

Repenting On Behalf Of Our Nations

'I set my face to the Lord God to seek Him by prayer and supplications, with fasting and sackcloth and ashes; and I prayed to the Lord my God and made confession and said, "O Lord, the great and awesome God, Who keeps covenant and mercy with those who love Him and keep His commandments; We have sinned and done wickedly and have rebelled, turning aside from Your commandments. We have not listened to Your prophets who spoke in Your name to our fathers, and to all the people of the land. O Lord, righteousness belongs to You ... O Lord to us belong shame ... because we have sinned against You. To the Lord our God belong forgiveness and mercy, for we have rebelled against Him, and we have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God ... Yes, we have all transgressed Your Laws, turning aside that we may not obey Your voice, therefore the curse has been poured out on us ... yet we have not earnestly sought forgiveness, that we might turn from our iniquities and become wise in Your truth ... and now O Lord our God ... as at this day, we have sinned, we have done wickedly! O Lord, according to Your justice, I beseech You, let Your anger and Your wrath be turned away ... O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord listen and act! Do not delay, O my God." While I was speaking in prayer, Gabriel ... came near to me and touched me about the time of the evening sacrifice' (Daniel 9:3 to 21).

'I fasted and prayed before the God of heaven; "O Lord God of heaven, the great and awesome God, Who keeps covenant and mercy for those who love Him and keep His commandments. Let Your ear be attentive and let Your eyes be open to the prayer of Your servant ... confessing our sins which we have sinned against You. Yes, I and my father's house have sinned. We have acted very corruptly against You and have not kept Your commandments ..."' (Nehemiah 1:4 to 7).

When the Lord instructed the Israelites to obey His commandments, He set before them both a chance to receive His blessings and a threat of curses if they did not obey. 'Behold, I set before you this day, a blessing and a curse. The blessing if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you this day; and a curse if you will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God' (Deuteronomy 11:26 to 28).

Obedience to the Lord brings blessings of rain and harvest, but disobedience brings a curse, of which drought is one, as are war, diseases and locusts. "And I withheld the rain from you ... I caused it to rain upon one city and caused it not rain upon another, and the piece of ground which did not have rain, withered ... I smote you with blight and with mildew. I laid waste your gardens and your vineyards, your fig trees and your olive trees; and the locust devoured, yet you did not return to Me. I have sent among you pestilence (disease); your young men I slew with the sword (war), yet you did not return to Me", says the Lord. (Amos 4:7 to 10). Have farmers ever thought that drought, fruit blight, insect plagues and mildew on their crops may be the result of sin? That is something we need to tell our food producers so we can pray for them, encourage them to repent, then they can enjoy great harvests.

If a nation repents, the Lord will reverse the evil that He does to them. In this verse we can see that it is the Lord Who plants nations. "If that nation turn from their evil, I will reverse My decision concerning the evil that I thought to do to them. At another time I will speak concerning a nation that I will build up and plant" (Jeremiah 18:8 & 9).

When the Lord speaks of repentance, He speak to nations as much as He speaks to individual people. "If I shut up heaven so no rain falls, or if I command locusts, or if I send pestilence; if My people who are called by My name, shall humble themselves and pray, and seek My face and will turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, forgive their sins and heal their land; for now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to prayer offered in this place" (2 Chronicles 7:13 to 15).

Daniel did not pray against anything evil that was going on in his nation, he humbled himself by wearing sackcloth and ashes, he fasted then confessed their sin and repented; God did the rest. Daniel did not assault strongholds, he simply prayed and asked forgiveness on behalf of his people. Daniel saw the need to repent and he prayed, not knowing that the Archangel Michael and heaven's messenger Gabriel, would come to him. We need to have a similar attitude because we never know how or when God will answer our prayer. All nations have some evil and some good within them. We need to repent of the evil like Daniel and Nehemiah did, and be thankful for the good. 'I will sacrifice to You with the voice of thanksgiving' (Jonah 2:9).

When the Gentile city of Nineveh heard through Jonah that there was to be God's judgement on their city (Jonah 1:1), every person in that city, including the king (their leader), humbled themselves and repented with fasting, and the Lord changed His mind. 'So the people of Nineveh believed in God and proclaimed a fast and put on sackcloth from the greatest of them to the least of them. For word came to the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne and he laid his robe aside, covered himself with sackcloth and sat in ashes. He made a proclamation throughout Nineveh; ... "Let neither man nor beast ... taste anything; let them not feed nor drink water. Let man and beast be covered with sackcloth and let them cry mightily to God. Yes, let every one turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands. Who can tell, God may turn and revoke His sentence against us and turn away from His fierce anger so that we may not perish." And God saw their works, that they turned from evil and He revoked His sentence of evil that He said He would do to them, and He did not do it' (Jonah 3:5 to 10). Notice these three very important things; (1) the king realised that violence was the wickedness of which they needed to repent; (2) the leader of the city (the king) humbled himself, repented and called for repentance; (3) the king did not repent of any area that was not under his jurisdiction. We must also follow that example. We cannot repent on behalf of any nation that is not ours. We can pray for them, but we cannot repent on their behalf if they are not within our boundaries, because we do not have any spiritual authority over any area that is not ours.

The Lord blesses a nation that has a righteous leader, and we as the general population need to pray for the Lord to rise up righteous people to lead us;

leaders who will stand before the Lord. 'When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when the wicked man rules, the people groan' (Proverbs 29:2). 'Solomon stood before the Lord in the presence of the assembly and spread forth his hands' (2 Chronicles 6:12). 'When Solomon had finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the house of God so that the priests could not enter, because the glory of the Lord filled the house' (2 Chronicles 7:1 & 2). We can read about that happening again in 1 Kings 8:11 and 2 Chronicles 5:14. The Apostle Paul continued with this theme. 'I counsel you, that you make petitions and prayers, intercessions and thanksgiving for all people including kings and all leaders, and those in authority so that we may lead quiet, peaceful lives, being Godly and upright in everything, for such prayer is good and pleasing to God our Saviour' (1 Timothy 2:1 to 3).

When we walk with God, He expects us to pray for our leaders. We need to pray for the Lord to rise up Godly leaders – those with Godly principles – even if they do not attend our church or denomination. We need to pray for them to make decisions and laws based on God's Word. When we lift our governments up in prayer, that pleases God. We need to recognise that we are all sinners and we all need to repent (Romans 3:23), so without any feeling of superiority, we need to humbly pray for our leaders and repent on behalf of those who do not know God and therefore have not yet repented. By doing that, we can reverse God's judgement on our nations.

One example of that is when Australia was in the grip of drought. For ten years, we had so little rain things were becoming desperate. We prayed for the Lord to raise up leaders with Christian principles and praise the Lord we have had two Godly Prime Ministers lead our nation – John Howard and Kevin Rudd. They are not perfect, but they have Godly principles, they attend church wherever they are in the world, whenever possible. Then we prayed and asked the Lord to show us the reason for the drought. Once we repented on behalf of our nation and asked the Lord to bless our nation, we have had rain in abundance; we have enjoyed medical breakthroughs; when other nations near us suffered earthquakes and tidal surges, Australia was spared. We have, as a nation, enjoyed great financial prosperity under the leadership of John Howard, and that prosperity has been continued under Kevin Rudd's leadership, so much so, that when other countries suffered a financial melt-down, Australia was mostly spared. That can only happen when God is in control, and we need to give Him all the glory and praise. 'When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice'. Australia is the Great Southern Land of the Holy Spirit – the uttermost part of the earth – set aside for His glory (Acts 1:8; 13:47). As long as the believers of our nation continue to humble ourselves and pray and seek His face, and continue to support God's holy nation of Israel, we will continue to be blessed. All believers around the world need to pray for their own nations and their own leaders.

Amen and God bless you.

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