

# Repentance

*God's Strategy  
to Bless a Nation*

## Jeffrey Daly

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## Repentance---God's Strategy to Bless a Nation

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# Repentance – God’s Strategy to Bless a Nation

## Table of Contents

Dedication.....	5
Acknowledgments.....	6
Preface	Time to Use the “R” Word.....7
Chapter One	Why Repentance?.....11
Chapter Two	Repentance is part of our Judeo-Christian Heritage.....16
Chapter Three	The Perfect Lamb.....20
Chapter Four	Repentance is the First Step to Salvation.....23
Chapter Five	Repentance is a Key to Spiritual Growth.....26

Chapter Six	Repentance in the Early Body of Believers....	29
Chapter Seven	Repent: it's the Season of Repentance Already.....	34
Chapter Eight	Repentance for a Nation: Old Testament Solemn Assemblies.....	36
Chapter Nine	Days of Repentance: Miracles in American History – part one.....	44
Chapter Ten	John Adams: Repentance is the Test for our Nation's Survival.....	57
Chapter Eleven	Days of Repentance: Miracles in American History – part two.....	63
Chapter Twelve	Defiance Instead of Repentance.....	70
Chapter Thirteen	Time for a New National Day of Repentance.....	74
Chapter Fourteen	Healing Our Land.....	82
References.....		86
About the Author.....		87

## **Dedication**

God never gives up on a person. I experienced a miracle one night back in July, 1991 when, just before my fiftieth birthday, in the middle of a confused, messed up life, with all kinds of betrayals, I came out of the New Age and found Jesus Christ personally. I'd been arguing each night over dinner with a visiting Christian who read the Bible virtually hour after hour. The New Age attorney in me sought to best this "Jesus freak", but to do so I had to dust off and begin to read my old Bible given me when I joined a local church almost forty years earlier. One night I helped out backstage a New Age teacher expounding on various principles to live by, enrolling people in her courses. As she walked off the stage she said to me in all seriousness: "God wasn't I good tonight!!" Something hit me in the spirit like a bucket of water.

I went home, didn't speak to the visiting Christian. Then, alone in my room, my patient Creator led me to read one passage in the Bible, John

7: 18: *“He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him.”* It hit me like a ton of bricks. I got on the floor, I repented, and I asked Jesus to forgive me. He immediately did. Life has not been the same! The Good Lord has restored all that the enemy had stolen from me.

I dedicate this book to that visiting Christian and to the Lord who never gave up on me.

## **Acknowledgments**

After the Holy Spirit, to whom I’m indebted for His loving care in every aspect of my life, I have to thank my precious wife, Laurie, who has been a wonderful support to me, day in and day out, for close to two decades. She has been blessed with great gifts from the Lord and she used them to suggest changes to this booklet. Her love and advice has been invaluable.

I am an amateur. I love American history but can claim no degree, no mastering of the subject. I’m still learning, largely from writings published by Christian historian William Federer. I have also been blessed to have gleaned from the writings of Derek Prince, David Barton, Thomas Kidd,

Jerry Newcombe, Stephen McDowell and Mark Beliles of the Providence Foundation. I thank them all for their devotion to this nation and their serious research; I apologize if in any way I have failed to track their facts correctly.

I also have to thank friends such as Judy Clover, Jim Wilson, Rodger Martin, Dan Prout, and Jeff and Carrie Mendenhall who have kept this National Day of Repentance project in prayer. They have all repeatedly offered their help. My friend, Pastor Paul Smith, has also been an encouragement.

Above all, I have to thank the Lord Jesus Christ for redeeming my lost soul and directing my path. May this book and the National Day of Repentance project advance His Kingdom in Jesus' Holy Name.

### *Preface—Time to Use the “R” Word*

In 1777, sitting in the Continental Congress next to John Adams, Dr. Benjamin Rush, himself a devout Christian, whispered to Adams and asked if the colonists would succeed in their struggle with Great Britain. Adams' answer----which speaks volumes to us today--- was: *“Yes---if we fear God and repent of our sins.”*

As a country we haven't done that for a very long time. You and I

live in a country today where the “F” word can be heard on the schoolyard or in a classroom as well as on late night TV. It’s a sign of a culture sliding down to the lowest common denominator. We’re sliding increasingly towards self-promotion, towards prurience, away from the purity of the Living God who created us in His image and whose miracles launched this nation.

Instead of the “F” word, it’s time for the “R” word: repentance.

Scripture tells us that *“Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people He has chosen as His own inheritance.”* (Psalm 33:12). The Word of God also teaches us that *“Unless the Lord builds the house, They labor in vain who build it; Unless the Lord guards the city, The watchman stays awake in vain.”* (Psalm 127: 1).

The Pilgrims and our Founders knew these Truths and built a nation based on these principles and their dependence upon Him. They practiced days of repentance (or what they called a day of fasting and “humiliation”). When they repented as a group what happened? Immediately the Lord blessed them with miracles, as described in this book, chapter nine.

The present state of our culture would now shock them. Piety instead of perversion used to be a treasured virtue in this nation. So now what do we do? Write letters to the editor? Vote for candidates with our values? Get involved in such campaigns? Run for office? Yes, yes, all of the above. We believers are called to be salt and light to a dying culture. But there’s more than politics involved in transforming our nation. We believers in Christ, people called out of the world by His Name, also have available a key spiritual strategy that hasn’t been used for a very long time. The founders of this nation knew this spiritual strategy well and used it repeatedly.

For those of us who believe in the Living God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, it’s time to use the “R” word: repentance, both personally and as a grassroots group exercise, a National Day of Repentance.

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I went to the bank the other day to open the account for this project, the National Day of Repentance, telling the young girl some of the basics: we were a nonprofit organization; we have no employees, all are volunteers at this point, two signatures will be required---that kind of basic information. All of a sudden she looked up at me with a question on her face and started to form the word: “re-pen-ta-nance” she asked, adding another syllable to the word. “What does it mean”?

I was startled out of my own thinking and struggled to give her a sentence or two definition. It took me three or four sentences to cobble together an explanation. “Oh” she said. There was a curious look on her face. “Oh” she said again and went back to the busy work of setting up the account. As a pastor I didn’t know if I’d opened up a spiritual door or not.

But on the drive home it hit me. I was all the more convinced of the need for a National Day of Repentance. And to brush up my own definition of repentance, and to open the topic to others, I figured it wouldn’t hurt for me to study the concept.

I met with two other pastors and after prayer we quickly got the point that any such day had to be done at the local, grassroots level; we weren’t going to wait for some type of call by the President for a solemn assembly for repentance at the national level.

As I began to read Scriptures on repentance I triggered my own repentance process with the Holy Spirit. I realized I couldn’t even begin to begin to write about the topic of repentance if my own soul hadn’t begun to repent to my Creator. You can’t teach what you haven’t experienced!

Maybe I’m like a lot of pastors or priests. In the business or the task of pastoring or the lack of courage to dive in---more of the latter--- I had put it off. Now the Good Lord had positioned me where I couldn’t put it off; I had to do some real work on my soul. It was time. I couldn’t fool myself any longer. It’s in the Lord alone that you can begin to get real, starting with yourself.

I’m still in that process of repenting; I’ve got a long way to go. But

each day it gets easier; my eyes are opening. Who was I fooling except myself! Proverbs 9:9 says: *"Who can say, 'I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin'?"*

Sometimes in prayer I could "sense" the Holy Spirit speaking to me. Other times I'd have a dream where later I could begin to interpret the dream, or my wonderful wife Laurie could interpret the dream, to see how the Lord was revealing the condition of my heart. His timing was always perfect. Layers were coming off my heart. My mind was beginning to point in the direction of the mind of Christ.

Earlier I had read Psalm 51 where David repents, and I had taught on it regularly. The first two verses show us David's heart: *"Have mercy upon me, O God, According to Your lovingkindness; According to the multitude of Your tender mercies, Blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin."*

Often as a pastor I had taught about David's doing the right thing once he had committed adultery and murder: in Psalm 51:3-4 he acknowledged his sin: *"For I acknowledge my transgressions, And my sin is always before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done evil in Your sight---That You may be found just when You speak, And blameless when You judge."* But now I was going beyond mere teaching; I was forced to experience the spiritual truth that repentance is good for the soul. In Psalm 32, the Holy Spirit speaking through David says in verse two: *"Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit."*

The more I confessed to Him what He already knew, the more my shielded heart softened. Human betrayal after betrayal, some against me, some by me, layers upon layers, all hardening my heart, came up in my prayers in God's perfect timing. He mentored me, the best coach I'd ever had. In prayer in His presence I could release them thanks to the Holy Spirit. This time I could see how small they were compared to His love. Earlier I had often taught on John's remarkable letter to the called out ones, to the body believers in Jesus Christ, particularly 1 John 1:9. Now He and I

were living the Truth of that verse: *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*

Soon the Scriptures in Leviticus setting forth the Day of Atonement were opened up to me. Christ became the sacrificial animal to atone for my sins. Yes, I knew that intellectually. But now Christ's blood on the cross---- I could almost see the pouring wounds as if I were standing there.

If He had already handled my sin why was I hiding it from Him?

The Liberty and freedom in Christ in all of this opened my heart as never before: because He had done all that, why was I reluctant to speak to Him through prayer about my sins? I saw the perfection in the key verse that drives this project for an annual National Day of Repentance forward: Revelation 3:19: *"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent."* And this parallels Proverbs 3:11-12: *"My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, Nor detest His correction; For whom the Lord loves He corrects, Just as a father the son in whom he delights."*

He wants you and me to become more like Him. To have His mind. To be His Ambassador! You and I are engineered for eternity. Repentance, like forgiveness, is one of those "safety valves" the Lord originally designed for each of us to use to get back closer to His Presence.

So it's a process. As much as I can, I'm repenting every day. I want to leave the old patterns of sin behind to follow the illumined path upward towards Him.

The next time I visit that teller in the Bank who wondered what the word "repentance" meant I know I'll be able to give her a better answer.

I hope this book blesses you, opens your thinking on repentance, causes you to repent, and activates your communication to those of us committed to this project. We hope you'll be a participant in your community in an appropriate service on the National Day of Repentance, set each year to coincide with Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement.

Above all, I pray this study brings you closer to our Creator. He who sits on the throne set in heaven is worthy to receive all Glory and Honor and Power; for He created all things, and by His will they exist and

were created, including the miracle process of repentance.

And the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, the Lamb of God, Yeshua the Christ, was slain, and has redeemed each of us sinners to God by His blood. Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation Yeshua the Christ has made those of us who are believers in Him, kings and priests to our God. And this is the promise of Scripture: we children of the most high God shall, under His love and power, surely reign on the earth.

## **Chapter One: Why repentance?**

God invented repentance; humans didn't. In God's mercy He grants life after death; He grants second chances----- and chances after that. His mercy is fresh every day. And Godly repentance is not just to bless individuals; it's a strategy to bless nations.

We're a nation now that has forgotten that Truth.

Repentance is needed because of sin. All humans have been made in God's image. Genesis 1: 27: *"So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them."* We were created to dwell with God, to enjoy daily and eternal fellowship with Him. God created each of us to need His Presence. There is a hole in our hearts until we find our Creator.

But through Adam and Eve's disobedience to God, sin surfaced on the Earth and it's still present no matter what current cultural commentators say. "Just do it" is the anthem of this current culture, but God is not mocked. Sin forced Adam and Eve out of the Garden and created an eternal divide with our Holy Creator. From that point forward mankind couldn't come into God's presence. Born into sin, no person after Adam and Eve was worthy to stand in the presence of a Holy God. Romans 3:23 says it precisely: *"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."*

Those that attempted to stand in the presence of a Holy God, like Uzzah touching the Ark of the Covenant, fell dead. Those who lied to the

Holy Spirit, Ananias and Sapphira, fell dead also. Acts 5:1-10.

And this original sin was passed down to each of us by all our ancestors. We each were born with sin; we all begin life automatically distanced from our Creator. In one sense, each child is a “special needs” child needing to be reconnected spiritually to his or her Holy Creator. We all fall short of the glory of God.

But all along, the Living God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had a perfect plan to restore us all, now available to anyone on the planet. Repentance, individually and as a nation, is a key aspect of His perfect plan.

“Repent” is now a very rare word, easy to avoid in today’s secular culture and even in our churches. It means to feel so contrite over one’s sins as to change one’s ways and to follow God’s higher path.

If we have to look at the concept at all, most have the picture of a hell and brimstone preacher pointing out to lost souls that they are bound for hell any minute. They picture an angry God, bitter, frustrated at His creation, ready any hour now to bring forth the fiery judgment of end times on all of us sinners. True, He is the living God of judgment and He alone will set the timing for the awful Day of the Lord. As Jonathan Edwards used to preach, back in the 1730s, He has the option to curtail His mercy today if the appointed Day of His wrath has come. On that Day-----His repenting believers having been raptured----He will execute judgment on cursing, rebellious, secular, unrepentant souls who have deliberately chosen not to follow Him.

But there’s another picture, consistent with the love and grace of the Living God who sent Jesus, the Son, to act as the perfect Lamb sacrifice for all of our sins, once and for all. Because of His perfect work on behalf of all of us sinners, the sin debt has been paid, whether we know it or not, whether we accept it or not. When we believe in what He has done for each of us, by grace we are saved and our sins are forgiven. You and I have Liberty from sin as a lifestyle. We don’t need to walk around in that sin consciousness.

Thanks to Jesus Christ's passion on the cross a "new man" has been created; hatred, enmity, sin has been conquered. Humans can be liberated; Christ set the captives free! This is the Message version of Ephesians, chapter two:

*1-6 It wasn't so long ago that you were mired in that old stagnant life of sin. You let the world, which doesn't know the first thing about living, tell you how to live. You filled your lungs with polluted unbelief, and then exhaled disobedience. We all did it, all of us doing what we felt like doing, when we felt like doing it, all of us in the same boat. It's a wonder God didn't lose his temper and do away with the whole lot of us. Instead, immense in mercy and with an incredible love, he embraced us. He took our sin-dead lives and made us alive in Christ. He did all this on his own, with no help from us! Then he picked us up and set us down in highest heaven in company with Jesus, our Messiah.*

*7-10 Now God has us where he wants us, with all the time in this world and the next to shower grace and kindness upon us in Christ Jesus. Saving is all his idea, and all his work. All we do is trust him enough to let him do it. It's God's gift from start to finish! We don't play the major role. If we did, we'd probably go around bragging that we'd done the whole thing! No, we neither make nor save ourselves. God does both the making and saving. He creates each of us by Christ Jesus to join him in the work he does, the good work he has gotten ready for us to do, work we had better be doing.*

*11-13 But don't take any of this for granted. It was only yesterday that you outsiders to God's ways had no idea of any of this, didn't know the first thing about the way God works, hadn't the faintest idea of Christ. You knew nothing of that rich history of God's covenants and promises in Israel, hadn't a clue about what God was doing in the world at large. Now because of Christ – dying that death, shedding that blood – you who were once out of it altogether are in on everything.*

*14-15 The Messiah has made things up between us so that we're now together on this, both non-Jewish outsiders and Jewish insiders. He tore down the wall we used to keep each other at a distance. He repealed the law code that had become so clogged with fine print and footnotes that it hindered more than it helped. Then he started over. Instead of continuing with two groups of people*

*separated by centuries of animosity and suspicion, he created a new kind of human being, a fresh start for everybody.*

*16-18 Christ brought us together through his death on the cross. The Cross got us to embrace, and that was the end of the hostility. Christ came and preached peace to you outsiders and peace to us insiders. He treated us as equals, and so made us equals. Through him we both share the same Spirit and have equal access to the Father.*

*19-22 That's plain enough, isn't it? You're no longer wandering exiles. This kingdom of faith is now your home country. You're no longer strangers or outsiders. You belong here, with as much right to the name Christian as anyone. God is building a home. He's using us all – irrespective of how we got here – in what he is building. He used the apostles and prophets for the foundation. Now he's using you, fitting you in brick by brick, stone by stone, with Christ Jesus as the cornerstone that holds all the parts together. We see it taking shape day after day – a holy temple built by God, all of us built into it, a temple in which God is quite at home.”*

Christ, having created in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, reconciling them both to God in one body through the cross, put to death for all eternity the enmity among humans, the hatred, all sin, death itself. There's no more need for human hatred among peoples. For the joy set before Him Yeshua endured all of it on the cross because He loves you and me.

Repentance first of all is the key step in turning from the world and choosing Christ as the center of one's life. It was the very first word Jesus spoke as He began His public ministry: *“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”* (Matthew 4:17).

Thanks to Jesus' work on the cross, His awesome grace, it's the goodness of God that leads us to repentance. Romans 2:4.

When we repent the Lord forgives us. This is the Truth David expresses in Psalm 32:3-6:

*“When I kept silent, my bones grew old  
Through my groaning all the day long.*

*For day and night Your hand was heavy  
upon me;  
My vitality was turned into the drought  
of summer. Selah  
I acknowledged my sin to You,  
And my iniquity I have not hidden I said, 'I will confess my  
transgressions to the LORD,'  
And You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah  
For this cause everyone who is godly shall pray to You. "*

Once you and I repent and make an eternal decision for Christ to become Lord of our lives, repentance thereafter becomes a welcome discipline, a spiritual "tool" ---something one actually wants to do--- to break off old sinful patterns, old strongholds of thinking. Jesus wants us to be more like Him; we have available His mind, the mind of Christ. We now live for the will of God, not for the lusts of men.

Repentance becomes a key process to take on, a blessing He made available to each of us, so that we might partake of the fruits and gifts of the Holy Spirit as well as the mind of Christ. This is how the Holy Spirit speaking through Peter, expresses it: *"Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God."* 1 Peter 4: 1-2.

Because of all that Christ has done, will do today, and will do forever, the plea in the Book of Revelation that the risen Christ makes to the lukewarm church in Laodicea--- and to us lukewarm denominations and believers today---now makes perfect sense: *"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent."* Revelation 3:19.

God "invented" repentance to bless us. It's time again to use this Godly process to return to our Creator, to bless ourselves, and to heal our nation.

## **Chapter Two: Repentance is part of our Judeo-Christian Heritage.**

Repenting individually and as a nation is a Godly event, at least 3,450 years old. The Lord God Almighty spoke to Moses to establish a holy gathering for all Israelites, a Day of Atonement, now called Yom Kippur, to

be observed “forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.” Leviticus 16:29; 23:26-32.

In the Old Testament when setting forth the attributes of the Day of Atonement, the Lord said to Moses: “Also the tenth day of this seventh month shall be the Day of Atonement. It shall be a holy convocation for you; you shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. And you shall do no work on that same day, for it is the Day of Atonement, to make atonement for you before the LORD your God. For any person who is not afflicted in soul on that same day shall be cut off from his people. And any person who does any work on that same day, that person I will destroy from among his people.” Leviticus 23:27-30.

On that Day appointed by God, all were to do no work; it was to be a Sabbath of solemn rest, a day of fasting, the most holy of all days of the year, a 24 hour day from evening to evening to “afflict” their souls, to humble themselves before the Lord their God. The Day of Atonement was a lasting ordinance for all generations. It was not an optional Day. It was required for all of Israel to observe that solemn Day, even including strangers who were then dwelling among the Israelites (Leviticus 16:29). It is still honored today by Jews all over the world sincerely practicing their religion. Even in today’s largely secular nation of Israel it is said that on Yom Kippur one can walk down the center of highways freely because there are no cars on the streets. Even to a secular person it is a day to stop the busy-ness of the world to begin to approach the Lord God Creator with the fear and awe He deserves.

The key question on such a Day has always been: *in what way have we sinned, thereby destroying fellowship with a Holy God?* It’s the key question for an individual. It’s the key question for every nation, including, today, the United States of America.

God’s way is the opposite of sin. He hates sin and what sin does to us in terms of pain and death and an eternal destiny without Him. God cannot fellowship with sinful humans.

In the Temple there was a heavy veil separating the people from the

place of God's Holy presence on the Ark of the Covenant, in the cloud above the mercy seat. Sin regularly had to be covered, to be atoned for, to restore fellowship with a pure God.

Once a year, on the Day of Atonement the high priest held a ceremony, following the Lord's instructions to Moses set forth in Leviticus 16 and 23. To show the horror of sin in the eyes of a Holy God blood was required; something alive needed to be sacrificed. The Lord made it clear in Leviticus 16:15-16 *"Then he shall kill the goat of the sin offering, which is for the people, bring its blood inside the veil, do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it on the mercy seat and before the mercy seat. So he shall make atonement for the Holy Place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions, for all their sins; and so he shall do for the tabernacle of meeting which remains among them in the midst of their uncleanness.*

Only one person each year was appointed for this task: the high priest. Dressed in holy garments he took two kid goats, each free from defect, for a sin offering, offering them to the Lord at the door of the temple. He then cast lots: one lot for the goat to be killed as an offering to the Lord and the other lot for the scapegoat.

To atone for his own sins and the sins of the people, the high priest killed the goat on which the Lord's lot fell.

That blood was then brought inside the heavy veil and sprinkled on the mercy seat, the Ark of the Covenant. That sprinkling of blood on the mercy seat brought atonement for that year. It was not certain that the high priest would leave alive. A rope was tied around his legs so that if he died he could be pulled out of the Holy of Holies.

If the high priest lived he went outside and pronounced the Aaronic blessing on the people by speaking the usually unutterable name of the Living God, Y-H-V-H.

The scapegoat was then presented alive before the Lord, to make atonement upon it. Laying both hands on the scapegoat's head, the high priest confessed to the Lord all the iniquities, all the sins of the children of

Israel including his own. Bearing all their iniquities to an uninhabited land, the scapegoat was released into the wilderness, outside the walls of the city.

Releasing the scapegoat symbolized the temporary taking away of the guilt of the Israelites. Leviticus 16: 30-34: *“For on that day the priest shall make atonement for you, to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins before the Lord. 31 It is a Sabbath of solemn rest for you, and you shall afflict your souls. It is a statute forever. 32 And the priest, who is anointed and consecrated to minister as priest in his father’s place, shall make atonement, and put on the linen clothes, the holy garments; 33 then he shall make atonement for the Holy Sanctuary, and he shall make atonement for the tabernacle of meeting and for the altar, and he shall make atonement for the priests and for all the people of the assembly. 34 This shall be an everlasting statute for you, to make atonement for the children of Israel, for all their sins, once a year.”* And he did as the Lord commanded Moses.

All Israel had to know what the blood of the first goat represented. God’s wrath for sin was obvious. In killing the first goat every Israelite had the opportunity to be “convicted” in his or her soul that the goat’s blood was a substitute for his or her own sins.

Many had to have repented of their sins on this solemn Day of Atonement. The Books of Leviticus and Micah point out that Israelites were not only to recognize the seriousness of their sin (Leviticus 16:29-30; Micah 6: 6-8), but they were expected to identify themselves personally with the victim that was substituted for them. (Leviticus 1:4).

God’s plan was perfect. The Day of Atonement was a day to repent and then be restored. The Holy Spirit speaking through Paul tells us in Romans 2:4: *“Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness, tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?”*

God’s timing was perfect. The most joyful of Holy Festivals, the week-long Feast of Tabernacles was only a few days away, and His people, having genuinely repented, could now come boldly into His presence, now able to fellowship joyfully with Him. His people could now joyfully

experience a fresh spiritual start, thanks to God's goodness. The Lord of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob actually commanded the Israelites to rejoice ("you shall rejoice") during this most joyful of feasts (Deuteronomy 16:14), signifying the final harvest of the year and God's great provision for His people.

To an individual and to a community, real repentance brings fresh JOY. This is more than temporary happiness; real joy is a gift from the Living God through the Holy Spirit, bringing about shouts of rejoicing, leaping, dancing, cheering in triumph, similar to the jubilation of the righteous in a city when the wicked are eliminated (Proverbs 11:10), or when the redeemed---by God's miracle---return to Zion from captivity and begin the restoration of the Lord's temple.

After Nehemiah's repentance, personally and for the nation of Israel (Nehemiah 1:1-11), miracles happened; joy soon followed. Ezra 3:10-13 describes the joy that followed repentance: *"10 When the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord, the priests stood in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, to praise the Lord, according to the ordinance of David king of Israel. 11 And they sang responsively, praising and giving thanks to the Lord: "For He is good, For His mercy endures forever toward Israel." Then all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid. 12 But many of the priests and Levites and heads of the fathers' houses, old men who had seen the first temple, wept with a loud voice when the foundation of this temple was laid before their eyes. Yet many shouted aloud for joy, 13 so that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people, for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the sound was heard afar off."*

There's a new fresh vista, an awesome revelation of God's pure love towards us when we repent. We zealously repent as a way to know Him more and more.

God's timing of His festivals was perfect. Joy follows repentance!

## Chapter Three: The Perfect Lamb

Under the Old Testament God Himself brought about atonement by graciously establishing the appointed animal sacrifices. At the same time God's justice for all such sins was not complete. Knowing that sin and death could not be solved by humans (Proverbs 20:9), in the fullness of time, and in fulfillment of dozens of prophecies, the Living God in His love and mercy sent His only Son, Yeshua to atone for all sins for all humans for all time.

Yeshua, conceived by the Holy Spirit and a virgin, in fulfillment of many prophecies, was specifically born fully man and fully God to be the ultimate sacrificial "Lamb" to spill His perfect blood to take away all the sins of the world. He was the embodiment of atonement. He was slain for our sins and has redeemed us to God by His blood. Through God's grace and forgiveness and the sacrificial loving act of Christ, we can now be reunified with God in spite of our sins. By trusting in Him, by His grace not our works, our sins are forgiven and we can now come into God's presence again.

The Holy Spirit, speaking through the author of Hebrews, chapter 9, verses 11-14, describes God's perfect plan to have the blood of Jesus shed for our sins to cleanse our conscience from dead works to serve the Living

God: *“But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? “*

The Holy Spirit, speaking through Paul to the Romans, chapter 3: 21-26 expressed it also this way: *“ But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.”*

Salvation from sin and from God’s understandable wrath aroused against sin is now possible, first to the Jews, and now to all peoples all over the planet. The second “Adam”, Yeshua, obeyed His Abba Father and spilled His blood for each of us, outside of the walls of the city, like the scapegoat, thereby reconnecting humans to their Creator. He was born to die, and then to be raised from the dead. He was the sacrificial Lamb. He *“gave Himself a ransom for all...”* (1 Timothy 2:6).

His coming was not in opposition to the Day of Atonement but fulfilled the Day of Atonement ordinance. His incredible passion on the cross opens up a revelation of the Day of Atonement as never before. It reveals God’s power over sin through His unfailing love and grace for each of us, each of us His unique creation. Those now who believe in Yeshua (Romans 3:22) are saved from God’s wrath over sin (Romans 5:9) through the precious blood of Christ (1 Peter 1:19).

Thanks to Jesus Christ's personal blood sacrifice there is no need for the blood of a goat every year. He became the goat slain for the Lord. His atonement was perfect and complete covering all sin for all time in that one sacrifice. When the Abba Father now looks down on us humans He sees us covered by His Son's blood.

His Word tells us: *"For as the heavens are high above the earth, So great is His mercy toward those who fear Him; As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us."* Psalm 103: 11-12.

The atoning act of shedding His blood brought about "at-one-ment" - ---establishing complete reconciliation for mankind with God in whose image we were created.

As Jesus' blood was being shed on the cross the veil to the temple was split and forever torn. Now thanks to Him we can come into the Holy of Holies. The past is now covered. In spiritual perfection humans can now be "at one" with God as were Adam and Eve. And the word "atone" means to "cover" as in the case of Noah, covering the inside and the outside of the ark with pitch to withstand the flood of the earth. Genesis 6:14.

After the Babylonians and then later the Romans destroyed the temple, the High Priest, the Holy of Holies, and the system of sacrificing animals was ended. If they didn't choose their Jewish brother, Yeshua, Jews found another way of yearly atonement through personal prayer and good deeds. Today the Day of Atonement for many Jews is spent in the synagogue, in prayer, in fasting, in repentance for sins. It is a day to approach the Lord of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob with the awe and fear which He deserves. Many seek to be written for one more year in the Book of Life.

Thanks to Christ's perfect atonement, His sinless blood shed on the cross for our sins, we each can be connected again to our Creator -----now in this brief life and for all eternity, where we redeemed believers will be present with the Lord and will see His face (Revelation 22:4).

Remarkably, out of His love for us, we believers are now a chosen

generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people (1 Peter 2:9). With Yeshua, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, we will proclaim the praises of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. We will reign on the earth. Revelation 5:9-10 tells us: *“You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth.”*

## **Chapter Four: Repentance is the First Step to Salvation**

But to get to this miracle place, to receive new life and fellowship with Christ, now and for eternity, every sinner must first repent of sin. To repent is the first key ingredient of salvation. To be saved a person first needs to decide, to exercise the free will God gives us, to turn away from sin, to repent.

After being tempted in the desert forty days Jesus began His ministry calling on all to repent. His very first words were: *“The time is fulfilled, and*

*the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.*" Mark 1:15. Again, in Matthew 9:13 and in Luke 5:32 Jesus says:" *...I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.*" Through repentance a person turns away from sin towards God's purity. And then through faith, through belief that one's sins are now forgiven in the good news of Christ's present Kingdom, salvation is made available by grace to every believer.

This Great Good News, the Gospel, was proclaimed by Peter on the day of Pentecost, causing thousands to join the body of Christ immediately: *"Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord."* (Acts 3:19 NASB)

REPENT. RETURN. REFRESH! That was the Great News proclaimed to a dark, dead, wicked world! It's still true today---- for individuals as well as nations.

Repentance is mainly in the mind; believing is mainly in the heart. To repent is a two part process: first there is prayer time with the Lord, a honest review, a spiritual inventory, an "afflicting of the soul" leading to a sincere regret for past sins. Then, exercising one's own will, there can be a new change of mind, a fresh decision to turn to God's higher path. There is a wonderful Greek word for this: the word "metanoia." It means a complete rethinking or change of mind. Repentance involves a personal decision to leave the sin in one's life, the dead ways of the world and the dead ways of the flesh---all of the traps of the liar, the evil one--- for the higher path of God's purity, His direction for one's life.

You and I now live in a culture of "distraction." This has always been the enemy's plan at the end of this age. We can be busy doing anything but spiritual introspection, taking time with the Lord to review our life, to review our sins. We spend more time on a computer networking with others or watching TV or sending banal text messages than we spend alone in prayer with our Creator. Spiritual introspection is almost unheard of, even in the body of Christ.

But repentance requires spiritual introspection, sometimes called "Godly sorrow." One's soul needs to be "afflicted." (Leviticus 23:29). In

sincere repentance there is a point when we are genuinely sad in our souls for failing to follow all that the patient Lord has had for us.

Repentance means to get honest with one's own sins instead of being in denial and then exercising one's free will to change direction towards God's better way. In the Old Testament the prophet Ezekiel says: *"Then you will remember your evil ways and your deeds that were not good; and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities and your abominations."* Ezekiel 36:31.

Through repentance we turn from the ways of this world and the dead pathway of self and flesh. We choose the higher path of God's direction. We choose to be born again. Having repented, having exercised our own free will to choose renewed life, we can then freely choose to be born again spiritually through belief and faith in Jesus Christ. Because He was resurrected from the dead into eternal life, now each of us repenting believers, by the grace of God, can be resurrected into abundant, joyful life now and throughout eternity. The Name Above All Names, the eternal Lamb of God, forever completely replaced the one time scapegoat. His Blood was eternally perfect. What love He had and will always have for each of us, made in His image!

But not all men will repent. Those who won't will face the coming Judgment unsaved. We learn through the Lord Jesus' words found in Luke 13: 1-5 that all sinners who do not repent will perish:

*"There were present at that season some who told Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. 2 And Jesus answered and said to them, "Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered such things? 3 I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish. 4 Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse sinners than all other men who dwelt in Jerusalem? 5 I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish."*

As clear as His direction is, that every person must repent from sin or perish, not all will believe Him. Some will continue in pride and rebellion

to view life within themselves, not seeking God's rescue. Even when the Lord Jesus held a worship service in Galilee after His Resurrection, some attending still doubted even though He was there in person! Matthew 28:17. The unrepentant mind of a human is a trap. *"There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death."* Proverbs 14:12.

But the Lord is patient, wishing that not one of us will be lost. The Holy Spirit speaking through Peter in 2 Peter 3:7-9 tells us: *"But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. 8 But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."* It's the riches of His kindness, His tolerance, and His patient love that leads one to repentance. Romans 2:4.

Repentance, causing you and me to decide to be born again in Christ, is the best decision we can make in life. There is more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance. Luke 15:7.

Jesus said to Nicodemus, John 3: 5-6, 13-21: *"Jesus answered, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ...No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 15 that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. 16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. 17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. 18 He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19 And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 20 For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest*

*his deeds should be exposed. 21 But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.”*

## **Chapter Five: Repentance is a Key to Spiritual Growth**

Once we become believers in Christ a supernatural miracle occurs: the Holy Spirit indwells us, our sins are forgiven, and bondage to habitual sin is broken. But sin still happens; for example, “strongholds” of erroneous thoughts, false concepts we’ve been brought up with contrary to Christ’s Kingdom, still can deflect believers from the Godly life the Lord has uniquely planned for each of us. (2 Corinthians 10: 3-5). The Holy Spirit speaking through Paul to the Corinthians tells us: *“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ...”*

And we’re human. There’s no condemnation in Christ even though we sin. Paul said to Timothy, 1 Timothy 1:15: *“This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.”*

The Godly assignment of a believer’s indwelling Holy Spirit is to *“restore my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake.”* Psalm 23:3. The indwelling Holy Spirit becomes our Comforter, our Teacher.

To come boldly before the throne of grace, to come into the presence of God, confession of our sins is vital. Confession means literally “to agree with.” It means telling the truth to our Creator, the indwelling Holy Spirit, who already knows that we have sinned. We need to confess and ask forgiveness. *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”* 1 John 1:9. By confessing our sins, alone in our prayer closet, or to another, in a cell group, or to a priest as is done in some churches, our relationship with our Creator is fully restored. Confessing our sins to God gives us assurance that our guilt over

sin is removed, in the same way that the high priest's confessing of sins over the second goat, the scapegoat, symbolized the taking away of the people's guilt that year for their sins.

Ongoing confession of sins and sincere repenting of them then becomes a key tool for ongoing spiritual growth to be more like Christ Himself. Once you deal with anything in your life which hinders fellowship with a holy God, there's a fresh anointing of His Presence in your life. Hebrews 12:1, 2 expresses this: *"...let us lay aside every weight and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith..."*

For this reason "repent" was one of the last words Jesus spoke to His body of believers as the Risen Christ, particularly those who were members of a lukewarm church. He implores us individually and as dry churches to be zealous about repenting. In Revelation 3:19 the Risen Christ, quoting Proverbs 3:11-12, speaking as a father loving and delighting in a son, says: *"As many as I love I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent."*

This chastening and repenting is healthy, both for an individual and for a nation. We are told *"do not refuse Him who speaks."* Hebrews 12:25. It's what a good loving father would do to his child. Hebrews 12: 7-11 says: *"If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? 8 But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. 9 Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? 10 For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. 11 Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. 12 Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, 13 and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed. 14 Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord..."*

Job had this same insight. Job 23:10-11 states: *“But He knows the way that I take: when He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold. My foot has held fast to His steps; I have kept His way and not turned aside.”*

Repentance usually occurs when a person sets aside time to pray to his or her Creator while taking a “spiritual inventory”---really examining honestly one’s everyday practices. When seeking the Lord’s guidance in the process, a healthy “conviction” can occur in our mind and heart, a personal decision can be made, a fundamental change of mind, a “metanoia” takes place. We exercise our free will; we change course forever; we purposely leave the lower standard and turn to the higher path to which God patiently has been calling us. As a result, real repentance brings true JOY.

There was a surge of joy in our lives when our sinful lives were resurrected through repentance and then faith in Christ. But then more miracles await. As we repent, joy builds. Through the coaching of the Holy Spirit to lead us through trials to repentance, our joy is now made full. With repentance His joy remains in us. We now abide more in Him. John 15:1-17. We are transformed by the renewing of our minds. Romans 12:2. Through genuine repentance we are transformed to be more like Him: *“ But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.”* 2 Corinthians 3:18.

To an individual and to a community, real repentance brings a new vista, an awesome revelation of God’s pure love towards us. We zealously repent as a way to know Him more. John chapter 15, verse 5 captures this Truth: *“I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.”*

## **Chapter Six: Repentance in the Early Body of Believers**

Only a few decades after Jesus Christ ascended from the Mount of Olives to sit at the right hand of the Father, He appeared as the Risen Christ to the apostle John on the island of Patmos. The first three chapters of the Book of Revelation express Jesus' words on repentance to His believers. Like a Good Shepherd His words are tough love to the seven churches in question, and they are tough love from Him to us today. Repeatedly He says: *he who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*"

The Lord first says to us: *"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty....Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. 18 I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death. 19 Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this. 20 The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of*

*the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches. (Revelation 1: 8, 17-20).*

*“To the angel of the church of Ephesus write, ‘These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands: 2 “I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; 3 and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name’s sake and have not become weary. 4 Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. 5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place – unless you repent.” (Revelation 1: 17-2:5)*

Isn’t it true? For many of us we need to confess that we have lost our first love, individually and as a nation. We’ve put other things first. The Lord already knows it, and seeks to refresh our love as we confess and repent. The Lord tells us in Revelation 3:19: *“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.”* This tracks the words of the Holy Spirit found in Proverbs 3:11-12: *“ My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, Nor detest His correction; For whom the Lord loves He corrects, Just as a father the son in whom he delights.”*

And the Risen Christ calls on others within the group of seven churches to repent. As He does so, He speaks to you and me today. After speaking to the loveless church in Ephesus the Lord addresses the persecuted church in Smyrna: *“And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write, ‘These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life: 9 I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich); and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. 10 Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. 11 He who has an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who*

*overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death."*

The Risen Christ then speaks to us by describing the compromising church of Pergamos. Jesus first acknowledges that those believers held fast to His name and did not deny their faith even in the face of martyrdom. However among their group were those who followed pagan practices eating things sacrificed to idols and committing sexual immorality. Some also picked up the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, a practice Jesus says "*which thing I hate.*" Seeking to bring them back fully into fellowship with Him, the Lord is blunt in calling for immediate repentance: "*Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth. 17 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it.*" (Revelation 2: 16-17.)

The Lord then asks John to write to the "angel," the leader, of the church in Thyatira, the corrupt church. In this letter the Lord confirms that He searches the minds and the hearts of all of us. And we see the patience of the Lord in giving time for repentance and then the potentially fatal consequences of continuing in sin, rejecting repentance, rejecting His love and grace: "*And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write, 'These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass: 19 "I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience; and as for your works, the last are more than the first. 20 Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. 21 And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent. 22 Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. 23 I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works. 24 "Now to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, who*

*have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I will put on you no other burden. 25 But hold fast what you have till I come. 26 And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations – 27 ‘He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter’s vessels’ – as I also have received from My Father; 28 and I will give him the morning star. 29 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”*

The “morning star” is Christ. If you and I are overcomers we are--- by His miracle--- fully to possess Him. What a future awaits all those who have Christ in their heart, who have shunned a false spirit like Jezebel!

To protect us from sin and rebellion, God in this longest “letter” from Christ to His churches, exposes the spirit of Jezebel, perhaps in a real woman but certainly also as a false spirit of apostasy. *“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.”* Ephesians 6:12. The Jezebel spirit can surface as a proud spirit, vaunting claims of superior holiness, a disregard for authority, quick to quench the authentic Holy Spirit for one’s ego, often mixed with open immorality, attacking leadership. This spirit surfaces often today, together with other apostate spirits, in the various denominations, in the churches of God.

Jesus warns us that if we persistently indulge in spiritual harlotry, if we refuse to repent, if we refuse His graciousness giving us additional time to repent, disaster will surely follow.

This is as true for a nation as it is for an individual.

Repentance is again highlighted in the Lord’s words to the remaining three churches. The words He speaks to the believers in Sardis might perfectly apply to us believers, the body of Christ, in our nation today. The Risen Christ is blunt in calling the believers in Sardis “dead:” *“I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. 2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God. 3 Remember therefore how you have received and*

*heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you. You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” Revelation 3: 1-6.*

Jesus then speaks to the believers in Philadelphia, telling them that He has set before them an open door and no one can shut it. He says that because they have a little strength, have kept His word, have not denied His name, and have kept His command to persevere, He will keep them “*from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.*” Revelation 3: 7-10. To show others “*in the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie*” how much Jesus loves his believers in Philadelphia, the Lord promises to “*make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you.*” And then the Lord speaks to us today, and to the Philadelphians, that He is coming quickly, a theme He will repeat at the very last verses of the Bible. He pleads with us to hold fast what we have, and to be an overcomer: “*Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. 12 He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name. 13 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*” (Revelation 3: 11-13).

It's in His words to the seventh church, the lukewarm believers in Laodicea that Jesus speaks pointedly to our situation in our modern, secular society today. These are His words, Revelation 3: 14-22: “*And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, ‘These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: 15 “I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. 16 So*

*then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. 17 Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing' – and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked 18 I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. 19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. 20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. 21 To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. 22 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”* Verse 19 is pivotal to the National Day of Repentance project: *“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.”*

Seeing His love for us, seeing His goodness, knowing that He will forgive us when we confess our sins, it is the goodness of God that leads us---zealously---to repentance.

## **Chapter Seven: Repent—it's the Season of Repentance Already**

There's power to be repenting with thousands of other believers, on one particular day, especially a Day set aside historically as a Holy Day unto the Lord. One has to hope that on that day the focused prayer by those of us called by His name, to turn from our wicked ways, will cause the Lord to hear from heaven, forgive our sins, and heal our land. 2 Chronicles 7:14.

But there's no need to wait. As our nation plunges forward as a ship without a rudder, with leaders not calling on God's Providence for help, many have already begun to repent. A remnant has already begun a season of repentance. And so, as you may be nudged by the Holy Spirit, our Teacher and Comforter, today is the right day to repent, in Jesus' Name. All of us have fallen short of the glory of God. Joyful restoration awaits us when we confess and repent.

The prophet Isaiah saw this miracle: *"I have blotted out, like a thick cloud, your transgressions, And like a cloud, your sins. Return to Me, for I have redeemed you."* (Isaiah 44:22).

And our Lord Jesus said in Luke 11:9-13: *"So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 10 For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. 11 If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? 12 Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? 13 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"*

Dr. Robert Heidler in his book, *The Messianic Church Arising*, pages 201-202, (Heidler, 2006) has developed some suggested exercises for repentance. During the 24 hours National Day of Repentance each year this could be an excellent one hour exercise for any participant. It's essentially "sin to joy" in a few basic steps.

Step one is setting aside time to be alone with God for at least one hour. For many this will be just before bed or early in the morning. Dr. Heidler suggests: "As you come before the Lord, bring your Bible, a pen,

and paper. Begin by reading Psalms 32 and 51, where David shares his testimony of confessing sin. Thank God for His love and ask His Spirit to minister to you.”

“Next, ask God to bring to mind any sins He wants you to confess. Pray, as David did, *‘Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me.’* (Psalm 139:23). As God brings your sins to mind, write them down. Make a list of your sins. When God stops bringing them to mind, ask Him, *‘Is there anything else?’*

“As He shows you more sins, write them down also. Write down every sin He shows you. Don’t be in a hurry and don’t try to make excuses...make your list as complete as possible. ...When you ask, *‘Is there anything else?’* and God doesn’t show you any more, you know your list is complete. You now have a list of every sin God wants you to confess.

“The third step is confession. When you feel your list is complete, pray carefully through the list, confessing and renouncing each sin. In 1 John 1:9, God assures us that if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. *When we come into agreement with God about our sin, He restores us. We are forgiven and cleansed.* The blood of Jesus has already paid the price for every sin in your life. Before you even existed, God loved you so much He took the penalty for your sin upon Himself. As we come before Him in humility to confess our sin, God applies the *‘Atoning Sacrifice’* of Jesus to our lives and restores us to full fellowship with Him.

“When you have prayed over every item on the list, confessing every sin, there is one more step. Take your sheet of paper listing all the sins you’ve confessed, turn the paper sideways and write across the list in BOLD letters the promise of 1 John 1:9: *‘If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.’* Thank God that every sin is now confessed and forgiven! Now, take that list, tear it up and destroy it! Don’t show your list to anyone. As you tear up your list, you will experience what the Israelites experienced when they

watched that second goat led away into the wilderness! *You will be assured that God has dealt with your sins and that your defilement has been taken away!*" (Heidler, 2006). At that point our Lord Jesus' truth in John 16:24 will become real; His joy awaits us: *"Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full."*

## **Chapter Eight: Repentance for a Nation: Old Testament Solemn Assemblies**

Just one individual, crying out to God, can save a nation. Nehemiah, for example, upon learning of the tragic condition of the survivors and the wall in Jerusalem, wept, mourned for many days, confessed his own sins, the sins of his father's house, and the sins of the children of Israel. He repented personally and for his nation as he humbly sought God's favor and mercy. (Nehemiah 1: 1-11).

But it is also a powerful spiritual weapon to have many in a nation come together in a solemn assembly to seek the Lord in repentance for His help. From the beginning of their exodus the children of Israel literally had the Presence of the Lord with them as a cloud over the tabernacle by day and a pillar of fire by night. To the children of Israel, to come together in a sacred assembly was to come into the presence of the Lord.

Sometimes such an assembly was to observe a holy day such as Yom Kippur. Other times it was for a festive purpose such as the dedication of the temple by King Solomon (2 Chronicles 7:8) or for the joy of holding for the first time in generations the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem (Nehemiah 8:18).

On other occasions a sacred assembly was held for a unique purpose. At one point the Lord instructed Moses to take his tent and pitch it far outside the camp, calling it the tabernacle of meeting, Exodus 33:7-11. It was there that the pillar of cloud descended and the Lord talked to Moses. Moses required everyone who sought the Lord to go outside the camp, away from the place of sin, to the tabernacle to meet the Lord.

Another time the Lord instructed Moses to “gather all the congregation together” to witness the holy consecration of the high priest Aaron and his sons (Leviticus 8: 3-5). Forty seven years later, the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled at Shiloh to set up the tabernacle of meeting there. (Joshua 18:1). And almost 350 years later Samuel “called the people together to the Lord at Mizpah” to anoint Saul, their first human king. 1 Samuel 10:17.

At other times a sacred assembly was called to all to come together for urgent prayer for His miracle intervention over their enemies.

Consider King Jehoshaphat’s situation, approximately 852 B.C., wonderfully described in 2 Chronicles 20: 1-30. A great multitude of Moabites and Ammonites came against Israel, and the King was alerted. The King first experienced fear. Then, to take authority over the fear, he “set himself to seek the Lord.” In the prayer/ worship process of seeking the Lord, Jehoshaphat was filled with faith. (It’s possible this was similar to David’s process “to strengthen himself in the Lord his God” when his own people spoke of stoning David, because the soul of all the people was so grieved with the destruction of Ziklag (1 Samuel 30:6).

Now filled with faith, Jehoshaphat then publicly proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. In response, “Judah gathered together”; Israelites from all the cities of Judah came to Jerusalem to “stand before the Lord, “to ask help from the Lord. In the house of the Lord, before the new court, Jehoshaphat gave honor to the Lord: *“Are You not our God, who drove out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel, and gave it to the descendants of Abraham Your friend forever? And they dwell in it, and have built You a sanctuary in it for Your name, saying, ‘If disaster comes upon us---sword, judgment, pestilence or famine---we will stand before this temple and in Your presence (for Your name is in this temple), and cry out to You in our affliction, and You will hear and save.’ .....O our God, will You not judge them? For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon You.”* 2 Chronicles 20: 6-9, 12.

At that point the Holy Spirit spoke through one of the priests and the Lord responded: *“Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God’s. Tomorrow go down against them. They will surely come up by the Ascent of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the brook before the Wilderness of Jeruel. You will not need to fight in this battle. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, who is with you, O Judah and Jerusalem! Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, for the Lord is with you.”* 2 Chronicles 20: 15-17.

The next day the king sent worshipers out in front of the army: *“ Now when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated.”* 2 Chronicles 20:22. Through the Lord’s supernatural intervention the enemy groups fought and destroyed each other. *“And the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of those countries when they heard that the Lord had fought against the enemies of Israel. Then the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet, for his God gave him rest all around.”* 2 Chronicles 20: 29-30.

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There are enemies from without and enemies from within. A sacred assembly also was a key technique in the Old Testament to stop the enemy’s growth from within the nation of Israel because of the people’s unconfessed sins. Ever since mankind’s disobedience in the Garden of Eden, sin has abounded. Satan especially hates the Living God of Israel and seeks to defeat Israel by any ploy, including sin from within.

Old Testament revivals were preceded by some form of a righteous judgment by the Living God, the result of unconfessed national or corporate sins. When the people of God sin against Him, when they don’t heed the warnings He sends through His servants nor through the calamities He can create, when in the face of all this His people still don’t repent, He understandably judges them.

At the time of the prophet Joel the priests and people had turned away from the Lord. They were guilty of flagrant sin which had not been confessed.

God then visited them with a remedial judgment in an attempt to get them to repent: He sent a plague of locusts in a huge proportion never seen before; He afflicted the land with a fierce drought; herds of cattle wandered aimlessly because there was no pasture. Joy “withered away from the sons of men.” Earlier, Moses had prophesied that God would use locusts to punish His people if they were disobedient. (Deuteronomy 28:38, 42).

To make His judgments effective, God does not need to use the great forces of nature, such as an earthquake, or a flood, or various storms. In this case He took one of the most insignificant instruments, the locusts, as He had used against Pharaoh and the Egyptians, to fulfill His purpose of executing judgment against His people. God’s ultimate purpose is not punishment, but is for the restoration of His people, for them to remedy their practices of turning from Him.

In His mercy, He then used Joel to urge His people to repent, to repel the enemy. Joel 1:14 says: *“Consecrate a fast, Call a sacred assembly; Gather the elders And all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the LORD your God, And cry out to the Lord.*

In Chapter two of the book of Joel we see the awesome wrath of God’s judgments on the coming of the day of the Lord. All the inhabitants of the land will tremble; a day of thick darkness will spread; a devouring fire will overwhelm a terrorized people writhing in pain. The earth will quake, the heavens tremble, and the sun and moon will grow dark as the Lord gives voice before His army on the great and very terrible day of the Lord.

In face of this reality The Holy Spirit speaks through Joel and calls each of us then and now to repentance, to trigger God’s grace and mercy: *“Now, therefore, says the Lord, ‘Turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning.’ So rend your heart, and not your garments;*

*Return to the Lord your God, For He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness; And He relents from doing harm.” (Joel 2:12-13)*

Included in the Lord’s instruction is again a call for a sacred assembly, Joel 2: 15-17: *“Blow the trumpet in Zion, Consecrate a fast, Call a sacred assembly; 16 Gather the people, Sanctify the congregation, Assemble the elders, Gather the children and nursing babes; Let the bridegroom go out from his chamber, And the bride from her dressing room. 17 Let the priests, who minister to the Lord, Weep between the porch and the altar; Let them say, “Spare Your people, O Lord, And do not give Your heritage to reproach, That the nations should rule over them. Why should they say among the peoples, “Where is their God?”*

If, then, a sacred assembly was held and the people repented, the Lord promised to refresh His people and zealously restore His land (Joel 2: 18-21; 25-29): *“Then the Lord will be zealous for His land, And pity His people. 19 The Lord will answer and say to His people, “Behold, I will send you grain and new wine and oil, And you will be satisfied by them; I will no longer make you a reproach among the nations. 20 “But I will remove far from you the northern army, And will drive him away into a barren and desolate land, With his face toward the eastern sea And his back toward the western sea; His stench will come up, And his foul odor will rise, Because he has done monstrous things.” 21 Fear not, O land; Be glad and rejoice, For the Lord has done marvelous things!...So I will restore to you the years that the locust has eaten, The crawling locust, The consuming locust, And the chewing locust, My great army which I sent among you. You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, And praise the name of the Lord your God, Who has dealt wondrously with you; And My people shall never be put to shame. Then you shall know that I am in the midst of Israel: I am the Lord your God And there is no other. My people shall never be put to shame.”*

And then these often-repeated verses: *“ And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions. And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.”*

Repentance leads to a miracle release of the Holy Spirit!

One author, Richard Owen Roberts, in his 1989 book *The Solemn Assembly*, (Roberts, 1989) states: "Through the use of the divinely ordained means of the Solemn Assembly, the land rejoiced and was made glad. The pastures of the wilderness turned green. The trees and the vines bore fruit. And the fruit borne was not ordinary but extraordinary. God moved the rainy seasons closer together, and caused the sun to shine upon the earth, so that the threshing floors were full and the vats overflowing. So great was the blessing bestowed by the God who delights in a broken and contrite people that He made up to them the years that were lost to the mighty army of locusts. The people had plenty and were satisfied and praised the name of the Lord who had dealt wondrously with them. They knew that God was in their midst, that He only was God, and that there was none other!"

Almost four hundred years later, sin again nearly destroyed Israel from within. In the time of Ezra the high priest, key leaders of the people had intermarried with pagan wives, mixing the holy seed (Ezra 9:1-2).

Upon learning of this, Ezra was astonished and immediately tore his garments; fell on his knees, confessing the corporate sins of his people, admitting the guilt of Israel, begging the Lord for mercy. (Ezra 9:5-15). As the people spontaneously gathered near the priest, Ezra then ordered all the tribe of Judah and Benjamin, the descendants of the captivity to assemble at Jerusalem. After all the men of Judah and Benjamin had gathered in the open square of the house of God, "trembling because of this matter and heavy rain", Ezra stood up in front of them and said: "*You have transgressed and have taken pagan wives, adding to the guilt of Israel. Now therefore, make confession to the Lord God of your fathers, and do His will; separate yourselves from the peoples of the land, and from the pagan wives.*" Then all the assembly answered and said with a loud voice, "Yes! As you have said, so we must do." (Ezra 10: 9-12).

Author Roberts points out that we have largely forgotten a key method God used in the past to deal with national sin: the solemn assembly. We have to come together in His Presence, for at least a day,

fasting, to confess our sins ourselves, instead of blaming the world. As we see that immorality is on the increase and spirituality is on the decline, we have to hope that a biblically sound and spiritually alive Church will not foolishly blame the world but will immediately recognize its own complicity. (Roberts, 1989). The Church—the “called out ones, the ecclesia”--- must repent first. God’s righteous judgment is not against the world but against His people called by His name, His Church.

We live in a time of great moral decadence with seemingly insurmountable problems. We can observe His judgment already on this nation in the form of His withdrawing of His favor, His Providence over our economy, His Presence over our very lives. As He exercises remedial judgment by slowly withdrawing His manifest Presence, iniquity will continue to grow.

As iniquity grows, any joy we used to experience in this nation has largely evaporated. People are at a loss to explain what’s going on. The numbers of the poor are rising. Young people are disillusioned and saddled with an extraordinary national debt out of control. We have leaders in our Nation’s capital who by their actions show that they either don’t know or have consciously not followed His policies set forth in His Scriptures. Proverbs 28: 16 says: *“A ruler who lacks understanding is a great oppressor...”*

Pray for all of our leaders that this very day they will have such a “Damascus Road” experience as did Paul that the Wisdom of the Holy Spirit would pervade their hearts and minds, causing actions to bless this nation. 1 Timothy 2: 1-3.

There may be one or more Nehemiah’s and Esther’s in the wings who by their courage and boldness will save our nation. But we, His people, can also act now to trigger God’s healing using His tested method: a sacred assembly of repentance.

Today, this nation, those 150 million or more of us who say we are Christian or Jewish, can’t all physically assemble in one city at one time. But we can observe, house by house, church by church, synagogue by

synagogue, village by village, city by city, a National Day of Repentance over a 24 hour period set to coincide with the Day of Atonement.

We have begun to activate this grassroots 24 hour process through modern technology such as a website and social networks on the internet. Prayer knows no distance. One by one, those of us with His Holy Spirit will gather at local places of worship during part or all of those 24 hours, in a grassroots national solemn assembly. One by one we each can pray on that one day to have His Presence in our hearts as we each confess our sins and confess the sins of our nation, and as we each sincerely repent, in Jesus' Name.

Our culture will change as the power of the Holy Spirit moves through His millions of people in this nation.

Richard Owen Roberts, in *The Solemn Assembly*, says: "Therefore, in times of spiritual declension and moral decadence, the great duty of every Christian is both to discover those sins which have caused the judgment and to put them away by that method which God Himself has chosen. The method God has chosen is the Solemn Assembly. Corporate sin must be dealt with by corporate repentance according to divinely ordained methods." (Roberts, 1989).

Mr. Roberts wrote his book in 1989; his serious warning to the Church is all the more relevant today: "Historically, unheeded remedial judgments have turned into final judgments. America, as a nation, is ripe for destruction. The Evangelical Movement in this country is characterized by an arrogance that is almost beyond belief. The neglect of prayer, the involvement in Philistine methodology, the moral evils, and the doctrinal corruptions that characterize the Movement are sufficient to cause Sodomites to wonder at God's justice in destroying their city while sparing the United States." (Roberts, 1989).

God's miracles established this nation as a beacon of His Liberty, to be spread globally in furtherance of His loving sacrifice setting all of us captives free. (Luke 4:14-30). Now we are facing the anti-Liberty spirit, in effect the anti-Christ spirit, a spirit that wants to remove the Source of

Liberty, the living God, in our culture. President Thomas Jefferson once said: *" God who gave us life gave us liberty. Can the liberties of a nation be secure when we have removed a conviction that these liberties are the gift of God? Indeed I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just, that his justice cannot sleep forever."* (Newcombe, 2011).

If this and our next generations are to experience this Liberty it will be the result at this key tipping point in our nation's His-tory of His people, called by His name, humbling themselves, praying, seeking His face, repenting of their sins in His Presence, alone in one's prayer closet or in a local sacred assembly. His Holy Word tells us: *"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."* 2 Chronicles 7:14.

Then, as always, the battle will be the Lord's. The Lord will be zealous to heal our land beyond our wildest imagination! He will bring the Scriptures alive as we give honor *"to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen."* (Ephesians 3: 20-21).

## Chapter Nine: Days of Repentance: Miracles in American History, part one

Although they typically did not observe the Day of Atonement (except for practicing Jewish congregations in some of the colonies), our forefathers in this country were close to their Creator, understood the reality of sin, and often repented of their sins, sometimes spending all day to fast and to pray. In his diary, on June 1, 1774, as the Colonies were seeking God's will as to whether they should break ties with the King and Great Britain, George Washington wrote: "Went to church and fasted all day" (Federer, 2010).

For virtually all of our Founding Fathers the word of Psalm 139:23-24 must have spoken to them literally: *"Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."*

In his own prayer book which he began in 1752 when he was twenty years old, George Washington wrote:

*" O Eternal and everlasting God, I presume to present myself this morning before Thy Divine Majesty, beseeching Thee to accept of my humble and hearty thanks...Direct my thoughts, words and work, wash away my sins in the immaculate Blood of the Lamb, and purge my heart by Thy Holy Spirit...Daily frame me more and more into the likeness of thy Son, Jesus Christ, that living in Thy fear, and dying in Thy favor, I may in Thy appointed time attain the resurrection of the just unto eternal life. Bless my family, friends and kindred, and unite us all in praising and glorifying Thee in all our works."* (Federer, 2000).

Setting aside a day to give thanks to God began with the colonists at Jamestown in 1619. Shortly thereafter, to achieve their spiritual goals, even

before the Mayflower sailed from Leyden, the Pilgrims set aside a day of “solemn humiliation.” (Prince, 1973). Their pastor, John Robinson, read from Ezra 8:21: *“And there at the river, by Ahava, I proclaimed a fast, that we might humble ourselves before our God, and seek of him a right way for us, and for our children, and for all our substance.”* The rest of the day “was spent in pouring our prayers to the Lord with great fervency, mixed with abundance of tears.” (Prince, 1973). As Derek Prince points out in his excellent book, *Shaping History through Prayer and Fasting*, there was a close parallel between the Pilgrims’ embarking on their journey to the New World and Ezra’s company of exiles returning from Babylon to Jerusalem to help in the restoration of the temple. (Prince, 1973).

And the Pilgrims understood the power of setting aside a solemn day of humiliation and prayer when disaster later threatened in the summer of 1623. A great drought and intense heat had scorched the cornfields for several months. In response they held a solemn day of humiliation and prayer.

The next morning was once again very hot, without clouds or any sign of rain but *“toward evening it began to overcast, and shortly after to rain with such sweet and gentle showers as gave them cause of rejoicing and blessing God.”* (Prince, 1973). The Governor of the colony, William Bradford, later wrote that ordinarily the rain would have fallen as a thunderstorm but on this occasion *“It came without either wind or thunder of any violence, and by degrees in that abundance as that the earth was thoroughly...soaked therewith. Which did so apparently revive and quicken the decayed corn and other fruits, as was wonderful to see, and made the Indians astonished to behold. And afterwards the Lord sent them such seasonable showers, with interchange of fair warm weather as, through His blessing, caused a fruitful and liberal harvest... For which mercy, in time convenient, they also set apart a day of thanksgiving.”* (Prince, 1973).

Special days of prayer and fasting and humiliation became an accepted part of the life of Plymouth Colony. Derek Prince points out that the Pilgrims, following Isaiah 58:12 practiced the kind of prayer and fasting

approved by God, and thereby “raised up the foundations of many generations.” Isaiah 58:12 says in the King James Version: *“And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.”*

One hundred fifty years later, virtually all citizens at the time of our nation’s birth were Christians, and many had had a “born again” personal experience of the Holy Spirit through evangelists such as George Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards, or through those pastors influenced by them. (Newcombe, 2011). Sin was very real. Hell was real. For many, even those in government as public servants, confessing sins and repenting was part of their personal walk towards Christ through the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Even a philosopher/hedonist like Benjamin Franklin actually attended some of the revival meetings of George Whitefield. And Franklin knew his Bible; in the middle of one key contentious day during the Constitutional Convention, as tempers were rising with the heat of a Philadelphia summer, Dr. Franklin invoked a passage from John 15:14 where Christ Jesus declared we can be His Friend if we do what is commanded. Dr. Franklin said in part: *“In the beginning of our contest with Great Britain, when we were sensible of danger, we had daily prayer in this room for Divine protection. Our prayers, Sir, were heard, and they were graciously answered. All of us who were engaged in the struggle must have observed frequent instances of a superintending Providence in our favor. To that kind Providence we owe this happy opportunity of consulting in peace on the means of establishing our future national felicity. And have we now forgotten that powerful Friend? Or do we imagine we no longer need His assistance? I have lived, Sir, a long time, and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth---that God Governs in the affairs of men. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without His aid? We have been assured, Sir, in the Sacred Writings, that ‘except the Lord build the House they labor in vain that build it.’ I firmly believe this; and I also believe that without His*

*concurring aid we shall succeed in this political building no better than the builders of Babel... I therefore beg leave to move that henceforth prayers imploring the assistance of Heaven, and its blessings on our deliberations, be held in this Assembly every morning before we proceed to business..."*

At the time of the founding of this country, as many Christians awakened by a Holy Spirit revival a generation earlier walked more and more towards Christ, seeking the mind of Christ, that spiritual discipline produced "fruit" of the Holy Spirit (John 15:5). This fruit of the Holy Spirit produced a positive effect on their families, their neighborhoods, their churches, their villages, their cities, their colonies, their States, and the new nation. Whole villages came into a personal relationship with Christ. Deeply respecting the awesomeness of the Living God, following instructions contained in the Book of Proverbs, our Founders and many of their countrymen had access to Divine Wisdom, unlike many of our leaders today. (Kennedy, 2008; Federer, 2008).

Many of the Founders, whatever their shortcomings, such as owning slaves, were genuinely devout. (Kidd, 2010). Believers in Christ in those days would have understood the Risen Christ's plea to each of us believers, and to the church denominations themselves, in Revelation 3:19: *"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent."*

With many individuals finding Christ through revivals, and men and women of God serving as public servants, the fledging nation fared well, given the personal Christian faith of so many of the citizens.

For help in their lives and their families many first looked to the Lord, and He blessed them. They did not look first to government except in matters of defense. Most had had the revelation that Liberty comes from the living God; it doesn't come from the state. (Federer, 2000). It's God perfect will, announced by Christ Jesus in Luke 4:18, for each of His unique creations to have real Liberty. As they read this Scripture they wished to live this truth: *"Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."* 2 Corinthians 3:17.

Patrick Henry, for example, had to have had an epiphany at some point, a powerful revelation of the Lord's Liberty spoken at Jesus' synagogue in Nazareth (Luke 4: 16-21) confirming the prophesy in Isaiah 61:1. You may recall this is what our Lord said: *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."*

Patrick Henry had to have understood the Truth of this statement by Jesus Christ. Liberty was a key topic for Mr. Henry. (Kidd, 2011). God's Liberty, now an inalienable right for every human thanks to Jesus, was the central theme of Patrick Henry's famous "Liberty or Death" speech in March, 1775 at St. John's Church in Richmond, Virginia. (Kidd, 2011).

At age twelve Patrick Henry's mother took him to sermons by an evangelical preacher, Pastor Samuel Davies, whose soaring rhetoric often contained the message that Christians needed to repent and turn back to God. (Kidd, 2011). Henry, the greatest orator of the Founders, later claimed Pastor Davies was the best preacher he ever heard; clearly Davies and evangelist George Whitefield had a profound influence of Patrick Henry's Biblical worldview and in Henry's popular appeal as a speaker. Like the two evangelists, Henry employed direct appeals to the people in their own language, often sprinkled with Biblical verses. (Kidd, 2011).

In the famous "Liberty or Death" speech many of the powerful phrases came almost straight out of the Book of Jeremiah. For example, Henry warned that British assurances of good intentions would "proved a snare to your feet" (Jeremiah 8:22). He worried that Virginians would become like those "who having eyes, see not, and having ears, hear not" (Jeremiah 5:21). In the speech he also warned that "gentlemen may cry peace, peace—but there is no peace" (Jeremiah 6:14). Drawing upon the Biblical account of Judas Iscariot, Patrick Henry said: "Suffer not yourselves to be betrayed with a kiss." (Kidd, 2011). And in the final passages of the speech Henry noted those seeking Liberty would not be

alone: *“Sir, we are not weak, if we make proper use of the means which the God of nature hath placed in our power. Three millions of people, armed in the Holy cause of Liberty, and in such a country as that which we possess, are invincible by any force which our enemy can send against us. Besides, sir, we shall not fight our battle alone. There is a just God who presides over the destinies of nations; and who will raise up friends to fight our battle for us. The battle, sir, is not to the strong alone; it is to the vigilant, the active, the brave... Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains or slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death.”* (Federer,2000; Kidd, 2011).

Some saw this as treason; most followed this bold call for Liberty. They trusted in the Lord that He would bless this first nation founded on Biblical principles. The unique government they formed thus was intended to foster God-given Liberty, to protect the rights of the people given to them by God, as boldly documented in the Declaration of Independence and confirmed for posterity in the Constitution.

Upon the signing of the Declaration of Independence Samuel Adams, the great patriot and organizer of the Boston Tea Party, said: *“We have this day restored the Sovereign to Whom alone men ought to be obedient. He reigns in heaven and...from the rising to the setting sun, may His kingdom come.”* (Federer, 2000). And John Hancock (the signer with the largest signature) said: *“ Let us humbly commit our righteous cause to the great Lord of the Universe...Let us joyfully leave our concerns in the hands of Him who raises up and puts down the empires and kingdoms of the earth as He pleases.”* (Federer, American Minute 2011).

Because of the Biblical mindset pervasive in the country, and given their personal relationship with the Lord, the Founders turned to Him often. They first sought His way, not their own thinking, so common in our current politicians. They honored this truth from Isaiah 55: 8-9: *“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,”* says the Lord. *“For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.”*

They virtually all had to have been familiar with this key verse found in the Gospel of John, chapter 15, verse 5: *“I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.”* Virtually all the Founders had to have believed that that key verse *“without Me you can do nothing”* applied to nations as well as individuals. They viewed all persons, themselves included, as weak, quick to sin, needing a Creator’s Love and Mercy. They needed His Divine Providence to bless themselves and their fledgling nation.

Almost half of the signers of the Declaration of Independence had attended the equivalent of a Bible college; virtually all, like Franklin, knew Scripture extensively. Close to seventy percent were Calvinists, many of them Presbyterians, including Dr. John Witherspoon, President of the College of New Jersey (now Princeton). (Newcombe, 2009). They knew the Bible stories of God’s victories for His people, such as King Jehoshaphat’s miracle victory after proclaiming a fast and calling on the Living God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob for Divine help. (2 Chronicles 20:1-10).

So when they were faced with similarly impossible situations from the British forces, they employed the same Biblical warfare strategy, standing on the Promises of God, calling for days of *“fasting, humiliation (repentance) and prayer.”*

Citizen participation in a day set aside for national repentance became a trusted spiritual *“weapon.”*

Among those who valued this *“spiritual weapon”* to defeat those threatening Liberty was Thomas Jefferson. For example, on May 24, 1774, more than two years before the Declaration of Independence, the young Thomas Jefferson drafted a resolution in the Virginia colonial legislature calling for a *“Day of Fasting, Humiliation and Prayer”* for their sister colony of Massachusetts. (Federer, 2010). To fight this vastly uneven battle they used their best weapon: national prayer and personal soul-searching with one’s Creator leading to repentance.

Boston already had thousands of British troops stationed in the colony. The colonists then faced immediate attack by cannon from

numerous British warships in the Boston harbor. The “Boston Massacre” had occurred only a few years before. The Boston “tea party” had been staged only five months previously; the smallest spark could ignite a devastating war at any moment.

On March 7, 1774 King George III punished the colonists for the Boston Tea Party by passing the Boston Port Act, effectively closing the key harbor to all commerce, deliberately ruining their economy. Food came to Boston from surrounding towns. And spiritual aid came to Boston from other Christians in Virginia.

Thomas Jefferson, supported by Patrick Henry, Richard Henry Lee and George Mason, introduced a bill on May 24, 1774 which unanimously passed the House of Burgesses: *"This House, being deeply impressed with apprehension of the great dangers, to be derived to British America, from the hostile invasion of the city of Boston in our Sister Colony of Massachusetts Bay, whose commerce and harbor are, on the first day of June next, to be stopped by an Armed force, deem it highly necessary that the said first day of June be set apart, by the members of this House, as a Day of Fasting, Humiliation and Prayer, Devoutly to implore the Divine interposition, for averting the heavy calamity which threatens destruction to our Civil Rights, and the evils of civil War; to give us one heart and one Mind firmly to oppose, by all just and proper means, every injury to American rights...."* (Federer 2010).

That June 1, 1774, as the British blocked the harbor of Boston, George Washington wrote in his diary: “Went to church, fasted all day.” (Federer 2010). Jefferson later recalled that that public day of fasting was “electric.” (Kidd, 2011).

The King’s appointed Governor was so upset at the call for a Day of Fasting, Humiliation and Prayer he then dissolved the House of Burgesses. In response, many legislators went down to meet in a local tavern. There they called for leaders throughout the colonies to attend a first Continental Congress to gather in Philadelphia in September, 1774. (Kidd, 2011).

When the first Continental Congress met on September 6, 1774 in Philadelphia, with Boston’s harbor still blocked, with rumors that Boston

had been bombarded and destroyed, the first order of business was not military intelligence; it was prayer. They sought a local pastor, Reverend Duche, who did more than pray; the next day he taught on Psalm 35. (Federer 2000). The prayer and the teaching were so powerful the entire group broke out into spontaneous prayer, the whole process lasting, according to John Adams, several hours. Virtually all participants, including Washington, actually left their seats and prayed spontaneously on their knees. John Adams later wrote to his wife, Abigail: *"I never saw a greater effect upon an audience. It seems as if heaven had ordained that Psalm to be read on that morning. After this, Mr. Duche, unexpectedly to every body, struck out into an extemporaneous prayer, which filled the bosom of every man present. I must confess, I never heard a better prayer, or one so well pronounced...It has had an excellent effect upon everybody here. I must beg you to read that Psalm."* (Federer, 2000)

The first ten verses of Psalm 35 fit precisely their situation: *"Plead my cause, O Lord, with those who strive with me; fight against those who fight against me. Take hold of shield and buckler, and stand up for my help. Also draw out the spear, and stop those who pursue me. Say to my soul, 'I am your salvation.' Let those be put to shame and brought to dishonor who seek after my life; let those be turned back and brought to confusion who plot my hurt. Let them be like chaff before the wind, and let the angel of the Lord chase them. Let their way be dark and slippery, and let the angel of the Lord pursue them. For without cause they have hidden their net for me in a pit, which they have dug without cause for my life. Let destruction come upon him unexpectedly, and let his net that he has hidden catch himself; into that very destruction let him fall. And my soul shall be joyful in the Lord; it shall rejoice in His salvation. All my bones shall say, 'Lord, who is like You, delivering the poor from him who is too strong for him, yes, the poor and the needy from him who plunders him?'"*

Only months later, in June, 1775, two months after "the shot heard 'round the world" was fired at Concord, the Continental Congress met again. They issued a proclamation calling on the three million Colonial Americans to observe a day of humility, repentance and prayer. They decreed in part: *"And it is recommended to Christians, of all denominations, to*

*assemble for public worship, and to abstain from servile labour and recreations on said day.*" (Federer, 2000). Although there were great losses in front of them, in God's timing a Declaration of Independence was signed, a new nation was formed. In their prayers and repentance they trusted that God's hand would provide Liberty over the far larger, better trained British forces.

God's Providence was soon evident. Not long after these powerful prayers in Philadelphia a key battle took place near Boston. In the battle of Bunker Hill in June, 1775 inexperienced colonial forces were able to stand up to regular British army troops in a pitched battle. The colonials, if shaken from what was for many the first taste of war (and what it reveals of men's character), had proven to themselves that in direct confrontation they could thwart the British army, a force superior in training, equipment, and organization. The British suffered extensive losses; colonial forces lost far fewer men. (Bennett, 1998; Kidd, 2010).

A few months later, a logistical miracle happened: 25-year-old Colonel Henry Knox, under orders from General Washington, moved 59 cannons 300 miles in three months over ice and snows from Fort Ticonderoga to Boston. In the dark of night on March 4, 1776, with a diversionary attack made to distract the British, the cannons (and some logs painted to look like cannons) were laboriously moved up to Dorchester Heights strategically overlooking Boston harbor. Looking up at the hill the next morning British General Howe was shocked; he planned an attack of 3,000 top British soldiers. (Federer, American Minute, 2011) The next day, on March 6, from his headquarters, General Washington ordered: "*Thursday, the 7th...being set apart by this Province as a Day of Fasting, Prayer and Humiliation, 'to implore the Lord and Giver of all victory to pardon our manifold sins and wickedness, and that it would please Him to bless the Continental army with His divine favor and protection,' all officers and soldiers are strictly enjoined to pay all due reverence and attention on that day to the sacred duties to the Lord of hosts for His mercies already received, and for those blessings which our holiness and uprightness of life can alone encourage us to hope through His mercy obtain.*" (Federer, 2000).

General Howe planned to land 3,000 troops and charge up Dorchester Heights, but a violent snowstorm arose causing the sea to be too turbulent for the attack. (A similar change of weather, a very dense fog, foiled the British attack, and covered the retreat of the colonists during the Battle of Brooklyn Heights on August 27, 1776 (Federer, 2000).

General Washington wrote his brother, John Augustine Washington, March 31, 1776: "*Upon their discovery of the works next morning, great preparations were made for attacking them; but not being ready before the afternoon, and the weather getting very tempestuous, much blood was saved and a very important blow...prevented. That this most remarkable Interposition of Providence is for some wise purpose, I have not a doubt.*" (Federer, American Minute, 2011)

On March 8, General Howe sent word to Washington that if the British were allowed to leave Boston unmolested, they would not burn the city to the ground. Eight days passed, and on March 16, 1776, the Continental Congress approved without dissent a bold resolution: "*Congress....desirous...to have people of all ranks and degrees duly impressed with a solemn sense of God's superintending providence, and of their duty, devoutly to rely...on his aid and direction...do earnestly recommend...a Day of Humiliation, Fasting and Prayer; that we may, with united hearts, confess and bewail our manifold sins and transgressions, and, by sincere repentance and amendment of life, appease God's righteous displeasure, and, through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, obtain this pardon and forgiveness.*" (Federer 2010).

The next day, March 17, 1776, British General Howe ordered his troops onto their ships, and together with about a thousand British loyalists, they evacuated Boston. (Federer, American Minute, 2011) Thanks to the Lord, Thomas Jefferson's Day of Fasting, Humiliation, and Prayer, in support of Boston twenty-two months earlier, was successful!

There are other examples of prayers for repentance leading to God's miracles for the young nation. According to Christian historian David Barton between 1633 and 1812 there were over 1700 prayer proclamations

issued in the colonies. (Newcombe, 2009). Many proclamations included “humiliation” or repentance.

For example, in July, 1775, after the battle a month earlier with the British at Bunker Hill, there was a Congressional call for fasting and prayer: *“The Honorable Congress have proclaimed a Fast to be observed by the inhabitants of all the English Colonies on this continent, to stand before the Lord in one day, with public humiliation, fasting and prayer, to deplore our many sins, to offer up our joint supplications to God, for forgiveness, and for his merciful interposition for us in this day of unnatural darkness and distress.”* (Federer, American Minute 2011).

The Governor of Connecticut, Jonathan Trumbull, conveyed this Congressional proclamation to General George Washington, commander of the troops. In his letter, Governor Trumbull also said: *“They have, with one united voice, appointed you to the high station you possess. The Supreme Director of all events hath caused a wonderful union of hearts and counsels to subsist among us. Now therefore, be strong and very courageous.*

*“May the God of the armies of Israel shower down the blessings of his Divine Providence on you, give you wisdom and fortitude, cover your head in the day of battle and danger, add success, convince our enemies of their mistaken measures, and that all their attempts to deprive these Colonies of their inestimable constitutional rights and liberties are injurious and vain.”* (Newcombe, 2009).

Perhaps the boldest call for national repentance came in 1776. Only months before the Declaration of Independence, the Continental Congress called for a day of prayer and fasting and repentance, for the colonies’ sins to be confessed and forgiven through “the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ.” Part of the text of the Proclamation follows: *“The Congress... Desirous...to have people of all ranks and degrees duly impressed with a solemn sense of God’s superintending providence, and of their duty, devoutly to rely...on his aid and direction...Do earnestly recommend Friday, the 17<sup>th</sup> of May be observed by the colonies as a day of humiliation, fasting and prayer; that we may, with united hearts, confess and bewail our manifold sins and transgressions, and, by sincere repentance and amendment of life, appease God’s righteous displeasure, and through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, obtain this pardon and*

*forgiveness.*" (Federer, 2000).

Even during the War, General Washington issued orders for a day of prayer, giving thanks to God. From his headquarters at Valley Forge, the General declared on May 5, 1778: *"It having pleased the Almighty Ruler of the universe to defend the cause of the United American States, and finally to raise up a powerful friend among the princes of the earth, to establish our liberty and independence upon a lasting foundation, it becomes us to set apart a day for gratefully acknowledging the divine goodness, and celebrating the important event, which we owe to His divine interposition."* (Federer, 2000).

Eleven years later George Washington was inaugurated as our first President. With his hand on an open Bible he took the oath of office, to which he added, kissing the Bible, "so help me God." (Federer, American Minute, 2011). In his inaugural address to Congress President Washington said in part: *"Such being the impressions under which I have, in obedience to the public summons, repaired to the present station, it would be peculiarly improper to omit, in this first official act, my fervent supplications to that Almighty Being who rules over the universe, who presides in the councils of nations and whose providential aids can supply every human defect, that His benediction may consecrate to the liberties and happiness of the people of the United States a Government instituted by themselves for these essential purposes....No people can be bound to acknowledge and adore the Invisible Hand which conducts the affairs of men more than the people of the United States. Every step by which they have advanced to the character of an independent nation seems to have been distinguished by some token of providential agency....We ought to be no less persuaded that the propitious smiles of Heaven can never be expected on a nation that disregards the eternal rules of order and right which Heaven itself has ordained...."* (Federer,2000). Immediately after the speech the President and the Congress all walked to nearby St. Paul's Chapel for a Christian service officiated by the Chaplains of Congress. (Federer, 2000).

The new nation, the United States of America, was launched in proper submission, in grateful thanks, in sincere reverence, in fervent prayers, to the Living God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Within several months, President Washington issued the first national Thanksgiving Proclamation on October 3, 1789. The comparison to a current Presidential Thanksgiving Proclamation would be striking. Several passages show President Washington's devotion to the living God for His blessings on this nation: "*Whereas it is the duty of all Nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey his will, to be grateful for his benefits, and humbly to implore his protection and favor..... to recommend to the People of the United States a day of public thanks-giving and prayer to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many signal favors of Almighty God.... I do recommend ...the 26<sup>th</sup> day of November next to be devoted by the People of these States to the service of that great and glorious Being, who is the beneficent Author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be.... And also that we may then unite in most humbly offering our prayers and supplications to the great Lord and Ruler of Nations and beseech him to pardon our national and other transgressions....and generally to grant unto all Mankind such a degree of temporal prosperity as he alone knows to be best.*" (Bennett, 1998; Federer, 2000).

Several years later, in 1795, having observed the blood and terror of the French revolution, where human reaction was substituted for Godly reverence, President Washington issued a proclamation setting aside February 19, as a day for national thanksgiving and prayer.

President Washington believed in praying not just for Divine intervention but also giving thanks in national prayers when prayers were answered. (Prince, 1973). Part of the text of President Washington's proclamation reads: "*When we review the calamities which afflict so many other nations, the present condition of the United States affords much matter of consolation and satisfaction....In such a state of things it is, in an especial manner, our duty as a people, with devout reverence and affectionate gratitude, to acknowledge our many and great obligations to Almighty God, and to implore Him to continue and confirm the blessings we experience. Deeply penetrated by this sentiment, I...do recommend to all religious societies and denominations, and to all persons whomsoever within the United States, to set apart and observe...a day of public Thanksgiving and Prayer; and on that day to meet together, and*

*render their sincere and hearty thanks to the great Ruler of Nations for the manifest and signal mercies which distinguish our lot as a Nation...and at the same time, humbly and fervently to beseech the kind author of these blessings graciously to prolong them to us---to imprint on our hearts a deep and solemn sense of our obligations to Him for them...."*

And then, after serving two terms as President, George Washington gave a "Farewell Address," another insight into his personal faith and his prayers for the young nation. He reminded the American people that its strength rested upon the pillars of private morality, especially religion. He stated that religion and morality in the United States was not optional; it was "indispensable": ...*"Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, Religion and morality are indispensable supports....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 on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that National morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle."* (Bennett, 1998; Federer, 2000).

## **Chapter Ten: John Adams-- Repentance is the Test for our Nation's Survival**

Perhaps no other Founding Father had the blessing of Divine Wisdom as much as John Adams. He had a clear understanding of the need for Divine Providence and the role the living God and godly repentance needs to play in the ongoing health of a nation.

John Adams was a very devout Christian, a tireless public servant, and a fierce patriot for God's Liberty. Like Patrick Henry, he had to have had at one point a revelation of the power of Jesus Christ--- set forth in Luke 4: 18-19--- to bring Liberty, to bring freedom from sin and death, to free in principle all human captives. He had a deep revelation that no

earthy ruler could deny God's Liberty now available to every human being.

As a young student at Harvard he wrote in a diary entry, in February, 1756: *"Suppose a nation in some distant region should take the Bible for their only law book, and every member should regulate his conduct by the precepts there exhibited! Every member would be obliged in conscience, to temperance, frugality, and industry; to justice, kindness, and charity towards his fellow men; and to piety, love and reverence toward Almighty God....What a Eutopia, what a Paradise would this region be."* (Federer, 2000).

As a young attorney in Massachusetts he recognized God's Providence in the settling of America. In his notes for A Dissertation on the Canon and Feudal Law, in February, 1765, Adams wrote: *"I always consider the settlement of America with reverence and wonder, as the opening of a grand scene and design in Providence for the illumination of the ignorant, and the emancipation of the slavish part of mankind all over the earth."* (Federer, 2000).

With this Godly Wisdom on God's unfolding plan for a nation founded on His Liberty, John Adams had the dream of American independence long before most Americans. Richard Stockton, Congressional delegate from New Jersey, called Adams "the Atlas of Independence." (Bennett, 1998).

On July 1, 1776 as part of the Continental Congress delegation in Philadelphia debating the Declaration of Independence he rose at one point and said: *"Before God, I believe the hour has come. My judgment approves this measure, and my whole heart is in it. All that I have, and all that I am, and all that I hope in this life, I am now ready here to stake upon it. And I leave off as I began, that live or die, survive or perishes, I am for the Declaration. It is my living sentiment, and by the blessing of God it shall be my dying sentiment. Independence now, and independence forever!"* (Federer, 2000).

John Adams, like Patrick Henry, had at some point a key revelation of God's way of spiritual warfare, how to call on God for national success.

Perhaps more so than any other Founding patriot, John Adams saw that repentance was the key to God's ongoing Providential blessings over

the new nation. For the nation to survive, Adams had the Wisdom to see that its people needed Godly repentance from their sins as a national practice.

In 1777, sitting in the Continental Congress next to John Adams, Dr. Benjamin Rush, himself a devout Christian, whispered to Adams and asked if the colonists would succeed in their struggle with Great Britain. Adams' answer----which speaks volumes to us today--- was: "*Yes---if we fear God and repent of our sins.*" Dr. Rush later wrote: "This anecdote will, I hope, teach my boys that it is not necessary to disbelieve Christianity or to renounce morality in order to arrive at the highest political usefulness or fame." (Federer, American Minute, 2011).

Adams was very public about his Christian faith. He openly espoused Christianity as the root of Liberty and the founding of this nation. For example, years later, after his Presidency, in a letter in 1813 to another President, Thomas Jefferson, Adams wrote: "*The general principles, on which the Fathers achieved independence, were the only Principles in which that beautiful Assembly of young Gentlemen could Unite....And what were these general Principles? I answer, the general Principles of Christianity, in which all these Sects were United: And the general Principles of English and American Liberty, in which all those young Men United, and which had United all Parties in America, in Majorities sufficient to assert and maintain her Independence. Now I will avow, that I then believe, and now believe, that those general Principles of Christianity are as eternal and immutable, as the Existence and Attributes of God; and that those Principles of Liberty, are as unalterable as human Nature and our terrestrial, mundane System.*" (Federer, 2000).

Adams clearly understood that Wisdom comes only from those who deeply revere or fear the living God. Proverbs 1:2-7. As the first occupant of the new White House, on November 2, 1800, President Adams wrote to his wife Abigail. Included in that personal letter was a powerful prayer, later engraved on the mantel in the state dining room where it rests today: " I pray Heaven to bestow THE BEST OF BLESSINGS ON THIS HOUSE and All that shall hereafter Inhabit it, May none but Honest and Wise Men ever

rule under This Roof.” (Federer, 2000).

Very familiar with the Bible and God’s strategies for protection and victory, President Adams during his Presidency twice used the “spiritual weapon” of calling for a day of national repentance. In 1798, at a time when a war with France was threatened, President John Adams issued a proclamation for a national day of “solemn humiliation, fasting, and prayer” to take place on May 9, 1798:

*“As the safety and prosperity of nations ultimately and essentially depend on the protection and the blessing of Almighty God, and the national acknowledgment of this truth is not only an indispensable duty which the people owe to Him, but a duty whose natural influence is favorable to the promotion of that morality and piety, without which social happiness cannot exist, nor the blessings of free government be enjoyed...and as the United States of America are, at present, placed in a hazardous and afflictive situation, by the unfriendly disposition, conduct and demands of a Foreign Power...Under these considerations it has appeared to me that the duty of imploring the mercy and benediction of Heaven on our country, demands, at this time, a special attention from its inhabitants. I have therefore thought fit to recommend . . . a day of Solemn Humiliation, Fasting, and Prayer: That the citizens of these States, abstaining on that day from their customary worldly occupations, offer their devout addresses to the Father of Mercies. “...That all Religious Congregations do, with the deepest humility, acknowledge before God the manifold sins and transgressions with which we are justly chargeable as individuals and as a nation, beseeching Him at the same time of His infinite grace through the Redeemer of the World, freely to remit all our offenses, and to incline us, by His Holy Spirit, to that sincere Repentance and Reformation, which may afford us reason to hope for His inestimable favor and Heavenly Benediction: That it be made the subject of particular and earnest supplication, that our country may be protect from all the dangers which threaten it: That our civil and religious privileges may be preserved inviolate, and perpetuated to the latest generations.” (Prince, 1973).*

When President Adams called for the day of fasting and prayer, he was roundly mocked in the press, but on the day itself the churches were filled. (McCullough, 2001). War with France was averted.

A few months later, in October, 1798, President Adams wrote to the officers of the First Brigade, Third Division of the Massachusetts Militia. In a sentence or two the President stated deep Truths about our nation and our Constitution from his personal relationship with the Living God: *“We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion. Avarice, ambition, revenge, or gallantry, would break the strongest cords of our Constitution as a whale goes through a net. Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.”* (Federer, 2010).

Again on March 6, 1799 President Adams called once more for a *“day of solemn humiliation, fasting and prayer.”* The President’s Proclamation, literally citing Proverbs 14:34, stated in part: *“...that the citizens on that day abstain, as far as may be, from their secular occupation, and devote the time to the sacred duties of religion, in public and in private; that they call to mind our numerous offenses against the most high God, confess them before Him with the sincerest penitence, implore His pardoning mercy, through the Great Mediator and Redeemer, for our past transgressions, and that through the grace of His Holy Spirit, we may be disposed and enabled to yield a more suitable obedience to his righteous requisitions in time to come; that He would interpose to arrest the progress of that impiety and licentiousness in principle and practice so offensive to Himself and so ruinous to mankind; that He would make us deeply sensible that ‘righteousness exalteth a nation but sin is a reproach to any people’ (Proverbs 14:34).”* (Federer, 2000).

Years later, in 1809, John Adams wrote to a friend: *“I think there is nothing upon this earth more sublime and affecting than the idea of a great nation all on their knees at once before their God, acknowledging their faults and imploring His blessing and protection.”* (Federer, American Minute, 2011).

John Adams passed this devotion to Jesus Christ and His plan for this nation on to his son, the sixth President, John Quincy Adams. For example, on July 4, 1821, five years to the day that his father and Thomas Jefferson would die, John Quincy Adams said: *“From the day of the Declaration... they (the American people) were bound by the laws of God, which they all, and by the laws of the Gospel, which they nearly all, acknowledge as the rules of their*

*conduct.” (Federer, 2000). And sixteen years later, after his Presidency and while he was serving in Congress, John Quincy Adams spoke to a local group celebrating July 4: “ Why is it that, next to the birthday of the Savior of the World, your most joyous and most venerated festival returns on this day? Is it not that, in the chain of human events, the birthday of the nation is indissolubly linked with the birthday of the Savior? That it forms a leading event in the Progress of the Gospel dispensation? Is it not that the Declaration of Independence first organized the social compact on the foundation of the Redeemer’s mission upon earth? That it laid the cornerstone of human government upon the first precepts of Christianity and gave to the world the first irrevocable pledge of the fulfillment of the prophecies announced directly from Heaven at the birth of the Savior and predicted by the greatest of Hebrew prophets 600 years before.” (Federer, 2000).*

The father, John Adams, and the son, John Quincy Adams, devoted their lives to this nation. They speak to us now from their timeless insights into the Source of Liberty and the need to preserve it. Only days before the Declaration of Independence, John Adams wrote: *“Statesmen, by dear Sir, may plan and speculate for liberty, but is Religion and Morality alone, which can establish the Principles upon which Freedom can securely stand. The only foundation of a free Constitution is pure Virtue, and if this cannot be inspired into our People in a greater Measure, than they have it now, they may change their Rulers and the forms of Government, but they will not obtain a lasting liberty.” (Federer, 2000).*

On July 3, 1776, the day following Congress’ approval of the Declaration of Independence, John Adams wrote two letters to his wife, Abigail. In the second letter he wrote: *“The second day of July, 1776, will be the most memorable epoch in the history of America. I am apt to believe that it will be celebrated by succeeding generations as the great anniversary Festival. It ought to be commemorated, as the Day of Deliverance, by solemn acts of devotion to God Almighty... I am well aware of the toil and blood and treasure that it will cost to maintain this Declaration, and support and defend these States. Yet through all the gloom I can see the rays of ravishing light and glory.” (Federer, 2000).*

At the same time, knowing God’s spiritual principles, Adams

understood the process of what he called “affliction.” Even in difficult trials, even in the “furnace of affliction” Adams knew that God would use those circumstances to bless a people if they would confess their sins to Him and repent.

In his first letter that day to his beloved Abigail he wrote: *“It is the will of heaven that the two countries should be sundered forever. It may be the will of heaven that America shall suffer calamities still more wasting and distresses yet more dreadful. If this is to be the case, it will have this good effect, at least: it will inspire us with many virtues which we have not, and correct many errors, follies and vices, which threaten to disturb, dishonor and destroy us...The furnace of affliction produces refinements in states, as well as individuals.”*

## Chapter Eleven: Days of Repentance: Miracles in American History – part two

After our nation was created by the miracles of the living God, key Founders continued to acknowledge the nation's dependence on the Lord Jesus Christ. John Hancock, for example, when Governor of Massachusetts in 1791, long after the Divine miracles creating our nation, called for a statewide day of thanksgiving and prayer. His statement included calling for a "confession of our sins." As Hancock was bold in writing his name in large letters on the Declaration, Hancock was bold to proclaim our nation's need for Christ.

His proclamation reads in part: *" And above all, not only to continue to us the enjoyment of our civil Rights and Liberties; but the great and most important Blessing, the Gospel of Jesus Christ: And together with our cordial acknowledgments, I do earnestly recommend, that we may join the penitent confession of our Sins, and implore the further continuance of the Divine Protection, and Blessings of Heaven upon this People; especially that He would be graciously pleased to direct, and prosper the Administration of the Federal Government, and of this, and the other States in the Union---To afford His further Smiles on our Agriculture and Fisheries, Commerce and Manufactures---To prosper our University and all Seminaries of Learning---To bless the Allies of the United States, and to afford His Almighty Aid to all People, who are virtuously struggling for the Rights of Men---so that universal Happiness may be established in the World; that all may bow to the Scepter of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, and*

*the whole Earth be filled with His Glory.”* (Kennedy, Newcombe, 2008)

Thomas Jefferson is thought of as more of a Deist than as an evangelical Christian, but he attended church regularly during his Presidency, (at services held in the Capitol building) and he, too, cited Jesus Christ in his writings and some public pronouncements. For example, in one letter to Dr. Benjamin Rush, while Jefferson was President, he wrote: *“My views...are the result of a life of inquiry and reflection, and very different from the anti-Christian system imputed to me by those who know nothing of my opinions. To the corruptions of Christianity I am, indeed, opposed; but not to the genuine precepts of Jesus himself. I am a Christian in the only sense in which he wished any one to be; sincerely attached to his doctrines in preference to all others...”* (Federer 2000).

On the day of his second inaugural, March 4, 1804, President Jefferson offered a “National Prayer for Peace” as follows: *“ Almighty God, Who has given us this good land for our heritage; We humbly beseech Thee that we may always prove ourselves a people mindful of Thy favor and glad to do Thy will. Bless our land with honorable ministry, sound learning, and pure manners. Save us from violence, discord, and confusion, from pride and arrogance, and from every evil way. Defend our liberties, and fashion into one united people the multitude brought hither out of many kindreds and tongues. Endow with Thy Spirit of wisdom those to whom in Thy Name we entrust the authority of government, that there may be justice and peace at home, and that through obedience to Thy law, we may show forth Thy praise among the nations of the earth. In time of prosperity fill our hearts with thankfulness, and in the day of trouble, suffer not our trust in Thee to fail; all of which we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.”* (Federer, 2000).

Earlier, in 1774, Jefferson had proposed a Day of Humiliation, Prayer and Fasting for the colony of Massachusetts when Boston was under siege from the British. He said later that he felt “electric” on that Day set aside for humiliation, prayer and fasting. (Newcombe, 2009).

James Madison followed Washington, Adams, and Jefferson in the use of national prayers for repentance to ensure God’s protection and

ongoing miracles over our nation.

On June 1, 1812, after years of British trade restrictions brought about by Britain's ongoing war with France, after the impressment of American merchant sailors into the Royal Navy, and after British support of American Indian tribes against American expansion, President Madison sent a message to the Congress recounting American grievances against Great Britain, though not specifically calling for a declaration of war. After Madison's message, the House of Representatives deliberated for four days behind closed doors before voting the first declaration of war, and the Senate agreed. The conflict began formally on June 18, 1812, when Madison signed the measure into law. Madison may have assumed that even though the United States was not prepared to prosecute a war that state militias would easily seize parts of Canada and that negotiations would follow.

Twelve days after war was declared Congress resolved to have the President declare a national “day of public humiliation and prayer: *“ It being a duty peculiarly incumbent in a time of public calamity and war, humbly and devoutly to acknowledge our dependence on Almighty God, and to implore his aid and protection: “Therefore, Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That a joint committee of both Houses wait on the President of the United States, and request that he recommend a day of public humiliation and prayer to be observed by the people of the United States, with religious solemnity, and the offering of fervent supplications to the Almighty God for the safety and welfare of these States, His blessing on their arms, and the speedy restoration of peace.”* (Federer, 2010).

President Madison then issued the following proclamation on July 9, 1812: *“ I do therefore recommend...rendering the Sovereign of the Universe and the Benefactor of mankind the public homage due to His holy attributes; of acknowledging the transgressions which might just provoke the manifestations of His divine displeasure; of seeking His merciful forgiveness;...that in the present season of calamity and war He would take the American people under His peculiar*

*care;...that He would inspire all nations with a love of justice and of concord, and with a reverence for the unerring precept of our holy religion, to do to others as they would require that others should do to them.” (Federer, 2010).*

After the British burned the Capitol and portions of the White House in 1814, President Madison, again responding to Congress’ resolution, issued on November 16, 1814 the following proclamation for a National Day of Public Fasting and Prayer: “ *The National Legislature having by a Joint Resolution expressed their desire that in the present time of public calamity and war a day may be recommended to be observed by the people of the United States as a day of public humiliation and fasting and of prayer to Almighty God for the safety and welfare of these States, His blessing on their arms, and a speedy restoration of peace...I recommend...offering...humble adoration to the Great Sovereign of the Universe, of confessing their sins and transgressions, and of strengthening their vows of repentance... that He would be graciously pleased to pardon all their offenses against Him... that He would in a special manner preside over the nation...giving success to its arms.” (Federer, 2010).*

Thirty-eight days later a peace treaty with Great Britain was signed in Ghent, Belgium. The war of 1812 was over even before the Battle of New Orleans. The Lord honored the calling for National Day of Public Humiliation, Fasting and Prayer even before that Day took place. As Derek Prince points out, simply calling for such a Day triggered God’s response as set forth in Isaiah 65:24: “ *And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.” (Prince, 1973).*

The War over, President Madison then called, in April, 1815, for a day of Public Thanksgiving, a day “*with religious solemnity, as a day of thanksgiving, and of devout acknowledgments to Almighty God for His great goodness manifested in restoring...the blessings of peace. No people ought to feel greater obligations to celebrate the goodness of the Great Disposer of events, and of the destiny of nations, than the people of the United States. ” (Prince, 1973).*

James Madison lived to age 85. He was the last surviving member of

the Philadelphia Constitutional Convention of 1787. To his dying day he saw the United States involved in spiritual warfare. About to die he wrote a final contribution to a nation that he had been so instrumental in building. In "Advice to My Country" he said in part: *"The advice nearest to my heart and deepest in my convictions is that the Union of the States be cherished and perpetuated. Let the open enemy to it be regarded as a Pandora with her box opened; and the disguised one, as the Serpent creeping with his deadly wiles into Paradise."* (Bennett, 1998).

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Wartime --- the Civil War and then World Wars I and II--prompted what appear to be the final calls from a President for a National Day of Prayer, Fasting and "Humiliation." There have been numerous Presidential proclamations of Thanksgiving, giving thanks to God for His many blessings, and an annual National Day of Prayer, for the last sixty or more years, but few proclamations where repentance, or "humiliation" for our personal and national sins, was suggested.

On May 11, 1918 President Wilson, at the request of Congress, proclaimed a "Day of Public Humiliation, Prayer and Fasting." Part of the proclamation read: *"...Whereas it has always been the reverent habit of the people of the United States to turn in humble appeal to Almighty God for His guidance...I...exhort my fellow-citizens of all faiths and creeds to assemble on that day in their several places of worship and there, as well as in their homes, to pray Almighty God that He may forgive our sins and shortcomings as a people and purify our hearts to see and love the truth, to accept and defend all things that are just and right and to purpose only those righteous acts and judgments which are in conformity with His will; beseeching Him that He will give victory to our armies as they fight for freedom."* The war ended 180 days later on Armistice Day. (Federer, 2010).

And in World War II President Roosevelt, in December, 1941 as part of a Christmas Eve message said: *"The year 1941 has brought upon our Nation a war of aggression by powers dominated by arrogant rulers whose selfish purpose*

*is to destroy free institutions. They would thereby take from the freedom-loving peoples of the earth the hard-won liberties gained over many centuries. The new year of 1942 calls for the courage...Our strength, as the strength of men everywhere, is of greater avail as God upholds us. Therefore, I...do hereby appoint the first day of the year 1942 as a day of prayer, of asking forgiveness for our shortcomings of the past, of consecration to the tasks of the present, of asking God's help in days to come. We need His guidance that this people may be humble in spirit but strong in the conviction of the right..."* (Federer, 2010)

Perhaps the most poignant plea for national repentance was President Lincoln's. During his Presidency and the Civil War Abraham Lincoln called for three separate days of national humiliation, prayer, and fasting. His first Proclamation called for a day of public Humiliation, Prayer and Fasting...with religious solemnities, and the offering of fervent supplications to almighty God for the safety and welfare of these States, His blessing on their arms, and a speedy restoration of peace." The Proclamation contained this key language: *"And whereas it is fit and becoming in all people, at all times, to acknowledge and revere the Supreme Government of God; to bow in humble submission to his chastisements; to confess and deplore their sins and transgressions, in the full conviction that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and to pray, with all fervency and contrition, for the pardon of their past offenses... And I do earnestly recommend to all the people, and especially to all ministers and teachers of religion, of all denominations, and to all heads of families, to observe and keep that day, according to their several creeds and modes of worship, in all humility, and with all religious solemnity, to the end that the united prayer of the nation may ascend to the Throne of Grace, and bring down plentiful blessings upon our Country."* (Prince, 1973).

In 1863 President Lincoln freed the slaves with the Emancipation Proclamation. He had seen the horrors of war. In the middle of the carnage of the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln declared a National Day of Humiliation, Fasting and Prayer:

*"It is the duty of nations as well as of men to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God, to confess their sins and transgressions in humble sorrow*

*yet with assured hope that genuine repentance will lead to mercy and pardon, and to recognize the sublime truth, announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history: that those nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord.*

*"...The awful calamity of civil war... may be but a punishment inflicted upon us for our presumptuous sins." Lincoln continued: "We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of Heaven...We have grown in numbers, wealth and power as no other nation has ever grown. But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious Hand which preserved us in peace, and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us; and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own."*

President Lincoln concluded: *"Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us! It behooves us then to humble ourselves before the offended Power, to confess our national sins and to pray for clemency and forgiveness."* (Federer, 2000)

Again we see, with President Lincoln's plea for repentance, God's miracles to a nation following national prayers for repentance. On the blood-soaked battlefield of Gettysburg only three months later, the tide turned; the horrific war was almost over.

Inspired by the Holy Spirit, Lincoln's Gettysburg address would later proclaim, under God, a new birth of freedom: *"The world will little note, nor long remember, what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us – that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion---that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain---that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom---and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."* (Federer, 2000).

The living God heard the prayers of repentance in President Lincoln's words. With such humble repentance from His people, God reset again the

national course of the United States of America as a beacon of Liberty, giving us a new birth of freedom, all under Him.

## **Chapter Twelve: Defiance Instead of Repentance**

Instead of learning about the miracles of repentance, the ways of the living God, instead of learning His Kingdom, His spiritual truths for blessings, humans often defy the living God out of ignorance, or pride, or spiritual deception by the enemy.

It started in heaven when one angel, Lucifer, said in his heart (Isaiah 14:13-14): *"I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High."* The Lord then promptly brought that angel down: *"How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations!"* (Isaiah 14:12).

Tempted by this same Lucifer spirit in the form of a serpent, Adam and Eve, made in the very image of God, destined for eternal life without sin in His Presence, disobeyed God. Then their first son, Cain, became very angry with God because God didn't respect his offering, but did respect his younger brother Abel's offering. Envy, wrath, ego, pride, defiance surfaced in Cain, and the Lord said to him: *"Why are you angry? Any why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it."* Genesis 4:6-7.

Cain was not able to rule over his emotions. Sin kicked the door down, and Cain killed his brother. By the time of Noah, the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of human hearts was only evil, continuously. Even after the flood, Noah's son, Ham, exposed his father, and Noah had to curse his grandson Canaan for Ham's defiance. Defiance and rebellion were re-seeded into the human race. God's mercy towards all of us was again put to the test.

Story after story in the Old Testament confirms that defiance, rebellion, pride and arrogance plagued even God's chosen people, the Israelites. Despite their magnificent covenant promises of protection and

blessing from God Himself for His chosen people, and despite His repeated mercy and miracles of deliverance, they repeatedly defied Him. God's mercy had limits; from time to time He set up Israel's enemies to attack Israel, to awaken His people from their ignorance or defiance.

But instead of repentance from the priests and the leaders and the people, human defiance often still surfaced. As Psalm 78 details, instead of seeking the Lord of Hosts they repeatedly turned their backs on Him. Thank God *"He being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, And did not destroy them. Yes, many a time He turned His anger away, and did not stir up all His wrath; For He remembered that they were but flesh, A breath that passes away and does not come again."* Psalm 78: 38-39.

One example of pride and defiance instead of repentance is pointed out powerfully in Isaiah chapter nine, verses 8-17: *"The Lord sent a word against Jacob, And it has fallen on Israel. 9 All the people will know – Ephraim and the inhabitant of Samaria – Who say in pride and arrogance of heart: 10 "The bricks have fallen down, But we will rebuild with hewn stones; The sycamores are cut down, But we will replace them with cedars." 11 Therefore the Lord shall set up the adversaries of Rezin against him, and spur his enemies on, 12 The Syrians before and the Philistines behind; And they shall devour Israel with an open mouth. For all this His anger is not turned away, But His hand is stretched out still. 13 For the people do not turn to Him who strikes them, Nor do they seek the Lord of hosts. 14 Therefore the Lord will cut off head and tail from Israel, Palm branch and bulrush in one day. 15 The elder and honorable, he is the head; The prophet who teaches lies, he is the tail. 16 For the leaders of this people cause them to err, And those who are led by them are destroyed. 17 Therefore the Lord will have no joy in their young men, Nor have mercy on their fatherless and widows; For everyone is a hypocrite and an evildoer, And every mouth speaks folly. For all this His anger is not turned away, But His hand is stretched out still."*

Amazingly patient, the Lord always has His hand out to each of us to guide us back into fellowship with Him. His mercy is fresh every day (Psalm 86).

Only the Holy Spirit knows the extent, but it's possible that a remnant of this disobedience or defiance has crept into virtually every

pastor or priest or leader now serving the body of Christ. And if we don't confess it regularly to the Lord, if we don't repent, it festers and mutes our effectiveness as local shepherds of the Good News. Soon we become just like the world, and hypocrites to the public.

And since there has been virtually no recent move for repentance within the body of Christ in our nation, and the "church" (the called out ones) has virtually no voice in our media or culture, our secular leaders are following the same dangerous path of arrogance and defiance as those Israelites in Isaiah, chapter nine. We have not heeded God's call to mankind: "*Awake! Awake! O Zion!*" (Isaiah 52:1).

Lacking spiritual discernment, clueless as to the lesson of Isaiah chapter nine, since 9/11 our national and local leaders are bringing to life these very same passages; they're being re-enacted the very same way they played out at the time of Isaiah, leading to the nation's captivity and dispersion.

A key example is the rebuilding of the World Trade Center after the 9/11 tragedy. Instead of seeing 9/11 as an emergency 911 call from the Lord to seek His face, to humble ourselves, to repent, to get back under His original Providential covering for our nation, leaders sadly unaware of the Isaiah 9 Scriptures rebuilt an even taller tower, showing their pride in the process.

God is not mocked. He hates pride. We learn from Proverbs 6:16-19 that the number one thing that the Lord hates, that the Lord declares is an abomination, is a "*proud look.*"

And Proverbs 1: 20-33 is right on point, prophetically speaking of the unexamined 911 emergency over a decade ago and the complacency which followed:

*"Wisdom calls aloud outside; She raises her voice in the open squares. 21 She cries out in the chief concourses, At the openings of the gates in the city□ She speaks her words: 22 'How long, you simple ones, will you love simplicity? For scorners delight in their scorning, And fools hate knowledge. 23 Turn at my rebuke; Surely I will pour out my spirit on you; I will make my words known to you. 24 Because I*

*have called and you refused, I have stretched out my hand and no one regarded, 25 Because you despised all my counsel, And would have none of my rebuke, 26 I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your terror comes, 27 When your terror comes like a storm, And your destruction comes like a whirlwind, When distress and anguish come upon you. 28 "Then they will call on me, but I will not answer; They will seek me diligently, but they will not find me. 29 Because they hated knowledge And did not choose the fear of the Lord, 30 They would have none of my counsel and despised my every rebuke. 31 Therefore they shall eat the fruit of their own way, and be filled to the full with their own fancies. 32 For the turning away of the simple will slay them, and the complacency of fools will destroy them; 33 But whoever listens to me will dwell safely, and will be secure, without fear of evil. "'*

Instead of building out of pride a new taller tower showing our human strength, we have needed to repent from removing God from our society. We need to find God's protection against enemy attacks using God's ways.

All this is captured in the excellent book, *The Harbinger*, by Rabbi Jonathan Cahn (Cahn, 2011).

Rabbi Cahn points out brilliantly that God is now sending a prophetic message on which America's future hangs. We will learn and repent or face disaster as did ancient Israel. Virtually the exact same acts, nine different harbingers, nine signs, have been done after 9/11 which are cited in Isaiah chapter 9. With the same "pride and arrogance of heart" of those leaders in ancient Israel, our leaders have planted a new tree, the Erez tree, replacing the cut sycamores for cedars. And for the bricks that have fallen down, leaders, with clueless pride, have rebuilt out of our own strength with "hewn stones." Rabbi Cahn points out that key negative events have already been triggered by 9/11, including Wall Street's collapse seven years later in 2008, including the 9/11/08 collapse of Lehman Brothers. Seven years is a Biblical period of time that points to a nation's financial and economic realms. (Cahn, 2011).

Compounding the potential disaster, Isaiah 9:10 was actually proclaimed publicly by key leaders of the Senate, Tom Daschle and John Edwards, in our nation's capital after 9/11. In their defiance, by publicly proclaiming the vow of Isaiah 9:10, that we would rebuild out of our own strength, those key leaders, since discredited, sealed the nation's course. At no point did they speak of repentance.

Our United States of America was seen by the Founders as a new Israel; a place for His Liberty to shine forever. But now, without repentance, we risk the same disaster Israel earlier experienced.

Instead of defiance we have to choose repentance.

## **Chapter Thirteen: Time for a new National Day of Repentance**

American history is full of miracles. Repeatedly, the living God answered national prayers of repentance from Americans in times of war. Now, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we are engaged in a different form of war: an unseen war in the spirit realm that is striking at the root of Liberty, striking at Christ Himself.

Instead of an outside observable enemy, we are facing the enemy without and within in a battle for the soul of this nation. This is a battle more serious than any of our earlier battles in all of our American history.

On United flight 93 on the day of 9/11 those passengers stormed the cockpit to crash the plane to avoid it striking the White House and the Capitol. On that flight, saying "Let's Roll!" they had to use physical force to overthrow those hijacking the plane. But in this current battle, against the same, murdering spirit, we have to use different "weapons", time-tested "weapons" of prayer, fasting, repentance, worship, and Godly participation as citizens, joining with others committed to the spiritual battle, seeking the Lord's victory over the enemy spirits.

Ephesians 6:12-18 tells us: *“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.”*

And then the Holy Spirit, writing through Paul, tells us what to do in such a case: *“Therefore take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, And having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.....”*

After He rose from the tomb Jesus said to His disciples, as part of His instruction for them to make disciples of all the nations: *“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.”* (Matthew 28:18-20). When a person repents and becomes a believer in Christ, a miracle happens: the believer can then draw upon Christ’s spiritual authority over every lesser enemy spirit through the Holy Spirit that then indwells that person. Armed with the spiritual weapons of Christ, no weapon formed against a believer can prosper!

If we believers use our “spiritual weapons” the anti-Liberty spirit now attacking our nation has to be defeated as a matter of spiritual law. James 4:7 says: *“Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”*

Only repentance — turning back to God and God’s ways — can save our land. For as the Lord declares forthrightly to the prophet Jeremiah: *“If that nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I had thought to bring upon it.”* (Jeremiah 18:8).

At another place in Scripture, Matthew 5: 13-14, Jesus calls each of us who believe in Him to be salt of the earth and the light of the world. Like our Founding Fathers we can bring this salt and light to our governments,

local and national, as public servants, honoring Christ in the process. Today, over 100 members of Congress, in both parties, meet regularly for Bible study; may their numbers and influence increase!

We can also register to vote and vote our values. Until recently only 50% of Christians even registered to vote. Believers can even seek Christians elected to office. The first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, John Jay, later President of the American Bible Society, said: "Providence has given to our people the choice of their rulers, and it is the duty, as well as the privilege and interest of our Christian nation to select and prefer Christians for their rulers."

But given the strength of the enemy's attack on our nation, there's no need to wait until there are changes politically in this country.

Drawing upon God's Promises, and earlier precedent of God's victories for His people throughout Scripture, we believers can gather in a sacred assembly, on a national day of repentance, to seek the Lord's intervention to save our nation.

In past years a legislative body or the President called for a National Day of Prayer, Fasting and Repentance. It's still possible that one or both may still act. But there is no point in waiting when we, the called out ones, across Christian denominations, have the technology this critical year to encourage a day of repentance in our local communities.

The vision is for His people, at the grassroots, in our communities, in our homes, in our churches, whenever possible with other believers across denominations, as the Holy Spirit may direct, to set aside 24 hours beginning at sundown in your community on September 25, 2012 to pray, to "afflict our souls," to repent. Together we will constitute a "solemn assembly" to honor the Lord. Our goal is to have at least one "solemn assembly" in each of the counties in each of the fifty States.

A "solemn assembly" is a corporate time specifically called for the purpose of soul-searching. It's a time of confession and repentance, not simply for our individual sins, but for corporate sin. When we come together as a corporate body for this purpose then we can ask God for

forgiveness. Fasting is required; a contrite heart is required. Genuine humility before God is essential. (Roberts, 1989). Coming together as a local corporate body we can, in humility, solemnly, stand in the gap for others, including our leaders. We are called to pray for our own sins, for those of our fellow countrymen, and for the sins of our leaders (Isaiah 59:13-16; Daniel 9:3-19; Hebrews 3:12-13). If sins are not confessed and repented for, our sins invite His wrath and judgment. We can confess the sins of our cities, and confess our nation's sins as well as our own.

As the church stands in the gap for its cities, God will heal our land. On behalf of the righteous, He visits the unrighteous and sends revival.

In the verses leading to 2 Chronicles 7:14 God calls His people to repentance not when they perceive a moral need for it, but whenever disaster is seen in the land. He says, "If My people who are called by My Name, "not "If those people I believe have sinned...."

He then promises healing when we have turned back to Him. When there is an emergency in the land, God calls on His people, and His people alone, at that point to pray and to repent, individually and collectively, not waiting for those who have sinned eventually to seek repentance.

We honor Him when nationally, in a day set aside for repentance, praying individually or in groups, from villages to large cities, we humble ourselves and turn from our wicked ways back to Him. We have His promise that He will hear from heaven, forgive our sin, and heal our land. 2 Chronicles 7:14. He will then heal our land and pour out His spirit on all flesh.

Here, again, is instruction from the Book of Joel 2:12-29:  
*"Now, therefore," says the Lord, "Turn to Me with all your heart, With fasting, with weeping, and with mourning." 13 So rend your heart, and not your garments; Return to the Lord your God, For He is gracious and merciful, Slow to anger, and of great kindness; And He relents from doing harm.14 Who knows if He will turn and relent, And leave a blessing behind Him – A grain offering and a drink offering For the Lord your God? 15 Blow the trumpet in Zion, Consecrate a fast, Call a sacred assembly; 16 Gather the people, Sanctify the congregation,*

*Assemble the elders, Gather the children and nursing babes; Let the bridegroom go out from his chamber, And the bride from her dressing room. 17 Let the priests, who minister to the Lord, Weep between the porch and the altar; Let them say, "Spare Your people, O Lord. And do not give Your heritage to reproach, That the nations should rule over them. Why should they say among the peoples, "Where is their God?" 18 Then the Lord will be zealous for His land, And pity His people. 19 The Lord will answer and say to His people, "Behold, I will send you grain and new wine and oil, And you will be satisfied by them; I will no longer make you a reproach among the nations. 20 "But I will remove far from you the northern army, And will drive him away into a barren and desolate land, With his face toward the eastern sea And his back toward the western sea; His stench will come up, And his foul odor will rise, Because he has done monstrous things." 21 Fear not, O land; Be glad and rejoice, For the Lord has done marvelous things! 22 Do not be afraid, you beasts of the field; For the open pastures are springing up, And the tree bears its fruit; The fig tree and the vine yield their strength. 23 Be glad then, you children of Zion, And rejoice in the Lord your God; For He has given you the former rain faithfully, And He will cause the rain to come down for you – The former rain, And the latter rain in the first month. 24 The threshing floors shall be full of wheat, And the vats shall overflow with new wine and oil. 25 "So I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten, The crawling locust, The consuming locust, And the chewing locust, My great army which I sent among you. 26 You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, And praise the name of the Lord your God, Who has dealt wondrously with you; And My people shall never be put to shame. 27 Then you shall know that I am in the midst of Israel: I am the Lord your God And there is no other. My people shall never be put to shame. 28 "And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and Your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions. And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days."*

A nonprofit public benefit corporation, National Day of Repentance, has been formed to inform the public about this annual project and to encourage participation. As well, a website has been created:

www.dayofrepentance.org. The specific purpose of this nonprofit is “to educate the public about the need for and power of repentance in the destiny of a nation.”

God willing, we will hold a National Day of Repentance each year until the Lord Himself returns.

Knowing God’s love of His Holy convocations, the choice was made to schedule such a day, each year, to coincide with the Jewish Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur. The event taking place on Yom Kippur in no way is meant to preempt or replace what Yom Kippur means for the Jewish people, but is meant to honor the Jewish people's divinely mandated calendar (Lev 23:1-2), and to honor the holiness and seriousness of that day. Three thousand five hundred years ago this holy convocation, a day to “afflict one’s soul”, to do no work, was set by God as a statute forever in all dwellings throughout all generations.

Holding the National Day of Repentance on the same day as Yom Kippur each year will honor the Jewish tradition from which Christianity has been birthed. They are the root (Romans 1:16); Christians are the branches.

During the 24 hour service it is suggested that time be set aside for prayer for the Jewish people, who are now under attack. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem. Pray also about the place of Yeshua in history: past, present and future. Thank the Living God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that 2 Chronicles 7:14 applies to Israel primarily, but also now for us believers, is a way to heal all nations, including our nation in 2012.

This project can also help bring together locally the various denominations within the body of Christ to demonstrate the love and unity Christ prayed for in John 17: 20-26.

The National Day of Repentance follows in the footsteps of Scripture itself, and recent events such as The Call (Sacramento, Detroit, Virginia); the Response (Houston); A Line in the Sand (Pasadena); the Luis Palau Festival (Sacramento), Fortnight For Freedom, and Call2Fall sponsored by the Family Research Council – events gathering hundreds of thousands of

Christians across denominations to worship, pray and repent. Our purpose is to educate the body of Christ to the need for and the value of repentance at this time of our life together. Our vision is to be a light to the Church in carrying out this purpose.

We seek to reach a great number of priests and pastors in the 400,000 Christian churches in America, as well as those deeply called by the Holy Spirit who see the vision of this project. Ideally, there would be a person excited by this vision, called to organize a sacred assembly in his or her local community, in each county in all fifty States. There are approximately 3,000 counties in the United States. What would be the effect in heaven if on one single day 3,000 sacred assemblies were held to pray, to repent, to seek the Lord's healing for our land?

We hope they will be encouraged to create with the Holy Spirit an observance in their churches that day appropriate to the occasion, encouraging all participants to spend at least one hour in those 24 hours in prayer privately with the Lord. No national, state or regional format will be imposed. The one common denominator as a statement of faith across denominations is the Apostles' Creed. We ask only that the day itself be devoted to repentance activities, possibly including encouraging participants to pray all night as did the Lord Jesus Himself (Luke 6:12).

One volunteer has given some suggestions for a service during that 24 hour period: *"Seek the Holy Spirit as to an outline of a program for your group or church. You may wish to begin and end with worship, giving plenty of time for silence and soul-searching. It's not about judgment; we've all fallen short of the glory of God. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. During the service you may wish to provide an open microphone for persons to pray spontaneously. Pray for unity in the body of Christ (John 17: 13-26) around this event which seeks support by many ministries and denominations across the body of Christ. You may also wish to teach on the many Scriptures referring to repentance, many of which are found on the [www.dayofrepentance.org](http://www.dayofrepentance.org) website. You may consider taking time to teach the remarkable, true stories of how repentance was a key factor in God's Victories*

*through David (Psalm 51), Jehoshaphat, (2 Chronicles 20:1-22), Daniel (chapter 9: 1-19), Esther (chapter 4: 1-17), and Nehemiah (chapter 1: 3-11). There are similar examples in American Christian history showing God's Hand to bless our nation once there was a national call for repentance. You may also wish to focus on Christ and His Dominion and the zeal of the Lord in establishing the increase of His government and His peace for which there will be no end. (Isaiah 9: 6-7).*

We also ask that we be permitted to help spread the word through the website about what a local group may be doing to create a local sacred assembly. We believe this will encourage participation in every county, in every State. Interest has even surfaced in other countries, such as Cameroon, and the Philippines, who are planning a similar National Day of Repentance on the same day.

God willing, a season of repentance has already begun! Prayer teams focusing on repentance may form spontaneously months before this Day in September; in addition to praying for each other, reaching across denominations to other local Christians, they can begin to repent both personally and collectively. The topics are numerous: repenting for the division in the body of Christ, for failure to reach more of lost souls, for earlier issues with this nations' first occupants, for failing as a body of Christ to meet the needs of the poor, leaving such work to government, for failing to take out the planks in our eyes while seeking to remove specks in others' eyes.

If just one person's prayers can move the heart of God, as in the case of a Nehemiah, or a Deborah, or an Esther, what could thousands or even millions of prayers achieve at one time? Prayer knows no distance. What will it look like in the spiritual realms?

We envision on the National Day of Repentance the many prayers of repentance lifted up to heaven will be single hearted, single minded, led by the Holy Spirit, as one voice in unity, touching heaven, received by the Lord as a sweet aroma. As we pray, repenting, there can be a releasing of sins and a new intimacy with God from earth to heaven, heaven to earth. Joy will surface!

In God's supernatural way, His Holy Spirit, moving freely through those fixed on Him, can then bring change to our hearts, change to our minds, and change to our nation. Our prayer is that this project will contribute to a season of repentance in the Church itself. Creating a Day of Repentance each year until the Lord returns creates a process by which Christ Jesus, the head of His body, can perfect each of us believers in His holiness. 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13: *" And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you, So that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints."*

As the Church itself repents and begins to live the victorious life that is the fruit of repentance the nation will see that fruit and will "beat a path to our door." As one of our volunteer directors, Jim Wilson, has said: "Let us begin and let us rejoice."

## Chapter Fourteen: Healing Our Land

His hand is still stretched out now for this nation. Days of Humiliation, Prayer, and Fasting played a vital role in shaping the national destiny of the United States. (Prince, 1973). God's love for this nation, this "city set on a hill" is unquestionable. We were established through Divine miracles by Him as a beacon of His Liberty, a beacon to all nations, as part of God's perfect plan to set all captives free.

And yet His judgment must again follow if His way is ignored. If we watchmen on the wall (Isaiah 62:6; Ezekiel 3:17) see the signs of calamity appearing in the distance and fail to blow the trumpet to warn our people, our "souls are not delivered" (Ezekiel 3:19); we will have disobeyed our Lord's instructions. No; we must follow the Risen Christ's instructions in Revelation 3:2 (the Message version): *"Up on your feet! Take a deep breath! Maybe there's life in you yet. But I wouldn't know it by looking at your busywork; nothing of God's work has been completed. Your condition is desperate. Think of the gift you once had in your hands, the Message you heard with your ears – grasp it again and turn back to God."*

In those powerful verses of Revelation chapter three, the Risen Christ was speaking of a lukewarm group of believers and also, many believe, to

His end times Church today. Some observers have been particularly blunt about the state of our body of Christ today, notably Leonard Ravenhill, gone to be with the Lord over twenty years ago. Some of Mr. Ravenhill's quotes prick our conscience today: *"Today's church wants to be raptured from responsibility." "If weak in prayer, we are weak everywhere." "Men give advice; God gives guidance." "Are the things you are living for worth Christ dying for? "A sinning man stops praying, a praying man stops sinning" "Entertainment is the devil's substitute for joy" "The only reason we don't have revival is because we are willing to live without it!" "God pity us that after years of writing, using mountains of paper and rivers of ink, exhausting flashy terminology about the biggest revival meetings in history, we are still faced with gross corruption in every nation, as well as with the most prayerless church age since Pentecost."*

His judgment must follow if His way is ignored, for us personally and as a nation. Over two centuries ago, in 1787, at the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, comments showing the connection between a nation's sin and God's Providence were made by one of the great Founding Fathers, George Mason. In a debate over slavery, Mason warned that slavery would cause God to curse America. He, along with many of the other patriots, saw a direct connection between a nation's morals and its future welfare. Today, slavery is behind us, but increasingly our public policies are going against the specific words of Truth in the Bible, such as changing God's definition of marriage, set forth in Genesis, and expressly defined by Jesus Himself in Matthew 19: 4-6 and Mark 10: 6-9. God is not mocked. On the issue of God's judgment, George Mason said: *"Every master of slaves is born a petty tyrant. They bring the judgment of heaven on a country. As nations can not be rewarded or punished in the next world they must be in this. By an inevitable chain of causes and effects providence punishes national sins, by national calamities."* (Newcombe, 2009).

We are headed into very dark times. The body of Christ, you and me individually, and our denominations, can no longer be lukewarm. We are to be salt and light to a dying culture. Just looking at one key issue, same sex marriage, any fabric of Divine Providence over the White House had to

have been ripped extensively if not fully removed when our President came out in favor of same sex marriage, notwithstanding the defining words of Jesus Himself in Matthew 19:4-6 and Mark 10:6-9. As His people we must stand in the gap boldly for what is right and acceptable to Him. We first have to be free from ongoing sin, confessing and repenting. In John 8:34-36 Jesus tells us: *“I tell you the truth everyone who sins is a slave to sin. Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.”* The Founding Fathers understood that this freedom through submission to the living God applied not only in their personal faith, but also in the governing of nations.

In Revelation, chapter three, the Risen Christ, *“the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God”* addresses the lukewarm church of Laodiceans: *“I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’---and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked---I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.”*

All this is addressed to His body of believers, including you and me today. After imploring His believers to be zealous and to repent, to find the joy that will surely follow confession and repentance of sins, our Risen Christ Jesus holds out His nailed-scarred Hand of Fellowship in a very personal way to each of us: *“ Behold I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”*

As we set aside one day a year, choosing to do so on the Day of

Atonement, we can remember the Sacrificial Lamb's work on our behalf. We can repent personally and as a nation. We honor the fact that God is sovereign over all nations.

If we do our part we have the assurance that He, the One who loves us, the One who is knocking on the door of our hearts, will do His part. He always has. Sensing our Lord's ongoing love and forgiveness, having repented, we can re-establish our fellowship with Him. With repentance, the way is opened for Him to heal our many deep wounds ----in ourselves and in our land.

We know from the Book of Joel, chapter two, verse twenty eight, that in His timing, the Lord says: *"And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh..."* The "afterward" is after the earlier fast, and the sacred assembly. (verses 12-18). He will pour out His Holy Spirit upon all flesh. But before He can do so, we, His people, have to repent.

Will you join us this year on the Day of Atonement, on the National Day of Repentance, for a 24 hour sacred assembly in your community?

As the Feast of Tabernacles follows the Day of Atonement, joy will follow repentance!

At that point the words of the Holy Spirit speaking through David in Psalm 63:7, when he was hunted in the wilderness of Judah, will ring true: *"Because You have been my help, therefore in the shadow of Your wings I will rejoice."* The promise of Psalm 67:4 will also unfold: *"O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for You shall judge the people righteously, and govern the nations on earth."*

And at that point the words of the Holy Spirit speaking through Isaiah the prophet in Isaiah 60:1-2 will also come alive, healing our land:

*"Arise; shine; For your light has come! And the glory of the Lord is risen upon you. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the people; But the Lord will arise over you, and His glory will be seen upon you."*

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## About the author

Since 1999 Jeffrey Daly has pastored at Jesus Christ Fellowship, Middletown, Lake County, California. He also has been an attorney since 1966. An honors graduate of Stanford and Columbia Law School he left graduate school and Wall Street an agnostic. He had attended church from time to time as a child but had not experienced the reality and power of the Holy Spirit. Then one night in 1991 he had an epiphany. A New Ager at that time, he was preparing to argue the next day with a visiting Christian. To prepare, Jeff started to read the Gospel of John. One verse there changed his life, John 7:18: *"He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him."* He immediately saw how he and others in the New Age were speaking for themselves, making themselves their own god. He got on his knees, repented, prayed to Jesus Christ for forgiveness, and immediately received it. He became a new creation in Christ with a whole different perspective on life.

In 1999 he felt a call on his life to become a pastor while continuing his work as an attorney, and, with his remarkable, supportive wife Laurie, he has been blessed with a wonderful church family, basing its fellowship on the model of the first believers in Jerusalem, described in the Book of Acts.

In 2009 he felt a nudge from the Lord to intensify his study of the Bible and American history. *The Spiritual Battle for the White House* was published in 2010. ([www.spiritualbattle4whitehouse.com](http://www.spiritualbattle4whitehouse.com).) Repeatedly, the Scripture that became the theme of the book surfaced in almost every chapter: Ephesians 6: 12: *"For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places."*

Most recently he has studied the concept of repentance as part of Biblical and American history. In 2011 he incorporated a nonprofit organization, National Day of Repentance, and serves today as its executive director.

