

HAS GOD DIVORCED AMERICA?

Divorce Decree

Jesse C. Jones

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Preface

I recently came across a prophecy by David Wilkerson having to do with the state of our nation, and its need for revival. He pointed out that we cannot have faith for revival unless we are convinced that God still wants to pour out His Spirit upon us. He makes his point here by comparing America to Judah, the Southern Kingdom of the Jews, after the Northern Kingdom of Israel had been conquered by Sargon, King of Assyria, in 722 B.C. “God had already divorced Israel, giving them . . . a certificate of divorce” (Jeremiah. 3:8). But now His attention was on Judah, a people who had cheated on Him and walked away from him. God still had a heart for Judah, and He came to them crying to see the certificate of divorce (see Isa. 50:1). He was saying, ‘Show Me your divorce papers! Prove to Me I ever put you away. It was you who walked away from Me! I did nothing to grieve or hurt you. I loved you the whole time. I came to you and I called to you!’ ”

Consider whether this passage of scripture applies to America or not, and answer the following question: Has our nation rejected God, and

allowed evil to overcome good? I am becoming more and more convinced that this is the case. After the terrible disaster of 9 - 11 there was a great turning back to God, and the church (the body of Christ). But as soon as the dust had settled, representatives of our nation were denying one of the foundational statements of Christianity: John 14:6 GNT says, “. . . *I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*”

This denial of God's Word was made with good (although worldly) intention: to minimize ethnic distrust and hatred that could lead to rioting, and potential loss of life. But like many things men do with good intention, God's truth has a way of proving it to be wrong over time. I believe that is the case in this situation as we have learned more about the Islamic faith, and the laws of their Quran. God warned us about the enduring hatred by many of Arabic descent (primarily Islamic zealots) for Christians: in Galatians 4:29 KJV, “*But as he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is until now.*” In this verse of scripture “*he that was born after the flesh*” refers to Ishmael, Abraham's son by Hagar, Sarah's bondwoman; and “*him that was born after the Spirit*” refers to Isaac, Abraham's son of promise by Sarah, his wife. We need to be mindful that all descendants of Ishmael are not strict believers of the Quran any more than

all those that identify themselves as Christians are strict believers of the Bible. Those that perpetrated the heinous acts of 9 - 11 were Islamic zealots (terrorists), we cannot assume that all people of the Islamic faith feel that same hatred for Christians. Nevertheless, it is clear that those of Islamic faith (as interpreted by the Quran), do not worship the same God as Christians, who believe that Jesus Christ is the only path leading into God's kingdom.

During the 2000 election I was in a group from my church that met once each week to share what God seemed to be showing us in regard to our cry for a president that could communicate with God, and could go to Him for guidance when faced with difficult decisions. Many believers were also crying out (praying and fasting) for a change in direction during the 2012 election, but God seemingly failed to get involved. After the 2000 election, when many believers saw their prayers answered, increased interest in God and church attendance seemed to peak, but it didn't last long. Our government continued to make decisions by political expedience, ignoring God's truth given to us in His Word, and we continued to live our lives frivolously and, according to Matthew 24:38 KJV, “. . . *they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage until the day Noe entered into the ark.*” I

wonder if God was not giving us a warning in the 2000 election, when our prayers were answered by the slimmest of margins. Since that time our nation has endured weather disasters of unimaginable magnitude, and criminal acts seem to be ever more evil and vicious. Evil seems to reside in every high and low place, and in many cities people (especially women) are afraid to be on the streets at night. I live in a Bible-belt city with a medium sized population, and when I go out at night to satisfy some commitment I am now acutely aware of my increased vulnerability. This is a far cry from the 1930's, when parents in many cities and towns gave little or no thought as to their children's safety, and allowed them to play with neighborhood friends long after dark. Evil was restrained during that time, and I do not believe it was because everyone was a Christian. Rather, I believe Christian influence within communities was strong and, as a result, evil was restrained (see 2 Th. 2:6-7). Nowadays, parents are afraid to leave their children unattended, even in the light of day, and even in small, off the beaten-track towns and villages.

In America we seem to have turned within: we are seldom interested in those around us, especially those in need. Often, we do not know our neighbor's name, much less do we love them as ourselves. We have allowed

God to be removed from our schools, and at what cost? The leader of our country has stated that the United States is no longer a Christian nation, and, contrary to the Bible, he discounts the idea that Jesus is the only pathway to heaven and the Kingdom of God. The very fabric from which our country's past greatness was formed, the Christian family, has basically been destroyed. The number of divorces now exceeds the number of marriages, a few families have both father and mother. We have subsidized both sloth and failure, and have more of both as a result. It is as if God has been rejected by our nation, and His beneficial oversight no longer protects us.

Let's face it, our nation is corrupt and evil, what right do we have to expect God to intervene on our behalf? In an appropriate scripture Isaiah 1:2 says, *"Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord God hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me."* In Isaiah 59:1-4 KJV He adds, *"Behold the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither His ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear. For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness. None calleth for justice [righteousness], nor any pleadeth for [in] truth: they trust in vanity, and speak lies; they con-*

ceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity.” At this point I believe it would take a Jonah preaching repentance, and a response like that he received in Nineveh (when all men and beasts were covered with sackcloth crying mightily unto God) to convince Him that we have turned from evil and violence (see Jon. 3:7-10). What's the chance of that happening?

Those familiar with the Bible are aware of the fact that our world is coming to an end. The Book of Revelation describes the horrific events scheduled to occur during the last seven years of the rule of man on earth. Many of the events occurring at that time are described in the Bible, and certain actions on the world scene seem to be lining up in accordance with these scriptures. To give the reader some understanding of this great prophecy I have included a brief summary describing the beginning, middle and end of this period.

The start of this period is described by Jesus as “*the beginning of sorrows*” in Matthew 24:8, and the woman (Israel) travailing in birth pangs (Re. 12:2). Daniel 9:26-27; 12 indicates that the prince (antichrist) that shall come will destroy the city (Jerusalem) and the temple. He then makes a treaty with the Jews allowing them to continue the sacrifice and oblation for a week (seven years). But he breaks his treaty in the middle of the week (3 1/2 years), and requires all

mankind to worship him on penalty of death. Jesus, when answering His disciples' question about the timing of the end of the world, stated that when they saw the abomination of desolation standing in the temple then all those in Judea should flee to the mountains (M't. 24:15-21). Great tribulation then begins as the antichrist starts his reign of terror about the middle of the seven-year period. At some undefined time after the start of the Great Tribulation the sign of the Son of man (Christ) will appear in heaven, and He will come to gather His elect from the four corners of the earth. This is commonly referred to as the rapture. The end comes in Revelation 19:11, when Christ comes to destroy the beast (antichrist) and the kings of the earth that joined him. They are defeated, and Satan is bound and cast into the bottomless pit while the antichrist and false prophet are cast alive into the lake of fire and brimstone.

My purpose in writing this book is to record God's response in the OT in dealing with the Israelites disobedience, sin, and spiritual adultery. I believe there are many similarities between God's care and provision for Israel, and that for America. The question raised herein is, "Does God's loving oversight of America include punishment for sin and rebellion similar to that inflicted on the Jews?" I hope to be able to draw some conclusions

about the future of America by studying God's resolution of difficulties with the Israelites as recorded in the OT.

In writing this book I have used many different biblical word dictionaries, and lexicons. My primary reference has been the Dickson New Analytical Bible (KJV), and all scripture references are from this source, unless otherwise noted. I have also used the "Interlinear Greek - English New Testament" by Jay P. Green, Sr., and the "Interlinear NIV Hebrew - English Old Testament" by John R. Kohlenberger III. I have used Hodge's Systematic Theology, and Keil and Delitzsch Commentary on the OT, and lest I forget, I have used Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible as necessary. I have obtained much of the history of Israel from Halley's Bible Handbook. The statistical data on the present-day church I have taken from Bob Beltz's February 14, 2009 Religion and Spirituality web site.

Chapter 1

Rebellion

(Numbers 13:1-33; 14:1-45)

As the Israelites approached the promise land the Lord spoke to Moses and told him to send twelve men, one from each tribe, into the land of Canaan, to search out the land, and see whether the people that dwell there were strong or weak, few or many, and whether the land was good or bad (fat or lean), and the cities were fortified or vulnerable. So these twelve men searched the land, making observations and gathering samples of the produce grown there.

After forty days they returned with a large cluster of grapes, as well as pomegranates and figs. They reported that the land was surely a land of milk and honey but that the people were strong, and the cities were walled, and very great. Also, they reported that giants, descendants of Anak, lived there. Caleb (who was one of the twelve) then said let us go up at once, and possess the land for we are well able to overcome it.

But the men that went to spy the land with Joshua and Caleb disagreed, claiming that the people of the land were stronger than the children of Israel. When the congregation heard this evil report they cried out, saying, *“Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt, or would God we had died in this wilderness. And wherefore hath the Lord brought us into this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt?”* (Nu. 14:2-3).

Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before the assembly of the congregation, and Joshua and Caleb spoke, saying if the Lord is with us He will bring us into the land and give it to us. They tried to keep the children of Israel from rebelling against God by reminding them that He was with them, and the people of Canaan would be defenseless against them. But the congregation was out of control and began throw stones at Joshua, Caleb, Moses, and Aaron.

“And the Lord said to unto Moses, How long will this people provoke [despise] me? and how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have shewed among them? I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation and mightier than they. And Moses said unto the Lord, Then the Egyp-

tians shall hear it, (for thou broughtest up this people in thy might from among them:)"

(Nu. 14:11-13). Moses then interceded for the nation of Israel saying to God,

"Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people according to the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt until now. And the Lord said, I have pardoned according to thy word." (Nu. 14:19-20).

We see in this narrative the tendency of the Israelites to follow their own will and judgment rather than God's. They received a negative report from ten of the twelve spies that were sent into the land to assess the agricultural productivity and strength of the people, and, based on the spies report, they acted on their own will rather than on God's promise to give them the land. Joshua and Caleb tried to convince the congregation to trust God and follow his guidance. They refused in spite of the many miracles God had performed in bringing them out of Egypt with the intent of giving them the promise land of Canaan.

As a result of this rebellion God threatened to destroy the nation of Israel, and raise up another in its place, but Moses interceded, and God agreed to pardon the iniquity of the Israelite nation. But those that failed to recognize the glory and miracles performed in Egypt, and in the wilderness, and did not

hearken to His voice and enter the land were not to see the land promised to their fathers. All those that were 20 years old and older were to be destined to die in the wilderness during a forty year period. Joshua and Caleb and their families, and those who entered the wilderness under twenty-years of age, whose parents died during the forty-year period, would be allowed into the land.

In contemporary America there are a great number of people who identify themselves as Christians that are like these Israelites. They do not study God's Word nor do they believe much of what is recorded there, and as a result, when it comes to accepting God's will over that of their own will and desire, they do not give God freedom to work His will in their lives (Philippians. 2:13). A Christian must be "born-again", which means that he/she must be cleansed with the washing of regeneration, and renewed by the Holy Spirit (Tit. 3:5). In John 3:5, Jesus describes this to Nicodemus by telling him he must be "born of water and of the Spirit".

In the Titus passage Paul refers to the moral cleansing of regeneration necessary for the sinner to be able to understand spiritual truth, and the difference between right and wrong. This washing with water is followed by the inner cleansing that comes from the blood of Christ sprinkling our heart from an

“evil conscience”, which removes the guilt of sin from our heart (Hebrews. 10:22).

For the first time in our lives we are truly free - free to choose the right (Godly) path, or the wrong (worldly) path. We are somewhat like Adam was initially, he could choose to follow God’s command, or he could be influenced by Eve to accept Satan’s offer. However, we have something that Adam did not have - we have the Holy Spirit within us encouraging us to accept His guidance, and be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ.

When Paul mentions renewing by the Holy Spirit he refers to the sanctification process, in which the Holy Spirit renews our minds with the intent of making us holy (Ro. 12:2). The part of us that is represented by “the old man” (Adamic nature, or sin nature) is the part of us that dies on the cross with Jesus. Paul uses the word “reckon” to describe this - we reckon ourselves dead with Jesus, and are resurrected with Him with a new spirit - we are “born again”. We then enter that phase of salvation referred to as “sanctification”. Receiving and acting on God’s will rather than our own will, is a measure of our progress in the process of sanctification. We must believe that God is always right, and we are wrong. I do not see much of this attitude expressed in our land. At the national level we hardly recognize God at all, much less seek his word over our own. It has not always been that way: the founders of our great

nation were (by and large) strong believers, who sought guidance from God at every turn. A quote from Woodrow Wilson emphasizes this point: "...the Bible...is the one supreme source of revelation of the meaning of life, the nature of God and need of men. It is the only guide of life which really leads the spirit in the way of peace and salvation."

The additional point we should note in this rebellion against God is the fact that the nation of Israel was saved from God's wrath through the intercessory prayer of Moses. The 1828 Dictionary of the English Language defines the word "intercessor" as "A mediator; one who interposes between parties at variance, with a view to reconcile them; one who pleads in behalf of another." An intercessor must have a personal relationship with God: he must have been tested by God and be found trustworthy. The Theological Workbook of the OT by Harris, et al says this: "An intercessor is one who makes 'contact' with God as opposed to the many who simply dabble in prayer." In Isaiah 59:16 God wondered that there was no intercessor in all the Jewish nation. Sadly, I believe He would have the same comment when He looks down on America. Who has the moral and spiritual stature with God such that he could intercede for our nation?

Chapter 2

Idolatry

(Exodus Chapters 19-34)

In the third month after the Jewish nation departed from the land of Egypt, they entered the wilderness of Sinai and camped before the mount located there. The Lord called to Moses out of the mountain, telling him that he should remind the children of Israel what God did to the Egyptians, and how He had brought them safely thus far. He told Moses to tell them that if they will obey His voice and keep his covenant they will be a peculiar treasure to Him above all people: they will be a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. This is after the incident with the spies and therefore seems to be an affirmation by God that He had in fact forgiven them. Moses descended the mount and told the people that they should sanctify themselves and wash their clothes, for the Lord would come down in the sight of all the people on Mount Sinai. They were not to approach the mount, nor touch the border of it, for anyone that touched the mount would die. On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightnings, with a thick cloud upon the mount. A

trumpet sounded exceedingly loud so that all the people in the camp trembled. God told Moses to keep the people from coming near the mount for fear that they would perish. So the people stood far off while Moses drew near to the thick darkness where God was and God gave Moses the civil and sacramental Laws by which the nation of Israel should be governed. Moses then told the people all the words of the Lord, and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice that they would do everything that the Lord required. After this Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up unto the God of Israel, but Moses alone came near the Lord. Moses asked the elders to tarry there while he went up in the mountain where he remained for forty days and nights. While on the mount God gave Moses the specifications for the tabernacle, and instructions on how the worship should be conducted. *“And He gave unto Moses, when He had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God”* (Ex. 31:18).

Down below the people were becoming restless and questioning whether Moses would ever return. They persuaded Aaron to make them an idol of a golden calf which they then proceeded to worship as the god who brought them up from the land of Egypt. The Lord told Moses that he needed to

quickly descend from the mount for the people had turned away from His commands and were worshipping a golden calf as god. Exodus 32:10 says, “*Now let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation.*” Again, Moses interceded for the nation of Israel, and God repented of the evil which He thought to do to His people. In his appeal to God Moses told God to blot his name from the Book of Life rather than to destroy the nation of Israel.

Here we see that God hates idolatry so much He was willing to destroy the Israelites and start again with a nation of Moses’ descendants. Many in our day tend to think of idols as physical statues or images that are worshipped as gods, but I believe a better understanding of the the word “idol” is given in the 1828 Dictionary of the English Language which says, “Any thing on which we set our affections; that to which we indulge an excessive and sinful attachment. An idol is anything which usurps the place of God in the hearts of His rational creatures.” This definition seems to ensnare most of us. Given this definition, God would certainly be just in divorcing us, and removing His protection from our nation.

Several interesting scriptures mentioning idolatry are listed below:

1 Samuel 15:23 - *“For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.”*

1 Corinthians 10:14 - *“Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.”*

2 Corinthians 6:16 - *“And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”*

Galatians 5:19-21 - *“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornications, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have told you in times past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”*

Colossians 3:5 - *“Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry.”*

Chapter 3

Rejection

(1 Samuel Chapters 8, 9, 31)

When Samuel the prophet grew old he made his sons judges over Israel. His sons did not walk in his ways, but instead took bribes and perverted judgment, which led the elders of Israel to gather together and petition Samuel to give them a king to rule over the nation. Samuel was displeased by this request and went to the Lord to discuss it. *“And the Lord said to Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign [be king] over them”* (1 Sa. 8:7). In addition, the Lord told Samuel to tell the people all the things that a king reigning over them would do including using their sons as personal servants, conscription for service in his army, and working in his fields to gather crops. He would take their daughters to be maids, cooks, and bakers. He would take their fields, their vineyards, and oliveyards, and would take the most desired young men

and put them to his work. The people would then cry out, but the Lord would refuse to hear them in that day. Nevertheless, the people refused to listen to Samuel and insisted that he appoint a king over them. Notice that God did not threaten any action against them other than the fact that He would not hear them when they came to Him crying about the actions of the king they desired.

Subsequently, the Lord led Samuel to Saul, a choice young man: there was not a more desirable young man in all Israel. Samuel took Saul into his house and fed him a sumptuous dinner. The next day Samuel anointed Saul and sent him on his way with explicit instructions that he was to go to Gilgal and wait seven days until Samuel joined him. As Saul turned from Samuel to leave God gave him a new heart. This act of receiving a new heart is one of the wonderful changes that God promises new born-again Christians (Ezekiel 36:26). Of course, we know Saul did not become a born-again believer, but this statement seems to indicate that he was changed in some way to make him a more effective king .

“Samuel called the people together unto the Lord in Mizpeh; and said unto the children of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I brought Israel out of Egypt, and deliv-

ered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all kingdoms, and of them that oppressed you: And ye have this day rejected your God, who himself saved you out of all your adversities and your tribulations; and ye have said unto him, Nay, but set a king over us. Now therefore present yourselves before the Lord by your tribes, and by your thousands. And when Samuel had caused all the tribes of Israel to come near, the tribe of Benjamin was taken. When he had caused the tribe of Benjamin to come near by their families, the family of Matri was taken, and Saul the son of Kish was taken: and when they sought him, he could not be found” (1 Sa. 10:17-21). Saul was thus chosen before the people as their king, but when they sought him the Lord told them that he had hid himself “*among the stuff*” (1 Sa. 10:22). They ran and fetched him and Samuel said to all the people, “*See ye him whom the Lord hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people? And all the people shouted, and said, God save the king*” (1 Sa. 10:24).

Saul ruled the nation of Israel for forty years, and though he manifested a humble nature initially, he did not maintain that characteristic for very long. After David slew Goliath, and was subsequently recognized by the people as the leader of Saul’s army, Saul became insanely jealous, and began to look for ways in which he could kill him. Saul soon became aware of the fact that God had replaced him as king of Israel and had anointed David in his place, and he

began to actively pursue David in an attempt to slay him. He pursued David from place to place, and cave to cave, but was unsuccessful in finding him. On two occasions during this time David had opportunities to kill Saul, but he refused to slay God's anointed, in spite of Saul's attempts on his own life.

As the end of Saul's reign approached we find him going to battle with the Philistines at Gilboa. When Saul saw the Philistine army he was afraid, and greatly troubled. He went to the Lord to enquire about the battle, but the Lord refused to answer him. Saul then sought out a seer with the intent of contacting Samuel, who was now dead. The witch of Endor, who possessed a familiar spirit, conjured up Samuel, and Saul asked him what he should do about the upcoming battle with the Philistines, since God would not advise him. Samuel told Saul that the Lord would deliver Israel into the hands of the Philistines, and that Saul and his sons would be killed in the battle. Upon hearing this Saul collapsed, having no strength and fearing what Samuel had told him.

As Samuel had prophesied, the Philistines fought against Israel and the men of Israel fled before the onslaught. Saul's three sons were killed in the battle, and Saul was sorely wounded. Saul asked his armor-bearer to thrust him

through with his sword so that the Philistines would not abuse him in the process of killing him. However, the armor-bearer was afraid to kill the king, so Saul fell on his own sword and died.

In the story of Saul, the first king of Israel, we find God being rejected by the nation of Israel. This encounter with God differed from the first two examples (Chapters 1 and 2) that we have considered, for Israel was not judged here for some grievous sin. Rather, God seems to accept this rejection, for He tells Samuel to hearken unto their voice, but to advise them of what they are getting into by asking for a king. God then selects what appears to be an excellent candidate in Saul, who He describes as a choice young man with none like him among all the people. God changed Saul's heart, from which we assume that He removed the hard places, and gave him a heart of flesh (Ez. 36:26). Before this, Saul's life was ruled by his old Adamic nature: always destined to follow the direction of his personal desires and lusts. In changing his heart God was preparing him to receive godly guidance, and thus be capable of choosing between good and evil. From what we see in this story it appears that God felt that Saul could receive His guidance and (hopefully) follow it, so that God could lead His chosen nation through the kingship of Saul. What we find is that Saul continued to be ruled by his own self-willed, egotistical, arrogant,

jealous nature. He refused to surrender his will to God and thus was eventually removed as king and replaced by David.

The lesson I think we can learn from this example is that God will abandon a chosen nation if He is rejected. Here we see Saul crying out to God for guidance after he has refused to accept God's will and instead followed his own instincts, but God refused to respond. Sadly, I see many parallels between Saul's failure as king of Israel, and America's move away from the godly heritage we once held so dearly. I remember many people crying out after the evil disaster of 9 - 11, asking how God could let such a thing happen. We as a nation have removed God from just about every institution: schools, holidays, business, the public square, families, welfare, many churches, etc. How could we expect Him to protect our nation from principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this world, and against spiritual wickedness in high places (Ephesians. 6:12). I imagine He feels toward America as He expressed in Luke 34-35 about Israel, *"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see me, until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."*

We have had leaders of our nation in the past that God could guide with varying degrees of success, but I do not see any hope for that with our present leadership. If that is a true assessment of where we are, we shouldn't be surprised when God doesn't answer when we cry out for our nation.

Chapter 4

Dissolution

(1 Kings 11,12)

Solomon, David's son and heir to the throne of the nation of Israel, had an illustrious career as king of Israel during his early years. He was known as the wisest man on earth and he brought great wealth to the nation. During his rule he built the first temple, following the specifications given to David by God. But in his later years he fell subject to his lusts, as evinced by his 700 wives and 300 concubines, who led him into debauchery and abomination. He built places of worship for the gods of his wives, and the Lord was angry with him because his heart was turned away from the God of Israel. *"Wherefore the Lord said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it unto thy servant. Notwithstanding in thy days I will not do it for David thy father's sake: but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son. Howbeit I will*

not rend away all the kingdom; but will give one tribe to thy son for David my servant's sake, and for Jerusalem which I have chosen" (1 Ki. 11:11-13).

Jeroboam was the son of Nebat, an official under Solomon. Jeroboam, because of his abilities, was made an overseer of a part of Solomon's building operations in Jerusalem. Rehoboam was Solomon's son and logical heir to the throne of the kingdom. But he was a foolish ruler whose actions resulted in the kingdom being split into two separate nations made up of the Northern Kingdom (Israel), which consisted of ten tribes, and the Southern Kingdom (Judah), which consisted of two tribes. Now Jeroboam was the leader of the Northern Kingdom. In order to keep the two kingdoms separate he adopted calf worship, which was the religion of Egypt. The worship of God was identified with Judah and the family of David; thus, calf worship became the symbol of Israel's independence from Judah. The original Kingdom of Israel established by God lasted for 120 years: Saul for 40 years, David for 40 years, and Solomon for 40 years. After the division, the Northern Kingdom (Israel) lasted just over 200 years, and was destroyed by the Assyrians in 721 BC. The Southern Kingdom (Judah) lasted just over 300 years, and was conquered by the Babylonians in 587 BC.

The Northern Kingdom was ruled by 19 kings during its 200-year existence, all of whom worshipped the Golden Calf, or Baal. At no time was the apostasy as extreme as under the rule of Ahab and his evil wife Jezebel. It was during this frightful time that the Lord sent His prophet Elijah to denounce Ahab and pronounce the judgment of God on Israel's crimes and apostasy. In the ultimate confrontation came when Elijah challenged the prophets of Baal at Mt. Carmel. He told the 450 prophets of Baal to place an offering on wood and pray to their god to cause fire to come down on the wood. Accordingly, the prophets of Baal prepared the offering and prayed to their god to come down with fire and consume the offering. They prayed from morning until noon at which time Elijah began to mock them. Elijah told the prophets of Baal to pray louder for their god might be talking, or on a journey, or asleep and need to be awakened. At this the prophets of Baal cried even louder and began to cut themselves, as was their manner. They continued this spectacle until the time of the evening sacrifice, but there was no answer from their god. Then Elijah constructed an altar, placed wood accordingly, and put the sacrifice upon the wood. Then he called for four barrels of water to be poured on the sacrifice and the wood. He repeated this process two more times so that water was running around the altar. Elijah then prayed, “. . . *Lord God of Abraham, Isaac,*

and of Israel let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again. Then the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed all the sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The Lord, he is God; the Lord he is the God” (1 Ki. 18:36-39).

Unfortunately, Israel failed to live up to their vow to God. Their kings continued to worship Baal and spread their abominations to the Southern Kingdom Judah. God finally gave up on Israel and pronounced this curse upon them: *“For the Lord shall smite Israel, as a reed is shaken in water, and He shall root up Israel out of this good land, which He gave to their fathers, and shall scatter them beyond the river, because they made their groves, provoking the Lord to anger”* (1 Ki. 14:15).

We see here a case in which God totally abandoned ten of the tribes of Israel. The Assyrian policy was to deport conquered people to other lands, and after Israel was conquered by the Assyrians in 722 BC many were carried away, and the ten tribes: Reuben, Gad, Aser, Naphtalim, Manasseh, Simeon, Levi, Issachar, Zebulun, and Joseph essentially lost their tribal identity. It is not possi-

ble to identify these tribes in our extant world, but God knows at least 12,000 individuals in each of these tribes, for near the end He seals them with the Father's name in their foreheads (Re. 7:3-8). God had promised that a remnant of Abraham's descendants would be saved at the end (Is. 1:9, 11:11; Je. 23:3; Ez. 6:8; Joe. 2:32, Mi. 2:12, Ro. 9:27). Zechariah 13:8-9 gives us one other piece of information about the size of the remnant by saying, "*And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein.*" God has made no such promise to America, and if we turn away from Him to the worship of other gods, as Israel did, He could take equivalent action against our nation, in which case America could disappear from the world scene forever, or He could divide our nation as He did with Israel. Either one of these out-comes is hard to imagine, for America has been the leader of the free world for many years, but we need to keep in mind that the leader of our country has already declared that we are no longer a Christian nation. In Malachi 3:6 God warns, "*For I am the Lord, I change not*".

Chapter 5

Divorce

2 Kings 25

The destruction of Judah took place in four campaigns beginning in 606 BC and ending in 586 BC. In his final campaign Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came against Jerusalem and besieged it. After four months of famine in the city, and there was no bread for the people to eat. The king of Judah (Zedekiah) fled the city with his army but they were overtaken by the Chaldees (Babylonians), who killed Zedekiah's sons, and put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and took him to Babylon along with 832 captives, leaving only the poorest class of people in the land (2 Ki. 25:1-7).

Nebuchadnezzar took 20 years to destroy Jerusalem. He first came seeking only tribute. Daniel, one of the captives taken to Babylon in 606 BC, became Nebuchadnezzar's advisor, and may have been a positive influence for Jerusalem at this time. Later, Judah made an alliance with Egypt, forcing Nebuchadnezzar's hand, and he subsequently destroyed Jerusalem in 586 BC. Five years

later the Babylonians came again and took another 745 captives, making a total of 4,600 Jews that were taken to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar's army. The captivity of Judah by Babylon had been predicted 100 years earlier by Isaiah and Micah (Is. 39:6, Mic. 4:10): after it had occurred Jeremiah predicted that it would last 70 years (Je. 25: 11-12).

Most of the kings of Judah served idols and followed the evil ways of the kings of the Northern Kingdom, Israel. However, some of Judah's kings served God, and at times there were great reformatations in Judah. Of the 20 kings of Judah, 12 were considered bad and eight were considered good. Manasseh was the longest reigning king and was one of the most evil rulers of Judah. The Lord gave prophecy through his servants regarding Manasseh and Judah: *"Because Manasseh king of Judah done these abominations, and hath done wickedly above all that the Amorites did, which were before him, and hath made Judah also to sin with his idols: Therefore thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Behold, I am bringing such evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever heareth of it, both his ears shall tingle. And I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria, and the plummet of the house of Ahab: and I will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish, wiping it, and turning it upside down. And I will forsake the remnant of mine inheritance, and deliver them into the hand of their enemies; and they shall become a prey and a spoil to all their enemies; Because they*

have done that which was evil in my sight, and have provoked me to anger, since the day their fathers came forth out of Egypt, even unto this day. Moreover, Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to the another; beside his sin wherewith he made Judah to sin, in doing that which was evil in the sight of the Lord” (2 Ki. 21:11-16).

In this chapter we see that God finally becomes angry enough to deliver the last of His chosen nation of Jews to their enemies. He had worked with them for over 1300 years, from the time that Abraham was called, to the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians. God will continue to wait from this time until Christ’s second coming, when a remnant of the Jewish people will be saved, and God will make good on His promise to Abraham (Is. 1:9, 11:11; Je. 23:3; Ez. 6:8; Joe. 2:32; Mi. 2:12; Ro. 9:27). The reason God decided that He had no choice but to give up on His hopes for a chosen nation is given in 1 Kings 11:9-13: *“And the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice. And he had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which the Lord commanded. Wherefore the Lord said unto Solomon, forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it*

to thy servant. Notwithstanding in thy days I will not do it for David thy father's sake: but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son. Howbeit I will not rend away all the kingdom; but will give one tribe to thy son for David my servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake which I have chosen." This pretty well summarizes the problems of the nation that God chose and dealt with during the entire period from late in Solomon's rule until the final destruction of Jerusalem, and captivity of the Jews by the Babylonians.

The Southern Kingdom (Judah) consisted of the two tribes (Benjamin and Judah) that represented the nation that God chose when He called Abraham. Like the Northern Kingdom they also succumbed to the temptation of idolatry and caused God to prophesy that He would forsake them and deliver them into the hands of their enemies. God undoubtedly felt like the desperate father that finally gets to the place where he realizes that he must reject a beloved son in the hope that the son's life of sin and degradation will finally turn him back home. This is somewhat like the parable of the prodigal son given in Luke 15:11-32. I believe God would feel the same way the father did when the prodigal son returned home: "*. . . my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found*".

The sin that plagued the Israelites more than any other was that of idolatry. In the world of today we tend to think of this as worshipping the Golden Calf, or some other god represented by a picture or some physical model. To really understand the insidious nature of this sin I believe we need to look within ourselves. I can determine to be my own god, and let my desires and lusts control my life. This is basically what happened with Adam, he chose to be his own god, and he passed this on to his descendants (us). If I have not believed into Christ this places me in jeopardy of being under the total control of Satan, who we know has only one goal: that of destroying what God created (us). If I am a believer into Christ I must die to myself (renew my mind), and be conformed to the image of Christ. Unfortunately, we still have our psyche, which includes the id: that part of the psyche that is the reservoir of the libido that leads many into trouble. It was the sexual practices of the Canaanites, with their gods Baalim, Diana, Ashtoreth, and others, that seemed to draw the Israelites into the worship of false gods. Jezebel, the wife of Ahab, one of the kings of Israel, was a strong believer in Baal worship, and she led many Israelites into the worship of false gods.

I believe we are playing with fire with the great emphasis placed on sex in today's society. You cannot turn on a TV without being exposed to some sort

of sexual content, whether it is a short advertisement, or a full-length program. Movies are hardly any better, but we are supposedly warned by the rating scheme used by the movie producers. Women's clothing seems to be designed to exploit feminine pulchritude, and men respond to it by something close to what I would call worship of sex. But all this is just a means to the real false god: money. I believe we are reaping the (benefits?) of the love of money, which we know is the root of all evil. 1 Timothy 6:7-11 says: *"For we brought nothing into this world and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness."*

I was raised in the 1930's - 40's, at a time when manufacturers (and their employees) realized that the quality of their product was the path to success (and sales). The buying public had little to spend, and, as a result they were more discriminating in what they purchased. I recently received an email advertising various products from 1934. A two-story home was \$1,092, ladies

shoes were \$1.97, and nice dresses from \$0.97. In those days products from China were generally made from pewter, and were pretty much junk. The supplier in China did not worry about his reputation, nor about the life of his product, for it was seldom identifiable by the American purchaser. Today it is the almighty buck (weak as it is) for which everything is sacrificed. In the crazy world we live in, as product quality diminishes, the pride of workmanship suffers: soon we will no longer have skilled workers dedicated to the quality of their work. They are no longer measured by the quality of their work but by the quantity. The final nail in the coffin will be the loss of quality workers, as well as quality managers, and plant owners. Today we seem to place more trust in foreign manufactured products than we do in American made products. The tide has turned and the American product no longer manifests quality - the manufacturer no longer expects the product to last: in fact they design the product to fail about the time the warranty runs out. I'm not sure what mentality prevails in the manufacturing world in foreign countries, but I have read that the Chinese are operating the way we did the 1940's and 50's.

The Bible seems to teach that all other evils spring from the love of money. We know that it is harder for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God than for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle. This is just another Biblical truth

that emphasizes the fact that we can never get enough, we always want more, more. If we could get it through our heads that all things belong to God: we just act as stewards over what He gives us until we meet Him face to face. I daresay that the people I knew in the 1930's were happier than the people I know in the 2013's. Our strong desire (lust) for money only leads to other evils. Consider the financial condition of our nation: we are basically bankrupt. The only thing keeping us afloat is the fact that we can print money. Of course, the more we print, the less it is worth. This makes me think of God's view about the love of money: the more we accumulate, the less it is worth if we measure worth by our quality of life (emotional and spiritual). Money is just another idol, and we may come to the time when it is as useless as Baal was in bringing fire down in the competition with God on Mount Carmel.

Chapter 6

Synthesis

In the first five chapters of this book we have given a synopsis of five confrontations between God and the chosen nation of Israel. God's relationship with individual believers undoubtedly influences His dealings with their nation, but our focus is on the God that made the world and rules the nations, who has determined their seasons (opportunities) and the bounds of their habitation (Ac. 17:26). We have considered only those events in which God contemplated, or actually took, punitive action against the nation of Israel, making the assumption that there may be something we can learn about God's recent actions (or inaction) concerning our own nation, the USA. This argument is based on the postulation that God established America as a Christian nation, and He provided blessing and protection for us from the time the pilgrims entered the country in 1492 AD, until late in the twentieth-century.

Our nation has suffered major disasters in the past few years and the cry often heard is, “How could God let this happen?”, or “Where was God?” This writing attempts to provide a possible answer to that question. I believe the answer to these questions may well be that God is where we have placed Him: on the outside looking in at the nation He had blessed so greatly in the past. We are, in a way, in the same position that the nation of Israel was from the destruction of Jerusalem in 587 BC, until the reestablishment of the nation in 1948 AD. During this time period God seemingly abandoned Israel, and left them to work out their destiny in the world without His involvement. Jewish people really had no nation during this period, and they suffered terribly without God’s protection. Of course, Jesus Christ came into the world during this period, but He was on a greater mission than that of re-establishing the nation of Israel.

It is not so much that God has abandoned our nation, it is really the other way around: we have abandoned (or rejected) Him. You often hear arguments from non-believers that America was never a Christian nation, that God doesn’t even exist, and if He does He certainly doesn’t get involved in the affairs of nations. But this statement directly contradicts God’s Word, the Bible, and reflects a serious lack of knowledge about our country’s heritage. There

are countless examples that could be cited to validate the fact that America was established on the basis of a strong belief in God, and the necessity of a vital morality and knowledge being necessary to good government. I will cite only one written by John Adams: “We have no government 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 made for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.”

In order to complete our comparison of the failures of Israel to that of our own nation we will close by reviewing the sins of the nation of Israel, and try to determine whether America is guilty of similar iniquities.

I. Rebellion

The Hebrew root word interpreted as “rebellion” refers to a breach in relationships, civil or religious, between two parties. In the context of national considerations the verb form indicates a casting off of allegiance, a rebellion against rulers. We see this in the action of the Israelites when they refused to enter the promise land. They rebelled against God’s will that they enter the land and conquer the people that were there. They elected to follow the advice

of ten of the twelve men sent to spy out the land over that of the remaining two (Joshua and Caleb).

I see this as very characteristic of our own nation. Time was, when our nation was being established, that a few dedicated and virtuous God-fearing men stepped-up to do the right thing, and eventually were successful in winning freedom. Now it appears that most thorny national decisions are influenced by political correctness, and the outcome of opinion surveys. If the decision about going to war with the British in 1776 had been made on the basis of political correctness, America would now be part of Canada. When Israel refused to follow God's will and enter the promise land, Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before the congregation. Can you imagine the President of the United States (or any of our leaders) falling on his face on the capital steps crying out over the religious and moral state of our union? What has happened to the boldness and goodness that at one time were our trademark? In his inaugural address to the nation George Washington said: "No people can be bound to acknowledge and adore the invisible hand which conducts the affairs of men more than 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..We ought to be no less persuaded that the propi-

tious smiles of heaven cannot be expected on a nation that disregards the eternal rules of order and right, which heaven itself has ordained.” Almost a hundred years later Abraham Lincoln stated: ”It is the duty of nations, as well as of men, to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God and to recognize the sublime truth announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history, that those nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord.” When Alex De’Tocqueville, French philosopher of the nineteenth century, visited America to find the secret of her greatness he traveled across the land seeking to find the reason. It wasn’t until he visited the churches “afame with righteousness” did he find the secret of America’s greatness. Returning to France he summarized his findings: “America is great because America is good; and if America ever ceases to be good, America will cease to be great.” Although we still have Bible believing churches, the secular, unbelieving majority seem to be winning the nation by eliminating God from all aspects of our society. But as De’Tocqueville implied, the greatest problem may be with the church’s failure to maintain that flame of righteousness.

I would argue that we have:

1. Failed to acknowledge the hand of God in our national decision-making.

2. Failed to recognize his hand in the blessings which this nation has received in becoming the greatest nation on earth.
3. We have ignored the eternal rules of order and right ordained by God in heaven.
4. Failed to acknowledge our dependence on the overruling power of God.
5. We have failed to recognize the truth from the Holy Scriptures that those nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord.
6. We have failed to keep the flame of righteousness burning in our churches.
7. We have ceased being good, and are thus no longer a God-fearing nation.

Thus, according to Washington, Lincoln, and De'Toqueville, God no longer looks on our nation with favor, we should no longer expect God to bless our nation, and we should recognize that America is no longer great. We find our nation in a similar position to that of Israel when they failed to believe God, and refused to enter the promise land. But Israel

had an intercessor, a man that God had tested and found to be trustworthy, one who could intercede for them. This raises the question: "Does America have anyone with the qualifications of an intercessor?" I know there are many

devout believers that are praying for our nation, but are there any that God thoroughly trusts, with the stature of a humble servant of God and who is poor in spirit; that mourns for the condition of our land; who is meek; who hungers and thirsts after righteousness; who is merciful; poor in heart; is a peacemaker; who is persecuted for righteousness sake; and who men reproach, persecute, and speak evil of falsely because of his/her stand for the Lord. We can only pray that there are such committed believers out there who are led to intercede for our land.

2. Idolatry

To understand the full meaning of the word “idolatry” we need to consider both the first and second commandment. The first commandment states that “*Thou shalt have no other Gods before me*”. This command requires the recognition of Jehovah God as the true God. In order to have this kind of relationship with God we need to “know” Him, and He must “know” us. Notes in the Recovery Version of the Bible on John 3:16 say, “Believing into the Lord is not the same as believing Him. To believe Him is to believe that He is true and real, but to believe into Him is to receive Him and be united with Him as one. The former is to acknowledge a fact objectively; the latter is to receive a life subjec-

tively.” The preposition “in” is often mistakenly used in various versions of the Bible in scriptures like John 3:16, where the proper interpretation should be “*believing into*”. If we believe **in** Christ we have only an objective knowledge of who He is; whereas, if we believe **into** Him we have that relationship described in the Bible as being “in Christ”, and having Christ “in us”, best described in John 17. We must also believe that God the Father is who He declares Himself to be, and that we are his children. We must be willing to confess our belief in Jehovah in all circumstances, even under duress.

The second commandment states that, “*Thou shalt not make thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the waters beneath the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.*” In this commandment the Lord has declared Himself to be a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation of them that hate Him, but showing mercy unto thousands of generations of those that love Him and keep His commandments. The degradation and miseries of the whole world are the inevitable consequences of turning the

truth of God into a lie, and worshipping the creature more than the Creator.

It all started when Adam chose to be his own God: he was duped by Satan, and his action amounted to a rejection of God, and worshipping of the creature (himself). We are guilty of idolatry when we commit ourselves (worship) any creature pleasing activity to the exclusion of worshipping God: including the love of money, sex, power, notoriety, and any other self-gratifying endeavor.

God even seems to include lukewarm “Laodiceans” in this category (Re. 3:15-18). We seem to be very much like these Lukewarm Laodiceans, we are neither hot or cold. As Revelation 3:17 says, *“Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.”*

I think that many in our nation fit God’s description of these lukewarm Laodiceans, and unfortunately, many are outright unbelievers. God makes it absolutely clear about how He feels about the sin of idolatry, and we are certainly guilty of worshipping the creature more than the Creator.

3. Rejection

Judging by actions at the Federal level there seems to be little doubt that we have rejected God, and are no longer considered to be a God-fearing nation. We have rejected God in one way or another from just about every aspect of our lives: efforts to remove God from the national holiday bearing His name (Christmas), have even been somewhat successful. We are definitely becoming more and more like Sodom and Gomorrah, with militant homosexual riots against businesses and individuals who are vocal about their Christian beliefs. Romans 1:24 is clear about God's feelings on this subject: "*Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves.*" The Obama Administration, through the EEOC Commissioner, has stated that society should not tolerate any private beliefs, including religious beliefs, if they may negatively affect homosexual equality. This is beginning to sound like double-think out of George Orwell's book 1984.

No one but God Himself knows when evil becomes so great, and rejection of God so prevalent that He determines that He has been rejected by that nation. There are a large number of believers in our land, many of which pray and minister every day to encourage and strengthen belief in God, and do what

they can to fight the tide of evil that seems to be engulfing our nation. Does God decide that He has been rejected by a nation based on a simple majority? I doubt it, but He does know those that belong to Him (1 Ki. 19:18; Ac. 18:10).

Here are some statistics regarding the number of Christians in the USA. This will give you some idea about what God observes when He considers whether a nation is God-fearing or not. In 1990, George Gallup released the results of a major study indicating that 86% of Americans identified themselves as Christians. His research indicated that some 70% of the 86% indicated that they were “born again.” Statistics also indicated that something like 130 million people regularly attended religious services on Sunday. That number was close 47% of the adult population of America. The latest research in these areas indicates that much of this earlier information was either incorrect, or has radically changed. The latest findings from the Pew Foundation give us a much different picture of what is really going on in the religious landscape. The Pew research indicates that the actual percentage of people who attend church in America on any given Sunday is closer to 24%. This is actually a higher number than a Baylor study which places it at 17%. The Baylor research was based on hard data from church services, versus the interview method normally used to gather most of this kind of information. The Pew

study goes on to indicate that 52% of the people actually attending services at mainline Christian churches say that religion is “very important” in their life. That means that the other 48% either think it is “somewhat important” or “not at all important.” This seem to indicate that at least 48% of those attending mainline churches might not be Christians at all; at least by any meaningful definition of the word. The study also found that 79% of those attending “evangelical” churches find their faith “very important”, compared to 17% who think it is only “somewhat important”, and the 3% who say it is “not at all important.” This seems to say that at least 20% of those attending evangelical churches are not evangelical in any meaningful sense of the word. In evangelical churches the research shows that 36% of those who attend believe that Jesus is way, the truth, and the life: no one comes to the Father but by Him (Joh. 14:6), while 57% believe other religions can lead to eternal life. Christianity is based on the conviction that Jesus’ death on the cross is the only way our sins can be forgiven. Is it possible to be a true Christian and believe that any other religion would be accepted?

In mainline churches only 14% believe that Christianity exclusively provides the way to eternal life, while 83% think many religions lead there. Only 22% of this group believe that the Bible is fully inspired, 28% believe that it is written

by men and not the inspired Word of God. In Evangelical churches only 7% do not believe the Bible is divinely inspired.

Although God may consider the number of true Christians in determining that He has been rejected, God seems to have relied heavily on the actions of the head of government, whether a king, judge, president, prophet, prime minister, or other. According to Halley's Bible Handbook, Israel (Northern Kingdom) had 19 kings, none of which followed God. The Northern Kingdom lasted a little over 200 years and was destroyed by Assyria in 721 BC. The Southern Kingdom had 20 kings, eight of which followed God and were considered good. The Southern Kingdom lasted a little over 300 years and was destroyed by Babylon about 600 BC. Our current President, Barack Obama, has stated publicly that the US is not a Christian nation, but is an amalgam of many different religions. While it is true that our nation is made up of people with many different religious faiths, and has been for many years, that did not keep us from being a Christian nation until fairly recent times. We honored our Christian heritage, and enforced laws that were based on God's Ten Commandments. We identified the day celebrated as Christ's birthday as Christmas, and we had Christmas trees, Christmas presents, Christmas dinner, etc. And we did not have laws authorizing the murder of children just because they

were still in the womb and could not speak for themselves. We erected emblems of Christ's life on earth and placed them in public places to keep us mindful of the fact that we were a Christian nation and that we were a force for good in the world. And we were strong, willing to go to war to defend other nations from tyranny, even at the cost of young American lives. With God on our side we clearly won difficult wars, at least through World War II. Afterward, most of the conflicts we entered into were not settled by clear victory and absolute surrender of the enemy.

Possibly one of the most grievous actions we have entered into is that of destroying God's plan for marriage and families. God's Word is clear about the ceremony of marriage being a union of a man and a woman coming together as one flesh (Ge. 2:24; M't. 19:5). This occurs because Eve (representing women) was formed by God taking a rib from Adam (representing man), and marriage enables the two to become one, as intended by God (Ge. 2:23). Thus, this human pair differed from all other "pairs", which God declares is a great mystery (Ephesians. 5:32). Could this happen in a union of two of like sex? Without good Christian-based marriages we can't have solid families, and we surely cannot be fruitful, and multiply and replenish the earth.

5. Divorce

We now come to the question, Has God divorced America? We have discussed many of the failures of the Jewish nation that caused God to finally determine that the only possible way He could honor his promise to Abraham was to destroy the nation, and rebuild it with a remnant of one-third of the people. Zechariah 13:9 records this event, *“And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will try refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will bear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, the Lord is my God.”*

We have reviewed the failures of Israel, and it appears that our nation has committed the same sins, but not in exactly the same way. We have had no leader like Solomon, who established Israel as a rich and powerful nation, but America has become rich and powerful through free enterprise, and ownership of private property. If God’s hand has been behind the blessings that America has enjoyed, He could rightfully punish us as He has Israel. Unfortunately, America has not received any promise that God will bring us through the fire as has Israel. Of course, no one knows what our future holds but God; but all the elements seem to be in place. We have failed to maintain fear of God, we

no longer seem to honor and respect the Creator of the universe: the One through whom all things consist. We seem to have rejected Him and His commands: very few accept the Bible as the Word of God. Galatians 5:19-21 says, *“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”* I can’t honestly say that we are not guilty of all of these evils.

Is there any hope for reversing what seems to be our destiny, based on the above analysis? Surprisingly, there is, and it was given to Solomon by God in II Chronicles 7:14, *“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”* Such a sea-change in our national posture would have to begin in the body of Christ, the believing churches, and it would not be easy. It would require these believers to lay down their lives for Christ: to literally become broken bread and poured out wine. Gary Wilkerson, in his newsletter dated April 22, 2013, said this: “To me, what passes for normal Christianity today must be an outrage to God. It’s not

only powerless, it is also passionless, lacking self-sacrifice. In other words it is cross-less -- and therefore Christ-less.”

I want to close this writing by quoting a daily reading entitled: “Am I My Brother’s Keeper”, from Oswald Chambers’ book “My Utmost for His Highest”.

“How many of us are willing to spend every ounce of nervous energy, of mental, moral and spiritual energy we have for Jesus Christ? That is the meaning of a witness in God’s sense of the word. It takes time, be patient with yourself. God has left us on the earth - what for? To be saved and sanctified? No, to be at it for Him. Am I willing to be broken bread and poured out wine for Him? To be spoilt for this age, for this life, to be spoilt from every standpoint except one - saving as I can disciple men and women for the Lord Jesus Christ. My life as a worker is the way I say ‘thank you’ to God for His unspeakable salvation.”

Appendix

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