

# A Nation that has Forgotten God (1)

2009005

## Topic # 2535 (America)

### Introduction:

- A. Would it be safe to say that America has seen profound changes in culture & morality over the last five decades?
  - 1. Humanism, atheism, evolution, liberalism, pluralism, and political correctness are aggressively attacking Christianity & Christian principles at every opportunity.
  - 2. Some have said that a “culture of death” is permeating our country.
  - 3. Aspects of might be characterized as:
    - a. Materialism; consumerism; secularism; relativism; and hyper-individualism
    - b. These things take on very different forms in our day & age and disguise themselves very well.
- B. In describing late 20<sup>th</sup> century America, author Tom Wolfe has surmised:
  - 1. The democratic elements of our nation are fading
  - 2. We are immersed in wealth and enjoy the freedom of social mobility – like never before.
  - 3. Personal liberty is greater than ever...in fact many now equate liberty with license!
    - a. *Manners are relaxed; behavior formerly frowned upon is now tolerated, marriage is easily terminated.*
    - b. *Games and spectacles abound.*
  - 4. Fabric of customs that once helped to civilize relations between men/women is frayed...
    - a. Fatherhood/motherhood receives little support/respect
    - b. Children spend more time w/TV; Internet; video games than w/parents.
- C. People are now openly hostile toward God. From Hollywood, academic elites, to common person.
  - 1. We live in perilous times. May get worse.
  - 2. Laws & history are being rewritten.
  - 3. May someday get to point where the practice of Christianity will be viewed as insensitive, hateful, and against some of the laws of society.
- D. Psalm 33:12, 18
  - 1. As a nation...do we fear God?
  - 2. Yes. We do hope for His loving-kindness...*in word*. But as a nation...do we continue to seek Him *in deed*?
  - 3. Broadly speaking, I feel that we have become a nation that has forgotten God.
  - 4. And...as we shall see, we do so at our own peril.
- E. In our lesson today we shall:
  - 1. Look at Israel of old
  - 2. Compare their rise & fall to today.

3. Continue our thoughts into this evening's lesson.

### I. A look at Israel

- A. Under David, Israel had strong relationship with God.
  1. Started with the character of their **leader** – 2 Sam. 5:12.
  2. 2 Sam. 5:19 – **God** was factored into decisions
  3. 2 Sam. 5:25a – God's expectations were followed closely
  4. God was exalted, revered, and recognized.
- B. 2 Sam. 7:18-22 – David's prayer characterizes what would be a prevailing national attitude.
  1. Result? 2 Sam. 8:14b-15 – Israel greatly blessed. Triumphs over enemies.
  2. David rules over *all* of Israel.
    - a. Subdued enemies that had plagued them for centuries.
    - b. Territory @ largest point it had ever been – conquering nations/people that should have been taken upon Israel's entering the land.
    - c. Israel's power/influence recognized internationally.
  3. Yes David had his failures:
    - a. 2 Sam. 6 – Uzzah and the ark
    - b. 2 Sam. 11 – Bathsheba
    - c. 2 Sam. 13-14 – family discord – Absalom; Amnon; Tamar
    - d. 2 Sam. 24 – an unlawful census taken
  4. But yet...David recognized his mistakes. Look at some of his final words: 2 Sam. 22:2-3a; 50-51
- C. After his death, slow gradual descent begins – leading Israel away from God – and ultimately toward its destruction.
  1. 1 Kings 11:1-6 – starts in old age **of Solomon**. Turns to idols.
    - a. Son Rehoboam consults, not with God, but with peers on higher taxation – leads to division of country. 10 tribes in N; 2 tribes in S.
  2. 1 Kings 12:25-30 – Jeroboam's first act.
  3. The downward progression builds steam: Ahab – 1 Kings 16:29-33
    - a. Think that influence of national leader doesn't matter? Due to Ahab's leadership/encouragement Baal worship spreads.
    - b. Devotees to **Baal** completely permeated the nation – 2 Kings 10:18-24a.
    - c. Jehu kills these followers – 10:25
    - d. 10:26-28
    - e. 10:29, 31 – but yet Jehu's devotion to God was only partial.
  4. And from here it only gets worse.
- D. 2 Kings 17:6 – northern tribes destroyed.
  1. Note carefully the explanation why – 17:7-23

### II. A striking parallel

- A. Ours is a nation that for its first 175 years openly recognized God.
- B. This is not what our young people are being told. Today they hear:

1. Founding fathers endorsed pluralism. Deists not Christians.
  2. Opposed public expression of Christian religion in connection with government.
  3. Lies...all lies. These lies have been repeated over and over and are now accepted as fact.
    - a. *Easier to believe a lie that has been heard 1000 times than to believe a fact no one has heard before.*
    - b. Hitler said the bigger the lie; the easier it is to deceive the masses.
  4. *Separation of Church & State.*
    - a. Term not found in constitution.
    - b. Comes from private correspondence of Thomas Jefferson.
      - i. In context...used to alleviate concerns of a Baptist association that was concerned about the government interfering with the free/open practice of religion.
      - ii. Jefferson said the government couldn't do that. His words were written to express that the government should keep itself from interfering with the free exercise of the Christian religion.
      - iii. **That is not what is happening today.**
- C. God is everywhere in the founding documents of our country. His influence and recognition by people is clearly seen in American culture until the 1950's.
1. Declaration of Independence: God is identified as:
    - a. Supreme Judge of the World
    - b. Creator
    - c. Divine Providence
  2. George Washington's 1789 Thanksgiving declaration:
    - a. *It is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the One True God.*
    - b. Imagine an American President doing this today.
    - c. Entire document is essentially a sermon & a testimony to God.
  3. Pledge of Allegiance...one nation under God.
    - a. Not in original in 1892
    - b. Added in 1954 by Congress...required pledge to be recited by Americans around the country.
    - c. Supreme court has dealt with this recently...passed on it...but it will come up again. What happens when we have more liberal judges?
  4. Every President in his inaugural address has referred to the God of the Bible in his inaugural address...Washington to Bush.
    - a. Washington/Bush statements
    - b. Will it happen this week?
- D. These are but a few examples. God is everywhere in our nation. The Christian influence built the moral foundation of our country.
1. Government documents
  2. Coinage
  3. National symbols
  4. Presidential oath
  5. National songs/hymns
  6. Cemeteries

- E. Radical & powerful forces now seek to remove God from everything and everywhere.
  - 1. They have already succeeded in ways that would have been unfathomable twenty years ago.
    - a. **See supplement.**
    - b. As we cut God out of our lives...so He will cut us out of His plans.
  - 2. In popular culture, Christianity is framed from the viewpoint of its adherents as nothing more than religious “nuts” or “old fashioned” or “out of touch”
  - 3. Look at network television; cable television...books; Internet; music...all forms/types of media.
- F. Newt Gingrich: *There is no attack on American culture more deadly and more historically dishonest than the secular effort to drive God out of America's public life.*
- G. Proverbs 14:34
  - 1. Where are we headed? Certainly ... as a nation ... we are headed away from God.
  - 2. God will not allow that to go unnoticed/unpunished.

#### Conclusion:

- A. Don't fall into the trap that all is well & we'll be OK.
  - 1. History says that will not be the case.
  - 2. More importantly, God's word says that will not be the case.
- B. It doesn't have to be that way though.
  - 1. 2 Chronicles 7:14-15
  - 2. A warning: 2 Chronicles 7:19-22
  - 3. Brethren: Our national sins cry out to God for justice
- C. On which side will you be in this culture war?
- D. I N V I T A T I O N