

GLOBAL LIFE CAMPAIGN™

How Should We Respond to God During a National Crisis? Part 2

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Last week, on 7 May 2020, was the National Day of Prayer in the United States. That sacred time together appropriately included worship, reading Scriptures, prayers, encouragement and short homilies. I joined in for most of the White House and evening virtual assemblies, and was amazed to see President Donald Trump as MC of the White House event. But I was grieved that the focus seemed to be on getting through this pandemic crisis, and proclaiming God would bring us out this crisis even stronger, as if we were a nation without sin and could gain His blessings without repentance. If the history of nations is accurate, then I think not!

On 30 March 2020, I wrote the first brief titled, “How Should We Respond to God During a National Crisis? (see at: www.GlobalLifeCampaign.com). The examples given therein were from the founding period of the U.S.A., and the Civil War. This Part 2 focuses on Daniel’s response in his time. I welcome you to respond with your thoughts to info@GlobalLifeCampaign.com.

Example of Daniel: For the nation of Judah’s sin, they were conquered by Babylon and taken into captivity, including Daniel. After 70 years of exile, “Daniel observed in the books” that Jeremiah had prophesied “the number of years . . . for the completion of the desolation of Jerusalem, seventy years.” So he “gave attention to the Lord God to seek Him by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes,” and prayed the following prayer that resulted in his people being able to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple and city (Daniel 9:2-3).

“I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed and said, ‘Alas, O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments, we have sinned, committed iniquity, acted wickedly and rebelled, even turning aside from Your commandments and ordinances. Moreover, we have not listened to Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings, our princes, our fathers and all the people of the land. Righteousness belongs to You, O Lord, but to us open shame, as it is this day . . . Open shame belongs to us, O LORD, to our kings, our princes and our fathers, because we have sinned against You. To the Lord our God *belong* compassion and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against Him; nor have we obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in His teachings which He set before us through His servants the prophets. Indeed all [*the nation*] has transgressed Your law and turned aside, not obeying Your voice; so the curse has been poured out on us, along with the oath which is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, for we have sinned against Him. Thus He has confirmed His words . . . As it is written in the law of Moses, all this calamity has come on us; yet we have not sought the favor of the LORD our God by turning from our iniquity and giving attention to Your truth. Therefore the

LORD has kept the calamity in store and brought it on us; for the LORD our God is righteous with respect to all His deeds which He has done, but we have not obeyed His voice. And now, O Lord our God . . . we have sinned, we have been wicked. O Lord, in accordance with all Your righteous acts, let now Your anger and Your wrath turn away from (us) . . . for because of our sins and the iniquities of our fathers . . . Your people *have become* a reproach to all those around us. So now, our God, listen to the prayer of Your servant and to his supplications, and for Your sake, O Lord, let Your face shine on Your desolate sanctuary. O my God, incline Your ear and hear! Open Your eyes and see our desolations . . . for we are not presenting our supplications before You on account of any merits of our own, but on account of Your great compassion. O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and take action! For Your own sake, O my God, do not delay, because . . . Your people are called by Your name” (Daniel 9:4-19).

How does Daniel’s example teach us to respond rightly to God during a crisis or plague?

- Humble ourselves before God;
- Praise and worship the LORD for who He is;
- Confess our sin and the sin of our people or nation, including disobedience, not listening to God or those He spoke through, and wickedness;
- Acknowledge the LORD’s righteousness and our unrighteousness;
- Recognize the LORD’s compassionate and forgiving heart and nature;
- Ask God for mercy, and humble ourselves again before God;
- Ask God to “hear . . . forgive . . . listen and take action.”

During the National Day of Prayer, Pastor Robert Morris did quote 2 Chronicles 7:14, but went directly to the blessings, effectively ignoring what God asked us to do – the conditions He placed upon receiving the blessings – which is to: “humble (ourselves) and pray, and seek (His) face and turn from (our) wicked ways.” At the end, Rev. Will Graham quoted that verse again, and did call us to do what God Himself asks us to do.

Recommendation: I recommend that those of us reading this, and those we share it with, have another Day of Prayer soon, this year, and this time we follow the example of Daniel – and of Nehemiah, and earlier generations of the United States. Let us who are believers in Jesus Christ truly humble ourselves before God, individually, as couples and families, as churches, and as communities. Let us ask God to open our eyes to see us and our nation as He sees. Let us gather together and be honest with Him about our sins, including those of our nation, and cry out to Him for His mercy, compassion and forgiveness. And then let us stand in the gap and ask Him to “listen and take action” and come to our aid, and destroy this coronavirus plague.

SDG and for the sanctity of human life,

Thomas W. Jacobson

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