

SHINE Devotional

Week 22 – Lesson 1



What Makes America Great – Her God

Scripture reading Psalm 33:12

“Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance.”

On March 28, 2019, Eric Holder, the attorney general during the Obama administration, stated “I think to myself exactly when did you think America was great.” On August 15, 2018, Andrew Cuomo, the governor of the state of New York made this statement, “America was never that great.” Today is Memorial Day here in America. As a citizen of this country I have always believed that we are the greatest nation on earth. I thank God for those who died for this nation. I thank God that He has given us a president who wants to, “Make America Great Again.” The question is , “What is it that has made America great in the past?” In our devotionals this week I want to share with you what I believe has made America great.

America is great because America’s God is great. Our Scripture reading today says, “*Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord*” (Psalm 33:12). Whenever you read the Old Testament and you see the word LORD translated with all capitals it is referring to the proper name Jehovah. Jehovah in the Old Testament is Jesus in the New Testament. So you can easily read “*Blessed is the nation whose God is Jesus Christ.*” It is obvious from the writings of the founding fathers of this nation that they worshipped and served one God, who is the God of the Bible, Jesus Christ. Patrick Henry, the governor of Virginia, said, “It cannot be emphasized too clearly and too often that this nation was founded, not by religionists, but by Christians; not by religion, but on the gospel of Jesus Christ.” Our founding fathers certainly weren’t perfect, but the majority of them did believe in the God of the Bible and attempted to put together a coalition of states that would adopt laws that were founded on the Word of God.

It is important that we understand that America is great because its founders revered the God of the Bible. When you revere our God, you will SHINE.

SHINE Devotional

Week 22 – Lesson 2



America Is Great Because of Her Righteousness

Scripture reading Proverbs 14:34

“Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.”

At its foundation, our founding fathers revered and honored the name of Jesus Christ. As with any human endeavor the founding of this nation was wrought with problems that took decades to rectify. Permitting slavery would probably be the most glaring injustice that was permitted. It must be noted, however, from the very beginning of our republic many of our founding fathers stood in opposition to slavery. We can thank God that because of the government they set up this injustice was rectified through the first republican president, Abraham Lincoln, eighty-seven years later.

Our founding fathers recognized that we would be dependent on the blessings of God if our nation was to succeed and therefore they promoted righteousness. John Jay, the first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court 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.”* Charles Carroll, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, said this, *“Without morals a republic CANNOT subsist any length of time; they therefore who are decrying the Christian religion, whose morality is so sublime and pure... are undermining the solid foundation of morals, the best security of the duration of free governments.”* Though this nation is imperfect, it has grown in greatness as it has applied the righteous standard of the Word of God. It has grown over the centuries through conflicts like the Civil War when just men, determined to stand for truth, fought and died to help this country become the great nation God wanted it to be. In 1835, Alexis de Tocqueville, a French historian, traveled to America and made this observation, *“America is great, because America is good. If America ever ceases to be good, it will cease to be great.”* I agree with Mr. Tocqueville, as does God’s Word.

We must be righteous and when we as believers are righteous, God will exalt the nation and America will be great! As a Christian you need to live for Christ with a righteous life so you can SHINE.

SHINE Devotional

Week 22 – Lesson 3



America Is Great Because of Her Trust in God

Scripture reading Psalm 91:1

“He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.”

Every American dollar bill and coin that is made has the words, “In God We Trust.” That is our national motto. God tells us that if we truly trust in Him, He will protect us. America has had the protecting hand of God upon it. Not just some unknown deity but the God of the Bible. 73% of the population of America claim to be affiliated in some way with the Christian faith. In times of national crisis like we are facing today, people call on God because they trust in Him. At this moment there is a cry from God’s people to the government to open the doors of churches. It is my belief that very soon we will be meeting together again. Why? Because the people of God in this country trust in God.

The first permanent settlement in America was the 1607 English colony of Jamestown. The first charter of that colony recognized, “The providence of almighty God,” and that they were to honor “the glory of his divine majesty.” Our founding fathers recognized their dependence upon God, and that can be seen in the Declaration of Independence and in our Constitution. America is great and has been great because of her God, her righteousness, and her trust in the God of the Bible.

When you, as a believer, trust in God, you will SHINE.

SHINE Devotional

Week 22 – Lesson 4



America Is Great Because of Her Christian Remnant

Scripture reading Genesis 18:32

“And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake.”

Genesis 18-19 records the story of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Sodom and Gomorrah were twin cities located near the south tip of the Dead Sea. They were cities that were filled with immorality. They had become so debased that homosexuality had become a normal and acceptable lifestyle. Homosexuality is an abomination to God as is adultery, premarital sex, and any type of immoral behavior. God revealed to Abraham that he was going to destroy the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham had a nephew named Lot, whom he had raised as his own son. He was living in Sodom. This led Abraham to plead with God not to destroy the cities if there were righteous people inside them. He started off asking God to withhold His judgement for fifty righteous people. He got all the way down to ten righteous people, and in our passage God said He would not destroy the city if there were ten righteous people. I believe that one reason God has blessed America and His blessings are still on this nation, is because we have the equivalent of those ten righteous people in America. There are people who pray every day for God to protect this nation. There are people who pray for the blessing of God on this nation. There are people who pray daily for our president, vice president, cabinet members, and congress. As a believer you should pray. There are multitudes of Christians that live here and are trying to do right, love Jesus, faithfully serve Him, faithfully give, and are living to honor Jesus Christ. Because of this righteous remnant, God has protected this nation. I believe America is still great and I believe it is still great because of the righteous remnant that is here. Because of that righteous remnant, God has blessed this nation.

You need to do right and SHINE as a believer, so God will continue to use you. As you do right, God will preserve this nation for His name sake through you, and you will SHINE.

SHINE Devotional

Week 22 – Lesson 5



America Is Great Because of Her Support for the Nation of Israel

Scripture reading Genesis 12:3

“And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.”

In Genesis 11, God divided the nations at the tower of Babel. After He divided the nations, He went down to a city called Ur and called a man named Abram to build a special nation. Abram’s name was changed to Abraham, and from Abraham came Isaac, and from Isaac came Jacob. Jacob had twelve sons and his twelve sons made up the twelve tribes of Israel and a nation was born. This nation was created for one reason, to represent God. When that nation obeys God, God blesses them. Throughout history when they have been in disobedience to God, God has chastened them. God made promises to this nation that are yet to be fulfilled. In 1948, God restored the nation of Israel to its land. Even today Jewish people migrate to the land of Israel. Israel is unlike any nation, for it is a nation that represents God on this planet. For that reason, God said to the father of that nation in Genesis 12:2, *“And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.”* God promised to bless the nation that blesses or speaks well of Israel.

I believe that God has blessed America and made America great because of our relationship with the nation of Israel. America has been a sanctuary for Jewish people who have fled from persecution in other countries. Since the reestablishment of Israel as a nation, America has been its closest ally. In 2017, President Donald Trump recognized the city of Jerusalem as the capital of the nation of Israel. He has been a very strong friend of that nation. The more favor that America shows towards Israel, the more favor God will show toward America. America is not great because she is filled with people who do not sin. She is great because God has chosen to make her great because she has followed certain principles. The biblical principle that God will bless the nation that befriends Israel is still valid today. Let me encourage you to pray for the peace of Jerusalem. Let me encourage you to support those politicians who are profoundly pro-Israel. God’s Word is clear. He will bless those who bless Israel. I encourage to do that and as you do, you will SHINE.

SHINE Devotional

Week 22 – Lesson 6



America Is Great Because of Her Respect for Life

Scripture reading Exodus 20:13

“Thou shalt not kill.”

The Word of God is very clear. Life was created by God. Human life was created in the likeness of God. *“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.”* (Genesis 1:26-27). From her very beginning, America has valued life. In the Declaration of Independence our nation’s founding fathers wrote, *“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.”* From the very beginning, we as Americans have proclaimed and defended the fundamental belief that human life is precious because it was created in the image and likeness of God. This past Monday, our nation celebrated Memorial Day. This is a day where we honor brave military men and women who have sacrificed their lives so that we could enjoy privilege of freedom. If people or nations do not have respect and protection for both the born and unborn, all other professed morals and values are meaningless. The dignity of human life is not just a principle of the Bible, it is the first principle of any civilized society. There is no greater privilege than to hold in your hand a life given to you by God.

One month ago today, God blessed my wife and I with a brand new grandchild. Her name is Emma Mae. I am so glad she was born in America. She is the fourth child of our fourth child, Faith Elizabeth. In the socialist country of China, she would have been considered property of the state and, frankly, unwanted property. She would have been forcibly aborted because of the one child rule that was enforced by the communist state of China. Because America values life, we were allowed to raise five children and now have the privilege of enjoying our eighteen grandchildren. Life is precious to God and God has blessed America because America has stood for the dignity of life. I encourage you to honor life. When you do you will SHINE.