

NATIONS BLESSED BY GOD: PRESCRIPTION FOR GOOD, FREE, SECURE SOCIETIES

Part I of GOD AND NATIONS Series
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Every person desires and needs loving relationships and a family, freedom, sufficient provision, protection from injustice, and a safe and secure environment to live and thrive. That's the way the Creator made us, but how can these blessings best be secured? The blessings of the Living God contained in the list of characteristics below are available to any people that choose to worship and obey Him, and follow the wisdom He has given for relationships, family, church, society, business, and civil government. It may surprise you how many of these characteristics we take for granted because we do not know they come from Him for our good. The eternal principles, commandments, and laws of God given in the Bible are pure and good, revealing how any person or nation can live in right relationship with Him and each other. Yet because of our fallen, sinful, prideful, rebellious human nature, living this way is possible only through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit dwelling in us. When people do what is right out of love and reverential fear of God, and love for one another, they reveal the Law of God written on their hearts, which is in perfect harmony with a pure conscience. Because such people are self-governing and responsible, they can sustain maximum liberty with little government. As long as they trust in God and live righteously (though imperfectly), He will ensure they live in security and overcome enemies. While every person and nation are free to follow or reject any aspect of God's wisdom, the reality is that at every point we choose a contrary way, negative effects always result – whether or not perceived, whether immediate or eventual, yet precisely the consequences that God gives us the opportunity to avoid.

Characteristics of a Nation Devoted to & Blessed by the Sovereign LORD

No person, family, or nation is or will ever be perfect in this life, which is why we need the grace of God, repentance, and forgiveness through Jesus Christ to live in right relationship with each other. The following are some of the vital aspects of creating the best possible society in our fallen human state. These noble characteristics were *imperfectly* true of ancient Israel during periods of its history, as well as in the United States and other nations for parts of their histories, but never by all the people in any nation.

Relationship to God:

- God has “raised up ... prophets and ... Nazarites” devoted to Him and speaking His Word and will to the nation (Amos 2:11).
- The people reverentially fear, trust, and worship God, obey His Commandments and Law, honor their leaders, respect one another, and are self-governing and responsible (Genesis 26:4-5; Exodus 20:1-17; Deuteronomy 6:13; 10:12-13; 13:4; 30:15-20; Joshua 24:14-15; Psalm 103:2-5; Jeremiah 9:23-24; Micah 6:8; Matt. 4:10; 22:37-38). 1:7; 9:10; 15:33; John 1:14, 17; 8:31-32; 14:16-17; 16:13; 17:17; 18:37; Col. 2:3).
- The leaders and people look to God and the Bible as the primary source for wisdom, truth, and the foundations for each area of knowledge (Nehemiah 9:13-14; Proverbs 1:7; 9:10; 15:33; John 1:14, 17; 8:31-32; 14:16-17; 16:13; 17:17; 18:37; Colossians 2:3).

- The knowledge of God and His wonderful acts are passed successively from one generation to the next (Deuteronomy 4:9; 6:20-25; Psalm 22:30-31; 145:4-13).

Liberty, Religious Liberty, Freedom of Speech, other Inherent Human Rights:

- Liberty was given by the Creator to all mankind, but this gift was given to provide every person with the opportunity to know Him and live in right relationship to Him and one another; it comes with accountability to Him; it was not given as an absolute freedom to do whatever we want, even though we are free to abuse the gift (Genesis 1:26, 28; 2:7-8, 15-17; 3:1-19, 22-24; Leviticus 25:10; Psalm 119:45; Isaiah 58:6; 61:1; Jeremiah 34:12-17; Romans 13:10; II Corinthians 3:17; Galatians 5:13-14; I Peter 2:16).
- Religious liberty, and freedom of conscience and belief, are respected and protected; places of worship are held sacred, free of government interference, taxation, or control (John 8:31-32; I Corinthians 8:9; II Corinthians 3:17; Galatians 5:1).
- Freedom of speech (Biblically, every person is free to say anything as long as they do not curse, lie or bear false witness, slander, or otherwise harm another person).
- Other inherent human rights are protected by law, including: the sanctity of human life; the freedom and right to marry, and bear or adopt children; the sanctity of each individual family unit; the responsibility to work and provide for one's self and family; the right to own private property; freedom of movement and travel; etc.

The Church:

- The Christian Church and Jewish Temple, their leaders and members, are a tremendous influence for righteousness, truth, grace, and good (Psalm 15; 33:4-5; 45:4; Isaiah 9:7; Matthew 5:2-16; John 1:14, 17; II Corinthians 5:21; I Timothy 3:15; II Timothy 2:15).
- Church leaders and pastors are shepherding over their people well (Matthew 20:25-28; John 13:5-17; I Timothy 3:1-7; 5:17; I Peter 5:1-4).
- Families, towns, cities, and the nation keep the Sabbath or LORD's Day holy by closing all businesses, schools, and government offices on that day, except for critical and security services, even though unbelievers may not (Genesis 2:2; Exodus 20:8-11; Nehemiah 13:15-22; Isaiah 58:13-14; Matthew 13:10-17; 14:1-6).

People, Women, Posterity, Foreigners:

- Women are respected and honored as created in the image of God, with equal standing before Him, with some responsibilities identical to men, a few distinct capacities and roles that differ from men, and a few roles they were not given (Genesis 1:26-28; 5:2; Matt. 12:48-50; 19:9; 26:6-13; 27:55-56, 61; 28:1-10; John 4:7-30; 8:1-11; Galatians 3:26-29; Gen. 2:18; 3:20; 4:1; 14:14; Numbers 1:2-17, 20-21, etc.; 3:1-3; Joshua 1:14).
- Posterity – preparation for and careful consideration of the impact of every decision, action, or policy on future generations – are of foremost concern of parents and leaders (Genesis 18:19; Deuteronomy 1:8; 4:9-10; 11:20; Psalm 22:30-31; 102:18, 28).
- The people care for, forgive, and extend grace to one another (Exodus 22:21; 23:9; Matthew 5:3-9, 43-48; 7:12; 18:21-35; 22:39; Luke 6:27-38; 23:34; Romans 13:8).
- The people “speak the truth to one another” (Zechariah 8:16; Ephesians 4:25).
- The people do not “devise evil” against each other or commit perjury; those who do are corrected or punished (Zechariah 7:9-10; 8:17; Romans 13:3-4).
- They honor strangers and are a blessing to the people of other nations (Genesis 12:2-3; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14; Exodus 22:21; 23:9; Zechariah 8:13; Acts 3:25; Galatians 3:8).

Human Life, Male & Female, Sexuality, Marriage, Children, Family, Education:

- From conception or fertilization to natural death, every human life is recognized as created by God, in His image, protected as a precious gift, with each individual having inestimable worth (Genesis 1:26-27; 5:1-2; Job 10:10-12; 31:15; 33:4; Psalm 139:13-16; Ecclesiastes 11:5; Isaiah 49:1, 5; Jeremiah 1:5; Luke 1:5 – 2:38).
- Human life is protected in law by prohibiting abortion and infanticide (Exodus 20:13; Leviticus 18:21; 20:1-5; Deuteronomy 18:10; 12:31).
- Mankind is affirmed as created by God as male or female, with identical and distinct aspects of His image within them; any gender confusion is a result emotional wounds, deception or sin, and can be healed through the grace and truth in Jesus Christ (Genesis 1:27; Matthew 19:4; I Corinthians 6:9-11).
- Human sexual relations are sanctioned and protected only within the covenant of marriage; immorality, adultery, rape, and incest are prohibited as sinful (Genesis 4:1; Matthew 1:24-25; Luke 1:5-7, 13, 23-24, 57; I Corinthians 7:1-9; Genesis 25:19-21; 34:1-7, 25-26, 31; II Samuel 11:1-5, 26-27; 12:1-18; 13:1-19; I Thessalonians 4:3-8).
- Marriage as designed by the Creator is highly valued, as a lifetime covenant between a man and a woman; adultery and divorce are rare (Genesis 2:18-25; Exodus 20:14, 17; Matthew 19:3-9; Romans 7:1-3; I Corinthians 7:10-15, 39; Ephesians 5:31, 33).
- Husbands love and cherish their wives, and faithfully fulfill their duties to lead, provide for, and protect them and their children (Genesis 2:7, 18, 21-24; 12:1-5; 35:1-4; Ex. 1:1; 6:14, 25; Num. 1:2; II Samuel 2:2-3; Eph. 5:22-29; Col. 3:18-19; I Peter 3:1-14).
- Wives honor and respect their husbands, and manage their households well (above).
- Children are viewed as blessings from God, and are cherished and protected (Genesis 4:1-2; 26:1-3; I Samuel 1:11-20; Matthew 18:1-6; 19:13-15).
- The God-given authority of parents over their children is honored and respected (but not for those who abuse and severely neglect their children). Parents diligently teach their children the ways of God, and the foundations for Truth in the Bible for every area of knowledge. Parents' authority to teach or oversee the education of their children is honored by society and government (Genesis 18:19; Deuteronomy 4:9-10; 6:4-9; 11:18-20; Proverbs 1:8; 6:20; 22:6; 23:22; Ephesians 6:1-4; Colossians 3:20-21).
- Pedophilia, Homosexuality, Lesbianism, Bestiality, and all other sexually deviant behaviors are prohibited by law; while every individual is respected as created in the image of God and compassion is extended, such behaviors are recognized and abhorred as immoral, and not respected, encouraged, or sanctioned in any way.

Civil Government, Justice, Separation of Powers, Taxes:

- The civil government does not interfere with the church or clergy, or restrict the freedom of religion, except in its role of prosecuting criminal wrongs.
- Civil government power is separated into three branches: legislative, executive, and judicial. This is because of the fallen, sinful nature of man, who is easily corrupted by power. God alone is totally righteous and able to hold all powers (Isaiah 33:22).
- Citizens choose, or officials appoint, their rulers, officers, and judges wisely (Exodus 18:21; Leviticus 19:15; Deuteronomy 1:13-17; 16:18-20; II Chronicles 19:5-11).
- Courageous and righteous leaders fear, trust, and worship God, have integrity, do what is right, demonstrate God's Law written on their hearts, make laws and policies consistent with the 10 Commandments and Laws of God [the only fixed standard], and honor God publicly (e.g., Moses, Joshua, David, Solomon; George Washington, John Adams, James Madison, John Quincy Adams, Abraham Lincoln).

- Unity in leadership for the benefit of the people and nation (Joshua 1:16-17).
- Leaders who humble themselves when the authority entrusted to them is questioned or they do wrong (e.g., Moses, Numbers 12:1-3; David, II Samuel 12:13).
- Those in government have clear discernment about what is good and what is evil; they create secure communities by enforcing just laws with equity, doing justice, prosecuting and punishing those who do something evil, and cleansing their communities from bloodguiltiness by putting to death those who are proven guilty of intentionally shedding innocent blood [with possible opportunity for pardon or reduced sentence for genuine repentance] (Genesis 4:8-11; 9:1, 6; Exodus 20:8-16; 21:12-14; Numbers 35:30-31, 33; Deuteronomy 16:18-20; 17:6; 19:10-21; II Samuel 8:15; 12:9-14; I Kings 3:9-12, 28; 10:9; Jeremiah 22:3; Zechariah 7:9; 8:16; John 7:51; 8:17; Romans 13:1-4; I Corinthians 6:9-11; I Timothy 1:8-11; Revelation 9:21; When most leaders and people were more righteous in the United States, in many communities our children played freely anywhere and we didn't need to lock our houses or cars).
- Taxes are the same rate for every citizen (10 percent or less), and are low because civil government is small (I Samuel 8:15, 17; Matthew 17:24-27; 22:17-21; Romans 13:6).

Peace, National Security, Military:

- Secure communities and peace within own borders (Leviticus 26:1-6; II Samuel 7:1, 11; I Kings 4:24-25; I Chronicles 22:9; II Chronicles 20:29-30; Isaiah 32:15-18; Jeremiah 7:5-7; Zechariah).
- Victory over enemies (Leviticus 26:1-3, 7-8; II Chronicles 20. As recorded in Joshua, ancient Israel conquered at least 34 kings and kingdoms with no recorded loss of life, except at Ai where some disobeyed the LORD's command. In later generations, Israel was repeatedly defeated and oppressed by enemies as a result of their sin. Then King David, a man after God's own heart, and his army defeated all their enemies, and never suffered a defeat. Likewise, the USA lived in security, and was never defeated in war, during all the generations its leaders and most of the people feared God. The Civil War was a judgment of God for slavery, after which He blessed the nation.)

Business, Prosperity:

- Businesses and an economy that is growing and flourishing (Genesis 26:12; Leviticus 26:1-5; Deuteronomy 8:18; 28:1-14; II Chronicles 14:7; 26:5; Job 1:1-3; Isaiah 32:15-16, 20; Proverbs 10:22; Hosea 2:8; Zechariah 8:12).