instruments of iron: **Amos 1:4** But I will send a fire into the house of Hazael, Which shall devour the palaces of Ben-hadad. **Amos 1:5** I will break also the bar of Damascus, And cut off the inhabitant from the plain of Aven, And him that holdeth the sceptre from the house of Eden: And the people of Syria shall go into captivity unto Kir, saith the LORD.

3 = plurality

4 = multiplicity

Iron = people were treated like pieces of grain

First – symbol of judgment. Same for all 1:4,7,10,12,14,2,2,5

Bar – on the gate

1:5 → 9:7 so God sends them back, as judgment

B. God’s word to ...the Philistines

West

Amos 1:6 Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of **Gaza**, And for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; **Because they carried away captive the whole captivity**, To deliver them up to Edom: **Amos 1:7** But I will send a fire on the wall of Gaza, Which shall devour the palaces thereof: **Amos 1:8** And I will cut off the inhabitant from **Ashdod**, And him that holdeth the sceptre from **Ashkelon**, And I will turn mine hand against **Ekron**: And the remnant of the Philistines shall perish, saith the Lord GOD.

C. God’s word to Tyre

North - west

Amos 1:9 Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of **Tyrus**, And for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; **Because** they delivered up the whole captivity to Edom, **And** remembered not the brotherly covenant: **Amos 1:10** But I will send a fire on the wall of Tyrus, Which shall devour the palaces thereof.

The Phoenicians (modern day Lebanon) had been Israel’s friends.

D. God’s word to Edom

South & South - east

Amos 1:11 Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of **Edom**, And for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; **Because** he did pursue his brother with the sword, And did cast off all pity, And his anger did tear perpetually, And he kept his wrath for ever: **Amos 1:12** But I will send a fire upon Teman, Which shall devour the palaces of Bozrah.

E. God’s word to Ammon

East side of the Jordan River

Modern day Jordan

Amos 1:13 Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of **the children of Ammon**, And for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; **Because they have ripped up the women with child of Gilead, That they might enlarge their border:** **Amos 1:14** But I will kindle a fire in the wall of Rabbah, And it shall devour the palaces thereof, With shouting in the day of battle, With a tempest in the day of the whirlwind: **Amos 1:15** And their king shall go into captivity, He and his princes together, saith the LORD.

Neither life of the mother nor the life of the unborn baby are important – **only money!**

F. God’s word to Moab

South of Ammon

South – east of Judah

Amos 2:1 Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of **Moab**, And for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; **Because he burned the bones of the king of Edom into lime:**

Amos 2:2 But I will send a fire upon Moab, And it shall devour the palaces of Kerioth: And Moab shall die with tumult, With shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet: **Amos 2:3** And I will cut off the judge from the midst thereof, And will slay all the princes thereof with him, saith the LORD.

Judgment is not about ethnicity or even history → but God's moral law

F. God's word to Judah

Amos 2:4 Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of **Judah**, And for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; **Because they have despised the law of the LORD, And have not kept his commandments, And their lies caused them to err, After the which their fathers have walked: Amos 2:5** But I will send a fire upon Judah, And it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem.

They despised God's laws

They disobeyed God's commandments

They disrespected God's people

G. God's word to Israel

Amos 2:6 Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of **Israel**, And for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; **Because** they sold the righteous for silver, And the poor for a pair of shoes; **Amos 2:7** That pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor, **And** turn aside the way of the meek: **And** a man and his father will go in unto the same maid, To profane my holy name: **Amos 2:8** **And** they lay themselves down upon clothes laid to pledge by every altar, **And** they drink the wine of the condemned in the house of their god. **Amos 2:9** Yet destroyed I the Amorite before them, Whose height was like the height of the cedars, And he was strong as the oaks; Yet I destroyed his fruit from above, And his roots from beneath.

2:6-15

So, whose side is God on?

1. God is on His own side

God is & God is God!

2. God's side is discerned &/ expressed in and by His word!

3. All peoples – linguistic, cultural, ethnic, geographical, racial, social, economical, sexual, educational...stand under God's word!!! (Words of both gospel and judgment – good news and bad news!)

Isaiah 45:22 Look unto me, and be ye saved, **all** the ends of the earth: For I am God, and there is none else.

John 1:29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, **Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.**

Matthew 11:28 **Come** unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. **Matthew 11:29** **Take** my yoke upon you, and **learn** of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. **Matthew 11:30** For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Revelation 22:17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

Acts 17:23 For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. **Acts 17:24** God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; **Acts 17:25** Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; **Acts 17:26** And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; **Acts 17:27** That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: **Acts 17:28** For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. **Acts 17:29** Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. **Acts 17:30** And the times of this ignorance God winked at; **but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent: Acts 17:31** **Because** he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

4. God's people stand uniquely under God's word!

John 5:24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that **heareth** my word, and **believeth** on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

John 8:31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, **If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; John 8:32** And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

John 8:43 **Why** do ye not understand my speech? even **because** ye **cannot** hear my word.

John 8:47 He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them **not**, **because** ye are not of God.

John 10:27 My sheep **hear** my voice, and **I know** them, and **they** follow me:

Luke 12:48 ...For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required...

On Causes, Confederates, and Christ

BY BRETT WILLIAMS | FEB 5, 2021 | IN THE NICK OF TIME

One of my favorite books on the Civil War was written by a chaplain in the Army of Northern Virginia, Baptist preacher J. William Jones. Jones went from being a humble pastor to being named the Baptist missionary to Lieutenant General A. P. Hill's corps. Jones's book, *Christ in the Camp or Religion in the Confederate Army*, was originally published in 1887 and contains many letters and first-hand accounts from chaplains and soldiers in Lee's infamous army. These correspondences describe in great detail almost unbelievable revivals during which thousands were saved. Jones estimated that during the army's existence (1861–65), nearly 150,000 Confederate soldiers converted to Christ, representing almost one third of men under arms. This staggering number was not a mere guess taken from foxhole confessions, but reflected careful and copious records of personal testimonies, evangelistic services, and baptisms. The revivals were not only among the enlisted as Jones shared that "a large portion of the higher officers were men of faith and prayer."

Lest one think this was the result of wartime fervor, at the time of book's publication, out of the 410 men whom Jones had personally baptized, only three were known to have "gone back to the world." Twenty years after the war Jones reported that according to many seminary presidents, "nearly nine-tenths of the candidates for the ministry had determined to preach while in the army." Jones wrote of chaplains and generals alike who, after witnessing so many come to Christ, believed that this army held a unique providential blessing. Surely God would bless such piety and devotion. Convinced of the righteousness of his cause, Jones closed his book with the words, "Christian men of every section and of every creed will unite in thanking God that Christ *was* in the camps of Lee's army with such wonderful power to save."

While there are many historical and cultural complexities surrounding the Civil War, one of the most important questions to ask is, "How could this army bent on perpetuating the evil that is human bondage be so thoroughly infused with penitent Christians, many of whom gave their lives to Christ just before giving their lives, at least in part, for slavery? How could a cause so rooted in sin ever be mistaken as righteous or divinely blessed?"

Whether it was crusaders shouting "*Deus vult*" after a victory at the Siege of Antioch in 1098 or a man carrying a "Christian flag" onto the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives on January 6, 2021, Christians have often employed Christ in defense of social and political causes. Sadly, I believe that many, like William Jones, have made egregious errors in so hastily engaging Christ to support their cause. While there are many that could be discussed, below are **several fallacious assumptions** that are all too common.

Victories *in* a cause equals God's favor *on* a cause. Whether on the battlefield or at the ballot box, Christians often think that winning is the result of divine favor. The Army of Northern Virginia, for example, enjoyed extraordinary victories from Seven Pines to Fredericksburg to Chancellorsville,

which many assumed were the result of divine favor. In fact, until Lee's gamble at Gettysburg, his army rarely lost a fight, though facing overwhelming odds. Brilliant battlefield victories coupled with the aforementioned spiritual revivals led many Southern Christians to conclude that God was indeed on the side of the Confederacy. Similarly, in modern times, the church growth movement, built upon the premise that bigger is better, has ensnared many pastors with the faulty logic that *more* equals *more blessed*. Numbers, victories, and majorities are in no way an indication of God's favor, nor do they indicate the righteousness of a cause. Causes are either good or bad based upon their reflection of either eternal truth, as revealed in Scripture, or earthly, bane wisdom.

Christians supporting a cause makes it a Christian cause. The fallacy of *honor by association* assumes that because a cause or movement (which is the actions done because of the cause) is made up of Christians or carries Christian themes, it is therefore a Christian cause. I once heard an evangelical declare from the pulpit that because some of America's founders were Christians and often mentioned the divine in founding documents and monuments, America is a Christian nation and has therefore incurred God's unique blessing. By this reasoning, the Vatican would be the most Christian place on earth. Thousands upon thousands of redeemed rebels fought for the cause of slavery. Just because a cause has Christians associated with it or uses the name of Christ does not make it a Christian cause.

Causes are simple. Causes are not simple; that is to say they rarely entail a singular principle or solitary moral outcome. They are as complex as the cultures, ideas, and times in which they arise. A cry for freedom by one may result in the enslavement of another. Clarity on one side may be confusion for the other. Even if a cause is straightforward and moral, the movements which it spawns may be twisted and immoral.

God works because of a cause. This is perhaps the most egregious assumption. Jones assumed that the blessing of spiritual revival within the army was the result, at least in part, of the Confederate cause. If God uses a cause, He therefore supports the cause. Many heresies have arisen with this line of thinking. Monergism reminds us that in regards to humanity, salvation is always *despite*. God's blessings and salvation are granted because of God's own glory and for His own end. Divine favor within a cause should never be viewed, even tacitly, as divine acceptance of a cause. Often God works despite causes, not because of them. Christ saved me despite myself and my ideas just as He saved my tragically-wrong rebel brethren.

I wholeheartedly agree with Jones on one point, Christ was indeed in Lee's camps with wonderful power to save. **Not however, because of the Confederate cause, but despite it.** Christians, be very cautious of causes, even if they contain Christian themes or have Christian leaders. Jesus Christ *is* our cause and should not be easily employed in so many earthly endeavors.



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