

Prayer Letter 1

Excerpts from the book "Pray for the Nation" (chapter 3)

1. Praying for nations

God says, "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people" (Proverbs 14:34). Note the words "a nation" and "any people" – this applies to any nation and people, not just to Israel; this is an eternal, universal truth. If we are concerned for our nation, we need to pray against sinfulness in the nation, and pray that righteousness will prevail.

In 2 Chronicles 7:14 the Lord said, "If My people who are called by My Name, will humble themselves and pray, seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from Heaven, and I will forgive their sin and heal their land." (One aspect of "humbling ourselves" is to pray for God's help and intervention). So God is calling Christians to pray, seek His face, repent, and turn from evil so that our sin will be forgiven and 'healing' will come to our land.

Similarly, we read 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 ... turns from its evil ways, I will repent of the evil I intended to do to it. [Remember Nineveh!] 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 repent of the good which I had intended to do to it." [Remember Israel!] Note again, that God is not just talking about Israel: He says, "If at any time... a nation or a kingdom..." This is a general principle to all nations at all times! This is also an extension of the principle God gave to the nation of Israel in Leviticus 26 which states, in essence, "If you obey the Lord, He will bless you. If you disobey, He will punish you (because He loves you!). If you confess your sins, He will forgive you". How simple are God's ways! Even a child can understand His principles!

Paul, in Galatians 6:7-8, echoes the same thought, although applying it to an individual. (But a nation is, of course, a large collection of individuals and so this has national application as well). "Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for whatever a man [a person or nation] sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will, from the Spirit, reap eternal life." We reap what we sow – if we live evil lives we will suffer the consequences of evil fruit; if we live Godly lives we will enjoy the fruit of a blessed, eternal life.

Praying for leaders

Some Christians may feel that it is all right to pray for other Christians, for the salvation of the lost, for the Church, and so on, but what about praying for "secular"

things, like governments? Lest we think that secular things are unimportant, or that God is not interested in them, Paul writes, "First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men; for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, Godly and respectful in every way. This is good, and it is acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour... " (1 Timothy 2:1-4)

God is concerned about leadership; after all, it is by His authority that they are in those positions, and He has the Sovereign power and absolute authority to raise up leaders and put leaders down (Daniel 2:20-21; 4:17). Therefore, we are exhorted to pray for our leaders, and to submit to their authority (Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-17) except when they command things which are contrary to God's laws, and they are therefore acting outside their God-given authority (Acts 4:18-20; 5:27-29).