

The Statesman Considers Our Creator's Hand upon the Nation

God made an astounding promise to Abraham, the father of ancient Israel:

all the peoples on earth will be blessed through you (Genesis 12:3).

This promise is repeated numerous times. Let us seek to understand what it was that made this promise applicable to other nations:

Abraham is to become a great and powerful nation, and all the nations of the earth will be blessed through him. For I have chosen him so that he will command his children and his house after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just. This is how the LORD will fulfill to Abraham what He promised him (Genesis 18:18-19).

What was it that God asked of Abraham as the basis of installing His blessing upon the nations? Simply stated, it was:

to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just.

We learn more as God repeated His promise to Abraham's son Isaac:

I will be with you and bless you.... I will confirm the oath that I swore to your father Abraham.... all the nations of the earth will be blessed by your offspring...

As God proceeded with Isaac, He provided more insight into the key to that blessing:

... because Abraham listened to My voice and kept My mandate, My commands, My statutes, and My instructions (Genesis 26:3-5).

Clearly, the uniqueness of Israel may only partly be understood by the human mind. It was the people through whom His Saviour for mankind would come. Israel was also to be a visible teaching lesson to all the nations. God's interaction with Israel would be a visible demonstration of God's character as it applies to nations. Israel would be an object lesson for every other nation of the blessings God desires to bestow upon every nation, with the clear understanding that each nation would listen to His voice and obey His instructions.

God provided a clear measuring stick for Israel which we must understand applies to our nations as well in evaluating whether our nations are experiencing God's intended blessings:

Now if you faithfully obey the LORD your God and are careful to follow all His commands I am giving you today...All these blessings will come and overtake you, because you obey the LORD your God: You will be blessed in the city and blessed in the country. Your descendants will be blessed, and your land's produce, and the offspring of your livestock, including the young of your herds and the newborn of your flocks. Your basket and kneading bowl will be blessed. You will be blessed when you come in and blessed when you go out... The LORD will make you prosper abundantly with children, the offspring of your livestock, and your land's produce in the land the LORD swore to your fathers to give you. The LORD will open for you His abundant storehouse, the sky, to give your land rain in its season and to bless all the work of your hands....you will only move upward and never downward if you listen to the LORD your God's commands I am giving you today and are careful to follow

them. Do not turn aside to the right or the left from all the things I am commanding you today, and do not go after other gods to worship them (Deuteronomy 28:1-14).

Can our vision for our nations be any greater than this? Let us continue with God's clarification:

But if you do not obey the LORD your God by carefully following all His commands and statutes I am giving you today, all these curses will come and overtake you: You will be cursed in the city and cursed in the country. Your basket and kneading bowl will be cursed. Your descendants will be cursed, and your land's produce, the young of your herds, and the newborn of your flocks. You will be cursed when you come in and cursed when you go out...because of the wickedness of your actions in abandoning Me... You will sow much seed in the field but harvest little, because locusts will devour it... All these curses will come, pursue, and overtake you until you are destroyed, since you did not obey the LORD your God and keep the commands and statutes He gave you. These curses will be a sign and a wonder against you and your descendants forever. Because you didn't serve the LORD your God with joy and a cheerful heart, even though you had an abundance of everything,... If you are not careful to obey all the words of this law, which are written in this scroll, by fearing this glorious and awesome name—Yahweh, your God— He will bring extraordinary plagues on you and your descendants, severe and lasting plagues, and terrible and chronic sicknesses (Deuteronomy 28:15-59).

As we get to know the character of our God, we recognize that He desires to show love and bestow His blessings upon every human being. His desire is to bless and not to harm. His character is expressed:

"For I know the plans I have for you"—this is the LORD's declaration—"plans for your welfare, not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope" (Jeremiah 29:11).

However, He only asks that we give Him His proper place in our lives individually and as nations. Israel was intended to be a visible demonstration of what our Creator would do for the nation that would obey Him.

As we evaluate our nations using the measuring stick of blessing and withholding of intended blessing from our Heavenly Father, where does my nation lie? If I perceive that my nation is not receiving the blessing He intends, what steps can I and my people take? God gave this prescription to the God-fearing people in ancient Israel:

If I close the sky so there is no rain, or if I command the grasshopper to consume the land, or if I send pestilence on My people, and My people who are called by My name humble themselves, pray and seek My face, and turn from their evil ways, then I will hear from heaven, forgive their sin, and heal their land (2 Chronicles 7:13-14).

This must also be considered the prescribed course of action for those of every nation.