

It Is Black and Blue, But Must Be White and Gold

The biggest story to hit the Internet this past week wasn't the fact that after beheading 21 Christians on the shores of Libya, ISIS has kidnapped another 220 Christians. Without a miracle, those precious souls are likely to suffer a similar fate. ISIS has made their message clear. They are at war with the "Nation of the Cross" (1, 2). Are we listening?

In northern Nigeria, Boko Haram added another 100 deaths to the tens of thousands they've slaughtered and that barely made the headlines either. Like ISIS, their continued genocide is part of their own radical push to turn all of northern Africa into an Islamic state ruled by Sharia law (3). Do we notice that our Christian brothers and sisters in Nigeria are suffering?

This week the U.S. discussed arming Ukraine while continuing to push sanctions on Russia (4). Is all of Europe headed for war? Does our future involve sending our children off to fight in another global conflict?

Our strongest ally in the Middle East is visiting the US to address congress about the prospect of Iran, a sworn enemy of the U.S., obtaining nuclear weapons. Our president refuses to meet with Israel's prime minister but will be sending our Secretary of State to negotiate with Iran (5). Do we understand this is a partisan fight we cannot afford to engage in?

We are facing significant history making crises at this moment, yet few are paying attention. Instead we have been focused on a debate of greater significance; is this dress blue & black or white & gold?

Time magazine called it "The dress that broke the internet"

(6). It certainly had my social media feeds buzzing. From the celebrities in Hollywood to the soccer moms in the midwest, everyone was willing to boldly opine. I laughed when I saw a news outlet bring a “vision expert” to break down the science of how we perceive color. Not since Monica Lewinsky has a single dress been so talked about.

Why is it at a time when our nation’s attention should be focused on the color of red in the sands of Libya we are caught up in a pointless debate on social media about the color of a dress and what does this say about us?

Are we the ones who are “black and blue”?

Our world is broken and spiraling out of control. Yes, we see the brutality and injustice around the world and our hearts hurt, but what can we do? When everything seems beyond our reach it is natural to turn towards the things that entertain and offer an escape. The dress debate is simply a distraction from the harsh realities of a cold and brutal world.

Look further what is it revealing about us?

Just like the dress, are we not the ones who are black and blue? Each of us bear the bruises from living in a fallen world. Similar to the church of Laodicea so many refuse to recognize their own spiritual sickness and the treacherous position they currently occupy.

The nation, as well as many churches, are in a state of spiritual and moral decline. The clear voice of truth to address sin and true injustice is largely silent. Instead we trumpet messages that fill the sanctuary but don’t truly heal the soul. The bold truth that sets men free is ignored or softened for fear of losing influence with a depraved world.

Oh what irony to live in a culture where we foolishly call black, gold and blue, white! Right is now wrong and wrong is right. Truly we have eyes to see, but refuse to see our own

poverty. We ignore our nakedness while we parade about as if we are richly adorned. It is time to open wide our eyes!

Until we are willing to face our own brokenness, we can offer little hope to a broken world. The answer isn't to hide our bruises but to let them be revealed in the light of the father's fire. Just as Jesus counseled to the church at Laodicea may we also heed his words.

Revelation 3:18-19, "I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined by fire, that you may be rich, and white garments, that you may be dressed, that the shame of your nakedness may not appear, and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. Those whom I love, I rebuke and discipline. Therefore be zealous and repent."

Yes the dress is black and blue, but it must be white and gold!

The dress debate was settled when someone went to the source and picked up the actual dress. It was black and blue.

There is a lesson for us all to learn. Return to the source! It is time that we as a nation and more importantly as a people return to God. We can no longer hide ourselves from the truth; not around us and certainly not within us.

The hope of the nation and the world is not found in Washington. It is found in Jesus and in Him alone. We must not be ashamed to say it and when needed shout it.

Truly our garments are black and blue but they must be white and gold. Let us come before Christ and purchase gold refined in his fire and find garments that are white with His righteousness. Repent of our sins and be zealous for the Lord. The greatest force for good in the world is the church, but she must rise up in this hour and be healed before she can offer hope to a hopeless world.

Time is far too precious in these last days to be distracted by a material dress, let's focus on a spiritual one. I for one am unwilling to stand in eternity before a martyred Iraqi saint who was crucified upon a cross in the desert sands and tell him I looked the other way while he bled out. I want him to know I was standing with him in prayer as He gave his life for Christ. How could we do any less?

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