

## Sunday Morning Message

August 9, 2020

*Keep Your Eyes on the Lord*

Topic – Maintaining proper focus during perilous days

Texts – 2 Chronicles 20:1 - 30; Isaiah 36 – 37; 2 Timothy 3:1 – 5; 2 Chronicles 7:14.

Congregational Reading – 2 Chronicles 20:10 - 12

### Introduction

This morning, we are going to look at two accounts from the Old Testament, one from the time of King Jehoshaphat, and the other from the time of Hezekiah. In each of these accounts the people of God were going through extremely difficult circumstances; each time they were literally at the point of complete destruction as a nation. In each of these incidents, the people were utterly helpless: they had no military might; no human wisdom or strategy; no help from other nations; they literally had nowhere to go and nobody to turn to for help, but God.

There are many applications that New Testament Christians can make from these passages, but first let me be clear that there is also a distinction between God's dealings with Old Testament Israel and what might be considered a Christian nation today. In other words, we cannot universally apply the promises that God made to Israel to the situation in America today.

Israel was, and is in a covenant relationship with God. God promised Abraham way back in the Book of Genesis that He would give Abraham's seed a place, and a seed (children). There will always be an Israel. Right now, Israel is not in a right relationship with her God because she has rejected the Messiah that God has sent to deliver from her sins, and ultimately from her oppressors. Someday, Israel will realize that she was wrong about Jesus and will receive Him, and at that time God will deliver her from her all her enemies and set up His throne and Kingdom in Jerusalem.

Right now, we are in the time of the New Testament Church. The Church is not a nation, but is a group of people scattered throughout the world within all nations that have also received many promises from the Lord. However, those promises do

not necessarily apply to nations that we call home. God has saved me and many, many others here in America, but He has not saved the nation. In other words, America is not guaranteed survival in the same way that Israel is, but the Christians within America do have many promises, provisions, and protections that do apply to them.

However, there are some general principles that do apply to America:

1. America will be blessed as long as she is a blessing to Israel:

*"And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."* (Genesis 12:3)

2. America will be blessed as long as she is a righteous nation:

*"Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance."* (Psalm 33:12)

The first part of that verse did at one time apply to America as she was founded on Biblical principles.

*"Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people."* (Proverbs 14:34)

3. America will be blessed in proportion to the number of Christians within her that are living for the Lord. If revival does come to America where many more people trust Christ, and the Christians are living separated and Christ-honoring lives, then there is hope that America will be spared.

However, if America continues to shake her fist in God's face, and continues to make decisions that hurt the people of God, and continues to murder innocent babies, then she will someday be wiped out, just as so many other nations in the past have been.

Those are some of the distinctions between Israel and America. Our nation does not have the promise that she will be here forever, but the people of God within America do.

Now, let's get back to those Old Testament stories and see what we, as Christians, can apply today.

### Read 2 Chronicles 20:1 – 30

Verse 3 – Jehoshaphat sought the Lord and proclaimed a national fast.

Verses 4 - 5 – The people gathered at God's house to seek God's help.

Verse 7 – Their prayer was based upon faith in the Scriptures. They knew what God had promised them and what God had done for them in the past.

Verse 12 – Their trust was in God alone.

The government cannot help us; human wisdom and philosophy cannot help us; Fox News or CNN cannot help us; social media cannot help us. We need God.

### Read Isaiah 36: 1 – 10; 14 – 22; 37:1 – 20; 33 – 38

Verse 37:1 – Hezekiah was humble and went to the house of the Lord.

Verse 37:2 – Hezekiah went to the prophet who would give him the Word of God.

Verses 37:14 – 15 – Hezekiah prayed.

### Conclusion

In both of these historical accounts we see that when the people of God were faced with impossible situations, they turned to God.

1. The People of God were Contrite and Humble.
2. The People of God Went to God's House.
3. The People of God Fasted and Prayed.
4. The People of God Looked to the Word of God.

This reminds me of God's promises in 2 Chronicles 7:11 – 14:

*"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." (2 Chronicles 7:14)*

We are certainly living in what the Bible refers to as perilous times:

Read 2 Timothy 3 (if there is time)

Incontinent = no self-control

Heady = rash or hasty; intoxicated; violent

God may or may not spare America. I suppose if God's people really wanted revival and turned to God wholly, and went out winning souls fervently, God would give us more time here.

But, regardless of what happens to our nation, you and I as individual Christians can experience the marvelous grace of God, including His protection and provision.

But we are going to have to stay focused on the Lord. We are going to have to keep our eyes on the Lord, and we are going to have to get committed to what we have been called to do, which is get the gospel to all of these lost people around us. They need Christ.

Don't get caught up in all of the drama that the world is wallowing in right now. Stay off of the news: it's all bad; stay off of social media and the internet.

Get back in your Bible.

Get back in your prayer closet.

Get back into church.

Get back out into the highways and hedges, streets and lanes of the city, and tell people about Jesus.

Stay focused on the mission.

Your mission is not bring America back; it's to bring every American you can to Christ.