

## There Is Hope for America

**And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.**  
(Joel 2:13 KJV)

Not only do I sing the song **God Bless America**, I sing it prayerfully and with enthusiasm. Irving Berlin originally composed the song in 1918 and later revised it in 1938 to the version we know. The original began with these words: *While the storm clouds gather far across the sea, Let us swear allegiance to a land that's free, Let us all be grateful for a land so fair, As we raise our voices in a solemn prayer. God bless America, Land that I love...*

In view of Joel 2:13, can you sing **GOD BLESS AMERICA** in the following manners? (1) Prayerfully unto our Father who rules in heaven and on this earth; (2) Gratefully while we thank God that we live in this country; (3) Realistically knowing that storm clouds of sin and wickedness are both at home and across the sea; (4) Humbly unto our Lord who is the only one who can bless us; and (5) Penitently as our hearts are torn because of sin and disobedience.

Consider the dark clouds that cover our nation today. In contrast, consider God's Word where there are repeated calls for people and nations to turn to Him in repentance when dark clouds surrounded them. What was true in the past is true for us today.

### Dark Clouds of Sin:

**Atheism** "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God." Psalm 14:1

**Humanism** "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." Jeremiah 10:23

**Ungodliness** "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness" Romans 1:18

**Immorality** "Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind.... Shall inherit the kingdom of God." 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 6:9,10

**Pleasure** "Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God" 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 3:4

**Pride** "Pride goeth before destruction" Proverbs 16:18

**Prosperity** "Deceitfulness of riches" Mark 4:19

**Worldliness** "Love not the world, neither the things in the world" 1<sup>st</sup> John 2:15

**Rebellion** "Despise dominion, speak evil of dignities" Jude 1:8

### Repentance:

**Jeremiah 18:8** "If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them."

**Jeremiah 18:10 (Warning to lack of Repentance)** "If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them."

**Ezekiel 14:6** "Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God; Repent, and turn yourselves from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations."

**Jonah 3:9, 10** "Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not? And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not."

**Mark 1:4** "John did baptize in the wilderness and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins."

**Acts 17:30** "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent."

## God Bless America as We Repent!

The hope for America is not in our wisdom, not in our might, not in our prosperity, and not in our leaders. The hope for America, or any other nation, is in God and in Him alone. David by inspiration said in Psalm 78:7, "**That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments.**"

The song **God Bless America** references God in the lines: “*Stand beside her, and guide her, Thru the night with a light from above.*” The song that we sing has a human author. However, Solomon in his divine wisdom tells us in Proverbs 14:34. **“Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.”** The Bible penned by divine authorship gives us the answer how to correct the problems in our country. Too many people have chosen the broad road that leads to both physical and spiritual destruction. (Matthew 7:13,14) Instead, we need people to return to the narrow road. Jesus exhorts us, **“I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”** (Luke 13:3,5)

As much as we at Mt. Carmel want God to bless America as a nation, we want God to bless you also as an individual. The dark clouds of sin not only bring down nations, they also bring sorrow and heartaches to anyone. God warns us in Galatians 6:7 that sin has consequences – both spiritually and physically. If you are in the bondage of sin and on the wrong road, then repentance involves:

- (1) Having Your Eyes Opened – Acts 26:18
- (2) Having Your Heart Torn – Joel 2:13; Acts 2:37
- (3) Having Your Mind Changed – Acts 8:21, 22
- (4) Having Your Life Turned Around – Acts 3:19
- (5) Having Your Soul’s Condition Changed – Acts 2:38
- (6) Having Your Sorrow Centered On God’s Ways – 2 Corinthians 7:11,12
- (7) Having Your Strength Renewed in God – 2 Thessalonians 2:16,17

### There Is Hope for America – Repentance

On May 22<sup>nd</sup> we had corresponding lessons on this topic. Check our website for sermons titled “HOPE When It Seems All Hope is Gone (Jeremiah 18:1-17)” from the AM service and “HOPE When It Seems All Hope is Gone: The Church’s Responsibilities (Genesis 18:22-33)” from the PM service. Also, you can find our worship services on our Facebook page.