

What Does It Mean?

Contra Costa Gospel Church
Adult Sunday School

2 Chronicles 7:14

[NIV] “...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 will heal their land.”

[NAS] “...and My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land.”

[NKJ] “...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.”

[ESV] “...if my people who are called by my name 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.”

[NLT] “Then if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and heal their land.”

Small groups:

- 1) Are you familiar with this passage? What is your experience with this verse? Where might you have seen it before?
- 2) The first Thursday of every May has been designated by the US Congress as the National Day of Prayer. Every year on this day Americans are encouraged to pray and meditate to God, even by proclamation by the President of the United States.

The National Day of Prayer Task Force is an independent organization whose aim is to help organize this event and mobilize Christians to pray. The current Chairperson of the Task Force is Shirley Dobson, wife of Dr. James Dobson (from Focus on the Family).

Please read this short excerpt of an article from the Task Force’s website. The article is entitled, “A Time to Pray” (nationaldayofprayer.org/a-time-to-pray/)

“...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 will heal their land.” 2 Chronicles 7:14

Second Chronicles 7:14 contains a remarkable promise from the Almighty God that speaks of forgiveness and healing for nations and for believers. But as awesome a prophetic promise as it is for America, maybe believers forget that it is a conditional promise. When believers meet His conditions, God will honor His promise.

As we look at this country, we see a nation that is morally bankrupt and in spiritual decline. Vulgarity, indecency, obscenities, lies, and corruption are today's norm. Economic struggles, terrorist threats, sexual immorality, and the breakdown of families are just a few problems our country faces. We are a fractured people and nation, and we need healing through God's divine intervention.

Incidentally, about a year ago, Governor Terry Branstad of Iowa signed a proclamation declaring July 14, 2014 as a day of prayer, fasting and repentance in Iowa. This date was chosen as a symbolic reference to 2 Chronicles 7:14 (7/14/14).

- 3) The article above fairly accurately represents the cursory understanding of this passage. According to the article, what can we expect to happen if America begins to pray in earnest?
- 4) According to the cursory understanding of such a passage, what is the reason for America's decline at the moment? And how is this decline evidenced? In other words, what "signs" do we see in America that demonstrate that this country is in fact in decline?

All together:

- 5) It is always helpful when evaluating a text like this to consider the context of the passage in question, both the larger context (which book, which chapter in the book) and the immediate context (the verses before and after). In the larger context, we see Israel at somewhat of a spiritual high. Solomon has just finished the Temple and is leading the people in their dedication/consecration of the Temple for the Lord's work. This chapter describes that ceremony.

In the immediate context, the Lord has a private conversation with Solomon beginning in v. 12. In v. 13, God speaks of times when there might be no rain, or pestilence over the land and crops. According to Deuteronomy 28:15-24, why would God ever cause this to happen to Israel?

- 6) What kind of relationship did the Lord enter into with Israel at Mt. Sinai? See 2 Chronicles 7:15-22. How would we describe this relationship?
- 7) Like other passages that are misunderstood, what is the starkest error committed in interpreting this passage by those who take the cursory understanding?