

Is God Lifting His Favor Off America?

Happy 242nd Birthday America! You look good for your age. I love our great country and was raised in a patriotic home. God has allowed and aided America's rise to unrivaled greatness in world history. Benjamin Franklin asked the Continental Congress, "If a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without His aid?" Someone observed that of all the major civilizations in human history, they all collapsed when they reached the moral state that America is currently in. Thomas Jefferson aptly wrote, "I tremble for my country when I remember that God is just and that His justice cannot sleep forever."

I am not a doom-and-gloom preacher, but I do believe that many of our recent calamities like national debt, prolonged wars, terrorist attacks, mass shootings, natural disasters, anarchy and social upheaval are indicators of God lifting His favor. Abraham Lincoln said, "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 proved by all history, that those nations only are blest whose God is the Lord." He was referring to Psalm 33:12a, which states, "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord." What was true of Israel in Bible times is also true of America now—as long as we stay in covenant with God, we will remain strong and free. Ronald Reagan warned, "If we ever forget that we are 'One Nation Under God,' then we will be a nation gone under."

On July 30, 1956, President Dwight D. Eisenhower approved a resolution adopting "In God We Trust" as our national motto and requiring it to be placed on all U.S. currency. He observed, "In these days when imperialistic and materialistic communism seeks to attack and destroy freedom, it is proper to

remind all of us of this self-evident truth that as long as this country trusts in God, it will prevail." Deuteronomy 28 lists several indicators of a blessed nation, including divine protection, economic prosperity, rain on crops, victory in battle, lending to other nations instead of borrowing and being the head and not the tail. By the providence of God, we have become the greatest nation on the face of the earth. America, the lone remaining superpower, is one of the few countries where there is a waiting list to get in instead of out. But prosperity has lulled us to sleep, and we have forgotten the source of our blessings. I call it "America's Amnesia." As our country becomes more secularized, many bite the hand that feeds them, spurn His moral laws and spit in the face of the one whose benefits they enjoy. As Benjamin Franklin asked the Continental Congress, "Have we forgotten this powerful Friend? Or do we imagine we no longer need His assistance?"

On the National Day of Prayer, April 30, 1863, Abraham Lincoln reminded Americans of our true source of blessing. "We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of heaven. We have been preserved these many years, in peace and prosperity. We have grown in numbers, wealth and power, as no other nation has ever grown. But we have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us; and we have vainly imagined in the deceitfulness of our hearts that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us. It behooves us to humble ourselves before the offended power, to confess our national sins, and to pray for clemency and forgiveness."

Consider five main reasons why God keeps blessing America:

1. The faith of our forefathers: God continued blessing Israel for Abraham's and David's sake centuries after their deaths.

Modern Americans are the beneficiaries of the covenant our forefathers had with God as they established this Christian nation. Most of our Founding Fathers acknowledged God and sought His guidance in forming this country on Biblical principles. Although we have strayed far from those ideals, the foundation of this country was built upon the rock-solid foundation of Judeo-Christian ethics. We have drifted from our spiritual heritage, but a strong spiritual root system is still a vital part of our national identity. Secularists and atheists are trying to deny and rewrite history, but America's Christian roots remain intact.

2. Missions: The Great Commission is near and dear to the heart of God. Missionary to Africa, David Livingston, said, "God only had one Son and He made that Son a missionary." Some of Jesus' last words were, "Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). Any person or nation that sends and supports missionaries will have God's blessing. America has sent more missionaries to foreign fields than any other nation. Now, sadly, we are rapidly becoming the mission field, because we've forsaken God. As one author noted, "Every person in the world is either a missionary or a mission field." Evangelism is just one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread. So, may we all adopt the attitude of John Wesley, who said, "All the world is my parish [church]."

3. Humanitarianism: As the breadbasket of the world, America responds to the cries for help when there is an earthquake, tsunami, war, refugee crisis or genocide. Who typically sends the most money, food, medicine and volunteers when there is an international disaster? We do. Proverbs 19:17 states, "He who has pity on the poor lends to the Lord, and He will repay what he has given." The best way to be blessed is to be a blessing to others. We are all called to be channels of God's blessings not merely containers who hoard it.

4. Allegiance with Israel: God still honors His covenant with

Abraham, "I will bless those who bless you and curse him who curses you" (Gen. 12:3a). When the U.S. Embassy recently moved from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said, "Israel has no better friend than America, and America has no better friend than Israel." It is vital for us to remain a staunch ally with Israel. They are still God's chosen people who produced the Messiah. Our politicians and diplomats would do well to remember that a friend of Israel is a friend of God!

5. The influence and prayers of a righteous remnant: America has already experienced some judgment from God due to our national sins of abortion, immorality, racism and materialism. We have sown to the wind and now we are reaping a whirlwind of consequences. But repentance and prayer can delay judgment. If God spared Sodom and Gomorrah for only 10 righteous people, then surely millions of believers who love and pray for this country can prevent divine destruction. God promised, "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 will heal their land" (2 Chron. 7:14).

Independence Day (July Fourth) commemorates how we broke the chains of tyranny from our oppressive mother country England. In fact, the closing clause of the Declaration of Independence is actually a declaration of dependence upon God. It reads, "In support of this declaration, with a firm reliance upon the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor." The 56 men who signed it knew their autograph on that document was an act of treason and, without God's help, they were doomed. Thomas Jefferson said what they all knew, "We must hang together, or assuredly, we will all hang separately."

Despite its flaws, America is still the melting pot of the world, a beacon of hope to those oppressed by dictatorships, a bastion of freedom for those longing for liberty, a shining

city set on a hill the world admires and emulates. May we renew our dependence on God, and may His favor continue to flow on land of the free. As the inscription on the Liberty Bell reads, "Proclaim liberty throughout all the land to all its inhabitants" (Lev. 25:10). Let freedom ring! {eoa}

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