



First Baptist Church At The Villages

COMPANION TO MESSAGE: PRAYER FOR THE NATION (7/5) •
LESSON TITLE: NATIONAL PRAYER • 2 CHRONICLES 7:11-18 •
FOR USE 7/5 THROUGH 7/11/2020

MAIN POINT

When we continue to look to God and continue to turn from our wicked ways, we more regularly and fully rely on Him and begin to experience revival and renewal in ourselves.

INTRODUCTION

As your study time begins, use this section to focus your mind and heart on the subject of this lesson.

When you think about political elections, where do you see people in our nation putting their hope?

How are we putting our hopes in politics? How are we placing our hope in particular person or people?

**In what ways do those systems or people provide what you think our country needs?
In what ways do they fall short of being able to provide what we really need?**

2 Chronicles 7:14 is a verse that is sometimes applied to the United States as a call to repentance and revival. Though the principles of this verse are applicable to any nation, the verse is more for the people of God than an exclusive nation. The issue at hand is where a given people have placed their hope. This passage helps us see that when we consistently look to God and turn from our wicked ways, we more regularly and fully rely on Him and begin to experience revival and renewal in ourselves.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about this particular subject.

Solomon is considered the wisest man ever to live. He was the king of Israel who built the temple. After the temple was dedicated, he prayed to the Lord, asking for Him to open His eyes and ears to His people, and to forgive them when they sinned against Him.

| READ 2 CHRONICLES 7:11-18.

What events and elements of the world does God use to emphasize His sovereignty?

Why was this significant for the Jews of the day?

What events and elements might God be using for communicating to Christians today?

Do you believe God is in control today? Does our culture at large feel the same? Why or why not?

God came to Solomon at night and told him that He heard his prayers. When God spoke to him He demonstrated His sovereignty by saying the things of heaven (rain and sun) and the things of earth (locusts and pestilence) are under His control.

| READ 2 CHRONICLES 7:14.

Who are "God's people" in this passage? Who are God's people today?

What does it mean for a people to be called by God's name? What impact does such a calling have on a people? What responsibility comes with being called by God's name

Why does revival start with believers (v. 14)? Do God's people need revival today? Why or why not?

God addressed His people, not a random group or a nation He thought would be nice to talk to. God called His people because they are the ones who need Him and who are His instrument for sharing the good news of His love in Jesus Christ. Some might argue that our nation wants to place its hope in government leaders and policies, but God's people hope in God.

Why did God want His people to humble themselves? Why is it important for believers to humble themselves in today's culture? What does that look like?

Pride gets in the way of God's people pursuing Him. God called His people to humility so that they could embrace Him as their hope. Pride tells us that we don't need God and that we only need ourselves. Humility tells us we need nothing other than God.

How does prayer relate to humility? Does a prideful person seek God's face in prayer? Why or why not?

Why is prayer important for revival? What other things do we turn to to solve our problems?

Prayer and humility go together because without humility, we do not offer sincere prayers. The call from God to pray and seek His face requires authenticity before Him. We need to be humble and seek God because He is the one who brings revival.

What did God's people need to do as humble, prayerful people?

The term "repent" is used in the Bible 969 times. What is repentance? How is it different than simply confessing sin?

What is the relationship between repentance and revival?

To "repent" means to stop sinning and turn to God. Sometimes as believers we think we just need to tell God we are sorry and confess our sins, but genuine repentance goes further. Believers must confess, turn from their sin, and turn to God.

Why is forgiveness important in this verse? Why is that promise important for us today?

How does our land need to be healed? How does revival among God's people help heal the land?

God promised His people that He would hear them, forgive them, and heal their land **IF** they, in prayerful humility, would repent. The same is true for us today.

CONTEMPLATION & APPLICATION

Identify how the truths from these Scriptures apply directly to your life.

What historical events do you recall that drove people in our country to God? Did they stay close to God? What happened?

What things in your life keep you from truly seeking revival? How do the things of the world and comforts you have make you complacent in your relationship with God?

How does the political climate impact the way you think about God? How does the political climate impact the way you think about other people? So, how do these mindsets impact your prayer life?

What disciplines and practices do you need to implement in your life to be like the person described in 2 Chronicles 7:14?

PRAYER

Close in prayer, asking God to begin a revival in your life, our church, and our community. Be bold, praying that God would move in your life and our church, and that you would be humble and seek Him in prayer. Pray that our church would be known for humility, prayer, and repentance. Pray for our country to see that while politics are important, government solutions will never provide what all truly need: a relationship with Jesus.

BIBLE COMMENTARY

| 2 CHRONICLES 7:11-18

Second Chronicles is tied to 1 Chronicles as they narrate the history of Israel, particularly supplementing for stories not found in 1 and 2 Samuel and 1 and 2 Kings. It was written around 400 B.C. by a person with priestly or Levitical training. Tradition holds that Ezra is the author of 1 and 2 Chronicles. It was written during Persian rule. At that time, many Jews were returning from exile in Persia and Babylon. Judah and Jerusalem were the last to go into exile at the hands of the Babylonians in 586 B.C. In 538 B.C., Babylon fell to Persia, and the Persians policy was to let exiles return to their original lands. Chronicles was composed as a way of teaching and reminding the people who returned from exile the history of the land and what God had done.

This section of 2 Chronicles 7 begins with an introductory comment in 11 and 12 and then moves into a declaration by God. God approached Solomon at night, some time after the completion of the temple and the completion of Solomon's royal palace. Based on the events of 1 Kings the palace was completed around 13 years after the temple was dedicated. The speech that God gave to Solomon (7:12b-22) set up the way that temple worship would function during the Divided Kingdom.

Beginning in verse 12, God's speech shows that He listened and is answering the prayer of Solomon in 2 Chronicles 6:14-42. His acceptance of Solomon's prayer demonstrates the basis

for Him hearing people's prayers and answering them. The temple was raised up by God in a way that few other places ever were. He calls the temple both a house of prayer and a house of sacrifice. This shows that prayer and sacrifice worked together as the dual function of the temple. The Law required that worship consist of both prayer to God from the inward self and also of outward sacrifice for sins. Christians live in a different system because Christ offered Himself as the final and complete sin sacrifice (Heb. 10:12-22). The paragraph in 2 Chronicles 7:11-18 shows the essential message of both books of Chronicles as well as the essential teaching of the Old Testament. It calls people to approach God in prayer.

The principles of verse 14 can be seen throughout the kings that would follow Solomon. The call to humble themselves is evident in the stories of Rehoboam (2 Chron. 12:6-12), Hezekiah (2 Chron. 30:11; 32:26), and Manasseh (2 Chronicles 33:12-23). The call to pray is used throughout 2 Chronicles in reference to repentance (2 Chron. 11:16; 15:4; 20:4). One of the key elements in this verse is that God hears prayers. It is an answer to the requests of Solomon in chapter 6, where he asks God several times to hear him (2 Chron. 6:19, 20, 21, 25). The combination of terms in verse 14 represents the aspects of heartfelt repentance, beginning with humbling one's self, then moving to prayer, seeking, and turning. The forgiveness that God promises for those who repent and turn is not found anywhere else in 2 Chronicles outside of chapters 6 and 7. The healing of the land is tied to 2 Chronicles 30, which talks about how God "healed the people." Healing throughout the Old Testament is related to both physical healing and forgiveness. When referring to the Promised Land, it typically involves peace and security.

In verses 15 and 16, God outlined His mode of operation when people pray and repent (v. 14). He opens His eyes and ears to hear the prayers of His people. God said this particularly in light of the temple where the nation of Israel would go to offer sacrifice and become one with God again. For Christians, the temple has changed to Christ, and the sacrifice has changed to Christ's death. However, the principle remains: when a believer approaches God in prayer and repentance because of the work of Christ, God listens and is open to his or her prayers.

In verses 17 and 18, God addressed Solomon specifically as the leader and king of God's people. Solomon is called to follow the Law of Moses so that he could be a man to rule Israel. The encouragement to Solomon was to live and walk in the Law as his father David had done.