

Sound the Alarm

A Call to Prayer

Does God Judge
Nations?

Will God Judge
America?

Truman Herring

Truman Herring Ministries
Boca Raton, Florida

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Sound the Alarm
A Call to Prayer

*Does God Judge Nations? Will God
Judge America?*

By Truman Herring

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Sound the Alarm – A Call to Prayer

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Introduction – Sound the Alarm, A Call to Prayer

In the dark times of war or crisis in our nation, an Army recruiter's appeal "America needs you" was often the motivation that stirred the patriotism of young men and women to enlist to do their part to save our country.

We as a nation are in a spiritual crisis and "America needs you" to enlist in an army of prayer warriors. Our problems are bigger than our politicians can solve.

God has in the past given His people a burden or "Spirit of intercession" to pray for God to revive His people and spare a nation from His righteous judgment.

Because I am convinced from Scriptures that all nations are still accountable to God, and that we have embraced the same national sins that brought God's judgment on nations of the past, I was burdened to write Sound the Alarm, Does God Judge Nations? Will God Judge America? (See Appendix) This book includes 78 short chapters that deal with the principles of God's judgment of nations. It illustrates God's judgment of many nations and warns America that we are now in moral decline and are following the same pattern of nations that God judged.

Sound the Alarm – A Call to Prayer is a sample edition of 21 of those chapters selected from the nine thematic sections. To focus on Hope and

Intercession for America by including a section at the end of each devotion for you to include your prayers or thoughts of what God is saying to you personally.

God is calling many Christians to intercede for America and His Church. Will you be one of them? We have created a new website to give many more devotions to encourage your prayers and intercessions. Visit us at American Intercessors at americanintercessors.com.

Praying for revival in America,
Truman Herring



Sound the Alarm
A Call to Prayer

21 Days of Prayer



Day 1 (Sound the Alarm - Chapter 1.5) Where Were You on 9-11?

First there was Sunday morning, December 7, 1941.

Some days are just unforgettable. December 7, 1941 is such a day for the generation of Americans alive at that time. In a surprise move, Japan attacked our military base at Pearl Harbor on that day. America could no longer sit on the sidelines during WWII as Hitler's Germany, Mussolini's Italy, and the Emperor's' Japan sought to expand their territories through war.

America stepped up to be a catalyst to insure freedom for most of the world. The war was won and evil defeated not only by God's Providence in raising up America as freedom's champion by military might but by the spiritual might of His church in America.

*Righteousness exalts a nation*¹ and the churches of America had given America a foundation of Christian virtues that our enemies did not have. The millions of prayers of the Church were answered and the days of our freedom continued.

¹ Proverbs 14:34

Then there was Tuesday morning, September 11, 2001.

Another unforgettable day for another generation. I was preaching in a small town in Florida when my wife and I turned on the television to see the airliners crash into the Twin Towers of New York. Again national tragedy had struck America. 9-11 marked a new type of war in which Muslim extremist terrorists committed themselves with fanatical religious zeal to destroy what they would call *"The Great Satan."*

Again America took the lead to fight terrorism around the globe. However, even though America's military was strong, something had changed in the moral fiber of our country. The church was in decline and secular humanism was growing. Our firm Christian moral foundation that had helped our nation weather many external and internal crises were weakening. The America that faced Pearl Harbor and World War II believed more in Christian moral absolutes than the America of today.

Sunday morning, December 7, 1941 and Tuesday morning, September 11, 2001 are marked in history as days in which foreign enemies attacked America. Pearl Harbor and 9-11 were obvious attacks by the enemies of our American freedom and way of life.

However, very few remember two other very important dates in the life of our country: the dates of January 22, 1973 and June 26, 2015, in which America was attacked from within. I believe these dates marked an attack upon God's character and a disregard for God's moral law as the basis for our government's civil laws.

- On January 22, 1973 the Supreme Court in Roe v. Wade made most abortions legal in America. Since that decision millions of innocent babies have been put to death.
- On June 26, 2015, the Supreme Court ruled against God's standard of marriage as being between a man and women. All fifty states have been ordered to recognize same sex marriages as legal.

It was easy to see the immediate consequences of Pearl Harbor and 9-11. The thousands of lives that perished that day stirred the conscience of America to unite to defend herself and entered WWII. But what about the consequences from the decisions in 1973 and 2015?

Let's look at the consequences of the Supreme Court's decision to legalize abortion.

Few look at history from a biblical perspective. To do so would be to realize that as millions rejoiced over the legalization of abortion, our nation had just defied the Everlasting God, the Creator, and Giver of Life. The death of millions of innocent babies followed. Those who understand God's Word know that though He is patient and merciful, the righteous Judge of the nations will one day hold our country accountable in righteous judgment. Our sins mount up to heaven in the cries of the innocent every single day.

Another date that became a turning point for America was June 26, 2015, On that day the Supreme Court defied God in departing from God's revealed pattern for marriage as

being between a man and a woman. As a result, same-sex marriage was legalized in a fifty states.

Again millions of our citizens rejoiced and joined with the Gay, Lesbian and Transgender lobby and counted this as a victory for love over the *“religious hatemongers.”* Famous movie stars, rock stars, and the liberal media marked this day as a great day of victory for American justice. The majority of young people and universities saw this as a victory for individual freedom. Even the President and the White House celebrated this decision by lighting the White House in the symbolic colors of the rainbow to celebrate this *“reasonable and right decision.”*

While millions rejoiced, there was a small remnant of Christians who identified with the heart of God. They realized that our country had once again thrown off the moral absolutes of God to call that which God called sin as the expression of love.

Call sin what it is: sin. But do it with the right motive: love.

Dr. James Dobson responded,

“Even though Friday’s re-definition of marriage by the U. S. Supreme Court was anticipated, I have found myself grieving over its implications for my country and for Western civilization itself. This radical decree will have a devastating effect on every dimension of culture.

I grieve most for what it will do to our children, our grandchildren and future generations. They will be taught that right is wrong and wrong is right, and that

the teachings of Scripture are unreliable and inaccurate....

The U.S. Supreme Court does not have the authority to redefine something it did not create. Marriage was created long before the United States and our constitution came into existence....

Today's decision of the Supreme Court lacks both constitutional and moral authority. There is no eternal or natural law that allows for marriage to be redefined.”²

Richard Land, president of the Southern Evangelical Seminary, said the battlefield has shifted to religious freedom, in a statement emailed to WND.

“Will the progressive, totalitarian and intolerant left weaponize the government and attempt to force or compel people to affirm same-sex behavior and relationships? Or will they respect the freedom of conscience guaranteed by the Constitution?”³

In his dissent, Chief Justice John Roberts wrote,

“Today's decision, for example, creates serious questions about religious liberty. Many good and decent people oppose same-sex marriage as a tenet of faith, and their freedom to exercise religion is – unlike the right imagined by the majority – actually spelled

² From an interview entitled, “I Fear Judgment Befalling America,” published 6/26/2015

³ ‘Battlefield Shifts to Religious Freedom.’ Supreme Court ruling sets stage for litigious action by LGBT activists, published: 06/26/2015 by WND

*out in the Constitution.”*⁴

Solomon wrote, “*Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people.*” I am afraid if our country does not experience a spiritual revival, the consequences that await us will be horrifying.

⁴ <http://www.wnd.com/files/2015/03/jon-roberts.jpg>



Prayer

Father, give us the grace to identify with righteousness. Give us wisdom, insight and understanding as we seek to discern Your will and Your plan. I pray this in the name of the One who is righteousness itself.

What Has God laid on your heart to pray about today?



Day 2 (Sound the Alarm - Chapter 3.4) Progressive Waves of God's Judgment

Israel had a unique covenant with God, which no other nation had. How God dealt with Israel, however, was based upon their obedience to Him. This can help us understand how God deals with all nations based upon His unchangeable character.

God's pattern with Israel was clear. He first sent His messengers to teach the Word and call His people to righteousness and to turn from their national sins. If Israel failed to respond to the Word, then God sent calamity to correct them and have them respond to God's Word. If they were not corrected by the first wave of calamity or judgments, then God sent another wave of judgment to turn their hearts back to God before even greater and more severe judgments came upon them.

What is the principle?

Because God is longsuffering and desires that a nation turns from its sins, His corrections and judgments are progressive and increase in intensity only if there is no repentance.

If America turns a deaf ear to those who teach the righteousness of God's Word as our moral standard, then we may be corrected by calamity. It will be far better that we as a nation be corrected by our current calamities before we face the ever-increasing blows of God's progressive judgments.

There are several parallel passages that clearly teach God's progressive judgments of Israel. The first that we want to take a closer look at is Leviticus 26.

Leviticus 26:14-45 presents a series of five progressive judgments, each with an offer of mercy upon repentance. Without repentance the judgment's severity was promised to increase in intensity "*seven times more.*"

First, God pronounces judgment because the nation broke His covenant. The judgment included terror, disease, and defeat by their enemies (Lev. 26:14-17).

Second, God pronounces judgment because Israel refused to be humbled. To break their pride, they would experience major crop failure (Lev. 26:19-20).

Third, God pronounces judgment because Israel was not willing to obey God. Wild beasts were sent to destroy children and livestock (Lev. 26:22).

Fourth, God pronounced judgment because there had been no repentance. War and siege would lead to pestilence and famine (Lev. 26:25-26).

Fifth, God pronounced judgment because there was still no repentance. In the sieges parents would eat their own children, their cities and sanctuaries would be destroyed, the land was desolated and occupied by enemies, and Israel was scattered among the nations (Lev. 26:29-39).

This became an accurate outline of the history of judgments upon the divided kingdom of Israel. It started with Jeroboam and his idolatrous altar at Bethel and did not end until the great judgment in 722 B.C. by the Assyrians when Samaria was destroyed and Israel was slaughtered and scattered among many nations.

This same pattern was seen in the history of Judah who saw many periods of revival and reform that delayed God's judgments. But after a series of many judgments, the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple and led a remnant of surviving Jews into a seventy-year captivity.

Even after what seemed to be a final judgment, God still offered forgiveness to Israel if they confessed their sins, humbled their hearts, and accepted the guilt of their sins. The prayers of Daniel confessing the sins of his people Israel are an example of God remembering His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and restoring them to the Promised Land even after severe judgments (Daniel 9).

Knowing that God has dealt with nations in progressive judgments to reform a nation, we should recognize that God is now dealing with America though in a similar progressive way.

America was established by God's providence. No other nation has had a greater Christian impact. The church flourished and its influence upon national morality made America the greatest nation on earth. From America the church sent out missionaries to the nations and churches have been planted all over the world. However, in the past generation the church has been spiritually weakened from

within. It is losing its moral influence upon our society and the moral foundation of our nation is crumbling.

If we do not have revival in the church, we should expect to see progressive judgments to humble us and turn us back to God. If those do not cause America to repent, then we should expect a reaping of a harvest according to our national sins. Remember the greater the blessings the greater the responsibility and judgment.

What can conservative Christians do when we have become an ignored minority to our national leaders? What can we do when Hollywood and the liberal media have more influence with our national leaders than conservative Christians? We can remember that while the liberals have the ear of our national leaders, we have the ear of God. A nation can be spared greater judgments by the prayers of a righteous minority. Through intercession and confession of our sins and the sins of our nation, we can turn our nation back to God.

One of the purposes of this book is to call Christians to revival and intercession for our nation. I believe hundreds of thousands of Christians have become burdened by God over the sins of our nation and are being called by Him to pray daily.

One of the purposes of this book is to call Christians to revival and intercession for our nation.

Before God judged Jerusalem in great severity through Babylon, He marked those who were grieved over the sins of their nation (Ezekiel 9:4). Before God's severest judgment fell upon Jerusalem they were always preceded

by God raising up “*watchmen*” to call Israel back to God (Ezekiel 3:17).

Since Judah did not recognize the progressive wave of judgments and the daily voice of the prophets like Jeremiah and Ezekiel warning and pleading for repentance, a point of no return was reached. Finally, God said repeatedly, “*Do not pray for this people*” (Jeremiah 7:16; 11:14; 14:11). Isn’t that strange? But from God’s point of view, they had reached a point of no return. At that point the most severe judgment was unstoppable and God’s focus would not be mercy for the nation but mercy only for the righteous remnant in captivity.

Some feel that America’s sins are too great, that we have gone too far and judgment is unstoppable. Certainly the law of the harvest is true and we will reap what we have sown. However, God’s patience and mercy is great. I do not feel that God is saying, “*Do not pray for this people.*” I believe He is still marking those that grieve over our national sins and is still raising up spiritual watchman to plead for our country.



Prayer

O God, You are holy, but You delight in showing mercy and pardon to Your people. We as a nation have gone far from Your moral standards. We have turned from Your holiness and light to embrace iniquity and darkness. Lord, it seems that we are left alone to see our country pushing You out of our government, universities and schools. We have given birth to a young generation that does not know the former moral foundation of America. It seems that every month our nation now suffers some new calamity. Father, humble us that we might return to You and call upon the name of the Lord Jesus for our salvation.

What has God laid on your heart to pray for today?



Day 3 (Sound the Alarm - Chapter 3.7) Moral Relativism: *Are There Moral Absolutes Given by God?*

Is there such a thing as right and wrong? Are certain actions always wrong, no matter what the culture? Is there a basis for universal values?

Historical Christianity says yes to each of those questions. God Himself is the basis for universal truth and morality. This is sometimes called “*moral absolutism*” and is direct opposition to “*moral relativism*.” Here is the first principle:

Historic Christianity says that God is the basis for universal truth and morality. This is sometimes called “Moral Absolutism” and is conflict with “Moral Relativism.”

Absolutism claims that morality relies on universal principles (natural law, conscience). Christian absolutists believe that God is the ultimate source of our common morality, and that those truths are as unchanging as He is. Moral relativism asserts that morality is not based on any absolute standard. Rather, ethical “truths” depend on variables such as the situation, culture, one's feelings, etc.⁵ Here in America we are in a cultural war for the moral values of our nation. It seems that we are following the degenerating pattern of Europe by embracing relativism.

⁵ Got Questions?.org

Christianity is on the decline in Europe and now that has spread here to America.

This brings us to our second principle:

When a society, culture, or nation, rejects God as the basis for morality then it is only a matter of time before that nation is given over to sexual perversion and eventually judgment.

The Scriptures are clear that Adam's entire race has inherited his sin nature (Romans 5:6-21). If we were born without sin, our nation would not need law, courts, jails, policemen, and punishment to restrain evil.

Sin is like a contagious disease that, if left unchecked, grows worse and multiplies its infection to a nation. God gave to all both an inner witness of God and His outer witness of creation. Yet people still reject light for darkness. God's moral law and our conscience should aid in restraining evil. Sadly, once a society rejects the knowledge of God then evil grows rapidly. Government is granted the right to restrain sinful behavior by punishing evil and rewarding good. (Romans 13:1-6)

In the history of nations some moral sins can become so common that they can become culturally acceptable and defy God's universal moral law. Some sins associated with idolatry and sexual perversions seem to open the demonic floodgates of moral corruption upon a nation.

In this section we will deal with what I call "National sins." These national sins, if they become habitual and

predominate in a nation, will bring God's judgment on the government that has allowed them to defile a society.

A few examples will suffice:

- God warned Israel that both Egypt and the nations of Cana were being judged because of moral sins that defiled their nations (Deut. 12:31). These nations were defiled by their abominations and the land was vomiting out the sickness of their moral disease (Lev. 18:27-28).
- Nations cast out because of their sins.⁶ Numbers 35:33 states, *“So you shall not pollute the land where you are; for blood defiles the land, and no atonement can be made for the land, for the blood that is shed on it, except by the blood of him who shed it.*
- Nations were described as wicked and came under the judgment of God. God warned Israel that He was judging the nations of Canaan for their wickedness (Deut. 9:4). Israel was warned that if they committed these same sins, they also would be judged. Sadly, this would become the history of Israel and many more nations and empires in the future. Israel would be judged by the Assyrians and later the Babylonians for their national sins.

Some of these moral sins are especially grievous to God and to society and are called *“abominations, wickedness, perversions, confusion, and defilement.”* That doesn't

⁶ Leviticus 18:3, 27-28; 20:22-23; Deut. 12:29-31

sound very politically correct, does it? But that was God's evaluation of the nations.

There was a time in America that we accepted moral absolutes as part of the universal law of our Creator. The Bible influenced for good our society and enlightened our conscience to restrain sin.

We have a new generation that seeks to throw off absolutes and moral restraints. It could be said of this generation what was said of Israel, "*Everyone did what was right in his own eyes*" (Judges 17:6). The majority of this younger generation would label God's view of some of these sins as intolerant, bigoted, homophobic, hateful, and politically incorrect.

Some protestor might ask, "Well, just who does He think he is to judge me?" The answer is authoritative and final: *He is God and He is the Sovereign Creator and Lord of the Universe*. We as individuals or as a nation cannot change God's moral law. As we consider the national sins that have destroyed nations throughout human history, may God give us a burden for our beloved America to turn back to God.

Remember this:

A lie doesn't become truth, a wrong doesn't become right, and evil doesn't become good just because it's accepted by a majority of the population.



Prayer

Dear Lord, as I read that You judged and cast out the nations of Canaan for their moral perversions, I am burdened for my country. We too are guilty of many of these same sins. Our nation and government is now guilty of justifying what You called wickedness. God please forgive us. Turn our hearts back to Your Word as the basis for our moral conscience. Only You can turn back the spiritual darkness that is engulfing our nation. In Jesus name I pray. Amen.

What has God laid on your heart to pray for today?



Day 4 (Sound the Alarm - Chapter 4.4) Abortion

The next national sin that brought God's judgment was the sacrifice of children to pagan gods. Although America has not been guilty of child-sacrifice, I hope to show from God's perspective that the slaughter of millions of innocent babies on the altars of abortion is equally repulsive in God's eyes. We should tremble before God when we realize that God will one day hold America accountable for the millions of babies lost to abortion.

Child Sacrifice

God called child sacrifice "*detestable*." He hates it.⁷ America has been on a downward spiral morally. It has chosen darkness over the light that God has given through moral absolutes. It has chosen to take steps to descend into a dungeon of bondage to its sinful passions by not retaining God in its knowledge. Therefore, God is withdrawing His blessing and giving our country up to its own sinful choices (Romans 1). This was the experience of the nations of Canaan and in that darkness and with their conscience defiled, they were willing to choose the influence of demons over God.

Dr. J. Vernon McGee commented on Leviticus 18:21,

"Thy seed" means their children. This verse may seem to be out of place in this chapter, but the pagan

⁷ Deut. 12:29-32

worship of Molech was closely related with sex. The image of old Molech was heated red-hot, and the bodies of children were placed in its arms. It is hard to imagine the horror of this. There are those who believe that such a thing could never have happened. However, the Scriptures make other references to this same practice. "... and the Sepharvites burnt their children in fire to Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim" (2 Kings 17:31). "And they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart" (Jer. 7:31).

Others confirm that this was not child dedication to a god but children being burnt alive by this demon-inspired ritual. The worst of these "detestable things" was child sacrifice. This practice of burning their sons and daughters in the fire as sacrifices was frequently associated with the worship of the Ammonite god Molech.⁸ God's penalty for child sacrifice was death.⁹

Abortion

Life begins at conception. Prior to the 1973 U.S. Supreme Court decision that allowed abortion on demand, developing embryos were considered unborn persons. Now? Things have certainly changed. There are certain medical circumstances that would allow for a fetus that could survive outside its mother's womb to be aborted.

⁸ Lev. 18:21; 20:2-5; 2 Kings 23:10; Jer. 32:35

⁹ Lev. 20:2-5

*Science tells us that human life begins at the time of conception. From the moment fertilization takes place, the child's genetic makeup is already complete. Its gender has already been determined, along with its height and hair, eye and skin color. The only thing the embryo needs to become a fully-functioning being is the time to grow and develop.*¹⁰

God reveals to us in His Word that not only does life begin at conception, but He knows who we are even before we are born:

The word of the LORD came to me, saying, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations" (Jeremiah 1:4-5).

For You created my inmost being; You knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from You when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, Your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in Your book before one of them came to be (Psalm 139:13-16).

Yet You brought me out of the womb; You made me trust in You even at my mother's breast. From birth I was cast upon You; from my mother's womb You have been my God (Psalm 22:9-10).

¹⁰ <http://www.gotquestions.org/life-begin-conception.html>

And yet society continually seeks to devalue the lives of the unborn. Liberal theologians and cultural elites have created their own definitions of humanity based on distorted views of morality. But the undeniable fact is that life begins at creation, and a human life is created as soon as he or she is conceived. God is present at our creation; He is, in fact, our Creator. Our value as human beings created in His image is conceived even before we are. ¹¹

I am fearful regarding the “Law of the Harvest” for America. Millions of innocent babies have had their blood shed by a mother who put her interest ahead of theirs. Words like “*a woman’s choice*,” “*freedom over her own body*,” and “*personal preference*” pale when considering the worth of an innocent child’s life.

Does this go unnoticed by God? No!

Abortion is one of America’s great national sins against God. Some would protest and say that our government has made it legal. That is true, but it is not legal with God. When God said, “*You shall not murder*,” He was also addressing abortion. Remember we have already defined the meaning and purpose of government from Romans 13: to reward good and punish evil. If our government does not reverse the unjust and evil laws of abortion, there will be a day that God will execute His judgment upon us. We have seen throughout the pages of the Bible where He overthrew an unjust government and gave their land to another nation. Because of our practice of abortion on demand, He could do that to America as well.

¹¹ Ibid.

We have justified the practice of abortion by calling an unborn child only a fetus to lessen the guilt of taking an innocent life. While even the haters of Bible-believing Christians would condemn the abomination of placing a baby in the burning hot arms of an idol like Molech, yet somehow they can justify a partial birth abortion in which the baby is sacrificed and some of its body parts are sold for profit.

I have no doubt in my mind that the same God who condemned and judged the nations of Canaan for such abominations has condemned America for the sin of abortion. Judgment waits for America unless we have a reprieve by repentance and revival.

Life begins at conception. Abortion is murder. Such practices will not go unpunished by a holy and just God.

Our nation's very survival depends upon the repealing of abortion. If we could see into the future and view blood running in the streets of our cities, we would understand that it was the law of the harvest, reaping what we had sown through allowing the practice of abortion.

The prophets of Israel saw into the future and told them that very warning – but their hearts were hardened and the message went unheeded. Will we repeat their mistakes?

To support abortion is to support the eventual judgment of God upon America. What a paradox it is for those in our country who will go to great lengths to save a polar bear, but turn their heads in silence as millions of babies are aborted. They have tremendous zeal to protect the

environment from pollution and save a tree, but not an innocent life. May God have mercy upon us and spare us from what is coming because of our nations sins and the violation of His universal laws.

May we remember the multitude of nations that practiced human sacrifice and were judged by God. May we learn from history.



Prayer

O God, our hearts are so grieved to think that innocent babies were once placed in the burning hands of idols to die amidst cries of pain. We are also grieved that in our country we have stooped so low as to sacrifice our nation's innocent babies by the millions on the altar of women's rights while defying Your law and the rights of the unborn. Forgive us of this sin. Forgive us for hardening our hearts – and for not getting involved and doing more to fight this battle. O God, do what is necessary to humble America before we reap the harvest of blood of these innocent ones. In Jesus' name.

What has God laid on your heart to pray for today?



Day 5 (Sound the Alarm - Chapter 4.5) Homosexuality

The issue of homosexuality has become a battleground in our country. The gay agenda is pervasive in our culture. In 2003 Alan Sears and Craig Osten, president and vice-president of the *Alliance Defense Fund*, an American conservative Christian organization, offer this characterization:

*It is an agenda that they basically set in the late 1980s, in a book called *After the Ball*, where they laid out a six-point plan for how they could transform the beliefs of ordinary Americans with regard to homosexual behavior — in a decade-long time frame.... They admit it privately, but they will not say that publicly. In their private publications, homosexual activists make it very clear that there is an agenda. The six-point agenda that they laid out in 1989 was explicit:*

- *Talk about gays and gayness as loudly and as often as possible*
- *Portray gays as victims, not as aggressive challengers*
- *Give homosexual protectors a just cause*
- *Make gays look good*
- *Make the victimizers look bad*
- *Get funds from corporate America*¹²

¹² Osten, Craig (2003). "Q&A: *The Homosexual Agenda*," Focus on the Family Action, archived copy at the Internet Archive

What does God say about homosexuality? The Bible is clear and unequivocal. It is a sin that defiles individuals and can defile an entire culture. God warned Israel that they were not to commit such immoral acts.

God's sexual standards are formed from His creation purpose and pattern for male and female.¹³ Sexual intimacy was purposed by God as a gift to be expressed between a husband and wife in the marriage relationship. Sexual revolution from God's natural order of morality is evidence that a culture is rejecting God's rule over them.¹⁴

This was the case with all the nations of Canaan as outlined in Leviticus 18, where homosexuality is the next sin listed. What we saw in Abraham's day in Canaan with the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah was the beginning of the immoral cancer that would later spread to all the nations of Canaan. Even after God demonstrated His judgment on Sodom, the warning against such sexual sins went unheeded until all the defiled nations of Canaan also suffered the judgment of God and the land vomited them out of its midst.¹⁵

It is the next national sin listed in Leviticus 18:22. The nations of Canaan accepted homosexuality as a way of life. *"Homosexuality and bestiality were apparently common in Canaanite culture. Homosexuality is mentioned with reference to the Canaanites and also in Mesopotamia."*¹⁶

¹³ Genesis 1:27-28; 2:18-25

¹⁴ Romans 1

¹⁵ Genesis 13:10; 2 Peter 2:6-9; Jude 7

¹⁶ Cabal, T., C.O., Clendenen, E.R., Copan, P., Moreland, J., & Powell, D. (2007). *The Apologetics Study Bible: Real Questions, Straight Answers, Stronger Faith* (178-179). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers

God says in His law,

*You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an **abomination**. Nor shall you mate with any animal, to defile yourself with it. Nor shall any woman stand before an animal to mate with it. It is **perversion**. Do not defile yourselves with any of these things; **for by all these the nations are defiled**, which I am casting out before you. For the land is defiled; **therefore I visit the punishment of its iniquity upon it**, and the land vomits out its inhabitants (Leviticus 18:22-25, emphasis mine).*

Here in Leviticus we have a clear listing of these iniquities that reached a point that God visited the punishment of its iniquity upon it.¹⁷

The nations of Canaan had decayed morally for over four hundred years by exchanging the truth of God for a lie. They are an illustration of Paul's argument of why God removes the restraints and allows a nation to have its own way.

*Therefore God also gave them up to **uncleanness**, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. For this reason God gave them up to **vile passions**. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful,*

¹⁷ Lev. 18:25

*and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a **debased mind**, to do those things which are not fitting (Romans 1:24-28, emphasis mine).*

Those who depart from the Creator's purpose for sexuality are not a sign of cultural enlightenment. Throwing off the guilt of "*religious bigots*" does not make them free. According to God's Word, it enslaves them to their own sexual desires. And it ultimately brings a nation closer to God giving them over to a debased mind where judgment follows.

The Bible is clear that homosexuality is a debasing sin that moves individuals and nations away from God.

When nations move from God's moral absolutes for marriage and family, they are moving into deeper spiritual darkness that will lead to spiritual decay and destruction. Even though Israel was plainly warned of these consequences, they too would defile the land by idolatry and sexual immorality.

In this process of moral decay those who throw off the Creator's moral absolutes seem to despise and persecute those who still hold to Biblical Christian values. Those who preach tolerance become tolerant of almost any sexual deviation, but intolerant of those who call homosexual acts sin. In some circles today the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender crowd would embrace one of their own who can boast of hundreds of sex partners as a champion of freedom of expression. At the same time they would condemn in their intolerance and seek to silence a dear

old grandmother who reads her Bible and calls homosexual acts sin.

I am concerned that in America the Bill of Rights granting religious freedom and freedom of speech will be stripped from those who hold to God's definition of marriage as between a man and a woman. Freedom of speech at many of our universities has been redefined to mean we are free to say anything we want against Christian moral absolutes, but Christians are not free to express their moral values.

Dr. Kent Spann, writing on *The Christian and Same-Sex "Marriage,"* warns that hate speech legislation may one day be used against Christians who continue to embrace and teach Biblical values:

*To legalize same-sex "marriage" is to legitimize homosexuality. It also strengthens the hate crime legislature passed in America. Tony Perkins, president of Family Research Council, following the passage of Federal hate crimes legislation in 2009 said, "This hate crimes provision is part of a radical social agenda that could ultimately silence Christians and use the force of government to marginalize anyone whose faith is at odds with homosexuality," One has to only look north to Canada, where Bill C-250 was signed into law in April of 2004, making it a criminal offense to criticize homosexuality. Focus on the Family had to edit programs in order to comply with Canadian hate crime laws.*¹⁸

¹⁸ www.ccv.org/wp.../The-Christian-and-Same-Sex-Marriage-By-Dr.-Kent-Spann.doc

Our message is not one of hate but love. We preach that God loves all people, but all have sinned. God has made a way for all to be forgiven through the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. This means that all sinners can not only be forgiven but also become new creations in Christ.¹⁹ The church at Corinth had experienced this radical power of God's love. They saw fornicators, adulterers, homosexuals, and all manner of sinners forgiven and transformed into new people living in the power of the Gospel. Yet, today there are political forces at work to outlaw the transformation of homosexuals through the love of Christ and the power of the Gospel. Already three states have passed laws forbidding "Conversion therapy" among medical professionals. Next you can expect that the ban may also extend to pastors and Christians who believe that all sinners can be changed by the power of Christ. In the following passage notice the long list of sinful lifestyles that were changed through Christ including that of homosexuality.

*Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. **And such were some of you.** But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God (1 Corinthians 6:9-11 emphasis mine).*

¹⁹ 2 Corinthians 5:17

Moral relativism is the basis for the sexual revolution that is now changing America's view on fornication, adultery, incest, and homosexuality. Those who still hold to the Biblical view of morality are labeled by some as being hatemongers, homophobic, intolerant, and far right extremists.

True Christians love God and they love people. They also love the truth of the Bible. One of the marks that our beloved nation is facing the judgment of God will be the persecution of Christians because they call deviation from God's sexual moral standard a sin.

Christians must maintain the balance between loving the sinner and hating the sin. In the midst of persecution and alienation, we must stand firm and confident in our convictions.



Prayer

Dear God, forgive us as a nation that we are exchanging the truth about marriage and human sexuality for a politically correct lie. Forgive us as Your church for our own sins of fornication, adultery, homosexuality and pornography. Forgive us as a church that we have compromised Your moral standard as *“salt and light”* to our nation. Forgive us of our fear of being persecuted if we continue to hold to Your Biblical standards of morality. Dear Lord, You are the only one who can reverse our nation’s moral decay. Help us as we cry out to You to preserve our nation. In Jesus’ name.

What has God laid on your heart to pray for today?



Day 6 (Sound the Alarm - Chapter 5.1) The Cycle of Decline

You've probably heard the phrase, "*History repeats itself.*" That actually is a biblical principle. In this chapter we will see a repeating cycle of spiritual decline and recovery. It should serve as a warning to all nations.

The history of nations repeats itself because the sin nature of man has not changed.

God gave the nation of Israel a great mission and purpose. He entrusted the writing, preservation and dissemination of the Bible to them. Through them would come the Messiah, the Christ from the seed of Abraham. God intended for Israel to be a light in the world – but it failed. The nation turned inward and rejected the mission of serving the world. Finally, Jesus came in the flesh – as the true light of the world ... but they rejected Him also. Now Jesus has commissioned the Church to share His light and love to the world.²⁰

God's purpose is that the Church would share the Gospel to the world. God has a greater eternal purpose for His Church than He does for any nation. God is in the process through the Great Commission of calling His chosen out of every nation.

The nation that encourages the Church to be free to fulfill its mission and purpose from God will be blessed of God.

²⁰ John 1:9, Matthew 28:19-20

In God's providence, America's foundation and beginnings were related to and influenced by Church. The Church grew and flourished in America, and America grew and flourished because of the Church in America. The blessings were mutual.

God did not bless America without purpose. That blessing was not to spread a message of atheism, communism, or immorality to the world, but giving the freedom of the Church to worship freely and to spread the message of Christ to the nations.

God did not bless America without purpose.

God has blessed America because of its missional efforts. For generations a good percentage of our population drew their values from the Bible. The Church was salt and light to the world – and that made our nation better. However, a new generation has grown up without the same biblical values of former generations. They do not know the God of our fathers.

As we depart from *"In God we trust,"* we lose the blessings of God and will experience the reaping of the national sins that this new generation has sown. As the church declines in spiritual vitality, the nation also declines.

This dynamic was true of Israel and it will be true of America as well.

This cycle of blessing, departure from God, decline, and then judgment with Israel is historically illustrated to us in the Book of Judges through twelve judges or deliverers.

In the book of Joshua, an obedient people conquered the Promised Land by trusting in God's power, direction and leadership. By contrast, in Judges a disobedient and idolatrous people are often defeated because of their rebellion against God. In seven cycles of sin, the book of Judges shows how the nation sets aside God's laws and replaces them with *"that which was right in their own eyes."*²¹

Time after time God disciplines the nation by bringing in foreign nations to oppress them. Each time, they *"seem"* to learn their lesson, repenting from their sin and turning to God for deliverance. This repentance is not merely an *individual repentance*; it is a *national repentance*. As a result, God raises up Deborah, Gideon, Samson and others to overthrow their oppressors.

The repeated cycle of blessing, departure from God, decline and then judgment in Judges looks like this:

- God raised up Israel as a nation.
- God blessed them and delivered them from their enemies.
- God gave them national leaders that followed God's principles.
- The people served God for a season and prospered.
- The people grew spiritually cold in prosperity and turned from God.

²¹ Judges 21:25

- The people conformed to the pagan world around them and diluted the true worship of God.
- God reminded them of His Word, but they refused to hear.
- God stirred up an enemy to oppress them with the intent that if they would not turn to God through preaching; they would turn to God through suffering.
- In their suffering and misery they again called on God to deliver them.
- God in His mercy raised up a Judge to deliver them.
- The people would return to the God of their fathers and God again blessed them.
- They would have relief from their suffering and again worship God for a season, but then repeat the cycle of spiritual decline followed by judgment.

I find three “take-aways” from Israel’s experience that are very relevant to America today:

First, God was always merciful, always ready to forgive, and always ready to bless. He has not changed. He is the same today and He waits for our response.

Second, Israel’s repentance was never “*perfect*.” But their heart-felt cry was always heard by God. “*The sacrifices of*

God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise” (Psalm 51:17).

Finally, God used imperfect people to accomplish His tasks. Samson was a womanizer. Gideon was frightened and insecure. But God used them. And He can use people today as well. Our greatest ability is our availability.



Day 7 (Sound the Alarm - Chapter 6.3) When the Wall is Down and Enemies Abound

Of all King David's sons, God chose Solomon to be the next king. Solomon was given such great wisdom and wealth that he prospered above all the kings of the earth. Solomon walked with God and built the temple of God. And God blessed his kingdom with peace and prosperity because of his loyalty to God.

However, even wise Solomon failed. He became a fool when he married pagan wives and allowed them to turn his heart from God. He even went so far as to build altars to their pagan gods.

Because of this God stirred up enemies against Solomon and his kingdom. The former peace and protection that God gave Israel was removed and God no longer restrained evil against Israel. Here's the story:

But King Solomon loved many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh: women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites—from the nations of whom the LORD had said to the children of Israel, “You shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you. Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods.” Solomon clung to these in love. And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart. For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God, as was the heart of his father

David. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and did not fully follow the LORD, as did his father David. Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, on the hill that is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the abomination of the people of Ammon. And he did likewise for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods.

***So the LORD became angry with Solomon,** because his heart had turned from the LORD God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice, and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but he did not keep what the LORD had commanded. Therefore the LORD said to Solomon, “Because you have done this, and have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom away from you and give it to your servant. Nevertheless I will not do it in your days, for the sake of your father David; I will tear it out of the hand of your son. However I will not tear away the whole kingdom; I will give one tribe to your son for the sake of my servant David, and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen.”*

***Now the LORD raised up an adversary against Solomon,** Hadad the Edomite; he was a descendant of the king in Edom....*

***And God raised up another adversary against him,** Rezon the son of Eliadah, who had fled from his lord, Hadadezer king of Zobah.... He was an adversary of Israel all the days of Solomon (besides the trouble that*

Hadad caused); and he abhorred Israel, and reigned over Syria....

*Then Solomon's servant, Jeroboam the son of Nebat, an Ephraimite from Zereda, whose mother's name was Zeruah, a widow, **also rebelled against the king** (1 Kings 11:1-14, 23-24, 26, emphasis mine).*

The principle is clear:

When a nation or leader violates God's moral laws and promotes unrighteousness, God allows enemies to rise up against that nation.

Why does God do that? Two reasons are clear from Scripture:

1. To judge that land or leader. This is the punitive aspect – God is punishing them. In this case, God is *against* them.
2. To bring them back to Him. This is the discipline aspect – God is circumstantially working to bring them back to Him. In this case, God is *for* them.

How do you know which is the case when you are in the middle of it? Honestly, you don't always know. But God always offers a "return policy." Restoration is always available – conditioned only upon repentance. It is only when a nation's sins fill the cup of God's wrath that His verdict of judgment is final. That is when a nation – or an individual – has reached the point of no return.

There has never been a time when so many people around the world hate America. We once were seen as a protector

and champion of freedom to many nations but now we have lost the respect of many. Since 9-11 we have seen a great increase in the number of terrorist groups and nations who want to harm or even destroy America.

As conservative Christians we can see a parallel between our declining faith in God and the increase in our enemies. Many of our national leaders, like Solomon, want to court pagan religions and see no correlation between the rise of evil against us and our declining morality.

Everyday terrorist groups are plotting attacks against America. It is impossible for our national security agencies to track all the secret terrorist cells that are already in our nation. Millions are crossing our borders illegally, weakening us financially and threatening our security.

Cyber-attacks have become a reality. From terrorist groups who threaten our military to nations who steal military and industrial secrets worth billions of dollars, the threat is real. News agencies have suspected that China, Russia, North Korea, Iran and others are actively stealing our secrets. In some cases our enemies are gaining our military secrets that one day may be used against us.

China obtained more than 50 terabytes of data from U.S. defense and government networks, notably the Joint Strike Fighter's stealth radar and engine secrets, through cyber espionage, according to newly disclosed National Security Agency documents.

In all, the NSA concluded that the Chinese compromised key weapons systems including the F-35, the B-2 bomber, the F-22 fighter-bomber, the Space Based Laser, and other systems.

*The amount of stolen data was “the equivalent of five Libraries of Congress (50 terabytes),” the NSA said. A terabyte is 1,000 gigabytes.*²²

The church is not immune to these attacks. Missionaries are threatened and tortured for their faith around the world. The Bible is assailed and questioned. Religious liberties are being taken away around the world and at home.

As believers, we know that it is ultimately Satan who is behind the attacks against God and the church. He seeks to kill and destroy. But his powers are limited. When he sought to attack Job, God had built an unseen wall of protection around Job, his family, and his possessions. God allowed him to go only so far, and no further.

We must recognize the connections between rejecting God’s standard and the removal of God’s restraining hand of protection over our country.

²² Bill Gertz, freebeacon.com, January 22, 2015



Prayer

O Lord, our nation is under attack by many enemies. Some of our national leaders view our Christian values as intolerant to many religions and gods. We are told that it is wrong to claim there is only One true God and that Jesus is the only way to heaven. Like Solomon they have departed from the one true God to court many gods. God, forgive us as a nation. Forgive us that many of our national leaders in order to be politically correct no longer exalt Jesus Christ as Your only means of salvation from our sins. Lord, remember the true believers of our nation and have mercy upon our nation for their sake. In Jesus' name.

What has God laid on your heart to pray for today?



Day 8 (Sound the Alarm - Chapter 7.1) God Controls the Heart of National Leaders

Even when a nation has gone far from God, the Lord can still preserve His people and His church. We should have hope no matter what is coming because God is Sovereign. Just as He had a plan for His children in the past, He has a plan for the Church.

What is it that gives us this confidence? Proverbs 21:1 states it clearly:

The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes.

God rules sovereignly because He controls the hearts of national leaders.

The Bible is filled with examples of God sovereignly moving the hand of world leaders.

- God gave Nebuchadnezzar a dream that could only be interpreted by the prophet Daniel. The message was not good news: because of his wickedness, his kingdom would be brought to an end (Daniel 4:34; 5:23-25).
- God moved in Artaxerxes life to issue a remarkable decree to aid Ezra to help rebuild Jerusalem (Ezra 7:12-26). Though Artaxerxes ruled over many other kings, the ultimate King was the Lord Jesus. This passage showed God's deep commitment to keep

the Abrahamic, Davidic, and New Covenants with Israel.²³

Because we are a democracy, we elect our leaders by majority vote. In most cases our leaders become a reflection of the moral and spiritual values of the nation. When the Christian moral values embraced by our forefathers become a minority, then the hope of changing the direction of our nation through politics is in danger.

As a young teen, I have many good memories of fishing at False River around New Roads, Louisiana. I later learned that this oxbow lake was once part of the Mississippi River, but the mighty river changed its course during a flood in the early 1700s. History has been repeated many times in which rivers have changed their courses and villages and cities along rivers have been bypassed.

Just as a river flows with its twists and turns, cutting new channels that change its course, so God can change the heart of a king and change the direction of a nation.

Christians should never lose hope. Our hope is not in politics to bring about a moral change in our nation. Our hope is not in an elected official and what he or she can accomplish. Our hope is in God. And God does not need a majority to accomplish His purpose.

Christians are called by God to be good citizens. We should be law abiding citizens. We should work hard for the public good and vote accordingly. Our moral values should continue to be based upon the unchangeable truths of

²³ The MacArthur Study Bible, footnote on Ezra 7:12-26, p. 638

Scripture, and not the changing values shaped by the media or culture.

It is easy to become discouraged when our nation elects leaders who stand for godless principles. Whether their stance is based on their personal convictions or they are simply going along with what many in their district want to hear, those of us who know God's law are grieved. We know that these national sins that will bring God's judgment upon our nation. Abortion and gay marriage are two obvious indicators that our nation is in great spiritual decline.

We desperately need a spiritual awakening. The Church in America needs revival *now*. Without a revival that can turn our nation back to God, judgment seems inevitable.

In this section, we will discover that God can still work through a minority to accomplish His will. Here is a very encouraging principle:

The power of prayer and the power of even one believer interceding to God can change history.

The heart of the king is still in the hand of the Lord, and He can turn it wherever He wills regardless of that leader's political persuasion.

We must remain hopeful. God has intervened on behalf of faithful believers in the past, and He can and will do it again in the future. We cannot afford to give in to a doomsday mentality. I encourage each of you to remain steadfast, hopeful, prayerful and expectant that God can and will work in our land.



Prayer

Father, we do believe You are good. We believe You hold the king's heart in Your hands and can turn it in any direction You desire. Our heartfelt prayer is that You would do it again. Change our leaders' hearts. Raise up a generation who believes You and will work hard to return righteousness to our land. We pray in the name of the One who rules over all, Amen.

What has God laid on your heart to pray for today?



Day 9 (Sound the Alarm - Chapter 7.2) One Sleepless Night

Can one night make a difference in the course of history?
It can when the Lord is involved.

That night the king could not sleep. So one was commanded to bring the book of the records of the chronicles; and they were read before the king (Esther 6:1).

It looked hopeless for Jews who were scattered throughout the Persian Empire of King Ahasuerus (aka Xerxes). The King had signed a decree that under the Law of the Medes and Persians could not be changed – even by the king. All the property and possessions of the Jews were to be taken from them – and they were to be executed on a certain day. Certainly all the odds were in the favor of the enemies of the Jews. The Jews were destined for destruction. Satan was trying to destroy the Seed of Abraham.

The time of the Jews destruction was marked on the King's calendar and her enemies had made themselves ready.

In the name of King Ahasuerus it was written, and sealed with the king's signet ring. And the letters were sent by couriers into all the king's provinces, to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate all the Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar, and to plunder their possessions (Esther 3:12-13).

Then nighttime came. And God turned the king's heart and history with one sleepless night. God's Providence would do more than save the Jews. He would destroy their enemies and exalt Mordecai and Esther in the Persian kingdom as he had Daniel in the Babylonian kingdom.

But before the King's decree, the unseen hand of God was at work to make Esther the Queen and Mordecai the one who saved the life of the king from an assassination plot. The king was not aware that Esther was a Jew and was not aware that Mordecai a Jew had saved his life.

That night the king could not sleep. So one was commanded to bring the book of the records of the chronicles; and they were read before the king and it was found written that Mordecai had told of Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs, the doorkeepers who had sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus. Then the king said, "What honor or dignity has been bestowed on Mordecai for this?" And the king's servants who attended him said, "Nothing has been done for him" (Esther 6:3).

The king would honor Mordecai and then learn that Haman's plot to kill all the Jews would have included Mordecai and Queen Esther. At the request of Esther, the king would give them the power to write a new decree to destroy their enemies.

Then King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther and Mordecai the Jew, "Indeed, I have given Esther the house of Haman, and they have hanged him on the gallows because he tried to lay his hand on the Jews. You yourselves write a decree concerning the Jews, as

you please, in the king's name, and seal it with the king's signet ring; for whatever is written in the king's name and sealed with the king's signet ring no one can revoke."

So the king's scribes were called at that time, in the third month, which is the month of Sivan, on the twenty-third day; and it was written, according to all that Mordecai commanded, to the Jews, the satraps, the governors, and the princes of the provinces from India to Ethiopia, one hundred and twenty-seven provinces in all, to every province in its own script, to every people in their own language, and to the Jews in their own script and language.

And he wrote in the name of King Ahasuerus, sealed it with the king's signet ring, and sent letters by couriers on horseback, riding on royal horses bred from swift steeds. By these letters the king permitted the Jews who were in every city to gather together and protect their lives—to destroy, kill, and annihilate all the forces of any people or province that would assault them, both little children and women, and to plunder their possessions, on one day in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar (Esther 8:7-12).

The Book of Esther illustrates God's sovereignty over the nations and His unseen hand turning the heart of a king through a little thing like a sleepless night.

When God is at work, it only takes one person to change the course of history. One person, plus his or her God. And sometimes only one night.

We need hope that even when it looks like our beloved nation has gone so far from its Christian/Judean foundation that bestowed on us God's blessings like no other nation, that even as a minority God can still protect us. God can turn the heart of a king.

Now in the twelfth month, that is, the month of Adar, on the thirteenth day, the time came for the king's command and his decree to be executed. On the day that the enemies of the Jews had hoped to overpower them, the opposite occurred, in that the Jews themselves overpowered those who hated them. (Esther 9:1, emphasis mine).

The Bible Knowledge Commentary sums up Esther this way:

As the original Jewish readers read this account they would have been struck by the way God was sovereignly protecting them, often when they did not even know it. Many things in the Book of Esther happened that were beyond anyone's control except that of God, who oversees history. And the Book of Esther is filled with irony, with ways in which events turned out unexpectedly and in favor of God's people. Queen Vashti, a Persian, was deposed so that Esther, a Jewess, could become queen and save her people. Haman, once exalted, was brought low, and Mordecai and the Jews, once hated, were exalted and honored. A decree that would have wiped out the Jews was overruled by one which led to the destruction of nearly 76,000 enemies of the Jews. No wonder Purim was celebrated yearly with such rejoicing: to help the Jews

*remember that God is in control and that people should faithfully worship and serve their great God.*²⁴

It may look dark for our nation now as most of our national leaders no longer embrace biblical values. Rather than grieve over our national sins the majority embrace them as love and tolerance. As Haman hated the Jews, many political groups hate Christians who find their moral values from the Bible. We must remember that even when Christians are in the minority, God can still turn the heart of a President, Congressmen or Supreme Court Justice by one sleepless night.

We are commanded to pray for our political leaders that we might lead a quiet and peaceful life.

Pray for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence (1 Timothy 2:2).

²⁴ *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, John F. Walvoord and Roy Zuck



Prayer

Father, I know it only takes one person – and sometimes only one night. You have the power to reverse immoral laws even when Your children are in the minority. Help turn our nation by turning the hearts of our leaders. Defeat those politicians, who like Haman, plot against Your people. Place some of Your children in positions of influence to our leaders as You did Mordecai and Esther. In Jesus name.

What has God laid on your heart to pray for today?



Day 10 (Sound the Alarm - Chapter 7.3) A Disturbing Dream

A disturbing dream turned the king's heart and Daniel was exalted to a position of great power and influence.

Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face, prostrate before Daniel, and commanded that they should present an offering and incense to him. The king answered Daniel, and said, "Truly your God is the God of gods, the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, since you could reveal this secret."

Then the king promoted Daniel and gave him many great gifts; and he made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief administrator over all the wise men of Babylon. Also Daniel petitioned the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego over the affairs of the province of Babylon; but Daniel sat in the gate of the king (Daniel 2:46-49).

The book of Daniel should encourage believers everywhere that no matter what country they live in or what form of government rules over them, ultimately God rules over all nations. No government can override God's will.

Here in America when we see the eroding of moral values and the political winds of change toward Christian values, we should not lose heart. God can turn the heart of a king as a river.

The Back Story

King Nebuchadnezzar took Daniel captive to Babylon when God's judgment came upon Judah. This 17-year-old teenager was displaced from his country, his family, his friends, and all that was safe. He was in dangerous territory. The King seemed to have complete control over the fate of God's people. However, God honored him. God demonstrated that He rules over those that rule over nations.

And Daniel had complete faith in this sovereign Lord.

King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream that troubled him and no one could tell him the dream or the interpretation. But God revealed the dream and the interpretation to Daniel. This intervention by God was used to exalt Daniel to a political position of influence and to humble the King to acknowledge God.

It is important to note the place of prayer in this divine intervention. Daniel faced eminent death by an unjust law of the king. However, he and his faithful companions would touch the heart of God in prayer.

So Daniel went in and asked the king to give him time, that he might tell the king the interpretation. Then Daniel went to his house, and made the decision known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, that they might seek mercies from the God of heaven concerning this secret, so that Daniel and his companions might not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. Then the secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. So Daniel blessed the God of heaven.

Daniel answered and said: “Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, for wisdom and might are His. And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding (Daniel 2:16-21).

Nowhere else in the Bible do we see that God gave anyone knowledge of a dream that another person had—without the dreamer telling him about it. Joseph had interpreted the dreams of Pharaoh and his servants after they told him what they were. This was unique. Daniel believed that God could do anything, even reveal the dream itself to him, as well as its interpretation.

The stage was now set to show the reality, wisdom, and power of the one true God—Yahweh—as over against the inarticulate and impotent imaginary gods the magicians worshiped. It is the same general theme that dominates the remainder of the book and serves to remind the Hebrew nation that despite their own failure, collapse, and banishment into exile, the God of Israel remains as omnipotent as he ever was in the days of Moses and that his covenantal love remains as steadfast toward the seed of Abraham as it ever had been.²⁵

One final point needs to be made from this passage.

Daniel informed his three friends Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego about the situation so they could pray together about it. One biblical commentator suggests, “It

²⁵ Gleason Archer, *Daniel*, p. 42

*is the first instance of united prayer recorded in Scripture; and the fact that these children of the captivity resorted to it, discovers to us the secret of their holy and separate walk.”*²⁶

In these dark spiritual days in America, we are never without hope. No matter who is elected President or to Congress, we can have God’s veto power of prayer if we would have men and women like Daniel to pray. But we must recognize the power of corporate prayer.

- God gives us spiritual companions to join us in heart-felt prayer to God. There is strength in numbers.
- Sometimes when we are weak, those spiritual companions encourage us to be faithful to Him. At other times, we are the ones to encourage them. Either way, we need each other.
- The Christian life was never designed to be lived in isolation. Look for others that God brings your way to join you in the spiritual battle. You cannot do it on your own.

²⁶ Edward Dennett, *Daniel the Prophet: And The Times of the Gentiles*, p. 22



Prayer

Gracious Lord, we pray that You would give us good and godly friends to join us in the cause of praying for our nation. May we never lose heart when we see the eroding of moral values and the political winds of change toward Christian values. Sovereign Lord, turn the heart of the king just as You would the course of a river. In Jesus name.

What has God laid on your heart to pray for today?



Day 11 (Sound the Alarm - Chapter 7.4) When God Frustrated the King's Command

People in power often abuse the power that God gave them. However, God has demonstrated that He can frustrate their plans to persecute the righteous by delivering His children who trust in Him.

Let's go back to the book of Daniel for a moment. In the last chapter we were introduced to Daniel's three friends – Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego – spiritual companions who were in the battle with him. They were placed into a compromising situation – but they refused to compromise.

Nebuchadnezzar had an ego problem. He decided he was not revered enough, so he constructed a statue of himself that was **99 feet high and nine feet wide**. That is the height of a ten-story building and the width of a 9x12 feet room. It takes a massive ego-trip to do something like that. But politicians have a way of falling into the ego-trap unless someone holds them accountable.

Not only did “dear-old-Neb” build the statue; he commanded everyone in his kingdom to bow down in worship, and in doing so, pay allegiance only to him.

That presented a problem for Daniel's friends. They refused to bow to the great image that the King had erected, even though it meant to be thrown into a furnace of fire. They were ready to die rather than worship a false

god. They also trusted that God could deliver them if He so chooses.

So they were thrown into a fiery furnace to die. However, they survived because of the mighty hand of God. We pick up the story in Daniel 3 ...

Then Nebuchadnezzar went near the mouth of the burning fiery furnace and spoke, saying, "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, servants of the Most High God, come out, and come here." Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego came from the midst of the fire. And the satraps, administrators, governors, and the king's counselors gathered together, and they saw these men on whose bodies the fire had no power; the hair of their head was not singed nor were their garments affected, and the smell of fire was not on them.

*Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, who sent His Angel and delivered His servants who trusted in Him, **and they have frustrated the king's word**, and yielded their bodies, that they should not serve nor worship any god except their own God! Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation, or language which speaks anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made an ash heap; because there is no other God who can deliver like this." Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego in the province of Babylon (Daniel 3:26-30, emphasis mine).*

God delivered his faithful servants and changed the heart of a king.

God can do that. But that's not always the way God works.

Sometimes, our sovereign God allows His servants to experience severe persecution and martyrdom. Throughout history faithful Jews and Christians have been persecuted because of their faith. Steven was the first martyr of the Church followed by many like James, Peter, and the Apostles.

It doesn't mean those persecuted and martyred somehow didn't measure up like Daniel's friends. Those who give their lives for the sake of the kingdom are not "less spiritual." In fact, God's Word honors them.

Rome persecuted the Church for three centuries yet the Church grew. Once again today with oppressive governments we see the Church persecuted. Isis is now beheading and persecuting Christians.

America has been the champion of religious liberty since God raised her up to benefit the Church and world missions. God will continue to bless us for allowing religious liberty.

However, if we have new government leaders who are not supportive of Biblical Christianity, that could change. We should have the attitude of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, God can deliver us. But if not we will still not bow to a false god. Here's the record of their reaction:

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the

burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up” (Daniel 3:16-18).

They believed the Lord could deliver them from any fiery furnace and that He *would* deliver them. However, they also acknowledged the possibility that it might be God's will not to deliver them. God does not always save the lives of His children when they face martyrdom. They knew this, but they had no question about God's ability to save them. Whether God would deliver them or not, they refused to serve idols or to bow before the king's image

It is that same quiet confidence in God that is needed today. We need to be men and women who have core convictions that:

- Our God can do anything. No governmental pronouncement can supersede the will and authority of God.
- He is sovereign over everything. He can protect us from the fiery furnaces we face.
- He notices everything that we are going through. Nothing escapes His notice.
- Nothing happens to us without His direct authority. If persecution or even martyrdom come our way, we can rejoice, knowing that our heavenly Father has allowed such a thing to happen and that He has found us faithful to endure it to the end.

- Men and women who have that quiet confidence in their heavenly Father can change the world.

Can you affirm those truths? Are you willing to live by them?

Our God can do anything. He is sovereign over everything. He notices everything that we are going through. Nothing happens to us without His direct authority. Men and women who have that quiet confidence in their heavenly Father can change the world.



Prayer

Lord, help us to be faithful to You even if we face persecution. Give us the strength to trust You. May we not violate your Word, even if it means that we face persecution. May our willingness to suffer for righteousness become a testimony of Your grace. Find us faithful, we pray in Jesus name.

What has God laid on your heart to pray for today?



Day 12 (Sound the Alarm - Chapter 7.5) God's Will Cannot Be Stopped

I'm sure you've heard the hypothetical question that many agnostics ask: *Can God make a mountain so big He cannot move it?* Put another way, *what happens when the immovable object meets the irresistible force?*

Answer? God is *both* the immovable object (*He is our Rock, He cannot be moved*) and the irresistible force (*Nothing can stop our God*). That applies directly to the nations who oppose Him. Though the nations may seem strong and unstoppable, they are *nothing* when compared to our God.

God does His will among the nations and no one can stop His hand.

Or, if you want to put it another way, *"The bigger they are, the harder they fall."*

King Nebuchadnezzar had seen the hand of God in action in Daniel 2. He had his pride humiliated and his power destroyed by God when his fiery furnace experiment could not burn God's servants in Daniel 3.

Now in Daniel 4, the King is once again lifted up in pride and boasts of the majesty of his kingdom. (Same song, third verse?) He fails once again to realize that God had exalted him ... and God can humble him. Daniel is once again called upon to interpret another prophetic dream in which God will take from Nebuchadnezzar both his *throne*

and his *mind* for seven years. God uses the ultimate humiliation to teach him (and us) that God rules over nations and give their power to whomever He pleases. Referring to Nebuchadnezzar, God gives Nebuchadnezzar a vision of a great tree and says,

*Let his heart be changed from that of a man, let him be given the heart of a beast, and let seven times pass over him. This decision is by the decree of the watchers, and the sentence by the word of the holy ones, **in order that the living may know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, gives it to whomever He will, and sets over it the lowest of men.**'*
"This dream I, King Nebuchadnezzar, have seen. Now you, Belteshazzar, declare its interpretation, since all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make known to me the interpretation; but you are able, for the Spirit of the Holy God is in you" (Daniel 4:16-18).

God showed Daniel the purpose of the judgment of this "tree." It was to teach all people that the Most High God is sovereign over the affairs of all people. He can, has, and will set up whom He will, even people of humble origin, to rule nations (e.g., Joseph, Israel's judges, Saul, David, et al.). God does not need the mighty to do His work. He uses whom He chooses. Therefore, it is foolish to become proud over one's accomplishments and importance, as Nebuchadnezzar was.

God had sought to impress His sovereignty on Nebuchadnezzar previously (chs. 2, 3), but the king had not learned his lesson. So the Lord sent him a stronger lesson. This is often what He does (cf. Job 33:14-17). The last part of this verse is really a summary of the theme of

the Book of Daniel: *in order that the living may know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, gives it to whomever He will, and sets over it the lowest of men.*

In verse 18 the king concluded his description of what his dream contained by appealing to Daniel to interpret it for him. It seems incredible that the Babylonian soothsayers could not offer an interpretation of this dream, since its meaning seems quite transparent. Perhaps God hid the meaning from them, or maybe they pretended ignorance of it since it predicted Nebuchadnezzar's humiliation, and they would not have wanted to tell him of that.

The next seven years pass in a blur. Finally, Nebuchadnezzar's sanity returned to him and he said,

And at the end of the time I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me; and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever:

*For His dominion is an everlasting dominion,
And His kingdom is from generation to generation.
All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing;
He does according to His will in the army of heaven
And among the inhabitants of the earth.
No one can restrain His hand
Or say to Him, "What have You done?"*

At the same time my reason returned to me, and for the glory of my kingdom, my honor and splendor returned to me. My counselors and nobles resorted to me, I was restored to my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added to me. Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all of

whose works are truth, and His ways justice. And those who walk in pride He is able to put down (Daniel 4:34-37).

It was at this point that I believe Nebuchadnezzar finally and fully learned his lesson. The most powerful man on earth was humbled by an encounter with the true and living God. And it was proven to be true: *“the bigger they are, the harder they fall.”*

Imagine the impact on our nation if one of our political leaders came face to face with Jesus Christ. What would happen if one of them went through an experience like Nebuchadnezzar did? Nebuchadnezzar had to leave his place in society and live in the open air with *“beasts” (animals) of the field*. Moreover, he would behave as an animal himself, even eating grass. Zoanthropy is a form of mental illness that causes such behavior. With it a person imagines himself or herself to be an animal. Perhaps this is what God used to afflict Nebuchadnezzar.²⁷

Nebuchadnezzar’s whole life turned around. It took seven years. But God finally got through to him. What will it might take for God to get through to our leaders in America and those around the world?

²⁷ Thomas Constable, *Constable’s Old Testament Commentary, Daniel 4:21-23*.



Prayer

Father, today we are reminded that just as You changed our hearts, You can change the hearts of world rulers. We pray for the personal salvation of our political rulers. We pray for the President, that He will understand that the death of Christ on the cross was for his forgiveness, conversion and redemption. We pray the same for our Congressmen, Supreme Court Justices, and state officials. Lord, place a godly witness in the inner circle of our leaders to be a constant witness of Christ. In Jesus name.

What has God laid on your heart to pray for today?



Day 13 (Sound the Alarm - Chapter 7.6) God's Sovereign Hand of Judgment

Every nation and political leaders is accountable to God regardless of his or her form of government, political persuasion or religion. It does not matter whether a leader is a Christian, Jew, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Communist or atheist. God still hates pride and holds the breath of every leader in His hand.

Not only can God turn the heart of a king like He turns a river, but He can stop the heart of a king by His sovereign hand of judgment.

... and the God who holds your breath in His hand and owns all your ways, you have not glorified (Daniel 5:23).

Belshazzar became king of the Babylonian empire after Nebuchadnezzar's death. But he never learned the important lesson of humility from his father. He let unlimited power lift him up in raucous pride. He called together one thousand of his lords for a feast in which he would drink wine from the golden vessels taken from the Temple in Jerusalem. Mocking the One true and living God, Daniel 5 says,

They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold and silver, bronze and iron, wood and stone. In the same hour the fingers of a man's hand appeared and wrote opposite the lampstand on the plaster of the wall of

the king's palace; and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote ... (Daniel 5:4-5).

The same hand that wrote the Ten Commandments and declared that no one was to worship any god but the true God wrote God's message of judgment against King Belshazzar and his kingdom.

Daniel alone could interpret the message from God:

And this is the inscription that was written: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. This is the interpretation of each word. MENE: God has numbered your kingdom, and finished it. TEKEL: You have been weighed in the balances, and found wanting. PERES: Your kingdom has been divided and given to the Meds and Persians (Daniel 5:25-28).

Daniel reminded the king of truths that every President, Prime Minister, King and national leader should be reminded of in Daniel 5:17-31.

- God is the One who allows you to rule.
- God expects you to acknowledge His rule over you.
- God expects your rule to be for the good of the nation.
- God expects you to rule by His unchangeable and universal moral principles.
- God expects you to rule in humility, as a servant.

- God rules in the kingdom of men and appoints over it whomever He chooses.
- God also disposes of rulers as He chooses.

Even though Belshazzar was a pagan king who in his superstition worshiped many gods, God still demanded him to give glory to the one true God.

... and the God who holds your breath in His hand and owns all your ways, you have not glorified (Daniel 5:23).

That very night God took his life from him as the Medes and Persian army invaded Babylon and established the Persian Empire as the next great kingdom.

We may feel helpless when world rulers do not acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ or submit to the universal morals of God. But like Daniel we have the power of prayer and the knowledge that God can remove from office those who are lifted up in pride like Belshazzar.

God not only holds the heart of the king in His hand, but sometimes He chooses to stop the heart of the king in judgment.



Prayer

Today, Father, You reminded us again that even when we suffer under laws and rulers that do not abide by Your universal principles, You still hold the hearts of the kings in Your hand. God, we pray that our proud rulers will be humbled. We pray that those in authority over us will recognize that their very next breath is in Your hand and You demand that all rulers acknowledge and glorify You. Give us rulers who are humble. And may we be people of faith, insight and power like Daniel. In Jesus' name.

What has God laid on your heart to pray for today?



Day 14 (Sound the Alarm - Chapter 7.7) Changing Unjust Laws by the Faithfulness to God

Daniel had been through the test of suffering as a captive to Babylon. God faithfully exalted him to a position of power and influence under King Nebuchadnezzar.

Later God raised up the Meds and Persian Empire to judge Babylon for their national sins. Daniel then had a new government and a new king over him. God then gave Daniel favor before King Darius who made him governor over all his leaders. Moved by envy and hate, these leaders plotted Daniel's death. They had the king sign a bogus decree that anyone who prayed to any god but the King for the next thirty days would be thrown into a den of lions.

Guess what Daniel did? He could have chosen to pray silently and secretly for the next thirty days. After all, doesn't God hear all our prayers? But there was something greater at stake. It was a test of Daniel's character – and he did not disappoint.

*Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, **as was his custom** since early days (Daniel 6:10, emphasis mine).*

Even though Darius was displeased with himself for allowing Daniel's enemies to trick him into signing the

decree, he could not change it. God would have to intervene if Daniel was to survive.

Now the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; and no musicians were brought before him. Also his sleep went from him. Then the king arose very early in the morning and went in haste to the den of lions. And when he came to the den, he cried out with a lamenting voice to Daniel. The king spoke, saying to Daniel, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?"

Then Daniel said to the king, "O king, live forever! My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before Him; and also, O king, I have done no wrong before you."

Now the king was exceedingly glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no injury whatever was found on him, because he believed in his God.

And the king gave the command, and they brought those men who had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions—they, their children, and their wives; and the lions overpowered them, and broke all their bones in pieces before they ever came to the bottom of the den (Daniel 6:18-24).

Here again we see that the heart of the king can be turned by the hand of the Lord. We also see how easy it is for God's hand to overturn unjust laws.

Then King Darius wrote:

To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you. I make a decree that in every dominion of my kingdom men must tremble and fear before the God of Daniel. For He is the living God, and steadfast forever; His kingdom is the one which shall not be destroyed, and His dominion shall endure to the end. He delivers and rescues, and He works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth, who has delivered Daniel from the power of the lions. So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian (Daniel 6:25-28).

Daniel prospered. God delivered him. God raised him up and gave him favor with the king of a new regime. And He did it by overcoming an unjust law and honoring Daniel's faithfulness to God.

God can overturn unjust laws. And He often uses His faithful followers to accomplish that.

Today as we pray for America, let us pray that God would reverse immoral and unjust laws. There are some who would try to make it illegal for believers to continue to preach about the sanctity of marriage. Just this week, Russia and its president, Vladimir Putin, have enacted new laws making it illegal to evangelize for Christ in Russia. You cannot even invite someone to church or into your home to talk about Christ. They are even encouraging its citizens to turn Christians in to the State who violate these principles.

Where do we turn? To the same One Russian believers are turning to today: the sovereign God of heaven and earth.

Who is Putin in God's eyes? Just a temporary leader who can be taken in a moment's notice (Daniel 5). What is this new law? Just a temporary unjust law that can be overturned in an instant (Daniel 6).



Prayer

Father, make us strong like Daniel so we will not bow to laws that violate Your eternal law. Help us to remain faithful to You in the face of persecution. O God, You can change the direction of a nation back to You. And you can change unjust and immoral laws, and raise up believers to positions of influence. Do that today, we pray in Jesus' name.

What has God laid on your heart to pray for today?



Day 15 (Sound the Alarm - Chapter 7.8) God Turns a Heart

It is very important to remember that there is a difference between the way things *are* and the way they *appear*. It may *appear* that the nations are running wild and things are out of control. It may *appear* that political leaders do whatever they want. But that is not the case.

Proverbs 21:1 says that *“The king’s heart is in the hand of the Lord, like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes.”* **God** is in control. Nothing happens apart from His control and desire.

God often works behind the scenes, in ways we could never imagine, preparing people for tasks that will accomplish His purposes.

Today we are going to look at one such an event. It occurred in the first year of Cyrus’ reign as king in Persia.

God stirred the heart of King Cyrus to rebuild the Temple and to send the Jews home to Jerusalem. What would make the most powerful man in the world do such a thing for the Jewish people? Let’s take a look first at the decree he issued:

*Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, **the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia**, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying, “Thus*

says Cyrus king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth the LORD God of heaven has given me. And He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah. Who is among you of all His people? May his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel (He is God), which is in Jerusalem. And whoever is left in any place where he dwells, let the men of his place help him with silver and gold, with goods and livestock, besides the freewill offerings for the house of God which is in Jerusalem....”

King Cyrus also brought out the articles of the house of the LORD, which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from Jerusalem and put in the temple of his gods.... All the articles of gold and silver were five thousand four hundred. All these Sheshbazzar took with the captives who were brought from Babylon to Jerusalem (Ezra 1:1-4, 7, 11, emphasis mine).

God stirred up the heart of King Cyrus and turned it to favor God’s people.

God can stir up a king’s heart and turn it to bless God’s people.

That is quite a generous decree. How did God stir up the heart of Cyrus to do that? Here’s the backstory:

Could it be that God used Daniel to show the King that the prophet Isaiah had mentioned him by name and revealed that God had given him a mission to rebuild Jerusalem?

Who confirms the word of His servant, and performs the counsel of His messengers; who says to Jerusalem,

*‘You shall be inhabited,’ to the cities of Judah, ‘You shall be built,’ and I will raise up her waste places; who says to the deep, ‘Be dry! And I will dry up your rivers’; who says of **Cyrus**, ‘He is My shepherd, and he shall perform all My pleasure, saying to Jerusalem, “You shall be built,” and to the temple, “Your foundation shall be laid.”’ “Thus says the LORD to His anointed, **to Cyrus**, whose right hand I have held— to subdue nations before him and loose the armor of kings, to open before him the double doors, so that the gates will not be shut (Isaiah 44:26-45:1, emphasis mine).*

Daniel may have also shown him that Jeremiah had declared the length of the Jewish captivity to Babylon would be seventy years.²⁸ Perhaps Daniel showed him the prophetic place of Persia as recorded in prophecy.

*For thus says the LORD: **After seventy years are completed at Babylon**, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place.¹¹ For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope (Jeremiah 29:10-11, emphasis mine).*

*The ram which you saw, having the two horns—**they are the kings of Media and Persia** (Daniel 8:20, emphasis mine).*

If Daniel had indeed showed King Cyrus that God had revealed in the Bible a specific purpose for him to fulfill, it

²⁸ Jeremiah 29:10; 25:11-12.

is easy to see how Cyrus would have been moved to make such a generous decree.

Could it be that God is preparing a man or a woman today for a task that might come years down the road? As we pray for America today, pray that He would put His desires into their hearts. And as you pray, remember that God's plan for the nations includes both the evangelizing of the world (Matthew 28:19-20) and the regathering of the Jews as a nation to the land of Israel (Luke 21:20-24). Like no other nation on earth, God has used America to be part of that purpose.



Day 16 (Sound the Alarm - Chapter 7.13) Understanding Terrorist Attacks

Our nation – and our world – have been rocked by the continuous attacks from terrorists and terrorist organizations. Is there an explanation for these recent attacks in America beyond the obvious?

The explanations and finger pointing are often defined quite differently by Democrats and Republicans. Are they explained only by the hatred that Islamic radicals have for the American way of life? Are we to believe that some terrorist attacks can be explained as random hate crimes? Is the problem really traceable back to our Second Amendment and the rights to bear arms?

In this chapter I would like to look beyond the Islamic radicals, the mentally disturbed, the lone wolves that are inspired by ISIS in their demonic violence, and the well planned terrorist attacks like 9-11. Could there be a deeper, spiritual reason that we are now more susceptible to acts of terror here in America?

I asked myself the question, *“Could God have provided American with an unseen wall of protection against our enemies?”*

God’s Wall of Protection

God can establish a wall of safety for a nation. And God can remove His hand and invisible security barrier making that nation more susceptible to its enemies. The Psalmist

knew that a nation's safety was in the hands of the Lord and God was a nation's invisible shield.

*No king is saved by the multitude of an army; a mighty man is not delivered by great strength. A horse is a vain hope for **safety**; neither shall it deliver any by its great strength. Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear Him, on those who hope in His mercy, Our soul waits for the LORD; He is our help and **our shield** (Psalms 33:16-18, 20, emphasis mine).*

There was a time in King's Solomon reign in Israel when God gave the nation peace, rest and security. God in effect had built an *"invisible wall of protection"* around Israel where no enemy would attack her. The reason for this Divine protection was the nation's commitment to moral righteousness. However, when Solomon led Israel into idolatry and moral depravity, that invisible wall of safety was breached and God stirred up many enemies against Solomon.

Notice the following passages contrast the time of peace and rest in Solomon's reign as king of Israel, with a time of terrorist attacks upon his kingdom:

Peace and Rest

But now the LORD my God has given me rest on every side; there is neither adversary nor evil occurrence (1 Kings 5:3).

The Lord raised up enemies against Solomon:

Now the LORD raised up an adversary against Solomon ... (1 Kings 11:14).

And God raised up another adversary against him ... He was an adversary of Israel all the days of Solomon (besides the trouble that Hadad caused); and he abhorred Israel, and reigned over Syria (1 Kings 11:23,25).

We do not always know the reason why a nation suffers unrest and even terrorist attacks. However, God does give us the cause and affect reason for Solomon. It was because of Solomon's sins.

So the LORD became angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned from the LORD God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice (1 Kings 11:9).

Because Solomon turned from God to lust after many women, who then turned his heart to their idols, God not only removed the invisible wall of protection for Israel but also directly or indirectly rose up enemies to Solomon because of his sins.

There were also times in her history where God allowed a nation to terrorize Israel because of the evil she had committed.²⁹ Instead of restraining Jerusalem's enemies, God allowed or surrendered her to the hatred of its enemies.

²⁹ See Ezekiel 23:4,5, 22-24

A nation that puts its trust in the Lord is blessed by the Lord. However, a nation that throws off moral restraints also forsakes its greatest security – God’s wall of protection.

Without God’s unseen protection, a nation cannot protect itself from thousands of unseen enemies.

God’s Unseen Wall of Protection Illustrated

In the book of Job, God allows us to see behind the scenes to discover that God can build a wall of protection around the righteous. He can also remove that wall when He chooses.

*Then the LORD said to Satan, “Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?” So Satan answered the LORD and said, “Does Job fear God for nothing? **Have You not made a hedge around him**, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But now, stretch out Your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face!” And the LORD said to Satan, “Behold, all that he has is in your power; only do not lay a hand on his person.” So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.*

Now there was a day when his sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother’s house; and a messenger came to Job and said, “The oxen were plowing and the donkeys feeding beside them, when the Sabeans raided them and took them

away—indeed they have killed the servants with the edge of the sword; and I alone have escaped to tell you!” (Job 1:8-15,emphasis mine).

To Hebrew word for “*hedge*” in Job 1:10 means a fence or wall for protection.

Jesus made it clear that the true intent of Satan is to *steal, kill, and destroy*. When God allowed His invisible wall of protection to be breached by Satan, it was easy for Satan to manipulate the Sabeans to attack Job. Before God had allowed Job to be attacked by Satan, the natural greed of the Sabeans toward Job’s possessions had been held in check. God can do the same for us.

Israel’s security and protection was based upon their righteousness as a nation. Israel had a unique covenant relationship with God that no other nation had.

The following verses are related to the blessings and curses of that covenant. However, the way God deals with all nations is based upon His unchanging moral character. Though America does not have the same covenant that Israel had, we can make an application as well based upon God’s favor granted to any nation that practices righteousness and His disfavor upon those nations that practice unrighteousness.

You shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely. I will give peace in the land, and you shall lie down, and none will make you afraid; I will rid the land of evil beasts, and the sword will not go through your land. You will chase your enemies, and they shall fall by the sword before you. Five of you shall chase a

hundred, and a hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight; your enemies shall fall by the sword before you. For I will look on you favorably and make you fruitful, multiply you and confirm My covenant with you (Lev. 26:5-9, 14-17, emphasis mine).

But if you do not obey Me, and do not observe all these commandments, and if you despise My statutes, or if your soul abhors My judgments, so that you do not perform all My commandments, but break My covenant, I also will do this to you: I will even appoint terror over you, wasting disease and fever which shall consume the eyes and cause sorrow of heart. And you shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. I will set My face against you, and you shall be defeated by your enemies. Those who hate you shall reign over you, and you shall flee when no one pursues you (Lev. 26:14-17).

So you shall observe My statutes and keep My judgments, and perform them; and you will dwell in the land in safety. Then the land will yield its fruit, and you will eat your fill, and dwell there in safety. (Leviticus 25:18, emphasis mine).

But when you cross over the Jordan and dwell in the land which the LORD your God is giving you to inherit, and He gives you rest from all your enemies round about, so that you dwell in safety (Deut. 12:10, emphasis mine).

But if you indeed obey His voice and do all that I speak, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries. For My Angel will go

before you. I will send My fear before you, I will cause confusion among all the people to whom you come, and will make all your enemies turn their backs to you (Exodus 23:22,23,27).

The LORD will cause your enemies who rise against you to be defeated before your face; they shall come out against you one way and flee before you seven ways (Deut. 28:7).

God's special covenant with Israel promised blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience.

We in America can understand the principles of God's blessing a nation for righteousness and cursing a nation for habitual unrighteousness. No other nation in the history of the world has been so shaped by the church and Christianity. No other nation on earth has had the favor and blessing of God upon her people like America.

From the previous verses we can make these applications:

1. God can make a righteous nation dwell in safety.
2. God can give a righteous nation peace.
3. God can protect a righteous nation from a lone terrorist or an invading army.
4. God can make a righteous nation defeat her enemies.
5. God can look favorably on a righteous nation and build an unseen wall of protection around them.

6. God can allow an unrighteous nation to have enemies rise up against her and defeat her.

7. God can set a limit on what He allows Satan or man to do against a righteous nation.

8. God can set His face against an unrighteous nation and appoint, surrender or allow terror upon it.

As Christians we should see that all the money, laws, and army that we throw at the problem of terrorism would not protect us if we lose God's protection because of our national sins.



Prayer

Dear Lord, in the past our nation respected the godly influence of Christianity upon its morals and values. The majority of our citizens believed in Your moral absolutes. Forgive us God that we have turned our back upon the morality that made us spiritually strong. O Father, please revive Your church and spare our nation from greater tragedies. Keep and restore Your hedge of protection surrounding our nation. Be with the families of those victimized by terror. May You comfort them and grant them Your salvation. In Jesus' name, Amen.

What has God laid on your heart to pray for today?



Day 17 (Sound the Alarm - Chapter 8.1) Reason #1: God's Longsuffering

In this section, I would like to examine several factors relating to America's judgment. Why have we been so blessed? Why hasn't judgment come to our country yet? What is God's real attitude toward America?

I'm sure you remember the campaign slogan of this presidential: "*Make America Great Again,*" and "*Make America Whole.*" That's probably an admirable goal for a politician ... but I would like to suggest a *better* goal: "*Make America **Godly** Again,*" and "*Make America **Spiritually** Whole.*"

I believe that America has never been more spiritually and morally sick than she is now. Our national sins are great and grievous before God. God not only looks at the sin of a nation but also the goodness of a nation. The righteousness of a faithful remnant is not forgotten by God even when the majority of a nation turns from God.

Along with the factors that bring God's judgment on a nation there are some reasons that seem to extend God's longsuffering and give a nation more time for repentance. In this and the following five chapters, we will look at five reasons that may extend God's longsuffering to America. They are:

1. His longsuffering so that more people will come to faith.
2. America's friendship with Israel.

3. America's commitment to freedom of religion and the environment in which the Gospel can spread.
4. America's history of providing security and safety around the world.
5. America's merciful treatment of its enemies.
6. America's Liberty and Freedom

Let's start with the first one, **God's longsuffering so that more people will come to faith in Christ.**

One of my prayers for those who read this book is that as Christians take a closer look at God as the Governor and Judge of the nations, they will be burdened to become intercessors for America. A secondary purpose is to give us hope and not fear. We must not be *consumed* with fear and *preoccupied* with the future. Such attitudes of self-preservation will divert us from the Great Commission, the ministry of the Church, the willingness to suffer for righteousness, and to patiently look for our Lord's Second Coming.

So what about America?

Over the past forty years I have been sensitive to the biblical truth that God does still judge nations, including America. I believe He longs for America to return to her spiritual heritage and roots. What has grieved my heart is that many critics of America only look at her sins and fail to realize that there are other variable factors in the heart of God that we do not know. One of those factors is the longsuffering patience of God.

A better understanding of the longsuffering and patience of God will keep us from fear, date setting, and from

following visions, dreams, and false prophecies of those who tell us that God has told them what is coming upon America.

The longsuffering of God flows from His very character. God does not judge a nation without first offering mercy and giving both an individual and a nation time to repent. God is Just but He delights in mercy. It is this mercy and longsuffering of God that delays judgment for many years in some cases.

When God revealed Himself to Moses He declared: *And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth..."* (Exodus 34:6).

The Psalmist praised God for His longsuffering nature: *But You, O Lord, are a God full of compassion, and gracious, Longsuffering and abundant in mercy and truth* (Psalms 86:15).

When the Apostle Paul wrote of escaping the judgment of God, he saw the longsuffering of God as one of the many links of God's character and gracious plan of salvation: *Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?* (Romans 2:4).

The Apostle Peter reminds us that we cannot force the eternal God to conform to our preconceived ideas about God's timing of judgment. As we think of an individual or of national judgment, we must remember that God may hold back His judgment for hundreds of years for the sake of the salvation of many:

But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance (2 Peter 3:8-9).

The Scriptures gives us a balance on the judgment of nations and His longsuffering. When God gave the land of Canaan to Abraham; He did not immediately drive out its inhabitants Promised Land in judgment. God waited over 400 years until they reached a point of hardness of heart.

*Then He said to Abram: “Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict **them four hundred years**. And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions... But in the fourth generation they shall return here, **for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.**” (Genesis 15:13, 16, emphasis mine).*

In Noah’s day when man wickedness was great, still God grieved over man and His Spirit continued striving with man to repent. When God declared that He would judge the whole world, God still waited 120 years because He is longsuffering. He still gave grace to Noah both to preach to that generation and to build an Ark as a means of escape and a witness to that evil generation.³⁰

In hindsight we can look at the national sins of Egypt and declare that she deserved God’s judgment hundreds of

³⁰ Genesis 6:3-7; 1 Peter 3:20

years before it came upon them. But patience and timing in judgment is beyond our feeble knowledge. We do not control God's timing, nor do we understand God's multifaceted purposes in judgment.

There were many factors that played a role in Egypt's judgment. Egypt's judgment was according to:

- God's longsuffering
- Their oppression and enslaving of the Jews
- His greater purpose in Christ (remember the Passover)
- His promise to Abraham
- The vision of Joseph
- The salvation of Jacob's family
- The growth of Israel as a nation
- The raising up of Moses to make God's power, mercy and name great among the nations
- To demonstrate that His wrath on Pharaoh and a nation with hardened hearts

The pattern of God's longsuffering before judgment is repeated with Israel and Judah. When Jeroboam broke from the united twelve tribes of Israel to form a new nation of ten tribes, he rebelled against God by establishing a counterfeit religion with a mixture of the Laws of Moses and idolatry. God then pronounced judgment upon both Jeroboam and the idolatry of Israel. Not one good king would rule this rebellious state of Israel for its entire history. Yet God would send them prophets to call them to return to Him. After repeated corrective judgments, God finally in 722 B.C. brought His great judgment against them through the Assyrians. God's longsuffering had waited 210 years.

If we were living in the days of Ahab and Jezebel we might have thought that God's judgment would come any day. But we would have been wrong. Because God is longsuffering, His judgment would wait through twelve more successive wicked kings. (This is why we must be cautious in our approach to God judging America. Some feel like we have gone too far and judgment may come any day. We too can be wrong because God's longsuffering is great.) So the principle is this:

If we misunderstand the longsuffering of God, then we can easily be diverted from the Great Commission given to His Church and fall prey to our own personal self-preservation.

When our Savior invaded time from eternity, He was born as a man in order to die for our sins. He would be rejected by His own nation Israel. In that setting of rejection, Jesus wept over Jerusalem knowing its judgment was soon.

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! See! Your house is left to you desolate ... (Matthew 23:37-38).

Jesus warned of the Temple's destruction when He said, *"The days will come in which not one stone shall be left upon another that shall not be thrown down"* (Luke 21:5).

Jesus warned of a coming army destroying Jerusalem and the Jewish people being scattered among many nations.

But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near.... And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled (Luke 21:20, 24).

When Israel had done its worst to God's own Son, God's judgment was not immediate - because He is *longsuffering not willing that any should perish but all come to repentance*. But His judgment was certain.

There could not have been any greater sin than the rejection and crucifixion of Jesus. You would think that God would have poured out His wrath immediately upon the rejecting nation. No! The church would be birthed in Jerusalem and in its first few years it reached hundreds of thousands of Jews. God was longsuffering but that longsuffering came to an end nearly forty years after the national rejection of Israel's Messiah. Just as Jesus foretold, the Romans came and destroyed the Temple, slaughtered thousands of Jews, and the rest were scattered among many nations.

Every nation that the prophets declared God's coming judgment upon was always preceded by God's longsuffering. This secret time of God's longsuffering lasted under a hundred years for some, and hundreds of years to others. After God destroyed Jerusalem through Babylon, God's timing of seventy years was set for Judah's return and for Babylon's destruction by the Medes and Persian Empire. Then God through the Grecian Empire judged the Persian Empire. Then the Grecian Empire was judged by the Roman Empire.

In each of God's judgments of these nations God's was longsuffering and His timing varied according to God's own plan and purpose – some hundreds of years and some a thousand years or more.

Why hasn't God judged America? Why, at least in part, does He continue to bless us as a nation?

My point is one of caution. When we begin to understand that God still judges nations and we grieve over our nations sins, we must not make the mistake that so many have made and feel that God's judgment is within days, weeks, months, or a few years. Only God knows if and when.

When it comes to God's judgment of America, we must not make the mistake that so many have made and feel that God's judgment is within days, weeks, months, or a few years. Only God knows if and when it will occur.

Do I believe that God will judge America for her national sins? Yes, I do. Do I know when? No, I do not. Does anyone know? No, they do not. God has a purpose for America. We should continue to pray for revival and our part in reaching every nation, tongue, and tribe in the world before Jesus returns.

There are many unknown factors that we do not see. It may be that America's judgment comes just before the Second Coming of Christ. Perhaps the absence of American influence hastens the engulfing darkness that the anti-Christ's kingdom will bring to the Earth. Only God knows.

We should grieve over our nations sins. But we must also be cautious that we do not withdraw from our nation. We are to be God's light in the darkness that is engulfing our nation.



Prayer

Dear Father, we praise You that You are longsuffering and that Your mercies endure forever. May we see Your longsuffering as an opportunity to turn from our sins and not a pass to continue in our sins. Please stir up Your people to be more fervent in prayer and evangelism while you hold back your wrath against our national sins. In Jesus' name.

What has God laid on your heart to pray for today?



Day 18 (Sound the Alarm - Chapter 9.1) The Key to National Survival and Revival

Are you a marked man or woman? More specifically, are you marked by God?

In every culture and in every time, there are individuals who are marked by God. During the time of the prophets in the Old Testament, God saw a few among His people who cared for the nation of Israel so much that they would pray and cry over its sins. The prophet Ezekiel was one of those individuals who was marked by God.

Ezekiel Marked by God:

Ezekiel was called to be God's prophet to the thousands of captives that King Nebuchadnezzar had carried off to Babylon. God gave Ezekiel a vision of the abominations committed by Judah's leaders in the Temple in Ezekiel 8 showing God's just cause in destroying the Temple and the city. However, before God would allow judgment to fall, God marked some to be spared.

Ezekiel was called by God. When someone is called by God, they have a greater sense of God's holiness and their own sinfulness. They identify with the heart of God. And God shares His love and burden for people and His deep sorrow over their sins. Here is the principle:

God marks a righteous remnant before a nation is judged.

Some are marked for God's mercies and some are marked for God's judgment.

*Now the glory of the God of Israel had gone up from the cherub, where it had been, to the threshold of the temple. And He called to the man clothed with linen, who had the writer's inkhorn at his side; and the LORD said to him, "Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and **put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it.**" To the others He said in my hearing, "Go after him through the city and kill; do not let your eye spare, nor have any pity. Utterly slay old and young men, maidens and little children and women; **but do not come near anyone on whom is the mark;** and begin at My sanctuary." So they began with the elders who were before the temple. Then He said to them, "Defile the temple, and fill the courts with the slain. Go out!" And they went out and killed in the city. So it was, that while they were killing them, I was left alone; and I fell on my face and cried out, and said, "Ah, Lord GOD! Will You destroy all the remnant of Israel in pouring out Your fury on Jerusalem?" (Ezekiel 9:3-8, emphasis mine).*

In this passage about God's judgment we clearly see the fury of God poured out on the wicked who defiled the temple and lived sinfully. However, in God's grace, there was mercy for the remnant. They were marked on their foreheads that their lives were to be spared.

Why? Because these were the ones who sighed and cried over all the abominations done in Jerusalem.

Three chapters later, Ezekiel 6 reveals that God sighed with a broken and crushed heart over His love being rejected by Israel.

Yet I will leave a remnant, so that you may have some who escape the sword among the nations, when you are scattered through the countries. Then those of you who escape will remember Me among the nations where they are carried captive, because I was crushed by their adulterous heart which has departed from Me, and by their eyes which play the harlot after their idols; they will loathe themselves for the evils which they committed in all their abominations. And they shall know that I am the LORD; I have not said in vain that I would bring this calamity upon them (Ezekiel 6:8-10).

The burden of God became the burden of Ezekiel. He also sighed and his heart was crushed and broken over the sin of his people. Not only was he to sigh over sin, but he was to have a broken heart because he saw the coming destruction of his people because of their sins.

“Sigh therefore, son of man, with a breaking heart, and sigh with bitterness before their eyes. And it shall be when they say to you, ‘Why are you sighing?’ that you shall answer, ‘Because of the news; when it comes, every heart will melt, all hands will be feeble, every spirit will faint, and all knees will be weak as water. Behold, it is coming and shall be brought to pass,’ says the Lord GOD” (Ezekiel 21:6-7).

Jesus also shared the burden of God the Father for Israel and He sighed deeply. He wept over Jerusalem because they rejected God’s love and mercy. He not only warned of

the final judgment of hell, but He warned Jerusalem of its destruction that was accomplished in 70 A.D. by the Romans.

But He sighed deeply in His spirit, and said, "Why does this generation seek a sign? Assuredly, I say to you, no sign shall be given to this generation" (Mark 8:12).

Can I ask you a series of very serious questions? *What makes you sigh? What is it that makes you weep? When you see God mocked, when you see His laws violated, when you see His Son scorned and ridiculed, and when you see the Word of God attacked, what is your reaction?*

God knows those who grieve over a nation's sin and identify with God's holiness. He knows their private moments in prayer. He sees their tears and hears their intercession for God to turn their nation back to Him. It is God who has shared His burden with these who stand in the gap as His watchmen.

So what does it mean to sigh? That's not a word we hear very much in our culture. To sigh is to grieve deeply, to groan, to moan, to complain over wrongs and injustice.

Reflect for a moment about how a loving parent would grieve over a child who was very ill. This is the type of burden that those marked by God have for the sin sickness of our nation. They grieve over the millions of innocent babies who are sacrificed on the altar of abortion. They grieve deeply over the immorality of our nation. They feel sick over the nation accepting homosexual behavior as acceptable. And they weep over those who do not know Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

God sees your life. Are you marked by Him?

Do you share God's viewpoint of sin? Do you have a deep sense that our nation is facing the consequences of its sins? Are you troubled about our nation's future? Take your burden to the Lord in prayer.



Day 19 (Sound the Alarm - Chapter 9.3) Pardon for National Sins

Some people or nations have been spared judgment, not for their own righteousness, but because there was a faithful intercessor who turned away the judgment of God.

Moses was such an intercessor for his people.

After God had delivered Israel from Egypt by miracles and a mighty hand, and after God had saved them at the Red Sea from Pharaoh's army, and after He had provided water and manna on a daily basis in the wilderness, and after God had given His Ten Commandments from Mt. Sinai, Israel broke the first command by making and worshipping a golden calf.

God would have destroyed them all and raise up the promised nation through Moses. But there was an intercessor who stood in the gap and pled for mercy. His name was Moses.

*And the LORD said to Moses, "I have seen this people, and indeed it is a stiff-necked people! **Now therefore, let Me alone, that My wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them. And I will make of you a great nation.**" Then Moses pleaded with the LORD his God, and said: "LORD, why does Your wrath burn hot against Your people whom You have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? Why should the Egyptians speak, and say, 'He brought them out to harm them, to kill them in*

the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth'? Turn from Your fierce wrath, and relent from this harm to Your people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants, to whom You swore by Your own self, and said to them, 'I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven; and all this land that I have spoken of I give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever.'" So the LORD relented from the harm which He said He would do to His people (Exodus 32:9-14, emphasis mine).

*Therefore, He said that He would destroy them, **had not Moses His chosen one stood before Him** in the breach, to turn away His wrath, lest He destroy them (Psalm 106:23).*

*The people of the land have used oppressions, committed robbery, and mistreated the poor and needy; and they wrongfully oppress the stranger. **So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one.** Therefore I have poured out My indignation on them; I have consumed them with the fire of My wrath; and I have recompensed their deeds on their own heads," says the Lord GOD (Ezekiel 22:29-31, emphasis mine).*

It only took one person. That's all. One person, Moses, turned away God's wrath from Israel and *"the Lord relented from the harm which He said He would do to His people"* (Exodus 32:14).³¹

³¹ Moses is a beautiful picture of the Greater Intercessor the Lord Jesus who turned away the wrath of God from us on the Cross. From the Cross-of judgment, Jesus interceded for us sinners, "Father forgive them." God has

It *would* have taken only one person in Ezekiel's time to stand in the gap before the Lord on behalf of their land. But in one of the saddest verses in all of the Bible, God says, "*And I found no one*" (Ezekiel 22:30).

The fact that God would hear the intercession of one man should encourage the churches of America to pray. Could it be that the future of America might be decided by one man or one woman who chooses to stand in the gap for our country?

The principle we come away with from this chapter is:

Some people or nations have been spared judgment, not for their own righteousness, but because there was a faithful intercessor who turned away the judgment of God.

May God stir up hundreds – and thousands – of men and women like Moses to stand in the gap and intercede for America, that God will continue to be longsuffering toward us and turn our hearts back to God.

accepted the judgment of our sins on Christ that we might have His eternal mercy. The wage of our sins is death but Jesus died our death that we might have eternal life.



Day 20 (Sound the Alarm - Chapter 9.4) Turning a Nation to God

In this chapter, we are going to see that when a godly leader cries out to God and makes intercession for his or her nation, God responds and the tide of history is changed.

To see an example of this, let's go back in time around 2,700 years ago. God had allowed the wicked and fierce Assyrians to be an instrument of judgment against many surrounding nations because of their national sins. God's judgment had come after many years of longsuffering and warnings.

In this season of judgment, Assyria had conquered many nations. Now they turned their sights on Samaria the capital of Israel, and Jerusalem the capital of Judah. Hoshea was the last wicked king over Samaria that began with wicked Jeroboam and continued until God's final judgment came upon them. Hezekiah was a good and righteous king over Judah.

Assyria came to defeat them both. Samaria would be destroyed because of their sins against God and their refusal to repent. Jerusalem would be delivered from God's judgment at this time because of the intercession of Hezekiah, Isaiah and the repentance of the nation of Judah.

In this setting Assyria boasted about all the nations it had conquered. They mocked the true and living God as it

warned Jerusalem that they would destroy Jerusalem as they had destroyed all other nations before them.

King Hezekiah placed his confidence in God and went to the house of the Lord to intercede for Judah and Jerusalem. We pick up the story in 2 Kings 19,

“Thus you shall speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying: ‘Do not let your God in whom you trust deceive you, saying, “Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.” Look! You have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands by utterly destroying them; and shall you be delivered? Have the gods of the nations delivered those whom my fathers have destroyed, Gozan and Haran and Rezepth, and the people of Eden who were in Telassar? Where is the king of Hamath, the king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah?’”

And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it; and Hezekiah went up to the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD. Then Hezekiah prayed before the LORD, and said: “O LORD God of Israel, the One who dwells between the cherubim, You are God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. Incline Your ear, O LORD, and hear; open Your eyes, O LORD, and see; and hear the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to reproach the living God. Truly, LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste the nations and their lands, and have cast their gods into the fire; for they were not gods, but the work of men’s hands—wood and stone. Therefore, they destroyed them. Now therefore, O LORD our God, I pray, save us from his

hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You are the LORD God, You alone.”

Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, “Thus says the LORD God of Israel: ‘Because you have prayed to Me against Sennacherib king of Assyria, I have heard.’

“Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the king of Assyria: ‘He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor build a siege mound against it. By the way that he came, by the same shall he return; and he shall not come into this city,’ Says the LORD.

‘For I will defend this city, to save it for My own sake and for My servant David’s sake.’ ”

And it came to pass on a certain night that the angel of the LORD went out, and killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when people arose early in the morning, there were the corpses—all dead. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and went away, returned home, and remained at Nineveh. Now it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the temple of Nisroch his god, that his sons Adrammelech and Sharezer struck him down with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Ararat. Then Esarhaddon his son reigned in his place (2 Kings 19:10-37).

Hezekiah responded to this crisis by turning to God in prayer. He also turned to God’s prophet, Isaiah, for advice. He sensed his position under God’s authority; he humbled himself; and he sought God’s help. God rewarded Hezekiah’s attitude and assured him of success because the Assyrians had challenged the reputation of Yahweh. The principle we learn from this event is:

When a godly leader cries out to God and makes intercession for his or her nation, God responds and the tide of history is changed.

This is one of the most amazing events in human history. Two nations were facing the same judgment for sins through the same nation, Assyria. Yet one nation was spared, and one was crushed. It is important to note that Judah was not spared because of their mighty army, but because of the intercession and repentance of its leaders.

The type of leaders a nation has can be very telling. If they are righteous, humble and honorable, there will be blessing. If they are godless, prideful and self-reliant, they are setting the stage for punishment and judgment to occur.

From the time of Israel's first king Jeroboam until its destruction, it did not have one good king that trusted God. The repeated refrain that summarized their reign was *"And he did evil in the sight of the Lord."* They were a curse to their nation, and eventually God had enough and they were conquered in judgment. The nation of Judah, however, had many good kings who did what was right in the sight of the Lord. Their reigns resulted in blessing and the continuation of the nation.

America is not exempt from those principles. If we have godly leaders, blessing will occur. If we do not, we are setting ourselves up for judgment. We must pray for God to give us godly leaders. We face one of two alternatives: our leaders can lead us to destruction or to deliverance from judgment.



Prayer

Dear God, as a nation we have turned our backs to You rather than bowing in humility. We have taken prayer out of our schools. And our government seeks to silence our prayers that are made in Jesus' name. In the name of tolerance we have sought to lower the Lord Jesus Christ to be one of the many "*gods of our secular society.*" We trust in our leaders and our military power to deliver us from the threats of Iran, North Korea, China, Russia, ISIS, Muslim extremists and many others who would do our nation harm. Dear God, we know that we cannot be delivered by our own strength. Father we confess the sins that our leaders fail to acknowledge as sins before You. Please spare us and turn our hearts back to You. In Jesus' name.

What has God laid on your heart to pray for today?



Day 21 (Sound the Alarm - Chapter 9.5) Before It Is Too Late

Intercessors must stand in the gap before it is too late. Because America still stands, there is still time. However, we do not know when the hour-glass of God's judgment will run out. Until then, we must remember this principle:

Before God judges a nation that He has blessed, He seeks intercessors to stand in the gap on their behalf. Those intercessors must plead for mercy and revival rather than judgment. However, there can eventually come a point where time will run out. And God will no longer accept their prayers and intercession to delay or stop the judgment.

There is a time when His longsuffering continues and the iniquity of the nation is not yet full. But there is also a time when judgment is set – and at that point, God will no longer hear the prayers of those who plead that a nation be spared.

There eventually came a time when God told Jeremiah and Ezekiel that it was too late to change the judgment coming upon Judah and Jerusalem. An individual may have a measure of mercy in the midst of suffering, but the nation would not escape the harsh reaping of the sins that they had sown.

So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one.

Therefore I have poured out My indignation on them; I have consumed them with the fire of My wrath; and I have recompensed their deeds on their own heads,” says the Lord GOD (Ezekiel 22:30-31).

While the false prophets were promising that Judah would escape the wrath of Babylon and the Temple would not be destroyed, God was telling Jeremiah and Ezekiel that the time of God relenting because of the prayers of the faithful was past.

*And I will cast you out of my sight, as I have cast out all your brethren, even the whole seed of Ephraim.
Therefore do not pray for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me: for I will not hear you (Jeremiah 7:15-16 emphasis mine).*

*For according to the number of your cities were thy gods, O Judah; and according to the number of the streets of Jerusalem you have set up altars to that shameful thing, even altars to burn incense to Baal.
Therefore do not pray for this people, neither lift up a cry or prayer for them: for I will not hear them in the time that they cry to me for their trouble (Jeremiah 11:13-14 emphasis mine).*

Thus says the LORD unto this people, “Thus have they loved to wander, they have not refrained their feet, therefore the LORD doth not accept them; he will now remember their iniquity, and visit their sins. Then said the LORD unto me, Do not pray for this people for their good. When they fast, I will not hear their cry; and when they offer burnt offering and an oblation, I will

not accept them: but I will consume them by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence. Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! behold, the prophets say unto them, You shall not see the sword, neither shall ye have famine; but I will give you assured peace in this place. Then the LORD said unto me, "The prophets prophesy lies in my name: I did not send them, neither have I commanded them, neither have I spoken to them: they prophesy to you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart" (Jeremiah 14:10-14).

How sad that Jerusalem and the Temple were marked by God for destruction because of Judah's national sins. God had brought revival in the past through godly national leaders. There was a time in the past where He heard the intercession of the faithful. But now it was too late.

God told Jeremiah that even if Moses and Samuel were to plead for mercy for this nation He would not hear.

*Then the LORD said to me, "**Even if Moses and Samuel stood before Me, My mind would not be favorable toward this people.** Cast them out of My sight, and let them go forth. And it shall be, if they say to you, 'Where should we go?' then you shall tell them, 'Thus says the LORD:
"Such as are for death, to death;
And such as are for the sword, to the sword;
And such as are for the famine, to the famine;
And such as are for the captivity, to the captivity"'*
(Jeremiah 15:1-2 emphasis mine).

That's amazing – Moses, the man who had pleaded for his nation and turned the heart of God in the past, could not

even make a difference. God had run out of patience, and Judah had run out of time.

Now is the time for those who both love the Lord Jesus and grieve over the sins of America, to stand in the gap and intercede for our nation before there comes a day in which our judgment is set in stone and God says, *“Do not pray for America, for I will not hear your prayers.”*



Prayer

Lord, we come to You in the name and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let my heart and the hearts of thousands of Christians in Your churches be so burdened that we cry to You day and night for revival in America. May we understand that judgment is not very far away – but may we also know that You are gracious and longsuffering and that Your hand can be turned from judgment to blessing because of the prayers of Your people.

What has God laid on your heart to pray for today?

Appendix

Sound the Alarm

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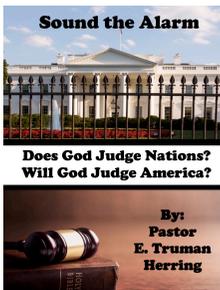
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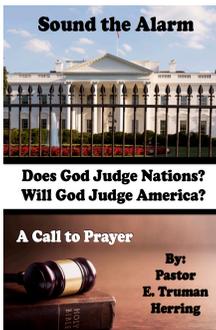
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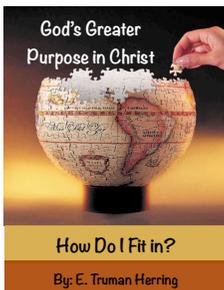
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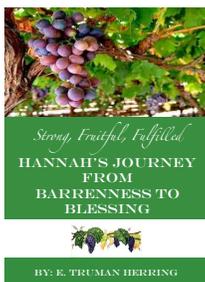
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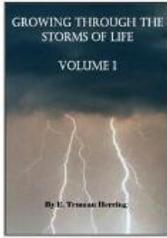
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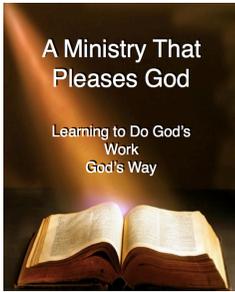


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