

Does Revelation 7-9 Give Us Hope for This Troubling Trend?

The year-end 2018 edition of *The Economist* magazine contains an article entitled "Losing Faith," which reveals a major and growing rejection of religious faith in the United States. The report also claims most believers are not aware of the trend.

Based on studies by the Pew Research Center, so-called Millennials (those born in the last 30 years or so) have drifted away from traditional, God-centered belief systems into atheist, agnostic and "no religion" convictions. This latter grouping is lumped for statistical research purposes into a category called the "Nones."

In Pew reports, polling results are broken into four primary categories: Catholic, Mainline Protestant, Evangelical Protestant and Nones. The greatest drops have occurred among Catholics and Mainline Protestants (an incredible loss of up to 20 percentage points since 1972). The ranks of evangelicals have remained relatively stable, but still suffered a drop-off rate of about 9 percent since peaking in the 1990-92 time frame. Statistics are always fungible, and there is little point in debating the numbers because, bottom-line, the hard fact remains that "religion" is not fashionable among Millennials, whatever the numbers.

More significantly, The "Nones" have grown from 5 percent of the total population to an astounding 22-23 percent of all Americans. Before moving on with these calculations, we should restate the obvious: Everyone has a religion. The Nones all have worldviews, predominantly a firm belief in sensual materialism, and/or in evolution and science as their gospel, with scientists and high academia serving as priests. All

humans of all cultures continually seek meaning, beginnings, purpose, objectives and bases for behavioral norms in trying to rationalize the mystery of sentient, self-aware life. Thus, we're all religious, though of varying intensity and spirituality.

My knee-jerk reaction to this rise of spiritual apostasy is a feeling of sad disbelief. But as I ponder it, I see a pattern. Given that we evangelicals generally believe we are drawing close to the midnight clanging of God's great mantle clock ... all but a tiny number of end-times prophecies having been fulfilled ... the prophetically-declared and cancerous growth of apostasy is now evidenced.

An earlier bastion of Christian evangelism, Europe, long ago abandoned the faith. As *The Economist* notes in its article, "America remains unusual among rich democracies in being highly religious. Europeans will remain bemused at how often American leaders pray in public and invoke God in their decisions."

Though the American decline is severe, God solidly retains His foothold on our country via faithful evangelicals, taking very seriously the dedication to Him of these "new" lands, in His name, as far back as 1492.

We're all aware that the Holy Bible was and is a mid-Eastern product, written primarily to Middle-East audiences some 2,000 years ago (though some of us continue clumsy attempts to "Americanize" it). But that does not change the fact that we are near to the greatest revival in world history, and Millennials will likely be a primary recipient of this divine largesse.

Revelation 7:9-13 explains it this way: "(I saw) a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation... standing before the throne! ... He [an elder] said to me, "These are those who came out of great tribulation and washed their robes

and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”

American revivalists will be but a small portion in that uncountable sea of souls, overwhelmed by the numbers of Chinese and Indians. Nonetheless, I am confident our troublesome and misguided Millennials will also be in that heavenly crowd, at least the majority willing to give up godless lives and repent of their fornications and magic arts (which also translates to illicit drug addiction as well as practicing various forms of witchcraft, wildly popular at this point in American time) (Rev. 9:21 and more).

So I encourage all parents and grandparents to take comfort in knowing there is a great hope for our Millennial offspring in the soon-coming days of great turmoil. Remember the promise: “I will not lose one of those the Father has given to me” (paraphrased from John 6:39).

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