



Chapter 7.12

Power from Above

Where does power come from? Where does ultimate authority reside? Who rules above all else?

Your answer to those questions says a lot about you.

If you say, “*I don’t know,*” chances are you are a man or woman who is tossed about by the events of this world. You are never on solid footing, always fearful and confused, and never at peace about the future.

If you say, “*The answer is with man’s might and power. The strongest nation rules,*” you are trusting in the wrong object. The nations of this world will one day be brought before the Lord of heaven and earth, and all will bow their knees before Him.

If you say, “*Jesus Christ. He is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords,*” you are right. He is the Lord, the Creator and Sustainer of all of life. Of Him, Paul wrote,

Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:9-11).

When His enemies came to arrest Him in the Garden of Gethsemane, they brought him before Pilate. This must have been a curious meeting between the one who thought he had ultimate power and authority in that region and the One who in fact *had* ultimate power and authority over heaven and earth. John records,

*The Jews answered him, “We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God.” Therefore, when Pilate heard that saying, he was the **more afraid**, and went again into the Praetorium, and said to Jesus, “Where are You from?” But Jesus gave him no answer. Then Pilate said to Him, “Are You not speaking to me? Do You not know that I have power to crucify You, and power to release You?” Jesus answered, “You could have **no power at all** against Me **unless it had been given you from above**. Therefore, the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin” (John 19:7-11 emphasis mine).*

Pilate thought he was toying with Jesus. He told him that he had the power to crucify him or release him. He conscience said to release him – he had found no fault in Him (v. 6). The Jewish leaders had delivered Jesus to Pilate out of envy, not for any real charges of guilt. Even Pilate’s

wife said she was warned in a dream not to harm Jesus. Pilate *wanted* to release Jesus, but he didn't. Why not?

In this narrative, we have the will of man and the will of God clashing together. It was like a mighty river overflowing its banks and floodwaters going in every direction. Yet the purpose and plan of God was still perfectly fulfilled.

The Jewish leaders wanted to have Jesus crucified. Satan had put it in the mind of Judas to betray Jesus. The mob cried "*Crucify Him!*" But Pilate wanted to release Him. He relented, however, changing his mind under the pressure from many voices.

Humanly speaking, the Jewish leaders were responsible for killing Jesus. So was the Jewish mob. And so was Pilate and the Roman government. And so were we because of our sins.

But leaders have no power at all unless it has been given to them by God.

*"Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know—Him, **being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death**" (Acts 2:22-23, emphasis mine)*

Human leaders have no power at all unless it is given to them by God.

Often, those in the White House and the President's Cabinet will say, "*I serve at the pleasure of the President.*" But let's remember, the President (and all leaders) should say, "*I serve at the pleasure of the God of heaven and earth.*"

As we pray for our nation today, remember these principles:

- Power and authority have been given by God to rulers like Pilate. But God has a predetermined purpose for history and for His Church.
- Nations will rise and fall, but the Church on mission is being prepared in every nation for the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.



Prayer

Dear Lord, today I thank You that You delivered Jesus into the hands of wicked men with the great purpose of our salvation. I pray for the Church to be found faithful in reaching the nations until You come back. May You continue to use America to show favor to the mission of the Church to reach the nations with the Gospel. In Jesus' name.



Chapter 7.13

Understanding Terrorist Attacks

Our nation – and our world – have been rocked by the continuous attacks from terrorists and terrorist organizations. Is there an explanation for these recent attacks in America beyond the obvious?

The explanations and finger pointing are often defined quite differently by Democrats and Republicans. Are they explained only by the hatred that Islamic radicals have for the American way of life? Are we to believe that some terrorist attacks can be explained as random hate crimes? Is the problem really traceable back to our Second Amendment and the right to bear arms?

In this chapter I would like to look beyond the Islamic radicals, the mentally disturbed, the lone wolves that are inspired by ISIS in their demonic violence, and the well planned terrorist attacks like 9-11. Could there be a deeper, spiritual reason that we are now more susceptible to acts of terror here in America?

I asked myself the question, *“Could God have provided America with an unseen wall of protection against our enemies?”*

God’s Wall of Protection

God can establish a wall of safety for a nation. And God can remove His hand and invisible security barrier making that nation more susceptible to its enemies. The Psalmist knew that a nation’s safety was in the hands of the Lord and God was a nation’s invisible shield.

*No king is saved by the multitude of an army; a mighty man is not delivered by great strength. A horse is a vain hope for **safety**; neither shall it deliver any by its great strength. Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear Him, on those who hope in His mercy, Our soul waits for the LORD; He is our help and **our shield** (Psalms 33:16-18, 20, emphasis mine).*

There was a time in King’s Solomon reign in Israel when God gave the nation peace, rest and security. God in effect had built an *“invisible wall of protection”* around Israel where no enemy would attack her. The reason for this Divine protection was the nation’s commitment to moral righteousness. However, when Solomon led Israel into idolatry and moral depravity, that invisible wall of safety was breached and God stirred up many enemies against Solomon.

Notice the following passages contrast the time of peace and rest in Solomon's reign as king of Israel, with a time of terrorist attacks upon his kingdom:

Peace and Rest

But now the LORD my God has given me rest on every side; there is neither adversary nor evil occurrence (1 Kings 5:3).

The Lord raised up enemies against Solomon:

*Now the LORD raised up an adversary against Solomon ... (1 Kings 11:14).
And God raised up another adversary against him ... He was an adversary of Israel all the days of Solomon (besides the trouble that Hadad caused); and he abhorred Israel, and reigned over Syria (1 Kings 11:23,25).*

We do not always know the reason why a nation suffers unrest and even terrorist attacks. However, God does give us the cause and effect reason for Solomon. It was because of Solomon's sins.

So the LORD became angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned from the LORD God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice (1 Kings 11:9).

Because Solomon turned from God to lust after many women, who then turned his heart to their idols, God not only removed the invisible wall of protection for Israel but also directly or indirectly rose up enemies to Solomon because of his sins.

There were also times in her history where God allowed a nation to terrorize Israel because of the evil she had committed.¹⁰⁴ Instead of restraining Jerusalem's enemies, God allowed or surrendered her to the hatred of its enemies.

A nation that puts its trust in the Lord is blessed by the Lord. However, a nation that throws off moral restraints also forsakes its greatest security – God's wall of protection.

Without God's unseen protection, a nation cannot protect itself from thousands of unseen enemies.

God's Unseen Wall of Protection Illustrated

In the book of Job, God allows us to see behind the scenes to discover that God can build a wall of protection around the righteous. He can also remove that wall when He chooses.

¹⁰⁴ See Ezekiel 23:4,5, 22-24

*Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?" So Satan answered the LORD and said, "Does Job fear God for nothing? **Have You not made a hedge around him**, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But now, stretch out Your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face!" And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your power; only do not lay a hand on his person." So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.*

Now there was a day when his sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house; and a messenger came to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys feeding beside them, when the Sabeans raided them and took them away—indeed they have killed the servants with the edge of the sword; and I alone have escaped to tell you!" (Job 1:8-15, emphasis mine).

To Hebrew word for "hedge" in Job 1:10 means a fence or wall for protection.

Jesus made it clear that the true intent of Satan is to *steal, kill, and destroy*. When God allowed His invisible wall of protection to be breached by Satan, it was easy for Satan to manipulate the Sabeans to attack Job. Before God had allowed Job to be attacked by Satan, the natural greed of the Sabeans toward Job's possessions had been held in check. God can do the same for us.

Israel's security and protection was based upon their righteousness as a nation. Israel had a unique covenant relationship with God that no other nation had.

The following verses are related to the blessings and curses of that covenant. However, the way God deals with all nations is based upon His unchanging moral character. Though America does not have the same covenant that Israel had, we can make an application as well based upon God's favor granted to any nation that practices righteousness and His disfavor upon those nations that practice unrighteousness.

You shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely. I will give peace in the land, and you shall lie down, and none will make you afraid; I will rid the land of evil beasts, and the sword will not go through your land. You will chase your enemies, and they shall fall by the sword before you. Five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight; your enemies shall fall by the sword before you. For I will look on you favorably and make you fruitful, multiply you and confirm My covenant with you (Lev. 26:5-9, 14-17, emphasis mine).

But if you do not obey Me, and do not observe all these commandments, and if you despise My statutes, or if your soul abhors My judgments, so that you do not perform all My commandments, but break My covenant, I also will do this to you: I will even appoint terror over you, wasting disease and fever which shall consume the eyes and cause sorrow of heart. And you shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. I will set My face

against you, and you shall be defeated by your enemies. Those who hate you shall reign over you, and you shall flee when no one pursues you (Lev. 26:14-17).

So you shall observe My statutes and keep My judgments, and perform them; and you will dwell in the land in safety. Then the land will yield its fruit, and you will eat your fill, and dwell there in safety. (Leviticus 25:18, emphasis mine).

But when you cross over the Jordan and dwell in the land which the LORD your God is giving you to inherit, and He gives you rest from all your enemies round about, so that you dwell in safety (Deut. 12:10, emphasis mine).

But if you indeed obey His voice and do all that I speak, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries. For My Angel will go before you. I will send My fear before you, I will cause confusion among all the people to whom you come, and will make all your enemies turn their backs to you (Exodus 23:22,23,27).

The LORD will cause your enemies who rise against you to be defeated before your face; they shall come out against you one way and flee before you seven ways (Deut. 28:7).

God's special covenant with Israel promised blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience.

We in America can understand the principles of God's blessing a nation for righteousness and cursing a nation for habitual unrighteousness. No other nation in the history of the world has been so shaped by the church and Christianity. No other nation on earth has had the favor and blessing of God upon her people like America.

From the previous verses we can make these applications:

1. God can make a righteous nation dwell in safety.
2. God can give a righteous nation peace.
3. God can protect a righteous nation from a lone terrorist or an invading army.
4. God can make a righteous nation defeat her enemies.
5. God can look favorably on a righteous nation and build an unseen wall of protection around them.
6. God can allow an unrighteous nation to have enemies rise up against her and defeat her.
7. God can set a limit on what He allows Satan or man to do against a righteous nation.

8. God can set His face against an unrighteous nation and appoint, surrender or allow terror upon it.

As Christians we should see that all the money, laws, and army that we throw at the problem of terrorism would not protect us if we lose God's protection because of our national sins.



Prayer

Dear Lord, in the past our nation respected the godly influence of Christianity upon its morals and values. The majority of our citizens believed in Your moral absolutes. Forgive us God that we have turned our back upon the morality that made us spiritually strong. O Father, please revive Your church and spare our nation from greater tragedies. Keep and restore Your hedge of protection surrounding our nation. Be with the families of those victimized by terror. May You comfort them and grant them Your salvation. In Jesus' name, Amen.



Chapter 7.14

Summary of Principles from Section Seven

1. God rules sovereignly because He controls the hearts of national leaders.
2. The power of prayer and the power of even one believer interceding to God can change history.
3. When God is at work, it only takes one person to change the course of history. One person, plus his or her God. And sometimes only one night.
4. Here in America when we see the eroding of moral values and the political winds of change toward Christian values, we should not lose heart. God can turn the heart of a king as a river.
5. Our God can do anything. He is sovereign over everything. He notices everything that we are going through. Nothing happens to us without His direct authority. Men and women who have that quiet confidence in their heavenly Father can change the world.
6. God does His will among the nations and no one can stop His hand.
7. Not only can God turn the heart of a king like He turns a river, but He can stop the heart of a king by His sovereign hand of judgment.
8. God can overturn unjust laws. And He often uses His faithful followers to accomplish that.
9. God can stir up a king's heart and turn it to bless God's people.
10. God can change the heart of national leaders to favor the ministry of Christians.
11. God is great enough to turn the heart of a king for His purpose. He is also great enough to use inadequate people to adequately accomplish His purposes.
12. God can exalt His servants to a position of influence to change the heart of a king and the direction of His people.
13. Human leaders have no power at all unless it is given to them by God.
14. A nation that puts its trust in the Lord is blessed by the Lord. However, a nation that throws off moral restraints also forsakes its greatest security – God's wall of protection.



Section Eight:

God's Patience: *Why Has God Blessed America?*



Chapter 8.1

Reason #1: God's Longsuffering

In this section, I would like to examine several factors relating to America's judgment. Why have we been so blessed? Why hasn't judgment come to our country yet? What is God's real attitude toward America?

I'm sure you remember the campaign slogan of this presidential race: "*Make America Great Again*," and "*Make America Whole*." That's probably an admirable goal for a politician ... but I would like to suggest a *better* goal: "*Make America **Godly** Again*," and "*Make America **Spiritually** Whole*."

I believe that America has never been more spiritually and morally sick than she is now. Our national sins are great and grievous before God. God not only looks at the sin of a nation but also the goodness of a nation. The righteousness of a faithful remnant is not forgotten by God even when the majority of a nation turns from God.

Along with the factors that bring God's judgment on a nation there are some reasons that seem to extend God's longsuffering and give a nation more time for repentance. In this and the following five chapters, we will look at five reasons that may extend God's longsuffering to America. They are:

1. He is longsuffering so that more people will come to faith.
2. America's friendship with Israel.
3. America's commitment to freedom of religion and the environment in which the Gospel can spread.
4. America's history of providing security and safety around the world.
5. America's merciful treatment of its enemies.
6. America's Liberty and Freedom

Let's start with the first one, **God is longsuffering so that more people will come to faith in Christ.**

One of my prayers for those who read this book is that as Christians take a closer look at God as the Governor and Judge of the nations, they will be burdened to become intercessors for America. A secondary purpose is to give us hope and not fear. We must not be *consumed* with fear and *preoccupied* with the future. Such attitudes of self-preservation will divert us from the Great Commission, the ministry of the Church, the willingness to suffer for righteousness, and to patiently look for our Lord's Second Coming.

So what about America?

Over the past forty years I have been sensitive to the biblical truth that God does still judge nations, including America. I believe He longs for America to return to her spiritual heritage and roots. What has grieved my heart is that many critics of America only look at her sins and fail to realize that there are other variable factors in the heart of God that we do not know. One of those factors is the longsuffering patience of God.

A better understanding of the longsuffering and patience of God will keep us from fear, date setting, and from following visions, dreams, and false prophecies of those who tell us that God has told them what is coming upon America.

The longsuffering of God flows from His very character. God does not judge a nation without first offering mercy and giving both an individual and a nation time to repent. God is Just but He delights in mercy. It is this mercy and longsuffering of God that delays judgment for many years in some cases.

When God revealed Himself to Moses He declared: *And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth..."* (Exodus 34:6).

The Psalmist praised God for His longsuffering nature: *But You, O Lord, are a God full of compassion, and gracious, Longsuffering and abundant in mercy and truth* (Psalms 86:15).

When the Apostle Paul wrote of escaping the judgment of God, he saw the longsuffering of God as one of the many links of God's character and gracious plan of salvation: *Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?* (Romans 2:4).

The Apostle Peter reminds us that we cannot force the eternal God to conform to our preconceived ideas about God's timing of judgment. As we think of an individual or of national judgment, we must remember that God may hold back His judgment for hundreds of years for the sake of the salvation of many:

But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance (2 Peter 3:8-9).

The Scriptures gives us a balance on the judgment of nations and His longsuffering. When God gave the land of Canaan to Abraham, He did not immediately drive out its inhabitants Promised Land in judgment. God waited over 400 years until they reached a point of hardness of heart.

*Then He said to Abram: "Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict **them four hundred years**. And*

*also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions... But in the fourth generation they shall return here, **for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.***" (Genesis 15:13, 16, emphasis mine).

In Noah's day when man's wickedness was great, still God grieved over man and His Spirit continued striving with man to repent. When God declared that He would judge the whole world, God still waited 120 years because He is longsuffering. He still gave grace to Noah both to preach to that generation and to build an Ark as a means of escape and a witness to that evil generation.¹⁰⁵

In hindsight we can look at the national sins of Egypt and declare that she deserved God's judgment hundreds of years before it came upon them. But patience and timing in judgment is beyond our feeble knowledge. We do not control God's timing, nor do we understand God's multifaceted purposes in judgment.

There were many factors that played a role in Egypt's judgment. Egypt's judgment was according to:

- God's longsuffering
- Their oppression and enslaving of the Jews
- His greater purpose in Christ (remember the Passover)
- His promise to Abraham
- The vision of Joseph
- The salvation of Jacob's family
- The growth of Israel as a nation
- The raising up of Moses to make God's power, mercy and name great among the nations
- To demonstrate His wrath on Pharaoh and a nation with hardened hearts

The pattern of God's longsuffering before judgment is repeated with Israel and Judah. When Jeroboam broke from the united twelve tribes of Israel to form a new nation of ten tribes, he rebelled against God by establishing a counterfeit religion with a mixture of the Laws of Moses and idolatry. God then pronounced judgment upon both Jeroboam and the idolatry of Israel. Not one good king would rule this rebellious state of Israel for its entire history. Yet God would send them prophets to call them to return to Him. After repeated corrective judgments, God finally in 722 B.C. brought His great judgment against them through the Assyrians. God's longsuffering had waited 210 years.

If we were living in the days of Ahab and Jezebel we might have thought that God's judgment would come any day. But we would have been wrong. Because God is longsuffering, His judgment would wait through twelve more successive wicked kings. (This is why we must be cautious in our approach to God judging America. Some feel like we have gone too far and

¹⁰⁵ Genesis 6:3-7; 1 Peter 3:20

judgment may come any day. We too can be wrong because God's longsuffering is great.) So the principle is this:

If we misunderstand the longsuffering of God, then we can easily be diverted from the Great Commission given to His Church and fall prey to our own personal self-preservation.

When our Savior invaded time from eternity, He was born as a man in order to die for our sins. He would be rejected by His own nation Israel. In that setting of rejection, Jesus wept over Jerusalem knowing its judgment was soon.

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! See! Your house is left to you desolate ... (Matthew 23:37-38).

Jesus warned of the Temple's destruction when He said, *"The days will come in which not one stone shall be left upon another that shall not be thrown down"* (Luke 21:5).

Jesus warned of a coming army destroying Jerusalem and the Jewish people being scattered among many nations.

But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near.... And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled (Luke 21:20, 24).

When Israel had done its worst to God's own Son, God's judgment was not immediate - because He is *longsuffering not willing that any should perish but all come to repentance*. But His judgment was certain.

There could not have been any greater sin than the rejection and crucifixion of Jesus. You would think that God would have poured out His wrath immediately upon the rejecting nation. No! The church would be birthed in Jerusalem and in its first few years it reached hundreds of thousands of Jews. God was longsuffering but that longsuffering came to an end nearly forty years after the national rejection of Israel's Messiah. Just as Jesus foretold, the Romans came and destroyed the Temple, slaughtered thousands of Jews, and the rest were scattered among many nations.

Every nation that the prophets declared God's coming judgment upon was always preceded by God's longsuffering. This secret time of God's longsuffering lasted under a hundred years for some, and hundreds of years to others. After God destroyed Jerusalem through Babylon, God's timing of seventy years was set for Judah's return and for Babylon's destruction by the Medes and Persian Empire. Then God through the Grecian Empire judged the Persian Empire. Then the Grecian Empire was judged by the Roman Empire.

In each of God's judgments of these nations God was longsuffering and His timing varied according to God's own plan and purpose – some hundreds of years and some a thousand years or more.

Why hasn't God judged America? Why, at least in part, does He continue to bless us as a nation?

My point is one of caution. When we begin to understand that God still judges nations and we grieve over our nations sins, we must not make the mistake that so many have made and feel that God's judgment is within days, weeks, months, or a few years. Only God knows if and when.

When it comes to God's judgment of America, we must not make the mistake that so many have made and feel that God's judgment is within days, weeks, months, or a few years. Only God knows if and when it will occur.

Do I believe that God will judge America for her national sins? Yes, I do. Do I know when? No, I do not. Does anyone know? No, they do not. God has a purpose for America. We should continue to pray for revival and our part in reaching every nation, tongue, and tribe in the world before Jesus returns.

There are many unknown factors that we do not see. It may be that America's judgment comes just before the Second Coming of Christ. Perhaps the absence of American influence hastens the engulfing darkness that the anti-Christ's kingdom will bring to the Earth. Only God knows.

We should grieve over our nation's sins. But we must also be cautious that we do not withdraw from our nation. We are to be God's light in the darkness that is engulfing our nation.



Prayer

Dear Father, we praise You that You are longsuffering and that Your mercies endure forever. May we see Your longsuffering as an opportunity to turn from our sins and not a pass to continue in our sins. Please stir up Your people to be more fervent in prayer and evangelism while you hold back your wrath against our national sins. In Jesus' name.



Chapter 8.2

Factor #2: America's Friendship with Israel

America has always been a friend of the nation of Israel. And that is near and dear to the heart of God. Speaking to Abraham about his lineage, God said,

I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed (Genesis 12:3).

Israel descended from Abraham. God chose Israel and entered into a unique covenant with them as a nation. God promised to bless those that blessed Israel. In our modern times, there has been no nation on earth that has been a better helper of Israel than America. And the primary reasons for America's friendship with Israel has been the influence of evangelical Christians and American Jews.

However, there seems to be a political shift that would weaken our support and defense of Israel. It is obvious that our national sins are increasing, yet our support of Israel can be one of the reasons that we have not faced a greater judgment so far.

Therefore all those who devour you shall be devoured; and all your adversaries, every one of them, shall go into captivity; those who plunder you shall become plunder (Jeremiah 30:16).

In the context of this passage God was pronouncing judgment on His people Israel and raised up nations to judge her. Yet, God pronounced future judgment on those nations that would devour, plunder, and persecute Israel.

God protects His people.

We are told to *"pray for the peace of Jerusalem: may they prosper who love you"* (Psalms 122:6).

When Hitler killed six million Jews in his Satan-inspired hatred, God judged him and his German war machine. In His providence, God saved the Jewish remnant and the world from Hitler's evil intent.

In 1948, America helped the nation of Israel become established once again. And we have been Israel's greatest ally ever since. We have aided Israel and warned its enemies that those who oppose Israel will become America's enemies.

In the face of so many nations turning against Israel, America has stood solidly behind her. Where would Israel be today if we had failed to do that? Conquered and subjugated once again. With all of America's sins, this seems to be a factor that is holding back God's judgment upon us.

Protecting and blessing Israel is a blessing in God's eyes. He looks favorably on nations that do that. So far, America has lived up to that commitment.

But there are warning signs that America's commitment to Israel is eroding. America may no longer see God's hand of judgment restrained because it has backed down on its political partnership with Israel. We have also seen a political shift away from the freedom of religion that has allowed the Gospel to flourish in America and expand to all the nations of the world.

Why should the church (and Christians) support Israel?

1. Israel is the Apple of God's eye. Jews are the chosen people of God and dearly loved by Him. The Abrahamic Covenant promises blessings to the Jews – and blessings to those who bless them.¹⁰⁶
2. God has historically blessed the people of Israel. Throughout history, Israel has been marked by God's blessing. That blessing culminated in the miraculous return of the Jews to the Promised Land in 1948.

One day in the late 19th Century, Queen Victoria of England reportedly asked her Prime Minister, Benjamin Disraeli, this question: "*Mr. Prime Minister, what evidence can you give me of the existence of God?*" Disraeli thought for a moment and then replied, "*The Jew, your majesty.*"

Think about it. The primary evidence that God exists is the existence of the Jewish people. These people were deported to Babylon in 586 B.C. yet returned after 70 years to rebuild a nation. They survived as a nation for six hundred more years, and then these people were again brutally massacred and dispersed by the Romans in 70 A.D. Yet after countless centuries of Diaspora, expulsions, and attempts at genocidal extermination, the Jews have clung to their faith, their customs and traditions. Finally, after almost nineteen hundred years of non-existence as a nation, have now been returned to the land promised by God to their ancestors.

A new nation began in that land in 1948. That is a miracle. The survival of the Jewish people is a miracle of God. The return of the Jewish people to the land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is a miracle. The remarkable victories of Jewish armies against overwhelming odds in successive battles in 1948, and 1967, and 1973 are clearly miracles of God. The technological marvels of Israeli industry, the military prowess, the

¹⁰⁶ Genesis 12:1-3; 27:29; Numbers 24:9

bounty of Israeli agriculture, the fruits and flowers and abundance of the land are all a testimony to God's watchful care over this new nation and the genius of this people.¹⁰⁷

Why? So that the fame and renown of God would be spread throughout the world. God said, *"Then the nations around you that remain will know that I, the Lord, have rebuilt what was destroyed and have replanted what was desolate. I, the Lord, have spoken, and I will do it"* (Ezekiel 36:36).

The United States has consistently demonstrated a total commitment to the nation of Israel.

*No nation in the history of the world has a better record of treating individual Jews with respect than America. The same can be said for our befriending Israel as a nation. America has committed many sins for which we may well deserve judgment, but as a nation, we have been a consistent friend of the Jews and the nation of Israel, as well as a benefactor. In 1948, President Harry Truman helped persuade the United Nations to recognize Israel as a nation. Since then, the United States has contributed billions of dollars in aid to Israel.*¹⁰⁸

By God's grace, may that continue.



Prayer

God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, may You continue to allow Your church and America to support and defend Israel's right to the land You promised them.

Continue to help America be a friend and ally against those who seek to destroy Israel. We pray for the peace of Jerusalem. Continue to bless America as we bless Israel. In the name of our Messiah, Jesus Christ.

¹⁰⁷ Adapted from <http://www.patrobobertson.com/Speeches/IsraelLauder.asp>

¹⁰⁸ <http://www.gotquestions.org/support-Israel.html>



Chapter 8.3

Reason #3: America Has Provided Freedom of Religion and Blessing to the Church

You cannot tell the story of America without telling the story of Christianity. Our faith has had a supreme influence on our country, culture and government for the last two hundred and fifty years. No nation in the history of the world has enjoyed such religious liberty and had such an influence for Christ.

The church in America has reached millions for Christ, not only in our country but around the world. The church has been salt and light that has influenced every area of American life for generations. That influence may be diminishing at this point, though there are pockets where the church is currently experiencing revival and influence in a great way.

America has blessed the church and the church has, in return, been a blessing to America and the world.

Our nation has allowed the church to send missionaries around the world to plant churches and to make disciples of all nations. The footprint of the church continues to spread worldwide and America has been a Gospel lighthouse to the world. It is hard to imagine how much darker our world would be without the influence of America and the missions of the American church.

Because of the ministry of the church, I believe God has granted greater blessings to our nation and withheld His greater judgments from us.

In the United States, our religious civil liberties are guaranteed by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution:

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

The Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution guarantees the religious civil rights. Whereas the First Amendment secures the free exercise of religion, section one of the Fourteenth Amendment prohibits discrimination, including on the basis of religion, by securing "the equal protection of the laws" for every person:

All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State where in they reside. No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due

process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

Jesus told His church to go into all the world and make disciples:

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen"
(Matthew 28:18-20).

Because of our religious freedom, the church has flourished in America. The American church's commitment to the Great Commission has grown and become more effective in recent years:

- America has historically sent more missionaries to other countries than any other country of the world.
- American churches and missions groups have planted thousands of churches around the world in recent years.
- Each year America's seminaries train hundreds of pastors and Christian leaders from around the world, sending them back to their countries to effectively promote the Gospel.
- The church's humanitarian efforts and responses in times of crisis and disaster are well-known.

A revived church obeying the Great Commission both here and around the world is America's greatest treasure.

As long as America continues to enjoy its religious liberties, the ministry of the church will continue – and it would seem that the longsuffering of God is extended because of its impact.

The more the church influences a nation, the greater the impact for godliness. However, where the Gospel goes, so does persecution. Our Bill of Rights protects our religious liberties – but those liberties are certainly under attack today. We must pray for our freedoms to continue.



Prayer

Our Father, thank You for our country. Thank You for the freedom of religion that we experience. You have graciously allowed America to prosper and to be a blessing to the rest of the world. Our country was founded on principles that have supported religious freedom. We ask that You would graciously keep those doors of freedom open so that the Gospel may go forth, not only in this country, but around the world. In Jesus' name.