

8-22-2021, COTR Texarkana

Title: Return to God America, pt-2

Purpose: Deal with sin, the root cause of why nation's turn away from God and provoke people to repent and return to God.

Spiritual truth: Sin causes us to turn away from God; repentance causes us to return to God.

Text: Daniel 9

Topic: Return to God, Revival, Sin,

Series Title: Return to God America!

Series purpose: Call America to return to God and provoke Christians to follow the Biblical prescription for revival.

Series spiritual truth: When people return to God, a spiritual awakening can change a nation.

## Return to God America, pt-2

### I. Introduction

A. Promo SFLB

B. Review Series: 'Return to God America'. We all know America is in trouble. We saw more evidence this week with America's humiliation in Afghanistan, devastating floods on the east coast and our governments call for booster shots because the existing vaccine isn't stopping Covid. Our only hope is a spiritually awakening that starts when people return to God. Last week, we asked the question, **what can God's people do to see our nation return to God?** [2 Chron. 7:13-14 (ESV) When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain...or send pestilence among my people, 14 **if my people** who are called by my name **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.]

C. Today we'll deal with the root cause of why people turn away from God; they love their, vs. 14, '**wicked ways**' more than they love God. Part of returning to God is admitting our sin to God, asking God to forgive us, and turning away from sin. Today we'll see how Daniel addressed Israel's sin and helped them return to God.

D. Title: Return to God America, pt-2

E. Sp. truth: Sin causes us to turn away from God; repentance causes us to return to God.

### II. Daniel called Israel to turn away from sin and return to God.

A. [Daniel 9 (NLT) It was the first year of the reign of Darius the Mede...2...I, Daniel, learned from reading the word of the Lord, as revealed to **Jeremiah the prophet**, that Jerusalem must lie desolate for **seventy years**.]

1. Daniel was referring to Jeremiah's prophecy. [Jeremiah 25:8-12 (NLT)]...the Lord...says: **Because you have not listened to me**, 9 I will gather together all the armies of the north under King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon...I will completely destroy you 11...Israel...will serve the king of Babylon for **seventy years**. 12 "Then, after the seventy years of captivity are over, I will punish the king of Babylon and his people for their sins...] history records the prophecy happened. A new ruler, Cyrus, let Israel helped return and rebuild Jerusalem.

2. Biblical prophecy predicts the future and is trustworthy. **Fulfilled prophecy is one proof the Bible is true.** Daniel knew it was time for God to move in Israel and he helps us know what to do for America.
- B. **Vs. 3** So I turned to the Lord God and **pleaded with him in prayer and fasting**. I also **wore rough burlap** and sprinkled myself with **ashes**.
1. Daniel prepared his heart to come close to God. Wearing sackcloth/ burlap, ashes was an outer sign of mourning in grief or repentance<sup>1</sup>
  2. Fasting is typically associated with abstaining from food or pleasure as an act of humility to draw close to God, but there's more. **Fasting is a time to realign ourselves back to the priorities of God.** [**Isaiah 58:6–8 (NLT)**]...**this is the kind of fasting I want:** Free those who are wrongly imprisoned; lighten the burden of those who work for you...7 Share your food with the hungry, and give shelter to the homeless. Give clothes to those who need them, and do not hide from relatives who need your help. 8 “Then your salvation will come like the dawn, and your wounds will quickly heal...] To return to God, we need to search our hearts for ways we're mistreating people and help people in need.
- C. **Vs. 4** I **prayed** to the Lord my God and **confessed**: “O Lord, you are a great and awesome God! **You always fulfill your covenant and keep your promises** of unfailing love to those who love you and obey your commands. 5 **But we have sinned and done wrong. We have rebelled against you and scorned your commands...**6 **We have refused to listen** to your servants the prophets... 8 O Lord, we...**are covered with shame because we have sinned against you.** 9 **But** the Lord our **God is merciful and forgiving, even though we have rebelled against him.**
1. Daniel identified with the nation's sin even though he may not have been guilty, i.e., identificational repentance. **The starting place for a spiritual awakening is an acknowledgment of sin.** Daniel knew sin had caused Israel's judgement/captivity. Sin was the root cause.
  2. Def. sin: to break God's commands; to fail to do what God asks of us; we sin in thoughts, words, or actions.
- 3. PRAY, confessing the sins of America**
- D. **Vs. 11** **All Israel has disobeyed** your instruction and turned away, refusing to listen to your voice. “So now the solemn **curse and judgments** written in the Law of Moses...have been poured down on us **because of our sin.** 12 You have kept your word and done to us and our rulers exactly as you warned. Never has there been such a **disaster** as happened in Jerusalem.
1. **Sin has personal and national consequences.** Maybe God has reached his limit with America. We murder innocent children in the name of choice, we rejected His plan for marriage and family, we embrace sexual immorality, we kicked Him and the Bible out of the public square and we wonder why our nation is in trouble.
- E. **Vs. 13** Every curse written against us in the Law of Moses has come true. Yet **we have refused to seek mercy from the Lord our God by turning from our sins and recognizing his truth.** 14 **Therefore,** the Lord has brought upon us the **disaster...** The Lord our God was **right** to do all of these things, for we did not obey him.
1. God Disciplines people who turn their back on Him, [**Psalm 119:67 (NLT)**] I used to wander off until you **disciplined me**; but now I closely follow your word.]

2. America, like Israel, is at a spiritual crossroads. We can stubbornly defy God or return to Him.
- F. **Vs. 15** ...we have sinned and are full of wickedness. 16 In view of all your faithful mercies, **Lord, please turn your furious anger away from your city Jerusalem...** 17 “O our God, hear your servant’s prayer... 18... We make this plea, **not because we deserve help, but because of your mercy.** 19 “O Lord, hear. O Lord, **forgive.** O Lord, listen and act...
1. God was willing to be merciful and forgive Israel in spite of their sin. Perhaps He will do the same for America.
  2. **PRAY: Lord forgive us and turn away your anger. Give us another chance.**
- III. The solution to a nation’s backsliding is repentance, i.e., returning to God
- A. Def. Repent: To be sorrowful for sin and return to God; To turn around.
  - B. **Matthew 3:1–8 (NLT)**...John the Baptist came to the Judean wilderness and began preaching...2 **“Repent of your sins and turn to God,** for the Kingdom of Heaven is near.”...5 People from...all over...went out to see and hear John. 6 And when they **confessed their sins, he baptized them...**7 But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming to watch him baptize, he denounced them. “You brood of snakes!” he exclaimed. “Who warned you to **flee the coming wrath?** 8 **Prove by the way you live that you have repented of your sins and turned to God.**
  - C. Jesus, Peter, and Paul called people to repent. [**Matthew 4:17 (NLT)** From then on **Jesus** began to preach, **“Repent of your sins and turn to God,** for the Kingdom of Heaven is near.”] **Peter** on the day of Pentecost, [**Acts 2:37–38 (ESV)**...they...said to Peter...what shall we do?” 38 And Peter said to them, **“Repent and be baptized** every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ **for the forgiveness of your sins...**] **Paul** in Athens, [**Acts 17:30 (NLT)** “God overlooked people’s ignorance about these things in earlier times, but now **he commands everyone everywhere to repent of their sins and turn to him.**]
    1. The message of repentance is missing in America today but it’s the starting place for a nation to return to God.
- IV. Conclusion: How do we return to God?
- A. John the Baptist said to start living God’s way. [**Lu 3:10–14 (NLT)** The crowds asked, “What should we do?” 11 John replied, “If you have two shirts, give one to the poor. If you have food, share it with those who are hungry.” 12 Even corrupt tax collectors ...asked...what should we do?” 13 He replied, “Collect no more taxes than the government requires.” 14 “What should we do?” asked some soldiers. John replied, “Don’t extort money or make false accusations. And be content with your pay.”]
  - B. Turning away from sin and selfishness is a part but it’s not all. We should start our day by reading the Bible and prayer, pray over meals, fellowship with Christians, go to church, share Jesus with people. Being a Christian is more than following rules, it’s following Jesus and being close to Him every day.
- V. Response
- A. Prayer
  - B. Souls

VI. Bibliography/ Resources: Logos Bible Software and Library, Platinum Edition, was used to prepare this message.

1. Pentecost, J. D. (1985). [Daniel](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, p. 1359). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.