Scripture and the Church

Who Are 'My People' in 2 Chronicles 7:14?

From the TeachingtheWord Bible Knowledgebase

They are not any nation on this earth, past or present. They are the people, God declares, "who are called by My name." In this time of great moral and mortal peril, true Christians must remember that - and act accordingly. There is no telling what God will do if believers repent of their greatest sin, the one that is at the root of all others: their neglect of His holy Word.

Thus Solomon finished the house of the Lord and the king's house; and Solomon successfully accomplished all that came into his heart to make in the house of the Lord and in his own house. 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. When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people, 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 My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to prayer made in this place. For now I have chosen and sanctified this house, that My name may be there forever; and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually." (2 Chronicles 7:11-16)

God's warning to the nation of Israel in 2 Chronicles 7:14 is also God's warning to His church today. "If My people who are called by My name" - He is speaking not to the nation as a whole, but to the people of God, God's remnant within the nation, those within Israel or in any other nation whose citizenship ultimately is in heaven.

Peter identified this people in his first epistle:

Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "Behold, I lay in Zion a chief
cornerstone, elect, precious, and he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame."

Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, "The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone," and "a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense." They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.

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; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy. (1 Peter 2:4-10)

"If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways" - not the wicked ways of the nation, but the wicked ways of the people of God - "then I will hear from Heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

**As the Church Goes, So Goes the Nation**

Dear friends, as the church goes, so goes the nation. The healing of the nation will begin with the repentance of the church. The repentance of the church will come through faithful, prophetic, expository preaching of the Word by faithful men. We need to become, once more, the Scripture-driven church.

The hand of God's righteous wrath is poised against the nations, and rightly so. It is poised in particular against America. This nation has fallen into great evil. The main reason is that the Evangelical church in this country has become disconnected from the Word of God, uncertain of what it believes, and ineffectual in fulfilling Christ's great commission. It is bad enough that God's Word has been pushed aside in the public square. But in our time, the Word of God has been pushed aside within the Evangelical church.

There is no telling what God will do if we His people will repent of our un-Scriptural ways. Often we find in the pages of the Word of God and in the history of the world that God has been merciful to a nation because of a faithful blood-bought remnant. We should not think it is too late for God's remnant to plead for His mercy. But we must be a faithful remnant.
God's Word Tossed Aside

Why is our nation in the shape it is in? The Bible has lost its influence. We read of a parallel situation in Nehemiah chapter 9. Here is the setting: A remnant of the children of Israel had returned to land from captivity in Babylon. We read in Nehemiah 9:1 that all the people assembled together "with fasting, in sackcloth, and with dust on their heads...and they stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers." What was the iniquity that they confessed? We find the heart of it in verse 26 - "Lord, we rebelled against You, and we cast Your law" - Your Word - "behind our backs."

Here is the picture: A man is walking along a road and he has the Word of God in his hands. And as he is walking along, he throws God's Word over his shoulder and lets it fall to the dust behind him, and he just keeps on walking. Utterly forsakes God's Word. Tosses it behind him. Rejects it. Treats it as useless. As a nation, that is exactly what we have done. This nation has been blessed above all nations in having God's Word in our hands. But we have taken God's Book, and we have tossed it over our collective shoulder, and we have just kept on going - farther and farther away from God's Word. The influence of the Bible on this nation over the last 50 years has gone steadily down, until it now has very little at all.

Why Had the Bible Lost Its Influence?

Why has this happened? The Bible lost its influence in the nation, because the Bible lost its influence in the church. That is where the problem began. It began long before Madalyn Murray decided to go to court to get prayer and Bible reading thrown out of the schools. It began long before the Supreme Court ruled that killing her unborn child is a woman's constitutional right. It began long before governments began passing laws that make Christian apologetics a hate crime. It began long before governments began giving legal protection to sodomy.

The Bible subsequently lost its influence in the nation because the Bible first lost its influence in the church. The church has gone after all kinds of other things. In many ways, the church has tossed the Bible over its shoulder just as ancient Israel did. And that is where the problem must be solved - in the church. But the answer to the political and economic and moral and social crises of our times is not for Evangelicals to organize more political pressure groups. The answer is not for Evangelicals to become involved in a wider range of so-called faith-
based initiatives. The answer is not for Evangelicals to seek empty promises from political candidates. And the answer is not for the Evangelical church to reinvent itself to try to please the world.

**The Answer**

The answer to the crisis of our times is submission to the Word of God. We need to repent. We need to go back. We need to go back and pick up God’s Word that we have so lightly cast aside. And we need to get seriously back into the Word. That is what the returning remnant in ancient Israel did. We read in Nehemiah chapter nine that during this time of repentance the entire remnant stood and heard the Word of God read and explained to them for a number of days for six hours a day, and they spent another six hours confessing their sins and worshipping the Lord their God in the proper way. True repentance. True worship. True turning to the Word of God.

That genuine turning to the Word of God meant that the Israelites saw that they needed to make some hard decisions. They had to give up practices, and associations, and relationships that were contrary to God’s Word. It wasn’t easy. Many tears were shed. But they did it. God blessed them for it, and God re-established the nation, because the remnant repented.

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