

AMERICA'S HOPE

TEXT: 2 Chronicles 7:14

INTRODUCTION: Who can deny that the United States of **America is a troubled nation and a nation in trouble?**

Whether you are among

- Those who believe that President Trump is a respite from the wicked ways of his predecessor, or you are among
- Those who believe that Mr. Trump is the worst president America has ever had.

Either way, how could anyone deny the statement that America is a troubled nation and a nation in trouble?

I could preach long and hard concerning the cause of our troubles. I have done that before, and if the Lord tarries I will likely preach on those things again, but not today. I do not refrain because today is a day of celebration for what God has done in the life of our country nor because it would in any way be inappropriate.

I am not preaching about America's flaws and sins because if I do, I will not have time to preach about the one thing that is in the text God put upon my heart for today. And that one thing is America's hope.

**America has many flaws.
America has one hope.
Americans have many sins.
Each American has only one hope.**

We read about it in 2 Chronicles 7:14.

2 Chronicles 7:14 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.

Now, I am aware that this is not an unusual text for a day such as this in a Baptist church. There may even be some of you that when you saw or heard the text and title of today's message, you began to check out, saying, "I have heard all of this before."

I plead with you not to do that. **DON'T CHECK OUT!!!** Commit to give me just **15 minutes** of your careful attention. No, I cannot preach this whole message in 15 minutes, but if I have not proven to you in the first 15 minutes of this sermon that I am going to take you deeper and ask more penetrating questions about this text than is common, then if you check out on me, I won't complain, nor will I call your name to wake you up.

I will try to make good on my promise by asking a question we seldom ask about this text from the pulpit:

I. IS 2 CHRONICLES 7:14 REALLY A PROMISE TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA?

Some people answer this question with a “NO!”

The reason they say 2 Chron. 7:14 is not a promise to America is because of the historical context of the passage.

A. The historical context is about Israel, following the dedication of the temple by King Solomon.

1. 2 Chronicles 6 has recorded to YHWH before a great crowd of Israelites gathered on the Temple Mount in front of the awe inspiring temple he had constructed, built on the same pattern as God commanded Moses to build the tabernacle.
2. **Solomon made a series of requests to the Lord.**
 - **If anyone sins against his neighbor... (6:22)**
 - **If Your people Israel are defeated before an enemy because they have sinned against You... (6:24)**
 - **When the heavens are shut up and there is no rain, because they have sinned against You... (6:26)**
 - **When there is famine... pestilence... plague... (6:28)**
 - **When they sin against You... and they take them captive to a land far or near... (6:36)**

And time after time, Solomon asked God

- **Hear from heaven... (6:21)**
 - **Forgive the sin...(6:25)**
 - **Bring them back to the land... send rain on Your land... (6:25,27)**
3. **Then that night, when all the celebration had ceased, the Scripture says that God appeared to Solomon and answered him.**

2 Chronicles 7:12–14 12 Then the LORD appeared to Solomon by night, and said to him: “I have heard your prayer, and have chosen this place for Myself as a house of sacrifice. 13 When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people, 14 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.

The conclusion is that, without question, the historical context of this promise of God is to God’s chosen people, Israel.

But that is not the end of this question.

B. Is there any way that the United States can be called “the people of God?”

The biblical answer is “No.”

That in no way denies the clear evidence of God’s providential hand in establishing this nation.

It does not count as insignificant the fact that the United States has had in its history many strong Christian leaders, some of whom have been properly quoted in this worship service.

Neither does this answer dismiss God’s hand of mercy and benevolent grace often laid upon this nation in times of conflict or trouble.

I personally strongly affirm all of those things about God’s interaction with our nation, its leaders, and its people, but I must be honest to tell you that the Scripture is clear that these actions by the Lord do not make America the people of God.

The only way, this side of the cross, to be the people of God is through personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

John 1:12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:

Being American does not make a person a part of God’s people. Neither does being a part of God’s people make a person American.

C. So, to whom is the promise of 2 Chronicles 7:14 made? I am so glad you asked!

2 Chronicles 7:14 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.

- **To God’s people**

1 Peter 2:9–10 9 But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, **His own special people**, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; 10 who once *were* not a people but **are now the people of God**, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

- **God’s people today are those who have passed from darkness into God’s marvelous light!**
- **They are the redeemed! The Saved!**

Look again at 2 Chr. 7:14

2 Chronicles 7:14 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.

Who today is called by God's name?

In the days following the resurrection and ascension, what did people in general call the followers of Christ, those who were saved, those who were redeemed?

They called them Christians!

Acts 11:26 ... **the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.**

- **Christian – “Little Christ”**
- **Every Christian is a part of God's people today, those who have passed from darkness to light!**
- **Christians are those today who are called by God's own Name!**

The promise of 2 Chronicles 7:14 is not a promise to America as a nation or to Americans as a people, but it is a promise to American Christians. And it is a promise to

- **British Christians**
- **French Christians**
- **Mexican Christians**
- **Chinese Christians**
- **Brazilian Christians**

And on and on we could go.

But let us come back to we who are American Christians. Christians not because of heritage but because of conversion, because we have repented of sin and trusted in Jesus Who died on the cross for our sins and rose from the dead. When we trusted the risen Christ as our Savior and Lord, He forgave our sins and caused us to pass out of darkness and into His marvelous light.

And we American Christians find the land in which we live in trouble, in trouble in more ways than we can count. So what do we do?

God says, 2 Chronicles 7:14 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.

God says, “Dear Christian, you need healing in your land? Don't call the lost to get their lives straight, this depends on you!”

II. WHAT MUST GOD'S PEOPLE DO?

A. We must humble ourselves.

- We must accept that the problem is with us, the saved, not with the lost.
- The lost always do wickedly; they are slaves to sin.
- But in America, many Christians do wickedly.
- The American dream of prosperity and comfort governs more Christian lives than does the Great Commission of our Savior.
- American Christians spend far more time planning their weekend trips and vacations than considering where they can go in Samaria or the ends of the earth to be a witness for Christ.
- Most American Christians consume all of their resources on themselves and return little or nothing to the Lord to acknowledge Him as the source of their every blessing.
- Most American Christians, if they have not abandoned the church for whom Christ died altogether, have made the church into a mere convenience for when they have nothing else they want to do on a Sunday.

B. We must pray.

- Begin with **praise and worship** for who God is.
- Take time to **thank Christ** for what He has done on the cross and in recent times in your life.
- **Confess** your sins to the Lord.
- **Petition** and ask the Lord for help with your own needs and struggles.
- **Intercede** for the needs of others. Intercede – pray for America.

C. We must seek God's face.

- We must seek to know Him more and more.
- Paul said, "I want to know Him and the power of His death and resurrection!"
- If Paul needed to know Him more, do you not imagine each of us need to know the Lord better?
- We can only know Him better through the reading and study of His Word.
- That is the only place God reveals Himself to us.
- And as we learn to know Him more, we also love Him more.
- And desire to be more and more like Him.
- For it is the will of God to conform us to the image of His Son.

D. We must repent – turn from our wicked ways.

- If we humble ourselves before God daily, pray, seek to know Him better through regularly reading His Word
- God will convict us of those areas of our life where we need to repent and turn.
- The problem is that this is not the regular pattern of most American Christians to humble themselves, pray, seek God's face in His Word.
- Most American Christians say, "I don't see anything wrong with my life."

But my friend, **if we would, if we would humble ourselves and pray, seek the face of God, and turn from our wicked ways, we would see God act.**

III. WHAT DOES GOD PROMISE HE WILL DO?

- **God would hear our prayers.**
- **He would forgive our sin.**
- **God would heal our land.**