A NATION THAT FORGETS GOD SHALL PERISH
DEUTERONOMY 8:1-20
By Dr. Gary G. Dull

INTRO: I love to sing the words, “AMERICA, GOD SHED HIS GRACE ON THEE.” I love those words because they are true regarding the past of America, and I love those words because they offer hope for the future for America. Without a doubt, GOD HAS SHED HIS GRACE ON AMERICA as a nation in the past, and we certainly do need the GRACE OF GOD for the present and the future! Without the Grace of God, America would have never become a nation, and without the Grace of God, America would be non-existent right now. History reveals that during the founding years of America God was respected and sought by many. Thus, the GRACE OF GOD was experienced. But over the more recent years, we have seen a turning away from God in America to the point that if we are going to continue as a nation, the GRACE OF GOD is needed more now than ever! Why? Because, in my opinion, AMERICA HAS, BY IN LARGE, FORGOTTEN GOD, AND THE NATION THAT FORGETS GOD SHALL PERISH, EXCEPT BY THE GRACE OF GOD! Today, from the pages of the Old Testament and from the example of Israel we are going to note a warning that NO NATION, INCLUDING AMERICA, CAN GET AWAY WITH FORGETTING GOD. EACH OF US IN AMERICA MUST TAKE HEED TO THIS WARNING!

A NOTE CONCERNING ISRAEL’S HISTORY: Often, Israel was told NOT TO FORGET GOD! However, they did NOT take heed to that warning. They FORGOT GOD…JER. 2:32; HOSEA 13:6. Because they forgot God, the Northern Kingdom of Israel experienced the Assyrian Captivity in 722 BC, the Southern Kingdom of Israel experienced the Babylonian Captivity in 586 BC, and the Nation, as a whole, was taken captive by the Romans in 70 AD. All of this could have been avoided if Israel would NOT HAVE FORGOTTEN GOD IN THEIR NATIONAL LIFE. AMERICA MUST TAKE HEED!

NOTE THE TEXT
Israel was being commanded to remember the dealings of God in their history. This was often done in Scripture. The entire chapter is summarized in verses 17-20.
VERSE 17: Israel had turned “HUMANISTIC” by thinking “THEY” were the source of their success.
VERSE 18: Israel was EXHORTED to FOCUS ON GOD! HE WAS THE SOURCE OF ALL THEY HAD AND HIS COVENANTS PROMISED CONTINUED PROVISION FOR THEM AS A NATION.
VERSE 19: Israel was WARNED not to forget God and turn to other gods!
   - To Walk after Them: That is, to follow their Unrighteous ways.
   - To Serve Them: That is, to please their Unrighteous desires.
   - To Worship Them: That is, to exalt their Unrighteous philosophies.
VERSE 20: Israel was TOLD they would PERISH if they FORGOT GOD!
THE EXPERIENCE OF ISRAEL IS A LESSON FOR AMERICA

I. THE FOUNDING OF AMERICA
NOTE: As Israel was brought into existence by the Grace of God; it is also true that America’s formation had the hand of God upon it from the very beginning. George Boddis said, “INDEED, IF WE READ OUR NATIONAL HISTORY IN LIGHT OF SCRIPTURE, WE CAN SEE GOD’S HAND IN AMERICAN HISTORY AS CLEARLY AS THAT IN ISRAEL.” No other nation on earth ever rose to prominence as quickly as America, and that is due to the SOVEREIGN BLESSING OF GOD.

A. Not all of our Founding Fathers were Evangelical Christians. Franklin and Jefferson were in fact, moral degenerates. Thus, they did not set out to found a “Christian Nation” per say, but neither did they desire to form a secular, anti-Christian nation.

B. Though some of the Founding Fathers were not “born again,” they practically ALL had respect for God and sought His wisdom in establishing America. This was evident in the writings of our founding documents.
1. The Declaration of Independence speaks of the “LAWS OF NATURE AND OF NATURE’S GOD” and the final sentence expresses, “A FIRM RELIANCE ON THE PROTECTION OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE.”
2. The Articles of Confederation declare, “IT HAS PLEASED THE GREAT GOVERNOR OF THE WORLD TO INCLINE THE HEARTS OF LEGISLATURES…TO APPROVE…THE SAID ARTICLES.”

C. According to the record, apart from Israel, for the first time in history, when America was formed, man called upon God to aid him in forming a government dedicated to the principle that each individual citizen was answerable ultimately to God for his/her own spiritual life and worship.

D. In American history, there is an expression, “THE BIBLE CHARTER OF FREEDOM.” That is the concept that THE REVERENCE FOR GOD OF OUR FOUNDING FATHERS, COUPLED WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF LIBERTY ESTABLISHED IN THE BIBLE, HAVE PROVIDED THE BASIS UPON WHICH THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA HAS BEEN FOUNDED.” NO OTHER NATION, EXCEPT ISRAEL, CAN MAKE THAT CLAIM!

ILLUSTRATION:
APPLICATION: IT CANNOT BE DENIED THAT AMERICA HAS A CHRISTIAN HERITAGE ALL DUE TO THE GRACE OF GOD!

II. THE FAULT OF AMERICA
NOTE: AMERICA HAS AND IS GOING AWAY FROM ITS FOUNDING PRINCIPLES! AMERICA IS FORGETTING GOD AND FOLLOWING OTHER GODS! This is not a reference to false religions. There are many of those in America. This is a reference to that which is against God, PERIOD!

A. The god of Secularism: “A system or philosophy that rejects religious faith and worship.”

B. The god of Materialism: “The preoccupation with material objects as opposed to spiritual values.” This stems from the theory that “matter” is the center of the universe, not God.

C. The god of Humanism: “Any system of thought or action in which human interests, values, and dignity predominate and therefore rejects the importance of a belief in God.”

D. The god of Socialism: “A system of social organization, apart from spiritual organization, in which the means of production and distribution of goods are owned by and controlled collectively by the government.” In socialism there is no room for God.
ILLUSTRATION:
APPLICATION: MANY CHRISTIANS ARE UNFORTUNATELY CAUGHT UP IN “OTHER GODS” INSTEAD OF THE ONE TRUE GOD!

III. THE FOCUS OF AMERICA
NOTE: MORE THAN EVER, AMERICA MUST HAVE THE RIGHT FOCUS IF THE DESTRUCTION OF OUR NATION IS TO BE AVOIDED.
   A. That Focus MUST be on the Philosophy spelled out in the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation and Implemented in our National Constitution. This philosophy includes:
      1. The Complete Dependence upon God.
      2. The Compulsory Free Will of Man.
      3. The Certain Accountability to God
   B. That Focus MUST begin with the Individual Christian and Promoted by Church of Jesus Christ.
      1. The Christian is Compelled to Know the Bible and the Original Philosophies of Americas Foundation. (Mentioned above).
      2. The Church is Compelled to Preach the Bible and the Original Philosophies of Americas Foundation.

ILLUSTRATION: “I sought for the greatness and genius of America in her rivers, lands, and prairies, and it was not there. Not until I went to the churches of America and heard her pulpits aflame with righteousness did I understand the secret of her genius and power.” French Statesman Alexis Compte de Tocqueville.
APPLICATION: RIGHT FOCUS STARTS WITH CHRISTIANS TODAY!
LESSONS: IF AMERICA DOES NOT TURN BACK TO GOD, AMERICA WILL PERISH!