

Introduction

America: The Big Picture

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What do zeitgeists, America, *The Matrix*, *Captain Marvel*, the Statue of Liberty and the Great Tribulation have in common? A lot more than you might think. First, let's make sure we're on the same page about each of these things.

Zeitgeist is a German word that refers to the spirit of the time or the general characteristics of a particular period, especially the predominant attitudes, actions and traits that produce a movement or philosophy that strongly shapes the history of that particular period. When viewed in this light, the New Testament, and even the Bible as a whole, can be seen as a history, a spiritual unveiling, as well as a prophetic foretelling of the work of some of these zeitgeists. And when we recognize that God is Spirit (Jn. 4:23, etc.) and that we who believe in Christ are enabled to wrestle against the spiritual forces of evil who are in rebellion against God (Eph. 6:12, etc.), we can then see and rightly expect that there must be a tremendous conflict whenever and wherever these titanic forces collide. It is also not at all unlikely that human blood will be shed in such instances.

America is more than just a nation – it is also a philosophical ideal. Many people do not understand this duality in its nature. Physically it incorporates the states and territories that have been received into the union. Philosophically it is built on the foundational principles stated so well by Thomas Jefferson:

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal...” and
“...governments [derive] their just powers from the consent of the governed.”
(Declaration of Independence, 1776)

This refers here, of course, to equality of opportunity and justice and not referring to equality of existence and to the revolutionary idea that “we the people” and not the king or the state are the real holders of ruling power.

Of course, America suffers from the same duality all humans suffer from. As Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn said so well,

“The line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being.
And who is willing to destroy a piece of his own heart?” (*Gulag Archipelago*)

Many people who cannot grasp their own personal duality have a similar difficulty grasping the duality of America. So, while we read the six well-intentioned purposes pursued by the American founding fathers –

“We the people of the United States, in order to [1] form a more perfect Union, [2] establish justice, [3] insure domestic tranquility, [4] provide for the common defense, [5] promote the general welfare, and [6] secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.” (Preamble to the Constitution of the United States of America)

– we must also recognize that America, even with its godly roots, good intentions and commendable attributes, will likely ultimately prove to be only a nation that looks like a lamb but speaks like a dragon. (Rev. 13:11) America stands now at a crossroads where we, each one as an individual and as part of various corporate groups, need to determine (with God’s help) whether we are truly part of the lamb or part of the dragon. America may yet abandon even the appearance of a “Christian nation” and take on more of the attributes of the dragon in direct proportion to its departures from the words and ways of the Lamb!

The Matrix is a 1999 fictional movie starring Keanu Reeves and Laurence Fishburne. Reeves is Neo and Fishburne is Morpheus. Morpheus is convinced that Neo is the human who will be able to dismantle the matrix, an alternative reality injected into the minds of human beings who are in fact being grown in sophisticated pods by artificial intelligence driven machines so that the humans’ bodies’ energies can be drained and utilized. In what has become an iconic confrontation of belief systems, Morpheus offers Neo a red pill and a blue pill, saying,

“You take the blue pill – the story ends, you wake up in your bed and believe whatever you want to believe. You take the red pill – you stay in Wonderland, and I show you how deep the rabbit hole goes. Remember: all I’m offering is the truth. Nothing more.”

Taking “the red pill” has become synonymous with embracing difficult truth while rejecting apparently comfortable and seemingly comforting deceptions.

Captain Marvel is a 2019 Marvel Comics fictional movie and may be Marvel’s most complicated movie yet. The super-hero is Carol Danvers who absorbs an incredible amount of power when she destroys an extra-terrestrial energy device to keep it from falling into the hands of what turns out to be another alien (of the domineering Kree race). In absorbing this energy, she loses her memory but is later trained to harness and control this energy by the Kree who took her back to their home planet, falsely convincing her they were “warrior heroes.” After she has been trained, she is sent on a mission (that does not go as planned) to extract a Kree agent before a planet of the supposedly terrorist shape-shifting race (the Skrulls) is destroyed. In a series of events that occur on planet C53 (Earth, 1990s), Danvers learns the truth about herself as well as the full extent of her powers and drives the Kree away from planet Earth in a spectacular display of power and strength.

The Statue of Liberty is a 305 foot tall statue of a woman holding a torch and a book that was brought to and assembled on Ellis Island, New York, USA in the 1870s. This statue stands for the promise of individual liberty and personal responsibility embodied in the American ideal of equal opportunity and equal justice for all. It stands as a beacon of hope for people who live in other countries who do not embrace this ideal and thus do not enjoy the hope of realizing a better life.

The Great Tribulation is a tag derived from the end-times prophecies of the Bible. This phrase specifically refers to the last seven years on earth before the return of Christ. Admittedly, this time period is viewed “as through a glass dimly” (1 Cor. 13:12) as it refers to future events that have not yet occurred even while speaking of those events as having already occurred. Unfortunately, it seems that nearly everyone who takes up the study of these prophecies comes to dogmatically embrace only their own opinions and becomes rather divisive about their own personal interpretations. (This fruit alone casts their interpretations into question!) In reality, there are several different views about how things will actually happen during this 7 year period

and possibly the only takeaway one can legitimately cling to is that we will all find out at the same time which, if any, of the end times teachers and prognosticators will actually be proven to have been correct. Only the future will prove the past in this regard. In the meantime, it is our responsibility in the end time to love truth, take our stand with the Lamb on “Mt. Zion” and follow Him wherever He leads us. (Rev. 14:1-5)

From this list of topics, it should be obvious that we are about to grapple with some mind-bending ideas. It becomes riveting when we link up these mind-bending ideas with a fascinating prophesy given about America in 1776. Buckle up! The ride might be a bit bumpy.

Zeitgeists: Clash of Titans

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