WHY FASTING AND PRAYER

2 Chronicles 7:13&14 “When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command locusts to devour the land or send a plague among my people, 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 I will forgive their sin and heal their land.”

Are There Problems?

“The latest map from the drought monitor shows that 90% of what it considers the West – California, Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Montana – is in drought. Conditions are ‘severe’ or ‘exceptional’ in about half the region. Colorado, Wyoming, Southwestern Texas and North and South Dakota are also affected.” Map from United States Drought Monitor

Meanwhile much of the Eastern United States is experiencing too much rain.

The modern term for plague is pandemic. Covid – 19 has hit the entire world, and the United States, very hard and as new variants arise, it may be around for a long time.

“The 2019-2021 locust infestation is a pest outbreak of desert locusts which is threatening the food supply across the regions of East Africa, the Arabian Peninsula and the Indian subcontinent.” (Wikipedia) It has now subsided.

We have just left Afghanistan after 20 years of fighting, leaving the Taliban firmly in control. The United States has not clearly won a major war since World War II.

Isaiah 5:20 Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.

Fasting and Humbling Oneself

I Kings 21:27&28 When Ahab heard these words, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and fasted. He lay in sackcloth and went around meekly. Then the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite:

I Kings 21:29 “Have you noticed how Ahab has humbled himself before me? Because he has humbled himself, I will not bring this disaster in his day, but I will bring it on his house in the days of his son.”

Ezra 8:21 There, by the Ahava Canal, I proclaimed a fast, so that we might humble ourselves before our God and ask him for a safe journey for us and our children, with all our possessions.

Daniel 9:3 So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes.

Matthew 6:16-18 “When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret will reward you.”

Who Are My People Who Are Called by My Name?

Acts 15:16-18 (ESV) “After this I will return, and will rebuild the tent of David that has fallen; I will rebuild its ruins, and I will restore it, that the remnant of mankind may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who are called by my name, says the Lord, who makes theses things known from of old.”

But Isn’t Apostasy and Judgment Inevitable?

Matthew 24:1-12(ESV) “And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. And because lawlessness will be increase, the love of many will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.” (emphasis added)

Acts 2:16-18 No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: “In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.”

How Should We Be Praying?

We should admit we are an integral part of the problem: Matthew 5:13 “You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.”

Luke 6:26 “Woe to you when everyone speaks well of you, for that is how their ancestors treated the false prophets.”

Ezekiel 16:49&50 “ ‘Now this was the sin of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters were arrogant, overfed and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy. They were haughty and did detestable things before me. Therefore I did away with them as you have seen.’ “

The most literal translation of “unconcerned” is probably (had) “undisturbed ease.”

Jeremiah 48:11 “Moab has been at rest from youth, like wine left on its dregs, not poured from one jar to another – she has not gone into exile. So she tastes as she did, and her aroma is unchanged.”

We should admit God is righteous in His judging us, we should ask for forgiveness, we should ask God to intervene for His Name’s sake (Ezekiel 36:16-32): Daniel 9:4-19 is an excellent example of this kind of prayer.

2 Kings 24:3&4 Surely these things happened to Judah according to the LORD’s command, in order to remove them from his presence because of the sins of Manasseh and all he had done, including the shedding of innocent blood. For he had filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, and the LORD was not willing to forgive.

Fasting and Prayer Used to Be a Part of What the United States Was

Abraham Lincoln’s Called for National Humiliation, Fasting and Prayer

Things to Remember

There are plenty of reasons to believe the Lord is unhappy with us.

2 Chronicles 7:14 is the appropriate response.

Fasting is a biblical way of humbling ourselves.

We need to fast and pray:

Admitting we are a part of the problem.

Admitting we deserve what is happening.

Asking God to forgive us.

Asking God to intervene for His Name’s sake.