

GROWING IN GOD PODCAST



GIG312 – Our Prayer for Our Nations

Welcome to this podcast, I appreciate you being here with me today. I want to share some things that are really on my heart, and have been now for a week or so during the activities that we find ourselves in. We have just finished the celebration of the 4th of July, which is celebrating the 250th year for the United States, and we also are moving up to the time of the 9th of Av. That is very deep in the hearts of Israel and the Israeli people, because on the 9th of Av so many things have happened that were disastrous, including the destruction of the Temples and many other persecutions against Israel. And I feel like even in our celebration of the birth of our liberty in the United States of America, it has made me really think about all of the nations. So I wanted to title this podcast, *Our Prayer for Our Nations*, because I think that we are going to use examples here and see things in the Scriptures that really are important for every nation, every kindred, every tongue, to recognize the need for an approach to God right now in the history that we find ourselves living in, the days that we are living in; and I want to use the Scriptures out of Daniel the ninth chapter for us.

I felt this very deeply when we were experiencing the 4th of July here in the United States, because obviously there are many tremendous things to celebrate – the fact that we are a nation, that we have been in existence for two hundred fifty years. We are celebrating the fact that God was involved and was very much a part of the founding of this nation. We are celebrating all of the tremendous blessings that we have had since America began, because of our seeking God and giving glory to God and recognizing God as the Founder of this country. At the same time, if we look at where we are now and where we find ourselves, I think it is a good point in time during all of the celebration to stop and reflect. I do not want to take away from the celebration; there are many things to celebrate, many things to be thankful for. But at the same time, I think to not take a hard look at what is going on around us today is a mistake. I think that we need to really study where we are. I also just expanded that, because I believe every nation can take a lesson from what we are going to be reading here in the Scriptures from Daniel and from what we see transpiring today in America, that there are really corrections that need to be made, that there be a seeking of God, an honoring of God in every nation.

God is the Creator of the universe, and He is over all the nations; and His desire is to be the Lord over all of the earth. And so we need to keep ourselves in touch with that, in tune with that. We do not want to just look and say, “Oh, God did a great thing when He founded this nation.” We want to go beyond that and say, “But are we walking with Him today in a way that keeps Him bringing the blessings and bringing the peace and all of the gifts that we have experienced in this country?” And again, I am applying this to every nation on the earth; because I wish we, as a global community of the body of Christ, would seek God on behalf of all of our nations. That is why I am calling this *Our Prayer for Our Nations*, because the body of Christ is scattered throughout the globe. It should be something so much on our hearts to seek God and to seek His blessing on our nations, and to seek that our nations follow after God in His righteousness; to cry out to Him in the days that we are living in, because we see so much going on throughout this world that needs God’s help, and we want Him to be with us.

So I want to start by reading Daniel the ninth chapter, verse 2. Daniel was doing just what I am talking about – he was sitting evaluating where Israel was at that time. We know that Israel was in captivity to Babylon, they had been taken away from the land. And so, even though there were many wonderful things happening with Daniel and those who were with him in Babylon, and great honor was being given to him because of the blessings of God that were coming to Daniel, he was also recounting why they were in Babylon. So I think that this idea of looking very carefully at where we are as the nations of the world, and taking account for circumstances that we find ourselves in, is very important. It is important that we be honest with ourselves about where we are, why we are in the positions we are in, whether it be with war or peace or financially or every other aspect of suffering within the nations that we see transpiring, and that we really bring it all before God and bring God's blessings and His covering back into our nations.

That is what Daniel is doing here. And so once again, we as the nations find ourselves having a wonderful example to follow out of the Scriptures, and out of the Jewish people. That is what Daniel is to us today, a wonderful example of somebody who is walking very closely to the Lord, seeking the Lord. Even though he finds himself in these circumstances, he knows that the circumstances are a reason to turn to God and ask for God's help. And that is what we are doing here today in this podcast.

Daniel the ninth chapter, verse 2, says, "In the first year of his reign," speaking about the king, "I, Daniel, observed in the books the number of the years which was revealed as the word of the Lord to Jeremiah the prophet for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years." So we see that Daniel is looking... he is reading the prophecies. He is looking to the prophets. What have the prophets said? What was spoken to us as Israel? And I think we can do the same. We can go to the Word of God and say, "What has God spoken over the nations and how we are to live as the peoples in these nations?" We know that at some point every knee will bow and tongue confess that He is Lord over the earth, and His lordship will be established over all of the earth, over every nation.

It goes on in verses 3-6 to say,

So I gave my attention to the Lord God to seek Him by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth and ashes. I prayed to the Lord my God and confessed and said, "Alas, O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments, we have sinned, committed iniquity, acted wickedly and rebelled, even turning aside from Your commandments and ordinances. Moreover, we have not listened to Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings, our princes, our fathers and all the people of the land."

I love how inclusive this is. Daniel recognizes, "Yes, there are problems. It starts with our leadership, the kings, the princes." For us it starts with our Congress, with our President, with all of those who are serving in state governments and bringing laws. It goes into our justices and our supreme courts, the state supreme courts, the US Supreme Court. It covers all of these that are included in the governance of the nations before God. Then it goes to the fathers, it goes into the family. Who are our fathers, and how did they raise us? What did they teach us? How did they walk before God? And in fact, it goes to all the people, it comes down to every individual in the nation and in the land that is being spoken to and about in this prayer from Daniel.

He goes on in verses 7-8 to say, "'Righteousness belongs to you, O Lord, but to us open shame, as it is this day—to the men of Judah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel, those who are nearby and

those who are far away in all the countries to which you have driven them, because of their unfaithful deeds which they have committed....”

Again, I love how everyone is being included here in this, talking about the shame. When we look around at the things happening in this country, in the United States, and of course I am using that as the example because that is what I am the most familiar with; but when I look at the things that are taking place in our nation, there is a shame that should exist on all of our hearts and minds for the things that we see happening in our politics, in our families, in our schools, in our court systems. Everyone needs to be included in evaluating where we are and why we are in these places. We see terrible things taking place right now in this country, and we need to all take our responsibility. We cannot point a finger and say, “Well, it’s those people, it’s that political party, it’s that way of thinking.” No, it is everybody. We are all responsible. That is what I believe this prayer is about. Let us all take our responsibility, and let us all evaluate our own hearts and minds. Let us all lift our hearts before God, and our thinking, our ways of acting before the Lord, and let us all pray together that the Lord would find grace to deliver us out of the places that we have gone to in our nations.

“Open shame belongs to us, O Lord, to our kings, our princes and our fathers, because we have sinned against You.” The things that are happening are happening around us because of our relationship to God. And maybe that is where everyone should start – your personal relationship with God; your seeking the Lord about Him, and the fact that He is your Creator. We did not make ourselves, we did not come into this life because of us; we were formed in the womb by God. We were brought forth by the love and the grace. We were provided a Messiah because of His great love for us, because God so loved the world, and He so loved mankind, that He is bringing about an opportunity of grace for us to cry out to Him and find deliverance through Him. And He is waiting for us to do that.

Verses 9-12 say, “To the Lord our God belong compassion and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against Him; nor have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in His teachings which He has set before us through His servants the prophets.” I love this about the Hebrew Scriptures and the examples that we have through Israel and the Jewish people, showing us that we are to walk before Him; and when we fall, Israel still becomes an answer of example for us to see. It is kind of like the older brother, the older sister; you watch how they make mistakes and the parents correct them. If we are smart, we learn our lessons. And I wish the nations would be smart to learn our lessons also, as Israel has learned hers, as exemplified here by Daniel. He is talking about the fact that they have not obeyed the teachings. They have not obeyed the Word, the Scriptures. They have not obeyed the prophets. He says,

“Indeed all Israel has transgressed Your law and turned aside, not obeying Your voice; so the curse has been poured out on us, along with the oath which is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, for we have sinned against Him. Thus He has confirmed His words which He had spoken against us and against our rulers who ruled us, to bring on us great calamity; for under the whole heaven there has not been done anything like what was done to Jerusalem.”

What we are trying to learn here is this: If God would allow Jerusalem to be destroyed, if He would allow the Temple, where He said, “I will dwell and My Presence will be there eternally. My eye will be upon this place. I will hear what is spoken here” — If God allowed that to be destroyed because of their sin, there should not be a nation on the earth that has the arrogance to think that they are okay and they will make it through and they do not have to worry about it because God did not speak to them. Yes, God spoke to all the nations. He speaks to them through Israel. God speaks to the nations through the body of Christ. We see what we must do.

Do not let the arrogance of your heart rise up and say, "I will be able to avoid what God is getting ready to bring on the earth." No, there is a tribulation, as the Scripture speaks to everyone. There is a tribulation coming greater than the earth has ever seen. And we better understand that what we see going on around us today is the precursors of these things, the beginnings of what has been called out. When we read all of these Scriptures through the Old Testament, we recognize that the destruction of Israel did not just come all at once. There were warnings after warnings after warnings, and people hardened their hearts and turned away from the prophets and the Word that God was speaking. Let us not follow that example. But instead, let's follow Daniel's example, that is able to rise up and say, "Yes, we were disobedient. Yes, we did not listen. And yes, You do have grace, and You have the forgiveness of sins in You. And so if we cry out to You, this calamity can be avoided."

He goes on praying. If I had the time, I would read all of this, but let me jump down to verse 16. It says, "'O Lord, in accordance with all Your righteous acts, let now Your anger and Your wrath turn away from Your city Jerusalem, Your holy mountain; for because of our sins and the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and Your people have become a reproach to all those around us.'" And the things that are happening in the earth today are truly a reproach. I have to say I am ashamed of what I see in the morality, or the lack thereof, in the United States. I have to admit that I am ashamed of what I see in our politics, the actions, the rhetoric of those who are our elected leaders in the place of making our laws and upholding our laws. It really is an abomination. It really is beyond what is imaginable that America and Americans could have sunk to. And we live now in such an anger atmosphere. We live with a drive to hurt each other and be angry and not to listen, not to learn, not to love. This is what we are facing; and it is going to have dire results if we continue on this path, because violence will beget violence will beget violence, until we will find in this nation a civil war break out once again. And I think we would all agree, that was the most grievous time this country has suffered through, where brother was bringing arms up against brother; and yet this is very possible in the time that we are living in, because of the hardness of our hearts and our refusal to turn to God.

Verses 17-22,

"So now, our God, listen to the prayer of Your servant and to his supplications, and for Your sake, O Lord, let Your face shine on Your desolate sanctuary. O my God, incline Your ear and hear! Open Your eyes and see our desolations and the city which is called by Your name; for we are not presenting our supplications before You on account of any merits of our own, but on account of Your great compassion. O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and take action! For Your own sake, O my God, do not delay, because Your city and Your people are called by Your name." Now while I was speaking and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God in behalf of the holy mountain of my God, while I was still speaking in prayer, then the man Gabriel [which is the angel Gabriel], whom I had seen in the vision previously, came to me in my extreme weariness about the time of the evening offering. He gave me instruction and talked with me and said, "O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you insight with understanding."

I hope that God hears this cry and hears our prayers. I hope that this podcast is able to spark and generate prayer within the body of Christ, within the nation of Israel, and yes, within all the nations of the earth at this present time, that we believe for things to change. And let the grace of God bring about His angelic messengers to come and minister to us as they did to Daniel, to bring about the instructions that we are to have.

But take note and be cautious, because if we get instruction and answers from God, let us not this time harden our hearts. Let us not at this time close our ears and our minds to what His Word is speaking to us. Let us believe that He brings in this generation the insight and the understanding that will by His grace bring deliverance to this age.

Amen.