



When God's Justice Awakens - A Wake Up Call to America

*Canton Baptist Temple
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Tomorrow, we celebrate the 246th birthday of the United States of America. The longest continuing constitutional Republic in the history of the world. And blessed of God, beyond description, this nation, our nation rose from nothing to become perhaps the greatest nation in terms of wealth and knowledge and compassion and creativity and work ethic and all of history. Like no nation before, the United States rose to prominence among the other nations of the world becoming the thought leader of the world, of the free world, the defender of the helpless. The communicator of truth and the proclaimer of the gospel to all people groups. Though hated by tyrants and despisers of God, this nation became a beacon of hope to the beleaguered. A light on the hill to the oppressed and a holy experiment in freedom to all of those in bondage everywhere.

So, God used this nation to bring hope to an enslaved world and to evangelize a world illuminated by that light, which became this shining city on a hill and to bring prosperity to a world just like prophesied in Jeremiah 51:7 where God says there, "Thou, oh Babylon, hath been a golden cup in the Lord's hands." Today we sit here still enjoying many of God's past blessings, and of that, we certainly can be thankful. Now that's the good news. America became the fulfillment of exactly that for which our earliest founders hoped and prayed. But today America hangs on the precipice of total destruction and collapse and losing, as we speak, all that God has bestowed upon us.

For over two generations, our nation has called evil good and good evil. For 60 years, last week, God has put up with America's defiance of its generous invitation and command to pray when our nation's highest court made it illegal to pray by our children in our government schools. For 49 years, I believe God has watched and wept over America, once one nation under God. Now the worldwide cheerleader and the enabler of the murder of the innocent. And since that door was first opened in 1973, the sanctioning of the slaughter of innocent children, over 65 million babies have been ripped from the wombs of their mothers and torn apart as this nation stands as condemned as Israel of old who sacrificed their babies on the altars of Molech and Baal.

Now, with the court ruling of last week of Roe v. Wade, this is certainly a good thing for which we should all be thankful. Yet the decision does not make the murder of the unborn illegal. It just moves the debate back to the states where it should have been all along, yet the verdict is still out. What will God's people and the Church in America now do? With less than 9% of the pulpits of America for the last 10 or 15 years even preaching one sermon per year on life and the sin of abortion because they feared someone in the pew, what do you think's going to happen now in the pulpits of America when there are actually people out there threatening to harm those churches and the people who stand up?

For 42 years, God has endured the arrogance of our nation when it raised its fist in the face of God Himself when our U.S. Supreme Court ordered the removal, from the walls of our government schools, the 10 Commandments of God. God's moral universal law. Do you know what the Court said when they ordered the removal of the 10 Commandments? Effectively these words, "If the 10 Commandments are hanging on the walls of our schools, it's possible that our children may read them. If they read them, it's possible, they may venerate them or do them." The court said, "This we cannot permit." But America still didn't learn. Still spiraling downward. From a national perspective, America has become the 21st century Sodom and Gomorrah.

For 7 years now, last week, our nation's highest court in grand arrogance to God Himself, but reflecting the leaders of government, generally, and the people themselves, defied the God of Heaven, the Creator of all mankind. Not to be out done by the evil of murdering our babies, our top determiners of law declared that the God who made male and female and established marriage and children to reflect the pattern of human civilization was again wrong. On June 26th, 2015, the court embraced as righteous the demonic structure of marriage as being between two men or two women and embracing as normal what God declares to be an abomination!

Romans 1 makes it very clear. Not content to revel in sin themselves, they seek to compel all people, not only to embrace, but to participate in this evil. God has watched, God has wept, and God began to judge just as He said. And not to be forgotten, yet wildly overlooked was a decision by this very same Supreme Court who 10 days ago, thankfully, reversed the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision. Two years ago, June 15th, 2020, this Court ruled in a six to three margin in favor of protecting and establishing the abomination of transgenderism as an acceptable definition of human sexuality. So, this morning, it is remarkable our nation rose to greatness.

It's also equally remarkable of our fall into moral collapse and judgment as we witness this very day. It's on that theme that I'd like to focus this morning's sermon, which God has laid on my heart. Not from my subjective opinions, because I don't mean a whole lot, but from God's unchanging word which means everything.

Rather than focusing on the what of Independence Day weekend and citing reminiscent platitudes and rehearsing selected pleasant, patriotic thoughts, which I would prefer to do, I want to present and consider from God's perspective 4 questions that focus on the Why? Why did America rise from nothing and become the greatest nation perhaps in all of human history? Why did America maintain such longevity of greatness? Why is America collapsing and in moral free fall? Why are Americans so lethargic and blind to the actual condition of being under God's judgment? I believe the answer to these questions lie in answering these questions from the perspective of when God's Justice Awakens. A wake-up call to America as we consider His speaking to our nation and the backdrop of the familiar words of independence and liberty and freedom and greatness.

Can we pray just briefly? Our Heavenly Father, we're thankful that we can be here in a country raised up of You, blessed beyond measure and be here today gathered together with fellow believers in Your house. I pray, Lord, You'd guide us as we look back to what You have done, what You are doing, and Lord, what we should do. We pray in Jesus' name, amen.

Well, before I identify the foundations established by our founders years ago, let me read to you a few verses that they identified as a part of their motivation for their choices, which should compel us to action in our lives today. From the book of Deuteronomy Chapter 30, you'll see on the screen, it says, "*See, I have set before thee this day life and death, good and evil. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you that I have set before you, life and death, blessing and cursing. Therefore, choose life that both thou and thy seed may live. That thou mayest love the Lord thy God and mayest obey His voice and thou mayest cleave unto Him for He is thy life and the length of thy days.*"

You see, there are only two paths that God says exist, life and death. God's desire is for all people and nations to choose life, which is blessing - both temporal and eternal, both physical and spiritual. Deuteronomy Chapter 28:1-2 says, "*And it shall come to pass. If thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all his commandments which I command you this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee high above all nations of the earth.*"

And all these blessings shall come on thee and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God." Again, God makes it clear, there are only two choices in life, but only one choice that guarantees God's blessings and liberty and freedom and prosperity. And that is fearing Him and keeping His commandments.

In Deuteronomy Chapter 28, same chapter, part way through God changes it and He says, "*And thou shalt not go aside from any of the words which I command you this day. To the right hand or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them. But it shall come to pass, if thou will not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God to observe to do all His commandments, and statutes which I command you this day, that all these curses shall come upon you and literally overtake you.*" See God makes it clear again, all other choices guarantee cursing and bondage and poverty. Then the Apostle Paul in the New Testament, 1 Corinthians 3:11, says, "*For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, Jesus Christ.*"

You see, the Bible is unmistakably clear. There is no other foundation which can be laid, which leads to life except through fearing God and keeping His commandments, which then leads directly to the gospel in Jesus Christ. The foundation, of course, is the manifest essence of choosing life. The entire purpose of God's Plan of Redemption being fulfilled in Jesus Christ the Way the Truth and the Life.

Why did America rise from nothing to greatness? Because the early founders established the foundations for national and personal blessing. The Pilgrims... we referred to Pilgrim's feet in the song earlier... the Pilgrims contributed 3 primary foundations.

The first was the foundation of Right Personal Priorities. You see, the Pilgrims, unlike the early Jamestown, Virginia landing party, did not come to America as a business venture looking for gold. The Pilgrims came expressly for evangelization of this new world and to train up their children in the fear of God. Believe it or not, since they knew and felt that in Holland at their time, they were losing their children to a decadent culture. Amazing. The Pilgrims came not for gold, but for God.

The second Pilgrim foundation was that of National Purpose, which they officially stated in what is the first of our three organic documents of law. The Mayflower Compact, the first lines of that say, "*In the name of God, amen." Having undertaken for the glory of God and the advancement of the Christian faith.*" Pretty amazing, huh?

The third foundation was that of a Heavenly Cultural Mission. John Robinson, the first Pilgrim leader, said this, "*I perceived that God was calling us to a new Jerusalem to build His temple anew.*" See they came not to build first their own home, but a dwelling place, a nation where God could freely be worshiped, and God could fully bless.

Then a few short 10 years later, the Puritans arrived, and through the very great fear of God and knowledge of Scripture contributed 4 additional foundations building on that which the Pilgrims laid down. The Puritans, particularly, understood the biblical nexus between obedience to God and God's blessings, and disobedience to God and God's judgment.

Their first significant foundation was what I call, Generational Perspective. They made their testimony known before the world, and with it, established a working vision and purpose that looked ahead to the future. John Winthrop, first governor of the Colony of Massachusetts, said this, "*That God would make us a praise and a glory so much so that men would say of succeeding efforts that the Lord make it like that of New England.*" In short Winthrop said, "*We must consider that we shall be as a shining city on a hill with the eyes of all the people- of the whole world- is upon us.*" They knew that their mission was divine.

The second Puritan foundation was that of an Attitude of Gratitude. They instituted the principle of gratitude to God building off of the Pilgrim's practice of Thanksgiving because they knew that being grateful is not only commanded by God, but it is also the practical antidote to pride and idolatry-which are the very seeds of rebellion guaranteeing the judgment of God. While every foundation that was laid for later building of the house of civil government and God's blessing, there is a particular significance to this principle of gratitude. Can I share?

When God took Israel into the land, in the beginning part of Deuteronomy, He said, I'm going to bless you mightily and give you all the things, houses, and all that kind of things. But He said then, "I warn you though, don't get to the point where I bless you and then you think that you did it by your own hands." Because at which point that happens, it will all change. Proverbs 6:17 says, "*These six things that the Lord hates.*" *Yeah, seven are an abomination.*" What's the first one on the list? Pride, pride and a haughty look. It was pride that took a hold of Satan and caused him to lift himself up against God. It is pride that God said He hates particularly, particularly in regard to civil leaders. It's because of pride that God says He will take down all of those who are proud and haughty. Nebuchadnezzar recognized that. God says that it is pride, which is the root which leads to idolatry, which is the breaking of the very first command of God given to all people. It is a sin that will bring judgment against nations more certainly than anything. It is pride, which I believe, is at the root of America's greatest sin.

The third foundation contributed by the Puritans is that of Christian Education in two distinct areas. They knew God's primary command for parents was to raise up their children in the fear of God. Deuteronomy 6 says this, "*Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God is one LORD. And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy might. And these words, which I command you this day, shall be in thine heart. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children and talk of them.*" It goes on to the verse- when you get up in the morning, when you sit down and all through the day. In other words, 24 hours a day Christianity, belief in God. If there's one greatest need we have in America and the American church today is for fathers to take their primary responsibility for teaching their children, and together with the mother, to raise up children in the fear and the admonition of the Lord.

But a second part of the Puritan commitment to Christian education was Secondary Education....but for the purpose of instructing men how to preach the gospel and to connect biblical principles to life and living. From this came the establishment of Harvard University in 1636. The first university in America and it was expressly established to teach men how to boldly preach the Word. Can you believe that? Reason, so that the world would know that the purpose for Christian education. The Puritans wrote the Rules and Precepts of Education and posted them on the wall of Harvard that is still hanging there, unless they took it down last week. Says this, "*Let every student be plainly instructed and earnestly pressed to consider well that the main end of his life in studies is to know God and Jesus Christ who is eternal life. John 17:3, Therefore, to lay Christ in the bottom as the only foundation of all sound knowledge and learning.*" Incredible?

A very important fourth foundation laid down by the Puritans was the concept of Memorials for they knew that this would help facilitate the foundation of a generational perspective, an attitude of gratitude and a Christian education. They took this from the illustration and command found in Joshua 4. It's that passage, if you recall, Israel had wandered in the land for forty years and were about to cross into the promised land. The Jordan River was at high tide, they couldn't get across. God said, Priests, step into the water, and it opened up. He commanded them to take out 12 stones and put them on the bank. One for each tribe and he called it a Memorial, Put it there for a Memorial to the next generations. Verse 21 of chapter four says this, "*When your children will ask your fathers in time to come saying what means these stones? Then you shall let your children know saying Israel came over this Jordan on dry land.*"

Then for these two purposes, why? "*That all the people of the earth might know the hand of the Lord,*" kind of like Winthrop's city on a hill. "*That it is mighty and that you might fear the Lord your God forever*". Memorials are to remind us of what God has done, and so we can tell our children, so they don't forget what God has done. Isn't it interesting a couple years ago, how many people wanted to tear down all kinds of memorials? There's a lot to that.

Well then, along came William Penn, the founder of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. **William Penn contributed one extraordinary foundation where he connected the principles of Scripture and personal holiness, and he linked those blessings to the fear of God and obedience to the Lord as the framework for civil government.**

He combined the principles of biblical authority and liberty into what Penn called his Frame of Government 1682, which earned him the right, in part, the designation by Benjamin Franklin or Thomas Jefferson as the Father of the Founders. Through his exhaustive and brilliant study of Scripture and history and borne out by his own personal

testimony of being cast out by his family when he came to faith in Christ, Penn laid down the foundation for civil freedom in the knowledge that liberty is being set free from the bondage of sin. Many cynics and atheists of our day love to state how our nation was not founded by Christians or Christian thought. It is wrong to claim such thing. Well, let me read to you, you'll find this amazing, I believe, just a portion of a brilliant defense of the gospel in regard to the right to religious freedom...so important to Penn. You decide if the early founders understood the essence of biblical faith.

He said this, *"in Christ's own words, they do plainly teach," he says, "the son of man has come to save that which was lost." Upon another occasion, he expressed himself to the same purpose in almost the same words, "For the son of man has come to seek and to save those who were lost." Well, who is this that is lost but man? In what sense can man be said to be lost except by sin and disobedience? It was the sin and disobedience that cast him out of the presence of the garden of God and put him in a condition of eternal misery. If Christ then came to save lost man, he must be understood to save him from that which puts him in a lost condition, and that is sin, for the wages of sin is death.*

The servant of sin is a son of perdition. We must faithfully tell people that he that commits sin is the servant of sin from which servitude Christ came to save His people, and that is why He's called the Savior and the Redeemer. Nothing can be more apparent than that freedom from actual sinning and giving newness of life to the souls of men was the great reason for Christ coming. For which he has given us his fullness of grace and truth, grace for grace. And to be under grace and not under the law is not to have the liberty to do which we ought not to have done before or be excused from former obligations. But to be freed from the condemnation of the law, first, through the remission of sins that are past based on faith and repentance.

And next freeing us from that weakness by which we were disabled from keeping God's law, and in fulfilling the righteousness of it by receiving and obeying the light and the grace that comes through Jesus Christ."

Wow! Now, this type of deep understanding was not unique. It is what led the later signers of the Declaration of Independence some years later, and the leaders of our War for Independence to further lay down the foundation for civil freedom in the knowledge that liberty is being set free from the bondage of sin. This knowledge then leads to the understanding, and this is critical, civil freedom can only be birthed and maintained by people who have first experienced spiritual liberty and freedom in Christ.

Again, let me ask the question, why did America rise from nothing to perhaps become the greatest nation in history? Because our founders feared God and they laid down the essential foundations that God could bless. Oh, that we would remember that ...yesterday.

The second greatest question of importance is why did America maintain its longevity of greatness when most nations of the world dissolved or fell into dictatorship early on?

Well, a first fundamental reason was a consequence of the Puritan foundation of Christian education and the commitment to teach men how to boldly preach the whole council of God. You may remember this story, American revolution, parallel, French revolution. American revolution succeeded, French revolution failed.

French historian, Alex Tocqueville, came to America to figure out why it was that America succeeded and France failed? He said, he came to America, he said, "I went into the academic institutions of America to see is the secret there? Well, he said, -I didn't find it there. I traveled America, I traversed, I saw their fertile stream. I mean, their streams in fertile fields." I thought, "Is it there?" He says, "No, it's not there." I went into industry of America, it wasn't there. I went into the halls of government, and I looked, and I said, "It's not there." And Tocqueville said this, "It's not until I went into the churches of America and heard the pulpit's flame with the preaching of righteousness that I understand the secret to the success of America." He said this, *"America is great because America is good. Good equals righteous. If America ever ceases to be good, righteous, America will cease to be great."* How biblical? How prophetic?

A second reason is that God had a Plan for America. Do you know that God has a Plan of Redemption that was telegraphed right in the first part of Genesis? And it works throughout all of history and God works through nations. Job

12:23 says, "God increases the nations and he destroys them. He enlargeth the nations and he straighteneth them out again." Acts 17 is all about God working through nations. God works through nations. But we also know, according to Daniel, Daniel 2, that, "God changes with the times and the seasons and he removeth Kings and he sets them up so no one gets in a position of power unless God, through his sovereign action, allows them to be there." So, God had a plan for America. No people, no nation should ever think that anything is all about them. It's all about God, and God's Plan of Redemption. That's why history is His story, not ours.

Now the third reason is that God honored the early commitment to fear God and keep his commandments. I read a couple of the verses from Deuteronomy 28: 1-2, Fear me and keep my commandments and I'm going to pour out so many blessings you won't be able to handle them. So, God was a God of promise.

Fourth unique reason for the longevity of America's greatness is that God sent periodic revivals and spiritual awakenings.

First great awakening, Jonathan Edwards, in the "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God", we know that sermon changed America. 1720 to 1745, immediately preceding the Declaration of Independence. Second grade awakening, Charles Finney preceded The Civil War. Third grade awakening, Dwight L. Moody just followed The Civil War. Billy Sunday opened up the 20th Century. One thing that pride does is that pride blinds us to the reality that man does not create greatness, man does not schedule great awakenings, and man does not plan revivals. God does. Although, man does, through the fear of God and his obedience to God, prepare the ground for revival.

Now, fifth reason is that throughout our history, leaders Recognized the Role of God and their Role before God. A couple of quotes here, just look at these quickly. Thomas Jefferson early on said, "*I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just. That His justice cannot sleep forever.*" Abraham Lincoln said, "*Sir, my concern is not whether God is on our side, my greatest concern is if we are on God's side for God is always right.*"

Here's one of the most interesting, Abraham Lincoln in the Gettysburg address quoted these words which came from the Bible of William Tyndale, and it was Tyndale's translation of the Bible into readable English that set the pathway that led into the preparation for the Pilgrims and the Puritans to come to our country. In the flyleaf of Tyndale's Bible is where Lincoln took this. Tyndale said this, "*This Bible is translated and will make possible a government of the people, by the people, and for the people.*" Interesting.

In light of all this amazing history, why is America collapsing in a moral free fall? Well, there are multiple reasons.

A prime and fundamental one I believe is that **we've just simply forsaken God and we have no fear of God before our eyes.**

This is evidenced in part by these things, our actions, collectively, our actions which indicate that we are proud and we feel we don't have any need for God. Our priorities are self-centered and unbiblical in most part. Generally speaking, it's definitely true. Our public policies and judicial congressional laws, executive mandates are almost exclusively evil from spending and spending and debt and debt to redefining what God has said to be good to be evil. Our pulpits are silent. You know less than 9% of the pulpits of America, I mentioned earlier, have even preached one sermon on a moral issue in the last 20 years. Most professing Christians are chameleon Christians, and the church is very lethargic.

No real difference between those who say they are Christians and those who don't. Our families are broken and dysfunctional. Our national worldview is anti-God. You know there are less than 5% of Americans manifest a biblical worldview? Do you know that there's a dominant religion in America? ... and it's not Christianity. The dominant religion in America, according to George Barna's recent survey, is what he calls Syncretism. By 94%, you may call it modern narcissism. It's a little bit of Christianity, a little bit of Buddhism, a little bit of mysticism, a little bit of atheism all put together and we make this our new religion, and the key is as long as you feel good about it. It's not God's Word.

Now another reason we're in moral free fall and economic collapse is that we've Destroyed the Foundations of truth. Psalm 11:3 said, "*If the foundations be destroyed, what shall the righteous do?*" Foundations of what? Foundations of truth. Foundations of authority I believe is what that verse is talking about. Well, when you declare prayer illegal, tear off the 10 Commandments, murder 65 million babies, and less than 30% of the evangelical pastors in the nation believe that the Bible is authoritative. You don't think that refers to and meets the definition of destroyed foundations? You throw out truth, it will lead to a Rejection of God, which then leads to a Redefining of truth, which then leads to Perverting of Justice, which then leads to Praising the Lawless, which then leads to the Persecution of the Righteous, which then leads to People mourning because the righteous are not in authority. Then that leads to exactly what God says will happen to any nation when a people reject him, and His judgment begins.

There's another reason, we've also committed the sins and evil which God says guaranteed will bring judgment, cursing, collapse. Just very quickly, Ezekiel 20, read Ezekiel 20 and 21 and 22. Ezekiel's kind of like a prosecutor for God, and he's laying out the sins of Israel. He just said this, --As Israel did when embracing idolatry and taking innocent blood and literally breaking all the 10 Commandments,-- is what he records in Ezekiel 20. Literally every one of them are broken there. I submit, so have we as America.

Ezekiel 22 goes further,--Israel at all governmental levels and the people themselves for their own greed distorted justice, embraced bribery, and corruption. They threw out truth to the wind and they proclaimed good to be bad and evil to be good-- So have we.

We've also rejected the repeated warnings of God and ascribed them to human natural causes. Think about this, how many fires and floods and droughts do we have to have across this country increasingly that devastate our land and just say, Well, I guess that's a result of global warming. COVID comes, manmade bioweapon, yes, it was. It comes, it came and look what happened. But God used that, it knocked down our idols of sports and entertainment and selfish pursuits and prosperity and mobility and security.

And we dismiss it as perhaps a product of the Left, a coincidence? In the end, we just don't understand the justice of God and His holiness and His hatred for sin and the need for judgment. Take time, go back and read Deuteronomy 28 because you will find all the listings of blessings that God said would come and you will find almost double the amount of judgment that will come on Israel and God did it. You look and see if they don't every one of them line up with America today. It is incredible.

Brings us to the last question. Why are Americans so lethargic and blind to the actual condition of being under God's judgment? How can we just continue to go on?

I think in large part because the church is Laodicean. I can't help but comparing the church of today to the church of the Laodiceans. Revelation chapter 3, Jesus describes them being rich, increased with physical stuff and they thought they had no need of anything. They were just 'all right', but Jesus said they were really wretched and miserable and poor, and poverty stricken, and they were blind and naked. He said, --Take some of your money and buy some eye salve so you can see your real condition!-- I think we have a lethargic church. I think, by and large, our people are idolatrous. I know they are idolatrous. God through Ezekiel says the same thing, "*You have become guilty by the blood that you have shed, and you've been defiled by the idols that you have made, and you have brought your days near. The appointed time of your years has come.*" See, the mercy of God is long, but the justice of God will step in.

The people in the entire nation ignore the voice of God. How can I say that? Well, just as Israel began to experience the severe hand of God's judgment, that's what the Old Testament's is all about. We can find it, our application to us today. They would not turn to God. So, has God not been speaking to us? And have we returned to God? Even when the prophets of old were traversing the land of Israel and declaring the warnings of God, the people rejected them. Isaiah 9:13 says, "*The people did not turn to him, God, who judged them, nor did they even think of inquiring of the Lord of hosts.*" Our problem is that we don't recognize when God is speaking. Worse, I think we got a real problem in that we don't even think God has a right to speak.

In spite of 9/11, COVID, generally, pestilences of all various types, destructive weather, collapsing economy and dollar, wars and rumors of war that's traversing the world, the rise of the globalist anti-Christ government, still even then, government leaders, they don't recognize God and remain arrogant, proud, compromised, given to bribery and corruption, fearful and covetous. The church closes down. Many people have still felt it comfortable to stay at home. Even many God-fearing people think that some politician can make America great again, and refuse to acknowledge that America can never become great again until God, once again, becomes great in America!

Now, as a result, we just simply don't see a need to humble ourselves as 2 Chronicles 7:14 says, "*If my people who are called by my name shall humble themselves and pray and seek my face, then I will hear from heaven. I will forgive their sin. I will heal their land.*" But since we don't even recognize how God speaks and God speaks through weather, God speaks through all of those things.... read Deuteronomy.... how will we ever hear or understand what He's saying? For some reason, I think because we're dominated by pride and a false sense of self-produced greatness, we think that God's conditions for blessings and judgment don't apply to us. We think that in America all we've ever known is blessing, and it just couldn't be any other way. But this is not the default position in life.

Like Babylon the Great referred to in Revelation 18:7, God said that when He'll pronounce judgment on this nation... this has not yet happened, prophetically. He says, "*How much she hath glorified herself and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she sayeth in her heart, I sit as a queen. I'm not a widow, I see no sorrow.*" And God says, "*Therefore, shall her plagues come in a day, death and mourning and famine and she shall be utterly burned with fire for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.*" Does this not sound like America?

Finally, this most serious question, perhaps we don't recognize the voice of God and are content to ignore the word of God, and therefore, see no need to humble ourselves in the sight of God or seek the face of God. **Maybe it's because we're not possibly the people of God**, and you say, "What are you talking about?"

Because I remember that verse that says, "*If my people who are called by my name.*" Think of this... George Barna, whom I do a lot of work with, just did a recent survey early this year. 74% of all Americans self-identify as Christians. 74%, you'd say, "Wow, that's fantastic." It would be if it'd be true, but we know it's not true. It's not possible. Otherwise, we wouldn't be in the condition that we're in, right?

But going down through, 30%, identify as being born again Christians. I say, "Oh, 30%, big number. That's fantastic." Now 28% self-identify as being evangelical. Interesting. But here's the bottom line, when you work it all down through only 6% to 7% actually manifest that what they say is what they believe. Well over half of all of them don't believe that the Bible is true. Well over half of all of those, including the born againers and the evangelicals who say they are, don't believe that the Holy Spirit or the Devil are real.

So, it reminds me very much of this, America looks very much like Israel of the Old Testament, Laodicea of the New Testament. And very much like the people that Jesus warned about in Matthew 7:13-23. This is where Jesus says this, you remember the disciples... He was talking to them and He said, "There are two ways." Just like I talked about with the founders. There are two ways. There's a narrow way... a narrow gate. There's a broad way... a broad gate. Many on this big path, the crowd is over here. Few on this path, it's narrow. Then Jesus says this, ---In that day, when judgment comes, many people--- I don't know what He means by 'many', but 'many is not a few'. Many people will stand before Me and will say, "*But God, Jesus, didn't we do all of these great things in Your name?*" Obviously, 'in Your name', they've got to be saying we are God fearers, Christians. We did it in Your name. We even cast out devils. We did a whole host of good things, and Jesus said...

...And, this is perhaps, I think-- to me, perhaps the scariest, most solemn verse in the whole Bible where Jesus looks at them and says it makes no difference, "*Depart from me you workers of iniquity. I never knew you.*" Wow! When I look around at America and I say, how so little respond to hearing the words of God. Responding in fear to the word of God. I'm convinced that Jesus was talking about our time, and George Barna was talking, and his research is proving, the time. We have a lot of professors, but very few possessors. Not My People.

Now that we can-- from God's Word and from history-- know that God blessed this nation, He's clearly now judging America, and we know that what God is saying, the logical question is **How will you respond to this? How will I?**

This morning, there are people here watching TV, listening to radio-- I think--in one of two groups. You're either a child of God by faith in Jesus Christ or still a child of the Devil dead in sins. You're either on the narrow way leading to Life or you're on the broad way leading to death. You've either been redeemed by the Blood of Jesus Christ, the Spotless Lamb of God, or you are still a rejector, unredeemed, rebellious in an innate sin nature, born with it. But one day we're all going to stand before Him in one of those two categories. To you who know you have not placed your faith in Jesus Christ, what a great weekend, Independence Day weekend, to experience spiritual liberty. Which only comes from being set free in Jesus Christ.

For you, who self-identify as Christians but have little evidence in your life of fearing God.... you're a Sunday Christian only. A lot of people come to church only a couple times a week or a year, or for them, Christian life is what they think on Sunday but forget the rest of the week. This dreadful thought, standing one day before the Lord and say, "Lord, I went to church once in a while. I did a lot of good things. I gave money. I did this, I did that." And Jesus said, "*Depart from me, I never knew you.*"

I believe as we look around the world today, all of the signs, the prophetic signs of Christ's return are literally on the table right now and they are moving. They are converging like never, ever before, which tells me that the time of great wrath, tribulation period, the rapture of the church to come first, is at the door. That means we'd better say, "Lord, what's my relationship to You like? Is it real? Do I have one? Am I living like it? Shall we bow our heads, please?"

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