

God Bless America

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword 5

Introduction 9

Chapter 1 11

STEWARDS OF THE GOSPEL

Chapter 2 15

CITIZENSHIP: ON EARTH AND IN HEAVEN

Chapter 3 23

A BROOK IN THE WAY

CONCLUSION 27

The Star Spangled Banner

by Francis Scott Key

*(Written on September 20, 1814 in the aftermath of
the battle at Fort McHenry in Baltimore, Maryland.)*

Oh, say can you see, by the dawn's early light,
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming?
Whose broad stripes and bright stars, through the perilous fight,
O'er the ramparts we watched, were so gallantly streaming?
And the rockets' red glare, the bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there.
O say, does that star-spangled banner yet wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?

On the shore, dimly seen through the mists of the deep,
Where the foe's haughty host in dread silence reposes,
What is that which the breeze, o'er the towering steep,
As it fitfully blows, now conceals, now discloses?
Now it catches the gleam of the morning's first beam,
In full glory reflected now shines on the stream:
'Tis the star-spangled banner! O long may it wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.

And where is that band who so vauntingly swore
That the havoc of war and the battle's confusion
Ahome and a country should leave us no more?
Their blood has wiped out their foul footsteps' pollution.
No refuge could save the hireling and slave
From the terror of flight, or the gloom of the grave:
And the star-spangled banner in triumph doth wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.

Oh! thus be it ever, when freemen shall stand
Between their loved homes and the war's desolation!
Blest with victory and peace, may the heaven-rescued land
Praise the power that hath made and preserved us a nation.
Then conquer we must, for our cause it is just,
And this be our motto: "In God is our trust."
And the star-spangled banner forever shall wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!

FOREWORD

On September 11, 2001, the United States of America suffered tragedy as she had never known before. Several terrorists hijacked and commandeered four commercial airplanes, purposely crashing two of them into the World Trade Center's twin towers in New York City and one into the Pentagon in Washington D.C. Another crashed in the countryside of Pennsylvania, presumably short of their mission. Thousands of innocent people—office workers, passengers, tourists, policemen, and firefighters—perished in the explosions and the devastation that followed.

The two skyscrapers imploded and became heaps of rubble, forever altering the world's most famous skyline. A gaping hole was left in the building where our nation's top defense personnel including hundreds of civilians plan, prepare, and manage military affairs. A remote field was scarred when passengers forced their plane

down, thwarting the hijackers' aim to destroy more buildings and more lives.

Humbled and heartbroken, our citizens were asked to observe a national time of remembrance and prayer. A memorial service was held at the National Cathedral in Washington D.C. on September 14. The following is an excerpt from the speech made that day by United States President George W. Bush:

"Our purpose as a nation is firm, yet our wounds as a people are recent and unhealed and lead us to pray. In many of our prayers this week, there's a searching and an honesty. At St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York, a woman said, 'I pray to God to give us a sign that he's still here.' Others have prayed for the same, searching hospital to hospital, carrying pictures of those still missing.

"God's signs are not always the ones we look for. We learn in tragedy that His purposes are not always our own. Yet, the prayers of private suffering, whether in our homes or in this great cathedral, are known and heard and understood.

"There are prayers that help us last through the day or endure the night. There are prayers of friends and strangers that give us strength for the journey, and there are prayers that yield our will to a will greater than our own.

"This world He created is of moral design. Grief and tragedy and hatred are only for a time. Goodness, remembrance, and love have no end. And, the Lord of life holds who die and all who mourn.

"It is said that adversity introduces us to our - selves. This is true of a nation as well. In this trial, we have been reminded and the world has seen that our fellow Americans are generous and kind, re - sourceful and brave....

"America is a nation full of good fortune, with so much to be grateful for, but we are not spared from suffering. In every generation, the world has pro - duced enemies of human freedom. They have attacked America because we are freedom's home and defender —the commitment of our fathers is now the calling of our time.

"On this national day of prayer and remem - brance, we ask Almighty God to watch over our na - tion and grant us patience and resolve in all that is to come. We pray that He will comfort and console those who now walk in sorrow. We thank Him for each life we now must mourn and the promise of a life to come.

"As we have been assured, neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth can separate us from God's love.

“May He bless the souls of the departed. May He comfort our own. And, may He always guide our country. God Bless America.”

INTRODUCTION

“...And the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6).

The booklet *God Bless America*, by Pastor Carl H. Stevens, was first released in 1985. This updated edition represents our purpose to reintroduce the reader to the vital issue of national entity as it is outlined in the Word of God. As we understand our eternal purpose and destiny, we can responsibly make individual and corporate decisions to honor God’s established government.

Two kingdoms are at war: the kingdom of darkness versus the kingdom of light. The kingdom of darkness oppresses men and rules over their free volition by an organized system of evil. But the kingdom of light, through our Lord Jesus Christ, establishes freedom in our human volition—a freedom that leads to life, blessing,

resurrection power, and truth.

We give thanks to the Lord Jesus Christ for His "...dominion and glory and kingdom, that all peoples, nations and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom one which shall not be destroyed" (Daniel 7:14, Amplified Translation).

Chapter One
STEWARDS OF THE GOSPEL

As Christians, we serve a kingdom not made with hands. According to 2 Timothy 4:18, 1 Corinthians 4:20, John 18:36, and Colossians 1:13, it is an everlasting kingdom that requires no earthly defense. Yet, while we are on this earth, we are citizens of various nations, with national responsibilities. The United States of America, which was established as a Christian nation, still enjoys the blessings of God because of the remnant of believers who pray, study, and obey the Word of God.

After His resurrection, Jesus appeared to all eleven disciples, the chosen representatives of His chosen nation Israel. "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations..." (Matthew 28:18-19a).

The Word of God must be taught to all nations. We must show people how to be saved,

and we must teach them objective categories of truth from the Bible. Each believer should be baptized by immersion, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Lord instructed the disciples to observe all things He commanded, and He promised to be with us always, even unto the end of the world. (Matthew 28:20).

Colossians 1:15-17 records the amazing truth concerning the dominion of Christ, “the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.”

Heaven's Citizens Must Rally

Some Christians are “rocking-chair” Christians. They do not go into all the world with the Gospel, and they do not know that it is the responsibility of pastors and teachers to teach every word of God (Matthew 28:20a). Today, because it is a strategic time in the panorama of human events, we must consider ourselves citizens of heaven as well as of the earth. We are stewards of the Gospel, the Word of God, and

the grace of God. We are also stewards of human freedom, which God has given to this great country of America so that the Gospel might be preserved and proclaimed.

When God created man in the Garden of Eden, the first gift He gave him was free volition (Genesis 2:16-17). Volition allowed man either to believe or not to believe (John 3:36)—it gave him the right of choice (Deuteronomy 30:15, 19). God's first concern was to protect that freedom.

Understanding the divine institution of free will, we must consider our responsibility to respond to what the Word of God says about the institution of marriage (Matthew 19:5; Genesis 2:22-24), the institution of the family (Psalm 68:6; Genesis 4:1), and the institution of nationalism (Genesis 10:5) to promote a sense of belonging, security, and loyalty on many levels, mirroring the believer's citizenship in heaven.

National Entity Established

God's design for government produces individual freedom, free industry, and free enterprise. Individuality and creativity are maximized as each person develops self-discipline in planning, working, and caring for others.

When people do not understand that God

created all things and holds all things together by the Word of His power, they implement other systems of government outside of God's plan.

Socialism is a system in which the government provides for individuals' needs in exchange for control of certain segments of society. Communism is a totalitarian system that takes away the rights of industry, free enterprise, and creative, competitive trade—which take place in a healthy, wholesome market of expansion—are quenched, preventing the development of a unique and wholesome economy.

Humanism, a philosophy created by man, for man, in order to deify man, is used as justification in any totalitarian system. It is deception promoted by Satan. Isaiah 14:12 says that Satan deceives and weakens the nations. Revelation 20:8 says that during the tribulation period, Satan will attack the nations. He goes forth to deceive, seduce, and lead astray the nations in the four corners of the earth.

Still, one of the most powerful tools of the enemy is religion. As we have seen in our nation, when radical religious groups try to force their views and agendas on others in the name of God, then anger and resentment come in to destroy true, godly foundations.

Chapter Two

CITIZENSHIP: ON EARTH
AND IN HEAVEN

“Thus saith the Lord concerning the prophets that make my people err, that bite with their teeth, and cry, Peace; and he that putteth not into their mouths, they even prepare war against him.

“Therefore night shall be unto you, that ye shall not have a vision; and it shall be dark unto you, that ye shall not divine; and the sun shall go down over the prophets, and the day shall be dark over them.

“Then shall the seers be ashamed, and the diviners confounded; yea, they shall all cover their lips; for there is no answer of God” (Micah 3:5-7).

Citizen Stewards

Prayer is one way of expressing faith in God. Faith is one way of revealing how much we trust

Him. We are responsible to be good stewards of our citizenship on earth and the great heritage of national entity, divine establishment, and human freedom, which God has bestowed upon us through common and universal grace.

We cannot disassociate from politics a ministry that propagates the Gospel on foreign shores and uses evangelism as a tool to make the Gospel known to the lost.

We cannot remain detached. We must work to keep our nation free so the Gospel can go forth. We must be free to serve God through salvation, the filling of the Spirit, and the Word of God. We must never become slaves to the old sin nature and the satanic system; we cannot detach the two.

Advancing Freedom

The early Americans knew how to protect and advance freedom. They introduced an economy that was based upon free enterprise and creative competition in industry. The government and bureaucracy stayed out of the affairs of the individual state, family, and business as much as humanly possible. They kept taxes as low as possible. Through creativity in their thinking, hard work, planning, and cooperation,

they matured, and the principles of teamwork, moral uprightness, justice, and equity for all were established.

Imagine the horrors people endured under the fascist regimes of Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Soviet Union. Book upon book has been written of the ways citizens were tormented and stripped of the freedom to choose, to work, to live, and to pray. Driven by power lust, men brutalized their populations in the name of their cause.

Communism's goal was to eliminate a class system, to eradicate the distinction between the "haves" and the "have-nots," and to allow all to share the centralized wealth of the nation. What it spawned was a diabolical society of deceit and suspicion, where only party bosses and bureaucrats enjoyed privilege and patronage. The rest of the citizens struggled to live day to day. No place was given for entrepreneurs to exist. Those on the bottom had no means to work themselves out of their situation. Those who dared to pursue any measure of freedom were spied out, jailed, or eliminated.

We now see that these paths ultimately led to destruction. Many, many millions died in the process.

This same thing goes on in the name of religion today. Power-hungry leaders of a clerical class rule ruthlessly, invoking “holy” mandates that enable them to abuse and control and kill, all the while believing that they are destined for “paradise.” These religionists are the “haves” in these nations because they have taken everything from their followers through satanic deceptions.

Satan’s program is to weaken the nations; meanwhile, the Lord Jesus Christ is establishing His dominion. Through His Holy Spirit, He encourages us to pray, serve, and protect our nation, to preserve our freedom, and to exercise stewardship by helping people around the world. We are called to protect them from the menace of satanic governments, which are used to steal away human freedom and usurp human rights and privileges. People should be free to worship God, to go to bed at night, get up in the morning, go to work, and plan their lives without the interference of an illegitimate, authoritarian police state.

Processes of Discipline

What happens when a nation does not foster its heritage, preserve its freedom, live in nation-

alism and protect God's established national entity? God will then begin to discipline that nation. He will do it every time. In Judges 17:6, it is recorded that Israel did what was right in her own eyes. They lost their social, moral, and religious composure. Ultimately, they lost their freedom. They experienced seventy years of captivity under the Babylonian government.

When the Babylonian nation fell, the Medes and the Persians took over, followed by the Greeks, and eventually the Romans. Discipline came upon Israel because she did not preserve her divine establishment as a nation representing God. The nation did not understand the beautiful privilege of freedom established by the Word, which is the banner of God's provision from heaven.

The government in the United States and in much of the free world is a democracy. By definition, citizens in a democracy have the authority to freely elect representatives to rule, based on the will of the majority. God has ordained such a government to establish our freedom. When freedom is taken from us, we can no longer function to our maximum potential as human beings. When our protection is taken away, we cease to prosper. There is one principle that the

Lord wants us to know: God is the King of the nations (Jeremiah 10:7a). In Isaiah 40:15-17, the Word of God says, "Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance. All nations before him are as nothing."

When I meet people who recoil at the name of God, who think that God ought to be kept out of the schools and public places, I am amazed at their attitude. They do not want us to mention the name of the One who is Omniscient! His name offends the ones He has created.

We cannot separate God from any aspect of our lives because He created everything! That is why we have His name on our currency, "In God we trust." Certainly, we separate church and state, and well we should, but we should never separate God from the state.

Keeping God in Our Affairs

Because a democracy allows differences in opinion to be expressed, there has always been a group who want to remove God from the public forum. One example was over the issue of prayer in public schools. The legal decision to remove prayer from most public venues challenged people everywhere to wake up from

idealism that says, "It can't happen here." Who really wants God removed from the affairs of men? It is Satan. The devil wants to weaken, deceive, and seduce the nations so that he can become the god of this world's system (2 Corinthians 4:4). His plan is for nations to come under his darkness by their own choices (1 John 5:19b) so that the whole world will be in his control. We are not fighting a philosophy; we are fighting a satanic strategy. We are not differing with men; we are differing with Satan who uses men.

We can see God's philosophy in Proverbs 14:34, saying, "righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people." If we lose our freedom, then we lose our right to worship Christ, to study doctrine, to evangelize, and to have Bibles. We lose the right to bring up our children to make godly choices after we have instructed them well and educated them in truth. We will have lost our privilege of nationalism. We will have lost our privilege as a local church to band together to learn, to become disciples, and to obey the Great Commission in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the earth. It is all relevant and it all spells one thing: We must understand the value and importance

of having God bless America.

When you stop and think of it, God has blessed our nation despite our weaknesses, frailties, sins, mistakes, and immorality. But America has experienced an upsurge in pornography, homosexuality, drug abuse, and adultery. All of these defiling sins eventually destroy a society.

When these things go on, Satan takes advantage of situations to destroy the souls of men and women and to destroy their capacities for individual freedom before God. Discipline is implemented by God. But when the soul is darkened, men live selfishly in the embrace of anything that promotes their feeble cause and silences their guilty conscience.

Chapter Three

A BROOK IN THE WAY

Psalm 110:7, speaking of Christ as He went to the Cross, says, "He shall drink of the brook in the way; therefore shall he lift up the head." America is a "brook in the way"—a source of hope and refreshment—to freedom-loving democracies that wish to prevent dictators from taking away their freedom. America is a brook in the way to the oppressed people in Afghanistan. Our country is a brook in the way for all freedom-loving people everywhere.

People of all nationalities have come into this great nation because they seek the possibility of experiencing freedom in marriage, family, and church. Here, they have the privilege of making their own decisions without indictments and without pressure from illegitimate authority. Because of her stand, God has blessed America uniquely.

Jesus was weary and tired. He was hurting.

He went to the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, and they were a “brook in the way” for Him. He was tired and He received a drink of love and friendship from this little home. Mary Magdalene had always been a brook in His way; she was a person who ministered refreshment to the Lord. Delivered from seven demons, she loved the Lord deeply. She remained at the Cross until the end.

A ministry that holds up categorical doctrine, whose members are filled with the Spirit, is a “brook in the way.” When believers love God, take up the Cross, and obey the Word, they become a source of rest and refreshment to people in their community. They are established in grace and understand Christ’s Finished Work as they reveal eternal love to the world.

Ministering Reconciliation

To have a “ministry of reconciliation” (2 Corinthians 5:18-19) means that we believe Christ died for the sins of the world. The Word of God teaches that every person who believes on Him is saved, born-again, and regenerated by the Holy Spirit *once and for all*. Every ministry of God should teach its members to love one another and to take that love into all nations so

people can be set free from the bondage of Satan's cosmic system and from all the forces of hell. Those nations can be released from tyranny, and from all the powers that attempt to incapacitate men from experiencing real happiness. Such a ministry is a brook in the way for all those who are drawn to fellowship there.

Perhaps you are brokenhearted, fainting, and weary. Maybe a loved one has just died or a tragedy has happened in your home. Receive the love of God; take a drink from the Bible.

"Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price" (Isaiah 55:1). Jesus said, "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst..." (John 4:14a).

Every Christian who has a prayer life, believes the Word, learns to rest in faith, and masters the details of life, becomes a "brook in the way."

Refresh Others with the Word

Christians can have God's love, power, grace, mercy, and patience. We can be brooks in the way to the weary travelers from broken

homes and to those who have sinned. Many teenagers have been devastated because of wrong choices and are searching for recovery and refreshment from the Word of God.

Oh, how God wants to raise up a group of believers to be a fresh drink from heaven who will manifest God's Word, His life, and His light as a brook in the way! This is what we ought to be as believers in Jesus Christ.

When we are "free indeed," continuing in God's Word, we can minister to the needs of others. When we are sanctified by God's Word, as it guides us, the Holy Spirit will fill us. As we walk in love as God's children, we can then become a brook in the way to all nations and peoples.

CONCLUSION

With great blessing comes power and great responsibility. The Word of God so beautifully ministers life to every possible human need. It answers every question man has posed throughout the ages, and it creates a fresh capacity to make vital decisions that will shape our nation's destiny.

The Word of God is our life. Therefore, as we go forward committed to live by every Word, we face two very narrow options: By faith, we can design our destiny by making right decisions in the perfect will of God; or, we can relinquish our divine acquisition of freedom by choosing the broad road that leads to destruction.

As our nation makes political and economic decisions on the national level, as well as corporate decisions on a global level, we must remember who is King. Within the seed of human volition lies the destiny of nations. As a man

agrees with the authority of God's Word, he becomes victorious in Christ who has overcome the world!

May God bless this great country with people who are willing to serve one another in love and to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free (Galatians 5:1).