

God's Message to America

Prov 14:34

Introduction:

1. Most of us place a high value on "personal" messages.
 - a. Form letters and mass mailings are the norm in our day, so it is very refreshing to receive a "personal" note from a person or organization
 - b. Some have made a concerted effort to make their mailings seem to be "one-of-a-kind."
 - c. Today it is difficult to tell what is personal correspondence and what is "mass mailing."
2. Sometimes it may seem the same with scripture.
 - a. While many preachers apply passages written for Israel to America, our text IS to America!
 - b. This is a blanket statement to ANY nation! What would God say to America, if He spoke audibly to us this Fourth of July holiday?
3. I believe He would remind us of this verse...

Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.

 - a. These truths still hold true for any nation today.
 - b. History is littered with the echoes of failed nations.
 - c. Nineveh, the Egyptian Dynasty, Greece, the Roman Empire....
4. Today, the United States is a proof text for this verse! Let us see how as we divide the thoughts into four sections.

I. The Righteousness of a Nation

34 Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.

- The first word is "righteousness" – seldom uttered today
- You don't hear our politicians / news media speak about righteousness.
- There are at least three implications of the word, righteousness.

A. It Implies Sovereignty

1. If there is such a thing as righteousness, then Someone sovereign must determine what it is.
2. Humankind has a varied idea of righteousness.
3. We could never in a million years agree on what is righteous and what is unrighteous.
4. God, however, is an authority on righteousness.
 - a) *Psalm 71:19 "Thy righteousness also, O God, is very high, who hast done great things: O God, who is like unto thee!"*
 - b) *Psalm 98:2 "The LORD hath made known his salvation: his righteousness hath he openly shewed in the sight of the heathen."*

B. It Implies a Standard

1. Society today does not want a standard; they will not even acknowledge that one exists.
2. This is the main reason that the Word of God has been attacked and ridiculed by unbelievers.
3. Psalm 119:40 "Behold, I have longed after thy precepts: quicken me in thy righteousness."
4. Psalm 119:142 "Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and thy law is the truth."
5. At the founding of our nation, the Bible was held in high esteem.
6. There are both direct and indirect quotations in the correspondence of the founding fathers.

C. It Implies a Straightness

1. It is one thing to admit that there is a standard, it is quite another to make that standard your own.
2. The word in our text intimates a personal righteousness, a personal morality.
3. The Judeo-Christian ethic has guided our nation from its founding up until the generation in which we live.
4. Our forefathers chose the righteousness of the Bible as it's guiding light.
5. De 4:5 Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the LORD my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it.

II. The Reward of a Nation

34 Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people.

- Who can doubt that America has been exalted among the nations?
- Some Americans, like Nebuchadnezzar in the book of Daniel, take the credit for such exaltation.
- The mentality is that we somehow deserve the greatness and power of our past. That is a sad mistake to make.
- America has been exalted because of it's citizens goodness and personal holiness!
- America has been exalted because of the churches that have carried out the great commission both at home and abroad!
- It is because of past obedience and humility that we now enjoy a preminent place on the world scene.
- Let us examine the word "exalteth" a little more closely to determine just what God means in this most glorious promise: "Righteousness exalteth a nation....!"

A. The Exalted Nation is Set-Apart

1. One of the meanings of the word "exalt" is "to be lifted up, to be made high." (Wilson's Word Studies, pg. 151)
2. The Bible teaches us that God Himself is exalted, the scripture is exalted, and Israel is exalted above the nations.
3. But in this verse we find a promise that the righteous nation also will be lifted up and made high
4. Surely there is no nation in the history of the world which has been lifted up and exalted more than America!
5. The United States has dominated history throughout the 20th century.

B. The Exalted Nation is Safe

1. Another sub-meaning of the word "exalt" is "to raise high as an inaccessible fortress, out of the reach of danger."
2. Ps 119:114 "Thou art my hiding place and my shield: I hope in thy word."
3. Many nations have been destroyed by their enemies or by God Himself through natural disasters.
4. Plagues, pestilence, war, and unbelief have destroyed many countries. But America celebrates her 234th birthday today
5. What a testament to God's protection and preservation!

C. The Exalted Nation is Strong

1. Another shade of meaning of "exalt" is "to triumph over enemies."
2. A mere glance at the history of America will reveal the hand of God's protection watching over us in war and in peace.
3. Think of the odds of the colonies defeating the most powerful nation in the 18th century world, the British Empire.
 - a) *Yet, it happened.*
 - b) *We take for granted our victory in the Revolutionary War.*
 - c) *We assume that our power then resembled our power today.*
 - d) *Not true! It was a miracle from God that America gained her freedom from England.*
4. Why did the Civil War not tear this nation apart? Could it have been the protection of God?
5. In World War II, America took on much of the world essentially single handedly and assured freedom throughout the globe.
6. There was a time when our citizens proudly said, "America has never lost a war!"
7. We must give God the glory for past victories for He has protected us
8. Ps 144:1 "Blessed be the LORD my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight:"

III. The Revolt of a Nation

34 Righteousness exalteth a nation: **but sin** is a reproach to any people.

- We come to the negative aspects of God's promise
- As surely as righteousness exalts a nation, sin destroys it.
- Today, many people want a "buffet-style" religion.
- They want a God who is merciful, loving and kind.
- The God of Christianity fulfills that desire. But the God of mercy and love is also the God of judgment and damnation.
- But here is a problem. This verse is a couplet, having two parts. The parts are opposite and contrasting.
- But one cannot be accepted without the other. They stand together as a testimony of God's unapproachable holiness.
- The truth is that God WILL judge sin! He will not wink at it, forget it, or misplace His records.
- To understand this truth, let us examine the meaning of the word "sin."

A. *Sin is Missing the Mark*

1. To sin is "to miss the mark, as an archer misses his target." (Wilson's Word Studies, pg. 395)
2. Psalm 2:1 "Help, LORD; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men."
3. Mankind is bound to fail, seeing we are only flesh.
4. But our sinful nature is not an excuse.
5. Missing God's mark is the result of an undisciplined aim, a careless shot at God's perfection.
6. America does not demand greatness of itself anymore.
7. We do not honor what is good and right.
8. Contrariwise, we honor and reward the evil and the froward.
9. Look at our culture. The "bad guy" is now the norm; the "good guy" is the potential hypocrite who bears watching.

B. *Sin is Stumbling From the Path*

1. Another meaning of "sin" is "to stumble, to err from the path."
2. Again, it seems that we have a built in excuse.
3. Which of us has not stumbled from the path through no fault of our own? It is human nature to fail, to stumble.
4. Our stumbling and erring from the path comes from a false assurance, a careless attitude.
5. America has taken for granted the blessings of God, assuming that He will continue to bless and protect us in spite of our sin.
6. Psalm 59:12 "For the sin of their mouth and the words of their lips let them even be taken in their pride:"

C. Sin is Stepping Over the Boundary

1. The final meaning of "sin" is "an outright transgression, rebellion."
2. **Da 9:11** Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us ... because we have sinned against him.
3. **1Jo 3:4** Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.

IV. The Reproach of a Nation "...is a reproach..."

- Sin brings a reproach, whether it is in the life of the individual or in the timeline of a nation.
- Again we examine the different meanings of our text.

A. Disgraced

1. One definition of reproach is "to be brought low, to go from the heights to the depths." (Wilson's Word Studies, pg. 350)
2. **Ne 1:3** And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province *are* in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem *also is* broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire.
3. Israel's sin had caused them to go into captivity and now their capital city stood in ruins. They were brought low by sin
4. We too, have been brought from the heights to the depths by the sins of our people.
5. God judges sin - He will not turn a blind eye to America's folly.
6. As he judged Israel and the heathen nations, He will also judge us.

B. Dishonored

1. Another def. of "reproach" is "to be ridiculed, to rail on, to revile."
2. **1Sa 17:26** And David spake to the men that stood by him, saying, What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel? for who *is* this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?
3. Israel was powerless in the face of Goliath and the Philistines.
4. Certainly they were ridiculed and reviled by their inability.
5. Goliath mocked the army of Israel and the whole nation.
6. America knows something about such disgrace.
7. We are the richest and most developed nation in the world, but we are reviled by much of the world.
8. The Muslim nations and Communist China have little respect for our system of government or our culture.
9. We were reviled and ridiculed by the former Soviet Union until God brought them low.
10. Don't think that the same thing cannot happen to us.

C. Defeated

1. The final definition of "reproach" means "to pluck or strip away all that is good."
2. Our culture is in the process of doing just that.
3. Our defeat has not come at the hands of a foreign invader.
4. It has come at our own hands.
5. The "silent majority" that Richard Nixon spoke of years ago has been splintered into competing special interests.
6. Politicians pit one group against another to keep us divided.
7. The city of Ai was a little speck on the map of the Israelite army.
 - a) *After the great victory at Jericho, Ai would be a simple campaign, a "mopping up" exercise.*
 - b) *But the sin of one man brought defeat.*
 - c) *I believe that the sin that is defeating America is found in churches rather than the culture.*
8. Yes, our culture is rotten; our society is eaten up with evil.
9. But the Christian Achans are hoarding up the world's gold and garments and allowing the gospel witness to fall silent.

Conclusion:

1. America has been great because of God.
2. If we fall, it will be because of our failure to honor God as our Sovereign Authority and Lord.
3. Must we watch our beloved land become mired in the slough of compromise and fearfulness?
4. It is the Christian that must stand up for what is right!
5. We must not fear the wrath of man or the condemnation of sinners.
6. They hated Jesus, so if we are the light which exposes their evil, they will hate us as well.
7. What would God's personal message to America be if He spoke to us audibly in this day?
8. I believe he would say, Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.
9. Let us pray for our land and resolve to do our best to make America great again.
10. If we achieve anything, it is God which must accomplish it!