

Hoping for Brighter Days

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Steps to Revival

In past issues we have established that God is reluctant to judge and is anxious to show mercy; and history—particularly that of Israel and our own nation—provides encouragement for the possibility of revival and awakening in the future. What are the steps Christians must take to have brighter days ahead?

In 2 Chronicles 7:14, God Himself outlines “The Steps to Revival.” God shows us what to do when conditions develop as they have in our time: **“If My people who are called by My name will 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 heal their land.”**

This is probably one of the most misapplied texts in the Bible. People apply this text to the U.S., implying that we as a country are the people of God, and we need to turn back to Him. But that isn’t an accurate application of the passage because God was speaking to Israel, which was a theocracy—a nation or kingdom under the direct rule of God. Israel was the only theocracy in history. While the U.S. was built upon Christian principles and founded by men who were, for the most part, professing Christians, it wouldn’t be accurate to say that we are a Christian nation.

The instruction in 2 Chronicles does not apply to the U.S. or any other country in a geopolitical sense, but rather it applies to the Church, which Peter calls a “Holy Nation” (1 Peter 2:9). We, the Church, are His people, called by His name. This is a message for us. If we want to see a fresh work of God, we need to take these steps ourselves.

According to this passage, there are four steps to revival: *Acknowledgment of Sin, Repentance, Total Devotion and Prayer.*

Acknowledgment of Sin

Let’s look at the first step: **“If My people will humble themselves ...”** What the Lord is really talking about is the acknowledgment of our sin. There is a human tendency to blame others for our troubles.

Quite often Christians say, “It’s the government’s fault that we are in this moral mess today, and the liberal media and the barrage of liberal ideas are corrupting the country.” I personally would agree that these are contributing to spiritual decline. However, the body of Christ is not without fault. We have failed. I personally have to admit, “Many times I haven’t been the godly man that I ought to be. I haven’t always sought the Lord with all my heart.”

If we can’t see our own contribution to the moral decline in our society, it’s because we haven’t seen the Lord.

Consider David. He committed adultery, and Bathsheba became pregnant, so he sent her husband to his death to hide his sin. David had sinned horribly, yet he went about his business as king and spiritual leader—until Nathan the prophet came to him and told him about a wealthy man who had taken advantage of a poor man. The rich man had a huge flock; the poor man had only one little lamb. When a guest arrived at the home of the rich man, he took the only lamb the poor man owned. Not realizing it was a parable, David was outraged that such an injustice could occur. He exploded, “That man shall die!” Nathan replied, “David, you are the man.” Just like us, David was blind to his own condition.

Isaiah and Daniel

In the early stages of Isaiah’s ministry, he pronounced woe upon the nation of Israel: **“Woe unto the wicked. Woe unto those who call evil good and good evil.”** Isaiah traveled through the kingdom pronouncing judgments upon the sinners in the land.

Then we come to the sixth chapter: **“In the year that king Uzziah died,”** Isaiah said, **“I saw the LORD. He was sitting upon the throne. He was high and lifted up. ... And the cherubim were crying, ‘Holy, Holy, Holy.’”** And then Isaiah said, **“Woe is me”** (verse 5, emphasis added). Isaiah was quick to pronounce woe upon everyone except himself. Then, he saw the Lord and was a changed man.

If we can’t see our own contribution to the moral decline in our society, it’s because we haven’t seen the Lord. The moment we see Him, like Isaiah, we must cry out, **“Woe is me ... I am a man of unclean lips.”**

Daniel was one man who should not have been implicated in the sins of his people. As you read the account of his life, you will be hard-pressed to find any inconsistencies. Yet even Daniel included himself as he prayed, “Lord, we have sinned.”

Like Daniel, we too must start with our own sins. This is where it all begins: **“If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves ...”** We need to come to God honestly, asking, **“Search me, O God ... see if there is any wicked way in me”** (Psalm 139:23–24).

I am certain that as we ask, God will highlight areas in our lives that are out of sync with what He wants to do and what He has called us to be. 🙏

Next issue—repentance.