

# WHAT'S THE BIBLE ABOUT?

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I probably step on a few denominational toes with this one, but here goes. I believe the Bible is about deliverance from bondage of every sort through the shed blood of Christ at Calvary and the wise and loving application of jubilee justice and righteousness by Christ ruling in his earthly kingdom.

To parse this a bit, think that deliverance means release and future freedom from whatever bonds are troubling God's people. Personal salvation is God's deliverance from the bondage of sin. Unfortunately, evangelicals too often equate sin only with sexual purity, personal piety, and doctrinal correctness. These sins are committed by individuals who abuse the clear commands of God, and thus earning separation from God until forgiven in an act of contrition, surrender, and acceptance of Christ as Master of their lives.

But there is another level of sin beyond personal behavior. There is also national sin, whereby nations abuse and oppress not only their people, but the earth itself. This unfortunate and very destructive situation occurs when small groups of dominant persons gain enough control over the governmental process and existing economic institutions to virtually enslave everyone else.

That's essentially what has happened today in the United States as an equitable distribution of income no longer exists. The middle class has been hollowed out through union busting, trade agreements spreading American jobs over the globe, and tax policies favoring the already rich. Lincoln's venerated Gettysburg phrase "government of the people, by the people, and for the people" daily drifts closer to what seems to be government over all the people for the benefit of the top few percent of the income pyramid.

The surprising thing is that the very people being destroyed still persist in

supporting the system doing the destroying. The present domination of business and government by corporations and their powerful allies in high finance and the media enable this unfortunate situation to persist. And those who protest are rapidly marginalized as mavericks, progressives, and socialistic dreamers.

Isaiah got

it right when he described the unjust situation existing in his land several thousand years ago. Quoting the dominators, he said: "My hand has found like a nest the riches of the people, and as one gathers eggs that are left, I have gathered all the earth. And there was no one who moved his wing, nor opened his mouth with even a peep" (Isa. 10:14).

That's

hubris folks---outrageous arrogance. They are proud of the fact that no one even peeps as they are robbed of their nest eggs by spoilers and plutocrats intent on nothing but ever-increasing profits and power.

But miracle

of miracles---the victims are now beginning to peep rather loudly. They are making the skewed distribution of wealth a major issue in the current presidential election campaign. They now protest attempts to popularize privatization of social security and Medicare. They rally against trade agreements like the not-yet-come-to-a-vote public disaster known as Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) that threatens to further abuse labor and the environment. And they are more and more loudly screaming that almost everything we do economically is unsustainable and unacceptable.

Evangelicals,

don't give up! Personal salvation is included in this deliverance, but it isn't the whole game. I think it pretty obvious that the world today is not evidencing deliverance, justice, or righteousness. We're sliding down a slippery slope toward ecological failure, economic oppression, social instability, political paralysis, military irresponsibility, cultural debasement, and other potential disasters almost too numerous to mention.

So, where is

God in all this? He's where he has always been---presiding in the kingdoms of men. He is attempting to get our attention, but we are so totally engaged in attempting to do things our way that we often can't see his way. But we will! As economist Milton Friedman and social commentator Naomi Klein have said: "Only a crisis (or shock) brings needed change." It seems that we can't hear the voice of God except as it speaks through adversity. We could prevent much suffering if we would simply accept God's way as revealed through his servants and prophets.