

HEALING REVIVAL BEGINS WITH US
II Chronicles 7:14 – Pastor Richard P. Carlson

This ancient promise was given around 3,027 years ago in 1004 BC to God's people, Israel. It applied to them, but not to them alone. The character of God has never changed, and His character will never change. Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today, and forever. (Hebrews 13:8) Some theologians tell us this ancient promise is limited to Israel, but Paul wrote in Romans 15:4, "For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures, we might have hope." Paul added in II Timothy 3:16-17, "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work." Take it to the bank. II Chronicles 7:14 is just as true for our nation today as it was for Israel 3,000 years ago. Paul, when he was speaking of Moses in the wilderness with the children of Israel on the Exodus, which began around 1491 BC, 3,514 years ago, Paul wrote in I Corinthians 10:6, "Now these things took place as examples for us that we might not desire evil as they did." Refuse to believe those who desire to tell us that the Old Testament is not for us as New Testament believers. Today, let's learn four lessons from the words of Ezra in II Chronicles 7:14, lessons that we as believers desperately need to face, to revisit, and to use to search our own hearts as we face our future for ourselves, and for our children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. What are these four lessons in II Chronicles 7:14?

REMEMBER THE PEOPLE GOD SAYS ARE HIS PEOPLE. (I.) God says, "If My people who are called by My Name." This whole time-worn ancient word of God is an "If, then," word of the Lord. It is a conditional word that does not address our President, our Congress, our political parties, or our state officials. This word of the Lord doesn't address Democrats, Republicans, Independents, or Libertarians. This is not a political word. God doesn't own any political party. He is King of the Universe. Do you remember when Joshua led the children of Israel across the Jordan and he was close to Jericho, sizing up the enemy at Jericho. Remember in Joshua 5:13-15 what happened. We read, "When Joshua was by Jericho, he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing before him with His drawn sword in His hand. And Joshua went to Him, and said to Him, "Are you for us, or for our adversaries?" And He said, "No, but I am the Commander of the Army of the Lord. Now I have come." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshipped and said to Him, What does my Lord say to His servant?" And the Commander of the Lord's Army said to Joshua, "Take off your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did so." Beloved, quit making any political party the answer for America. Quit thinking of any candidate for office as the answer for America. God hates that kind of thinking. Only Jesus is the answer for our country, and His appeal, His "if" is not a political "if." It is a personal if. "If My people who are called by My name." God is not addressing owners of liquor stores, porn companies, drug dealers, drag queens, atheists, humanists, evolutionists, or leaders of the woke, trans, or the false

rainbow movements. You might think God would be rebuking them. But rather, God is appealing to us, those who claim to be born-again, His people whom God calls “My people.” How often we are praying for God to send revival to our materialistic, immoral culture. That is never where God starts and sends revival. Healing revival always begins with you, with me, with us, and God first has to deal with us. If we would draw a circle around where we are seated, each of us, revival will never come to our country until we let God deal with the person inside our circle. Why on earth doesn’t God start with the White House, our state house in Cheyenne, our courthouse in Green River, or the schoolhouse where our children go to school, whether it is public, private, or home school? Why does it have to be so personal that it starts with me, with you? That’s because God is a personal God, and all revival is a personal matter of the heart, to see if we are surrendered or not. I Peter 4:17,18 tells us, “For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God, and (notice this ‘if.’) – and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the Gospel of God. And “if the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?”

A wonderful Irish evangelist, Dr. J. Edwin Orr, the writer of the hymn, “Search me, O God,” wrote of being in Auckland, New Zealand, where he was taken to a town where there was an annual Bible convention. As I read about this last Thursday, I remembered being in the same area near Auckland in another later Bible convention of Presbyterians, among the native Māori people, the indigenous men, and women of northern New Zealand. That day, my son Aaron and I were in a service that lasted from 12 noon to 12 midnight. That meeting was a revival. So, I read Edwin Orr’s words with pleasure. At this village convention, tents were spread out everywhere, and multiplied hundreds of people were there representing their local churches. After the first service on the first night, a young man came to Dr. Orr and said, “Mr. Orr, about a dozen fellows want you to come to Tent # 29. We are concerned about revival. So, Edwin Orr went and talked with them about the hindrances to revival. Then he asked the dozen men, “Are you serious about desiring revival, and do you believe God is going to send revival?”

They all said, “Yes!” After a time of silence, one man said quietly, “If we pay the price.” “All right,” said, Dr Orr. Let’s get to prayer and see if God keeps His word. Let’s pray for revival here in Tent # 29. Some of the men knelt down, but suddenly one young man cried out, “I say, don’t pray yet! Before we pray to God for revival, I want to get something off my mind.” Turning to another fellow in the tent, he said, “Jack, I want to confess I have been criticizing you behind your back. Will you forgive me? I think I ought to get right with you first.” It got painfully silent in Tent # 29. Then Jack said, “I forgive you, but it’s my fault too. I have been doing the same thing behind your back. May God forgive us both.” Then all 12 of the men began confessing sins in prayer, sins hindering revival, sins of the flesh and secret sins, sins of attitude and behavior. Revival began to fall on them and they started singing together, praying, and rejoicing. At 10:15 PM, Dr. Orr went back to his hotel to sleep but he first advised them to share with other tents what God was doing. Now Dr. Orr couldn’t sleep so he went back to Tent # 29, but lights were on in a dozen tents and prayer meetings were happening, Grown men

were weeping like children over their sinful hearts, and crying to God for mercy. Dr. Orr was thrilled but bushed so he went back to the hotel, and he couldn't get in now that it was so late. It was midnight, and the revival was spreading, Misunderstandings were being resolved. Enemies were being reconciled. Tears of repentance were falling on the ground, and the whole camp was singing at midnight. At 1 PM, Dr. Orr called for a benediction, and persuaded them all to go to bed, It didn't work. Tents a half mile away heard what was happening as the revival went on through the night. Why? It was because one of God's people, "My people," got right with a brother and confessed his sin. Healing revival never comes until "My people haul out the debris in our lives—the pride, the critical spirits, the bitterness, the sexual sins, the unbelief, the addictions. Then, as we spiritually wheel out our spiritual debris in our wheelbarrows, shovels, using mops and brooms, confessing to each other and to God, we will know vertical and horizontal forgiveness, and healing-revival will come. If you are one of God's people, He calls "My people," it will be glory-time for you, for others, and God's revival will spread for His glory. Secondly,

REMEMBER THE PRIDE GOD SAYS HE HATES MOST. (II.) The second phrase in this ancient word of God—"and humble themselves and pray." Why does God require humility? It is because without repentance, we all reek with pride. We read in Proverbs 6:16-19, "There are six things that the Lord hates; seven that are an abomination to Him. Haughty eyes, (notice pride comes first) a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil, a false witness who breathes out lies, and one who sows discord among brothers/or in the community or family of God." James wrote in James 4:6-10, "God opposes the proud, but He gives grace to the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will exalt you." Don't ask God to humble you. He can, but the easy way is to obey Him is to humble ourselves, and not ask God to do it for us. If you say today, "I am not proud," it's certain that is your or my indictment. Most of us are blind to our pride, and that is why humility must precede healing revival.

Who is to repent of the pride God hates? It isn't primarily the people we watch on television, our politicians, our enemies, and all the other wicked people whose words and actions we hate. No, it is you and me, saved Jews and Gentiles, "My people." Listen to Paul in Romans 9:6-8. He writes, "For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but "Through Isaac shall your offsprings be named. This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring." Read further in Romans 9:24-26, "Even to us whom He has called, not from the Jews only, but also from the Gentiles? As indeed He says in Hosea, "Those who were not My people, I will call My people, and her who was not beloved I will call beloved. And in the very place where it was said to them, "You are not My people," there they will be called "sons of the

living God.” God is calling each of us who are sons and daughters of the living God—My people—that’s who God is calling to humble ourselves of pride. 3rdly,

REMEMBER THE PRAYER GOD SAYS HE WILL HEAR. (III.) Notice the prayer God says He will hear—the third phrase is, “And seek My face and turn from their wicked ways.” The prayer God hears is not the prayer asking God to do this or that, to stop evil, to bring America to her knees, or to stop all addictions. God calls us to seek His face. Dr. Adrian Rogers once said, “God is not just our only hope... He is our biggest threat; and to pray without repentance angers Him. Repentance is more than a conviction of sin. It’s more than a confession or contrition for sin. Repentance is a heart change. We must repent of our wicked ways and seek the face of God.” Asaph in Psalm 80:4 prayed, “O Lord God of hosts, “How long will you be angry with your people’s prayers?”

When we pray to God without repentant hearts, God won’t hear us. Praying for revival without repenting ourselves is religious hypocrisy. The first message Jesus ever preached was repentance. Mark 1:15 reads, “Now after John the Baptist was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the Gospel of God, and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the Gospel.” The last message of Jesus in the Bible in the Revelation of Jesus Christ, begins, by asking 5 of the 7 churches to repent. In chapter 2:5 to the church in Ephesus, we read: “Remember therefore from where you have fallen, repent, and do the works you did at first.” To the church in Pergamum, Rev. 2:16, Jesus said, “Therefore, repent/turn from your wicked ways. If not, I will come to you soon and make war against them with the sword of My mouth.” Jesus accused the church in Thyatira, in Rev. 2:21, saying, “I gave her time to repent, but she refuses to repent.” To the church in Sardis, in 3:3, Jesus said, “Remember then what you received and heard. Keep it, and repent. If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come against you.” To the church in Laodicea, Jesus said, “Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent.” The word repent, or turn from your wicked ways, is used 969 times in the Bible. Jesus said, in Luke 13:3, “No, I tell you, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.” Paul said in II Cor. 7:10, “For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief/remorse alone produces death, as it did in the life of Judas.

When we seek God’s face, and turn from our wicked ways, what is this repentance and turning all about? Repentance is more than being convicted of our sins. When the apostle Paul testified of Jesus to Governor Felix, Acts 24: 24-25, Felix “sent for Paul and heard him speak about faith in Christ Jesus. And as Paul reasoned about righteousness and self-control and the coming judgment, Felix was alarmed and said, “God away for the present. When I get an opportunity, I will summon you.” Being alarmed about our sin and totally convicted is not repentance or turning from our wicked ways. Repentance is even more than confession of our sins. We read in Exodus 9:27-28, “Then Pharaoh sent and called Moses and Aaron and said to them, “This time I have sinned; the Lord is in the right, and I and my people are in the wrong. Plead with the Lord, for there has been enough of God’s thunder and hail. I

will let you go, and you shall stay no longer.” Yet the confession of sin prompted in the storm never lasted when God stopped the thunder and hail. “Mea culpa, “My bad,” my fault, my mistake, or I was wrong, still is not repentance.

Repentance is not conviction, confession, or even contrition with tears. God is not asking us merely to be sorry for our sin, weeping with tears, but the prayer God hears is when we turn from our sin. In I Samuel 24:16, after David spared Saul’s life, he lifted up his voice and wept, saying “David, you are more righteous than I am. And in I Samuel 26: 21, again after having his life spared, “I have sinned...Behold I have acted foolishly and have made a great mistake.” Saul was sorry, but it wasn’t godly sorrow. Saul never truly repented and turned from his wicked ways. True repentance is always turning, a change of mind and heart. When Paul spoke to the Ephesian elders in Miletus, he told them he always spoke to both Jews and Greeks, Acts 20:21, of repentance toward God and of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ—that’s II Chron.7:14, “seeking God’s face and turning from our wicked ways. Unless we turn away from sin, God will not hear or answer our prayers. Repentance is not sorrow we are caught in our sin, but being sorry enough to quit. That’s the kind of prayer God hears. But there’s one more issue. When God hears our prayers of repentance, they are not selective prayers. We can’t repent of one sin and knowingly hold on to another. God tells us the prayers He answers are wholehearted prayers in Ezekiel 14:6. We read, “Repent and turn away from your idols and turn away your faces from all your abominations.” This prayer of repentance that God hears is a whole-hearted heart change. Fourthly,

REMEMBER THE PROMISE GOD SAYS HE WILL HONOR. (IV.) We have finally got beyond the three “ifs.” Now in this fourth phrase God says, “Then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.” This phrase is why it isn’t too late for any of us, and why it’s not too late for our nation. The same Lord who brought revival many times before is still on the throne. He longs to pardon our transgressions when He hears us cry up to heaven. He would rather pardon and forgive us than send judgment. In times of calamity, when we are totally through with wallowing in materialism and credit card debt, when we have come to the end of ourselves, like the prodigal, crying out for mercy, God won’t pull the rug out from under us, and say, “You’ve gone too far. You’ve wearied me with your worldly sorrow, when you’ve kept going back like a dog to its vomit, or like a washed hog, back to wallowing in the mire.” God will honor the pledge He made in ancient times, even in 2023. If you are able and ready and willing to be real with God, remembering you are a born-again child of His that He can call “My people,” or if you are ready today to be born-again and to join God’s family; if you are willing to humble yourself of your pride, if you are willing to seek God’s face and to turn from your wicked ways, then it’s healing time, revival time, and God will begin a revival in you and in me that could well spread across our nation and that could heal our land. “Oh, God have mercy on each of us and on America. Help us to live by your grace and mercy. Help us live in true repentance and faith. Help us to claim II Chronicles 7:14 for our whole lives. God, help us live in Your healing revival, beginning Your healing revival in each of us. In Jesus’ precious Name, we pray. Amen.”