

GOD BLESS AMERICA

What a great country! We have so much freedom in this country because of the actions of those who came before us. God surely did "shed His grace on thee." But what about recent events? Sept 11, 2001, is still an open wound in many people's minds. And the crime rate! Where is God today? He is obviously not shedding His grace on us today! What changed?

God 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 will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land."¹ God insists that if we want Him to bless these great United States, we are to quit justifying ourselves in the areas where God says we are wrong. I'm about to say something very radical.

It's our patriotic duty to humble ourselves and pray!

Being humble is a difficult thing to do, but we owe it to the many thousands that have given their lives for our freedom in this great country. It's the only thing we can do to ensure the continuance of America. God gives us the standard by which He determines the "thought and intents"² of our hearts.

The Ten commandments stand as an eternal yardstick that we can use to compare ourselves. We must use these commandments, because if we judge ourselves based on the actions of our neighbors, then the standard becomes corrupted. The bible says "they who measure themselves by themselves, and compare themselves among themselves, are not wise."³ If you compare yourself to some people you are relatively rich, but if you compare yourself to someone else you are relatively poor.

We need a real, unchanging standard.

So, while we are asking God to bless America, let's look at how we've blessed God by adhering to His standard.

1. Have you ever lied? In God's eyes there is no such thing as a little white lie, a story, or a fib. They are all lies. What do we call people who tell lies? A liar. Won't you admit you are a liar?⁴
2. Have you ever taken something that wasn't yours? Even something small, like an ink pen, a paper clip or a stick of gum? Sure you have. But in the same respect that I can not go into your purse or wallet and take out one dollar without being a thief, neither can you. God does not care about the value of the thing you have stolen. What do we call people who steal? A thief. Won't you admit you are a thief?⁵

You say these are all things in the past? Just as man doesn't have a statute of limitations on some crimes, God has no statute of limitations at all!

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3. Have you ever looked at someone and lusted? "That person is HOT!". Jesus says "if you look upon someone with lust in your heart, then you have committed adultery with him or her in your heart already"⁶. Men are worse at this than women, but this is yet another sin we can all relate to. We are all adulterers in the light of God's law.⁷
4. Have you ever been angry with someone? Sure you have. There are so many injustices today. People act and drive and live without any respect for anyone else. And that makes us angry. Jesus said if you are "angry with your brother"⁸ then you have just committed murder in your heart.⁹

We would all like to think we are good people. But when we look at God's standard, we find that we are lying, adulterating thieves that commit murder. And we've only looked at four of the Ten Commandments. Can God bless America when we are like this?

Based on the Ten Commandments, if you were to die today and stand before God, would He find you innocent or guilty? C'mon. Try to be honest with yourself and be humble to God! If you break the law, and you know you've broken the law, and the judge finds you guilty of breaking the law, then aren't you subject to the punishment that is fitting of this law? Hell awaits everyone who has ever broken even ONE of God's commandments. God says "...the wages of sin is death..."¹⁰ and anyone who transgresses His law shall die.¹¹ Harsh? Yes, but God demands perfection. The bible reminds us "there is none righteous, no not one...For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."¹²

Fortunately, as we are being led away to hell for our transgressions, someone perfect steps up to the judge and says, "Because I love this person so much, I'll pay the penalty for their sins!" Who is this person? Jesus. Blessed Jesus. The bible says, "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us".¹³ This was God's plan from the very beginning¹⁴...that we would depend on Him for our very lives.

Jesus is God¹⁵ and knew what the penalty was for our sin. As God, He also knew we could not meet the requirement of perfection in order to get to heaven. So Jesus became a man, because only a man can suffer and die (God can't). He came to earth specifically for the purpose of dying on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins. Then He rose from the dead to purchase a place in heaven for us.¹⁶

Because of His sacrifice we have taken on His perfection – we are made perfect IN HIM.

And now He offers heaven, eternal life, to you and me as a free gift. The bible gives us the good news that "the wages of sin is death, but the GIFT of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord."¹⁷ I don't want you to go to hell, you don't want to go to hell. God doesn't want you to go to hell. It's unanimous! Give God His rightful place so He can show you He loves you, and then heal our land. How can we get this gift? The bible tells us that we can receive this gift by saving faith. It says "...For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the GIFT of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast."¹⁸ It can't be based on what we do, or we could boast that WE did it. Saving faith is different from what we generally see today.

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Head Knowledge.

Some people substitute head knowledge for saving faith. They know this and that and hundreds of other things ABOUT Jesus, but they don't KNOW Jesus. After-all, the bible tells us that "even the demons believe in God, and yet tremble in fear"¹⁹ because they know they are headed for hell.

Temporal Faith.

Some folks have a prayer life like this. They pray their alarm works in the morning. They pray the coffeepot came on like it was supposed to. They pray their car will start. And on and on and on. As each prayer is met, they quit praying for it, because they only pray about earthly, temporary things.

But saving faith is "trusting in Jesus Christ"²⁰ alone for eternal life. Every time you sit in a chair you exercise a kind of saving faith in the chair. If you didn't think it would hold you up, you wouldn't sit in it. Or you could put on a parachute because you know your airplane is about to crash, so you exercise a kind of saving faith in the parachute. Our life is about to crash. God knows how many heartbeats we have left on this earth. The statistic is that 10 out of every 10 people die. We need to put on the parachute. The bible says we are to "put on Christ"²¹ in the same way. Trust in Him fully. Move from trusting in our own ways, our own righteousness, and justifying our actions, thoughts and motives and replace it with full submission to God through Christ Jesus. Then the gratitude for Him paying the penalty for your sins will result in a change in your lifestyle and you'll turn from your wicked ways by your own choice. "We love Him because He first loved us"²².

Humble yourself before God. Pray and ask Him to forgive your sins. Give Him control of your life so He will heal our land. In the bargain, you'll receive an eternity in heaven. This satisfies the following commandments:

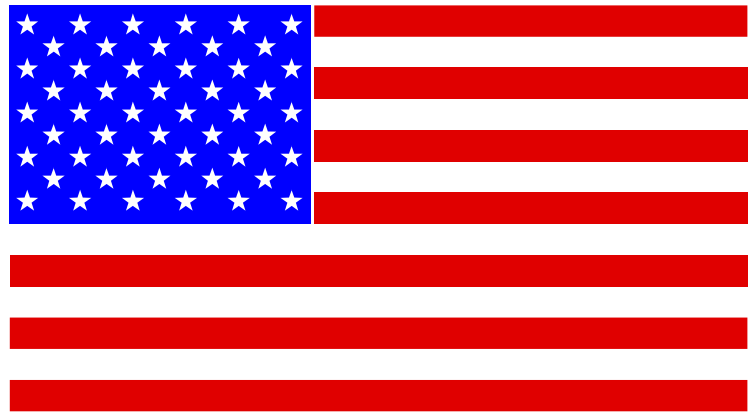
"THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE LORD; AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH." "The second is this, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' There is no other Commandment greater than these."²³

I hope to see you there.

For more information, write to:

FullNet@tampabay.rr.com

- 1 = 2 Chron 7:14
- 2 = Heb 4:12
- 3 = 1 Cor 10:12
- 4 = Ex 20:16/Matt 19:18
- 5 = Ex 20:15/Matt 19:18
- 6 = Matt 5:28
- 7 = Ex 20:14
- 8 = Matt 5:21
- 9 = Ex 20:13
- 10 = Romans 6:23
- 11 = Prov 19:16 / Jer 31:30
- 12 = Rom 3:10 & 3:23
- 13 = Rom 5:8
- 14 = Is 53:10
- 15 = John 1:1 & 1:14, John 8:58, John 10:30
- 16 = Rom 4:25
- 17 = Rom 8:23
- 18 = Eph 2:8&9
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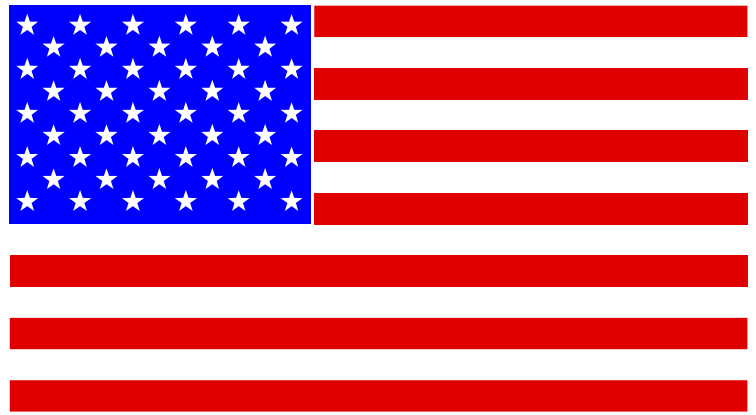
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