

# 5 Ways America Can Avoid Divine Judgment

Is America headed for divine judgment because of its disregard for human life and its contempt for the most vulnerable among us? Consider what just happened in the state of New York. Legislators approved the killing of unborn babies right up to the day of birth and then stood and cheered when it was announced that the measure had passed.

The law also removed protection for an infant accidentally born alive during an abortion. In other words, even a live baby outside the womb can be killed. Adding insult to injury, the governor ordered the World Trade Center tower to be lit pink to celebrate this law that will inflict untold suffering and death on countless babies.

Since abortion was legalized in 1973, over 50 million innocent babies have had their lives snuffed out because someone considered them an inconvenience.

Will God wink and turn a blind eye to this holocaust and disregard for innocent life?

## **America's Founders Believed That God Judges Nations**

America's Founding Fathers believed that God judges nations as well individuals—that He judges individuals for personal sins and nations for national-institutional sins. This was the basis for much controversy at the Constitutional Convention of 1787 when accommodation was made to the Southern slave states, fearing that a successful Union could not be established without their involvement.

The Great Awakening (1726-70) had unleashed anti-slavery sentiments, especially in the North, as the revivalists purposely reached out to blacks, both slave and free. As a

result, when the separation from England came in 1776, several states, including Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Vermont, New Hampshire, and New York immediately took steps to abolish slavery—something they could not do under George III.

Founders such as Benjamin Franklin released their slaves and began to advocate for abolition. Most Founding Fathers had come to agree with John Adams, who said, “Every measure of prudence ... ought to be assumed for the eventual total extirpation of slavery from the United States. I have throughout my whole life held the practice of slavery in abhorrence.”

Nonetheless, at the Constitutional Convention, the majority was willing to cut a deal with the Southern slave states to gain their participation. Some of the founders, however, such as George Mason, saw this as an ungodly compromise with evil and vehemently protested.

Mason, who is called the “Father of the Bill of Rights,” warned of divine judgment if the slavery question was not settled then and there. He declared:

*Every master is born a petty tyrant. They bring the judgment of Heaven upon a country. As nations cannot be rewarded or punished in the next world, they must be in this. By an inevitable chain of causes and effects, Providence punishes national sins by national calamities (Hyatt, The Great Prayer Awakening, 9-100.)*

Thomas Jefferson issued a similar warning, for it was in the context of the continuance of slavery in America that he warned,

*God who gave us life, gave us liberty. And can the liberties of a nation be thought secure when we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people that*

*these liberties are a gift from God? That they are not to be violated but with His wrath? Indeed, I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just and that His justice cannot sleep forever (Hyatt, The Great Prayer Awakening, 10).*

### **Was the Civil War God's Judgment for National Sin?**

Many see the Civil War with its widespread destruction and excessive loss of life as the fulfillment of the warnings of judgment issued by Mason, Jefferson and others. The destruction of property and the loss of life were truly apocalyptic.

Estimates of the loss of life range from 625,000 to over 700,000 soldiers and an unknown number of civilians. By way of comparison, in WWII, 50,000 American soldiers lost their lives. In the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, less than 10,000 Americans have died. More lives were lost in the Civil War than in all wars combined from the American Revolution through the Korean Conflict.

The magnitude of the loss is amplified by the fact that the United States population at the time was only 31 million. This would be comparable to 7 or 8 million Americans losing their lives today. Add to that the fact that this war—the most devastating of all wars—was fought on American soil.

It was truly a devastating time. The wounded and maimed were everywhere. Weeping could be heard in homes throughout America. In many homes, both father and sons were missing. Hardly a family could be found that had not lost multiple family members.

### **Mercy Precedes Judgment**

Four years before the onset of the Civil War, a great prayer awakening engulfed America. Churches, halls, fire stations, and auditoriums throughout the nation filled with people

wanting to pour out their hearts to God. It seemed that a spirit of prayer came upon the entire nation.

Charles Finney, the great revivalist, said that people preferred prayer meetings to meeting where preaching was the central activity. He said the attitude seemed to be, "We have heard preaching until we are hardened; it is time to pray."

At the height of this revival, it was estimated that 50,000 people were being converted to Christ every week. Although its greatest impact was the fall and winter of 1857-58, it continued into the Civil War and, no doubt, saved the nation from total ruin.

### **The Reason for the Prayer Awakening**

Some have suggested that the Prayer Revival of 1857-58 was an outpouring of God's mercy preceding national judgment for the national sin of slavery—that it was God giving the nation an opportunity to deal with this sin and thereby avoid the coming judgment.

Others would emphasize that the revival was God's way of strengthening and preparing the nation for the terrible time of suffering it would endure through the Civil War. In their excellent book, *FIREFALL: How God Has Shaped History Through Revivals*, McDow and Reid write,

The Prayer Revival laid the foundation to give spiritual resources that would help the nation survive this conflict. Roy Fish notes that one of the major functions of the great awakening of 1858 had to do with its preparation of the country for its fratricidal war which clouded the horizon" (Hyatt, *The Great Prayer Awakening*, 34-35).

### **Abraham Lincoln Considered the Civil War a Divine Judgment**

President Abraham Lincoln believed that the War to be an expression of divine judgment on the land. He made this clear

when he issued a proclamation for a national day of “humiliation, prayer and fasting” for April 30, 1863. Writing in the midst of the War, he declared,

*And whereas, it is the duty of nations as well as of men to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God, to confess their sins and transgressions in humble sorrow yet with assured hope that genuine repentance will lead to mercy and pardon, and to recognize the sublime truth, announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history: that those nations only are blessed whose God is Lord:*

*And, insomuch as we know that, by His divine law, nations like individuals are subjected to punishments and chastisement in this world, may we not justly fear that the awful calamity of civil war, which now desolates the land, may be but a punishment inflicted upon us for our presumptuous sins to the needful end of our national reformation as a whole people (Hyatt, The Great Prayer Awakening, 36).*

## **How Judgment Can be Averted**

With the rejection of God and truth in our culture and such contempt for life in the womb, can America presume that it will avoid judgment from God?

This judgment does not come by God thundering directly from heaven, but by Him allowing the consequences of human choices to unfold. Both Scripture and history teach us that God, as the moral governor of the universe, providentially allows people and nations to suffer the consequences of their own deeds when they refuse His grace.

Both history and Scripture also teach us that the future of America rests squarely on the shoulders of the professing Christians of this nation. This is borne out by the words of Jesus in Matthew 5:13, where He compares his followers to

salt, warning that if salt loses its saltiness—that quality of tartness and pungent flavor that gives it its value— then it becomes useless:

“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how shall it be made salty? It is from then on good for nothing but to be thrown out and to be trampled underfoot by men.”

One of salt’s most important qualities that made it valuable in the ancient world was that of a preservative. Salt resists corruption and spoilage. Salted meat lasts for long periods of time, even in warm weather, and before refrigeration, this made it especially valuable.

But salt that has lost its pungency and strength is no longer of value and is discarded, “trampled underfoot by men,” Jesus said. This reminds us of what may have happened in Russia in 1917.

I cannot document this, but some years ago I heard a lecture in which it was said that the very weekend the Bolsheviks took control of Russia, the largest church in that nation was having a conference to determine whether a cloth should be used on the Communion table. They lost their saltiness and became trodden underfoot by an atheistic, communist regime.

Here are five ways the American church can be salt and thereby restrain the moral corruption around us and avert divine judgment.

1. Do not compromise belief in Jesus as the only way to God (John 14:6).
2. Be committed to God’s Word as the ultimate source of truth (John 8:31-32).
3. Love the praise of God more than the praise of men (John 12:43).
4. Refuse to be conformed to popular culture ().
5. Speak the truth in love and stand for life (Eph. 4:15).

I would also encourage you to follow the lead of Vice President Mike Pence and begin to pray for another national, spiritual awakening throughout our land. Since its inception, God has graciously sent such awakenings at critical moments in our nation's history. In 2 Chronicles 7:14, He has promised to do it again: "If my people ..." {eo}

*This article was derived from Dr. Eddie Hyatt's latest book, The Great Prayer Awakening of 1857-58, available from Amazon in both Kindle and paperback. Check out his website at .*