

God Is Not Mocked - Gal 6:7, Lam 3:37-44

Introduction – The week is already full of patriotic pride and melodramatic memorials. Patriotism is good in its place, and weeping with those who weep is appropriate. But the foundational issue by which this nation will ultimately stand or fall is repentance. As a nation, we continue in our outright rebellion of God's laws, and our embrace of the god of tolerism and his brother, relativism, to the exclusion of the only true God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ., the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of all creation, the God who has brought this judgment upon us.

Texts: *“Do not be deceived. God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap”* (Gal 6:7). *“Who is he who speaks and it comes to pass when the Lord has not commanded it?.....Let us search out and examine our ways, and turn back to the Lord....”* (Lam 3:37-44).

A World of Cause and Effect (Gal 6:7-9) – This is the way God made the world, and we are instructed and warned in Galatians to make sure we take notice of this fact. When a man acts in a certain way, certain things will follow. When a nation acts in a certain way, certain things will follow. Verse 9 clarifies for us that the world does not work in this way like a vending machine, but more like a farm. “In due season” instructs us to not be too hasty to determine the connections. We must search and examine ourselves – in light of the Word.

Commanded to Examine (Lam 3:37-44) – God commands His people to look carefully at why a tragedy has befallen Jerusalem. God Did It (vv 37-38) – *“If there is calamity in a city, will not the Lord have done it?”* (Amos 3:6). Conversely, this passage declares that a man cannot do anything that the Lord has not decreed will happen. When pleasant events occur, God has decreed it. When woeful things occur, God wasn't caught by surprise.

Better Than We Deserve (v39) – Some will deny that these are judgments from the hand of God, because God would never treat us in such a way. In such statements, we deny the utter holiness of God. Jesus was not afraid to speak of judgment upon cities (Matt 11:20-24, 24:1-2). However, this is not to say that the wicked acts of free moral agents are not still deemed wicked and worthy of God's judgment. Terrorists will reap what they sow as well.

An Appropriate Examination (vv40-44) – An exam presupposes a standard. God's Word alone must judge us, our actions, our thoughts, our motives, our loyalties. Godly examination turns us to the Lord (v40), not to ourselves for salvation or forgiveness. A contrite heart and hands lifted to God in heaven expresses our trust in Him alone, not in our 'chariots' (v41). True repentance comes when we see that God is our enemy for we have sinned against Him (vv42-43). And when God does not turn the enemies away, we must carefully consider if He is purposefully ignoring our prayers (v44).

Mourning and Hope (Joel 2:12-17) – Christians must mourn when they are a part of the sin directly (and we are), and they must mourn when they are connected to the sin as of a nation. In fact, it is only after God has granted some repentance and obedience that any can rend their hearts and not their garments. And when they turn to God, they will know that they are turning to a God who is merciful, who does relent, who does forgive, who is great in kindness (vv12-14), who has given His Son for the salvation of the world.

Conclusions – Why have we called upon our church to fast and pray?

We Are More Vulnerable Than Ever – If my child continues to rebel after I have disciplined him, should he expect more? Our nation speaks of our vulnerability in terms of airport scanning devices, satellite surveillance systems, and defense against weapons of mass destruction. But no one is speaking fundamentally to the issue: God's warning did not lead us to repentance. And so, we should humble ourselves with prayer and fasting.

The Church Leads the Way (1 Pet 4:17) – We, the church, lead the way in teaching moral relativism, polytheism, and historical revisionism as well as selfish neglect of the poor and weak among us. The scriptures are not treated as the only final and infallible authority for our faith (what we believe) and what we practice (in worship and in our lives). Hypocrisy is even more ugly when it is practiced by those claiming to follow Christ. We must examine our own hearts, our own homes, this local church, our denomination, as well as the church at large. And so, we should humble ourselves with prayer and fasting.

Praying Against Enemies – Enemies of the church are to be engaged by a spiritual warfare, for we are ministers of reconciliation. Our calling as His church is to declare all men to repent and believe upon the Lord Jesus Christ. When a nation (whose God is the Lord) is attacked by enemies, they are to be engaged with military might (Rom 13) for that nation is a minister of vengeance. Paul and Barnabas were sent with much prayer and fasting. Jehoshaphat called for prayer and fasting as he prepared his military offensive. And so, we should humble ourselves with prayer and fasting.

God is Merciful – A year has gone by and we have been spared so much as a nation. Are we grateful, and are we grateful to God? If so, we can pray, “Who knows if He will turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind Him –“ (Joel 2:14). If we are not, then this year of relative safety has simply been the 'due season' where the seed of unbelief and rebellion is about to sprout. And we will reap what we have sown. And so, we should humble ourselves with prayer and fasting.