

# America Needs God Again

Romans 13:1-7

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When America's founding fathers sought for freedom from Great Britain, they realized their utter need for God's blessing. In the 1770s, the twelve colonies that later formed the United States of America were a loosely organized group of independent governments seeking to live their own lives free from the unfair taxation imposed by Great Britain. At that time Great Britain had the most powerful military in the world, and the colonies had only militias, undisciplined and ill-prepared to face such an opponent. But because of the political strife, the colonies faced numerous financial struggles and they lacked the industrial advantages that were found in Europe. They knew that if they were ever to become their own nation and govern their own affairs, they would have to have the favor and the support of Almighty God.

Did you know the very first act on the very first day of the very first Continental Congress on **September 7, 1774** was to read **Psalm 35** (read) and pray? Did you know they were kneeling, bowed with reverence, and fervently 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? You see, they knew they needed God; and we need God today!

Our lesson text comes from **Romans 13:1-7** - "Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. <sup>5</sup> Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake. <sup>6</sup> For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. <sup>7</sup> Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor." May God richly bless the hearers of that reading from His Holy Word.

**Let us pray together . . . Our Father in Heaven, help us to love our country and to love what You have done to provide for our protection and for our peace. And, Father, may our country always love You the way that You have loved it.**

**Please, please help this country to come to a new day of repentance, turning their hearts toward Your will and away from the evil things that are hurting this great country. In Jesus' name, Amen!**

The Continental Congress on May 16, 1776, appointed a day of fasting and prayer for the colonies. They said, “The Congress . . . Desirous . . . to have people of all ranks and degrees duly impressed with a solemn sense of God's superintending providence, and of their duty, devoutly to rely . . . on his aid and direction . . . Do earnestly recommend Friday, the 17th day of May be observed by the colonies as a day of humiliation, fasting, and prayer; that we may, with united hearts, confess and bewail our manifold sins and transgressions, and, by sincere repentance and amendment of life, appease God's righteous displeasure, and, through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, obtain this pardon and forgiveness.” The Continental Congress knew that their blessing came from God and their forgiveness came through the blood of Jesus Christ.

Friday, July 5, 2013, the local news reported the results of a Gallup Poll which indicated that 71% of Americans believe the founding fathers would be disappointed with the U.S.A. today. If our citizens knew their actual history, that poll would have shown

100% rather than 71%.

America doesn't stand or fall on the basis of its wealth or its might. No! Other nations have been very wealthy and powerful, and yet they fell. We must understand. America stands or falls on the basis of its willingness to live by the principles found in God's Holy Word. God is the true King of our country or any country. He is a greater power than all our weapons. The early Americans knew God was the source of their liberties. They also knew that if they abandoned the will of God found in the Bible, that they would lose the favor of God and their liberties.

Now, according to the Bible, God gives all nations their right to exist. The Bible says in **Acts 17-26** - "And He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation." The Father in heaven is far more involved in the establishing of nations than we might suppose, and the Father is involved in the bringing down of nations as well.

Our great God said through the prophet Jeremiah in **Jeremiah 18:7-10**. "If at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom, that I will pluck up and break down and destroy it, and if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I intended to do it. And if at any

time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom that I will build and plant it, and if it does evil in my sight, not listening to my voice, then I will relent of the good that I had intended to do it.”

**Romans 13:1** reminds us, “For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.” Whether emperor, king or president, every person in authority is subject to the God of heaven. God’s holiness, justice and mercy do not change, but God does adapt how He deals with mankind as people and nations change. America is not the nation it once was; it doesn’t know the Word of God as it once did; it doesn’t allow the voice of God to speak as it once did.

Have you heard of the Aitken Bible? The war with Britain cut off the supply of Bibles to the United States with the result that on September 11, 1777, the United States Congress instructed its Committee of Commerce to import 20,000 Bibles from "Scotland, Holland or elsewhere." On January 21, 1781, Philadelphia printer Robert Aitken asked Congress to officially sanction a publication of the Old and New Testament which he was preparing at his own expense. Congress "highly approved the pious and laudable undertaking of Mr. Aitken, as subservient to the interest of religion . . . in this country, and . . . they recommended this edition of the Bible to the inhabitants of the United States."

Benjamin Franklin said in the Constitutional Convention of 1787 that, “God governs in the affairs of man. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without his notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without His aid?” He said, “We have been assured in the Sacred Writings that except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it.” That is quoting from **Psalm 127:1**. Franklin said, “I firmly believe this. I also believe that, without His concurring aid, we shall succeed in this political building no better than the builders of Babel.”

During his inauguration as the first president of the United States on April 30, 1789, George Washington took the oath as prescribed by the Constitution but he added several faith-based components to that official ceremony. Before taking his oath of office, he summoned a Bible on which to take the oath, and then after the oath he added the words “So help me God!” Then he leaned over and he kissed the Bible.

When Solomon became king over Israel he prayed for God’s blessing on the nation. God answered Solomon’s prayer with these words found in **2 Chronicles 7:13-14**. God said, “When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command the locust to devour the land, or send pestilence among my people, **if 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 and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.”** But what if a country stops listening to God, stops seeking His face, and will not humble themselves before Him? Can they expect His blessing?

Solomon knew that being right with God makes a difference in any nation. And by inspiration he wrote in **Proverbs 14:34** that, “Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.” Solomon also wrote some of the psalms. In **Psalms 127:1** Solomon said, (as Benjamin Franklin quoted) that “Unless the LORD builds the house, they labor in vain who build it; and unless the LORD guards the city, the watchman keeps awake in vain.”

Arnold Toynbee who wrote the acclaimed 12 volume *A Study of History*, once declared, “Of the **22** civilizations that have appeared in history, **19** of them have collapsed when they reached the moral state that America is in today.” Toynbee died in 1975 before seeing how much worse we are today than we were in 1975. One must wonder how long God will tolerate the sins of America, before He punishes or puts an end to this once great country. America Needs repentance . . . America needs your prayers!

America as a nation has in part begun rejecting God and has allowed sin to become its master. America has lost its respect for

God and indeed its fear of God. It is filled with lust, materialism, and selfishness. It has lost sight of the sanctity of life, the sanctity of marriage, and the value of holiness.

**Every 26 seconds** in America a mother decides to take the life of an unborn child. More than **50 million** unborn infants have lost their lives since Roe versus Wade. Nearly half of American adults consider having an abortion as morally acceptable. **40%** of women between the ages of 15 and 44 have had at least one abortion. If we lose respect for the life of little innocents, it will not be long before we cast aside the aged. Today in America **41%** of all births are to unmarried parents. **80%** of women who have had children out of wedlock find themselves living below the poverty level.

The concept of sin is vanishing in the eyes of many people. **13%** of Americans say that there's no such thing as sin. About **one third** of Americans are now saying that many things in the Bible that the Bible regards as sin is no longer a moral issue. Should it surprise us then that **76%** of Americans say that our morals are getting worse. Only **9%** of "born again" teens believe that there are moral absolutes. Nearly **7 in 10** Americans who attend church 'nearly weekly' say that premarital sex is morally acceptable. Almost no one thinks he will be lost in hell, and many are denying that hell even exists. **6 in 10** American adults



consider co-habitation (that is shacking up) as a morally acceptable behavior. **4** in **10** believe that pornography is morally acceptable. More than a third of Americans believe it's okay to use profanity and **63%** say it is all right to gamble.

This loss of respect for God has affected the church as well. **16%** of Americans say that they have no religion at all. **40%** of Americans, sadly, don't believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. **51%** percent of United States' teens deny Jesus' resurrection. Only **4%** of teens today believe that the Bible is true in every circumstance. **Two-thirds** of Americans say that they believe Jesus Christ committed sins while He lived on this earth. This loss of faith in God, and this loss of faith in His Word, and its unwillingness to accept His church has caused people to experiment with false religions and to believe they can reinvent the church. They believe the church should be like the world. And of course, churches that become like the world lose their purpose and their reason for existing.

I ask again how long will God tolerate the sins of America. I wonder how long it will be before He punishes this once great country. God is not evil; He takes no pleasure in punishing people. The Bible says in **Ezekiel 33:11**, "Say to them, 'As I live!' declares the Lord GOD, '**I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked**, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live.

**Turn back, turn back from your evil ways!** Why then will you die, O house of Israel?” We might as easily say to ourselves in this country, “turn back, turn back from your evil ways!”

We need to repent and live godly lives. The Bible says in **Proverbs 11:11**, “By the blessing of the upright a city is exalted, but by the mouth of the wicked it is torn down.” How we live is not simply an individual matter; it affects many other people. We must individually choose to live righteous lives, so that we may bless our families and our society. **Amos 5:24** says, “But let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.”

The Bible says in **1 Peter 2:11-12**, “Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts, which wage war against the soul. Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.” If our Christianity doesn’t lead to righteous living, then we disgrace God. We must so live that we glorify Him by our words, our attitudes, and our behavior.

God saved us so we might bless those around us. The Bible says in **Titus 2:11-14**, “For the grace of God that brings salvation

has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.”

We must live as God’s people and provide examples for our children. **Ephesians 6:4** says, “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.” We’ve got to teach them and show them how pleasing God is the best life that we can live. We’ve got to teach our children to be holy and pure; teach them how God created them and gave them life. We’ve got to teach them to revere God and His Word. We have got to teach them to love the Lord, to love the Truth, and to love other people. We must teach them to be honest, full of integrity and honor. We must never let a day pass without God, without the Bible, and without prayer.

When Ezra came back to Israel after the period of exile in Babylon, he sought to re-establish the people in their faith. He knew the people of Israel needed God again. **Ezra 7:10** says that, “Ezra set his heart to study the Law of the Lord, and to do it and to teach his statutes and rules in Israel.” But Ezra learned

the children of Israel had spiritually and morally compromised themselves by intermarrying with the pagan nations. Ezra said in **Ezra 9:3** - “When I heard about this matter, I tore my garment and my robe, and I pulled some of the hair from my head and my beard, and I sat down appalled.”

Ezra said, “O my God, I am ashamed and embarrassed to lift up my face to You, my God, for our iniquities have risen above our heads and our guilt has grown even to the heavens.” **Ezra 10:1** says that, “While Ezra prayed and made confession, weeping and casting himself down before the house of God, a very great assembly of men, women, and children, gathered to him out of Israel, for the people wept bitterly.” He spent the night, neither eating bread nor drinking water, for he was mourning over the faithlessness of the exiles. Because of Ezra’s teaching God’s will, the people repented and ended their relationships with paganism. Instead of saying there is no sin, they gave up their sinful ways. We too need to recall our faith in God and in Christ Jesus. We need to humble ourselves, mourn about our sins and turn from them. We must in faith commit ourselves to the Lord by being baptized in Jesus Christ. In baptism the blood of Christ will cleanse us from sin and give us newness of life. Today is a good day for us to separate ourselves from sin and to start a new life in Christ. **God's Plan for Man's Salvation**