



JOIN US IN PRAYING FOR A "GREAT AWAKENING" IN AMERICA

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GOD'S MESSAGE TO AMERICA – PART 1

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The Lord said to Jeremiah, “And if at another time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be built up and planted, and if it does evil in my sight and does not obey me, then I will reconsider the good I had intended to do for it” (Jeremiah 18:9 and 10).

The above verse reminds us that God is still sovereign over world history. More specifically, it tells us that we have good reason to think that God is reconsidering the good He intended for America as the problems associated with the COVID-19 virus continue to beset us.

AMERICA'S PLACE IN WORLD HISTORY

America has a unique place in world history because America is the meeting point on the far side of the globe from the place where the descendants of Shem, Ham and Japheth (the sons of Noah) set out to the East and to the West to populate the earth.

This great gathering of the peoples of the world includes:

- the first inhabitants of America (the American Indians) who came from Asia;
- the European immigrants, starting in the 17th century;
- the African immigrants – initially by slavery – starting in the 18th century;
- and the diverse immigrants of the last two centuries.

Also God's Word was brought to this land where East meets West by the first European settlers in Jamestown (1607) and in New England (1620).

Reverence for God's presence in America has been maintained with cycles of rise and fall for over 400 years to the present day, with the War of Independence followed by the Constitutional Convention in 1787 firmly establishing a godly foundation for the American form of government.

GEORGE WASHINGTON

George Washington was the most prominent person in establishing our nation on a Biblical foundation. He was:

- a Brigadier General for the British army in the French Indian war,
- the Commander in Chief in the War of Independence,

- the president over the Constitutional Convention,
- the first President of the United States of America for two terms.

This prominence led Christianity Today to publish an article titled: “George Washington the American Moses” in 2008.

It is important to note, however, that George Washington wasn’t perfect. His most obvious sin was that he – like many large landowners of the time – had slaves. But God has always used imperfect men to do His will. For example, even Moses was barred by God from going into the Promised Land because of his anger.

INTRODUCTION TO GEORGE WASHINGTON’S FAREWELL ADDRESS

George Washington’s beliefs and wisdom are summed up in his Farewell Address given on September 17th, 1796 to a joint session of Congress.

This speech has the same purpose for America that the book of Deuteronomy had for the Israelites i.e.

- to summarize the foundation the Lord had laid for our nation, and
- to warn the nation of the dangers facing this new and precious form of government.

Indeed it is not too presumptuous to liken the purpose of his Farewell Address to Deuteronomy 1:3 that states:

“In the fortieth year, on the first day of the eleventh month, Moses proclaimed to the Israelites all that the Lord had commanded him concerning them.”

Using the same format for George Washington’s Farewell Address:

“In the 1796th year of our Lord, on the seventeenth day of the ninth month, George Washington proclaimed to the American people all that the LORD had commanded him concerning them.”

The following is a shortened version of George Washington’s Farwell Address that retains the meaning and emphasis of the full version, with some of the language updated where the words he used are now obsolete; for example,

- “beneficence” is changed to “*favor*”,
- “solicitude” is changed to “*concern*”,
- “felicity” is changed to “*happiness*”,
- “incitement” is changed to “*encouragement*”,
- “artifices” is changed to “*schemes*”.

I have adjusted the layout of the text to improve readability, and I have interjected five observations into the speech to highlight how it applies to America today.

WASHINGTON'S FAREWELL ADDRESS 1796

Friends and Citizens:

In looking forward to the moment which is intended to terminate the career of my public life, my feelings do not permit me to suspend the deep acknowledgment of that debt of gratitude which I owe to my beloved country for the many honors it has conferred upon me.

I shall carry it with me to my grave, as a strong *encouragement* to unceasing vows that heaven may continue to you the choicest tokens of its *favor*;

- that your union and brotherly affection may be perpetual;

- that the free Constitution, which is the work of your hands, may be sacredly maintained;
- that its administration in every department may be stamped with wisdom and virtue;
- that the *happiness* of the people of these States, under the auspices of liberty, may be made complete by so careful a preservation and so prudent a use of this blessing.

Concern for your welfare – which cannot end but with my life, and the apprehension of danger, natural to that concern – urge me to offer to your solemn contemplation, and to recommend to your frequent review, some sentiments which are:

- the result of much reflection,
- of no inconsiderable observation,
- and which appear to me all-important to your lasting *happiness* as a people.

These will be offered to you with more freedom, as you can only see in them the disinterested warnings of a parting friend, who can possibly have no personal motive to bias his counsel.

NATIONAL UNITY

The unity of government which constitutes you one people is also now dear to you. It is justly so, for it is a main pillar in the *structure*:

- of your real independence;
- of the support of your tranquility at home;
- of your peace abroad;
- of your safety;
- of your prosperity;
- of that very liberty which you so highly prize.

But as it is easy to foresee that, from different causes and from different quarters, much pains will be taken, and many *schemes* employed to weaken in your minds the conviction of this truth; as this is the point in your political fortress against which the batteries of internal and external enemies will be most constantly and actively (though often covertly and insidiously) directed.

It is of infinite moment that you should properly estimate the immense value of your national union to your collective and individual happiness.

1st OBSERVATION

In the next section of his speech, George Washington continued to point out one of the greatest dangers to national unity. A danger that we see played out daily in the media.

POLITICAL PARTIES

Let me warn you in the most solemn manner against the baneful effects of the spirit of party.

The alternate domination of one political party over another,

- sharpened by the spirit of revenge, natural to party dissension,
- which in different ages and countries has perpetrated the most horrid enormities,

is itself a frightful despotism.

But this leads at length to a more formal and permanent despotism. The disorders and miseries which result, gradually incline the minds of men to seek security in the absolute power of an individual; and

sooner or later the chief of some prevailing faction –more able or more fortunate than his competitors – turns this disposition to the purposes of his own elevation, on the ruins of public liberty.

Without looking forward to an extremity of this kind (which nevertheless ought not to be entirely out of sight), the common and continual mischiefs of the spirit of party are sufficient to make it the interest and duty of a wise people to discourage and restrain it.

2nd OBSERVATION

Here George Washington emphasizes the principle of Mark 3:24-25.

Jesus said, “If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand.”

We see today, the “spirit of party” between the Republican and Democrat parties turning the nation against itself which brings the warning that our nation will not stand.

SEPARATION OF POWERS (Executive, legislative, judicial)

It is important, likewise, that the habits of thinking in a free country should inspire caution in those entrusted with its administration – to confine themselves within their respective constitutional spheres – avoiding in the exercise of the powers of one department to encroach upon another.

The spirit of encroachment tends to consolidate the powers of all the departments in one, and thus to create – whatever the form of government – a real despotism. A just estimate of that love of power, and proneness to abuse it, which predominates in the human heart, is sufficient to satisfy us of the truth of this position.

The necessity of reciprocal checks in the exercise of political power – by dividing and distributing it into different branches of government, and constituting each the guardian of the public *well-being* against invasions by the others – has been revealed by experiments ancient and modern.

To preserve them must be as necessary as to institute them.

If, in the opinion of the people, the distribution or modification of the constitutional powers be in any particular wrong, let it be corrected by an amendment in the way which the Constitution designates. But let there be no change by wrongful seizure; for though this, in one instance, may be the instrument of good, it is the customary weapon by which free governments are destroyed.

3rd OBSERVATION

Isaiah 33:22 provides the Biblical source of the separation of powers in America.

“For the Lord is our judge (judicial branch, Supreme Court),

“the Lord is our lawgiver (administrative branch, Congress),

“the Lord is our king (executive branch, President);

it is he who will save us.”

We have seen George Washington’s warning played out in the last 70 years where the Supreme Court has made multiple rulings that were outside of their Constitutional authority:

- 1947, First Amendment was turned on its head, and “Free exercise of religion” became “Freedom from religion”.
- 1962, School prayer largely became illegal.
- 1963, School Bible reading was severely restricted.
- 1973, Abortion was legalized in *Roe v. Wade*.
- 1980, Posting of the Ten Commandments in most public buildings became illegal.

- 2015, the definition of marriage was redefined to include same-sex marriage.

RELIGION & MORALITY

Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism, who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human *happiness*, these firmest props of the duties of men and citizens. The mere politician, equally with the pious man, ought to respect and to cherish them.

A volume could not trace all their connections with private and public *well-being*.

Let it simply be asked: Where is the security for property, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligation desert the oaths of justice?

And let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion.

Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.

4th OBSERVATION

Jeremiah 17:9 confirms George Washington's concern,

“The heart [without God] is deceitful above all things and beyond cure.”

This concern is closely tied to the concern of the “spirit of party” and the concern related to the maintenance of “separation of powers”.

Progressive liberal segments of government (and society at large) have turned against the religion and morality that this nation was founded upon – and, as a consequence, turned against the Constitution itself.

NATIONAL DEBT

As a very important source of strength and security, cherish public credit avoiding likewise the accumulation of debt:

- not only by shunning occasions of expense,
- but by vigorous exertion in time of peace to discharge the debts which unavoidable wars may have occasioned,
- not ungenerously throwing upon posterity the burden which we ourselves ought to bear.

The execution of these maxims belongs to your representatives, but it is necessary that public opinion should cooperate. To *help* them *in* the performance of their duty, it is essential that you should practically bear in mind:

- that towards the payment of debts there must be revenue;
- that to have revenue there must be taxes;
- that no taxes can be devised which are not more or less inconvenient and unpleasant.

5th OBSERVATION

Proverbs 22:7 likewise warns us,

“The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is slave to the lender.”

- The US debt is over \$25 trillion. Our population is 327 million. Therefore, each person's (man, woman and child) share of the debt is over \$76,000!

Up to a few years ago fiscal conservatives raised the alarm about the size of the national debt, but now even they have largely gone silent.

Could it be that we have allowed the debt to get so large that the cure will be unpalatable to the population at large? If so we are approaching a fiscal precipice that will be much worse than the housing bubble of 2008 and 2009.

CONCLUSION

In offering to you, my countrymen, these counsels of an old and affectionate friend, I dare not hope they will make the strong and lasting impression I could wish; but, if I may even flatter myself that they may be productive of some partial benefit,

- some occasional good;
- that they may now and then recur to moderate the fury of party spirit,
- to guard against the deceit of pretended patriotism;

this hope will be a full recompense for the concern for your welfare, by which they have been dictated.

Though, in reviewing the incidents of my administration, I am unconscious of intentional error, I am nevertheless too sensible of my defects not to think it probable that I may have committed many errors. Whatever they may be, I fervently beseech the Almighty to avert or mitigate the evils to which they may tend. I shall also carry with me the hope that my country will never cease to view them with indulgence and that, after forty five years of my life dedicated to its service with an upright zeal, the faults will be consigned to oblivion, as myself must soon be to the mansions of rest.

George Washington

September 17th, 1796

TURNING OUR HEARTS BACK TO GOD

Next month we will publish Part 2 of God's Message to America, "Turning Back to God".

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