

10 Ways to Pray for a Troubled America

The Old Testament clearly shows that the rise and fall of Israel was determined by its spiritual condition. When the people worshipped God, and their leaders honored His laws, Israel prospered. When the people drifted into sin and idolatry, and Israel's kings forgot the God who delivered them from slavery, the nation went into decline. Foreign armies eventually invaded.

The same principle applies to any nation—and certainly to the United States, which was founded by people of faith who embraced the Bible. We have known seasons of spiritual revival, and in the past we have elected leaders who called on Jesus Christ as the true God. We have also gone through periods of spiritual darkness. When you review our 240-year history, it seems we are facing our darkest hour spiritually.

But I am not discouraged as we head into this uncertain season. God intervenes even in the darkest times. Elijah called down fire from heaven when an evil leader sat on the throne. When Israel faced certain defeat, King Hezekiah prayed and witnessed divine deliverance.

God is always willing to rescue His people if they pray.

As we head into the final days before this crucial 2016 election, I challenge you to do more than vote. Please pray big, God-sized prayers. A president or a political party cannot solve our national crisis. We need urgent help from heaven. Here are 10 things we should include in our petitions:

1. That our leaders will turn to God. It was President Theodore Roosevelt who said: "A belief in Jesus Christ is the very fountainhead of everything that is desirable and praiseworthy in our civilization." Yet today political

correctness prevents our leaders from barely mentioning faith. It's as if we are ashamed of what made our nation great. Pray that our next president and his or her cabinet will be drawn to love the Lord in a personal way.

2. That our president will rediscover God's forgotten laws. In the days of King Josiah, when the nation's moral compass went missing, the scrolls of the Old Testament were found in a closet. When the king heard the words of the Scriptures, he tore his clothes, repented and called the nation to serve God again (2 Kings 22-23). Pray that our next president will follow the footsteps of Josiah and bravely call for a reformation.

3. That God's prophets will have access to government leaders. Prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah and Elisha called on the kings of Israel to obey the Lord—and Israel was blessed when leaders heeded their message. Even when Israel went into captivity in Babylon, God put his servant Daniel in a strategic position of influence. Pray that our leaders will open their doors to those God is sending to speak for Him.

4. That we will have righteous judges. John Jay, the first chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, did not hide his Christian faith. He wrote: "The Bible is the best of all books, for it is the Word of God and teaches us the way to be happy in this world and in the next." Today, most of our judges have no knowledge of Christian morality; instead they create their own laws in a moral vacuum. Our judges are now responsible for redefining marriage, secularizing the country and taking away the rights of the unborn. Pray that God will raise up judges who honor God's laws.

5. That we will stop shedding innocent blood. About 3,000 unborn babies die every day in this country. But this devaluation of life is not only evident in the slaughter of innocent children. It is also seen in the sex trafficking of children and women; in the mistreatment of immigrants; in

violence against racial minorities; and in exploitation of the poor by greedy corporations. God judged Israel not only for the horrible practice of child sacrifice but also for unjust treatment of the poor (Mal. 3:5). Pray that justice will be restored in our land.

6. That our children will be protected from evil. When the evil Queen Athaliah took the throne of Israel, she slaughtered all the children in the royal family so she could control the country. The enemy hates the next generation and seeks to snuff it out. Pray that America's children will be delivered from the schemes of Satan—such as illegal drugs, promiscuity, sexual confusion, fatherlessness and harmful entertainment. Pray that the church will respond by nurturing a new generation of youth who follow Christ.

7. That God will defend us from our foreign enemies. Whenever Israel strayed from God, invaders appeared on the horizon. When King Hoshea became king of Israel, he “did evil in the sight of the Lord” (2 Kings 17:2). The result? The king of Assyria “invaded the whole land” and put Hoshea in prison. The United States has rarely experienced foreign invasion, but if we don't return to God soon it will be unavoidable. Terrorists are already plotting. Pray earnestly for mercy in this area.

8. That our economy will not crumble. In the days of Elisha, the spiritual condition of Israel was so bad that God sent a famine that resulted in economic crisis. It was not unlike a Great Depression—and it was so bad that people resorted to cannibalism to survive. Could that ever happen in America? We face similar judgment if we don't return to the Lord wholeheartedly. America's prosperity could vanish overnight if we forget the source of our true wealth.

9. That a great spiritual awakening will revive the nation. After Josiah heard God's Word and repented, he triggered a national turnaround. He burned idols, stopped child sacrifice, removed occult priests and reinstituted the Passover. No king

in Israel turned so dramatically back to God (2 Kings 23:25). Could the same thing happen in America today? I believe it is possible. And in this age of grace, God can pour out His Spirit in a fresh way. Even while sin abounds, grace can much more abound. Pray with expectation for a nationwide revival.

10. That God will show mercy instead of judgment. When Hezekiah became king, “he did right in the sight of the Lord” (2 Kings 18:3) and he removed the idolatrous high places in the land. The result was that God showed mercy to Israel and even extended the king’s life. God is willing to grant more time to America if we will humble ourselves and pray.

Some Christians have given up on this country and pronounced judgment on it. But if we would pray instead of criticize, the Father of mercy will respond. James 2:13 says: “Mercy triumphs over judgment.” Let’s be the true salt and light in our culture. Let’s shine in the midst of darkness. {eoa}