**RIGHTEOUSNESS EXALTS A NATION**

Alexis de Tocqueville, a Frenchman who came to America in 1831 to observe our new nation’s growth, wrote a book in 1835 on his findings called *Democracy in America*. It is still used in political science classes in major universities today. In it he wrote this:

“I sought for the greatness and genius of America in her commodious harbors and her ample rivers - and it was not there . . . in her fertile fields and boundless forests - and it was not there . . . in her rich mines and her vast world commerce - and it was not there . . . in her democratic Congress and her matchless Constitution - and it was not there. Not until I went into the churches of America and heard her pulpits flame with righteousness did I understand the secret of her genius and power. America is great because she is good, and if America ever ceases to be good, she will cease to be great.”

“America is great because she is good, and if America ever ceases to be good, she will cease to be great.” And all of God’s people said, “Amen!”

This got my mind to thinking about something Solomon said in Proverbs 14:34,  
*34* ***Righteousness exalts a nation****, But sin is a reproach to any people.*

When God gave the young new king a request of anything he wanted he wisely asked for wisdom (I Kgs. 3:9). God did just that. *“I have given you a wise and understanding heart, so that there has not been anyone like you before you, nor shall any like you arise after you”* (3:12*).* Keep reading. It goes on to say in I Kgs. 4:29-32,

*29 And God gave Solomon wisdom and exceedingly great understanding, and largeness of heart like the sand on the seashore. 30 Thus Solomon’s wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the men of the East and all the wisdom of Egypt. 31 For he was wiser than all men … and his fame was in all the surrounding nations. 32 He spoke three thousand proverbs, and his songs were one thousand and five.”*

So what he says in our reading today needs to be shouted from the roof tops and read in every family room in America. This is not mere philosophy. It is inspired revelation! It is *GOD* speaking. He is telling us how to fix this mess we are now in.

Oh that the pulpits in America would once again “flame with righteousness” by proclaiming boldly and without fear or favor these words:

“*Righteousness exalts a nation*, but sin is a reproach to any people.”

The cycle of America, as with the cycle of all nations, is as certain as today’s rising sun. All one has to do is read the book of Judges to see the cycle of Israel’s rise and fall. But then if that does not convince you then read your history books. Tell me, where is the glory of Egypt today? Or Assyria? Or Babylon? Or Persia? Or Greece? Or Rome? They all sit on the ash heap of history.

If ancient history doesn’t move you, then tell me of more modern empires like Spain, France, Great Britain, Germany, Japan, or Russia? Hitler boasted his Third Reich would last a thousand years. Stalin and Chairman Mao claimed their countries would rule the world. Nikita Khrushchev bragged, “Russia will bury America without firing a shot!” Where are they now?

The stages of national decline are engrained in nature. As you sow, you reap (Gal. 6:7). If you sow to the wind, you reap the whirlwind (Hosea 8:7). History has proven again and again there are ten stages of nations that rise and fall. These stages are:

Stage 1. Moves from bondage to spiritual faith.

Stage 2. Moves from spiritual faith to great courage.

Stage 3. Moves from great courage to liberty.

Stage 4. Moves from liberty to abundance.

Stage 5 Moves from abundance to selfishness.

Stage 6 Moves from selfishness to complacency.

Stage 7 Moves from complacency to apathy.

Stage 8 Moves from apathy to moral decay.

Stage 9 Moves from moral decay to dependence

Stage 10 Moves from dependence to bondage.

This is the same cycle found in the book of Judges. Whether it is Israel, or America, God always declares this fact: “*Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people*.” What God told Solomon at the dedication of the temple holds true for all people of all time. 2 Chronicles 7:14 says,

*“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.”*

Our nation has fought a war of revolution to gain her independence from tyranny. She has fought a bloody civil war to correct an injustice called slavery. She has fought two world wars to help free nations from prejudices like Fascism and Nazism. She has “fought” a cold war, along with hot wars (Korea, Vietnam), to stop the spread of Communism which seeks to enslave its people. As Lee Greenwood sings, I’m proud to be an American.

When I was a kid we started each day in school pledging allegiance to the flag and said, “one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.” We then all bowed our heads and said, “Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name…” My teachers read to us from the Bible and corrected us for taking God’s name in vain. But God has been taken from our schools, and from our national dialogue. And we then wonder why there is anarchy in the streets and hatred in the hearts.

So we must be the “*people who are called by My name*” who will humble ourselves, pray, seek God’s face, and lead the nation by turning from wicked ways, then converting others to this noble cause. God said He will then “*hear from heaven, forgive their sin and heal their land*.” Indeed, righteousness exalts a nation. Let us be righteous. Let us pray.

Until tomorrow… “*the prayers of a righteous man avail much*” (Jam. 5:16).

I love America. I love you.

Rick