

"One Nation Under God"

This week we've been celebrating the 250th anniversary of the United States of America. Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." God rules over all nations. How does God deal with the nations He rules over?

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. The God of the Bible is the source of all wisdom and knowledge. David prayed in 1 Chronicles 29:11 to 12, ""Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, indeed everything that is in the heavens and the earth; Yours is the dominion, O LORD, and You exalt Yourself as head over all. "Both riches and honor come from You, and You rule over all, and in Your hand is power and might; and it lies in Your hand to make great and to strengthen everyone." Oh, we'd love to hear from you and we want to be a part of your life each week.

This weekend the United States of America celebrates 250 years since its Declaration of Independence in 1776. The founders of this nation often quoted Scripture and pointed to the God of the Bible. Thomas Jefferson with others wrote, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness." On September 6, 1774 the Continental Congress voted to open Congress with Scripture reading and prayer.

Did you know they were kneeling, bowed with reverence, and praying in the name of Jesus Christ? This was not a church service—this was in their hearts. Who was kneeling? Patriots like George Washington, Patrick Henry, Samuel Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and John Jay. Did you know that they began every day with prayer at 9 o'clock? They sought the wisdom and favor of God. They knew that without the help of God they could not achieve anything. They knew that it's God who plants nations and uproots them. He is the ruler of all in every nation.

Now we offer this study, "One nation under God," free! And if you'd like a printed copy and live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. For those outside the United States, we also have programs and free materials on our website, www.searchtv.org. You can also see us on YouTube.

We'll now worship in song, we'll read from Jeremiah 18:7 to 10, and examine how God deals with nations.

Our reading today comes from the prophet Jeremiah chapter 18 verses 7 to 10 and they reflect the heart of God as He deals with the nations.

At one moment I might speak concerning a nation or concerning a kingdom to uproot, to pull down, or to destroy it; if that nation against which I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent concerning the calamity I planned to bring on it. Or at another moment I might speak concerning a nation or concerning a kingdom to build up or to plant it; if it does evil in My sight by not obeying My voice, then I will think better of the good with which I had promised to bless it.

That's God's warning for us. Let's and live like we ought to live before the Lord. Let's pray together. Heavenly Father we're thankful that you make know Your will to us. Father help us to listen to Your words, to take them seriously and to live lives that please You and give glory and honor to Your name. Help us to love You with all our heart and soul. In Jesus name, Amen.

Psalms 111:10 says that, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do His commandments; His praise endures forever." Again Ecclesiastes 12:13

reminds us, "Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man." To fear the Lord means we take His words and His warnings to heart and observe His commandments carefully, realizing that God means what He says. We respect and love Him so we make it our priority to do His will. Nations are often filled with some who take God seriously and others who don't. And according to the American Worldview Inventory 2024 "the Don'ts" are defined as people who don't know if a god exists, or don't believe that a god exists, or they don't care if a god exists. Don'ts make up about 25% of the adult population in America.

In the 8th century B.C. Isaiah described Israel in chapter 1, verses 3 to 4, "The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master's crib, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand. Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, offspring of evildoers, children who deal corruptly! They have forsaken the LORD, they have despised the Holy One of Israel, they are utterly estranged."

The prophet told them plainly in Isaiah 1:15 to 17, "When you spread out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood. Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause." Because they had become a corrupt people, God would not hear their prayers but urged them to cease their evil.

He frankly confronts them in verses 18 to 20, "Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool. If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be eaten by the sword; for the mouth of the LORD (God) has spoken." God's compassion gives us an opportunity to repent and to change our lives from evil to obedient; He'll bless us when we do His will. But if we refuse and rebel, we'll suffer punishment. We are freewill agents, after all, and choose whether we will serve God or serve sin.

When Solomon became king over Israel, he prayed to God on behalf of the people in 2 Chronicles 6:36 to 39, "When they sin against You (for there is no man who does not sin) and You are angry with them and deliver them to an enemy, so that they take them away captive to a land far off or near, if they take thought in the land where they are taken captive, and repent and make supplication to You in the land of their captivity, saying, 'We have sinned, we have committed iniquity and have acted wickedly'; if they return to You with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their captivity, where they have been taken captive, and pray toward their land which You have given to their fathers and the city which You have chosen, and toward the house which I have built for Your name, then hear from heaven, (he says for) from Your dwelling place, their prayer and supplications, and maintain their cause and forgive Your people who have sinned against You.

God's answer to Solomon in 2 Chronicles 7:13 to 14. He says, "If I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or if I command the locust to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among My people, and My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

Does our nation or your nation, or your nation, because we speak to people across the world, do your nation need to humble itself and seek God's face? This message is going global these days, and I wonder, wherever you live, if your nation needs to humble themselves, pray, and seek God's favor. Whether we serve God or not matters greatly. Those who are right with God need to stand up and say so. If we remain silent, we can be sure that those who serve sin and serve Satan will speak even louder and influence the young and the innocent to choose evil pleasures.

We need a revival of faith and a return to the God who gives us life and freedom from the evil that's in this world. When a people turn away from God to follow false gods and evil, they commit the same error as did Judah in the seventh century B.C. The Lord declared in Jeremiah 2 and verse 13, "For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, The fountain of living waters, To hew for themselves cisterns, Broken cisterns That can hold no water." In the dry areas of Israel, the people dug out cisterns or pits to catch every drop of the rain. They sealed the inside to keep the water from leaking; but if the least crack formed in the cistern, they would lose what little water they had and they will suffer.

Our God is like a fountain of living water. And when a person delights in God and His word, he prospers! Psalm 1 verses 2 and 3 speaks of the man who is blessed by God: "But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night. He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season And its leaf does not wither; And in whatever he does, he prospers." God will certainly bless those who are close to Him and take His words seriously.

Psalm 145:17 to 20 says that, "The LORD is righteous in all His ways And kind in all His deeds. The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, To all who call upon Him in truth. He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He will also hear their cry and will save them. The LORD keeps all who love Him, But all the wicked He will destroy." The Lord Jesus proclaimed in John 15:7 that, "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you."

Now prior to the time of Christ, the Jews were the people of God and other nations often fought against them. Jeremiah 12:14 to 17 says: Thus says the LORD concerning all My wicked neighbors who strike at the inheritance with which I have endowed My people Israel, "Behold I am about to uproot them from their land and will uproot the house of Judah from among them. And it will come about that after I have uprooted them, I will again have compassion on them; and I will bring them back, each one to his inheritance and each one to his land. Then if they will really learn the ways of My people, to swear by My name, 'As the LORD lives,' even as they taught My people to swear by Baal, they will be built up in the midst of My people. "But if they will not listen, then I will uproot that nation, uproot and destroy it," declares the LORD.

Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, did conquer and uproot the people of Judah. Jerusalem was completely destroyed, including the temple, in 586 B.C. The Jews, however, did return to their land and this prophecy was fulfilled.

Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, was a wicked city. And God told Jonah in Jonah 1 and verse 2, "Arise, go to Nineveh the great city and cry against it, for their wickedness has come up before Me."

Now this phrase carries weight—their wickedness had "reached a high degree or the highest pitch," suggesting a moral corruption so pervasive it demanded divine attention. Nineveh was known for its violent savagery. There was a violence in their hands. Jonah reluctantly went to Nineveh.

Jonah 3 verses 4 to 10 the bible says: Then Jonah began to go through the city one day's walk; and he cried out and said, "Yet forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown." Then the people of Nineveh believed in God; and they called a fast and put on sackcloth from the greatest to the least of them. When the word reached the king of Nineveh, he arose from his throne, laid aside his robe from him, covered himself with sackcloth and sat on the ashes. He issued a proclamation and it said: "In Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles: Do not let man, beast, herd, or flock taste a thing. Do not let them eat or drink water. But both man and beast must be covered with sackcloth; and let men call on God earnestly that each may turn from his wicked way and from the violence which is in his hands. Who knows, God may turn and relent and withdraw His burning anger so that we will not perish."

When God saw their deeds, that they turned from their wicked way, then God relented concerning the calamity which He had declared He would bring upon them. And He did not do it.

Mothers and fathers, put away your sins and live for the Lord, so that your children will know how we live matters. Young people find the Lord and follow Him. Find a church of Christ and study the word of God. Start praying daily. As the people go, so goes the nation. And if you live a godless life, will your children have hope? Israel sowed the wind and reaped the whirlwind (Hosea 8 and verse 7). Why was it that way? Well, Hosea explained in Hosea 4 and verse 6, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, (God says) I also will reject you from being My priest. Since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.

Oh my, when we forget God and don't care, we leave a horrible heritage for our children. My friend, Greg Tidwell, recently wrote a book, *I Want My Children to Go to Heaven*. What will your legacy be without Christ? Where will you spend eternity? A Christianity that never addresses sin or never addresses obedience to Christ is not the Christianity of the Bible, no, ah it will get no one to heaven. A Christianity that never finds fault and never offers reproof will never get anyone to heaven. A Christianity that treats faith as optional and never gets involved, refuses to worship at church, is really a dead and useless faith.

James 2 verses 14 to 20 says: What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself. But someone may well say, "You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works." You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder. But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless?"

Isn't it time that we changed our hearts and lives to serve the Lord? The best thing we can do in life for our homes, our cities, and our nation is to serve the Lord.

Let's pray together. Heavenly Father we're thankful that You have loved us and given us so many blessings. Help us Heavenly Father to not waste our lives by living for evil but to turn to You that we may please You and show You our love. Father help us to love You and to love one another. Give us strength and faith. In Jesus name, Amen.

The best thing anyone can do for the sake of the nation, state, and community where he or she lives is to be a faithful Christian. Proverbs 14:34 says that, "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people." We must understand our behavior matters. Galatians 6:7 to 8 says, "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life." Now what is true of an individual is also true of a nation.

The nation that sows wickedness will reap corruption, and the nation that sows righteousness will last. The Lord God makes his moral and spiritual laws for our blessing and our benefit. When people assume the right to change God's ways, to rebel against His teaching, they only reap corruption and misery.

Isaiah 55:6 to 7 urges us, "Seek the LORD while He may be found; Call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way And the unrighteous man his thoughts; And let him return to the LORD, And He will have compassion on him, And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon."

To become a Christian trust in the Lord and in the gospel of Christ. Let your faith and love lead you to confess Jesus Christ is the Son of God repent of your sins. Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, just as Acts 2:38 teaches. Now when you're baptized God will wash away your sins and you'll be born again as a child of God (Galatians 3:26 to 27). As the people go, so goes our nation. Do what is right.

We hope that our study, One Nation Under God, has caused you to consider your ways and your soul. If you live in the United States and want a free printed copy, send your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. For all our viewers outside the United States, we have free programs and biblical materials on our website, www.searchtv.org. SEARCH is also on YouTube! Subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry" and then like the programs. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now don't worry, we're not asking for money. We're here to help you draw close to God.

Show God your love by worshiping at church. You need a church family. And if you can attend, don't neglect worshiping at church. There's probably a church of Christ near you. If you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll be glad to help you find one. As always we say to you, God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.