

APOSTASY
CAN LEAD A NATION TO
SELF-DESTRUCT

WILL AMERICA MEND ITS WAYS AND RETURN TO GOD?

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Chapter 1

The Consecration of a Nation to God

The consecration and dedication of a nation and its people to God creates a sacred trust relationship with God. *For His part of that relationship, He surrounds that nation with His hedge of protection to prevent harm or danger to that nation and its people.* In response, the nation and its people are to honor and obey His laws and commandments and not worship any other god but Him.

Israel and Its People

We will see how that sacred trust relationship with God developed, first with Abraham, the patriarch of Israelites, and later with the nation of Israel.

God initiated that sacred trust relationship with Abram and his descendants. Abram was seventy-five years old when God called him to leave Haran and go to Canaan, the land He would show him.

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In Genesis 12:2a, God said to him, “I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you” (NIV).

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, God appeared to him.

Abram fell facedown, and God said to him, “As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations. I will make you very faithful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you. I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. The whole land of Canaan, where you are now an alien, *I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God.*” (Genesis 17:3–8 NIV, emphasis added)

More than four hundred years later, God called Moses to lead the Israelites out of bondage in Egypt. When his negotiations with Pharaoh failed, Moses turned to God and said,

“O Lord, why have you brought trouble upon this people? Is this why you sent me? Ever since I went to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has brought trouble on this people, and you have not rescued your people at all.” Then the Lord said to Moses, “Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh: Because of my mighty hand he will let them go; because of my mighty hand he will drive them out of his country.” God also said to Moses, “I am the Lord. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob as God Almighty, but by my name the Lord, I did not make myself known to them. I also established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, where they lived as aliens. Moreover, I have heard the groaning of the Israelites, whom the Egyptians are enslaving, and I have remembered my covenant.” (Exodus 5:22–6:5 NIV)

On Their Extended Journey

In about 1491 BC, after inflicting ten plagues on the Egyptians, God successfully led the Israelites out of Egyptian bondage. It is worth noting that after the tenth plague, the Egyptians not only let the Israelites leave but they insisted that they leave Egypt. It happened just as God told Moses it would happen. Because the Egyptians were so anxious for the Israelites to leave, they willingly gave them many valuables: jewelry, expensive cloth, clothes and even valuables the Israelites may have requested. The Israelites were able to use these valuables during their journey to the Promised Land.

God successfully had led the Israelites out of Egypt to near the southern perimeter of the Promised Land; the time of travel likely being less than two months. At that point, Moses sent twelve (one from each of the twelve tribes) spies to explore the Promised Land in order to gather information about the land they were about to conquer. When the spies returned, ten of them warned the Israelites that because the people in the Promised Land were giants they would be unable to win the battle. On the other hand, two of the spies, Joshua and Caleb, believing God would provide the victory recommended that the Israelites take possession of the land. Even though the Israelites had witnessed God's mighty power as He had recently led them out of Egypt, their faith and trust in God failed them. It was then, the whole Israelite assembly decided they would not be victorious and refused to enter and take possession of the Promised Land. That failure to trust His power angered God. He vowed that except for Joshua and Caleb not one of the Israelites who, at that time, was 21 years of age and older would ever enter the Promised Land. As a result of their defiance of God, the Israelites would wander about the desert for about an additional forty years. Also, Moses would not be allowed to enter the Promised Land because at one point in their journey he failed to precisely carry out one God's instructions, at a time, when God had performed a miracle for the Israelites.

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After inflicting ten plagues on the Egyptians, God led the Israelites out of Egyptian bondage. It is worth noting that after the tenth plague, the Egyptians not only let the Israelites leave but they were anxious to have them leave and gave the Israelites valuables such as jewelry, cloth, clothes, and other valuables.

On their journey to the Promised Land, they were encamped in the desert of Sinai in front of the mountain.

Then Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain and said, “This is what you are to say to the house of Jacob and what you are to tell the people of Israel: ‘You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites.”

So Moses went back and summoned the elders of the people and set before them all the words the Lord had commanded him to speak. The people all responded together, “We will do everything the Lord has said.” So Moses brought back their answer to the Lord.

The Lord said to Moses, “I am going to come to you in a dense cloud, so the people will hear me speaking with you and will always put their trust in you.” Then Moses told the Lord what the people had said.

And the Lord said to Moses, “Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow. Have them wash their clothes and be ready by the third day, because on that day the Lord will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people.” (Exodus 19:3–11 NIV)

In about 1452 BC, God selected Joshua to replace Moses as the leader of the Israelites. God’s instructions to Joshua were:

“Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land, I swore to their forefathers to give them. Be strong

and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. Do not let the Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.” (Joshua 1:6-9 NIV)

How much stronger assurance could God give any person who was about to assume such an important mission as leading His people into Canaan and conquering that land for them?

The Israelites did not begin taking possession of the Promised Land until about 1451 BC. The reader may recall the conquest of Canaan began with battle of Jericho during which God displayed His mighty power as the walls of the city collapsed at the sounding of the Israelite trumpets. The conquest of the Promised Land wasn't complete until about 1441 BC. After this the Promised Land was allocated to the various tribes of Israel. The tribe of Levi did not receive an allocation of land because the members of that tribe were placed among the other tribes to perform the required priestly duties.

At the time of Joshua's retirement, the Israelites renewed their covenant with God. He also warned them about what would happen should they fail to honor their commitment to honoring the covenant saying:

“You are not able to serve the Lord. He is a holy God; he is a jealous God. He will not forgive your rebellion and your sins. If you forsake the Lord and serve foreign gods, he will turn and bring disaster on you and make an end of you, after he has been good to you.”

But the people said to Joshua, “No! We will serve the Lord.” (Joshua 24:19b-21 NIV)

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From the time Joshua retired until their first king came on the scene (about 1095 BC) the Israelites were intermittently led by various judges. Near the end of this period the people expressed their desire to be governed by a king. Samuel, the judge at the time of their request warned them of what they could expect when they would be governed by a king. In spite of Samuel's warning, they continued to demand a king. As a result, God selected a man named Saul as their first king. Saul was followed by David. Following King David's death in about 1015 BC, David's son Solomon became Israel's third king. Solomon began construction of the temple in Jerusalem in 1011 BC. It was dedicated in 1004 BC. Solomon's prayer of dedication of the temple is recorded in 2 Chronicles 6:12–42. In addition to the dedication, he consecrated to God not only the temple but also the people of Israel.

United States of America and Its People

Now move forward about twenty-seven centuries and witness the foundation of a new Christian nation being laid by the colonists arriving in North America. More than 150 years later, the Founding Fathers continued to build on that foundation.

The first permanent settlement was the English colony at Jamestown, in 1607, in what is now Virginia. Similar to the other colonial charters, the First Charter of Virginia emphasized the Christian character of their purpose: “We, greatly commending, and graciously accepting of, their desires for the furtherance of so noble a work, which may, by the providence of Almighty God, hereafter tend to the glory of His Divine Majesty, in propagating of Christian religion to such people, as yet live in darkness and miserable ignorance of the true knowledge and worship of God” (Lee 2009, I-5).

In 1620, the Pilgrims followed and set up a colony at Plymouth, in what is now Massachusetts. The purpose of the Pilgrims was to establish a political commonwealth governed by biblical standards. The Mayflower Compact, their initial governing document, clearly stated that what they

had undertaken was for “for the glory of God and the advancement of the Christian faith.” William Bradford, the second governor of Plymouth, said, “[The colonists] cherished a great hope and inward zeal of laying good foundations... for the propagations and advance of the Gospel of the kingdom of Christ in the remote parts of the world.” (Lee 2009, I-6).

“In 1638, a colony was established in New Haven, in what is now Connecticut, by the Reverend John Davenport and Theophilus Eaton. A year later, the Fundamental Orders of Connecticut, often called the world’s first written constitution, was adopted. It reads in part: “For as much as it hath pleased Almighty God by the disposition of His Divine Providence so to order and dispose of things that we the inhabitants and residents... ; and well knowing where a people are gathered together the Word of God requires that to maintain the peace and union of such a people there should be an orderly and decent government established according to God, to order and dispose of the affairs of the people at all seasons as occasion shall require” (Lee 2009, I-7).

The following citation indicates why President Washington, in his first inaugural address, could confidently consecrate and dedicate this new nation (the United States of America) and its people to almighty God, Creator of the universe.

While most historians do not limit the “Founding Fathers” to the 55 delegates to the Constitutional Convention, this core group of men represents the religious sentiments of those who shaped the political foundations of our nation. As a matter of public record, the delegates included 28 Episcopalians, 8 Presbyterians, 7 Congregationalists, 2 Lutherans, 2 Dutch Reformed, 2 Methodists, 2 Roman Catholics, 1 unknown, and 3 deists (those who believe in an impersonal God who gave the world its initial impetus but left it to run its course). A full 93 percent of its members were members of Christian churches, and all were deeply influenced by a biblical view of mankind and government. (Lee 2009, I-11)

Some writers believe Benjamin Franklin was a deist. However, the following excerpt from his speech before the Constitutional Convention would indicate he was likely a believing Christian.

In the beginning of the contest with Britain, when we were sensible of danger, we had daily prayers in this room for Divine protection. Our prayers, Sir, were heard, and they were graciously answered. All of us who were engaged in the struggle must have observed frequent instances of superintending Providence in our favor... And have we now forgotten this powerful Friend? Or do we imagine we no longer need His assistance? I have lived, Sir, a long time, and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth: "that God governs 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 labor in vain that build it. I firmly believe this. I also believe that without His concurring aid, we shall succeed in the 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 a byword down to future ages. And what is worse, mankind may hereafter from this unfortunate instance, despair of establishing government by human wisdom and leave it to chance, war, or conquest. I therefore beg leave to move that, henceforth, prayers imploring the assistance of Heaven and its blessing on our deliberation be held in this assembly every morning before we proceed to business." (Barton 1988, 12–13)

This is how the United States of America was consecrated and dedicated to God Almighty, Creator of the universe. On Thursday, April 30, 1789, in Federal Hall in the City of New York, George Washington was inaugurated as the first president of the United States of America. With his inauguration, the Constitution of the United States of America took effect. Prior to that day the Constitution was only an organized group of words on paper.

In his first inaugural address, President Washington consecrated to almighty God the nation and its people and sternly warned the future generations of US citizens that they must not fail to honor and obey the God of the universe, when he said,

“Such being the impressions under which I have, in obedience to the public summons, repaired to the present station, it would be peculiarly improper to omit in this first official act my fervent supplications to that Almighty Being who rules over the universe, who presides in the councils of nations, and whose providential aids can supply every human defect, that His benediction may consecrate to the liberties and happiness of the people of the United States a Government instituted by themselves for these essential purposes, and may enable every instrument employed in its administration to execute with success the functions allotted to his charge. In tendering this homage to the Great Author of every public and private good, I assure myself that it expresses your sentiments not less than my own, nor those of my fellow-citizens at large less than either. No people can be bound to acknowledge and adore the Invisible Hand which conducts the affairs of men more than those of the United States. Every step by which they have advanced to the character of an independent nation seems to have been distinguished by some token of providential agency; and in the important revolution just accomplished in the system of their united government the tranquil deliberations and voluntary consent of so many distinct communities from which the event has resulted cannot be compared with the means by which most governments have been established without some return of pious gratitude, along with an humble anticipation of the future blessings which the past seem to presage. These reflections, arising out of the present crisis, have forced themselves too strongly on my mind to be suppressed. You will join with me, I trust, in thinking that there are none under the influence of which the proceedings of a new and free government can more auspiciously commence.

“... since we ought to be no less persuaded that the propitious smiles of Heaven can never be expected on a nation that disregards the eternal

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rules of order and right which Heaven itself has ordained; and since the preservation of the sacred fire of liberty and the destiny of the republican model of government are justly considered, perhaps, as deeply, as finally, staked on the experiment intrusted to the hands of the American people.” (United States Government Printing Office 1974, 2&3)

The inauguration was followed by an event of which very few twentieth- and twenty-first-century US citizens are aware or have ever heard. Immediately after his inauguration President Washington led the procession of all the members of the first Congress to Saint Paul’s Chapel, several blocks from Federal Hall. Here, President Washington led the congressional members of this new nation, the United States of America, in prayers to almighty God. I have searched for but failed to find the text of any of the prayers offered to almighty God that morning. However, I am certain the new president and members of the first Congress prayed that the people of future generations of the United States would remain faithful to God, worship only Him as their God, honor His commandments and laws, and seek the protection of His mighty hand.

It is only recently that I became aware of this momentous event in Saint Paul’s Chapel, where President Washington called the first Congress of this new nation into session with prayer. I suspect that most twenty-first-century US citizens also are unaware of how President Washington breathed life into the United States government.

A favorite scripture verse of the people at the time of the founding of the United States was Proverbs 29:2 of the King James Version of the Bible, “When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn.”

The Godly Foundation Undergirding the United States was Supported by Other Founding Fathers

Noah Webster, one of America’s leading public educators, made the following statement in support of Christian-based education:

In my view, the Christian religion is the most important and one of the first things in which all children, under a free government, ought to be instructed... No truth is more evident to my mind than that the Christian religion must be the basis of any government intended to secure the rights and privileges of a free people. *The opinion that human reason, left without the constant control of divine laws and commands, will preserve a just administration, secure freedom and other rights, restrain men from violations of laws and constitutions, and give duration to a popular government, is as chimerical [unlikely] as the most extravagant ideas that enter the head of a maniac...* Where will you find any code of laws among civilized men in which the commands and prohibitions are not founded on Christian principles? I need not specify the prohibition of murder, robbery, theft [and] trespass.” (Barton 1988, 41, emphasis added)

Robert Winthrop, a Speaker of the US House of Representatives observed,

“Men, in a word, must necessarily be controlled, either by a power within them, or a power without them; either by the word of God, or by the strong arm of man; either by the Bible, or by the bayonet” (Barton 1988, 45).

Thomas Jefferson stated the same concept in slightly different words:

“The precepts of philosophy and of the Hebrew [legal] code laid hold of actions only. He [Jesus] pushed his scrutinies into the heart of man [and] erected his tribunal in the region of his thoughts” (Barton 1988, 87).

Also consider this statement by John Adams:

“We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion. Avarice, ambition, revenge or gallantry would break the strongest cords of our Constitution as a whale goes through a net. *Our Constitution was*

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made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other” (Barton 1988, 87, emphasis added).

In Summary

What are the differences and similarities when comparing ancient Israel with colonial America and later the United States of America?

The first and primary difference is that there is a biblical record that ancient Israel and its people including future generations were dedicated and consecrated to God. Recall that it was God who initiated the relationship with Abraham, the forefather of Israel.

There is no Biblical record of America being dedicated to God, the language appearing in several of the charters establishing the specific colonies in America can be construed to imply that the colonists were really dedicating their colony, themselves and future generations to God and His glory. In addition, some of the colonists arriving on the shores of North America believed they were founding a new Israel here on North American soil. However, it did not replace ancient Israel but they envisioned it would be a commonwealth modeled after ancient Israel. The colonists dedicated it to God and envisioned it as a covenant with Him. They sincerely believed that if they obeyed, honored and worshiped God they would become powerful and prosperous. You will see this prophecy unfold in chapter 2.

In chapter 3, we can see the similarities between ancient Israel and America/the United States revealed.

Other than the nations of Israel and the United States of America, I am not aware of any nation that has ever been consecrated and dedicated to almighty God, the Creator of all that exists. *Being a nation so consecrated and dedicated carries with it the blessing of being surrounded by God’s hedge of protection and being the recipient of a multitude of gifts and blessings granted by His bountiful hand.* Not only is it an honor to be a nation consecrated to God, but that nation and its people have

the responsibility to trust, honor, obey, and respect with dignity the decrees and laws of God, to whom that nation is dedicated. Equally important, those people are to worship and serve no other god but Him. *It is important to appreciate the fact that God takes great pleasure in blessing the nation that honors, obeys, and worships Him.*

All a person has to do is study and understand history to recognize that what happened when Israel, the first nation to be consecrated and dedicated to God, was unrepentant of the grievous national sins it had committed and stepped onto the slippery slope of apostasy. Apostasy led to expunging God and His name from society and acting in defiance of the warnings. He sent prophets to Israel, urging it to turn from its wicked and evil ways. This is an amazing response by the nation that had been blessed with God's bounteous gifts and protection.

Knowing and understanding that history does indeed repeat itself, one only has to reflect on the biblical and historical events of ancient Israel and recognize the danger in which the United States of America has placed itself.



Chapter 2

God's Response to the Consecration and Dedication of the Nation to Him

When a nation and its people, including future generations, are consecrated and dedicated to God that means that the nation and its people are committed to obeying and honoring God's laws and commands, including the commitment to worship only Him. It is God's expectation that this commitment is forever. God's response to that commitment is positive. As a result, He enjoys showering that nation and its people with His bounteous blessings, which include protection, prestige, prosperity, and power.

God's Response for the Consecration of Israel to Him

In the case of Israel, it was God who initiated the relationship with its forefather, Abraham. It should be noted that this covenant relationship was initially renewed, generation to generation. The covenant relationship seems to have been put on hold when Jacob and his sons migrated to

Egypt to survive the famine. Once God heard the groans of slavery from the Israelites in Egypt, He set in motion the process of reinitiating the covenant relationship.

As the Israelites were being led in the wilderness, God was training them to become a God-fearing nation instead of just a group of wandering people. God was preparing them to take possession of Canaan, the Promised Land. In the final days in the wilderness God renewed His covenant with the Israelites and they unanimously agreed to accept their responsibilities under the covenant of worshipping only Him and obeying and honoring His decrees, law, and commands.

God's most important and beneficial response to the consecration and dedication of the nation to Him was that He promptly established a "hedge of protection" around the Israelites, as a people and as a nation. Even as they moved about in the wilderness as a wandering group of people, not one king or nation ever seriously challenged them. During the time the Israelites were taking possession of Canaan, they easily conquered every king, unless they failed to trust and honor God's instructions. That hedge of protection was in place for many years. In 732 BC, God removed the hedge of protection because the kingdom of Israel continued to ignore God's warnings to stop their idol worship and worship only Him. They also were to turn from and repent of their wicked and evil ways. They refused to acknowledge they were on the slippery slope of apostasy and that punishment was inevitable if they did not return to God.

God had certain expectations of the kings, leaders, judges, and others in authority in Israel. The king must be someone chosen and approved by God. He must be a brother Israelite and not a foreigner. He must fear God and not man. He must not allow his heart to be lifted above his brothers. He must not seek wealth or seek many wives. When the king ascends to the throne, he is to write in a book for himself a copy of God's law. He shall read it all the days of his life so he may fear God and be careful to observe scrupulously God's law and His statutes. The

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king and his judges and officials must not fail to declare the truth; render impartial judgments; shun bribes; and hate dishonest gain. Also they must seek after righteousness. These requirements and expectations are set forth in Deuteronomy 1:16–17; 17:14–20 and 2 Chronicles 19:4–7.

David was the second king of Israel. It was his longing to build a temple for God. David now had a permanent home, his palace, but God had only the movable tabernacle that was used during the wilderness journey of the Israelites. However, God deferred that privilege to David's son. Solomon, David's son, constructed the Temple in Jerusalem and he dedicated it in about 1004 BC.

After the dedication of the temple, God appears to Solomon at night, informing him that He had heard his prayer. In addition, God made clear His expectations of not only the people but also Solomon. In the citation below, note God's use of the possessive pronoun "my" in referring to the people. It seems He is truly desirous of having that special trust relationship with the people of Israel. God told Solomon,

"I have heard your prayer and chosen this place for myself as a temple for sacrifices.

"When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command locusts to devour the land or send a plague among my people, if my people, who are called by my name, will 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. Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayers offered in this place. I have chosen and consecrated this temple so that my Name may be there forever. My eyes and my heart will always be there.

"As for you, if you walk before me as David your father did, and do all I command, and observe my decrees and laws, I will establish your royal throne, as I covenanted with David your father when I said, 'You shall never fail to have a man rule over Israel.'

“But if you turn away and forsake the decrees and commands, I have given you and go off to serve other gods and worship them, then I will uproot Israel from my land, which I have given them, and will reject this temple I have consecrated for my Name. I will make it a byword and an object of ridicule among all peoples. And though this temple is now so imposing, all who pass by will be appalled and say, ‘Why has the Lord done such a thing to this land and to this temple?’ People will answer, ‘Because they have forsaken the Lord, the God of their fathers, who brought them out of Egypt, and have embraced other gods, worshiping and serving them—that is why he brought all this disaster on them.’” (2 Chronicles 7:12b–22 NIV)

The phrase “then I will uproot Israel from *my* land” is very important. With those words *God is affirming His rightful ownership not only of the land He had given to Israel but of the whole world He had created. Further, it was His right to do as He pleases with anything He has created.*

God’s Response for the Consecration of the United States to Him

It is my hope that those who read this can imagine the celebration in heaven that occurred when the colonists arrived on the shores of America and as they dedicated and consecrated this new land to God. The celebration must have resounded through heaven at the establishment of the United States when the first president reaffirmed the dedication and consecration to God of this nation and its people for generations to come.

Early on in the life of the American colonies, the colonists realized that the barrier of the Atlantic Ocean separating the colonies from Great Britain gave them a strategic advantage. The Christian faith of the colonists gave them a sense of destiny and they instilled deep faith in God and a Biblical understanding in succeeding generations. Their sense of independence and their desire for freedom from the tyranny of Great Britain began to grow, mature and nurture a desire for self-governance. The desire of total separation from Great Britain was not

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unanimous among the colonists. However, as time moved forward and the burden of taxation imposed on the colonists by the king and parliament became heavier, the desire of freedom from the burden of the tyranny caused the people seek their freedom England. The fifty-six signers of the Declaration of Independence were well aware of the risks, personal and financial, that they would assume.

The committee assigned to draft the Declaration of Independence consisted of: Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Roger Sherman and Robert Livingston. The Declaration of Independence was signed by fifty-six men, representing each of the thirteen colonies. Once signed each of the signers, individually, had in the eyes of the British government become a traitor of the crown. They and even their families were hunted down and executed or imprisoned on British ships, and in some cases their homes and farms were destroyed. None of them regretted the hardship they endured because they believed so much in the cause of the future freedom and glory of the nation. The last sentence of the Declaration of Independence reads, “And for the support of this Declaration, with firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.” I wonder how many men living in the twenty-first century would sign such after pledge.

For many years, God’s hedge of protection continued to surround the territory that later became the United States of America. The following are a few examples of how God, over the years, blessed America:

1. Winning the battle for independence. In the Revolutionary War (1775–1783), the thirteen tiny colonies, without a trained army or an established navy, defeated Great Britain, the world’s number one military power at the time. How could that have happened without the blessing of almighty God? At the conclusion of that war, General George Washington posed that very same question.

2. Later, the thirteen individual states, the former colonies, were able to come together and become united under the Constitution of the United States of America as a constitutional republic. *It has always been a constitutional republic and not a democracy. Today, many leaders and people erroneously identify the United States as a democracy.* The achievement of drafting this historic document was completed because Benjamin Franklin scolded the delegates of the Constitutional Convention for their failure to seek God's help. He then moved that the delegates begin each daily session of the convention with prayers to almighty God, seeking His guidance in its deliberations. All of the states accepted and approved the Constitution and it became operational on April 30, 1789, upon the inauguration of George Washington as the nation's first president.

3. The Civil War (1861–1865) was fought over the issue of slavery. It was a bloody and divisive war that could have caused the nation to be divided permanently. If not for the omnipotent hand of God stirring the hearts of men, the nation would have been split asunder.

4. God presented a number of opportunities that allowed the United States to expand its territory to the Pacific Ocean. The vast land made available to the nation a tremendous amount of natural resources—fertile agricultural soil, minerals, and energy sources. These resources would meet the nation's future strategic needs. Later, it was also able to acquire the territory of Alaska.

5. In 1917, the United States ended its isolation policy and entered World War I. At the beginning of the war the United States was a debtor nation, but by the end of that war in 1918, the United States had become the greatest creditor nation in the world. The financial center of the world had moved from London to New York City. This resulted of the massive transfer of global power. (Jonathan Cahn 2014, *The Mystery of the Shemitah*, pages 195–197, was the basis of this summary.)

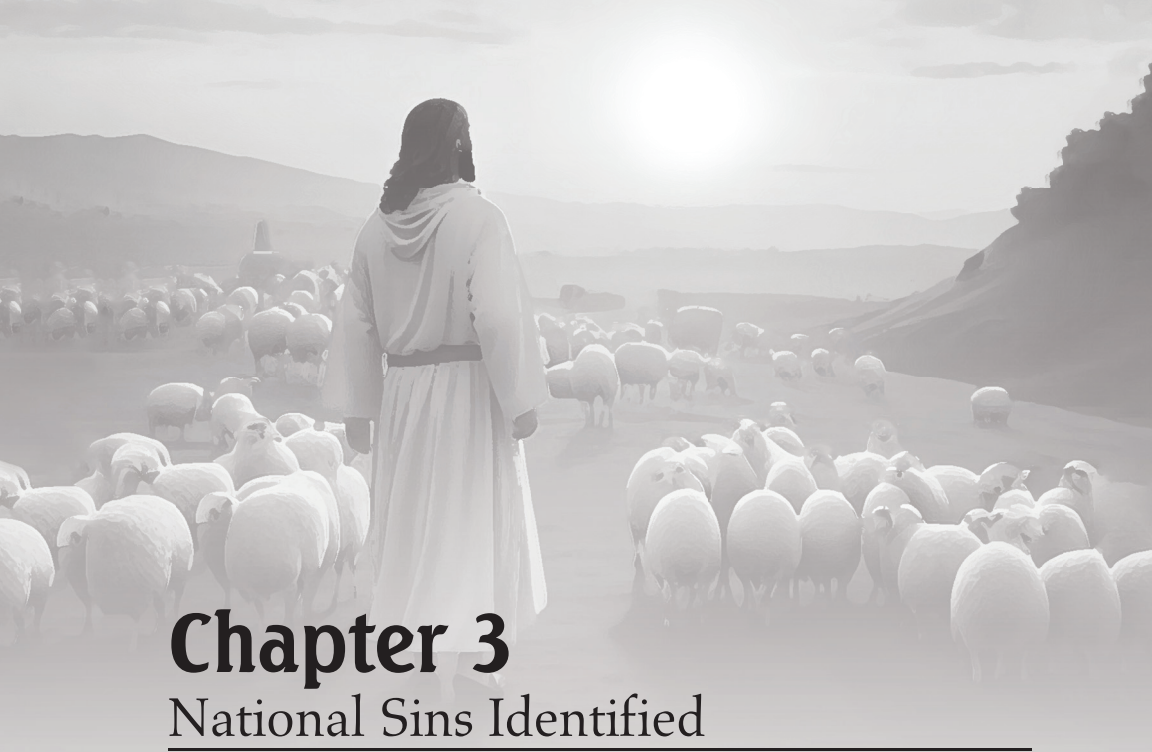
6. “Emerging from the ruins of the Second World War, America stood at a high pinnacle of world history. It was the greatest financial

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power, the greatest industrial power, the greatest commercial power, the greatest political power, the greatest military power, the greatest economic power, and the greatest cultural power on earth” (Cahn 2014, *The Mystery of the Shemitah*, 205).

In 1945, the United States of America had reached the pinnacle in all aspects of being a world superpower. All one has to do is look closely at what was beginning to happen in America in the 1950s. Pride, arrogance, and self-reliance were taking a foothold. Obviously, success had blinded our vision, and because of historical amnesia we no longer remembered that our greatness had come at the hand of God. Satan began telling us—and we believed his lie—that there was no need to trust and honor God because we had the power within ourselves to accomplish anything we wanted to do. *There was the sense of self-sufficiency, believing we were no longer subject to God or His laws and commands. In God’s eyes, this is called worship of the idol or the god of “self.”* Also, we began to ignore Benjamin Franklin’s warning, given in his speech before the Constitutional Convention (see chapter 1).

The rest of the story is disclosed in chapter 4, “God’s Response to National Sin.”



Chapter 3

National Sins Identified

The National Sins of Israel and Judah Reviewed

During the Israelites' wilderness journey to the Promised Land, God designated the descendants of the tribe of Levi to serve in the tabernacle. However, only the descendants of Aaron, a Levite, could serve as priests. Thereafter, only descendants of Aaron were allowed to perform the priestly duties, as set forth in Leviticus.

Moses had led the Israelites to the portal of the Promised Land but God did not allow him to set foot in the Promised Land because Moses had disobeyed His command at a critical time. Then Joshua led the Israelites into the land of Canaan, and they took possession of Canaan, as God had promised to their forefathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. At Joshua's retirement the Israelites promised that they would not forsake God to serve other gods (see Joshua 23–24). God had warned the Israelites numerous times that they must not intermarry with the

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people of the wicked foreign nations because the foreign spouse would turn the heart of the Israelite spouse to other gods.

We then observe the lifestyle of King Solomon, the third king of Israel. God had blessed him with wisdom and wealth. “King Solomon was greater in riches and wisdom than all the other kings of the earth” (1 Kings 10:23 NIV). It seems the sins of pride and arrogance, along with his desire to have many wives, including foreign wives, led him to forsake God’s commands. Recall God’s warning directed to Solomon personally. See chapter 2, where the full text of 2 Chronicles 7:12b–22 was quoted.

In 1 Kings we read, “As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the Lord his God, as the heart of his father David had been. On a hill east of Jerusalem, Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the detestable god of Moab, and for Molech the detestable god of the Ammonites. He did the same for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and offered sacrifice to their gods” (1 Kings 11:4, 7–8 NIV).

Solomon placed a heavy tax burden on the people of Israel in order to support his big government, along with providing for his luxurious lifestyle and that of his many wives and concubines. After Solomon’s death, his son Rehoboam, on the advice of his youthful advisors, not only refused to ease the tax burden but threatened to increase the tax burden. Rehoboam’s threat to increase taxes caused the ten northern tribes to rebel. They formed the kingdom of Israel and selected Jeroboam as their king.

Jeroboam decided he did not want to encourage his people to go to Jerusalem to worship and offer their sacrifices to God because Jerusalem was located in Judah. So he committed a national sin by making it easy for the people to worship in two different places in Israel. He made two idols (golden calves), placing one in Bethel and the other in Dan. The people now were participating in idol worship. He also appointed priests who were not descendants of Aaron (as God had commanded in

Leviticus). The people of the kingdom of Israel had begun the journey down the path of apostasy.

Most of the kings who ruled the kingdom of Israel did “evil in the eyes of the Lord.” Like Solomon, the kings of the kingdom of Israel were instrumental in leading the people further away from honoring and obeying the commands of God, who had brought their forefathers out of Egyptian slavery and led them in the wilderness for forty years while building them into a mighty nation. Now the people of the kingdom of Israel were becoming addicted worshippers of the gods of the Canaanite people living there and who the Israelites allowed to remain when God gave Canaan to the Israelites. They failed to remain faithful in their worship of God even though, He had warned them not to worship the gods of the Canaanites.

A majority of the kings of Judah “walked in the ways of the Lord.” However, Ahaz was one of the most wicked kings of Judah. “He walked in the ways of the kings of the kingdom of Israel and even sacrificed his son in the fire, following the detestable ways of the nations the Lord had driven out before the Israelites. He offered sacrifices and burned incense at the high places, on the hilltops and under every spreading tree” (2 Kings 16:3–4 NIV). It is not known how many children of nonroyalty were sacrificed to this idol of Baal in the valley of Ben Hinnom east of Jerusalem. In later years the people of Judah began worshipping the gods to which their brothers and sisters in the kingdom of Israel had become addicted.

Sampling of Messages of God’s Prophets Describing the Sinful State of Israel

For the Lord has spoken: “I reared children and brought them up, but they have rebelled against me. The ox knows his master, the donkey his owner’s manger, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand.’ Ah, sinful nation, a people loaded with guilt, a brood of evildoers, children given to corruption! They have forsaken the Lord;

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they have spurned the Holy One of Israel and turned their backs on him. (Isaiah 1:2b–4 NIV)

Jerusalem is depicted as a cheating wife, and the government is a cesspool of corruption.

See how the faithful city has become a harlot! She was once full of justice; righteousness used to dwell in her—but now murderers! Your silver has become dross, your choice wine is diluted with water. Your rulers are rebels, companions of thieves; they all love bribes and chase after gifts. They do not defend the cause of the fatherless; the widow's case does not come before them. (Isaiah 1:21–23 NIV)

Hosea delivered God's scathing indictment against the priests who headed the religious establishment. You will recall that Jeroboam appointed men as priests who were not descendants of Aaron. These priests, even though it was their priestly duty, failed to perform their duties and responsibilities as the guardians of God's law and to provide the people with the proper religious instruction. Obviously, they were beholden to Jeroboam (this is idolatry) and not God. Thus, they appropriately shared with the people God's judgment for the nation's national sins. Hosea's words were, my people are destroyed from lack of knowledge. "Because you have rejected knowledge, I also reject you as my priests; because you have ignored the law of your God, I also will ignore your children. The more the priests increased, the more they sinned against me; they exchanged their Glory for something disgraceful. They feed on the sins of my people and relish their wickedness. And it will be: Like people, like priests. I will punish both of them for their ways and repay them for their deeds." (Hosea 4:6–9 NIV)

God, through Micah, rebuked the leaders of both the kingdom of Israel and the kingdom of Judah because they despised justice and distorted everything that was right. The leaders of both kingdoms discharged their duties with bloodshed and greed, motivated by the desire for personal gain. Thus, the whole system of government was

corrupt. In all this corruption the leaders seemed to believe in a form of external religion that somehow or another was based on an imagined satisfactory relationship with God. Micah warned them that as a result, both kingdoms would experience God's punishment. The following are Micah's words:

Hear this, you leaders of the house of Jacob, you rulers of the house of Israel, who despise justice and distort all that is right; who build Zion with bloodshed, and Jerusalem with wickedness. Her leaders judge for a bribe, her priests teach for a price, and her prophets tell fortunes for money. Yet they lean upon the Lord and say, "Is not the Lord among us? No disaster will come upon us." Therefore because of you, Zion will be plowed like a field, Jerusalem will become a heap of rubble, the temple hill a mound over grown with thickets." (Micah 3:9–12 NIV)

National Sins of the United States

There appear to be two classes of "national sins" in the United States. There are the sins that were instituted by the federal government or one of its branches or agencies. These sins occurred because the government considered itself to be a god superior to the God who created the universe and all that exists. Some of these national sins are an abomination to God, meaning they are particularly offensive and detestable to God. The government politicians, judges, and bureaucrats had developed historical amnesia or failed to understand critical historical events in the founding of the United States. They did not know or remember that the nation and its people, for generations to come, were consecrated and dedicated to God.

Then there are those national sins that were initiated by the people because they no longer saw a need to obey and honor God's commands and laws. Also, they began to see government as their god.

Government-Instituted National Sins

1. United States Supreme Court decision on June 25, 1962, in *Engel v. Vitale*

2. United States Supreme Court decision on June 17, 1963, in *Murray v. Curlett* and *Abington v. Schemp*

In these two decisions the activist Supreme Court (exceeding its constitutional authority) forbade the inclusion of (Christian) religious activities in major activities of daily student life by striking down school prayer and Bible reading. Never before in the history of our nation had any branch of our government taken such a stand against the God to whom the nation and its people were consecrated and dedicated. The court's decisions were diametrically opposed to Noah Webster's view on the need for Christian-based education for children in any free government that is intended to secure the rights and privileges of a free people. At this point, I believe it is worthwhile to share a portion of his quotation that I used in chapter 1: "The opinion that human reason, left without the constant control of divine laws and commands, will preserve a just administration, secure freedom and other rights, restrain men from violations of laws and constitutions, and give duration to a popular government, is as chimerical [unlikely] as the most extravagant ideas that enter the head of a maniac."

Robert Winthrop, a Speaker of the US House of Representatives observed, "*Men, in a word, must necessarily be controlled, either by a power within them, or a power without them; either by the word of God, or by the strong arm of man; either by the Bible, or by the bayonet*" (Barton 1988, 45, emphasis added). Mr. Winthrop's statement was also included chapter 1. I believe there is more truth than fiction in Mr. Winthrop's statement. It has been more than fifty years since the Supreme Court inflicted its 1962 and 1963 decisions on America. Since then, we've had several generations of children and youth, most of whom have not been taught even the elementary concepts of Christian ethics and morality contained in the

holy scriptures. Is there any wonder that we have seen the unfettered growth of criminal and immoral behavior in our nation? Sexual abuse, rape, domestic violence, teenage pregnancies, single-parent families, murder, lying, drug addiction, malicious destruction of another person's property, theft, embezzlement, and, most recently, mass shootings—and the list continues. These criminal activities could have been prevented by the power within the perpetrator if he or she had been properly trained in the Christian religion as envisioned by Noah Webster, Robert Winthrop, Thomas Jefferson, and John Adams (see chapter 1). Unfortunately, more laws are not the answer because government cannot take action until after a crime has been committed. Consequently, in the court trials of the perpetrators, the all-too-common defense is that the perpetrator doesn't understand the difference between right and wrong (or similar legal jargon).

Thomas Jefferson and John Adams held similar beliefs regarding the importance of a biblical foundation for the people of a free society governed as a constitutional republic.

In simple terms—and ignoring the fact that God is omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient—the Supreme Court implicitly said, “God, your presence in the life of the United States is no longer needed or desired!” Thus, these decisions were just the beginning of the process of expunging God from our society. (See number 10 below.) We should recognize that those Supreme Court decisions were the first steps in placing the nation on the spiraling downward path of apostasy.

3. United States Supreme Court decision on January 22, 1973, in *Roe v. Wade* authorized the murder of unborn babies.

In the period from 1973 through 2015, nearly sixty million unborn babies were brutally murdered, and in some cases their body parts and organs were sold. In Genesis 1: 26a, we read, “Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our own image, in our likeness...’” (NIV). In Genesis 9:5–6, God explained to Noah the sanctity of human life when He

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said, “And from each man, too, I will demand an accounting for the life of his fellow man. Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man” (NIV). That conversation with Noah occurred more than eight hundred years before God delivered the Ten Commandments to Moses on Mount Sinai, which included the commandment “You shall not kill.” God has never taken lightly the wanton destruction of human life because He created human beings in His image! This national sin is an abomination and is extremely detestable to God because it is the destruction of a helpless human life in the womb. Presidents, judges, politicians, bureaucrats, and medical practitioners fail to realize they will likely be accountable to God for that continued and wanton destruction of human life.

4. United States Supreme Court decision on June 26, 2015, ruled that same-sex marriage was effective nationwide.

This action of the Supreme Court was an affront to God. Long ago, almighty God defined marriage as a lifelong conjugal relationship between one man and one woman. The Supreme Court of the United States of America, in its self-proclaimed infinite wisdom, never has had the authority to change the definition of the marriage relationship—a relationship that was created by and defined by God at the time of man’s creation. This national sin also is an abomination and is detestable to God because it is a relationship inconsistent with His created order.

5. The Supreme Court erroneously ruled on several occasions that the publication and distribution of pornographic materials were protected rights under the First Amendment of the Constitution. Pornography has become a god within US society, making it a sin against the first commandment. As a result, the United States has become a major purveyor of pornography.

6. Congress has created departments within the executive branch of government that have the authority to circumvent our constitutional legislative and judicial systems. Article I, Section 1 states, “All legislative

Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.” Congress has delegated some of its legislative authority and responsibility to these executive departments to promulgate rules and regulations that are equivalent to the laws passed by Congress but lacking Congress’s approval. In addition, some of those departments have the power to arrest and to accuse and the judicial power to adjudicate, convict, and sentence any person or entity without the benefit of trial by jury.

National Sins Initiated by the People

7. In the 1960s, the United States began to experience a growing breakdown of the nuclear family as God had intended at the time of creation. That family was to be headed by a father and mother; it was their primary responsibility and mission to rear the children with whom they were blessed in a God-fearing environment.

8. Elected members of Congress, with the encouragement of the electorate (people), continue the practice of out-of-control spending by the federal government. According to the debt clock, as of February 1, 2016, the federal government’s official debt was \$19 trillion. At the same time, when recognizing and including the unfunded liabilities of the federal government, the combined debt then stood at \$120 trillion. This out-of-control-spending mentality has spilled over into both the state and local government levels, whose debt on February 1, 2016 totals another \$3.1 trillion. In Proverbs 22:7b, we read, “and the borrower is the servant of the lender” (NKJV). Most of the electorate doesn’t realize that the United States is the servant of a number of foreign nations who are the owners of significant amounts of the US bonded indebtedness.

9. Elected local government leaders, at the request and approval of the local electorate, eliminated or struck down the “Blue Laws” that required most businesses to be closed on Sunday to honor Sunday as the Sabbath. Being open for business on Sunday generated more profit for the businesses, fueling the sin of greed.

10. Human beings were created to worship God the Creator. However, the sinful nature of human beings leads us to worship other gods, especially when the name of God has been expunged from the nation's life. This void is then filled with idols or gods, such as the gods of food, sex, and entertainment, including sports events that are found in the temple of pleasure; or the gods of success, money, achievement, fame, expensive cars, expensive clothes, extravagant houses, and vast real estate holdings that are found in the temple of power; or the gods of romance, family, and self that are found in the temple of love. I discovered the concept of identifying certain gods as being associated with a specific temple of sin from Kyle Idle man's *Gods at War*. The worship of these idols or gods is a sin against God's first commandment, "You shall have no other gods before me."

The People Fail to Cherish Their God-Given Heritage

The descendants of the people who lived in the era when the United States became a nation, along with the descendants of the immigrants who came to America after the founding of America, neglected to read and study the history of the nation's founding. As a result, they failed to cherish the fact that from its founding, this nation and its people and future generations were consecrated and dedicated to God. The people failed to recognize and understand that because this nation and its people were consecrated to God, they were the beneficiaries of what is written in the Declaration of Independence. In the second paragraph we read, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." Because of those gifts, we, as Americans, have the responsibility to honor and obey God's commandments and decrees and worship no other gods but Him alone. In exchange for that commitment, He encompassed this nation with His hedge of protection.

The failure of the people to cherish their God-given heritage resulted in the failure of the citizens to seek God's guidance in the selection

of truly God-fearing leaders at all levels of government. These leaders were to strive after righteousness, always declaring the truth, rendering impartial judgments, and detesting and shunning bribes. Instead, some men and women were elected who were only nominally God-fearing and who did not have a strong moral compass. Those leaders were more likely focused on seeking wealth, power, and fortune, using whatever means were available to achieve their goals.

Unfortunately, the historical amnesia that afflicted the people of ancient Israel has also tormented the people of the United States.

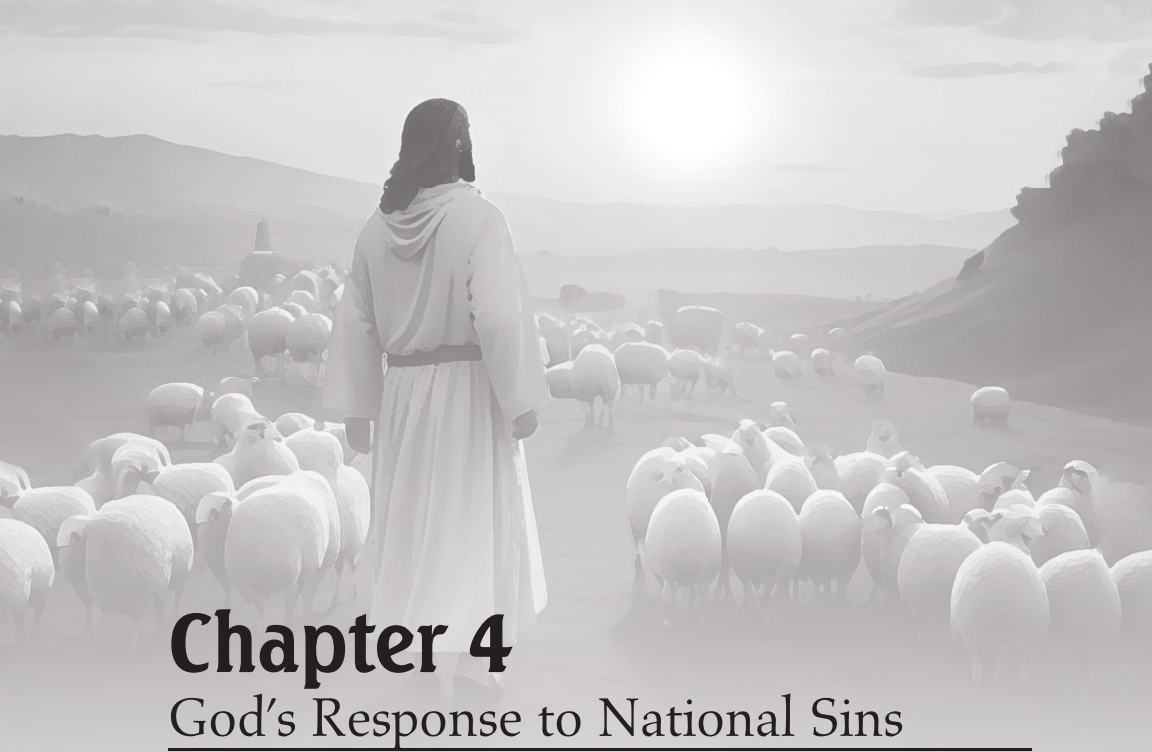
It is important to realize that the abandonment of Christian-based education has brought to our nation much needless moral suffering and disgrace.

In 1836, Noah Webster, often called ‘The Father of American Education,’ expressed the purpose of schools was meant for the advancement of the Christian faith: ‘In my view, the Christian religion is the most important and one of the first things in which all children, under free government ought to be instructed... No truth is more evident to my mind than that the Christian religion must be the basis of any government intended to secure the rights and privileges of a free people.’

It probably should not be surprising that the road of apostasy taken by both ancient Israel and America are similar. As one notices that both nations and their people for generations to come were dedicated and consecrated to God from their founding. The first phase for both was that they both relaxed their obedience of God’s laws and commands. Next was the worshiping of other gods and idols. As both nations moved down road of apostasy, the next step was that the god of government began to take charge which included more corruption. Finally, they were guilty of what God considered to be the most abominable sins—the sacrifice of human children and the murder (the sacrifice) of unborn human infants. This is a reminder that historical amnesia is such an insidious and

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devastating disease. Unfortunately, over time, a philosophical shift took place in America, and the biblical principles of education were slowly eroded and abandoned, with sad and tragic consequences that continue to unfold. *John Dewey, known as the 'Architect of Modern Education,' said, 'There is no God, and there is no soul. Hence, there are no needs for the props of traditional religion.'* Those props have been knocked away, and the loss of moral standards has opened the door to the untold numbers of unwanted teen pregnancies, abortions, drug abuse, alcoholism, violence, and suicide. (Lee 2009, I-24, emphasis added)



Chapter 4

God's Response to National Sins

God Is Very Serious About Sin

It is important to understand that in the eyes of God, sin is sin, and He cannot and will not ignore a sin, whether it is the sin of an individual or the sin of a nation. God's judgments are always just. Whether or not a nation and its people have been consecrated and dedicated to God does not affect His opinion of sin and its consequences.

Furthermore, God, the Creator of the universe and all that exists, is a gracious and loving God. God deals with sin in one of two ways—either the sinner (person or nation) humbly confesses and repents of the sin and is then forgiven, or the sinner refuses to repent, in which case *there will be punishment*.

There are national sins that are so repugnant to God that He considers them abominations.

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The wanton destruction of human life is one of those national sins. In ancient Israel, it was the sacrificing of thousands of children on the fiery altars of Baal and Molech. In the United States, it is the killing of millions of unborn babies as sacrifices on the altars of convenience, self, and “women’s rights.”

Sexual immorality is another of those national sins. As God was expunged from America’s culture, America began embracing, and promoting sexual immorality via pornography and same-sex marriage, thus twisting God’s natural order.

Turning to idols and false gods can be identified as another national sin. As ancient Israel abandoned and turned away from God, it focused on other gods—in its final days in the land of Israel, the images of these gods filled the land. As God was expunged from America’s culture, society filled its need for worship with the worship of the false gods of self, pleasure, sensuality, sexuality, greed, money, success, power, entertainment, and vanity, just to name a few.

God’s Warnings to the Nation of Israel

God spoke to King Solomon and said, “When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command locusts to devour the land or send a plague among my people, if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and forgive their sin and heal their land” (2 Chronicles 7:13–14 NIV). The word *my* as used in this text connotes a special relationship that existed between God and the Israelites, who had been consecrated and dedicated to Him.

Later in Solomon’s life, God became angry with him because his heart had turned away from God, even though God had forbidden Solomon to worship other gods, and he had failed to honor and obey God’s commands that included a monogamous relationship with one wife.

Therefore, the Lord said to Solomon, “Because you have done this, and have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom away from you and give it to your servant. Nevertheless I will not do it in your days, for the sake of your father David; I will tear it out of the hand of your son. However I will not tear away the whole kingdom; I will give one tribe to your son for the sake of My servant David, and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen” (1 Kings 11:11–13 NKJV).

In order to support his big government, his luxurious lifestyle, and his many wives, Solomon laid a heavy tax burden on the people. It is noteworthy that God uses the issue of tax burden as the method of fulfilling His threat to Solomon that He was going to tear the nation of Israel asunder, and Solomon’s son would rule a kingdom consisting of only one tribe. As persons or nations, it is important to realize that God has a variety of tools at His disposal to accomplish His will. The northern ten tribes (now to be known as the kingdom of Israel) rebelled and formed their own nation because Solomon’s son not only refused to ease the tax burden but threatened to increase it.

It is important to recognize the significant difference between David and his son, Solomon. David was by no means free of sin, After David had committed adultery with Bathsheba and she was found to be pregnant, he attempted to cover up his sin by calling her husband, Uriah, home from the battle in which Israel’s army was engaged. Uriah was one of David’s seasoned and honored warriors. David expected Uriah to come home and sleep with his wife. However, Uriah refused to go to his home because he felt that his soldiers were sleeping in the field. He believed, why then should I be so privileged to sleep in his own bed. Then David sent a letter to Joab, the commander of his army, directing him to place Uriah in a dangerous position assuring that he would be killed in battle. Now David was guilty not only of adultery but also of murder.

God sent the prophet Nathan to confront David with his sins, using what might be considered a parable. After Nathan confronted David,

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he then realized that God was fully aware of each of the sins he had committed and so he remorsefully confessed his sins and was humbly repentant. To express his remorse, David penned Psalm 51. Later, God spoke of David, “As a man after my own heart.”

Now consider Solomon who was known for his wisdom. He was well aware of the Ten Commandments. You can from the above text from 1 Kings that Solomon refused to acknowledge his sins and showed no remorse for his failure to honor God’s commands and statutes.

But when God confronted David with his sin, David remorsefully confessed his sin and was humbly repentant. On the other hand, even after God’s warnings, Solomon refused to acknowledge his sins and showed no remorse for his failure to keep God’s commands and statutes.

Ancient Israel had a special relationship with God. Because He is a God of patience and compassion, He sent various prophets to ancient Israel in His attempt to communicate the warnings of the impending punishment for their national sins.

Hosea delivered the following four messages from God. In the first, He accuses the Israelites of rearing their children in their evil and sinful ways instead of rearing them to fear and honor the Lord. In the second, He accuses them of choosing evil men to be their kings without seeking His guidance to choose Godly kings. (You can be certain that God would *never* appoint evil men as leaders of His chosen people.) In the third, He accuses them of becoming so comfortable in their sins that they have rejected His warnings. And in the fourth, Ephraim is seen as the spokesman for the kingdom of Israel, and God warns them that the consequence of their self-destructive idol worship will cause the demise of their nation, and it will disappear like mist, dew, chaff, or smoke, to be seen no more. The nation disappeared from biblical history in 722 BC. *This is the consequence when a nation substitutes other gods for almighty God.*

“They are unfaithful to the Lord; they give birth to illegitimate children” (Hosea 5:7 NIV).

“They set up kings without my consent; they chose princes without my approval. With their silver and gold they make idols for themselves to their own destruction” (Hosea 8:4 NIV).

“Because your sins are so many and your hostility so great, the prophet is considered a fool, the inspired man a maniac” (Hosea 9:7b NIV).

When Ephraim spoke, men trembled; he was exalted in Israel. But he became guilty of Baal worship and died. Now they sin more and more; they make idols for themselves from their silver, cleverly fashioned images, all of them the work of craftsmen. It is said of these people, “They offer human sacrifice and kiss the calf-idols.” Therefore they will be like the morning mist, like the early dew that disappears, like chaff swirling from the threshing floor, like smoke escaping through a window. But I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt. You shall acknowledge no God but me, no Savior except me. (Hosea 13:1–4 NIV)

Amos delivers God’s dire warning in the final days, saying no one will escape His wrath.

““Now then, I will crush you as a cart crushes when loaded with grain. The swift will not escape, the strong will not muster their strength, and the warrior will not save his life. The archer will not stand his ground, the fleet-footed soldier will not get away, and the horseman will not save his life. Even the bravest warriors will flee naked on that day,’ declares the Lord” (Amos 2:13–16 NIV).

When God’s people become so incorrigible and defiant that His warnings are ignored, He finally allows absolutely evil nations to inflict the punishment by removing His hedge of protection. *It must be understood that He does not support those evil nations.* Instead, God also

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inflicts punishment on them for their evil and wickedness. In the case of the Assyrians, they also disappeared from history.

God Pleads With Israel

Hear, O my people, and I will warn you—if you would but listen to me, O Israel! You shall have no foreign god among you; you shall not bow down to an alien god. I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt. Open wide your mouth and I will fill it. But my people would not listen to me; Israel would not submit to me. So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts to follow their own devices. If my people would but listen to me, if Israel would follow my ways, how quickly would I subdue their enemies and turn my hand against their foes! Those who hate the LORD would cringe before him, and their punishment would last forever. But you would be fed with the finest wheat; with honey from the rock I would satisfy you. (Psalm 81:8–16 NIV)

The Assyrian attack was arrogantly and defiantly viewed by the leaders of Israel as a temporary setback in the building of a bigger, stronger, and richer nation. Instead, they failed to be introspective and make the effort to understand the real reason for the attack. Isaiah records the defiant words and arrogant attitude: “The bricks have fallen down, But we will rebuild with hewn stones; The sycamores are cut down, But we will replace *them* with cedars” (Isaiah 9:10 NKJV).

God’s Warning to the Kingdom of Judah

The prophet Isaiah worked to prepare the kingdom of Judah for its Babylonian captivity. Isaiah delivered the following warning. If it had been delivered by Jesus, Messiah, it would have been called a parable. In it, the vineyard is Judah, and God is the operator of the vineyard that produces only bad fruit. As a result, God threatens to remove His hedge of protection.

“Now you dwellers in Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard. What more could have been done for my vineyard

than I have done for it? When I looked for grapes, why did it yield only bad? Now I will tell you what I am going to do to my vineyard: I will take away its hedge, and it will be destroyed; I will break down its wall, and it will be trampled. I will make it a wasteland, neither pruned nor cultivated, and briars and thorns will grow there. I will command the clouds not to rain on it.” The vineyard of the Lord Almighty is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are the garden of His delight. And He looked for justice, but saw bloodshed; for righteousness, but heard cries of distress. (Isaiah 5:3–7 NIV)

The prophet and priest Ezekiel began his prophetic work in the kingdom of Judah sometime around 593 BC. He was taken as an exile to Babylon, along with many of the people of Judah. He delivered the following stinging warning from God to the people of Judah:

“This is what the Sovereign Lord says: This is Jerusalem, which I have set in the center of the nations, with countries all around her. Yet in her wickedness she has rebelled against my laws and decrees more than the nations and countries around her. She has rejected my laws and has not followed my decrees.

“Therefore this what the Sovereign Lord says: You have been more unruly than the nations around you and have not followed my decrees or kept my laws. You have not even conformed to the standards of the nations around you.

“Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord says: I myself am against you, Jerusalem, and I will inflict punishment on you in the sight of the nations. Because of all your detestable idols, I will do to you what I have never done before and will never do again. Therefore in your midst fathers will eat their children, and children will eat their fathers. I will inflict punishment on you and will scatter all your survivors to the winds. Therefore as surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, because you have defiled my sanctuary with all your vile images and detestable practices, I myself will withdraw my favor; I will not look on you with pity or spare

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you. A third of your people will die of the plague or perish by famine inside you; a third will fall by the sword outside your walls; and a third I will scatter to the winds and pursue with drawn sword.

“Then my anger will cease and my wrath against them will subside, and I will be avenged. And when I have spent my wrath upon them, they will know that I the Lord have spoken in my zeal.

“I will make you a ruin and a reproach among the nations around you, in the sight of all who pass by. You will be a reproach and a taunt, a warning and an object of horror to the nations around you when I inflict punishment on you in anger and in wrath and with stinging rebuke. I the Lord have spoken. When I shoot at you with my deadly and destructive arrows of famine, I will shoot to destroy you. I will bring more and more famine upon you and cut off your supply of food. I will send famine and wild beasts against you, and they will leave you childless. Plague and bloodshed will sweep through you, and I will bring the sword against you. I the Lord have spoken.” (Ezekiel 5:5–17 NIV)

The following is God’s message to the kingdom of Judah that Jeremiah delivered:

“But you did not listen to me,” declares the Lord, “and you have provoked me with what your hands have made, and you have brought harm to yourselves.”

Therefore the Lord Almighty says this: “Because you have not listened to my words, I will summon all the peoples of the north and my servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon,” declares the Lord, “and I will bring them against this land and its inhabitants and against all the surrounding nations. I will completely destroy them and make them an object of horror and scorn, and an everlasting ruin. I will banish from them the sounds of joy and gladness, the voices of bride and bridegroom, the sound of millstones and the light of the lamp. This whole country will become a desolate wasteland, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

“But when the seventy years are fulfilled, I will punish the king of Babylon and his nation, the land of the Babylonians, for their guilt,” declares the Lord, “and I will make it desolate forever. I will bring upon that land all the things I have spoken against it, all that are written in this book and prophesied by Jeremiah against all the nations. They themselves will be enslaved by many nations and great kings; I will repay them according to their deeds and the work of their hands.” (Jeremiah 25:7–14 NIV)

The people of Judah were taken in exile to Babylon in three different groups. The first group was taken in 605 BC, when King Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Jerusalem. In 597 BC, Nebuchadnezzar took another ten thousand captives to Babylon. Then the Babylonians captured Jerusalem and destroyed the temple in 586 BC, at which time they took many of the remaining people into exile. God tells the people of Judah that they will be in captivity serving the king of Babylon for seventy years. During that time, the whole country will be desolate.

God’s Warnings to the United States

As I begin this section, I can just visualize God’s disappointment with what has happened in the United States. I understand that it would be truly heartbreaking for God to see what is happening to a nation and its people, who, from its foundation, were consecrated and dedicated to Him—the nation upon which He had showered so many blessings. Then, during the last slightly more than a half century, He has been rejected by the United States and has become its laughing stock. Just how heart-rending can that be for God?

Even though I can’t name them, I suspect that God has sent prophets to warn our nation of the consequences of the national sins it has committed. However, I do know God provided His holy scriptures for the people to study and understand, for He speaks to us through them. This should have given the United States an advantage; not only did we have access to the Bible with God’s warnings to the kingdoms of Israel

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and Judah of the Bible, but we also had the twenty/twenty hindsight of secular history. Instead, we have failed to perform our due diligence and pass that knowledge of history down, generation to generation. We should be reminded that the Bible is more than a collection of stories; it is an instruction manual for living the God-fearing life.

1962 can be identified as the year in which America officially began its journey down the treacherous road of apostasy and its own possible destruction. The Supreme Court informed the world that, as a nation, America would no longer be guided by almighty God.

In January 1973, America continued its accelerating descent down the road of apostasy. The Supreme Court authorized the murder of innocent unborn babies. It was then the nation began ignoring the sanctity of human life issue that God announced to Noah after the flood. The murder of the unborn is an abomination to God and extremely disgusting to Him. Has America become so anesthetized by this ongoing tragedy that the media even fails periodically to show a headline that announces another million unborn infants have been murdered? Just imagine the outcry that would be heard throughout America if a foreign invader assassinated a million Americans, let alone nearly sixty million or about twenty percent of America's present population.

Also, in January 1973, after the signing of the Paris Peace Accords, the United States began withdrawing its troops from South Vietnam. This marked the first war in which the United States had engaged but was not victorious., I think this should have been considered to have been a warning from God.

Our national leaders failed to recognize this as a message from God informing them that America was on the treacherous road of apostasy leading to certain doom and He had begun the process of gradually withdrawing His favor from the United States and its people. If those leaders would have had adequate knowledge and understanding of biblical history they probably would have recognized the warning and

been able to take the steps necessary to get the nation off the road of apostasy and back on the road acceptable to God. The United States was now in a serious “*spiritual crisis*” that had been in the making for more than a decade and with which the nation urgently needed to come to grips.

The evidence was there. The Ten Commandments had been removed as the plumb line against which the daily living in our society could be measured and judged. The name of God had been expunged from the daily life of America. Because human beings have an inherent need to worship God, that void was now being filled by the idols of—greed for money, materialism, power, success, and wealth; and the need to be entertained, sexual immorality, self-obsession and the worship of family. In addition, public vulgarity had become more common place. This was not what the founding fathers had envisioned for the future generations.

Now more than four decades later the United States had failed to take any corrective action to deal with that spiritual crisis. We had become so blinded by political correctness that we ignored the connection of the fall of ancient Israel with the current traumatic serious condition of the United States.

“The same nation that was formed after the pattern of Israel now follows after the pattern of its moral descent, its spiritual departure from God. As it was with Israel’s descent, so too with America’s. It began with complacency toward God, then spiritual confusion, then the merging of God with idols, and then, ultimately, the rejection of His ways. Just as with ancient Israel, America began ruling God out of its life, turning, step by step against His ways, at first subtly, and then, more and more, brazenly.”

“When?” I asked. “When did it start?”

“There is no one simple answer. In America’s greatest moments there was always sin, and in its worst moments, greatness. But there are critical junctures. In the middle of the twentieth century America

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began officially removing God from its national life. It abolished prayer and Scripture in its public schools. As ancient Israel had removed the Ten Commandments from its national consciousness, so America did likewise, removing the Ten Commandments from public view, banning it from its public squares, and taking it down, by government decree, from its walls. As it was in ancient Israel, so too in America, God was progressively driven out of the nation's public life. The very mention of the name *God* or *Jesus* in any relevant context became more and more taboo and unwelcome unless for the purpose of mockery and attack. That which had once been revered as sacred was now increasingly treated as profanity. And as God was driven out, idols were brought in to replace Him."

"But Americans don't worship idols."

"No," said the prophet, "they just don't call them *idols*. As God was expunged from American life, idols came in to fill the void—idols of sensuality, idols of greed, of money, success, comfort, materialism, pleasure, sexual immorality, self-worship, self-obsession. The sacred increasingly disappeared, and the profane took its place. It was another kind of spiritual amnesia; the nation forgot its foundations, its purpose, and its calling. The standards and values it had long upheld were now abandoned. What it had once known as immoral, it now accepted. Its culture was increasingly corrupted by the corrosion of sexual immorality, growing continuously more crude and vulgar. A wave of pornography began penetrating its media. The same nation that had once been dedicated to spreading God's light to the nations now filled the world with the pornographic and the obscene.

"Some would call it *tolerance*," I said.

"Yes," he replied, "the same tolerance that overtook ancient Israel... a tolerance for everything opposed to God, a growing tolerance for immorality and a growing intolerance for the pure—a tolerance that mocked, marginalized, and condemned those who remained faithful

to the values now being discarded. Innocence was ridiculed and virtue was vilified. Children were taught of sexual immorality in public schools while the Word of God was banned. It was a tolerance that put the profane on public display and removed nativity scenes from public sight... contraband, as if somehow they had become a threat—a strangely intolerant tolerance.”

“But still,” I countered, “how does all that compare to what happened in ancient Israel? America doesn’t offer its children on altars of sacrifice?”

“Does it not?” he said. “Ten years after removing prayer and Scripture from its public schools, the nation legalized the killing of its unborn. The blood of the innocent now stained its collective hands. Israel had sacrificed thousands on the altars of Baal and Molech. But by the dawn of the twenty-first century, America had sacrificed *millions*. For its thousands, judgment came upon Israel. What then of America?”

“Is America in danger of judgment?” I asked.

“The answer to your question is *yes*... Yes. America is in danger of judgment.”(Cahn 2011, 21–22)

God Pleads With the United States

Give me the liberty of paraphrasing Psalm 81:8–16, quoted earlier in this chapter. But first, let me take you back to chapter 1. There, we learned that the people of the United States were consecrated and dedicated to God. Therefore, we can use the possessive pronoun “my” and the pronoun “you” as applied to the people of the United States of America as God speaks to us. Consider foreign and alien gods to be self, power, wealth, luxurious homes and cars, and the like. (In chapter 3, in the section “National Sins Initiated by the People,” additional gods are listed.)

“Hear, O my people, and I will warn you—if you would but listen to me, O America! You shall have no foreign god among you; you shall not bow down to an alien god. I am the LORD your God, who brought

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you forth from many nations. Open wide your mouth and I will fill it. But my people would not listen to me; America would not submit to me. *So I gave them over to their stubborn and wicked hearts to follow their own worldly desires. If my people would but listen to me, if America would follow my ways, how quickly would I subdue her enemies and turn my hand against her foes!* Those who hate the LORD would cringe before him, and their punishment would last forever. But you would be fed the finest wheat; with honey from the hive I would satisfy you.” (Psalm 81:8–16 NIV, paraphrased with emphasis added)

What was our nation’s response to God’s plea? We must remember that God isn’t going to force the United States and its people to listen to Him. He wanted us to listen to Him and submit willingly to Him and His commandments so He could continue to bless our nation. Because our stubborn hearts refused to listen to Him, He just let our nation go our worldly, wicked ways and follow our desires. I am reminded of this Bible verse: “There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death” (Proverbs 14:12 NIV). In recent decades we have elected less-than-God-fearing leaders who blindly accepted the apostate decisions of the Supreme Court that drove God out of the mainstream of our society. Further, the present government stands by idly as the Islamic terrorists martyr Christians.

The next sentence is powerful: “If my people would but listen to me, if America would follow my ways, how quickly would I subdue her enemies and turn my hand against her foes.” Isn’t God telling us that He is standing by to help us if we will just humble ourselves, pray, and repent of our sin of disobedience and intransigence? What is preventing us from accepting His offer? Today isn’t too late, but tomorrow may never come.

In Summary

It seems ironic that the terrorists who were so intent on destroying the United States on 9/11 and in the intervening years could be descendants of the Assyrians that initially attacked the kingdom of Israel in 732 BC

and finally destroyed it in 722 BC. At this point, I am going to repeat a quotation of the prophet used earlier in this chapter:

“The Assyrians were children of the Middle East, so too the terrorists of 9/11. The Assyrians were Semitic people, so too the terrorists. The Assyrians spoke a language called *Akkadian*. The tongue is long extinct, but there is spoken in the modern world one language considered to be the closest of all tongues to ancient Akkadian.

“Which is...?”

“Arabic—the tongue of al Qaeda and the 9/11 terrorists.”

“Yes, and so when the leaders of al Qaeda plotted their attack on America, and as the terrorists communicated with each other on 9/11 to carry it out, they did so using words and speech patterns that mirrored those used by the Assyrian leaders and warriors as they planned and executed their attack on Israel two and half thousand years earlier in 732 B.C.” (Cahn 2011, 39)



Chapter 5

When God Removes His Hedge of Protection

It Happened to Ancient Israel

The prophet informs Nouriel about the wake-up call for ancient Israel and responds to his questions and comments.

“Yes. With no way of getting through to them, the hedge of protection is removed. The year is 732 B.C. Israel’s enemies invade the land and wreak havoc. The calamity traumatizes the nation. But it takes place on a limited scale. The enemy strikes and then withdraws. It’s a foreshadowing of something much greater and much more severe—a warning...*a harbinger of a future judgment so great that if it ever came to pass, the nation would never recover.*”

“So the warning is the removal of the hedge.”

“Yes,” said the prophet, “a late-stage warning, allowed to take place only when nothing else would wake them up... limited... restrained... the sound of an alarm for the purpose of averting a much greater calamity. *It never could have happened had Israel remained inside the will of God. No enemy could have ever breached its walls. But outside the will of God, any notion of national security or invincibility was an illusion. The breach exposed it. The nation was in danger. It would be shaken to its foundation... and apart from returning to God, there was no wall strong enough to protect them. It was their wake-up call.*”

“So they never woke up.”

“No,” he replied. “Most would see the tragedy as a matter of defense, national security, or foreign policy. They committed themselves to making sure it would never happen again. They fortified their defenses, strengthened their walls, and formed strategic alliances. Few of them pondered the possibility that there could be any deeper significance behind it. And yet the voices of their prophets, the words of their Scriptures, and an uneasy stirring in their hearts were all warning them that something was wrong. *The nation had departed from God. But apart from the prophets, few realized the critical line they had crossed and the new and dangerous era they had entered. No political or military power would be strong enough to ensure their safety; only a return to God. The attack was a warning and a harbinger of judgment.*”

“So what happened after they missed their wake-up call?”

“As time passed, it appeared as if life was gradually returning to normal. There was a respite, peace. With every passing year, it seemed as if the danger was farther behind them. But it was an illusion. The problem and the danger only increased. It was a period of grace, given to them in mercy, that they might change their course and avert the judgment. But if not, then a greater judgment would come, and that first breaching of their walls would be remembered as the harbinger that

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was the beginning of their fall. *These were the most critical of days.*” (Cahn 2011, 27–28, emphasis added)

The Israelites could have humbled themselves, repented of their sins, and turned back to God. At that point God would have accepted their confession and repentance. However, they became defiant and arrogant. “The bricks have fallen down, but we will rebuild with dressed stone; the fig trees have been felled, but we will replace them with cedars” (Isaiah 9:10 NIV). They were not just going to rebuild the buildings but were going to replace them with grandiose buildings made with hewn stone and replace the fig trees with cedars, which they thought were better trees. *Because they had, in such a defiant manner, rejected God, He did not restore His hedge of protection.*

God is exceedingly patient in executing His righteous judgment. In the process He continues to send notices and warnings. He even pleads with rebellious nations who defiantly ignore His attempts to get their attention.

In chapter 4, I included a number of texts that were unheeded warnings delivered to the kingdom of Israel. The obvious question for God is, “How many warnings over how many years do you allow to pass before you take action?”

God finally removed the hedge of protection that He had placed around Israel. The removal of the hedge of protection allowed a late stage warning to occur. The late stage warning was an attack on Israel and a surprise retreat by the Assyrians in 732 BC. If this attack failed to get the attention of Israel, God reasoned that any further warnings would be of no avail.

Unfortunately for Israel’s leadership, they failed recognize that the warnings of God’s messengers were not mere babblings, but were indeed notices that their spiritual relationship with God was in deep, deep crisis! In all their human wisdom they didn’t recognize the attack as “the black swan” warning.

Rather they assumed that the attack was the failure of their defense, a chink in their national security or a weakness in their foreign policy. The leadership didn't take a look at Israel's own history to recognize and understand the effect the powerful hand of God at work. Thus, they didn't understand that there was no political or military power they might be able to muster that could guarantee the nation's safety from further fatal attack. *The return to God was the only course of action that would save the nation.* Because God is compassionate and forgiving, the return to God is a possible course of action any time before executes His righteous judgment.

Returning to God's conversation with Solomon in 2 Chronicles, chapter 7, the Israelites could have humbled themselves, confessed and repented of their sins and turned back to God. He would have heard them. Because God is so gracious and forgiving He would have healed their land and restored His hedge of protection.

However, the leadership, in its stupor, fell into the trap of arrogantly defying God as predicted by Isaiah, "The bricks have fallen down, but we will rebuild with dressed stone; the fig trees have been felled, but we will replace them with cedars" (Isaiah 9:10 NIV). The attack of 732 BC had caused brick buildings to collapse and their fig/sycamore trees had been felled. So now they just were not going to rebuild just with bricks but they would replace those fallen brick buildings with grandiose buildings constructed with dressed stone. The ordinary fig trees would be replaced with stately cedar trees. This was not a statement of humility but an obvious statement of defiance and rejection of God. Therefore, He did not restore His hedge of protection.

Without God's hedge of protection in place, in 722 BC, ten years after the warning attack by the Assyrian army, the evil Assyrian forces conquered and overthrew the kingdom of Israel. The conquering Assyrian terrorists dispersed the people of Israel, at which time the kingdom of Israel disappeared from biblical history, just as Hosea had prophesied. "Therefore they will be like the morning mist, like the early

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dew that disappears, like chaff swirling from the threshing floor, like smoke escaping through a window” (Hosea 13:3 NIV). Also, one has to remember that God will not tolerate evil indefinitely, thus, the nation of Assyria also disappeared from history. Nouriel recounts for Ana portions of the conversation he had with the prophet regarding ancient Israel’s defiance and arrogance in the face of the calamity.

“I don’t understand,” I said, “I don’t even know what it’s saying. How is it the key?”

“This is Israel’s response to that first invasion, the first calamity. These words are the words that sum up the nation’s spirit—a spirit of pride, defiance, and arrogance in the face of the calamity.”...

“They’re not returning to God?”

“Exactly. Instead of listening to the alarm, instead of turning back, instead of pausing for a moment to reexamine their ways, they boast of their resolve. It wasn’t about rebuilding at all. It was about ignoring the warning and rejecting the call to return.

“So they missed their warning.”

”They did more than just miss it. They defied it. Notice the words. They weren’t vowing just to rebuild what was destroyed, but to make themselves stronger than before, to become invulnerable to any future attack. So what they’re were saying is this: ‘We will not be humbled. We will not search our ways or consider the possibility that something could be wrong. Instead, we’ll defy the calamity. We’ll beat it back. We’ll rebuild. We’ll undo the damage as if it never happened. Not only will we not change our course—we’ll pursue it now with even more zeal. We’ll come out of this calamity stronger than ever and rise to even greater heights than before.’”...

“The vow was a sign, a manifestation of the hardening of their hearts, the rejection of God’s calling, the sealing of the nation’s defiance and

its course—and thus the sealing of its end. So the vow itself is a sign of judgment.” (Cahn 2011, 46–48)

It was in 722 BC (ten years after the warning invasion by the Assyrians) that the evil Assyrian forces conquered and overthrew the kingdom of Israel. The conquering Assyrian terrorists dispersed the people of the kingdom of Israel. At that time the kingdom of Israel disappeared from biblical history. It happened just as Hosea had prophesied. “Therefore they will be like the morning mist, like the early dew that disappears, like chaff swirling from a threshing floor, like smoke escaping through a window” (Hosea 13:3 NIV).

The kingdom of Judah was also moving down the path of apostasy, following in the evil and wicked ways of its northern sister, the kingdom of Israel. Beginning in 605 BC the Babylonians made three incursions into the kingdom of Judah, taking captives back to Babylon. In 586 BC, after destroying the temple in Jerusalem, they took most of the remaining population into exile.

Jeremiah had prophesied that the Jews would serve the Babylonians for seventy years. In due time, God allowed the Persians to defeat the Babylonians for the evil they had done against Judah. So in 538 BC, Cyrus, king of Persia, allowed the first contingent of Jews to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple.

God had a plan that would be accomplished. Jesus, Messiah, was to be a descendant of the tribe of Judah and King David.

Is It Happening to the United States?

I believe it is appropriate to share Psalm 127:1. “Unless the Lord builds the house, They labor in vain that build it; Unless the Lord guards the city, The watchman stays awake in vain” (NKJV).

In the American Patriot’s Bible, the heading of this psalm is “Laboring and Prospering with the Lord.” Dwight D. Eisenhower placed his hand

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on Psalm 127:1 and 2 Chronicles 7:14 as he took the presidential oath of office in 1953.

As I read this verse, I realized the Benjamin Franklin quoted the first half in his speech to the members of the Constitutional Convention, at the end of which he moved that the convention be opened each morning with prayer, seeking God's guidance as the members carried out their work of drafting the Constitution (see chapter 1).

The second half of this verse seemed especially appropriate to include in this chapter. Referring to chapter 3, recall that in 1962 the United States began removing God from the watchmen duty list. Therefore, any watchman on duty was conducting an "exercise in futility" because God was no longer guarding the city.

Further, as the disease or sin of apostasy matures, the cumulative effect is the hardening of unbelief that becomes more impenetrable and defiant as time progresses.

The prophet discusses with Nouriel the issue of God lifting His hedge of protection from the United States.

"America was the most blessed nation on earth, its blessings shielded by a powerful hedge of national protection. As its founders had foretold, if the nation followed the ways of God, it would be blessed not only with prosperity and power but also with peace and security."

"But if America turned away from God, its protection would be removed?"

"Yes, and so it did. And so it was. Its hedge of protection was removed, and its walls were breached."

"Its walls were breached? When?" I asked.

The prophet was silent, as if waiting for me to say it, or waiting for it to hit me. And it did... all at once.

“September 11!”

“Yes,” said the prophet. “The First Harbinger, the Breach. The nation that had so long known the blessings of peace and security witnesses its walls of protection broken through as its defenses fail. *On September 11, 2001, the walls of America’s national security were breached.* It happened right there, he said, pointing to the sky above the waters. “The second attack. That’s how it came. The most powerful nation on earth and the most sophisticated defense system ever built by man...”

“Its wall of defense... breached.”

“And then came the mistake,” he said. “Then came the repeating of the ancient mistake. America responded to the calamity as if it were only a matter of security and defense... and nothing more. It would strengthen its national defenses and fortify its walls of protection. There was no pausing to ponder whether there could be anything of deeper significance behind it, no asking if something could be wrong, no searching of its ways.”

“Was God behind it?” I asked.

“Man was behind it,” he answered. “Evil men were behind it. Up to that point they had been restrained. But the restraint would have its limits. As with the attack on ancient Israel, an attack would now be allowed on American soil.

“But it was planned by evil men,” I countered. “It was evil.”

“Yes,” he replied, “but God can cause that which is evil to work for good.”

“But what good?”

“The sounding of an alarm to wake up a sleeping nation, to change its course, to save it from judgment.”

“But then was God with America’s enemies?”

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“No. No more than He was with those who attacked ancient Israel. Those who do such things are His enemies as well. God was against those who attacked America and would deal with them just as He dealt with the enemies of ancient Israel.”

“And what about those who perished?” I asked.

“When calamity came to ancient Israel, both the righteous and the unrighteous were touched by it. Both perished alike. The judgment was upon the nation. But the innocent and righteous also perished in those calamities was not a matter of judgment but of sorrow. *But for the nation, the fact that such calamities could have happened in the first place was a matter of both warning and judgment.* Each took place in its own realm. So it was with 9/11; the calamity took place in two different realms—the private realm of individuals and the public realm of the nation. In the first realm is only sorrow, and the magnitude of the calamity is secondary. And for those touched by it, the loss of one life is the loss of the entire world. The charge here is to bind up the broken, to comfort, to support and to never forget the wounded and bereaved. *But the second realm is distinct and separate, centering not on the individual but on the nation as a whole. It's in this second realm that the matter of judgment remains....*

“On 9/11 people were asking, ‘Where was God?’”

“*Where was God?*” he said, as if surprised by the question. “*We drove Him out of our schools, out of our government, out of our media, out of our culture, out of our public square. We drove Him out of our national life, and we ask, ‘Where was God?’*”

“Then He wasn’t there?”

“Still, He was there. He was there with those who lost their loved ones and is still there to heal the broken and comfort those who mourn. He was there with those who gave their lives so others could live, shadows of Him. And He was there, as well, with all the countless others who would have perished that day if not for the countless turns of details

and events that saved them. *And for those who perished... those who were with God in life are now with Him in eternity. For these, it was not a day of national calamity but of release. He was with them and is with them....*

“And what about America after 9/11?” I asked.

“In the months and years after 9/11 it appeared likewise as if things had returned to some state of normalcy. As time passed, as the initial shock wore off and the trauma lessened, there was a growing temptation to go on almost as if it had never happened, as if the nation were still somehow immune from destruction. So it was in the last days of ancient Israel. But it was all an illusion.” (Cahn 2011, 29–32, emphasis added)

The prophet now discusses the response by America’s leaders to 9/11 with Nouriel and responds to his questions and comments.

“So if the ancient mystery is joined to America, then somehow 9/11 has to be linked to the words *‘We will rebuild.’*”

“Correct. In the wake of their calamity, the leaders of ancient Israel proclaimed, *‘We will rebuild’*—the first sign of defiance. If the mystery holds and has now applied to America, we would expect to hear the same vow, the same three words, in the wake of 9/11, now proclaimed by American leaders.”

“And did it happen? Did they say it?”

“Yes. They said it. Not that it wouldn’t have been natural to speak of rebuilding, but the these three words continuously came forth from the mouths of American leaders, spoken, over and over again, as public proclamations, was striking.

“From the mayor of New York City in the wake of the attack: *‘We will rebuild...’*

“From the state’s senior senator: *‘We will rebuild...’*

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“From the state’s governor: *‘We will rebuild. And we will move forward.’*”

“From the state’s junior senator: *‘we will rebuild...’*”

“From the city’s mayor at the time of rebuilding: *‘We will rebuild, renew, and remain the capital of the free world.’*”

“From the president of the United States: *‘We will rebuild New York City.’*”

“One way or another, each leader would end up proclaiming the same words of defiance proclaimed thousands of years before by the leaders of ancient Israel.”

“And as with ancient Israel, it wasn’t just the speaking of words.”

“That’s correct, Nouriel. The words were followed by action.”

“So what happened after the words were spoken by the American leaders?”

“The words were likewise followed by action. The ruins of 9/11 were cleared away. Then a sign appeared with these words: *‘A new icon will soon rise above the Lower Manhattan skyline... the Freedom Tower.’...*”

“To replace bricks with bricks is restoration,” he said. “But to replace bricks with hewn stone is defiance. To rebuild what was destroyed is restoration, but to boast of rebuilding stronger and greater than before *is defiance*. The Fourth Harbinger is not simply about rebuilding what was destroyed, but it must specifically involve rebuilding bigger, taller, stronger, and better than before.” (Cahn 2011, 61–62, 64)

The prophet discusses the issue of spiritual problems with Nouriel.

“So, in other words, Israel’s real problem was a spiritual one—its separation from God. Everything else was just a symptom, or manifestation, of the underlying problem. So the vow to rebuild is like a gardener attempting to remove a weed by cutting off its leaves.”

“Exactly. The ultimate problem wasn’t national security or defense or the Assyrians or even the attack. If a nation’s underlying problem is spiritual, then all political, economic, or military solutions will do nothing to remove it. Such things can only treat symptoms—the bricks and the sycamores. *A spiritual problem can only be solved by a spiritual solution. Apart from that, every solution will end up producing another crisis.*”

“So the solution is to return to God.”

“But Israel would choose otherwise. The nation would harden itself, seeking to come back stronger without addressing its spiritual descent...” (Cahn 2011, 134, emphasis added)

I have come to realize that during the past more than sixty years, our nation’s leaders, along with our Christian religious leaders, have failed to recognize the benefits that God’s hedge of protection provided to this nation during the years since its colonization and its founding. Political correctness has become more important than honoring the God who blessed this nation with glory and power.

Sometime after 9/11, Nouriel and the prophet were discussing the response of ancient Israel to Assyria’s first attack and comparing it with the response of the United States to the terrorist attack of 9/11. Both responses were defiant and without hesitation. Both nations failed to recognize that the root cause was, in fact, spiritual. Both nations had expunged God from their national lives and because both had failed to recognize and heed God’s advance warnings. Each nation had callously ignored God’s prior warnings and as a last resort He removed His hedge of protection; thus allowing the attacks to occur. So their discussion begins.

“And when the ancient vow was proclaimed in its entirety, it happened in Washington DC, the nation’s capital. In both cases, it clearly had to do with more than Ground Zero and New York. It was about America as a nation. And it would be the nation as a whole that carried

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out the vow. Just as it happened in ancient Israel, it would happen in post-9/11 America—the vow would be turned into reality. Isaiah 9:10 would become the nation’s foreign and domestic policy.”

“How so?”

“What did ‘*We will rebuild*’ mean for ancient Israel?” he asked.

“It meant they would repair the damage and rebuild their fallen buildings, towers, homes...”

“And their *walls*,” he added. “They would rebuild their walls and fortify their defenses so as to become invulnerable to future attacks. In the same way, America, after 9/11, would embark on a campaign to rebuild its walls of protection, to strengthen and fortify its systems of defense. The campaign would mean the establishing of the Department of Homeland Security, the launching of a global war against terror, and two conventional wars abroad, one in Afghanistan and the other in Iraq. It was all a reaction to 9/11. America was doing exactly as ancient Israel had done in Isaiah 9:10—attempting to defy the first calamity. In fact, the speech that would launch the nation’s War on Terror would contain the words, ‘*We will rebuild.*’ America was waging war against 9/11, trying to reverse its consequences, overcome its impact, and nullify its danger. So in the years following the attack, American foreign and domestic policy was, in effect, a translation of the ancient vow.”

“But was it wrong?” I asked. “What choice was there?”

“Is it wrong for a gardener to cut off the stem of a weed, he asked, “instead of dealing with the root? The issue was deeper. You can’t solve a spiritual problem with a military or political solution. Apart from a return to God, the root issue remains untouched and will manifest again in a different form. It’s in this that the Isaiah 9:10 Effect begins to operate. A nation’s attempt at defying judgment apart from repentance ends up setting in motion a future calamity. In its campaign to strengthen itself, it ends up bringing about its own weakening.”

“So, then, as America vowed to emerge stronger than before and wage war against 9/11, the Isaiah 9:10 Effect was set in motion.”

“Yes. And each campaign born out of defiance would end up producing abacklash.”

“How so?” I asked.

“The campaign to strengthen America’s national security and defenses would require massive expenditures. The War on Terror, the military campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq, would add multiplied billions of dollars to the federal budget. Funds and resources that would have been used to strengthen the American economy were now diverted and drained away from investment. The war in Iraq would impel a surging of oil prices, further draining the nation’s gross domestic product. The massive amount of governmental spending in support of the nation’s War on Terror would lead to the skyrocketing of the national debt, further draining the economy. And beyond the financial consequences, what America began in the wake of 9/11 would end up further dividing the nation.”

“And it all would lead up to the economic collapse?”

“In part,” he said. “And for all that, it would be yet another manifestation of the Isaiah 9:10 Effect that would bring about the collapse of the American and global economy. And this too was born out of the ruins of 9/11. The most critical effect of the calamity on the American and global economy would begin six days after the attack.”

“As a response to the calamity?”

“Yes,” he said, “as in the ancient vow. In January 2001, with the American economy beginning to slow down, the Federal Reserve began reducing the target interest rate, lowering it to 3.5 percent by the summer of that year. Then came 9/11. The first economic impact of the attack was the closing down of the New York Stock Exchange the same day. The market would remain closed for six days. When it reopened the

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following Monday, it would suffer the largest point crash in Wall Street history up to that time. The attack had inflicted a damaging blow to an already fragile economy. In the days and months after September 11, there was a pervading fear that the calamity would cause the economy to hemorrhage. The repercussions of 9/11 and the nation's response to it would continue to affect the economy long after those initial fears had vanished along with the ruins of Ground Zero, long after even what appeared to be an economic rebound. September 11 would not only continue to affect the American economy but would also alter it and, in so doing, change the global economy." (Cahn 2011,136-139)

In summary—the above narrative exemplifies the severe case of historical amnesia with which America, its political and religious leaders had exhibited. Not one apparently remembered, that from the time colonists first arrived on the shores of North America, America had been consecrated and dedicated to God. Then at the time of its formation the first president re-consecrated and rededicated the United States and its people including future generations to God. Further, it shows why this nation's current spiritual crisis cannot be resolved satisfactorily without repenting and returning to God.

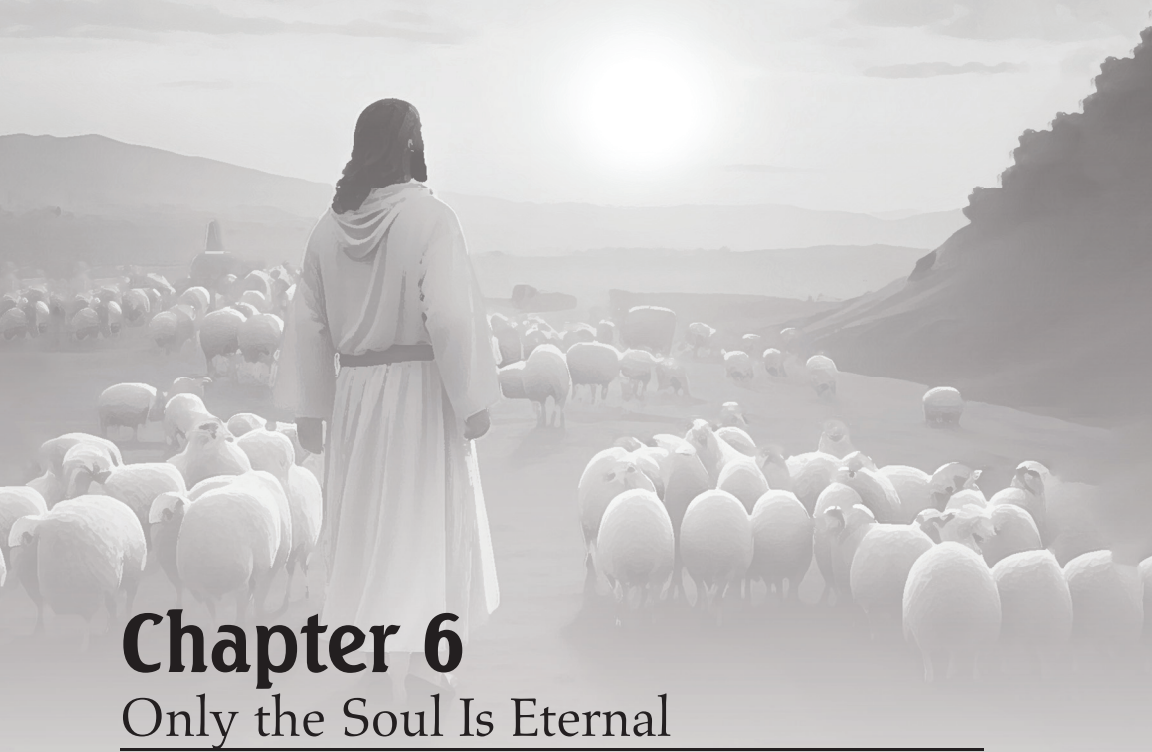
One of God's Covenants Remains Intact

In Genesis 12, God calls Abram (later, God changed his name to Abraham) to leave his country and his people and go to a land that God would show him. God tells Abram, "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 the peoples on earth will be blessed through you" (Genesis 12:2–3 NIV, emphasis added). God's promise to Abram assured him of blessing, reputation, influence, and legacy.

Notice in verse 3: "I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse." The covenant is very clear. As of the close of 2015, the United States has continued to bless and support Israel.

However, should the United States ever curse Israel and fail to support Israel, God's curse will be declared against the United States. Leaders and prospective leaders of the United States, it is time to take notice and heed this warning!

Leaders, pay attention! God never fails to honor His commitments!



Chapter 6

Only the Soul Is Eternal

In my original plan, this chapter was to follow the one titled “Return to God.” However, I realized that the leaders and many people of our nation might refuse to “return to God” and remain defiant, challenging God to execute His judgment against the United States. At the same time, there will be people who realize the gravity of the situation and will individually seek a right relationship with God and ask His forgiveness of their sins so their souls can be eternally with God in heaven.

A Brief Summary of the Story of God’s Love for Humankind

This section is intended primarily for those people who are not familiar with the biblical story about the beginning of sin in the human race and God’s plan to provide the means of salvation and redemption of humankind from its debt of sin.

“God said, ‘Let us create man in our own image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.’ So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them” (Genesis 1:26–27 NIV).

God is eternal. Therefore, because human beings were created in His image, their souls are eternal. God loved humankind so much that He provided them with a beautiful place to live (the garden of Eden), and all Adam and Eve had to do was honor God’s command “not to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil for if you eat of it you will surely die.” They failed to honor and obey God’s command—*that was sin*. As a result, God expelled them from the garden of Eden. Sin was now a part of the DNA of Adam and Eve. Therefore, their progeny for all future generations inherited this terrible characteristic. God is a righteous God, and sin has to be either forgiven or punished; the penalty for unforgiven sin is eternal death. Sin must be confessed and forgiven during the person’s earthly life.

Because of God’s infinite love for humankind, He had a plan whereby the human soul could be redeemed from the debt of sin, thereby providing it with eternal life. He promised to provide a Savior to accomplish that mission. The problem: it was a “mission impossible” for any mortal human being. That mission could only be accomplished by a man who was unblemished by sin.

God never fails to keep His commitments. During the approximately four thousand years following the fall of Adam and Eve, numerous references appear in the Old Testament confirming the coming of Messiah, the Savior. You also can be sure that God’s commitments are always executed with impeccable timing. It was during the Roman occupation of Judah that God’s only Son, Jesus, came into the world—incarnate as a human baby, conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of the Virgin Mary.

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Jesus grew into manhood in Judea. At about age thirty, He was baptized in the Jordan River by John the Baptist. He was driven by the Spirit into the wilderness, where He fasted for forty days. He was then tempted by Satan who lied by misquoting holy scripture in an attempt to deceive Jesus. Jesus overcame Satan's temptations with flying colors, telling Satan to get out of His presence.

Jesus then began three years of ministry and called twelve disciples He would train to carry forward His ministry after He would no longer be here on earth. He and His disciples walked through Judea and Samaria teaching the people and healing the sick and infirm. His teachings were regularly challenged by the religious leaders. His message could be summed up as follows: "The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength; and your neighbor as yourself." On the other hand, the religious leaders were primarily concerned about observing the hundreds of rules that they and their predecessors had established over many years.

Late in the third year of Jesus's ministry, the religious leaders became so desperate to get rid of Jesus that they falsely accused Him of blasphemy. They even threatened to blackmail Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea, if he did not convict Jesus and sentence Him to death by crucifixion. Jesus was crucified on Good Friday; He was buried in a tomb, and then, early on Sunday, He arose from the grave. Jesus, the unblemished Lamb of God, through His suffering, death, and the shedding of His blood, redeemed all past, present, and future believers from their debt of sin and prepared for them the way to eternal life. Jesus was able to carry out God's plan of salvation because He was unblemished by sin.

During the next forty days, the risen Jesus met with and continued to train His disciples. At the conclusion of the forty days and just prior to His ascension into heaven—to be with God, His Father, He issued the Great Commission to His disciples and all future Christians. He said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the

Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:18b–20 NIV). His ascension was witnessed by his disciples. Just before He ascended, He promised to return, at which time He would come to judge the world. Thus, we look forward to His Second Coming.

Ten days later, on Pentecost, the disciples received the Holy Spirit as Jesus had promised. Pentecost is remembered as the birthday of the Christian Church. On that day, three thousand persons believed the message of salvation—that Jesus shed His blood to redeem them from the debt of their sin—and were baptized.

Four Important and Critical Worldviews

Michael Slaughter, in his book, *Momentum for Life*, shares his thoughts that are critical to the intent of this chapter. In the first paragraph of the quotation below from *Momentum for Life*, I have taken the liberty to add first person plural pronouns alongside the original pronouns, because I believe it is important that all who read this book, feel themselves involved in the very worthwhile activity discussed in the following paragraphs. The discussion of these worldviews, I believe, gives us a yardstick against which we can measure the state of our own faith in God.

I [We] must continually challenge my [our] worldview with the worldview of Jesus. A worldview is a set of fundamental beliefs that determines your [our] primary life values, decisions, and actions. Your [Our] worldview has more to do with your [our] values than your [our] religion. It sets the course of your [our] life action. A worldview determines everything from your [our] sexual mores to your [our] political persuasions.

Tim Keller, who is lead pastor at Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City... has good insight on the types of worldviews found in North American churches today. Redeemer’s vision is to renew

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New York City socially, spiritually, and culturally. Tim talks about the diversity of worldviews in American culture, and I [Michael Slaughter] am synthesizing these into four predominant worldviews found in the institutional church today—the secular, the soft-secular, the post-secular, and, finally, the worldview of Jesus.

1. Secular. People with a secular worldview are skeptical of anything supernatural. They may or may not believe in some sort of higher power, but they live their lives within the confines of human logic. They make clear distinctions between secular and sacred. They believe that to involve faith in the daily marketplace of life is tantamount to superstition. They see belief in a supernatural God as a barrier to social progress. There is a humanistic point of view with the basic premise that human beings have a universal need to create their own meaning, values, and destiny. They view the world solely in materialistic terms, convinced that nothing exists outside of matter—the molecules that make up people and things. People and things are the only resources available to solve the problems of life.

You'll find relatively few people with this mind-set attending church regularly. Most secular people in North America are Caucasian, over the age of forty, and from Protestant-Catholic-Jewish backgrounds. They run many of the elite universities in North America that were originally focused on educating people for ministry, including Harvard and Yale, and many others that have separated (either officially or unofficially) from the denominations that founded them. For example, more than one hundred colleges and universities are United Methodist affiliated. Most were 'designed for evangelism' but have been 'swept up... into the culture and purposes of the American academy,' according to *The Dying of the Light: The Disengagement of Colleges and Universities from Their Christian Churches*. It cites as representative one university chaplain, a United Methodist cleric, who describes his responsibility, as he sees it, to "defend the importance of the university as a secular culture against all forms of orthodoxy."

2. Soft-secular. The predominant worldview in churches is “soft-secular.” People with a soft-secular worldview believe in God and claim a faith identity, but God is not their first priority or passion. They live comfortably in two spheres, sacred and secular, but when pressed for time their default always goes to the secular. They bring Jesus into their worldview instead of being converted to his. Soft-secular people may confess Jesus but trust the values of secular culture, putting their faith in material possessions to provide meaning rather than trusting God’s promise of provision. They make religious donations rather than life sacrifices. It is difficult for soft-secular people to make significant time or financial commitments to their churches.

People with a soft-secular mind-set tend to be over the age of forty [in 2008]. They represent the predominant worldview in baby-boomer churches.”

3. Post-secular. A third worldview is more widespread in people under the age of forty [in 2008]. It’s found in what some call millennial churches or Gen X churches. Post-secular people are open to the supernatural but biased toward more expressive individualism that leads to relativism. “It’s true if it works for me,” they believe. Those who view life this way are centered in today. The present is all that matters, and anything in the past is irrelevant to the expression of self and truth. Likewise, commitments made today—such as the “I do” of marriage—are viewed as intentions that may or may not work for tomorrow or the future.

Many times I see post-secular people make what seem to be heartfelt commitments to Jesus, but when identification with Jesus means a missed opportunity for a relationship, a sexual encounter, or a professional advancement, they bail on the Christian commitment. Post-seculars attempt to fit Christ into their own worldview instead of being transformed into his, creating a cult of self. Sadly, this is the worldview of many in the church.

4. Christian. The fourth worldview found in the church today says that commitment to Christ is bigger than my life or my lifetime. Truth will work and prevail because it is true, but it may not prevail in my lifetime. In fact, living for truth may cost me my life.

Jesus said, “For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it” (Luke 9:24). Heeding his call that we deny ourselves and take up Jesus’ cross daily (Luke 9:23) for the sake of the coming kingdom of God is the only way we can find life. This worldview flies in the face of the soft-secular mind-set found so widely in churches. Life is not about me but about me being a link in the chain of God’s generations. It’s not about my wants, my passions, or my needs, but it is about my commitment to God’s greater purpose and the coming of the kingdom of God! The sacred trust I have from all generations is to connect the covenant of the past with the promised coming kingdom, knowing from Jesus’ warning that pain may be a part of the package. Obeying the truth may lead to ostracism, loss of relationship, persecution, and rejection in my lifetime...

To have Jesus’ worldview is to reach out to those on the fringes, those who don’t fit into the institutional church...” (Slaughter 2005, 35–37)

Now Is the Time—Eternity Is Only One Heartbeat Away

The writer of the letter to the Hebrews wrote, “And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment” (Hebrews 9:27 NKJV). Of course, the writer is speaking of the soul. This is a reminder that the soul is eternal, while the nation and everything else, including human life, is temporary! Judgment Day is the day of punishment for the unbeliever.

While I was reading the chapter in *The Harbinger* titled “Eternity,” its powerful words tugged at my heart. Here I found the prophet and Nouriel dealing with Judgment Day, heaven, and hell.

“Why judgment?”

“Yes.”

“It must be. As long as there’s evil, there has to be judgment. Every sin, every wrong, every evil has to be brought to an end. Without it, there would be no hope.”

“Without judgment there would be no hope?” I asked.

“Without judgment, there would be no end to evil in the universe... or in man’s heart. There would be no heaven.”

“Why would there be no heaven?”

He looked away from me and toward the light of the setting sun before speaking again. “Because heaven would then be filled with locks and prisons, hatred, violence, fear, and destruction. Heaven would cease to be heaven... and would become hell instead. But there *is* a heaven, and there is a time and place of no more sorrow... no more hate... no more weeping or tears... and no more pain. There must be judgment. Evil must end... beyond which is heaven.”...

“And to be infinitely separated from God and heaven... is what?”

“Hell?”

“Hell—infinite separation from God and from all things good; total, infinite, eternal judgment.”

“We don’t just die?”

“The soul is eternal,” he said. “One way or another, at the end of a thousand ages, you still exist. The question is *where*. And if the joy and glory of being in God’s presence in heaven is beyond our imagining, so then too is the darkness and horror of being in His absence... without Him forever... hell.”

“So then our predicament is even more grave than of a nation in its hour of judgment.”

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“The prospect of entering eternity without God, on the wrong side of an infinite judgment, is far graver than the judgment of any nation—ininitely more so. Nations are temporary; the soul is eternal. So, Nouriel, I’m asking you again, what will you do on the Day of Judgment?” ...

Apostle Paul wrote to the church in Corinth: “I tell you, *now is the time* of God’s favor, *now is the day* of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6:2b NIV, emphasis added). The prophet and Nouriel discuss that from the individual’s standpoint, now is the time to consider eternity.

“Now...” said the prophet. “Now is the only time in which it can happen. As it is written, *‘Now is the time of salvation.’* never tomorrow, only now.”

“But if we were talking tomorrow, it could still happen then.”

“Yes, but only when then has become now, and tomorrow is today. But when it does, you may not be there.”

“And why wouldn’t I be?”

“How far away from eternity do you think you are, Nouriel?”

“How could I possibly know that?”

“But you can know that,” he replied.

Then what’s the answer?” I asked. “How far am I away from eternity?”

“One heartbeat,” he replied, “one heartbeat. That’s it. That’s all. You’re only one heartbeat away from eternity. Everything you have—your life, your breath, this moment, it’s all borrowed, it’s all a gift. And at any moment it all ends with a heartbeat... just one heartbeat, and there’s no more time. One heartbeat and the chance to be saved is gone. One heartbeat and there’s no more choosing—it’s all sealed for eternal life or eternal death.”

“But if I didn’t choose...”

“But then you already have. If you don’t choose to be saved, then you’ve chosen not to be saved. Your life and your eternity... it all rests on one heartbeat. *And what will you do on the Day of Judgment?* Remember the question, Nouriel... because in the end it’s the only question. Remember the question... because no one knows when that day will come. The only thing you can be sure of is that it *will* come, and the only time you can be sure of is now. Now is all you have. And now is the time of salvation.”

“It’s too big a decision to make just like that.”

“It’s too big a decision not to,” he said. (Cahn 2011, 234–235)

As I thought about this chapter, I was taken back to the time after 9/11, when many asked, “Where was God?” The prophet responded:

“Where was God?... We drove Him out of our schools, out of our government, out of our media, out of our culture, out of our public square. We drove Him out of our national life, and we ask, ‘Where was God?’

“Then He wasn’t there?”

“Still, He was there. He was there with those who lost their loved ones and is still there to heal the broken and comfort those who mourn. He was there with those who gave their lives so others could live, shadows of Him. And He was there, as well, with all the countless others who would have perished that day if not for the countless turns of details and events that saved them. *And for those who perished... those who were with God in life are now with Him in eternity. For these, it was not a national calamity but of release. He was with them and is with them.* (Cahn 2011, 31, emphasis added)

The last three sentences, shown in italics above, are my hope—and that hope can be yours!

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The basis for the believers' hope is well summarized by the following nineteenth-century hymn, "My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less," written by Edward Mote (1787–1874):

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness:
No merit of my own I claim,
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.

On Christ, the solid rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand,

When darkness veils His lovely face,
I rest on His unchanging grace;
In ev'ry high and stormy gale
My anchor holds within the veil.

On Christ, the solid rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand,

His oath, His covenant, His blood
Sustain me in the raging flood;
When all supports are washed away,
He then is all my hope and stay.

On Christ, the solid rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand,

When He shall come with trumpet sound,
Oh, may I then in Him be found,
Clothed in His righteousness alone,
Redeemed to stand before the throne!

On Christ, the solid rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand,

—American Lutheran Hymnal (1930-190)

Summary

Is it your desire that your soul spend eternity in the glorious presence of God and His Son, Jesus? Then, *now is the time, not tomorrow*, to believe that the salvation of your soul is the free and undeserved gift of the grace of God that was secured by the suffering, shed blood, and death of Jesus. Then repent of your sins and seek forgiveness from God. The Bible has this to say about confessing one's sin: "If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:8–9 NIV).

Jesus told Nicodemus, a Pharisee, who had come to see Jesus one night, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and Spirit" (John 3:5 NIV). If you have not been baptized, seek to be baptized with water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

As previously stated, if you have not chosen to believe and be saved, then you have chosen *not* to be saved!

Now is the time for every Christian believer in the United States to assist in returning this nation to God! *Time is of the essence!*



Chapter 7

Returning to God

Ancient Israel

History informs us that the kingdom of Israel never repented from its evil and wicked ways but was defiant toward God for urging it to turn from its wicked ways. As a result, it disappeared from biblical history.

The United States of America Could Return to God

God has not yet rendered the final judgment against the United States, but the United States has precious little time to initiate the process of returning to God. *The question is, “Will the leadership of the United States sense the urgency and the need to take the action necessary so America can return to God?”*

Should the reader question the desirability of expending the effort necessary for the United States to return to God, I would suggest that he

or she take the time to again read chapter 2 and the section of chapter four headed “God Pleads with the United States.”

It’s important to understand that God’s law is immutable and the process of returning to God will be a monumental but worthwhile task.

The Founding Fathers agreed on twenty-eight concepts or principles that were used in the development of the Constitution. Many of the founders were familiar with Marcus Cicero’s Natural Law.

The first principle was that the only reliable basis for sound government and just human relations is natural law.

“Dr. William Ebenstein of Princeton says: “The only Roman political writer who exercised enduring influence throughout the ages is Cicero (106–43 B.C.)... Cicero studied law in Rome, and philosophy in Athens... He became the leading lawyer of his time and also rose to the highest office of the state [Roman Consul]” (Skousen 1981, 38).

“Cicero’s compelling honesty led him to conclude that once the reality of the Creator is clearly identified in the mind, the only intelligent approach to government, justice, and human relations is in terms of the laws which the Supreme Creator has already established. The Creator’s order of things is called Natural Law.” (Skousen 1981, 39).

“First of all, Cicero defines Natural Law as “true law”. Then he says:

“True law is right reason in agreement with nature; it is of universal application, unchanging and everlasting; it summons to duty by its commands, and averts from wrongdoing by its prohibitions... It is a sin to try to alter this law, nor is it allowable to repeal any part of it, and it is impossible to abolish it entirely. We cannot be freed from its obligations by senate or people, and we need not look outside ourselves for an expounder or interpreter of it. And there will not be different laws at Rome and at Athens, or different laws now and in the future, but one eternal and unchangeable law will be valid for all nations and all times, and there will be one master and ruler, that is God, over us all, for he is

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the author of this law, its promulgator, and its enforcing judge. Whoever is disobedient is fleeing from himself and denying his human nature, and by reason of this very fact he will suffer the worst punishment (Skousen 1981, 39–40, emphasis added)

“Cicero then set forth the means by which people may judge between good and evil laws. All laws must be measured by God’s Law, which is described by Cicero as follows:

“Therefore Law [of the Creator] is the distinction between things just and unjust, made in agreement with that primal and most ancient of all things, Nature; and in conformity to Nature’s standard are framed those human laws which inflict punishment upon the wicked and protect the good.

“Cicero also emphasizes that the essence of an evil law cannot be mended through ratification by legislature or by popular acclaim. Justice can never be expected from laws arbitrarily passed in violation of standards set up under the laws of Nature or the laws of the Creator. Here is his argument:

“But if the principles of Justice were founded on the decrees of peoples, the edicts of princes, or the decisions of judges, then Justice would sanction robbery and adultery and forgery of wills, in case these acts were approved by votes or decrees of the populace. But if so great a power belongs to the decisions and decrees of fools that the laws of Nature can be changed by their votes, then why do they not ordain that what is bad and baneful shall be considered good and salutary? Or, if a law can make Justice Injustice, can it not also make good out of bad? (Skousen 1981. 45)

Returning to God

Before the United States can return to God, we, the people, must desire to reconsecrate and rededicate the nation, its people, and future generations to God. We must humble ourselves and, in prayer, confess America’s sins and

repent of its evil and wickedness. There must be a demonstrated intention and determination to proceed with the process of returning to God. Then God would, with confidence, reestablish and surround America with His hedge of protection to provide the peaceful environment to continue the process of returning to Him.

As God said, “If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land” (2 Chronicles 7:14 NIV). Unfortunately, humility is not in vogue in our twenty-first-century society. The nation should consider a time of fasting and prayer as the means of demonstrating to God the nation’s sincere desire for repentance. In so doing, we as a nation must commit ourselves to honoring and obeying God’s commandments and laws and make a commitment to worship only Him, refraining from all idol worship.

The process of returning to God for this nation will be an arduous task, requiring perseverance and seeking guidance from God. Many political leaders and influential people with “worldly wisdom” will vigorously oppose the actions necessary for the nation to return to God. However, in spite of strong opposition, returning to God is possible, even at this late date. An example can be found in Jonah, a book in the Old Testament of the Bible, where God directs Jonah to call the wicked city of Nineveh to repentance. It is worth noting, that earlier God had called Jonah to deliver His message of repentance or destruction. At that time Jonah resisted God’s call and attempted to run away and hide from God. In response to Jonah’s second call, the people of Nineveh, along with the king and his nobles, did repent of their sins in the eleventh hour and were saved. That account follows.

Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time, saying, “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and preach to it the message that I tell you.” So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, a three-day journey in extent. And Jonah began to enter the city on the first day’s

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walk. Then he cried out and said, “*Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!*”

So the people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a fast, put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them. Then word came to the king of Nineveh; and he arose from his throne and laid aside his robe, covered himself with sackcloth and sat in ashes. And he caused it to be proclaimed and published throughout Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, “Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything; do not let them eat or drink water. But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily to God; yes, let everyone turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands. Who can tell if God will turn and relent, and turn away from His fierce anger, so that we may not perish?”

Then God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it. (Jonah 3:1–10 NKJV, emphasis added)

The Process of Returning to God

It is time for every Christian and non-Christian to become thoroughly acquainted with the Bible by not only reading it but studying it daily and writing down the answer to this question: “What are the implications of this text for me in living my life?” This won’t be an easy task, but it will be the most rewarding task you have ever undertaken because you will hear, see, and feel God communicating with you. Study the Bible as if you were receiving a message from a very strict but most loving and compassionate father you can imagine.

Concurrently, the process of returning to God must continue with rescinding the Supreme Court decisions (cited in chapter 3), along with all lower court-implementing decisions and all legislative laws instituted to implement those decisions. People must understand that freedom is indeed compatible with Christianity and God’s commandments and decrees. God’s commandments and decrees were not intended to

restrict freedom but are the rules for “right living” so that people can live successfully in harmony with each other in community.

Then the monumental task of reviewing and testing all other federal, state, and local court rulings must begin by determining whether or not they are in compliance with God’s laws. Those that are not in compliance must be rescinded. This will involve assembling teams of qualified Christians who understand God’s laws and decrees, along with the writings of the Founding Fathers.

The federal, state, and local governments must make provisions in their constituting documents that all new laws and statutes and proposed legislation must meet the tests and requirements of natural law (God’s law).

The Ten Commandments, over the most vigorous objections of the ACLU and the atheists, must be restored in America as the standard for right living in community. This was the purpose for which they were given to us by our gracious and loving God.

Every citizen is to accept and embrace the responsibility to diligently prepare to vote by seeking God’s guidance to determine for which candidate to cast his or her vote. The goal of preparation is to seek and elect God-fearing, trained, experienced, and proven virtuous and moral leaders and judges who have demonstrated wisdom and are committed to the following:

- to fear and honor God
- to acknowledge that God’s laws and commands are supreme
- to seek and to serve God and the United States of America
- to avoid conflicts of interest by not being beholden to any person or group
- to study, understand, and obey natural law, also known as God’s law

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- to strive for righteousness
- to always declare the truth
- to render impartial judgments
- to detest and shun bribes
- to not seek personal wealth, fortune, or power or build a personal legacy
- to hate dishonest gain
- to value and maintain personal integrity
- to realize that “*Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people*” (Proverbs 14:34 NKJV, emphasis added)

The Founding Fathers were averse to government indebtedness because they believed it was wrong to burden future generations with the retirement of debt incurred by past generations. Therefore, all levels of government (federal, state, county, and municipal) must bring their spending under control. The budget for each year must include an amount that will retire the governmental unit’s indebtedness in a period no longer than fifteen years. In addition, the chief executive officer of each governmental unit shall submit a balanced budget to the legislative branch for approval at least six months prior to the beginning of its upcoming fiscal year or biennial budgeting cycle.

Every citizen and resident must seek God’s assistance in putting aside, in his or her personal life, the gods of food, sex, and entertainment found in the temple of pleasure; the gods of greed for power, wealth, and achievement found in the temple of power; and gods of romance, family, and me (self) found in the temple of love.

Each resident, Christian and non-Christian, of the United States must understand that during its formative years and the years prior to the age of its apostasy, the people of the United States were richly blessed

by God, enjoying freedoms, liberties, and prosperity, and the nation was rewarded with the benefits of God's hedge of protection. During the last half of the twentieth century, we began the process of expunging God from our society and failed to heed His pleas to obey Him. In response to our arrogance and intransigence, He removed His hedge of protection and allowed the nation to go its own wicked and treacherous way.

Unfortunately, now the United States is at the crossroads of either facing God's righteous judgment or returning to Him and once again basking in His almighty protection, gratefully obeying His commands, and worshipping Him only.

Assuming the nation chooses to return to God, non-Christians are welcome to remain and live in the United States. They may practice their religion. However, they must realize and gratefully acknowledge that the laws of the United States must always take precedence over their religious and nonreligious practices, should there be a conflict. The laws of the United States are based on God's laws and commandments found in the Bible. Our educational system is based on Christian principles. They are welcome to enjoy many of the rights and freedoms that we Christians enjoy. They also are welcome to become a Christian.

Should they, as non-Christians, dislike the freedoms and liberties available, they are always at liberty to emigrate to another country that conforms to their desires and wishes.

Now the nation must determine the steps and methods that must be taken nationally to permanently overcome the malady of historical amnesia that began gripping the nation more than one hundred years after it was founded. The cause of this historical amnesia was that the living generations were not taught to understand and appreciate that the blessings of peace, prosperity, and international prestige were the gifts of a loving God who had, in the past, surrounded the nation with His hedge of protection. In addition, they failed to communicate to the next generations their appreciation and knowledge of the importance of God's

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blessings and their responsibility to communicate that appreciation and importance to the following generations.

The people and leaders (elected and appointed) of the United States must humbly submit to God's care. All must understand that pride, arrogance, self-sufficiency, greed, and lust for power are false gods that can eventually lead to God's righteous judgment.

The nation's elected and appointed leaders, at all levels, must study and understand the biblical principles of Godly leadership. Those leaders must recognize they carry a sacred and high responsibility.

English should be declared the official language of the United States. It may not be politically correct, but is needed to reunify America as a nation.

May America's determination and effort to *return this nation to God* be acceptable to Him!

The question still remains: *Will the United States repent of its defiance of God, humble itself, mend its ways, and return to God?*