

WHY WE SHOULD PRAY FOR AMERICA

1. So that we will continue to have a free society within which the Gospel can be publicly proclaimed and openly professed by all who come to the knowledge of the truth. **1 Timothy 2:1-4**
2. Because righteousness alone exalts a nation and sin will ultimately prove to be a reproach to any people. **Proverbs 14:34**
3. Because revival is now a matter of national survival. As President Ronald Reagan once put it: "If we ever forget that we are a nation under God, then we will be a nation gone under."
Psalm 9:17
4. Because once the foundations are destroyed there is nothing that the righteous can do; the destruction of our nation will have become an inevitability. (**Psalm 11:3**)
5. Because only the nation whose God is the Lord will be divinely blessed and favored. **Psalm 33:12**
6. Because people rejoice under the government of the righteous, but always mourn when the wicked are in power. (**Proverbs 29:2**)

A SAMPLE PRAYER FOR AMERICA

O Lord God of heaven, we have sinned against you. We have corrupted ourselves and failed to keep your commandments. Therefore, help us to rend our hearts and not our garments, so that we may turn from our sins against you with broken hearts and return to you with all of our hearts. Spare us and pity us, I pray, so that our country will not become a reproach to you and a byword among the nations.

Restore us now to yourself, O Lord, that we may return to you. Renew our days as of old and once again make your face to shine upon us. In the midst of your wrath against us remember mercy and in the midst of America's years revive and renew her so that we, the American people, may once again rejoice in you.

Prayer is based on: **Nehemiah 1:4-11; Joel 2:12-17; Psalm 80:3, 19; Lamentations 5:21; Habakkuk 3:2; Psalm 85:6.**

DAY 1

*"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." **2 Chronicles 7:14***

Make no mistake about it; revival is America's only hope of survival. If America is to change, its people must change. If the American people are to change, revival must come. If revival is to

come, it must begin in the church. And if revival is to begin in the church, it must start in your heart! Thus, the best thing you can do for your country is to get your heart right with God!

Contrary to popular opinion, America's answer is not found in the Oval Office, beneath the Capital Dome, before the bar of the Supreme Court or in the polling place and ballot box. Instead, it is found in the altars of our churches. Until they are filled with repentant and broken hearts, as well as warm and free flowing tears, our country's sole and certain prospect is divine retribution.

If revival doesn't come to America, it won't be the fault of the American people, but of the people of God in America. The blame won't be laid at the steps of the White House, the Capital or the Supreme Court, but at the steps of the church. For only we can prevent revival fires!

Pray for revival in America!

DAY 2

"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge..." Hosea 4:6

A few years ago, Mark Osterloh, a former Arizona gubernatorial candidate, came up with a novel idea. He proposed that \$1 million dollars be rewarded in every general election to a lucky voter chosen by lottery. According to Osterloh, since the odds of winning the election lottery would be far greater than winning the popular Powerball jackpot (1-in-146 million), non-voting, lottery-playing Arizonians would be motivated to start showing up at the polls for a chance to win a million bucks. Gratefully, Osterloh's "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire? Vote!" ballot initiative was soundly defeated by Arizona voters.

Contrary to popular opinion, I don't believe that greater voter turnout is good for America. As far as I'm concerned, there are already too many uninformed people voting. I agree with Winston Churchill, who once said, "The best argument against democracy is a five-minute conversation with the average voter." The last thing this country needs is more uninformed and uninterested voters determining its future by carelessly casting their ballots in hopes of winning an election lottery jackpot.

Did you know that to vote in colonial America one had to pass a poll test and have a "stake in society"; that is, own property or pay taxes? Voting was considered so important that only the informed and invested were considered qualified to cast ballots. Today, however, just about anybody can vote, regardless of whether or not they own property, pay taxes, or know anything about the issues. Thus, higher voter turnout in today's America certainly doesn't assure a better outcome; in fact, it may guarantee the opposite.

If Mr. Osterloh's idea had passed, he predicted that it would have quickly spread to other states. Just think, before long Americans could have been casting their ballots in hopes of cashing in on election lottery jackpots, not in hopes of bettering our country or its prospects for the future. I don't know about you, but I believe reducing our democracy to a scratch-and-win game would have proven to be just one more nail in our country's coffin.

John F. Kennedy once said, “The ignorance of one voter in a democracy impairs the security of all.” How impaired will our security be by your vote today?

Since our country’s hope is found in our prayer closets, not our polling places, pray that America will turn from its faith in the electorate back to faith in God.

DAY 3

“Abstain from all appearance of evil.” 1 Thessalonians 5:22

Is it ever unchristian to vote? Many will unhesitatingly answer this question with a resounding “No!” Voting, we are told, is a Christian obligation never to be shirked. Yet, what is a Christian to do when neither candidates nor ballot initiatives offer righteous alternatives on important issues? Customarily, we are told to hold our nose, do our duty and vote for the least of evils.

When did the least of evils become an acceptable choice for the people of God? Is a choice between the least of evils ever a good enough choice for Christians, those who have been called by God to eschew evil altogether? Regardless of its lesser degrees and fainter shades, evil is always an unacceptable choice for the people of God.

As Christians, I don’t believe that we should make any choices at the polls until we’re afforded with choices that we can make with clear consciences. I don’t know about you, but I’d rather stand before God and answer for my failure to vote than to stand before God and answer for violating my conscience by casting a vote for the lesser of two evils.

Furthermore, if this country’s Christians refuse to take an uncompromising stand for the truth, who will? And what happens to our nation when the salt of the earth and the light of the world—the church, which is the conscience of our country—can be purchased by politicians and political parties for nothing more than lesser evils? If Christians can be bought at such bargain prices then our country is morally bankrupt and spiritually insolvent.

Pray that the church will refuse to compromise its stand for the truth, regardless of whether it is in the pulpit, prayer closet or polling place.

DAY 4

“If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?” Psalm 11:3

When the Constitutional Convention appeared hopelessly deadlocked and the framing of an American Constitution all but impossible, Benjamin Franklin rose to make the following suggestion:

“I have lived, Sir, a long time, and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth that God Governs in the affairs of men. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without his notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without his aid? We have been assured, Sir, in the sacred writings, that ‘except the Lord build the House they labour in vain that build it.’ I firmly

believe this; and I also believe that without his concurring aid we shall succeed in this political building no better, than the Builders of Babel: We shall be divided by our little partial local interests; our projects will be confounded, and we ourselves shall become a reproach and by word down to future ages. And what is worse, mankind may hereafter from this unfortunate instance, despair of establishing Governments by Human wisdom and leave it to chance, war and conquest.

I therefore beg leave to move-that henceforth prayers imploring the assistance of Heaven, and its blessings on our deliberations, be held in this Assembly every morning before we proceed to business, and that one or more of the Clergy of this City be requested to officiate in that Service.”

If the framers realized the need of prayer in the drafting of our Constitution, surely we should realize the need of prayer in the preserving of it! If they acknowledged the need of an eye toward God to protect us from the disunity of “little partial local interests,” how can we shut our eyes to God and hope to remain a united people?

Pray that our nation would return to the original intent of the framers of our Constitution, as well as to their acknowledged need of “the assistance of Heaven.”

DAY 5

*“Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.” **Isaiah 5:20***

On January 23, 1996, Rev. Joe Wright, pastor of Central Christian Church in Wichita, prayed the following opening prayer for the Kansas State Senate in Topeka.

“Heavenly Father,

We come before You today to ask Your Forgiveness and seek Your direction and guidance. We know Your Word says, “Woe to those who call evil good,” but that’s exactly what we have done. We have lost our Spiritual equilibrium and inverted our values. We confess that; we have ridiculed the absolute truth of Your Word and called it pluralism; We have worshipped other gods and called it multiculturalism; We have endorsed perversion and called it an alternative lifestyle; We have exploited the poor and called it the lottery; We have neglected the needy and called it self preservation; We have rewarded laziness and called it welfare; We have killed our unborn and called it choice; We have shot abortionists and called it justifiable; We have neglected to discipline our children and called it building self-esteem; We have abused power and called it political savvy; We have coveted our neighbor’s possessions and called it ambition; We have polluted the air with profanity and pornography and called it freedom of expression; We have ridiculed the time-honored values of our forefathers and called it enlightenment.

Search us, O God, and know our hearts today; try us and see if there be some wicked way in us; cleanse us from every sin and set us free. Guide and bless these men and women who have been sent here by the people of this state and who have been ordained by You, to govern this great state

of Kansas. Grant them your wisdom to rule and may their decisions direct us to the center of Your Will.

I ask this in the name of your Son, The Living Savior, Jesus Christ”

In response to Rev. Wright’s prayer, one member of the Senate walked out and others voiced strong criticism. However, when Paul Harvey aired the prayer on his radio show he received the greatest response to any story ever reported on his program.

Pray that America will stop calling evil good and good evil. Pray that we will repent of our evil and return to God.

DAY 6

“What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?” **Romans 8:31**

In a book entitled *Six Months in the White House*, which was written by Francis B. Carpenter shortly after the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, Carpenter writes of an encounter during the Civil War between President Lincoln and a northern clergyman. Carpenter’s account reads as follows:

“No nobler reply ever fell from the lips of a ruler, than that uttered by President Lincoln in response to the clergyman who ventured to say, in his presence, that he hoped ‘the Lord was on our side.’

“‘I am not at all concerned about that,’ replied Mr. Lincoln, ‘for I know that the Lord is always on the side of the right. But it is my constant anxiety and prayer that I and this nation should be on the Lord’s side.’”

May it be our constant anxiety and prayer that our nation should be on the Lord’s side, not that the Lord should be on our side.

DAY 7

“To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open. I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.”
(Revelation 3:7-8)

Rick Warren closed his Inaugural Prayer at Barack Obama’s Inauguration with these words: *“I humbly ask this in the name of the one who changed my life, Yeshua, Isa, Jesus [Spanish pronunciation], Jesus, who taught us to pray: ‘Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not*

into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.’”

At first glance, it appeared that Pastor Warren had bucked the political correctness of our day and bravely ended his much anticipated prayer in the name of Jesus. Like first century Jerusalem, the one thing intolerable in twenty-first century America is a Christian who dares to speak the name of “Jesus” in public (**Acts 4:5-31; 5:28, 40-42; 9:13-16, 21; 15:26; 21:13; 26:9-11**). Consequently, everyone was wondering whether Warren would dare to do the intolerable by biblically and unabashedly praying in “Jesus name” (**John 14:13-14; 16:23-24**).

At first glance it appeared that Warren had went where few contemporary Christians are willing to go; namely, outside the camp to Christ where the disgrace of our Savior is borne and our personal reputation sacrificed (**Hebrews 13:11-14**). Upon closer scrutiny, however, it turned out that Warren never really left the camp at all, but remained safely within the comfortable confines of compromise.

One of the names for Jesus in which Warren prayed his Inaugural Prayer is “Isa.” Although the Arabic for Jesus is “Yesu,” Mohammed refers to Jesus as “Isa” throughout the Koran. When forced to flee Mecca for Medina because of the preaching of his new religion, Mohammed suddenly found himself in a city that was founded and predominantly populated by Jews. The Jews of Medina viewed Jesus Christ as a phony Messiah and ridiculed Him by calling Him “Esau,” after the rejected brother of Jacob who swapped his birthright for beans and lost his father’s blessing. Mohammed picked up this derogatory name for Jesus, translated it into Arabic as “Isa,” and used it throughout the Koran when referring to Christ.

According to the Koran, “Isa” is like Adam, a mere man created by Allah from the dust. Furthermore, he is nothing more than a servant of Allah, whom Allah can destroy anytime he takes a notion to. Therefore, anyone professing “Isa” to be God or the Son of God is under the curse of Allah and will be “forbidden entrance into paradise and cast into the fire of hell.”

It was the Apostle Paul who warned us about false prophets who preach “another Jesus” (**2 Corinthians 11:4**). Muslims preach “another Jesus,” one who the Koran says only appeared to die on the cross for the sins of the world. In the Middle Ages, Martin of Tours taught believers to distinguish the real Jesus from all others by asking, “Where are the nail-prints?” If there are no nail-prints, it is not the real Jesus, but a counterfeit Christ.

One cannot help but wonder why Rick Warren prayed His Inaugural Prayer in the name of the nail-scarred Jesus who changed his life, as well as in the name of Islam’s counterfeit Christ, who has no nail-prints. Granted, Rick may have merely intended to include the “Arabic” name for Jesus in the closing of his prayer so as not to offend Muslim Americans. Yet, I’m afraid his attempt at praying a non-offensive prayer ended up being most offensive to the One to whom he prayed.

Try as we may, loyalty to our Lord leaves us no way around His solemn warning—“And you shall be hated of all men [and of all nations] for my name’s sake” (**Matthew 10:22; 24:9; Mark 13:13; Luke 21:17**). The true church of Jesus Christ has no other alternative but to unapologetically profess and to unabashedly proclaim the name of Jesus. No matter the cost or consequence to

ourselves, we must never deny the name of the only one who can set before us an open door to the treasure house of God (**Revelation 3:7-8**).

Pray that the church will not succumb to political correctness by refusing to boldly and publicly proclaim the name of Jesus—He who alone can save America!

DAY 8

“Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance.” Psalm 33:12

The well-known and much beloved song *God Bless America* was written by Irving Berlin in 1918 and revised by him in 1938. In 1938, it was introduced to America on an Armistice Day broadcast by singer Kate Smith, afterward becoming Mrs. Smith’s signature song. The song was actually written by Berlin to be sung as a prayer.

“While the storm clouds gather far across the sea,

Let us swear allegiance to a land that’s free,

Let us all be grateful for a land so fair,

As we raise our voices in a solemn prayer.

God Bless America,

Land that I love.

Stand beside her, and guide her

Through the night with a light from above.

From the mountains, to the prairies,

To the oceans, white with foam

God bless America, My home sweet home.”

That God has blessed America more than any country in the history of the world is indisputable. However, the real need today is not to pray so much for God’s blessings, but for our country to get back to the place where God can bless it. As the Bible says, “Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD...” (**Psalm 33:12**).

Pray that America returns to God so that God can bless us again as He has blessed us before.

DAY 9

“But we will bless the LORD from this time forth and for evermore. Praise the LORD.” Psalm 115:18

The Psalmist declared, *“Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.” (Psalm 103:1)*. Herein lies a twist on our traditional thinking in America. Rather than thinking and praying about God blessing us, do we ever think and pray about us blessing God?

Although He promised to bless Abraham, God’s greater promise to Israel’s patriarch was that he would make him a blessing to the whole world (**Genesis 12:1-3**). Although America, like no other nation before it, has been blessed by God, our greatest blessing is found in the fact that God has made us a blessing to the rest of the world. For instance, no nation in history has sent out more Christian missionaries than ours.

Unfortunately, things have drastically changed in today’s America. Take for example the boasting of our president at a press conference in Turkey that America is no longer a Christian nation. In addition, a member of his political party recently celebrated the fact on national television that we are no longer a nation of traditional values. Again, in both cases, there was no shame or lamentation, but proud jubilation. What does this say about the sad spiritual straits of today’s America.

Don’t pray that God will bless America, but that America would bless God!

DAY 10

“The stranger that is within thee shall get up above thee very high; and thou shalt come down very low. He shall lend to thee, and thou shalt not lend to him: he shall be the head, and thou shalt be the tail.” Deuteronomy 28:43-44

In Deuteronomy Chapter 28, God instructs half of His people to announce from Mount Gerizim the blessings that He will bestow upon their nation if they will be faithful to Him. He then instructs the other half of His people to announce from Mount Ebal the curses that will befall their nation if they ever forsake Him.

According to Deuteronomy 28:12-13, the nation will be blessed by God financially as long as the people believe and obey God’s Word. God promises a faithful nation that it “will lend to many nations, but borrow from none.” On the other hand, the nation will be cursed by God with financial disaster if the people ever cease to believe and obey God’s Word. God promises the nation that forsakes Him that it will end up borrowing from foreigners and incapable of lending to anyone (**Deuteronomy 28:43-44**).

I don’t know about you, but Deuteronomy 28:12-13 sounds to me like an accurate description of America yesterday, back when we were a God-fearing nation that revered God’s Word. In those days, we were blessed by God as the world’s greatest lender nation. Today, however, we resemble the nation described in Deuteronomy 28:43-44, a nation that has forsaken God and is no longer under His blessing, but under His curse. Consequently, our country is no longer the world’s greatest lender nation, but the world’s greatest debtor nation.

Although many explanations are given for America's current economic downturn, our forsaking of God is normally not one of them. Yet, here, just as in all our other national problems, the real trouble is spiritual. Having gone from being a God-fearing nation to a God-forsaking one, we've moved ourselves out from under God's blessings and put ourselves under His curse.

Pray that America will repent of its forsaking of God and return to its faithfulness to God so that God will lift his curse and restore His blessings.

DAY 11

This is what the LORD says about this people: "They greatly love to wander; they do not restrain their feet. So the LORD does not accept them; he will now remember their wickedness and punish them for their sins." Then the LORD said to me, "Do not pray for the well-being of this people. Although they fast, I will not listen to their cry; though they offer burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. Instead, I will destroy them with the sword, famine and plague."

Jeremiah 14:10-11

Is it possible that it is too late to pray for America? God told the Prophet Jeremiah not to pray for Judah, because the people's sins had exhausted God's patience and ensured the nation of divine retribution (**Jeremiah 7:16; 11:14**). Is it possible that America's sins have exhausted God's patience and ensured us of divine retribution?

An old French riddle calls upon children to consider the story of a lily pond. The pond is implanted with a single lily pad. On the first day the lily pad doubles to two. Afterward, the lily pads in the pond double everyday until the pond is completely covered on the 30th day, blocking out all light and oxygen and choking off all life in the pond. If one waits to deal with the problem until the pond is half covered on the 29th day, how long does one have to solve the problem? The answer, of course, is only one day.

What is the moral of the lily pond story? It is that we should not wait until it is too late to solve our problems. Have we been so busy with and distracted by others things that we've neither paid attention to nor addressed our country's constantly doubling spiritual decadence? If so, have we waited too late to do anything about it? Is the die cast, the divine patience exhausted and divine retribution inevitable? All we can do is hope and pray that such is not the case.

Pray that it's not the 29th day in America!

DAY 12

"And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes:" **Daniel 9:3**

If, as we hope, it's not too late to pray for America, then, the question becomes: "How should we pray for America?" To many Americans this question will sound silly, but to the spiritually astute, it will not. After all, the Scripture not only attributes spiritual want to missing prayers but also to praying "amiss" (**James 4:2-3**).

The first thing we need to do in order to pray for America is to seriously consecrate ourselves to the task. Notice, when it came to praying for his nation, the Prophet Daniel determined to seek the Lord in prayer “with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes.” He wanted everything—his appetites (fasting), his apparel (sackcloth) and his surroundings (ashes)—to keep him singularly focused on praying to God for his nation.

In the shallow pond of today’s contemporary church, prayer meetings are called within which a prayer or two is hoisted up for our nation between praise choruses and refreshments. In our poorly attended and vanishing midweek prayer services, we spend more time on prayer requests than we do on praying. And most of our requests have more to do with praying saints out of heaven than with praying sinners out of hell. In other words, most prayer requests are for the sick in our church rather than for the lost in our world.

Needless to say, such praying won’t do for America. As it is often said, “Desperate times call for desperate measures.” These are desperate times in America, times that call for desperation in prayer. Until we get desperate before God in prayer, there is no hope for revival in America; and apart from revival, there is no hope for America!

Since all revival is born in desperation, pray that God will burden us to the point of desperation in our prayers for America.

DAY 13

“To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him.”
Daniel 9:9

A second essential in praying for America is confidence. The Bible teaches us that confidence is always a prerequisite in prayer. For instance, consider the following:

(1) *“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”* **Hebrews 11:6**

(2) *“But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.”* **James 1:6-7**

(3) *“And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.”* **1 John 5:14-15**

Perhaps, the bigger question for Christians in America is not whether we have confidence in God or in Him answering prayers prayed according to His will, but how we can pray confidently for God to spare our nation when it is so steeped in sin. Notice, Daniel prayed for his nation on the basis that even though they had “rebelled against” God, the Lord still possessed “mercies and forgiveness.”

It is here alone that we find any basis for confidence in our prayers for America. It is not found in our nation's merits, but in God's mercy. It cannot be found in our goodness, but in the possibility of forgiveness, thanks to God's grace.

Let us pray with the ancient Prophet Habakkuk, "O LORD, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid: O LORD, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy." Habakkuk 3:2

DAY 14

"And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord... We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled... And whiles I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel..." Daniel 9:4-5, 20

Along with serious consecration and a sure confidence, there must be sincere confession in our prayers for America. Continuance in sin will certainly bring judgment, but confessing our sins results in forgiveness, as the Bible promises in **1 John 1:9**: *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*

Notice, it was not just the national sins of Israel that Daniel confessed, but his individual sins as well. If America is to corporately turn from sin and back to God, then, it must begin with Americans individually turning from sin and back to God. This means, IT BEGINS WITH YOU! Before you can pray for America to repent and get right with God you must repent and get right with God. Confession and repentance will never occur collectively in this country until it has first occurred individually among its citizenry.

Take the first step toward revival in America; namely, sincerely confess your sins to God.

DAY 15

"O LORD, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain: because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us. Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake. O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies. O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name." (Daniel 9:16-19)

With today's entry we'll complete our consideration of some essentials of national prayer gleaned from Daniel's prayer for the nation of Israel. We've already learned that serious consecration,

steadfast confidence and sincere confession are essential to our prayers for America. Today, we'll look at one final essential to be gleaned from Daniel's prayer; namely, our spiritual concern.

As much as it may have meant to Daniel, it was not his desire to return from captivity to his homeland with his fellow-Jews that formed the heart of his prayer for Israel. Neither was it Daniel's hope for a prosperous future for his nation. Instead, it was his concern for God's glory that fueled his prayer for the Jewish people. Knowing that the Jews were "called by [God's] name" and that their becoming "a reproach to all that [were] about [them]" was detrimental to the name of God in the world, Daniel prayed primarily for the restoration of Israel for the "Lord's sake," not Israel's.

We need to ask ourselves: "What is at the heart of our prayers for revival in America?" Is it our economy? Do we want revival so that more people will find work, fewer people will lose their homes and all of us will do better financially. Is it national security? Do we want revival in America because we believe it will result in God putting an impenetrable shield over our country, a shield which will protect us from all enemies, both foreign and domestic? Or is it civil rights? Do we simply want revival in America so that everyone will be treated fairly, equally and justly?

Although all of these things are good, none of them should be at the heart of our prayers for revival in America. At the heart of our prayers for revival in America must be a spiritual concern. It must be the glory of God. If our prayers are fueled by any other motive, regardless of how good it may be, there is no chance of our prayers being answered or of revival coming to America.

Let us ask God to send revival for His sake, not our own; for the glory of His name, not the mere good of our nation.

DAY 16

"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

1 Corinthians 10:31

A few years ago thousands of Americans gathered on the Mall in Washington D. C. to pray for revival in America. Their motive was the salvation of our country. Notice, it was not the salvation of souls for the glory of God, but the salvation of our society for the good of its populace.

Their method was to call all Americans to return to belief in God. What God? Well, no particular god was specified. Any generic god would do, just as long as some god was believed in. It could be the god of the Muslims, the god of a cult, one or more of the Hindu gods, or even an imaginary god conjured up in your own mind and tailored to your own liking.

What is the most condemned sin in the Bible? Idolatry, which is the worship of any god apart from the one and only true God. What is the first of the Ten Commandments? It is, "You must not have any other god but me" (**Exodus 20:3**). It was the worship of false gods that brought God's judgment down upon ancient Israel. Far from bringing revival, idolatry always brings divine retribution. Yet, in today's America, many believe that bowing before false gods will bring down God's blessings upon our nation.

Make no mistake about it; revival only occurs when men are seeking the one and only true God, not national salvation or some other thing. When it occurs, God alone will be glorified by it. No nation's flag will be unfurled over it; no, not even the Stars and Stripes. Although revival can result in the transformation of a nation, it is never to be seen as a means to this end, but rather as a side effect of men turning from their sin with broken hearts and to the one and only true God with all of their hearts!

Pray that America will repent of its idolatry and turn with all of its heart to the one and only true God!

DAY 17

“Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.” Zechariah 4:6

Jonathan Goforth, who was a Canadian Presbyterian missionary to China, once said, “If revival is being withheld from us it is because some idol remains still enthroned; because we still insist in placing our reliance in human schemes; because we still refuse to face the unchangeable truth that, ‘It is not by might, but by My Spirit.’”

What idol “remains still enthroned” in your heart? What takes precedence over God in your life? To what do you devote most of your time and energy? What is your first and foremost daily aspiration? Is it to please and glorify God or is it something else?

What “human schemes” are you relying upon. Do you think that the answers for your own life are found in your own ingenuity, resources and abilities? Do you think that the answers for America are found in politicians, political parties and polling places? Are you looking to God for all that is needed in your life and nation or are you looking to your own means and human schemes?

Neither our lives nor land can be saved by our “might” or “power.” Only God can save us! If salvation is to come it will be “by [God’s] Spirit.” Herein, lies the only hope for America. It lies in a move of the Spirit of God across our land, but such a move will never occur until we’ve rid ourselves of idols and schemes.

Pray that Americans rid themselves of idols and schemes and throw themselves on the mercy of God, who alone can save us!

DAY 18

“Now in the twenty and fourth day of this month the children of Israel were assembled with fasting, and with sackclothes, and earth upon them. And the seed of Israel separated themselves from all strangers, and stood and confessed their sins, and the iniquities of their fathers. And they stood up in their place, and read in the book of the law of the LORD their God one fourth part of the day; and another fourth part they confessed, and worshipped the LORD their God.”

Nehemiah 9:1-3

The National Day of Prayer is annually observed on the first Thursday of May. It was designated by Congress as a day for Americans “to turn to God in prayer and meditation.” The law which formalized this annual observance was passed by Congress and signed by President Harry Truman in 1952.

Long before 1952, national days of prayer had long been called for by American leaders. In fact, before our country was even founded, the Continental Congress issued a proclamation requesting that “a day of public humiliation, fasting and prayer” be observed on July 20, 1775. Numbered among the American presidents who have called for a National Day of Prayer is John Adams and Abraham Lincoln, the latter designating April 30, 1863 as a day of “national humiliation, fasting and prayer.” In his proclamation, President Lincoln went on to say, “It is the duty of nations as well as of men, to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God, to confess their sins and transgressions, in humble sorrow, yet with assured hope that genuine repentance will lead to mercy and pardon; and to recognize the sublime truth, announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history, that those nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord.”

In today’s America, the National Day of Prayer has been ruled unconstitutional by U.S. District Judge Barbara Crab, whose ruling states that the statute establishing this annual observance is “an inherently religious exercise that serves no secular function.” Furthermore, unlike his predecessors, President Obama has refused to hold any White House observance of the National Day of Prayer since taking office in 2009, this despite the fact that he has held a special White House dinner to mark the end of Ramadan—the Islamic month of fasting and prayer.

Adding insult to injury, Rev. Franklin Graham, the son of famous evangelist Billy Graham and a staunch evangelical Christian, was disinvented on this year’s National Day of Prayer from praying for our troops at the Pentagon. Although the official reason given was Graham’s description of Islam as an evil religion, the real reason was his refusal to say that “all religions are equal” and his insistence upon Jesus Christ being “the only way to God.”

If America’s only hope of survival is revival, and if all revival is born in prayer, what hope is there of revival in an America that has outlawed its national observance of prayer? Truly, our hope is not found in any public observance of prayer in the White House or at the Pentagon, but only in personal and private observances of prayer in our individual prayer closets.

Pray personally, privately and persistently for revival in America, remembering that your prayers are our nation’s only hope.

DAY 19

“And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.” **Matthew 6:5-6**

Someone has astutely observed, “As long as there are tests in school there will be prayer in school.” The Supreme Court may have outlawed prayer in the classrooms of our public schools, but it is powerless to prevent it in the hearts of students.

J. Sidlow Baxter once said, “Men may spurn our appeals, reject our message, oppose our arguments, despise our persons; but they are helpless against our prayers.” America, in spite of its recent secularization, is defenseless against our prayers. Our government, along with its courts, may have tossed prayer from the public square and our public schools, but it can’t touch it in the hearts of the American people. Our government, just like all others, is completely incapable of policing prayer in the hearts of its populace.

Although many bemoan the prohibiting of prayer in our public schools, the real problem in America today is the absence of prayer in our hearts, homes and churches. “And who,” I might ask, “is to blame for this?” It’s certainly not the Supreme Court. Instead, the culprit is us; after all, only we can prevent prayer in our hearts, homes and churches.

Pray that our hearts, homes and churches become bastions of prayer for revival in America.

DAY 20

“And David built there an altar unto the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the LORD was intreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel.” 2 Samuel 24:25

In 2005, President George Bush called for a National Day of Prayer and Remembrance for the Victims of Hurricane Katrina. Angry over what he perceived to be the government’s sluggish response to blacks and poor people in New Orleans, Reginald Jackson, president of the Black Ministers Council of New Jersey, accused the president of being “a little late” in his call for a National Day of Prayer. Consequently, Rev. Jackson and other ministers and their churches refused to “heed Bush’s request” to pray, opting instead to lodge a political protest by withholding their prayers from those who desperately needed them.

Granted, many churches had already held prayer services before President Bush’s call for a National Day of Prayer, as Reginald Jackson argued, “We’ve already prayed Mr. President.” Still, it seemed strange to me that any church would refuse to pray again, especially when their only reason for doing so was to take a swipe at a President who had called them to prayer.

Jesus said, “My house shall be called the house of prayer” (**Matthew 21:13**). The Apostle Paul instructed us to pray “for Kings, and for all that are in authority” (**1 Timothy 2:2**). Yet, in some churches today politics takes precedence over prayer and political protests takes precedence over praying for those in authority. Maybe this helps to explain the implosion of our country and the impotence of so many of our churches.

Pray that America’s churches will wake up to the paltriness of political action and return to the power of the prayer altar.

DAY 21

“My house shall be called the house of prayer” **Matthew 21:13**

Jesus did not say that His house would be called a house of preaching. He did not say that His house would be called a house of music. He did not say that His house would be called a house of fellowship. Jesus said that His house would be called a house of prayer.

In light of this, isn't it strange that in most churches today there is much more preaching, music and fellowship than prayer? In addition to this, how do we explain the fact that no service of the church is less supported and more poorly attended than the prayer service? While it's no problem to get people to come out for a potluck supper or a church singing, it's practically impossible to get people to come out for a prayer meeting.

The Bible teaches us to pray “always” and “without ceasing” (**Ephesians 6:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:17**). Why, then, do we do so little of that which the Bible commands us to do continuously? Do we see prayer in a lesser light that the Scripture shines upon it? Undoubtedly, we do; otherwise, we'd pray more.

If revival is to come to America it will come on the wings of prayer. But what chance is there of revival in America when its churches have so minimized prayer? Contrary to popular Christian opinion, the biggest obstacle to revival today is not the profaning of our culture, but the prayerlessness of our churches.

Pray that God will drive our churches to their knees, for it is only when we are on our knees that revival can rise in our land.

DAY 22

“And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee: for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities.” **Isaiah 64:7**

THE CONFLICT

The prince of darkness and legion

go forth in this world to win

the invaluable prize of the conflict

the immortal souls of men.

Heaven aligns its forces.

The battle lines are drawn.

Eternities hang in the balance.

In fury, the war rages on.
Humanities blind to the conflict,
though they the victor's spoil;
insensitive to the battle,
due to lives of earthly toil.
Where are God's gallant warriors,
who wax valiant in the fight,
who turn back the torrents of darkness
clad in the armor of light?
O Lord chasten your children,
in haste wield the rod,
force to their knees your people
that they might rise and take hold of God.
Then God's mighty princes
who are destined to prevail
will scale the citadels of evil
and snatch men from the clutches of hell.

Pray that God will stir us up to take hold of Him for our land.

DAY 23

*"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen." **Matthew 28:18-20***

J. Vernon McGee, the famous radio Bible teacher, was once asked why he did not run for political office. He answered, "God did not call me to clean up the pond, but to fish in it." I'm afraid a lot of

Christians today, unlike the late Dr. McGee, are more committed to politics than they are to preaching.

Today's Christians need to learn that our country will never be changed through the political process. Our nation will never change until men change. Although politics may change public policy, it is powerless to change people. It is only the Gospel of Jesus Christ that has the power to transform men. This means that the church alone, as the sole steward of the gospel, has the power to change America.

This awesome power, solely possessed by the church, is only wielded by us when we are preaching the gospel. When we exchange preaching for political activism the church becomes powerless to effect change in America. Is there any wonder then that the devil is working so diligently today to deceive the church into cleaning up the pond as an alternative to fishing in it?

Now, this is not to say that the church's voice should not be heard in the political arena or that Christians should be politically inactive. We are, after all, "the light of the world" and "the salt of the earth" (**Matthew 5:13-16**). By standing for the right and against the wrong, the church serves as the conscience of the country and the preserver of society. If the church fails to fulfill this God-given role the country will become morally rudderless and our society will soon reek with the stench of moral decay.

While I'm not saying that Christians should be politically inactive, I am saying that our political activism should never be seen as our primary responsibility. Instead, it should always be considered a secondary concern. Our primary responsibility is, as it has ever been and will ever be, the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost and dying world. Unfortunately, far too many Christians today are majoring on the minor (politics) and minoring on the major (preaching). Consequently, the contemporary church is becoming more and more irrelevant and today's America more and more unchristian.

Pray that the church will stop minoring on preaching and majoring on politics and start minoring on politics and majoring on preaching.

DAY 24

"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, [and] giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and [for] all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this [is] good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."

1 Timothy 2:1-4

In Luke 20:25, Jesus said, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things which are God's." As Christians, we hold a dual citizenship. First and foremost, we are citizens of Heaven. Second, we are citizens of the state. As a result of our dual citizenship, we have responsibilities to both God and Caesar, so it is important that we render to both their dues.

One of the things owed to Caesar is our prayers. In **1 Timothy 2:1-4**, the Apostle Paul writes: “I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, [and] giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and [for] all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this [is] good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.”

In exhorting us to pray “for all men” Paul singles out “kings and all that are in authority.” Why? Is God more concerned with the powerful than the populace? No, unlike the world, God is no respecter of persons (**Acts 10:34**). In His eyes, there is no difference between potentates and peasants.

The reason we are exhorted to pray especially for political leaders is because they hold such sway over the quality of life in our society. It is not because they have some special favor with God. Rather, it is because they have such influence over our way of life.

Proverbs 21:1 teaches us: “The king’s heart is in the hand of the Lord, as rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.” If we clasp our hands in prayer for political leaders, God, who holds their hearts in His hand, can sway them to keep our society “quiet and peaceable.” In such a society, Christians can practice their faith, publicly worship their Lord, and propagate their land with the gospel. According to Paul, “this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.”

Notice, the reason “God our Saviour” wants a “quiet and peaceable” society is so that men will “be saved and come unto the knowledge of the truth.” Where is it easier for sinners to be saved and learn of Christ—in a Muslim land where Christians are arrested for witnessing to others, in a Communist land where the church is prohibited from preaching the gospel, or in a free society where the church is permitted to practice and proclaim its faith? Obviously, the easiest place for sinners to be saved is in a free society. This is why God wants us praying especially for our political leaders.

God is not so much concerned with politics as He is with the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. God does care for our political leaders. He cares just as much, however, for their constituency. God wants all men from the White House to your house to have an opportunity to hear the gospel and be saved. Thus, He instructs us to pray “for all men” but especially “for kings and all of those in authority” so that we will have a “quiet and peaceable” society in which everyone will have an opportunity to hear the gospel and “come to the knowledge of the truth.”

For too long now this biblical admonition to pray for our political leaders has been misinterpreted to mean that Christians are divinely duty bound to pray God’s blessings down on every politician elected to political office. Nowhere, however, does the Bible admonish us to offer up blanket-prayers of unconditional divine blessings upon politicians who promote the most ungodly policies, as well as propose and pass the most ungodly legislation.

When it comes to praying for some present-day politicians, about the only prayer I know to pray for them, apart from any the Spirit specifically burdens me to pray, is a prayer for their personal salvation. Otherwise, I limit myself to praying as the Bible teaches me to pray, that the invisible

hand of God will continue to sway our political leaders to act justly and enact godly legislation so that our society will remain free and open to the public proclamation of the gospel.

Pray that those in authority will be used by God to keep our society free and open to the public proclamation of the Gospel so that all Americans will have an opportunity “to come unto the knowledge of the truth” and “be saved.”

DAY 25

“And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.” **Romans 13:11**

Praying for our political leaders so that our society will remain open to the public proclamation of the gospel may seem unnecessary to some Christians in America today. They take it for granted that our Constitution guarantees us the right to publicly practice and proclaim our faith. Why then should we bother praying to our Heavenly Father for something already guaranteed us by our Founding Fathers?

Well, just in case you haven't noticed, strange things are currently abreast in America—things which our Founding Fathers would have never believed. Our Constitution is being reinterpreted by today's courts and politicians to say things that our Founding Fathers never imagined, much less intended. For instance, the First Amendment, which prohibits our government from interfering with the free exercise of religion, has now been reinterpreted to mean that religious people cannot be involved in government, unless they promise beforehand to disavow their religious beliefs and convictions during the duration of their government service.

Even more bizarre than the above is the fact that our government, which was founded on an acknowledgement of God, is now being prohibited by its own courts from acknowledging God. Despite the fact that our whole system of government is predicated upon the principle that we were all created equal and endowed by our Creator with certain unalienable rights, any acknowledgement of such by our government today is deemed by its courts unconstitutional. Furthermore, any semblance of the Christian faith on government property, such as prayer in our public schools, a copy of the Ten Commandments on a courthouse wall, or a Nativity scene in the town square, is also forbidden by the Constitution's current black-robed reinterpreters.

When you add to all of this, the ever-increasing denunciations of Christians as bigots for opposing things like same-sex marriage, along with our current president's stated belief that the only religion acceptable in a democracy is one that is offensive to no faith and compatible with all faiths, you'll be forced to conclude that it is no longer far-fetched to foresee a day in America when the public proclamation of the gospel will be outlawed. Although such a thing was once unimaginable in these United States, it is now certainly plausible and possibly looming.

In the past, we may have considered praying for those in authority to be of minor importance, since we took for granted our right to publicly practice and proclaim our Christian faith. Unfortunately, we are now learning the fallacy of our past assumptions. Far from being of minor importance, our prayers for America to remain free and open to the public proclamation of the gospel are currently

some of the most crucial prayers we can pray. Failing to pray for the leaders of our nation may soon translate into us losing our freedom to preach to the lost of our land.

Pray that the church in America will “awake out of [its] sleep” to its present precarious position, which will result in our praying and preaching with unprecedented urgency.

DAY 26

“The word of the LORD that came to Joel the son of Pethuel. Hear this, you elders, And give ear, all you inhabitants of the land! Has anything like this happened in your days, Or even in the days of your fathers? Tell your children about it, Let your children tell their children, And their children another generation. What the chewing locust left, the swarming locust has eaten; What the swarming locust left, the crawling locust has eaten; And what the crawling locust left, the consuming locust has eaten. Awake, you drunkards, and weep; And wail, all you drinkers of wine, Because of the new wine, For it has been cut off from your mouth. For a nation has come up against My land, Strong, and without number; His teeth are the teeth of a lion, And he has the fangs of a fierce lion. He has laid waste My vine, And ruined My fig tree; He has stripped it bare and thrown it away; Its branches are made white. Lament like a virgin girded with sackcloth For the husband of her youth. The grain offering and the drink offering Have been cut off from the house of the LORD; The priests mourn, who minister to the LORD. The field is wasted, The land mourns; For the grain is ruined, The new wine is dried up, The oil fails. Be ashamed, you farmers, Wail, you vinedressers, For the wheat and the barley; Because the harvest of the field has perished. The vine has dried up, And the fig tree has withered; The pomegranate tree, The palm tree also, And the apple tree—All the trees of the field are withered; Surely joy has withered away from the sons of men. Gird yourselves and lament, you priests; Wail, you who minister before the altar; Come, lie all night in sackcloth, You who minister to my God; For the grain offering and the drink offering Are withheld from the house of your God. Consecrate a fast, Call a sacred assembly; Gather the elders And all the inhabitants of the land Into the house of the LORD your God, And cry out to the LORD. Alas for the day! For the day of the LORD is at hand; It shall come as destruction from the Almighty.” Joel 1:1-15

Today and tomorrow we’ll look at the need and purpose of a solemn or sacred assembly. We’ll begin by showing why a solemn assembly is now needed in America.

In Joel 1:1-15, we are given the **PREREQUISITES** of a solemn assembly, all of which add up to the dire and desperate spiritual straits of a nation facing the impending judgment of God. Unfortunately for us, all of these prerequisites are present-day realities in today’s America, proving to the spiritually astute that divine retribution now hangs over this nation like the sword of Damocles.

The first prerequisite proving the need for a solemn assemble is fruitlessness—*“the harvest of the field has perished.”* Though the plight of the American farmer is well know in our day, the fruitlessness which speaks more to the dire and desperate spiritual condition of our country is that of the church, which the Scripture identifies as “God’s field” (**1 Corinthians 3:9**).

The second prerequisite proving the need of a solemn assembly is defeat—“*For a nation has come up against My land, Strong, and without number; His teeth are the teeth of a lion, And he has the fangs of a fierce lion.*” Today, the church in America is losing the spiritual battle for the immortal souls of men, being primarily populated by carnal Christians who are overcome and oppressed by their “adversary the devil [who] walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour” (**1 Peter 5:8**).

The third prerequisite proving the need for a solemn assembly is the fact that there are no sacrifices or offerings at the house of God—“*Wail, you who minister before the altar; Come, lie all night in sackcloth, You who minister to my God; For the grain offering and the drink offering are withheld from the house of your God.*” In America’s contemporary churches there is a lack of “living sacrifices”; that is, of those committing themselves to the Lord (**Romans 12:1-2**). There is also a lack of spiritual sacrifices, those of true worship and praise (**Hebrews 13:15**). And who can deny the lack of “incense”—intercessory prayer—being offered up to God from the altars of contemporary churches (**Revelation 5:8; 8:3-4**).

Finally, the absence of joy—“*Surely joy has withered away from the sons of men*”—is a prerequisite proving the need for a solemn assembly. If you compare the amount of joy and gladness to the amount of gripping and grumbling in today’s church you’ll have a good idea of just how imminent the judgment of God is upon our nation.

Pray that the church in America will wake up to the signs of God’s impending judgment upon our land and begin crying out to God both day and night.

DAY 27

“*Who knoweth if he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him; even a meat offering and a drink offering unto the LORD your God? Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly: Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet. Let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O LORD, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God?*” **Joel 2:14-17**

Here, in Joel 2:14-17, we have God’s call for repentance. According to the Prophet Joel, if we will repent and return to God, God might relent from His impending judgment and mercifully spare our nation. Instead of annihilation there might be salvation. Of course, all of this is contingent upon our repentance.

This explains the prophet’s call for a solemn or sacred assembly. Sacred assemblies are called for when God’s people realize their need to come together and collectively fall upon their knees in hopes of persuading God to relent from His impending judgment upon their land.

Notice, the **PARTICIPANTS** in a solemn assembly are the people of God. The **PLACE** for a solemn assembly is the house of God. And the **PURPOSE** of a solemn assembly is for you to truly

repent and not just go through the motions, as the prophet makes abundantly clear—“*So rend your heart, and not your garments.*”

As we've pointed out repeatedly this month, revival in America must begin with personal repentance in individual hearts. Solemn assemblies are really not about: (1) what's wrong with our country (2) what's wrong in Washington D.C. (3) what's wrong in Sibley, LA (4) what's wrong in our church, or (5) what's wrong with other people. Instead, a solemn assembly is really about what's wrong with me. Until we get right that which is wrong in our own hearts nothing will change in America!

Pray the prayer of the Psalmist: “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Psalm 139:23-24).

DAY 28

“Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judaea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituraea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene, Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins; As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.” Luke 3:1-6

John the Baptist was the forerunner of Christ. He was called by God to prepare the way for Christ to come. He did so by “preaching the baptism of repentance.” It was the people's repentance that made (1) the crooked “paths straight” (2) “filled” the “valleys” (3) “brought” down “every mountain” (4) made “the rough ways...smooth,” and (5) prepared the way for Jesus to come.

According to Stephen Olford, “Revival is that strange and sovereign work of God in which He visits His own people—restoring, reanimating, and releasing them into the fullness of His blessing.” Indeed, revival has been simply defined as a “divine visitation.” But what is it that prepares the way for Christ to visit us in revival. It is repentance!

Contrary to popular opinion, repentance is not something that we can work up within ourselves. Instead, it is something that God must give us (**Acts 5:31; 11:18; 2 Timothy 2:25-26**). As Charles Spurgeon once said, “Repentance is too choice a flower to grow in nature's garden.”

What we need in the church today only God can grant us. We need a “godly sorrow” over our sins that leads to a repentance “not to be repented of” (**2 Corinthians 7:10**). We need, as Oswald Chambers put it, “the panging pains of repentance,” those “agonies” of heart that “the Holy Spirit [alone] produces.” Until the church is this heartbroken over our sin, we need not expect revival to breakout in our country.

Pray that God will break our hearts over our sins with a godly sorrow that will lead us to a repentance not to be repented of.

DAY 29

*“He cried also in mine ears with a loud voice, saying, Cause them that have charge over the city to draw near, even every man with his destroying weapon in his hand. And, behold, six men came from the way of the higher gate, which lieth toward the north, and every man a slaughter weapon in his hand; and one man among them was clothed with linen, with a writer’s inkhorn by his side: and they went in, and stood beside the brasen altar. And the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub, whereupon he was, to the threshold of the house. And he called to the man clothed with linen, which had the writer’s inkhorn by his side; And the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof. And to the others he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house.” **Ezekiel 9:1-6***

Too many Christians today misinterpret our faith as a mere means to their happiness. C. S. Lewis was a man who certainly saw through such shallow sentiment. He once said, “I didn’t go to religion to make me happy. I always knew a bottle of Port would do that. If you want a religion to make you feel really comfortable, I certainly don’t recommend Christianity.”

During His earthly sojourn, our Savior was described by Scripture as “a man of sorrows” who was well “acquainted with grief” (**Isaiah 53:3**). How could He have possibly been otherwise in a fallen world that both “despised and rejected” Him? According to the Apostle Paul, to truly know Christ you and I must join with Him in “the fellowship of His sufferings” (**Philippians 3:10**).

The “skip to My Lou” saint cannot possibly know true intimacy with Christ. Any Christian today who is turning cartwheels in America’s current Christ-forsaking, politically correct culture is clueless to the dire and desperate spiritual straits of our nation. If they had any idea of our country’s present precarious condition, they would stop skipping and cartwheeling and start sighing and crying over all the abominations being done in our midst.

In Ezekiel 9:4, God marks the foreheads of all who share His grief over the sorry spiritual condition of the land. Those marked are cohorts of God in that they share the concerns of His heart. Are you willing to carry such a mark? Are you willing to bear such a burden. Are you willing to “stand in the gap before [God] for the land” (**Ezekiel 22:30**)? Or are you going to skip and turn cartwheels until the judgment of God falls on America?

Pray that many will step forward to share the concerns of God’s heart and to stand in the gap as intercessors for our country.

DAY 30

“Why are we sitting here until we die?” **2 Kings 7:3**

In light of the 9/11 terrorist attack upon our nation, an argument can be made that if we had sent more missionaries and given more money to missions we would not now be sending troops and paying more in taxes. To be honest, however, history is replete with such arguments due to Christian inaction down through the ages. The painful truth is, the day of opportunity has often come and gone while the church just sat there.

In the text cited above, four lepers are sitting at the gate of Samaria, which happens to be surrounded by the Syrians. They are forbidden from entering the city because of their leprosy and they are afraid to venture out and surrender to the enemy. So, they sit there in their complacency waiting for the inevitable, namely, their death.

Notice, it is a question that jolts these four lepers out of their complacency. They ask themselves, “Why are we sitting here until we die?” The only chance they had was to get up and go out to the enemy in surrender. If the enemy killed them, what had they lost; they were going to die anyway? So they got up and did the only thing they could. As a result, they not only saved themselves, but the starving people of Samaria as well.

The complacent church in America today needs to ask itself, “Why are we sitting here until we *Joel 2:14-17* die?” Our country is imploding and God’s judgment is impending. Yet, the church is just sitting! It’s high time for us to get up and do something, not only for our own survival, but also for the sakes of the spiritually starving in our land.

What can we do? We can pray! Now, prayer is not the only thing that we can do. For instance, like the four lepers in our story, we too can declare to the perishing “the day of good news” (**2 Kings 7:9**). Still, nothing is more important than prayer. As A. J. Gordon said, “You can do more than pray after you have prayed, but you cannot do more than pray until you have prayed.”

Don’t just sit there, pray something!

Pray that the American church will be jolted out of its complacency and begin bombarding Heaven with its prayers, as well as preaching throughout this land the “day of good news.”