

"THE MAKING OF A NATION"  
 (2 Samuel 5:1-5, 9-10)  
 © 2018 Rev. Dr. Brian E. Germano

[McKendree U.M.C.; 7-1-18]

--I--

1. Read Text: 2 Samuel 5:1-5, 9-10 and Pray.
2. [WATCH VIDEO "*Celebrate America*" ([sermonspice.com](http://sermonspice.com)) (Time 1:22)]

A--You know, whether we realize it or not, there are some amazing parallels between the founding of *our* country America and that of the biblical nation of *Israel*.

B--Both, for example, were founded by a people possessing a common faith in God, a common history, and common law and business systems, both also began merely as a collection of independent countries (the United States was at first 13 very different *colonies*; while Israel began as 12 rival *tribes*).

C--Remember, too, that in both cases, it was through the leadership of *one man* that these independent regions were united as one nation: in America, it was *George Washington* who led us to victory during what we call the American Revolution; in biblical Israel, it was *David son of Jesse* who united the rival 12 tribes under his Kingship.

D--And consider how in both cases, one of the first official acts of these two men was to establish a new capital city as a symbol of their nation's unity: in America, we named it after its founder... *Washington, D.C.*; and today's Bible story describes how the new city of Jerusalem was established, as well -- a capital that (like our own) was *also* given the name of its founder... "*The City of David*."

3. Some of you may already know, but I was a History major in college, and one of the focus areas of my Senior Paper was the religious and spiritual heritage of America.

A--And I always found this historical parallel between America and Israel fascinating.

B--But what I found to be especially interesting is the fact that both contemporary America and ancient Israel are (and have been) considered to be "great" nations because they have been "Godly" nations.

C--So, as we get ready to celebrate our *own* national holiday, I'd like to talk about exactly what that means by suggesting **three qualities from today's scripture that go into the making of a "Godly" nation.**

--II--

4. Today's scripture tells us, first of all, that a "Godly nation" has **A GODLY HERITAGE** -- a heritage *not* defined by it glorying in its *own* accomplishments, but by it celebrating both *GOD'S* claim *upon* them, and *GOD'S* work *through* them.

A--Consider, for example, that even as the various tribes of Israel called upon David to be their new earthly leader, Vs.2 acknowledges that they recognized that they were still part of "God's" flock -- with David merely as the "*shepherd of [God's] people Israel.*"

1--In the opening video at the beginning of this message, we saw examples of this in the quotes from a few of the founders of our own nation: George Washington, Patrick Henry, Benjamin Franklin, and Alexander Hamilton -- each of whom were acknowledging God's claim on our nation, and that they themselves were merely conduits for His work.

2--Yes, it's true that many of these founders were not orthodox Christians by today's standards, <sup>1</sup> but I still think its significant to note that their confidence in America's destiny depended NOT upon our people's trust in our *own* strength and power, but our trust in the strength, power and wisdom of Almighty *GOD*.

B--In other words, America and Israel have had a "Godly heritage" because they both *put God first* in their national conscience and culture.

1--In Israel's case, though, wherever and whenever they *failed* to do this, the Bible tells us that they found themselves trouble, and lost their sense of "greatness." <sup>2</sup>

2--And in many ways, I fear we here in America today are in danger of following in Israel's footsteps, because we have an unsettling tendency to think (or at least *act* like) we don't need God in our national conscience anymore. <sup>3</sup>

3--Yet, I would argue that if we want to continue to be a predominant nation in the world, then we need to acknowledge and honor our spiritual heritage, rather than minimize and be embarrassed by it.

5. But in addition to its Godly *heritage*, I believe today's scripture reminds us that a "Godly nation" also must have **GODLY LEADERSHIP**...

A--...Leadership measured not by any physical, mental or charismatic quality, but by how closely a leader walks with God and follows God's will, way, and timing.

1--In today's scripture, for instance, we learn that King David was "great" *not* because he defeated Goliath, or was handsome, or even because he captured Jerusalem and unified Israel.

2--No. Verse 10 says that "*David became greater and greater, for the Lord, the God of hosts, was with him.*"

3--In other words, he was "great" because he knew and acknowledged *God* as the source of his wisdom and strength -- he was "great" because he was a *Godly leader*.

B--In like manner, throughout American history, those we often consider to be "great" Presidents have all begun their terms of office with some public acknowledgment of their dependence upon God to guide them in leadership (we read it in the inaugural speeches of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, and others).

1--Now, they may not have always *lived up to* their words in their administration, but they were at least able to correctly identify the *source* of true power. <sup>4</sup>

2--My point here is simply that a "Godly leader" is one who acknowledges God as the source of his or her guidance, strength, & wisdom in life & leadership. <sup>5</sup>

6. And yet, not only does a "Godly nation" need a "Godly heritage" with "Godly leadership," but lastly (and perhaps most importantly), it requires **A GODLY PEOPLE** -- a people who aren't afraid to openly acknowledge God as the source of their blessings (...who can they can say "*In God We Trust*" and have it mean more than simply being words on a dollar bill).

A--The biblical people of Israel honored God through their national festivals, rituals, and holidays... all of which were established to remind them that *God* (not themselves) was the source of their blessings.

B--In similar fashion, after an 1830s tour of America, the French writer Alexis de Tocqueville made this observation about our own country:

*"I have toured America, and I have seen most of what you offer. I've seen the richness of the fields and the wealth of your mines. I've seen your industrial might, the beauties of the rivers, the streams, the lakes, and the grandeur of the mountains. I've noticed the abundance of the forests and the marvelous climate with which you are blessed. In none of these things did I see the cause for the greatness of America. It wasn't until I went into your churches that I saw the reason for America's greatness. America is great because America is good; & as long as America is good, America will be great. If it ever ceases to be good, it will cease to be great."* <sup>6</sup>

C--You see, De Tocqueville understood that a nation's people are "great" only when -- and to the extent that -- they honor God (as proclaimed through America's churches).

1--So perhaps what we need again today are simple reminders that what makes us special among the peoples of the world is *not* the extent to which we can boast of our national autonomy and self-sufficiency,...

2--...But the extent to which we "boast" of (and recognize) our *need* for God -- that we, like the people of Israel and our own founders, are not afraid to publicly proclaim our passion and desire for God, <sup>7</sup> to openly acknowledge that we are a *broken* people, who are part of a *broken* land which can *only* be healed by God Himself!

3--In 2 Chronicles 7:14 God puts it this way, "*If my people who belong to me will humbly pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, forgive their sin, and heal their land.*"

D--Notice: the healing of our land *doesn't* start with *non-believers*, but with "*God's people who belong to [Him]...*" -- that's us! So if we want to continue to be a "Godly people," we have to seek God's face *ourselves*, so we can lead our nation to *follow*.

--III--

7. Yes, America and ancient Israel have both been considered "Godly" nations. But the qualities that make us (or *any* nation) "Godly" is that we acknowledge...

A--A "**Godly heritage**" -- one which recognizes God as the moving force in our history.

B--We have "**Godly leadership**"-- leaders who will honor God by their actions and anchor their policies in the ethics of their faith.

C--And we also must have "**Godly people**" -- people who aren't afraid to openly profess God as source of our blessings, and our need for His son Jesus to be Lord of our lives.

8. This week as we celebrate America's freedom, let's always remember that GOD (and God alone) is the only true source that goes into "*The Making Of A (Godly) Nation*."

9. [PRAYER]

#### ENDNOTES:

<sup>1</sup> Many of America's founders were "Deists" who did not believe in the divinity of Jesus (merely that he was a "good man"), and who believed that once God created the world, He no longer intervened or interacted with either it or with humanity. This means that for the Deists, there was no need to pray and that the miracles of the Bible were not true. (all miracles, they believed, had rational explanations which did not include God's hand or work). Most Deists were not active in, support, or attend the institutional church (although they usually gave it "lip service" in their public life). Prominent Deists of early America included Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, and even George Washington. Again, they all believed in God as a higher power/being, but not that Jesus was his son or that he died on the cross to save our sins

<sup>2</sup> For example, consider all the times the prophets warned Israel that they had turned away from God's ways and tried to do things their own way. Each of these times resulted in military, political, and moral disasters for them.

<sup>3</sup> For example, we write Him out of our history books by writing out all references to the faith motivation of our country's founders. We take prayer out of our schools and then don't replace it with any moral anchors whatsoever because we "don't want to offend anyone," and then wonder why children and youth carry guns to school and shoot each other. Regardless of what ones believes about the "rightness or wrongness" of these issues, we must understand that historically, most of these actions are exactly OPPOSITE the intentions of our nation's founders. Rightly or wrongly, *they* didn't believe that we could run government or a nation properly *without* having religion play a part in that government. In 1813, Thomas Jefferson said that,..."*The general principles on which the [founders] achieved independence were... the general principles of Christianity.*" And he believed that without these, we as a nation would fail miserably. Unfortunately, even we Christians have bought into the myth that "separation of church and state" means that religion must stay out of governmental affairs -- which is interesting considering the fact that when Jefferson coined the term, he was referring to the fact that government should stay out of *religious* affairs, NOT vice-versa!

<sup>4</sup> Remember, many of *America's* founders were NOT orthodox Christians in the sense we think of today (including Washington, Franklin, and Jefferson). But they *were* people who believed that it was impossible to properly govern a country without belief in a supreme being and the belief that religion provides the moral and ethical underpinnings for society itself. *That's* the type of people we should be looking for in our political candidates.

<sup>5</sup> I should insert here that if we're to continue the tradition of "great leaders" in our country, it will require several things of *us*, as well:

**First** of all, it means that we *all* have a responsibility to **elect Godly leaders** -- leaders who aren't afraid to stand up for what's right, and who'll make Godly values a priority. Notice I didn't say we necessarily have to elect *Christian* leaders. I certainly *do* hope that we would elect many persons to public office who *are* devout and committed Christians. But there are also people of other faiths and beliefs who may be equally as "Godly" as some supposed "Christian politicians" are (or even more so) -- so, the key is to elect leaders who'll lead in ways which are consistent with Godly values. But not only should we *elect* leaders who'll honor Godly morals and faith, but...

**Second**, we should also **open ourselves to the possibility of seeking to be elected**, as well. It may very well be that some of you here might sense God calling you to seek public office, not for your own sake or glory, but for GOD'S glory through you. You see, as Christians, we shouldn't be afraid to seek out elected office, because if there's anything our city, county, state, and nation needs today, it's Godly leaders.

<sup>6</sup> Cited from Alexis de Tocqueville's book Democracy In America (1835).

<sup>7</sup> Now, this doesn't give us license to disrespect the differing faith (or even the non-faith) of others, but neither does it mean that we need to "water down" who *we* are or what we believe in, in the name of "political correctness."