



An undenominational publication devoted to the teachings of Jesus and His apostles and dedicated to those who seek the truth.

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**WILL GOD BLESS AMERICA?
WHAT MUST WE DO?**

In this year of national election Americans will not agree on who should serve as our political leaders. It is important, however, that we acknowledge that God is ultimately in charge, and it is He who determines the long-term outcome of every nation on earth, including our own. To remind us of this, here are some verses in the Bible we all need to contemplate:

The Most High God is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and sets over them anyone He wishes.

Daniel 5:21

If at any time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be uprooted, torn down and destroyed, and if that nation I warned repents of its evil, I will relent and not inflict on it the disaster I had planned. And if at another time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be built up and planted, and if it does evil in My sight and does not obey Me, then I will reconsider the good I had intended to do for it.

Jeremiah 18:7-10

Fear God. Honor the king.

I. Peter 2:17

Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God He is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrong doer.

Romans 13:1-4

Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord

Psalms 33:12

God cares about nations. There are things we must do to ensure His continued blessings on our great nation. This is a call us to action rather than complacency.



EXAMINE OUR MORAL COMPASS

Today's culture is steadily declining in morals and values. You may ask yourself why people are leaving a sensible morality practiced by previous generations. Why is divorce on the increase? Why do people of all ages choose to live with multiple partners outside of marriage? Why are so many children being born out of wedlock? Why is there an uncontrollable epidemic of heroin addiction?

The core of the problem is found in relativistic morality. Relative morality is based upon a philosophy that each person determines for himself what is acceptable behavior. Often choices are based on self-indulgence and what feels good.

You may be surprised to find that this is not a new phenomenon. The Scripture says: "In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit" (Judges 21:5). The book of Judges was written thousands of years ago and yet it still is relevant today. Solomon, an ancient king of Israel, put it this way: "What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 1:9).

The Jewish people were suffering from moral corruption when Jesus came. Hellenistic values that glorified sexual immorality were pervasive. Hedonism was mixed with false piety by a corrupt ruling class which sought to hold onto power and influence. Jesus came as the light in such a depraved and dark time. It is written of Jesus that "in Him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it" (John 1:4-5).

God sent His Son to show the people of Jesus' time, and us today, the right way to live. Jesus taught a return to moral absolutes. He said: "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). Jesus announced that there was only one right way to live and be acceptable to God.

Read the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7), and notice the focus is a call to a higher moral standard. Jesus teaches us to affirm God's moral compass: to be humble, to forgive each other, to remain faithful to our spouses, to trust in God and to love our enemies. Until we make Christ the moral absolute of our lives, we cannot be truly blessed.

-- Nathaniel Hios, Minister
Church of Christ, Kittery, Maine



GO BACK TO THE BIBLE GO BACK TO THE BIBLE

If the validity and reliability of the Bible is rejected, we forfeit the only source we have for discovering who we are and how we're supposed to operate. Social changes from around the world demonstrate that we are very willing to try something new, but the drawback is that we no longer have a normative standard by which to evaluate the results. We lose the knowledge that we could have had better and more productive lives if we had listened to our Designer.

At the heart of the Bible is the fact that God has always wanted a people who would do things His way so that He could bless them. Much of the Old Testament is the story of Israel's blessedness when they represented God well, and their misery when they strayed from God's ways.

Humans have learned to live with fear, guilt, purposelessness and hopelessness. But what if that is only because we don't know of a better way? Why not give the Bible an honest hearing again? It promises assurance, forgiveness, meaning and hope. The light of joy and peace is in its revelations. "Righteousness exalts a nation but sin is a disgrace to any people" (Proverbs 14:34).

The spectacular blessedness of this light does not depend on America being prosperous or without significant challenges. Even in the midst of war, depression, famine or plague, a person whose thoughts and actions are founded on the words of God can be at peace. "I don't know what the future holds, but I know Who holds the future." I may not be strong enough to cope with everything, but God is all powerful -- enough for me to trust my future to Him. The future that really matters is eternal, not merely physical or national.

There is a caveat, however. I can't trust a god from my own imagination. I have to know and trust the true and living God through what He has revealed in the Bible. To the extent that individual citizens of any nation are the recipients of God's word, they will be blessed. Our nation and every other nation needs what God will do when its citizens get back to the Bible. A bright future depends on it.

-- **Norman Seiders**, Minister
Church of Christ, Warwick, Rhode Island

BE HUMBLE, BE GRATEFUL

Gratitude is becoming a lost emotion as America becomes a nation that takes its blessings for granted. We forget that we have not always had it so good. Even the poor in our nation are blessed with so much more than many others in the world.

In the Old Testament, God's people became comfortable. Apathy soon followed. They lost their mindfulness that it was God who freed them, fed them, and gave them their own land to work and to provide for themselves. They took for granted even the rains that watered the fields.

Despite warnings of the prophets to repent and follow after God, the people exchanged their relationship with God for a life of sin and rebellion against Him. In the end their land was taken and their freedom removed.

Memorial Day is set aside once a year to honor the men and women who gave their lives so many may have freedom in a nation "under God." Will we forget to be grateful to God? Will we recognize our responsibility to use this freedom to seek God and find His plans for us?

Let's make an effort to be grateful every day for all He has done for America and for the world.

**The Bible says:
"From one man
He made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and He determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. God did this so that men would *seek Him* and perhaps *reach out for Him* and *find Him....*" (Acts 17:26-27).**

TREASURE GODLY FAMILIES



Most of us have heard the statement, “Like Father, Like Son.” In 1782 a Revolutionary War officer and hero, resigned his position with the army. In a letter to his general he wrote, “I wish from motives of self to make my way easy and comfortable.” After leaving the army he engaged in a series of ruinous business ventures. When his son was two years old, this dad spent nearly a year in jail for failing to pay his debtors and ultimately escaped his creditors by sailing for the West Indies. Neither the son nor the officer’s wife ever saw or heard from him again.

Earlier, that same father went to a neighbor and asked to borrow his horses. Wanting to make sure he got his horses back the neighbor had one of his slaves accompany the man and the animals. Weeks passed and neither the horses nor the slave returned. The slave later did return but told the owner he could not bring back the horses because the man had sold the horses. The slave was then asked “Why did you take so long to return?” To which the slave answered, “cause he sold me, too.”

That father was Harry “Lighthouse” Lee and the son was Robert E. Lee. If one knows history he knows that Robert E. Lee was nothing like his father!

If we are to have godly families, which is the only way that God will bless America, we need men who will be “cycle breakers.”

My dad was a cycle-breaker. His dad was an alcoholic and a womanizer, and was dead by the time my dad was in his mid-teens. My dad had the ultimate dysfunctional family, pushed from one relative to another throughout his childhood years! Dad did not finish high school. When he was 19 he stole a car, was apprehended and given two choices: go to jail or go into the military service. He chose the military service. When dad was 20 years old, he was stationed in Alaska. He met a man who told him about Jesus. Dad heard the call, responded to the love of Jesus, became a Christian. My dad was a cycle-breaker!

I have some good news for you: You don’t have to be like your father. You can be a cycle-breaker! “The one who sins is the one who will die. The child will not share the guilt of the parent... The righteousness of the righteous will be credited to them, and the wickedness of the wicked will be charged against them” (Ezekiel 18:20).

--**Dan Cooper**, Minister
Church of Christ, Pitman, New Jersey



CONFESS OUR SINS TO GOD

Thousands of years ago, God made a covenant with Abraham and said, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you” (Gen. 12:1-3).

As he always does, God kept his promise. He did raise up a people descended from Abraham who became the Old Testament nation of Israel. They would have kings and geopolitical borders, and God reminded them frequently that as long as they lived according to the covenant they had with Him, He would bless them. If, however, they turned away from justice, righteousness and faithfulness, He would uproot their nation (2 Chronicles 7:11-22). Sadly, they grew wealthy, powerful and unfaithful, and lost everything.

God, however, was still working to bless all the peoples of the earth as He told Abraham He would. In time God sent His Son, Jesus, who lived and died and was raised from the dead. Jesus established a kingdom that will never end, because it is upheld by the power of God (Luke 1:30-33; Matt. 16:13-18). That kingdom is no single nation. It has no earthly ruler or geopolitical borders, but it most certainly does have a King who still calls us all to be faithful to our God and His purposes for us. We who have been baptized into Christ are now citizens of that kingdom and have the great task of continuing to advance God’s mission so that His reign continues to spread over all the earth (Philippians 3:17-21; 1 Peter 2:9-12).

In America, we have much to be thankful for but also much to confess. We’ve known unprecedented blessings, but we too often gorge ourselves on them rather than using them to bless others. We still pursue things that distract us from God’s purposes. We live for ourselves and make up our own rules as we go instead of honoring the teachings and guidance of our true King.

If we want to be a blessed people, then we must confess our sins as we realign our lives with God’s own mission. When we truly humble ourselves and pursue God again, He will hear us, forgive us and give us what we need to be productive servants in His kingdom. This is the only way our families, our churches, our country, and all peoples on earth will ever truly be blessed.

— **Patrick Barber**, Minister
Church of Christ, Manchester, Connecticut

FROM THE PRESIDENTS ...

“God who gave us life gave us liberty. Can the liberties of a nation be secure when we have removed a conviction that these liberties are the gift of God? Indeed I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just, that His justice cannot sleep forever.”

– **Thomas Jefferson, 3rd President of the United States of America**

“Intelligence, patriotism, Christianity, and a firm reliance on Him, who has never yet forsaken this favored land, are still competent to adjust, in the best way, all our present difficulty.”

– **Abraham Lincoln, 16th President of the United States of America**

“The foundations of our society and our government rest so much on the teachings of the Bible that it would be difficult to support them if faith in these teachings would cease to be practically universal in our country.”

– **Calvin Coolidge, 30th President of the United States of America**

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