



ARMAGEDDON AND THE 4TH OF JULY 2015

by

Prof. Barry Austin Goodfield, Ph.D., DABFM

It's 5 AM and it's going to be scorching, 112 F, (44 C) in Phoenix today. I better get outside and walk Trooper, our Scottish Terrier, before it's too hot in a few hours. From iPhone to earbuds, the BBC World News emanates from my Hawaiian shirt pocket. I hear the trustworthy sound of the newsreader's voice, telling me of the latest developments, as Trooper and I head out the door. There's nobody in sight, except, a funny little French car driven by a young girl skillfully tossing our local newspaper onto neighbors driveways.

From thousands of miles away in different time zones I hear about beheadings, attacks and shootings happening in France, Somalia and Tunisia. Is this the decline of Western civilization? Is this the terminal gift this generation will be passing onto the next? There's not much good news these days. Maybe I'm just one of the lucky guys, I think to myself, living in

the safety of my “Arizona bubble” with normally warm weather, a nice house and a comfortable life. Am I kidding myself?

The BBC continues to giving details, painting more darkness and gloom on my otherwise sunny morning. Is this the end? [Armageddon](#)? Are we about to lose to these Islamic radicals calling themselves the Islamic State? Is this the world my children will inherit?

Wait, I’ve been a “history nut” all my life maybe there’s some solace or insights I can draw upon to fend off the dismal details of the day. A person ought to be able to walk their dog in the morning without it turning into a doomsday stroll with their pet.

Back home I surf the internet for information. The Bible tells us that they’ll always be wars and rumors of wars. In [Mark 13:7](#) in the International Standard Version, I am reassured by the translation of what it said “*But when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, stop being alarmed. These things must take place, but the end hasn't come yet.*”

An even more contemporary version in the NET bible version gives even more relief, “*When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. These things must happen, but the end is still to come.*”

Fabulous! The end maybe near but it ain’t over just yet! That thought calmed me down to the point that I took a picture of a beautiful blooming plant in our garden.

Well, my crisis for the moment forestalled. I remind myself, that doesn’t do much good for the victims and their families in France, Somalia and Tunisia. How can I think about these tragedies in a way that allows me to have a less draconian perspective, and get on with my day? Here’s what I told myself.

In my parents generation there were the Japanese [Kamikaze](#) pilots flying their airplanes into allied ships and horrified sailors. The pilots were given a

manual which detailed how they were supposed to think, and to prepare for their sacrificial attack.

From this manual, pilots were told to "attain a high level of spiritual training," and to "keep [their] health in the very best condition." These things, among others, were meant to put the pilot into the mindset in which he would be mentally ready to die.

Moreover, there were the [death camps](#) taking the lives of 6,000,000+ innocent people. 20 million who lost their lives in Russia fighting a terrible winter and an insane dictator name Stalin who fought against an even crazier nut named Hitler.

WWII lasted from 1939 to 1945, fought in Europe, Russia, North Africa and in Asia. 60 million people died and about 40 million were civilians. Good grief, look at what our parents and grandparents lived through!

What about the price asked, and paid by our Service men and women, in places called, Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan and all the other unknown "hotspots" where they simply said "NO" to that which was simply wrong, and risking their lives.

Back home now, Trooper fed, I sip my coffee and look out at the garden and notice some quails and a few bunnies hopping around. Life goes on I thought to myself. But what about those insane people calling themselves the "Islamic State?" Is this just our generation's assault on our views and values? If so, what should we do about it?

I thought of a few things I know. When you accept the unacceptable you reinforce it. Failing to stand and fight IS (Islamic State), as we dignify them in the press today, is a mistake. Journalists risk their lives, as harbingers of the truth, foretelling our destiny if we fail to act.

We are reminded that IS becomes more powerful, more of a threat to Western views and values each day.

When we simply say, “It is what it is.” we are saying; “Give in, give up, there’s nothing you can do about it, so smile, shut up, sit down and let be what will be. It is what it is.”

Not this cowboy! I’m too old, too nasty, cantankerous and frankly just too tough, to let some stupid punks, halfway around the world, mess with my morning walk with Trooper!

Enough already! Great, I thought to myself, so what are you going to do about these crazy lunatics?

First realize that throughout history there were always events that caused people to question our ability to survive in the world around us. Winston Churchill talked us through tough times with resolute words that stimulated both hope and action. But his words spoke to a population who couldn’t deny what was happening around them.

They couldn’t simply walk their dog and ponder tomorrow today. Their lives were in danger, their choices limited. To fight or to die. But it wasn’t a question of death, it was a question of what you felt was worthy of life and death. The threat from IS is as real as any threat our civilization has experienced. The answer to that threat is as old as the problem.

[Rudyard Kipling](#) advised us in his poem “IF”

*“If you can dream—and not make dreams your master;
If you can think—and not make thoughts your aim;
If you can meet with triumph and disaster
And treat those two impostors just the same;
If you can bear to hear the truth you’ve spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
And stoop and build ’em up with worn-out tools.”*

God knows, our society's survival tools seems to be worn out. Trust, courage, honor, integrity and faith in others seem to be running low. Where are the tools of which Churchill spoke? "*Give us the tools and we will finish the job!*" I see all of those values some broken, some in disarray when I walk through the halls of the Veterans Hospital here in Phoenix.

Wounded warriors yes, but still warriors! There is the hope, there is the courage in most who have given so much. They are a living example of the price paid for our way of life. It is as simple as saying "NO." I will not except the unacceptable! I will fight for my beliefs and the values that I espouse, and pass on to my children. My job will be to join in the fight with those who are dedicated to stop IS.

The [4th of July](#) is just a few days away and we will barbecue, wear red, white and blue. Shoot off fireworks and perhaps some of us, maybe most, will remember what we celebrate. It is the message of our forefathers: *Freedom is not free.*

Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826) said, "*The tree of liberty grows only when watered by the blood of tyrants.*" Let the word go out to all of those who would once again threaten our freedom with words and deeds of the dramatic disproportion.

Tired as our world is, disillusioned as we may be, and disheartened as we may feel in the long run we know and have proven that we know, *when you except the unacceptable you reinforce it.*

And so with some level of consolation and historical reassurance I can say to those barbarians destroying lives and killing hopes: "It is only a matter of time until free people do what we have done throughout times, and simply say NO to your ludicrous actions."

We can only say "NO" when we are clear to that which we will say "YES".

I saw yesterday, while riding an elevator with a veteran, a dogeared American flag fastened to the back of his wheelchair. His leg missing but not his helpful smile. He noticed the lost look on my face. He said to me; “You look lost sir, can I help you?”. I smiled back and said;

“You already have.”



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