

May God Bless America & May America Bless God!

Proverbs 14:35, proclaims, “Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.” In other words, the greatest nation will be the nation that serves the demands of righteousness, the nation that reaches for the highest values. That’s how our nation came into being. The founders of our republic did not organize a government and then try to decide what kind of government it would be and what it would try to do. No, the government did not come first. Values, ideals, principles came first. After deciding upon those, they set up a government which would serve those ideals.

Listen to these words from the Declaration of Independence: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that whenever any form of government becomes destructive to these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness.”

Our founders began with certain ideals and values, and that the government was established for the purpose of serving these ideals and values. They believed that the source of all our highest values is God. He made us free people and placed in our hearts a longing to be free. All our highest ideals and all our noblest intentions have come to us from God. When we are faithful to those ideals we are exalted when we falter, we are brought down!

Arnold Toynbee, a respected historian has said, “Nations, cultures, and empires are never destroyed from the outside, but destroy themselves. Their self-destruction is always due to defects of character.” That is a word we need to hear! He is suggesting that the future of this or any nation is utterly dependent upon a national character. It is dependent upon the values we decide to pursue together.

In our Pledge of Allegiance we say, “One nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.” That is our highest ideal! Notice that it says that the nation is “under God”. Of course, every nation is under God’s providence and judgment whether we acknowledge that or not. Part of the greatness of our nation is that we do acknowledge it. Even though this conviction is not shared by all! So, how we honor and serve our nation must be shaped by that commitment. God first. Righteousness first. With conviction and with passion we say that God, His truth, and His righteousness come first. God has our loyalty first. We love our nation best when we insist that that’s the way it should be. “Righteousness exalts a nation!” What makes a nation great is having the right values - and then living up to them. That is true greatness!

Abraham Lincoln believed it. During the worst part of the Civil War, a person came to Lincoln and said, “I surely hope the Lord is on our side.” In his wisdom, Lincoln replied, “I am not at all concerned about that, for I know that the Lord is always on the side of the right; but it is my constant anxiety and prayer that both I and this nation should be on the Lord’s side.” Lincoln loved this nation best because he loved righteousness even more. That’s the right kind of patriotism, because, above all else, it is righteousness that exalts a nation! I pray that we will each pledge to live a life of righteousness so that God can bless our nation. May God Bless you and our nation and we and our nation bless God!