

Should we PRAY for our nation and the world?



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All scriptures are NKJV unless noted otherwise.

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Summary: *Some of you may pray for your country and the world on a regular basis. But for many believers, they often limit their prayers to be about people they know, or other believers of their fellowship and church. SHOULD you pray for your country, especially in times of high distress? Did the prophets? Did Jesus (Yeshua)? What happens if we don't? What could happen if we DO? Is it right – or wrong—to pray for your country?*

I'm recording this in March and in just a couple more weeks, we'll be remembering Jesus Christ – Yeshua the Messiah – and his last supper or Passover before he was crucified. His death was not just for “church people” – but for the whole world. John 3:16 – “God so loved THE WORLD that he gave his only begotten son...” . His death was for anyone in the world who would believe on him.

I am starting this way because we're in the middle of a lot of worldwide angst over this pandemic Coronavirus Covid-19 that has now spread to over 150 countries and by the time you hear this, well **over 109,000 will be infected in USA**, and well **over 1,750** (about 1.6%) infected Americans will have succumbed to it and died. And **over 29,000 worldwide** have died as I write this – and soaring. We'll have well over 630,000 infected around the world – and growing -- by the time you see this (4.6%). Numbers keep changing... upward. As far as *historic pandemics* go, as bad as this is, so far it doesn't even come close to the 50-100 MILLION deaths from the 1918 Spanish Flu. So far, Covid-19 is a “baby” compared to that.

Hello everyone. I'm Philip Shields. Welcome to Light on the Rock.

Because of the rulings to shelter-at-home – which we obey of course if that's our ruling – many of you are separated from loved ones. **But there's ONE separation that we need to focus on that will never happen to you—not even in DEATH!**

Romans 8:37-39 CJB

“No, in all these things we are superconquerors, through the one who has loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor other heavenly rulers, neither what exists nor what is coming, 39 neither powers above nor powers below, **nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God** which comes to us through the Messiah Yeshua, our Lord.”

So in spite of everything going on, we're always connected to the love of God in our wonderful Yeshua, no matter what trials he makes us go through for our perfecting.

So today here's my question: Are you praying for your country, and for the whole world – or are you praying just for yourself and your loved ones and maybe those in your church? Should we be praying for the world? Some even feel it may be wrong to pray for the world and so they don't.

You may think it's *alright* to pray for unconverted people in the world – but if you AREN'T praying for them in this crisis – why not?

JESUS

And I know some of you actually believe we're told NOT to ever pray for the world, whom Yeshua himself said are of their father the Devil (John 8:44). You can cite John 17:9 where even Yeshua himself at his last supper, in his High Priestly prayer of the order of Melchizedek, prayed - "I don't pray for the world..."

John 17:9

"I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours."

So is that a directive Yeshua is giving us? It can't be, because later in that same 24 hour period, while dying for us on the cross, he does pray for even the most evil of people who were torturing him when he prays: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34).

So his statement in John 17:9 is just cannot be a directive to not pray for the world since he himself did right after that. He just meant that at that moment in that Lord's Supper service he was focused on the disciples, not on the world.

How about JEREMIAH

You may also think of 3 places where God told **Jeremiah** NOT to pray for the people of his country because God says he would not hear him even if Jeremiah did pray for them! So what do we do with these?

Jeremiah 11:14

"So do not pray for this people or lift up a cry or prayer for them; for I will not hear them in the time that they cry out to Me because of their trouble."

Jeremiah 14:11-12

"Then YHVH said to me, **"Do not pray for this people, for their good.** 12 When they fast, I will not hear their cry; and when they offer burnt offering and grain offering, I will not accept them. But I will consume them by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence."

The fact that Jeremiah has to be told more than once *not* to pray for them, implies he *probably was* praying, and had to be told more than once to *quit*. Seems clear enough, doesn't it, but let's understand. *There does come a point when God punishes when the evil in the land is bad enough.* Reminds me of the sins of the Amorites had not yet peaked, as God said (Genesis 15:16).

God was so upset with Judah in Jeremiah's day that he even said, "even if Moses and Samuel were here praying on their behalf, I wouldn't hear them either!"

Jeremiah 15:1

"Then YHVH said to me, "**Even if Moses and Samuel stood before Me**, My mind would not be favorable toward this people. Cast them out of My sight and let them go forth."

And this is interesting: When God allowed Israel to have a human king, saying they had rejected GOD from ruling over them, the people asked Samuel to please keep praying for them, and **Samuel said it would be a sin for him if he quit praying for them** (1 Samuel 12:19-23). Let that sink in!

1 Samuel 12:19-23 "And all the people said to Samuel, "Pray for your servants to YHVH your God, that we may not die; for we have added to all our sins the evil of asking a king for ourselves."

20 Then Samuel said to the people, "Do not fear. You have done all this wickedness; yet do not turn aside from following YHVH, but serve YHVH with all your heart. 21 And do not turn aside; for then you would go after empty things which cannot profit or deliver, for they are nothing. 22 For YHVH will not forsake His people, for His great name's sake, because it has pleased YHVH to make you His people. 23 Moreover, as for me, **far be it from me that I should sin against YHVH in ceasing to pray for you**; but I will teach you the good and the right way."

So Samuel made a habit of praying for his fellow Israelites who at times could be very wicked.

Surely you know that Moses intervened several times:

- The gold calf incident when YHVH was ready to wipe Israel off the map and start over with Moses. See **Exodus 32:5-14**.
- He also prayed for Aaron and God spared Aaron because of Moses' intercession.
- In Korah's rebellion of Numbers 16, the day after God swallowed up the rebels in a huge sink hole, the other people were so upset they were about to kill Moses and Aaron. God was so angry that he sent a plague among the rebels and told Moses and Aaron to get away from the people. But what did Moses do? He told Aaron to grab a censer and run into the midst of where the plague was. It was an example of standing in the GAP, before GOD – countering God. GOD seems to actually be moved when he sees his children speak up for our people!

Numbers 16:41-50

On the next day all the congregation of the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, saying, "You have killed the people of YHVH." 42 Now it happened, when the congregation had gathered against Moses and Aaron, that they turned toward the tabernacle of meeting; and suddenly the cloud covered it, and the glory of YHVH appeared. 43 Then Moses and Aaron came before the tabernacle of meeting.

44 And YHVH spoke to Moses, saying, 45 "**Get away from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment.**"

And they fell on their faces.

46 So Moses said to Aaron, "Take a censer and put fire in it from the altar, put incense on it, and **take it quickly to the congregation and make atonement for them; for wrath has gone out from the Lord. The plague has begun.**"

47 Then Aaron took it as Moses commanded, and **ran INTO the midst of the assembly**; and already the plague had begun among the people. So he put in the incense and made atonement for the people. **48 And he stood between the dead and the living; so the plague was stopped.** 49 Now those who died in the plague **were fourteen thousand seven hundred**, besides those who died in the Korah incident. 50 So Aaron returned to Moses at the door of the tabernacle of meeting, for the plague had stopped."

Did you absorb all that? God told Moses to get away from them so he could destroy them – but what did Moses do? He told Aaron to take the censer and run into the group being plagued by God and intercede. The censer was a symbol of prayers. GOD honored them standing up to him, begging God's mercy on the people – the wicked people at that!

By Jeremiah's day, the wickedness had grown so great that God said, "even if Samuel and Moses were here, I wouldn't hear them". That's how bad Judah had become by that time.

Did this mean no prophet of God, no people of God, were to *ever* pray for the nation, or the world ever again? Too many of "God's people" seem to feel that way.

This COULD NOT have been a command for God's people for all time, because we also see other prophets, apostles and even Jesus Himself all PRAYED FOR the people to be forgiven – even though less than 24 hours earlier Jesus had said, "I don't pray for the world..." (John 17:9)

Let's look at a few examples, but *my main reason for going through all this is NOT for a doctrinal exercise – but to get us, the people of God, doing this: Praying FOR the nation, praying for God's mercy on distressed people all over the world, on our unconverted neighbors, praying we can be better lights than we've ever been. I preach to myself, too!*

DO we LOVE the people of the world – not the cosmos, the society, or the ways of the world, but the *people* – so much that we can do what Ezekiel tells us – that God marks those who are sighing and crying for the abominations of the land? Those people had a mark of protection put on them by God!

Ezekiel 9:3-7

"Now the glory of the God of Israel had gone up from the cherub, where it had been, to the threshold of the temple. And He called to the man clothed with linen, who had the writer's inkhorn at his side; 4 and YHVH said to him, "Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, **and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it.**"

Would you be one of those given a mark of protection had you lived in Jerusalem back then? Are you sure? How often ARE you praying for your country – and even crying out about the abortions, murders, sins, and abominations of the land? ALL the others were marked for death. It seems that if we have a "thy kingdom come" approach, that we could be spared the viral plagues and disasters coming. Somehow these godly people were crying

out to God one way or another about the nation's abominations. Notice v 6. Those who would execute the wicked were told "DO NOT come NEAR anyone on whom is God's protective mark!"

5 To the others He said in my hearing, "Go after him through the city and kill; do not let your eye spare, nor have any pity.

6 Utterly slay old and young men, maidens and little children and women; but do not come near anyone on whom is the mark; and begin at My sanctuary." So they began with the elders who were before the temple.

7 Then He said to them, "Defile the temple, and fill the courts with the slain. Go out!" And they went out and killed in the city."

And didn't **DANIEL** pray for God's mercy on his people and even spoke of HIS own wickedness? His humble prayer of Daniel 9 is full of "WE have done wickedly". It's a very humble, non-condemning prayer. God heard Daniel's prayer. I recommend you read Dan 9.

I've known ministers of God who would not pray for healing for someone who was not a regular church attendee or someone with sins. One man who was alcoholic – could not get convince his pastor to pray for him as he lay dying of cirrhosis of the liver. So his mom called for me. Sometimes we extend that "prayer quarantine" to the whole nation. It's not right.

Think: Of all the people Yeshua healed – name me one person, just one, who had received God's spirit yet at the time of their healing. You can't. ALL of those who were healed were simply asking for healing. God is all about relationships and love for him and for one another. He healed so many; he "healed them ALL" (**Matthew 12:15; Luke 6:19**).

ARE THE END-TIME PROPHECIES IRREVOCABLY SET IN STONE?

Some of you won't pray or aren't praying "for the world's people" because you feel God's prophecies of end time cataclysms are set in stone. You feel God won't rescind the prophecies once he speaks them. ARE they set in stone? Here are some basic points to remember:

- ***Remember God does not delight in executing someone or in the death of anyone.***

Ezekiel 33:11

Say to them: 'As I live,' says YHVH God, **'I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live.** Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?'

- WHY do we have the story of Jonah and Nineveh in the Bible if God's prophecies are set in stone? You know the story, and if you don't, go read that short book. Nineveh was so evil that God sent Jonah there to proclaim their impending doom. But those wicked Ninevites fasted, prayed and repented and GOD heard them – AND ...here's the point... God did not do what he had said he would do because we serve a merciful God.

Jonah 3:4-10

"And Jonah began to enter the city on the first day's walk. Then he cried out and said, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!"

5 So the people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them. 6

Then word came to the king of Nineveh; and he arose from his throne and laid aside his robe, covered himself with sackcloth and sat in ashes.

7 And he caused it to be proclaimed and published throughout Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying,

"Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything; do not let them eat, or drink water. 8 But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, **and cry mightily to God: yes, let every one turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands.** 9 **Who can tell if God will turn and relent, and turn away from His fierce anger, so that we may not perish.**"

10 **Then God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God RELENTED from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it.**"

I don't believe that was one-of-a-kind or a "one-off". I certainly think it's best to be one imploring for God's mercy – even if he doesn't relent from what he has prophesied and purposed to happen – than to have a hard heart about it. What will move God more? A non-concerned heart selfishly praying for your own protection – but not praying for others?

DO YOU believe enough in God's love, mercy and kindness – that you could see this happening today even in America, Britain, Canada, Europe – or anywhere in the world – in SPITE OF what is clearly said in Revelation and Daniel and Matthew 24, etc.? I DO believe it's possible God can still reverse course if enough people will pray and if enough would change.

Nineveh was not a one-off.

What I will cover today is sometimes one of the hardest things to convince God's people to do: to pray for our NATION to come to repentance and for God to be merciful to us all; not just brethren in your church! Would you fast for our nation and for the world in this Covid-19 pandemic? Why? Why not? Why don't we all fast for God's mercy and protection on the whole nation – and not just on "the brethren". Sometimes we just become too selfish, I think.

Our own President **Trump declared a National Day of Prayer March 15**, a day of seeking after God. But no fast was proclaimed. He didn't ask for the nation to turn from its wicked ways, but – it's a historic good start. Vice President Pence said to spend more time on your knees and less time on the internet. Amen to that.

The **famous 2 Chronicles 7:13-14 passage** when YHVH was speaking to the new King Solomon – isn't that a prayer for our nation? Even for a wicked nation? Notice God mentions "wicked ways". What I'll read is GOD speaking to young king Solomon:

2 Chronicles 7:13-17

“When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people, 14 IF My people **who are called by My name** will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, **and turn from their WICKED ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.** 15 Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to prayer made in this place. 16 For now I have chosen and sanctified **this house**, that My name may be there forever; and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually.”

Today, you child of Holy Father in heaven – are the Temple of God, the house of God, the House of Prayer. Today, we are the “House” he speaks of. God says he is attentive to prayer from this temple – your body, your life. And notice it was prayer for a WICKED people – who “TURN from their wicked ways” (v. 14).

Additionally, you can read these 2 stories yourself – if you’re unfamiliar with them:

- God had told **King Ahab** he would die soon because of his unspeakable cruelty in murdering a man to get his vineyard. But Ahab started living humbly, fasting, mourning – and God reversed what he proclaimed. (See **1 Kings 21:20-29**)

Can WE not find the time and means to FAST – especially those of you who cannot even go back to work who are hearing this? Proclaim a fast in your household and seek your God. Turn from any wickedness *yourself*. Ask God to be merciful to this nation. Ask God in Yeshua’s name to knock out this Chinese virus and to change the course he is taking!

God’s prophecies are not all set in stone! **King Hezekiah** was told he would die, by Isaiah the prophet, but when that king implored God’s mercy and wept, and so God added 15 more years to him and turned Assyria back! Based on a prayer!!!! (**2 Kings 20:1-6; 2 Chronicles 32:24-36**) *Are you seeing how consequential heart-felt prayer can be? YOUR prayer?*

You see God is so merciful he’s willing to reverse his course – when we PRAY.

Most evil **King Manasseh** of Judah was so evil that he exceeded the evil of the nations in the promised land that caused God to evict them all and give that land to Israel.

2 Chronicles 33:9-11

“So [king] Manasseh seduced Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to do more evil than the nations whom YHVH had destroyed before the children of Israel.

10 And YHVH spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they would not listen. 11

Therefore YHVH brought upon them the captains of the army of the king of Assyria, **who took Manasseh with hooks, bound him with bronze fetters, and carried him off to Babylon.**

So often, but not always, terrible circumstances are used by God to get our attention. Perhaps Manasseh remembered how God reversed his will even for his father – King Hezekiah. So King Manasseh also repented and look what happened; God reversed himself.

Let’s continue:

2 Chronicles 33:12-13

Now when he was in affliction, he (Manasseh) implored YHVH his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, 13 and prayed to Him; and He (YHVH) received his entreaty, heard his supplication, and brought him back to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that YHVH was God.

There's much more. Who's speaking here in Jeremiah 18? It is YHVH, God, who is saying his options are like those of a potter with clay in his hands who could do what he wanted with that lump of clay. Now we pick up the story:

Jeremiah 18:7-8

"The instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy it, **8 if that NATION against whom I have spoken TURNS from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it.**

Folks, DID YOU get that? That's no different than what happened at NINEVEH. Nineveh was not a "one off". God says he can change his mind on what he says about blessing or cursing a nation – depending on how we respond to him.

Jeremiah 18:9-11

And the instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it, 10 if it does evil in My sight so that it does not obey My voice, then I will relent concerning the GOOD with which I said I would benefit it.

11 "Now therefore, speak to the men of Judah and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, 'Thus says YHVH: "Behold, I am fashioning a disaster and devising a plan against you. **Return now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good.**"'"

Jeremiah 26:12-13

Then Jeremiah spoke to all the princes and all the people, saying: "YHVH sent me to prophesy against this house and against this city with all the words that you have heard. **13 Now therefore, amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of YHVH your God; then YHVH will relent concerning the doom that He has pronounced against you.**"

STANDING IN THE GAP

So remember, God is not pleased with the death of anyone – even sinners! God wants his children, you and I, to be "STANDING IN THE GAP" and interceding for the people of the land. A "gap in the wall" is a weak point in the defenses. He wants you there, standing up for the nation as you'll see. If we love people and care – we will be doing this. And we can also be urging our friends and family to turn back to God. Will you be one of those who stands in the gap for your country?

Ezekiel 22:28-31

"Her prophets plastered them with untempered mortar, seeing false visions, and divining lies for them, saying, 'Thus says the Lord GOD,' (Adonai YHVH) when YHVH had not spoken. **29** The people of the land have used oppressions, committed robbery, and mistreated the poor and needy; and they wrongfully oppress the stranger.

30 So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall AND STAND IN THE GAP BEFORE ME on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one.

(CJB says “to OPPOSE me on behalf of the land...”)

31 Therefore I have poured out My indignation on them; I have consumed them with the fire of My wrath; and I have recompensed their deeds on their own heads,” says the Lord GOD (Adonai YHVH).

Ezekiel 22:30 Contemporary English Version

“I looked for someone to defend the city and to protect it from my anger, as well as to stop me from destroying it. **But I found no one.**”

How SAD. God could find NO ONE, not a single one, interceding for the people of the city or nation. God says “I WANT my people having a HEART for the people of the land enough to even stand before ME in behalf of them... I’ll be impressed with that”, says Almighty God.

So let’s pray for this nation, for this world, even as we pray “Thy kingdom come”. Show God we have a heart for people and for him.

Here’s what PAUL said:

Romans 10:1 “Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved”

Romans 9:1-5

“I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, **2 that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart.**

3 For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh, 4 who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises; **5 of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God.** Amen.

What did Paul just say? “If I could give up my own eternity that my fellow countrymen could be saved, I would”!!!

WHEN did you and I last pray for OUR country? Those of you in Kenya – are YOU praying for an outpouring of God’s spirit in **your** country? We Americans, Canadians, Britons – are we praying our **nations** wake up? Or do you think somehow, we are not to be praying for the nation?

Paul would disagree with you! **In Romans 9:3** He says he’s willing to give up his own salvation if that could mean all Israel could be saved!

Would **you** give up your salvation as Paul implies, would you give up your future, for the salvation of your countrymen? **Don’t say you would, if you’re not even regularly praying for your nation!**

So what about what God said to Jeremiah earlier about not praying for the people of his day?

This COULD NOT have been a command for God's people for all time, because we also see other prophets and apostles and even Jesus Himself all PRAYED FOR THE PEOPLE.

*We've talked about **Daniel** praying for the nation in Daniel 9. Certainly **Moses** did (Exodus 32; Numbers 16). **Abraham** also interceded for Sodom of all places! (Genesis 18) **David** interceded for Jerusalem when he saw the Angel of the LORD above the city with a drawn sword (2 Samuel 24:15-17). There are many more examples.*

Even Jeremiah himself later adds this—straight from God's lips. **Would you ever pray for Babylon?** That's a weird question, you say? Read it yourself.

Jeremiah 29:4-8

*“Thus **says YHVH** of hosts, the God of Israel, to all who were carried away captive, whom **I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem to Babylon**:
5 Build houses and dwell in them; plant gardens and eat their fruit. 6 Take wives and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons and give your daughters to husbands, so that they may bear sons and daughters -- that you may be increased there, and not diminished. 7 *And seek the peace of **the city** where I have caused you to be carried away captive, **and pray to YHVH for it**; for in its peace you will have peace.*”*

Still wondering if we should pray for the nation? YOU – whom God calls “MY people” who are part of his temple – definitely are told to!

2 Chronicles 7:13-14

*“When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people, 14 **if My people who are called by My name** will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and **turn from their wicked ways**, *then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.*”*

I hope this has been helpful and thank you for coming to our free website. Please tell others about us -- and thank you for your prayers and encouragement.

Closing prayer.