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What Must America Do Now to Regain God's Protection and Blessings?

by Lawrence Gregory, Matthew Steel & Pat Dennis

Many prominent leaders and citizens have said the attack of Sept. 11, 2001 on New York and Washington D.C. by terrorists has caused America to change in a number of ways. As a nation we have already done many significant things:

- Our government has issued a declaration of war on the terrorists and those who harbor them through a coalition with other supporting countries.
- The political parties have achieved a spirit of harmony and cooperation to face this crisis together.
- We have increased our airport and airline security.
- We are reviewing our immigration and visa regulations.
- We have experienced a tremendous increase in singing patriotic songs and hymns, prayer vigils, candlelight ceremonies, flag waving and wearing memorial ribbons.
- We are calling up military reserves of up to 1 million members.
- We are reviewing the violence portrayed in our entertainment media.
- We are planning to rebuild the World Trade Center buildings in New York City and create a memorial to the fallen.
- Blood donations for the victims have come from all over the nation swelling the blood banks to an all time high.

Many educated and talented leaders from all walks of life have determined these efforts to be paramount and they are indeed vitally important and noble. However, is all this exertion and hard work enough to prevent a recurrence of September 11, 2001? Will our most carefully crafted plans and our most strenuous attempts to seek and destroy the perpetrators of these vile acts be enough to secure our liberty, happiness and peace? Underlying all these fears is this one vital question: "What must America do now to regain God's protection and blessings?"

We answer this question in three ways.

Has America had God's protection and blessings in the past? The answer from history and scripture is, yes. Numerous events have shown the overshadowing hand of God in guiding, protecting, and intervening on our behalf. We have been the recipients of the blessings promised to ancient Israel, including protection against our enemies.

Isaiah 5:1-2, 5, 7 "Now will I sing to my well beloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My well beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: And he fenced it and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down: For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry" (KJV).

God Himself says He put a wall of protection, a hedge, around Israel and Judah (America and the Jewish people). These verses and others show God has been watching over the Israelite nations of Britain and America.

The last words of Moses, before he died, included a prophetic blessing on all the tribes of Israel.

Deuteronomy 33 "And this is the blessing, wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death... And of Joseph he said, Blessed of the LORD be his land, for the previous things of heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that coucheth beneath, And for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, and for the precious things put forth by the moon, And for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious

What Must America Do Now to Regain God's Protection and Blessings?

things of the lasting hills, And for the precious things of the earth and fullness thereof, and for the good will of him that dwelt in the bush: let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph, and upon the top of the head of him that was separated from his brethren. His glory is like the firstling of his bullock, and his horns are like the horns of unicorns: with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth: and they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh... There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, destroy them. Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: The fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew. Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the LORD, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! And thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places."

Verses 13-17 list some of the many national blessings, and verses 26-29 show the Eternal God is our refuge, protector, shield and sword against our enemies, who feign (lie about) their friendship with us.

God Calls Israel's rebellion fornication.

God cautioned the ancient nation of Israel not to go to the other nations and learn their ways or to depend on them for their necessities (*Leviticus 18:1-5*). He told them His blessings were sufficient for them. Instead of avoiding involvement in foreign entanglements with other nations, Israel did exactly what God warned them against. God referred to His special nation, Israel, as a bride espoused to Him, (*Jeremiah 3:6-14*) dependant on Him for all her needs and protection. When Israel went after other nations and developed wrong relationships with them, God called Israel a harlot and called her activities with the other nations fornication. Whenever an individual or a nation becomes entangled with someone else or another nation that has something desirable, they can become subservient to that nation or individual in ways that restrict certain freedoms enjoyed prior to the new relationship.

Understanding that God's promised blessings to Abraham have descended upon America and the countries where the descendants of Israel have migrated provides an even greater indictment against what we as the modern descendants of ancient Israel have done. We have done exactly what God warned ancient Israel not to do. We have entangled ourselves with other nations and are now dependant upon them for what have become our basic needs.

America seeks her blessings elsewhere.

God did not require the people of Israel to become isolationists in their dealings with other nations. He did insist they not become dependent upon them. America has

a tremendous need for oil. We have domestic supplies that at current production rates do not supply 100% of our requirements. We have made trade agreements with other nations to supply our lack. When ancient Israel made entangling agreements with other nations, God called it fornication and accused Israel of being a harlot in His eyes because Israel did not rely on God for her needs. That is how God works with nations and individuals, through blessings and cursings. Blessings for obedience and cursings for disobedience (*Deuteronomy 11:26-28*). When a nation or an individual chooses to ignore their relationship with God, they do so at their own peril.

America protects her interests elsewhere.

Why is America in the Middle East protecting Saudi oil interests? This is one of the main complaints of the terrorists. They say America is on their holy soil, polluting it. In fact, America has enough undeveloped oil fields that, if added with domestic oil production and reserves, could provide all of her needs from God's promised blessings. We now own technology that allows us to drill with minimal impact on the environment. We have enough oil for our needs until we are able to develop alternative energy sources, which we should be doing, since all the oil in the world will eventually be consumed; it isn't being made fresh.

Why is God's protection and blessing departing from America?

Hosea 5:14-15 "For I will be unto Ephraim as a lion, and as a young lion to the house of Judah: I, even I, will tear and go away; I will take away, and none shall rescue him. I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early."

God will partially withdraw for a short time from America, just as He did in ancient times, departing temporarily from Israel and Judah when their sins were overwhelming. Isaiah 5:5-25 shows it is the sinful practices of our people that have contributed to this national crisis. We have been warned in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 that these things would come on our nation if we departed from His commandments. His protection and blessings are conditional on our obedience to His divinely revealed laws.

What must America do now to regain God's Protection and Blessings?

We need to acknowledge our sins and return to God. Hosea 5:14-15, already quoted, and 6:1-3

"Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days will he revive us; in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight. Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as

What Must America Do Now to Regain God's Protection and Blessings?

the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth."

And as promised in **Deuteronomy 4: 29-31**, "But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul. When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, even in the latter days, if thou turn to the LORD thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice; (for the LORD thy God is a merciful God) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he swore unto them."

God will hear our sincere prayer.

2 Chronicles 6:28-31 "If there be dearth in the land, and if there be pestilence, if there be blasting, or mildew, locusts, or caterpillars; if their enemies besiege them in the cities of their land; whatsoever sickness there be: Then what prayer or what supplication so ever shall be made of any man, or of all thy people Israel, when every one shall know his own sore and his own grief, and shall spread forth his hands in this house; Then hear thou from heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and render unto every man according unto all his ways, whose heart thou knowest; (for thou only knowest the hearts of the children of men) that they may fear thee, to walk in thy ways, so long as they live in the land which thou gavest unto our fathers."

The God of Israel cries out to us this day, to choose life or death. He pleads with us to choose life!

Deuteronomy 30:19-20 "I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; that you may love the LORD your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them" (NKJ).

So then as a nation how do we choose life?

Our merciful Father has granted us a swift and great method of salvation and all we have to do is humble ourselves, seek Him and pray for forgiveness.

2 Chronicles 7:14 "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."

We need to recognize our own personal sin, repent (turn from our wicked ways), humble ourselves before God, praying, and turning to the commandments of the Lord God, then He will forgive us and turn again to America, healing our land. Jesus preached for everyone to repent, believe the Gospel, be baptized and keep the commandments and he shall be saved (Matthew 4:17 and Mark 1:15 and 16:16). The same words are just as relevant for America today.

The nation has many choices to make as it enters this new time of war.

Of all those choices there are three that seem to be clearer than any others:

- 1) We can protect ourselves and do nothing else but hope for the best.
- 2) We can protect ourselves and attack those who have attacked us wherever we can find them.
- 3) We can protect and defend ourselves, understanding that ultimately our true protection and defense comes from God through obedience to Him.

This is what America must do.

Instead of simply asking God to bless America, we must show God, through individually changed hearts and lives, that we desire to be obedient to Him and His Ten Commandments and acknowledge the blessings He has given us.

We can each individually and collectively ask God to forgive our transgressions. We know what they are: we have made gods of things, we have made graven images of things that we should not, we have taken God's name in vain, we have forgotten His Sabbaths, we don't honor our parents, we kill, we commit adultery, we steal, we lie, we covet. God's laws are simple. He can and He will protect us as only He can, but it is up to us to turn to Him. It's our decision.

Let us all with one accord repent of our sin, national and personal, and let us all return to our God and accept His salvation through Jesus our savior. May the God of our Fathers be with the families of those who are suffering; may God be with our President and our government; and may God give us mercy, wisdom and the ultimate victory as we turn to Him.

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